

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND
POLITICAL STUDIES**

MASTER'S THESIS

**EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN
RIGHTS PROTECTION:
CASE STUDY OF
ROMA POPULATION IN
THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

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Subject: IEPS
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Master Thesis Proposal



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Proposed Topic:

Effectiveness of human rights protection: Case Study of Roma population in the Czech Republic

Registered in SIS: Yes **Date of registration: 14.10.2015** (in case of No give an expected date) *Remark: the registration must be done by your supervisor but, prior to that, it requires the approval by Dr. Riegl.*

Topic Characteristics:

Human rights protection is a subject that I am very interested in because I believe it is an issue that all people can deal with together. Discrimination is a prevalent problem in the world, and although it does get mentioned in the news, it is almost never the main story. This is why I want to do more research on the topic, especially on the Roma population since there is not much information on them.

I am currently working for one of Amnesty International's groups in Prague, which is why I know that discrimination against the Roma population is a huge problem not only in Czech Republic but also in Central Europe. This also means that I can gain primary data from Amnesty's actions and events, such as its street actions and petitions. Moreover, one of the biggest things we do within my group is organise actions and events with other organisations. Some of these organisations include Ride for Happiness, which aims to raise awareness of Roma discrimination among younger people. Thus, I hope to gain more knowledge and research in how they believe to achieve human rights protection, and how to reach their goals effectively. Education is an important part of dealing with discrimination, which is why raising awareness is an important aspect to human rights protection.

Moreover, not only will I research into NGOs but also governmental organisations such as the UN, as well as governments. I will look into the legal frameworks and political systems of the EU, since great change will require political action. I want to study the evolution of human rights laws and how they came about. This will be a great starting point to see how effective people and organisations can be for human rights protection.

Working hypotheses:

1. Legal and political changes are an effective way to fight human rights discrimination
2. Organisations can effectively transform laws into practice within societies
3. Efforts, such as petitions, marches, street actions, and education, can raise awareness and effectively end discrimination

Methodology:

I will be examining the legal framework of the EU, thus determining the rights of the citizens and residents. Moreover, I will analyse the evolution of these laws and the factors involved in how and why human rights laws have changed. Thus, I will be studying past actions of NGOs and see how effective their processes and efforts have been. As a result, I will also be analysing the political systems of relevant countries, and see how effective their human rights protection have been. I will be able to study referendums, petitions, and news reports to see how public opinion has evolved, as well as how NGOs' images have been received by the public.

I will also be analysing the efforts of human rights NGOs. An example is Amnesty International, since it has offices, actions, events, and street petitions in Central Europe. However, I am in touch with other NGOs, such as Ride for Happiness, so that I can gain primary research data. With their help, I will be analysing their goals and objectives, statistics, actions, and reports. Although it will be hard to achieve concrete measurable results, I will be able to study previous efforts and see what changes came about regarding laws and political decisions.

I will rely mostly on laws and reports, but also my personal experience with NGOs that tackle the issue of human rights discrimination.

Outline:

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical background and the review of world literature
3. Legal and political frameworks of human rights
 - a. Past laws and actions
 - b. Evolution of human rights laws
 - c. Evolution of political systems
 - d. Human rights laws in practice
4. Organisations' role in human rights protection
 - a. Governmental organisations, such as UN and EU
 - b. Non-governmental organisations, such as Amnesty International
 - c. Differences and similarities between their actions
 - d. Effectiveness of their past actions
 - e. Future outlook of their actions
5. Case Study: Human rights protection of Roma population
 - a. History
 - b. Efforts towards protection
 - c. Education
 - d. Public opinion
6. Conclusions
7. References / Bibliography

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Author

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Supervisor

DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. The thesis as submitted is 102,667 keystrokes long (including spaces), i.e. 67 manuscript pages.

Aidai Idinova

26th July, 2016

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1. Introduction

This thesis will be looking at the Roma population in the Czech Republic, even though significant Roma populations are also found around Central, East and South-East Europe. One country was used – the Czech Republic – in order to provide a more useful and accurate analysis within a country. Unfortunately, although this topic has produced a number of articles and international initiatives, very little data has been collected and analysed, so lack of data is already one challenge in this research. However, the information and research that is available will be used to look at past and current efforts done by the Czech government in dealing with the rights of education for its Roma minority. Other rights such as right to employment, housing and health care are very crucial rights as well, however this thesis will focus on the right to education as problems with this particular right, especially when dealing with children at a young age, ultimately affect the other rights. Moreover, organisations within the Czech Republic and within the European Union (EU) have stressed the need to improving access to education for Roma as it would directly and indirectly affect the Roma population's employment opportunities, as well as health care and housing prospects.

This thesis has four hypotheses on the effectiveness of human rights protection and will try to either prove or disprove each of them through data, research, and analysis. The first hypothesis states that *the people of Czech Republic will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than the rest of EU's citizens*. Thus, the Czech citizens' perceptions towards Roma will be analysed and evaluated in order to determine if there really is discrimination. The second hypothesis states that *the people in the Czech Republic affiliated with Christian*

religious groups will be less comfortable with Roma than those affiliated with another or no tradition. This hypothesis looks at whether religion, specifically Christianity, might have something to do with the negative attitude towards Roma. The third hypothesis states that *the Czech people who finished their full-time education later in life will be more comfortable with having a Roma neighbour than those who finished earlier.* This hypothesis looks at whether people who have had longer education will be more comfortable with Roma. And finally, the fourth hypothesis states that *the people from former communist countries will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than people in other countries in the European Union.* This hypothesis wants to see if a communist past could have affected the people's perception towards Roma. All four of the hypotheses will be looked upon throughout the first chapter and evaluated to see what their results mean.

2. Anti-Roma attitudes

Introduction

One way to describe the anti-Roma attitudes in Europe is through the populations' perception of them. Political Scientists Matthew Loveland and Delia Popescu have researched this topic and developed the 'Gypsy threat narrative', which deals with the negative perception people have towards the Roma population. They believe that it is this story, spread all across Europe, that has not only started this negative attitude but also helps maintain the discrimination towards Roma. The narrative states that Roma, or also known as Romani or Gypsies, entered Europe as nomads from India, as far back as the eleventh Century. Ever since then, the Roma have always isolated themselves from society due to inherent cultural and religious differences. Over the centuries they have proven their differences by their aversion to productive labour and their unwillingness to participate in their societies' economies. Thus, with no respect to their neighbours, they survive solely by stealing from and lying to the 'good and civilised' people. Therefore, the Roma cannot be trusted and need to be better controlled (Loveland and Popescu, 2015).

This gypsy threat narrative seems to not be an uncommon narrative in Europe due to the persistence of Roma discrimination over the centuries. With discrimination in all parts of society, such as when looking for employment, housing or education, this issue is something that has to be addressed. With this narrative being so common, many people ignore or reject this discrimination, leading to little actual effort being done regarding this issue (Loveland and Popescu, 2015).

Roma

According to the EU, the Roma population is the biggest minority group in Europe, with an estimated number of 10-12 million people living on the continent. The EU's Agency for Fundamental Rights, the UN Development Programme and the World Bank's 2011 survey on the Roma population found that one in three Roma was unemployed, one in five did not have health insurance, and that nine in ten lived below poverty. The organisations saw, and still see, the many years of discrimination, racism, social exclusion, prejudice and intolerance as the sources for their problems (FRA, 2012). The 2011 national census of the Czech Republic recorded 5,135 people as Roma by ethnicity, with 837 of them stating that Roma was their mother tongue. This number is a significant decrease from previous censuses as the 2001 census recorded 11,746 Roma by ethnicity while the 1991 census recorded 32,903 Roma by ethnicity. Thus, in these 20 years the number of Roma decreased by an astounding 84%. The population of the Czech Republic however had been growing, with 10,302,215 in 1991 and 10,436,560 in 2011. This decrease may be due to a number of reasons, as the 27,768 Roma could have left the country in the last 20 years, or perhaps many of them stopped registering or labelling themselves as Roma (Czech Statistical Office, 2014).

What is important to note, which quite a few authors do not elaborate on, is the term and identity of 'Roma'. Not every Roma will call themselves a Roma because, after all, what does it mean to be a Roma? Is it the ethnicity, language, culture, religion, history, skin colour, lifestyle or just individual choice? Many authors and many Europeans view Roma as a homogenous group that lives all across Europe, ranging from Romania to France. But how is it possible for the Roma population to be homogenous if they live in various countries and

have various job occupations, dialects and geographical backgrounds? Dictionaries also have various definitions, with the Cambridge dictionary defining a Roma as: “people of a race originally from northern India who typically used to travel from place to place, and now live especially in Europe and North America” (Cambridge Dictionaries, 2016). The Oxford dictionary gives a slightly different definition: “A member of a travelling people traditionally living by itinerant trade and fortune telling. Gypsies speak a language (Romany) that is related to Hindi and are believed to have originated in South Asia” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Thus, most literature view Roma as an ethnical group of nomads that seems to have remained the same from the eleventh Century.

Moreover, due to the past negative stereotype of Roma being thieves, dancers and fortune tellers, there still exists this stereotype. This leads to many Roma not identifying themselves as Roma because of a fear of discrimination from their governments, societies and neighbours. Assimilation pressures from governments and societies also discourage individuals from labelling themselves as Roma. As a result, national statistics, censuses and organisations have differing statistics regarding the number of Roma in countries (FRA, 2012). Thus, in the Eurobarometer Survey that will be used in this chapter, the term ‘Roma’ that is used when asking citizens about their self-reported measures of comfort with having Roma as a neighbour depends entirely on the individuals’ own definitions of Roma.

