

ROMA IN SLOVAKIA – IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET OUT OF THIS VICIOUS CIRCLE?

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Abstract: Not only among the lay public, but also among experts and scientific researchers who deal with the life of Roma in Slovakia, there is a prevailing opinion that if we wanted to characterize the situation of Roma in Slovakia in one sentence, we would say that it is bad and is constantly getting worse. The presented article aims to implicitly and explicitly show the causes of the current situation by evaluating selected aspects of the life of the Roma ethnic population in Slovakia. We pay attention to the following phenomena: the development of the number of the Roma population, the spatial distribution of the Roma population, the employment of the Roma population in the past and the problems of their employment today, state measures aimed at improving the life of the Roma population and selected problematic phenomena associated with the Roma population. The explanation of these phenomena makes it possible to understand the unflattering state of the Roma population in Slovakia to a large extent. In the article, we do not consider it necessary to devote a separate chapter to research methodology. Standard statistical and cartographic methods of geographical research and critical evaluation of published works are used here.

Keywords: Roma, Roma population, number and distribution of the Roma population, employment of Roma, measures of the state, improvement of living conditions

1 INTRODUCTION

The main reason for writing this article is best described by the opening sentence of the article by Mušíňka and Kolesárová (2012): “If we had to characterize the situation of the Roma in Slovakia in one sentence, we would say that it is bad and is constantly getting worse”. However, we accept that the reader who looks at the title of this article will probably sigh: “Again about the Roma in Slovakia and what to do with them?” And that sigh is not surprising when we realize these three facts:

1. From the first professional (scientific) work on the Hungarian Roma (and thus also on the Roma in Slovakia), which was published at the end of the

18th century, “Gypsies in Hungary. About today’s state, special manners and way of life, as well as about other characteristics of Gypsies in Hungary”, the author of which is Augustini ab Hortis and was published in a Slovak translation in 1995 (the original text was published as a continuation in the years 1775-1776 in the magazine *Kaiserlich Königlich allergnädigste Anzeigen aus sämtlichen König. Erbländer*), until the study, which was published at the end of 2022, “The Roma have been in Slovakia for 700 years; their number, distribution and relationship to selected social phenomena” (Korec et al., 2022), countless (thousands?) of scientific and professional articles, scientific and professional monographs, research papers, popular science studies and monographs, scientific collections were published, popularizing articles and works of a different kind, which, among other things, try to show how to improve the life of Roma in Slovakia and how to integrate them into society. A remarkable comprehensive summary report on Roma in Slovakia was published in 2002 (Vaščka ed., 2002). Authors of a large number of works dedicated to the Roma in Slovakia, such as Horváthová E., Vaščka M., Jurová A., Mušinka A., Vaňo B., Džambazovič R., Mann A., Matlovičová K. and many others can safely be described as experienced “romists” in the context of issues related to the Roma community in Slovakia.

2. From the first regulation issued by the Austro-Hungarian empress Maria Theresa in 1761, “Regulations on the method of emancipation of Gypsies”, the ultimate goal of which was to quickly assimilate Gypsies with other subjects and improve their lives, to the “Strategy of equality, inclusion and participation Roma by 2030”, which was adopted by the government of the Slovak Republic in 2021 (this strategy elaborates on 5 priority areas, education, housing, employment, health and the fight against anti-Roma racism and the promotion of participation), was issued in the past 260 years during the time of Austria-Hungary, the First Czechoslovak Republic, the communist Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the independent Slovak Republic more than a hundred laws, regulations, decrees, concepts and other binding documents aimed at improving the life of Roma in Slovakia and their integration into society.
3. We know practically everything about the Roma in Slovakia. We know how many there are, we know where they live, we know what conditions they live in, we know what their demographic behaviour is, we know what their relationship is to individual social and economic phenomena, we know a lot about their culture and values, and we also know a lot of other facts about them. Experts and politicians from the level of communes, districts and regions, through the level of the government to the level of the European Union, express themselves very critically about the conditions in which the Roma live, but also about the ongoing problem of their integration into society. And of course everyone says that we must finally do something about this situation.

So, it is understandable that the question stated at the beginning of the work seems appropriate. It would be expected that after such a broad, intensive and long-term effort dedicated to improving the life of the Roma in Slovakia, the Roma should live significantly better than 260 years ago. The opposite seems to be true. Due to the rapid growth of their number and share of the total population of Slovakia, the living conditions of a large part of the Roma (means of livelihood, housing, hygiene, education, relationship with the majority population, etc.) rather worsened.

So there are many reasons for us to write and try to publish an article where we would at least partially clarify why the life/position of the Roma in Slovakia is not improving. Before we explicitly state the goals we are pursuing by writing it, we would like to point out one more fact. The fact that the situation of a large part of Roma/inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity in Slovakia practically does not improve after the Second World War is, in our opinion, if we leave aside the perhaps not the best approaches of the state, regional and local institutions, a consequence of these three facts.