Literature Review

Most literature on the issue of anti-Roma attitudes in Europe are either historical papers and books, or documentations of treaties and efforts done. Unfortunately, there is little literature on research and studies done for the explanation of the discrimination and prejudice. Political

leaders have actually acknowledged the issue, although not entirely positively. Over the years, a number of countries in Europe had Roma populations forcefully migrate to different communities and some even had Roma deported out of their countries, for instance by France in 2010 (Severance, 2010). A number of organisations have, however, worked on making sure that the negative attitudes towards Roma are recognised and acknowledged, especially the EU with its reports and Barometer surveys. Their reports write about increasing political commitments to better integrate Roma into societies in order to improve people's perceptions of Roma. However, they are limited regarding explanations and reasons behind the problem (FRA, 2012).

There is also other literature that focuses on describing the history of the Roma. Many authors agree that the Roma are the largest minority in Europe with no "mother state" to represent them, thus describing them as a historically marginalised and stereotyped minority – with stereotypes such as being musicians, dancers and palm-readers as well as thieves and liars. Therefore, with no protection, and the persistent view of Roma being "foreigners" to a historically Christian Europe, many authors believe that the Roma have been looked down upon mostly because of nationalistic tendencies and religious affiliations (Loveland and Popescu, 2015).

Other authors have written about solutions to dealing with the Roma population: containing them, expelling them, or assimilating them. Some want to assimilate them so that they can join the European communities while others are in favour of forceful integration. But even then they view full assimilation as impossible due to differences in hereditary cultural and

religious values. Stereotypes are upheld and emphasised, such as the Roma being a culture based on unproductiveness and begging and dancing (Loveland and Popescu, 2015).

Therefore, it is very important to find out where this narrative seems to stem from and what variables and factors seem to contribute towards this negative attitude towards Roma. Could it be due to historical experiences, religious reasons, economic standings, or perhaps political reasons? Due to the vast scope of the issue, this thesis will focus on the Czech Republic and its negative attitudes towards its Roma population. Moreover, this chapter will be looking at some hypotheses on where this negative attitude stemmed from.

Data

For this research and analysis will be used data from the 2008 Eurobarometer Survey (number 69.1), created by the EU's European Commission (EC). This survey consists of questions asked on an individual basis, meant to be representative of the EU population from the age of 15 and over. It interviewed 26,746 citizens of the European Union in 29 sampling units (the 27 EU countries as of 2008, so Croatia is not included. Northern Ireland and East Germany are counted separately from Great Britain and (West) Germany, respectively). The variables that will be of importance will be the citizens' religious affiliations, the age at which citizens finished their education as well as the EU countries' statuses as former communist states. These variables will be compared with the individuals' results with their self-reported measures of comfort with having Roma as neighbours. This dependent variable has been chosen as it can be a great indicator of the individuals' defence of this narrative. And finally, for this analysis will be used the SPSS programme (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Hypotheses

1. The people of Czech Republic will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than the rest of EU's citizens.

This hypothesis will check whether the Czech citizens feel less comfortable with having a Roma neighbour due to the perceived negative perception that the Czech society has put on Roma.

2. The people in the Czech Republic affiliated with Christian religious groups will be less comfortable with the Roma than those affiliated with another or no tradition.

The hypothesis arises from the fact that Roma have historically been seen as religious outsiders, even if they have converted to Christianity.

3. The Czech people who finished their full-time education later in life will be more comfortable with having a Roma neighbour than those who finished earlier.

This hypothesis assumes that those who are more educated will be more comfortable around Roma, as they will have had more years to educate themselves.

4. The people from former communist countries will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than people in other countries in the European Union.

This hypothesis looks at all the former communist states in the EU, and tries to see if former communist states' populations might have different attitudes towards Roma than those that never went through communism. Communism was not kind to socially disadvantaged groups

such as Roma, and so sentiments of prejudice, discrimination and persistence of stereotypes might still exist in current populations. Thus, it will be looking at the 11 former communist countries of East Germany, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania. These 11 countries will be compared with the other 18 EU countries that are not former communist states.

Variables

The dependent variable that will be used for all the hypotheses is called “v102” and is the self-reported measure of the respondent to having a Roma as a neighbour. Respondents were asked: “For each of the following situations, please tell me using this scale from 1 to 10 how you would personally feel about it. On this scale, ‘1’ means that you would be “very uncomfortable” and ‘10’ means that you would be “totally comfortable” with this situation.” The situation in this case is “having a Roma as a neighbour.” Thus, there are 10 available answers.

The first hypothesis will be looking at the self-reported measures of how comfortable a respondent would feel with a Roma neighbour but will separately look at the answers of the Czech citizens and the answers of the rest of EU’s citizens. The mean for the whole of the EU is 5.82, while the mean for the Czech Republic is 3.65.

The second hypothesis will use the independent variable that deals with the respondents’ religious affiliations. This variable is called “v428” and asked respondents: “Do you consider yourself to be: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Other Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh,

Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Non believer/Agnostic or Other?” From the 19,859 EU citizens that responded, 15,494 are Christian so that 78% of the citizens are Christian. In the Czech Republic, 37.9% are Christian, while 61.7% are Atheist or Non-believer/Agnostic.

The third hypothesis will be using the independent variable that looks at how old the respondent was when they finished their full-time education. This variable is called “v388” and asked respondents for their: “Age when finished full-time education.” They were given the options of “up to 14 years, 15 years, 16 years, 17 years, 18 years, 19 years, 20 years, 21 years, 22 years and older, and still studying.” The mean age for the whole EU is 18.6 years, while for the Czech Republic it is 18.4 years.

The fourth hypothesis will be using the independent variable of whether a state is a former communist state. Thus, the variable of “v6” will be useful as it lists all the nations present in the survey. Then, using knowledge of the EU countries’ communist pasts, a new variable will be created that will split the EU countries into “former communist states” and “non-former communist states.” The former group includes the 11 countries of: East Germany, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, while the latter group includes the 18 countries of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Greece, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and West Germany.

Results of Analysis

Hypothesis 1:

“The people of Czech Republic will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than the rest of EU’s citizens.”

CZ_EU * QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA Cross-tabulation

		QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA										Total	
		Box 1 - Very uncomfortable	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7	Box 8	Box 9	Box 10 - Totally comfortable		
CZ_EU	Czech Republic	Count	316	72	119	101	153	69	49	44	16	30	969
		Expected Count	141.3	53.9	77.9	70.8	134.6	64.9	76.0	81.5	51.5	216.6	969.0
		% within CZ_EU	32.6%	7.4%	12.3%	10.4%	15.8%	7.1%	5.1%	4.5%	1.7%	3.1%	100.0%
	Rest of EU	Count	3253	1291	1849	1687	3247	1572	1872	2014	1286	5443	23514
		Expected Count	3427.7	1309.1	1890.1	1717.2	3265.4	1576.1	1845.0	1976.5	1250.5	5256.4	23514.0
		% within CZ_EU	13.8%	5.5%	7.9%	7.2%	13.8%	6.7%	8.0%	8.6%	5.5%	23.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	3569	1363	1968	1788	3400	1641	1921	2058	1302	5473	24483	
	Expected Count	3569.0	1363.0	1968.0	1788.0	3400.0	1641.0	1921.0	2058.0	1302.0	5473.0	24483.0	
	% within CZ_EU	14.6%	5.6%	8.0%	7.3%	13.9%	6.7%	7.8%	8.4%	5.3%	22.4%	100.0%	

From the table it is visible that 32.6% of Czech citizens feel very uncomfortable with having a Roma as a neighbour, while only 13.8% of the rest of EU’s citizens feel very uncomfortable.

On the other end of the scale it can be seen that 3.1% of Czechs would feel totally comfortable with a Roma neighbour, while 23.1% of EU’s citizens would feel totally comfortable. Already, there is a huge difference between the numbers and percentages.

Moreover, there is a huge difference between the observed counts of Czechs in each box and its expected counts, for instance in Box 1 where 316 Czechs feel very uncomfortable with the idea of having a Roma neighbour, while the expected count is just 141.3. The same

applies to Box 10, where the observed count is 30 Czechs being totally comfortable with having a Roma neighbour while the expected count is 216.6.

Additionally, in order to not only look at the extreme ends of the scale, it is important to look at the remaining boxes. Through boxes 1 to 5, around 78.5% of Czech citizens of the Czech population would be uncomfortable with having Roma neighbours. Meanwhile, there are around 48.2% of the rest of EU's citizens who would feel uncomfortable with having Roma as neighbours. Thus, when looking at Boxes 6 through 10, around 21.5% of Czech citizens feel comfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while 51.8% of the rest of EU's citizens would feel comfortable. This comparison shows great differences between the self-reported measures of comfort with having a Roma neighbour, with Czech Republic's citizens feeling much more uncomfortable than the rest of the EU. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the people of Czech Republic being less comfortable than the rest of EU's citizens with having Roma as neighbours has been satisfied.

Hypothesis 2:

“The people in the Czech Republic affiliated with Christian religious groups will be less comfortable with having a Roma neighbour than those affiliated with another or no tradition.”

Christian * QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA Cross-tabulation

		QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA										Total	
		Box 1 - Very uncomfortable	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7	Box 8	Box 9	Box 10 - Totally comfortable		
Christian in CZ	Christian	Count	116	27	35	37	61	18	18	10	8	16	346
		Expected Count	111.7	25.7	43.2	36.3	53.8	24.2	17.8	16.3	6.1	11.0	346.0
		% within Christian	33.5%	7.8%	10.1%	10.7%	17.6%	5.2%	5.2%	2.9%	2.3%	4.6%	100.0%
	Other religion	Count	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
		Expected Count	1.3	.3	.5	.4	.6	.3	.2	.2	.1	.1	4.0
		% within Christian	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Agnostic / Atheist	Count	178	40	79	58	80	46	29	33	8	13	564
		Expected Count	182.0	42.0	70.3	59.2	87.6	39.5	29.0	26.5	9.9	17.9	564.0
		% within Christian	31.6%	7.1%	14.0%	10.3%	14.2%	8.2%	5.1%	5.9%	1.4%	2.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	295	68	114	96	142	64	47	43	16	29	914	
	Expected Count	295.0	68.0	114.0	96.0	142.0	64.0	47.0	43.0	16.0	29.0	914.0	
	% within Christian	32.3%	7.4%	12.5%	10.5%	15.5%	7.0%	5.1%	4.7%	1.8%	3.2%	100.0%	

In this table, one can see that from the 914 Czech citizens interviewed, around 61.7% of them (564 citizens) are agnostic or atheist, while 37.9% are Christian (346 citizens) and only 0.4% affiliate themselves with another religion. From those that are Christian, 33.5% of them would be very uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while from those with another or no religion around 31.5% would feel very uncomfortable. On the other hand, around 4.6% of Christians would feel totally comfortable with a Roma neighbour, while around 2.29% of those with another or no religion would feel totally comfortable. Thus, although the numbers are very close, it would look like there are more Christians than non-Christians who would feel very uncomfortable with the idea of having a Roma neighbour, but at the same time there are more Christians who would feel totally comfortable. Additionally, looking at boxes

through 1 to 5, around 79.8% of Christians would be uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while around 77.3% of non-Christians would be uncomfortable. Therefore, 20.2% of Christians would feel comfortable with the idea of having a Roma neighbour, while around 22.7% of non-Christians would feel comfortable. With these numbers being so close, it would be difficult to draw any conclusion between the differences of Christians and non-Christians in their comfortableness with having a Roma neighbour, so the hypothesis that the “people in the Czech Republic affiliated with Christian religious groups will be less comfortable with having a Roma neighbour than those affiliated with another or no tradition” has not been proven.

Hypothesis 3:

“The Czech people who finished their full-time education later in life will be more comfortable with having a Roma neighbour than those who finished earlier.”

Age when finished education * QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA Cross-tabulation

		QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA										Total	
		Box 1 - Very uncomfortable	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7	Box 8	Box 9	Box 10 - Totally comfortable		
Age when finished education	Up to 14 years	Count	4	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	10
	Expected Count	3.3	.3	1.3	1.0	1.6	.7	.5	.4	.2	.3	10.0	
	% within Age	40.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
	15 years	Count	8	5	7	5	3	1	4	4	0	5	42
	Expected Count	14.0	3.2	5.3	4.0	6.5	3.0	2.1	1.8	.7	1.2	42.0	
	% within Age	19.0%	11.9%	16.7%	11.9%	7.1%	2.4%	9.5%	9.5%	0.0%	11.9%	100.0%	
	16 years	Count	7	3	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	24
	Expected Count	8.0	1.8	3.0	2.3	3.7	1.7	1.2	1.0	.4	.7	24.0	
	% within Age	29.2%	12.5%	4.2%	12.5%	12.5%	8.3%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	100.0%	
	17 years	Count	14	10	12	7	11	7	6	2	6	4	79
	Expected Count	26.3	6.1	10.0	7.6	12.3	5.7	3.9	3.4	1.3	2.3	79.0	
	% within Age	17.7%	12.7%	15.2%	8.9%	13.9%	8.9%	7.6%	2.5%	7.6%	5.1%	100.0%	
	18 years	Count	149	28	52	36	60	27	16	13	5	10	396
	Expected Count	132.0	30.4	50.1	38.0	61.7	28.6	19.7	17.0	6.7	11.6	396.0	
	% within Age	37.6%	7.1%	13.1%	9.1%	15.2%	6.3%	4.0%	3.3%	1.3%	2.5%	100.0%	
	19 years	Count	67	15	23	18	40	14	3	6	3	3	192
	Expected Count	64.0	14.8	24.3	18.4	29.9	13.9	9.3	8.2	3.3	5.6	192.0	
	% within Age	34.9%	7.3%	12.0%	9.4%	20.3%	7.3%	1.6%	3.1%	1.6%	1.6%	100.0%	
	20 years	Count	12	0	6	3	3	2	0	5	0	2	38
	Expected Count	12.7	2.9	4.8	3.6	5.9	2.7	1.9	1.6	.6	1.1	38.0	
% within Age	31.6%	0.0%	15.8%	7.9%	21.1%	5.3%	0.0%	13.2%	0.0%	5.3%	100.0%		
21 years	Count	10	0	2	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	20	
Expected Count	6.7	1.5	2.5	1.9	3.1	1.4	1.0	.9	.3	.6	20.0		
% within Age	50.0%	0.0%	10.0%	15.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%		
22 years and older	Count	24	6	8	9	9	9	11	7	0	1	84	
Expected Count	28.0	6.5	10.6	8.1	13.1	6.1	4.2	3.6	1.4	2.5	84.0		
% within Age	28.6%	7.1%	9.5%	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%	13.1%	8.3%	0.0%	1.2%	100.0%		
Total	Count	295	68	112	85	138	64	44	38	15	26	885	
	Expected Count	295.0	68.0	112.0	85.0	138.0	64.0	44.0	38.0	15.0	26.0	885.0	
	% within Age	33.3%	7.7%	12.7%	9.6%	15.6%	7.2%	5.0%	4.3%	1.7%	2.9%	100.0%	

From this table that shows the 885 Czech citizens who answered, 1.1% of them finished their full-time education at 14 years or younger; 40% of them are in Box 1, meaning that they would feel very uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour. Moreover, all 10 of them are found in boxes 1 through 5, meaning that none of them would feel comfortable with a Roma

neighbour. Around 4.7% of all the Czech respondents finished their full-time education at 15 years of age and 19.0% of them are found in Box 1 – Very uncomfortable, while 11.9% are found in Box 10 – Totally comfortable. Overall, from those found in boxes 1 through 5, 66.7% of them would feel uncomfortable with a Roma neighbour with 33.3% of them would feel comfortable – a huge increase from those who finished their full-time education at 14 or younger. Furthermore, from those who finished at 16 years of age, 29.2% of them would be very uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while only 4.2% of them would be totally comfortable. As a result, around 70.8% of them would be uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour as they are found in boxes 1 through 5, while 29.2% of them would be comfortable – a slight decrease from those who finished their education at 15 years.

From those that finished their full-time education at 17 years of age, there is a slight decrease in the number of people who would be uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour as 17.7% of them are found in Box 1 - Very uncomfortable, and overall around 68.4% of them are found in boxes 1 through 5. Thus, 31.6% of them are found in boxes 6 through 10 and would be comfortable with having a Roma neighbour, with 5.1% of them in Box 10 as they would be totally comfortable with a Roma neighbour. On the other hand, from those who finished their full-time education at 18 years, which makes up around 44.7% of the respondents, there are 37.6% at the bottom of the scale as they would be very uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour. Meanwhile, 2.5% are at the opposite end and so would be totally comfortable. Therefore, for those who would be uncomfortable with a Roma neighbour, around 82.1% of them are found in boxes 1 through 5, while 17.9% of them are found in boxes 6 through 10 and would be comfortable with a Roma neighbour. This is a huge jump from those who finished their education at 17 years. However, the numbers for those who finished their education at 19 years of age stays relatively the same, although there are

fewer people who would be very uncomfortable (34.9%) but also fewer people who would be totally comfortable with having a Roma neighbour (1.6%). Yet, while the number of those on the extreme ends of the scale decrease, the number of those who would feel uncomfortable increases as 84.9% of them are found in boxes 1 through 5, while only 15.1% would feel comfortable.

From those that finished their education at 20 years of age, there are 31.6% of them that would feel very uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour – a slight decrease than those who finished education at 19 and 18 years. Moreover, the number of those who would feel totally comfortable increases to 5.3%. Thus, there is a decrease in the number of people who would feel uncomfortable as 76.3% of them are found in boxes 1 through 5, while 23.7% of them are found in boxes 6 through 10. On the other hand, this trend changes for those who finished their full-time education at 21 years of age as 50% of them would be very uncomfortable with a Roma neighbour, while none of them would feel totally comfortable. Thus, 80% of them are found in boxes 1 through 5, while 20% in boxes 6 through 10. However, this might just be an anomaly as this row has the lowest number of respondents - only 20 respondents representing 2.3% of the 885 respondents. Thus, that might explain how there is no one in boxes 8, 9 and 10. But finally, for those who finished their education at 22 years of age or older, there is a decrease in the number of respondents in Box 1 with 28.6% of them found here. There are also only 1.2% of them in Box 10 – Totally comfortable. As a result, 66.7% of them are found in boxes 1 through 5 – a decrease from those who finished their education at 21 and 20 years of age. Therefore, 33.3% of them would be comfortable with having a Roma neighbour.

To summarise, it would seem that the majority of the Czech respondents were uncomfortable with the idea of having a Roma neighbour, no matter at what age they finished their full-time education. The peak however was between the ages of 18 and 19 as over 80% of the respondents reported low comfortability measures with having a Roma neighbour. Those below 18 years of age had no steady increases or decreases in how comfortable they felt with having a Roma neighbour. However, excluding those who finished their education at 21 years of age, the numbers of people who felt uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour decreased from 19 years to 22 years and older. Nevertheless, even those who finished their full-time education at 22 years or older still felt more uncomfortable than comfortable with having a Roma neighbour, with a 66.7%. Therefore, the hypothesis that: “the Czech people who finished their full-time education later in life will be more comfortable with having a Roma neighbour than those who finished earlier” has not been satisfied.

Hypothesis 4:

“The people from former communist countries will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than people in other countries of the EU.”

Former communist states * QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA Cross-tabulation

			QA6 NEIGHBOUR: ROMA										Total
			Box 1 - Very uncomfortable	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7	Box 8	Box 9	Box 10 - Totally comfortable	
Former commu- nist states	Non-former communist state	Count	1859	789	1116	1103	1953	1027	1283	1340	829	3471	14770
		Expected count	2153.1	822.3	1187.2	1078.7	2051.1	990.0	1158.9	1241.5	785.5	3301.7	14770.0
		% within FCS	12.6%	5.3%	7.6%	7.5%	13.2%	7.0%	8.7%	9.1%	5.6%	23.5%	100.0%
	Former communist state	Count	1710	574	852	685	1447	614	638	718	473	2002	9713
		Expected count	1415.9	540.7	780.8	709.3	1348.9	651.0	762.1	816.5	516.5	2171.3	9713.0
		% within FCS	17.6%	5.9%	8.8%	7.1%	14.9%	6.3%	6.6%	7.4%	4.9%	20.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	3569	1363	1968	1788	3400	1641	1921	2058	1302	5473	24483	
	Expected count	3569.0	1363.0	1968.0	1788.0	3400.0	1641.0	1921.0	2058.0	1302.0	5473.0	24483.0	
	% within FCS	14.6%	5.6%	8.0%	7.3%	13.9%	6.7%	7.8%	8.4%	5.3%	22.4%	100.0%	

From the table it can be seen that 12.6% of people in non-former communist states would feel very uncomfortable with having a Roma as a neighbour, while 17.6% of people from former communist states would feel very uncomfortable. On the other end, it is visible that 23.5% of people from non-former communist states would feel totally comfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while 20.6% of people from communist states would feel totally comfortable. And looking at boxes 1 through 5, there are 46.2% of people from non-former communist states that feel uncomfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while from former communist states there are 54.3% of people. And from boxes 6 through 10, there are 53.9% of people from non-former communist state that feel comfortable with having a Roma neighbour, while for those from former communist states there are 45.8% of people. Thus, there are differences between the numbers but they are not as significant as those for the first hypothesis. Yet, it would seem

that just like the second hypothesis states, there are more people from former communist states that feel very uncomfortable with having a Roma as a neighbour, and more people from non-former communist states than former communist states that feel totally comfortable with having a Roma as a neighbour. It therefore satisfies the hypothesis that states that: “the people from former communist countries will be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than the people in other countries in the European Union.”

Conclusion

To conclude, with all the four hypotheses dealing with how comfortable respondents feel with having a Roma neighbour, the analyses revealed a lot of interesting information. The first hypothesis was proven true as Czech Republic’s citizens felt much more uncomfortable than the rest of the EU with having a Roma neighbour. The second hypothesis was not proven true as there were no significant differences between Christians and non-Christians in how comfortable the Czech citizens felt towards having a Roma neighbour. The third hypothesis was also not proven true as there was no significant correlation between the age at which one finished full-time education and their comfortableness to having a Roma neighbour. The hypothesis stated that the Czech citizens that finished their education at an older age would feel more comfortable, yet the research was not able to prove this. And finally, the fourth hypothesis was proven true people from former communist countries were found to be less comfortable with having Roma as neighbours than the people in non-former communist states of the EU.

Overall, the research did bring insight into the problem of anti-Roma attitudes in the Czech Republic as there seems to high degree of negative perception towards Roma in the country. And although the variables of education and religion were not found to be very effective variables in the Czech Republic, more research can be done regarding other countries in order to get a clearer picture. Looking at the variable of religion in countries with more variety can be more useful and enlightening, especially since the Czech Republic is predominantly Atheist, Agnostic and Christian. Looking at other religions could also be more interesting. The variable of education could also be expanded on so that one could analyse citizens' attitudes towards Roma not through their age when they finished full-time education but through diplomas or degrees they received. Those with PhDs might have a different view than those with a high school diploma. Nevertheless, the sample size and data of the survey were great, with a variety of variables that can be useful for future studies and research. The Czech Republic could be researched in more depth to find specific reasons regarding the negative attitudes towards Roma. Or, future researchers could also look more into different countries and regions, and look for the different societies' attitudes towards other minorities other than Roma to see if there are any significant similarities or differences.

3. Right to Education

Introduction

Education is such an important human rights issue as it not only has an impact on personal development but also on societal development. Especially for the Roma minority, education, especially primary education when children are very young, can be a way to reduce their risk of social exclusion – which is something the EU and its Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has been working on (FRA, 2012). Hence, can efforts by a government in fact improve access to education for Roma? A problem that will arise in answering this question is on whether one can measure access to education. Indicators that will be used will include drop-out rates of Roma as well as their school attainment rates. This can lead to another problem however as national governments cannot even come into an agreement with organisations on how many Roma they have within their borders, as organisations claim that a number of Roma do not register as Roma for national censuses due to fear of discrimination, assimilation pressures from governments and societies, and lack of knowledge in the benefits of registering. However, because of the lack of data, numbers provided by the Czech government's census will have to be the main source of data, with some extra statistics provided by organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (FRA, 2012).

Thus, this chapter will be looking at the education of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic, as well as the Czech school system. In order to understand and analyse the access to higher education for Roma it is very important to first look at the access to primary education, as past education heavily influences, and for some dictates, future educational opportunities.

The discrimination of Roma students will be the main focus of this chapter, and the methodology of the chapter will comprise of studying available documents to find out if there is discrimination in this field and to what extent. Actors such as the government, local authorities, local schools and even parents will also be examined and analysed. Through understanding how access to primary and secondary education works for Roma children, it will be possible to understand the effects it has on higher education and what measures can thus be taken.

Methodology

In order to analyse access to higher education for Roma, it will be crucial to take a look though and study available documents and reports on the topic. Access to primary and secondary education is of utmost importance as it undoubtedly affects access to universities and colleges as well as employment opportunities and housing and health care issues. Most documents on the topic are written by organisations such as the EU and Amnesty International, so it will be essential to look at their researches on topics such as right to equal and quality education of Roma children, differential treatment of Roma in education, governmental efforts in ‘special schools’ for Roma, and factors and actors involved in residential and school segregation.

Amnesty International did their own research into the issue and so from January to December 2014 they visited 24 mainstream primary schools, 4 special schools for children with mental disabilities and 2 secondary vocational schools in the cities of České Budějovice, Děčín, Ostrava and Brno. In all four of these locations there were schools that were widely recognised as “Roma schools” as the proportion of Roma children varied from 10% to 90%.

And especially Ostrava and Brno were chosen as they have large populations of Roma families. Thus, their reports from their research and monitoring will be useful in deciphering how Roma children are segregated in schools. It is widely assumed that it is due to residential segregation, yet Amnesty has found out that that is most often not the case as schools and parents can be key factors (Amnesty International, 2015).

Access to Primary and Secondary Education

Introduction

Primary education in the Czech Republic is the first stage of its compulsory education, with children beginning primary school at the age of 6. Children have to attend at least 9 years of school: 5 years at primary school and 4 years at lower secondary school. Once completed, children can attend one of three upper secondary schools: gymnasium (general secondary school), professional/technical school or vocational school. The gymnasium provides a general academic education in order to prepare students for university studies at the tertiary education level. With 346 gymnasiums in the country, around 17.4% of those who apply for upper secondary schools go to gymnasiums in order to receive their *maturita*, with which they can attend universities. Technical schools provide a complete secondary vocational education which prepares students for technical work in one of 260 branches. Thus, while 40% of the education is devoted to general education, 60% is devoted to vocational technical education such as working in laboratories or workshops. With around 804 of these schools, around 37.5% of students go to these technical schools. After around 4 years, students also have a *maturita*. And finally, vocational schools provide apprenticeship training courses that end with an apprenticeship certificate if finished successfully. The goal is to teach manual skills, so 50% of the time the students have practical training. With around 280 branches, around 45% of the youth go to these schools. However, there are around 565 secondary vocational schools that offer 4-year courses that can also result in a *maturita* exam (Embassy of the Czech Republic, 2016).

Special Schools

In order to analyse the access to higher education for Roma, it is crucial to look back and study their access to primary and secondary education. In the Czech Republic, there exists an ethnic segregation of Roma and non-Roma children regarding primary and secondary schools that they attend. Especially outside the multicultural city of Prague, Roma children are physically separated from non-Roma children, not only in classes but also in schools. For many years, a huge percentage of Roma children have been placed in schools that are designed for children with health disabilities, such as mental, physical, visual, or speech problems. Thus, these schools offer a reduced curriculum, making it harder for the students to attend higher education. Looking at statistics, one can find an over-representation of Roma children in these special schools for children with mental disabilities, thus leading to claims of discrimination for the educational system's disproportionate placement of Roma children (Amnesty International, 2015). According to the Czech School Inspectorate's 2014 survey, around 32% of children that were studying in educational programmes designed for those with mental disabilities were Roma (Czech School Inspectorate, 2015). However, according to the 2011 Czech national census, Roma made up only 0.05% of the country's population¹ (Czech Statistical Office, 2014). However, due to a lack of consensus on the real number of Roma in the country, another source can be used where the Public Defender of Rights in 2012 recorded the number of Roma to be between 1.4% to 2.8% of the country's population², still leading to a disproportionate number of Roma in special schools (Public Defender of Rights, 2012).

¹ The 2011 Czech National Census recorded the population of the Czech Republic to be 10,436,560, with 5,135 of them recorded as Roma by ethnicity. (Czech Statistical Office, 2014).

² The Office of the Public Defender of Rights, in 2012, recorded the population of the Czech Republic to be 10,562,214, with 150,000 to 300,000 of them being Roma living in the Czech Republic. (Public Defender of Rights, 2012).

With the over-representation of Roma children in special schools, which are also known as ‘practical schools’, children follow a scaled-down curriculum that not only limits them from developing their potential but also from future educational and employment opportunities. Those that graduate from these special practical schools have severely limited options for secondary education as they lack the qualifications and knowledge due to these schools containing vocational programmes that train them for assisting professions such as assistant cooks, shop assistants, carers, or carpenters (Amnesty International, 2015).

Other actors:

1. Parents

A crucial group of actors is the parents, both of Roma and non-Roma children, as they have the power to influence their children’s education. Amnesty International, through interviews with directors of non-Roma schools in , have found out that non-Roma parents seem to look for schools with no or very low numbers of Roma children. One director even stated that: “in the course of a single day 200 non-Roma pupils left our school [from around 460 pupils]. Parents didn’t want to leave [their children] here and the other school accepted them.” This shows the amount of discrimination that Roma parents can face when enrolling their children in non-Roma schools as non-Roma parents and even school staff will not be overwhelmingly welcoming with their arms wide open (Amnesty International, 2015).

Many Roma parents also tend to prefer sending their children to schools with a high percentage of Roma children as they believe that in these ‘Roma schools’ their children will

receive both greater attention due to smaller class sizes as well as less discrimination and prejudice from staff and other children. These parents do not want their children to be exposed to racial bullying and so they place them in the special schools. Yet, a problem that may result over the years is that although the children were not exposed to racial bullying during their education, they may not succeed in continuing at a high school and later in achieving a high school certificate for entrance into university. However, many Roma parents want their children to be surrounded by those similar to them, and away from discrimination, and so may opt for special schools. It is not uncommon for Roma children in 'regular mainstream schools' to be ignored by teachers or left without help, especially with large class sizes. Thus, parents' choices can make it harder for authorities and schools to overcome segregation in education (Amnesty International, 2015).

Although parental consent for whether a child should go to a special school has been an improved step in improving access to quality education, it has not significantly decreased the number of children in special schools. Pressures from not only schools but also social workers can force Roma parents to give consent for their children to be sent to special schools. Therefore, parents are faced with a dilemma on whether to send their child to a regular school, where their child will be bullied and isolated due to schools not adjusting to the child's social and cultural differences, or to a special school, where the child feels less of an outsider as there will be many more Roma children around. Additionally, special schools can be more accommodating financially as regular schools can require money every year on fees or school equipment while special schools can cost almost nothing. Moreover, special schools may be much closer to homes or even have a school bus to collect children, thus encouraging enrolment in special schools (Amnesty International, 2015).

Additionally, it can be the Roma children who ask their parents to be sent to the special schools due to racial bullying. Parents that succeed in registering their children into a mainstream mixed schools have complained to teachers and school directors that teachers do not stop their children from being bullied. Many children would be called names like “gypsy” and “dirty”, and so parents would voluntarily send their children to special schools. An example of discrimination is the situation of Karel and Jana, brother and sister living in the city of České Budějovice. Their primary school had only one other Roma student in the 8th grade, while Karel was in the 5th grade and Jana in the 3rd. Karel recalled that his sister experienced severe bullying as “they were pushing her around, they called her black mouth, [told her] she didn’t know anything, that she looked disgusting... they did everything on purpose. They hid her shoes... it was snowing so I had to bring her home on my back.” Jana would then throw hysterical fits just to avoid going to school as she was too afraid to go. Karel complained about the bullying but said that the help he hoped for did not come as the school director would not listen. So he decided to deal with it himself and fight them, although he was the only one who got told off for fighting. He even stated that teachers would complain as they would not bring lunches and that their clothes were torn. He and his sister then stopped attending school and their grades dropped. The school director denied all the allegations of bullying and stated that “the class treated [Karel] really nice... Initially there weren’t any problems with him, later he became aggressive... It was probably due to his family situation.” When asked about Jana, the director stated that she “did not fit in.” The children stayed for another year but had stopped going to classes, due to their difficulties at school and possibly at home. A local charity attempted to help by mediating between the family, the school and social services, yet one of their workers stated that: “the chances of a child who is significantly different [by its background] to the rest of the pupils succeeding at a given school are low.” However, due to too many unauthorised absences, which amounted to

an offence under Czech law that can lead to a withdrawal of custody rights of the legal guardians or parents, the social services stepped in and Karel and Jana were taken away from their family and put in a children's home (Amnesty International, 2015).

2. Schools

Some school directors of mainstream schools encouraged Roma parents to enlist their children into special schools as they believed that the children would find them easier and so would be better off as they believed they would not be able to cope with the mainstream schools. This was especially true if a Roma child was under-performing in certain areas, such as with the Czech language. The child would then be sent to a psychological assessment and the parents would then be told that it was necessary to transfer the child to a special school as he/she would find it very difficult to keep up and thus continue failing (Amnesty International, 2015). Some school directors have claimed that this is due to a lack of funding as they lack the resources to provide necessary support to under-performing children. Others have stated that Roma children were not worth the investment and that if they required more time or support then they were better off at practical schools. Therefore, with a lack of support, large numbers of children end up in the special practical schools (EurActiv Czech Republic, 2015).

One of the main factors leading to the under-performance of Roma children has been difficulties with the Czech language. Many families do not have Czech as their native language as they speak Roma or a mix of Roma and Czech at home, or they might even have migrated from other countries, particularly from Slovakia. However, many mainstream schools do not take this into consideration and so do not provide support with the Czech

language. Other factors include social and cultural difficulties of families within their societies, as well as personal problems within families that are not taken into account by the authorities. Efforts have been taken to help combat this problem with community centres running after-school programmes and after-school tutoring to help children with schoolwork. However, there has been a lack of this kind of support by national and local authorities (Amnesty International, 2015).

The use of psychological tests for Roma children is a widespread practice in all four locations that Amnesty visited, where registration into a mainstream school included psychological tests. A common result of these assessments is that the parents are recommended to postpone the child's enrolment into primary school, which the majority of parents do not challenge. One mother tried to enrol her daughter Anička into a local mainstream school, which had already refused her two sons. The school did not want to accept her so the mother went to a social worker for help, and they managed to register her through two visits to a psychologist. They had to prove that Anička could cope with school and the result was that she was smart. However, she was not enrolled into the 1st grade but into a preparatory class, as a way to help children who are not yet considered ready due to their lack of kindergarten attendance. The condition for being placed into a preparatory class under the Schools Act is that the child is from a socially disadvantaged background. One director of a special school in Děčín stated that: "Preparatory classes are the most pro-segregation measure in this society. [As a non-Roma] I can't enrol my child into a preparatory class as I'm not socially disadvantaged." As a result, preparatory classes are almost entirely made up of Roma children, whose primary education can be postponed by up to two years (Amnesty International, 2015).

Some school directors have agreed about the incompetent system that exists and state that the biggest problem is funding for support measures. Some schools around the Czech Republic have stated that their programmes' funding come from special projects and EU funds, and not the state. Thus, individual integration of Roma children becomes harder as their needs are not taken into consideration by the funding system (Amnesty International, 2015).

3. Governmental efforts

Discrimination of Roma in the education system has been noticed and recognised by the EU, leading to the European Commission to start infringement proceedings against the Czech government for violating the EU's anti-discrimination legislation in September 2014. The goal is to make the government propose new and effective reforms in its educational system, such as ending separate educational programmes for children as well as strengthen available funding in order to help and support children that are under-performing in mainstream schools. Such reforms have still not come into effect. However, looking into the past for guidance may not be the best way to find solutions as previous reforms have not been effective in tackling the problem as they had failed due to bad designs – most likely due to not being designed to be effective and due to lack of acknowledgement of prejudices against Roma, leading to exclusion of Roma children from mainstream schools (Romea, 2015).

Solutions

There has been a call for the government to adopt a new principle of 'money follows the child' into its educational funding policies. According to this principle, funding is per-individual and thus varies according to the individual's needs and goals. As a way to reform the current Schools Act, this amendment aims at setting support measures to students that

have 'special educational needs', so that they can be more equal regarding their right to education. It, therefore, encourages integration rather than segregation as regular schools can become more open to students with diverse educational needs. This amendment was adopted on the 13th of February 2015 by the Czech Parliament's lower chamber, and is expected to come into force on the 1st of September 2016. The amendment had garnered many supporters, yet concern has been raised about whether it can be implemented effectively due to inadequate financing regulations (Amnesty International, 2015).

NGOs have been doing a good job in helping students and their parents in dealing with learning difficulties and admission to mainstream schools. However, many believe that this responsibility and work should be held by the government. And not only reforms, but proper enforcements of them have to also be introduced. Discrimination such as telling a Roma child's parent that the class is full and yet admitting non-Roma children should be monitored and stopped as it only increases segregation. With a monitoring actor or inspector, if a school or local authority is found to be segregating and discriminating, then the government should impose sanctions. Accountability for such discrimination ranges from classmates, school staff, and local authorities to the government, ministry of education, and even the Prime minister. The Chief of Amnesty International has also stated that in the Czech Republic education is so inter-related with other sectors that by tackling and effectively dealing with discrimination in education can one directly and indirectly find better results in sectors such as employment, housing and health care (EurActiv Czech Republic, 2015).

Another possible solution that can be used to tackle prejudices is through spokespeople. Having public figures speak about the problem of racial prejudice can help overcome some

people's denial of a problem regarding access to quality education. Having Roma spokespeople can help overcome stereotypes associated with Roma. Success and failure stories can help paint a different picture than the one that exists in many people's minds (EurActiv Czech Republic, 2015).

Furthermore, ethnic diversity should be recognised in school curriculums. The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that education should develop respect for human rights, with Article 29 stating that education should be directed to: "respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own" (UN General Assembly, 1989). A majority of the schools that Amnesty visited in 2014 did not have any classes or teaching of Roma history or culture in their curriculums. Only one textbook on civil education for children in the 8th grade mentioned two ethnic minorities living in the Czech Republic: Jews and Roma. The Jewish minority was summarised as a minority that contributed to the country's culture, art and science. And while it mentioned that Jews were victims of the Nazi Holocaust during World War II, one of the worst racist crimes in world history, Roma were however construed as people who "came from India hundreds of years ago when they had started their journey around the world. With horses harnessed into carriages, they moved from one place to another and because they differed from the Europeans by the colour of their skin and their lifestyle, they were viewed with distrust and hostility" (Amnesty International, 2015).

Besides, Czech Republic not including Roma's history and cultural heritage in its education makes it fall short of its international responsibilities and standards. According to the UN

Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, its 26th General Recommendation states that the Czech Republic should: “include in textbooks, at all appropriate levels, chapters about the history and culture of Roma, and encourage and support the publication and distribution of books and other print materials as well as the broadcasting of television and radio programmes, as appropriate, about their history and culture, including in languages spoken by them” (UN CERD, 2000). Moreover, the Council of Europe has also declared that the inclusion of Roma culture and history in curriculums will bring about a “better understanding of culture [that] is necessary to fight stereotypes” (Farkas, 2014). Such standards are not upheld by the Czech government, as Amnesty realised when analysing seven educational programmes and finding only one that contained Roma fairy tales in the curriculum of Czech language (Amnesty International, 2015).

Access to Tertiary Education

Introduction

Tertiary education, also known as Higher education, includes higher professional schools and higher education institutions that can be either university or non-university types. Higher professional schools provides the needed qualifications for demanding technical activities and do not require a university degree. Once finished, students receive the title of DiS. (specialist with a diploma), and there are around 164 of these schools. Higher education institutions offer tertiary education at three levels: Bachelor programmes, Master programmes, and Doctoral programmes. There are 39 higher education establishments in the Czech Republic, and most of the university-type of institutions are divided into faculties (Embassy of the Czech Republic, 2016).

For those Roma students that do finish high school, there is now the problem of access to higher education. Especially for the Roma minority, higher education can be a way to integrate into society through opportunities in employment, health care and housing, which is something the EU and its Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has been working on. The FRA has tried to measure Roma's access to universities through their drop-out rates as well as their attainment rates in entering higher education (FRA, 2012).

The international and joint 2011 survey by the FRA, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank (WB) researched the social situation of Roma in Europe and collected statistical data on the number of Roma in education and their attainment

and drop-out rates. Their findings showed that school attainment is very low, drop-out rates are high, and that a large number of Roma do not even go to higher education. Starting with compulsory school for children aged 7-15, 4% of Roma did not attend schools, compared to 3% for non-Roma. This gap increased as age increased, with only 30% of Roma between 20-24 having finished either general or vocational upper-secondary education, compared to 82% for non-Roma. Therefore, without having finished this level of education, Roma students may have doors open for them to enter higher education but lack the requisites to enter this tertiary education. Without higher education, Roma find it harder to find skilled employment and so their employment opportunities stay low (FRA, 2012).

Impact of segregated schools

Unfortunately, entering university is much easier if children attend high school and a mainstream primary school. Roma children that study at segregated special schools are later told that it is impossible to get into a school that offers the *maturita* – the required qualifications for university entrance. And so, many end up going to vocational schools and do not reach tertiary education. Poor quality of primary school education has a number of negative consequences as it is linked with unequal opportunities regarding future education, employment and growth as an individual. Some of the teachers of the so-called “Roma schools” have admitted and acknowledged the fact that the children there learn very little. A teaching assistant said that “there are pupils in 6th grade who cannot read and write.” (Amnesty International, 2015).

The quality of education can be properly examined by looking at the future paths that graduates take. Segregated schools have had a negative effect on their students’ future

educations, despite their claims of being more helpful for Roma and their approach to individualised teaching. One segregated school in Brno, where 80% of the students were Roma, had none of its graduates go to a gymnasium in the academic year of 2013 – 2014. 5 of them went to a regular high school, 7 went to a vocational school, 2 finished their full-time education, and 7 enrolled to a training to complete primary education, which is offered to those who finish their primary education earlier than in the 9th grade. These last 7 students are an example of those students in segregated schools who fail to complete primary education. (The number in the academic year of 2009 – 2010 was 18.) A similar sized school in Brno that was not ethnically segregated had 1 of its graduates go to a gymnasium, 17 to a regular high school, 3 to a vocational school, and only 1 not finish primary education. Another school in Brno that can be compared has two buildings – 1 mixed and 1 only for Roma – where from the mixed building, 3 continued at a gymnasium, 19 at a high school, and 20 at a vocational school. From the Roma-only building, there were no graduates. Moreover, a significant number of the students transferred to a different school at the end of the year. Thus, it is no surprise that the number of Roma in higher education is low and that their drop-out rates are high, as the roots of their problems go all the way back to their poor quality primary education (Amnesty International, 2015).

Factors that improve access to higher education

Universities generally have set-up special programmes and subsidies from the state budget for students with special educational needs. Socially disadvantaged students can receive support by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, or directly by the university in the form of stipends or provisions, thus improving one's access to higher education. Moreover, studying at a state university in Czech is free of charge, no matter one's nationality or citizenship, which can essentially help Roma students in enrolling and studying (Katzorova et al., 2008).

Even the EU has stated the need to improve access to higher education, particularly for minorities, in order to achieve greater growth. Thus, public investments into higher education has become a priority of the EU, with an emphasis that a Higher Education Access Policy Agenda should use the public financing as effectively as possible. With the 'Europe 2020 Strategies', the EU is aiming at decreasing school drop-out rates as well as introduce new school programmes and activities to encourage children to stay in school (Veugelers, 2011). However, this can only apply to those Roma students that meet the requirements necessary for tertiary education. Thus, improving access to higher education should come hand-in-hand with improving access to primary and secondary education.

Political action

With discrimination and racial prejudice from a very early age, many Roma students lack the necessities to enter higher education and fulfil their potential. A solution to this can be political action. Roma students and families can rightfully claim that they are disadvantaged and gain support for the government to take action. However, as evidenced in the past and in other countries with minorities, minority groups are typically passive when it comes to politics, leading to a lower political participation. One reason for this can be their perceived view that they do not have any power and thus cannot do anything to improve their conditions. Their low educational attainment, or even poverty, can give them a feeling that political participation in decisions that can affect their lives is unattainable and far-fetched. Moreover, even if some of them did want to change the education system and improve access to not only higher education but also primary and secondary schools, the Czech government can just ignore their pressures due to their small numbers and minority status. Continued efforts and lack of results can lead to feelings of defeat and ultimately into acceptance of their disadvantaged access into education. This is further emphasised with the very low number of

Roma recorded in the Czech Republic's 2011 census, leading to less political power for the minority group and thus less motivation to participate politically (Fischer et al., 2007).

On the other hand, activist groups and NGOs do participate politically on behalf of minorities such as with Roma in the Czech Republic. Their efforts can garner public support, which can lead to reforms in education. NGOs and civil society organisations can press for greater access for minorities, and with greater numbers their causes can be heard and prioritised by the population and policy makers. Discrimination can be fought by activists and, through local, national and international pressures, by the government, which can ultimately improve access for Roma in education (Fischer et al., 2007).

Conclusion

To conclude, the issue of improving access of Roma to tertiary education and especially primary and secondary education in the Czech Republic is not an issue that is to be taken lightly. Higher education not only improves a person's chances for paid and skilled employment but also reduces the risk of social exclusion. Roma in the Czech Republic may have decreased in number over the past 20 years but their access to primary, secondary and tertiary education has not improved. With their low rates of completion of general or vocational upper-secondary education, a pre-requisite for attending higher education, their opportunities for skilled employment is low.

Moreover, with an over-representation of Roma children in ‘special practical schools’, Roma children are segregated from an early age regarding their education and future educational opportunities. Yet, due to pressures from schools, social workers and local authorities, as well as bullying towards their children, Roma parents are forced to comply with their recommendations to escape the mainstream schools’ racial bullying by both students and teachers. Special schools become places where Roma children do not feel ostracised and can receive greater attention from teachers. However, when it comes to graduating from these schools, it becomes difficult to enter and complete secondary education as special schools have reduced curricula with teaching slowed down for the “mentally disabled.” Therefore, with low rates of completion of general or vocational upper-secondary education, only a small amount of Roma students have access to higher education. Without a proper completion of a secondary education – a pre-requisite for attending higher education – the Roma students’ educational opportunities are severely limited, which not only adversely affects their opportunities in skilled employment but also regarding quality housing and health care. It is up to the government to fight this racial prejudice and introduce and implement effective policies and monitoring methods to deter local schools and authorities from discriminating. Only through an improvement in access to primary education for Roma can access to higher education be improved.

4. Czech Legal Framework

Perceptions of public

Sometimes not everyone in a society will be in favour of improving human rights protection, such as access to education for the Roma populations. Or, conversely, people may want to increase the number of Roma in education but lack the power to force their government to do something. Regarding the state, in all nations there will be social groups that will be unable to influence the decisions of another group. Therefore, even if a group has the power to make a decision that affects others, the others may have very little power to influence those decisions that are made on their behalf or even against their interests. This can be seen in sectors such as in health, and particularly in education. Children as minors have very little power to influence the state's decisions and policies on education. Ethnic minorities such as the Roma minority can also face a similar challenge as their status as minorities gives them little power to influence not only the state's policies but also the majority's decisions. There do exist groups that can work and talk on behalf of the minorities in order to give them more power, yet there can be a problem when the minorities are construed as being totally helpless. This can lead to a reluctance for help from minorities. This then leads to them not registering themselves as Roma in surveys or national censuses, leading the government to believe there is much less of them than there really is (Fischer et al., 2007).

The Roma population can even face problems when the majority of the population is against improving access to education for them. Big groups can prevent minorities' groups from advancing further and gaining more power, thus creating a power imbalance in the policy

process. Countries that have little state provision of services in areas like education, health care, employment or housing tend to overlook these areas as rights on their agendas, when compared to countries with a high participation of states in these areas. This can be due to different societal and cultural values across the countries, such as the US political system resting more on cultural values of self-reliance rather than state provision. This limits the state's power in improving access to education for minorities, and means that the minorities have to look at individual schools and universities in order to achieve their goals. This of course can then lead to an indirect effect on discouraging Roma from entering public higher education (Fischer et al., 2007).

Another problem that the Roma can face is that they may not want to use their power on the policies of the state. They could rightfully claim that they are disadvantaged and yet be passive when it comes to politics, which in turn will lead to their lower political participation. One reason for this can be their perceived view that they do not have any power and thus cannot do anything to improve their conditions. Their low educational attainment, or even poverty, can give them a feeling that political participation in decisions that can affect their lives is pointless, unattainable and far-fetched. Moreover, even if some of them did want to change the system and get into higher education, the state or big organisations can just ignore their pressures due to their small numbers and minority status. This lack of results can lead to feelings of defeat and later into acceptance of their disadvantaged access into education. This is further emphasised with the very low number of Roma recorded in the Czech Republic's 2001 census, leading to less political power for the minority group and thus less motivation for participate politically (Fischer et al., 2007).

It is not all pessimistic as activist groups on behalf of minorities can lead to reforms in education. NGOs and civil society organisations can press for greater access for minorities, and with greater numbers their causes can be heard and prioritised by the population and policy makers. Furthermore, NGOs can be seen as policy designers since their work also involves researching, formulating and designing policies. Therefore, with more activist approaches by NGO's minorities can look for improvement in their access to education (Fischer et al., 2007).

2004 Education Act

In the Czech Republic, there has not been made any substantial progress towards eliminating the discrimination towards Roma and their segregation in public spheres of society, such as education. However, in 2004, the Czech government recognised the large numbers of Roma children in schools meant for children with mental disabilities and so initiated a legal reform that would abolish these schools – a new Education Act (Amnesty International, 2015).

However, under Section 16 of the Education Act of 2004, it states that schools could “open an individual class, department or study group with adjusted educational programmes,” thus allowing special schools to get rid of the label from their name and continue with what they were doing (Czech Republic, 2004).

D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic

In November 2007, the European Court of Human Rights (European Court) saw the trial of *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*, where 18 Czech students of Roma descent from the city of Ostrava in the Czech Republic brought their case to the Strasbourg court. They had

first sent their case on the 14th of April, 2000, making them between 9 and 15 years old at the time of the application. They complained that from 1996 to 1999 they had been assigned to “special schools” for children with learning difficulties, with the decision to place them in these schools made by the head teacher on the basis of a psychological examination, with the consent of the child's parent or guardian. They argued that they received inferior education based on a diluted and reduced curriculum, and that their treatment amounted to discrimination that violated Article 14 (Non-discrimination) in conjunction with Article 2 of Protocol 1 (Education) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as their right to education had been denied (ERRC, 2015). As well, they argued that their segregation was so bad that it amounted to degrading treatment which breached Article 3 (Inhuman/Degrading treatment) of the ECHR. And lastly, they argued that the lack of adequate judicial review of the decision to assign them to “special schools” violated the right to a fair trial in Article 6 (Fair trial) of the ECHR (Open Society Foundations, 2012).

Extensive research into the case revealed that Roma children were systematically assigned to these segregated schools based on their racial or ethnic identity rather than intellectual abilities. Statistics used for the case showed that in the year of 1999, over half of Roma children in Ostrava were placed in “special schools”; as a result, over half the students in these schools were Roma. Moreover, any randomly chosen Roma child would be more than 27 times more likely to be placed in a special school than a non-Roma child. Thus, once Roma children fell into this sub-standard education, they had small chances in entering higher education or finding stable employment (Open Society Foundations, 2012).

However, on the 7th of February 2006, the Court ruled that although the applicants had serious arguments, there was no violation. The students then petitioned for a referral of the case on the 5th of May 2006 to the Grand Chamber of the European Court, with the request being granted on the 2nd of July 2006. The oral argument before the Grand Chamber took place on the 2nd of January 2007, with Anthony Lester QC, James A. Goldston, and David Strupek arguing on behalf of the applicants. Finally, on the 13th of November 2007, the Grand Chamber ruled in favour of the applicants with 13 votes to 4, as they found a violation in the ECHR and that the applicants had suffered discrimination when denied their right to education (Open Society Foundations, 2012).

It was the first time that the European Court had found a violation with Article 14 of the ECHR regarding racial discrimination in a specific sphere of life – in this case public primary schools. It therefore emphasised that the ECHR addresses not only specific acts of discrimination, but also systemic practices that refuse the enjoyment of rights to racial or ethnic groups. Moreover, the Court clarified that racial segregation does amount to discrimination that breaches Article 14 of ECHR. Furthermore, the Court pointed out that Czech Republic is not the only country with a persistent problem in providing equal access to education for Roma children. The European Court stated that discriminatory obstructions to education for Roma children exists in a number of countries throughout Europe (ERRC, 2015). What is more, the European Court explicitly accepted the principle of indirect discrimination, stating that a *prima facie*³ allegation of discrimination would shift the

³ *Prima facie* is a legal term that means that something is accepted as correct until proven otherwise. It refers to a lawsuit or criminal prosecution in which the evidence before trial is sufficient to prove the case (unless there is substantial contradictory evidence presented at trial). It is Latin for “at first look” or “on its face.” (Law.com, 2016).

responsibility to the defendant state to prove that any difference in treatment is not discriminatory (Open Society Foundations, 2012).

As a result, the Czech Republic had to adopt “general and/or, if appropriate, individual measures” in order to end the discrimination against the Roma population in its education system. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe was put in charge of making sure the European Court’s decision of ending the violation found by the Court was implemented. The Committee of Ministers have met in June 2009 but decided that they needed more information regarding the impact of the 2004 Education Act in practice. They considered the case in December 2010 and reviewed the progress of implementation in June 2011. However, since the 2007 ruling they have received five memos stating that segregation is still continuing, with special schools containing around 30% of Roma and only 2% of non-Roma students. Moreover, the memos noted that the Czech government’s laws were not adequate enough in tackling the issue as they have had very little effects (Open Society Foundations, 2012).

This landmark ruling in 2007 recognised the serious issue of discrimination of Roma and urged the Czech government to reform its educational system, which led to the Czech authorities initiating a slow process of reform that focused on increasing the safeguards around parental consent for placing Roma children in special schools. In addition, reforms were made regarding procedures in diagnosing children for these schools. Yet, these reforms were unable to significantly decrease Roma children’s over-representation in special schools and educational programmes aimed for children with mental disabilities (Amnesty International, 2015). As of 2014, around 32.4% of children in special schools in the Czech

Republic were Roma, while Roma represented about 1.4 to 2.8% of the Czech population (Public Defender of Rights, 2012). The Czech government has however stated that this actually represents progress as in the year 2012 Roma children made up 35% of children in special schools (Amnesty International, 2015). Nevertheless, the Czech School Inspectorate has stated that the numbers collected in 2012 and 2014 were collected using different methods and thus are incomparable (Czech School Inspectorate, 2015).

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe has noted that segregation still exists in the Czech Republic, despite the 2007 ruling, and has stated that it is the practical schools in the country that “perpetuate segregation of Roma children, inequality and racism. They should be phased out and replaced by mainstream schools that need to be properly prepared to host and provide support to all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic origin. There are certain examples in the country that show the feasibility of this necessary paradigm shift, which will require the government’s political will and sustained commitment.” Moreover, the Commissioner has said that this reform will require sufficient budgetary resources to be allocated to the issue (Farkas, 2014).

Positive Measures

Due to the judgement of the European Court in 2007, the Czech government had implemented a National Action Plan for Inclusive Education in 2010. The goal of this plan has been to reform the country’s educational system, with special attention on diagnosis and counselling centres. It realised the need for inclusive education for all students, and aimed to introduce new measures to help students with various needs including with mainstream schools. This was then followed by the government approving amendments to two decrees in 2011 that

dealt with counselling services in schools and the education of children with special educational needs. Thus, from the 1st of September 2011, all students and their legal guardians had to be notified of the nature and purpose of counselling services. Moreover, for a student to be put into a school or class intended for those with disabilities had to first receive a recommendation for it by a counselling centre, a talk with the legal guardian, and the student's consent. Although these amendments implicitly state that those with no mental disabilities could not be put into special schools, it fails to explicitly demand local authorities to educate students regardless of their socially disadvantaged status, such as Roma students, in mainstream schools (Amnesty International, 2015). Furthermore, the amendments do not address the issue that the educational system is often incapable of differentiating between the needs of socially disadvantaged students and the needs of those with mental disabilities (Czech School Inspectorate, 2015).

In September 2011, the Czech government ratified a Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion 2011-2015, which covers the areas of security, housing, social services, employment, regional development, and education. It recognises the problem of mainstream education lacking the ability to keep in it a number of specific groups of students, who are then susceptible to inadequate education due to exposure to segregation. Some of its goals included ambitious plans such as gradually removing practical schools. Interestingly, the Strategy acknowledged that changing any complex system will be fraught with local and temporary tensions, where those that are part of the pedagogic public that work in special education, as well as those working in mainstream education, will reject and protest such reforms due to fears for losing their jobs and children and due to fears of an inflow of children, respectively. The Strategy also acknowledges that a part of the general public will also most certainly reject such reforms due to the perceived threat of having “socially disadvantaged children or culturally diverse

children in the group with their own children.” Thus, reforms should be explained, parents should be included in local solutions within schools or towns, and there should be set aside adequate public resources for pre-school, primary and secondary education, as all levels of education impact each other (Šimůnková and Šimáček, 2011). Unfortunately, just like with 2010 National Action Plan for Inclusive Education, this Strategy was very underfunded and thus was never implemented (Amnesty International, 2015).

Implementation of D.H. Judgement

Due to constant criticisms by the Committee of Minister for the slow speed of the implementation of the D.H. judgement, in June 2012 the Czech government was urged to submit a Consolidated Action Plan, with a clear medium and short-term strategy for the implementation of its measures. Thus, in November 2012, the Czech government submitted such a Plan, which included measures that would remove the “possibility for pupils without a disability to be educated in a class teaching a reduced curriculum (designed for pupils with mild mental disabilities); and the collection of statistical data – disaggregated by ethnicity – concerning pupils being educated in programmes for pupils with mild mental disabilities.” However, this Plan was met with criticisms, with Amnesty International finding the implementation of this Plan to be inadequate due to lack of details regarding how Roma students would be included into mainstream education, its ambiguity regarding the phasing out of practical schools, as well as its inadequate resources for effective monitoring and support for Roma students (Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers, 2013).

Moreover, in 2012 the Czech Ombudsman oversaw its own research into special schools during debates over reforms in the educational system, and found evidence of indirect

discrimination of Roma students in education. However, steps taken by the Czech Ombudsman and the Czech School Inspectorate have been persistently criticised by the Association of Special Teachers – not a professional organisation but rather a voluntary movement created in order to fight reforms in the special school educational system. The association wishes to maintain the current system, and thus fights against efforts to stop educating mentally not disabled children in special schools as they maintain that children moved from special schools to mainstream schools will necessarily fail. Nevertheless, sociologists have warned that if such segregation continues in special schools, the Czech Republic will encounter a future with segregated primary schools where there will be exclusively Roma and exclusively non-Roma schools, unless racism in the country can be tackled (Farkas, 2014).

Due to the unsuccessful efforts of the 2012 Action Plan, the Czech government replaced it in February 2015 with a Revised Action Plan that would amend the Education Act of 2004 in order to ensure the “maximum achievable... education in mainstream schools for all pupils.” The Plan would also further improve the Czech School Inspectorate’s monitoring of counselling centres and psychological assessment centres, make the last year of kindergarten compulsory for all children, and abolish educational programmes for students with mild mental disabilities so that they can be better integrated into mainstream schools, with proper funding to help accommodate extra educational needs. This reform has been planned to be implemented in September 2016 (Amnesty International, 2015).

The Amendment to the Education Act however has already been approved by the Chamber of Deputies, and has already been met with quite some controversy. The amendment steps away

from focusing on diagnoses and introduces support measures for all students in mainstream education so that even mildly disabled children can enter mainstream schools. Nevertheless, it will be up to the local authorities to use these support measures and find more funding to make sure the system can function properly. However, those against the amendment state that it still does not explicitly address the issue of special schools as these schools will most likely not be impacted by the amendment as they have still not been defined in any Czech law, leaving them to operate in a legal vacuum. On the other end of the scale, critiques also include a number of non-Roma parents who are adverse to inclusion of Roma students in mainstream education. Many claim that inclusion has not been properly tested in the Czech Republic and so it will be unknown if it will actually benefit the mildly mentally disabled. They also argue that even having assistants will not bridge the gap between these children and those without disabilities. With the heated debates and discussion over the issue, Minister of Education Kateřina Valachová has stated that this inclusion will be gradual with a two-year process, and will start in September 2016 (Czech News Agency, 2016).

Conclusion

Although the Czech educational system has an over-representation of Roma children in its special schools, and insufficient support measures towards socially disadvantaged groups, it was the 2007 landmark ruling by the European Court that urged the Czech government to deal with the racial discrimination in its country. By focusing on strengthening the measures surrounding diagnostics and psychological assessment centres, as well as parental consent, the educational system saw no significant improvements. It was not until 2011 when the government adopted the Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion that the solution of phasing

out practical schools became an acceptable solution. However, with insufficient funding, such a plan could not be implemented and special schools have continued the segregation of Roma students. Yet, there might be real change with the recent 2015 amendment to the 2004 Education Act as greater inclusion of Roma students can help the country, and the government, tackle its problems with racial segregation in its educational system. Only time will tell how much of a real impact these new reforms will have, and whether they can positively affect the needs of Roma children.

5. Conclusion

Despite the unsuccessful attempts at dealing with its country's discrimination, the Czech government has devised the 2015 revised Action Plan which includes an amendment to the 2004 Education Plan that would create greater inclusion of students into mainstream schools. And although this amendment has started great controversy among parents and local authorities over the benefits of such a law, the results of this amendment will be visible only after its formal implementation this September. And although it will be a gradual process, greater research can then be done regarding special schools and the over-representation of Roma children in them. With greater inclusion at a primary school level, Roma children will have greater chances for future educational opportunities, which can improve their chances for paid and skilled employment as well as reduce their risk of social exclusion. Special schools have become a space for segregation, as evidenced by many of them being known as Roma schools due to the high numbers of Roma present in them. Thus, it is up to the Czech government to fight the racial prejudice by introducing and implementing effective policies to improve the monitoring and abolition of discrimination, especially in regards to special schools. Moreover, educating the people of reforms and supporting all children in their pursuit of quality education can ultimately reduce the Czech Republic's discrimination towards Roma, so that their human rights can finally be more adequately and effectively protected.

6. Abstract

The thesis will look at the how effective human rights protection can be, and especially regarding the Roma population in the Czech Republic. As there is a huge number of human rights, this thesis will focus on the right to education. Moreover, the case study of this thesis is the Roma population in the Czech Republic, therefore the rights and livelihoods of the Roma population will be analysed, examined and evaluated in this country.

The thesis will also look at four hypotheses and try to find out if there really exists discrimination in the country, and to what extent; whether religion has an effect towards perceptions towards Roma; whether longer education changes one's attitudes towards Roma; and whether a communist past correlates with greater discrimination.

But most importantly, this thesis will look at the right to education and the access to education for Roma students. Education is such an important human right as it has long-term effects in Roma's employment, health care and housing opportunities. Therefore, the Czech educational system will be analysed in regards to the socially disadvantaged group of the Roma population.

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