The first is the fact that social development after the Second World War, especially the development of the economy (industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, later mechanization/robotization, computerization, globalization and others), "took away" from the Roma their traditional professions, which they were able to support themselves for a long time. The second fact is the rapid growth of their number and share of the total population of Slovakia, with their current high concentration in selected regions, which, according to several authors, increases their resistance to external influences and thus makes it difficult for them to integrate into the economy and social life of the region and the state. And the third fact that must be mentioned and respected is the unprecedented strength with which the Roma "cling" to their traditional way of life, to their culture and values, which ultimately affects their ongoing way of life.

Today we know very well that the Roma communities in Slovakia are clearly a very numerous group that is most threatened by poverty and marginalization. The unpleasant fact is that they have to face multiple disadvantages for a long time, which are mainly defined by generational poverty, low social status and social exclusion, the level of housing and hygiene and the resulting physical exclusion, cultural and language barriers, the level of education, discrimination, hidden racism and others (Horváthová, 1994; Jurová, 2000; Matlovič, 2005; Džambazović and Gerbery, 2012; Jancura, 2016; Ravasz et al., 2020 and others).

The basic objectives of this article can be summarized as follows. The main goal is to strongly warn all relevant public institutions, from the government level to the local authorities that it cannot remain like this any longer. We live in the 21st century, Slovakia is a member of the European Union and is among the economically advanced states of the world with a democratic constitution. Respecting some unfavourable circumstances, such as high number of Roma ethnic population and their large concentration in selected regions, the current unfavourable situation must be significantly improved within a certain time horizon. The second goal of the art-

icle is to implicitly and explicitly show the causes of the current situation by evaluating selected aspects of the life of the Roma ethnic population in Slovakia. Given the possibilities of this article, it cannot be expected that there will be any comprehensive exhaustive in-depth analysis of the life of the Roma population, we will focus on, in our opinion, important phenomena that will allow a better understanding of the current situation.

According to several authors, the first written document about the Roma in Slovakia is a document from 1322, in which the appearance of Roma in Spiš is mentioned by Ján Kunch, the mayor of Spišská Nová Ves. Kunch wrote in the local chronicle that some new people are roaming in the surrounding forests on the property of the Mariássy family, who are black, unkempt and move in larger groups (Horváthová, 1964; Matlovičová et al., 2012, Korec et al., 2022). In the second half of the 18th century, the favourable policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II also contributed to the large concentration of Roma in Central and Southeastern Europe (Horváthová, 1964; Fonsecaová, 1999; Mann, 2000; Podolák, 2000; Matlovič, 2005 and others). In our opinion, natural conditions probably also contributed to the high concentration of Roma in Slovakia. The Carpathian Mountains and its basins in contact with the lowlands suited the Roma not only in terms of their nomadic way of life, but also in terms of the means of ensuring their livelihood and the possibility of settling.

The current situation of the Roma population, especially in Eastern Europe, can only be properly understood in a historical context, as a result of continuous development over several centuries. As Hancock (2005, p. 71-72) says, it is easy to negatively perceive the sad state of today's Roma, their life in ghettos, begging, high unemployment and crime. However, it is necessary to ask yourself a question. What series of events since the arrival of the Roma in Europe has brought the current Roma population to its current unflattering state? During the past more than 800 years, many laws, decrees, resolutions and regulations were adopted in European countries, which negatively affected the life and emancipation of Roma in Europe. From their excommunication from the church in 1427 to the approach taken by the former socialist Czechoslovakia, when the Roma were not recognized as a national minority, the Roma had to endure many hardships (Horváthová, 1964; Jurová, 2002; Hancock, 2005; Matlovič, 2005; Mušinka and Kolesárová, 2012; Jancura, 2023 and others). Mann (1996) well characterized the period of 40 "socialist" years as a period of deculturation, social and moral retardation of the Roma.

In the article, we do not consider it necessary to devote a separate chapter to research methodology. Standard statistical and cartographic methods of geographical research and critical evaluation of published works are used here.

2 NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF ROMA/INHABITANTS OF THE ROMA ETHNICITY IN SLOVAKIA

Although we wrote in the introduction that about the Roma, or we know everything about the inhabitants of the Roma ethnic group in Slovakia, including how many there are and how they are distributed in Slovakia, we have to specify it a little in this chapter. At the beginning, it should be noted that we consider it important to use the term “Roma” in this chapter when we are talking about the numbers or their distribution according to the results obtained in the official population census and about “inhabitants of Roma ethnicity”, “Roma ethnicity” or “Roma inhabitants”, when we talk about the results of unofficial surveys.

2.1 Number of Roma/inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity in Slovakia

The assessment of the number and development of the number of Roma in Slovakia was complicated by the change in the indication of ethnicity in the official population census, which came into force in the 2021 census. In this census, residents of Slovakia could indicate their first ethnicity as well as their second ethnicity. At the last official population census, when citizens could state only one ethnicity, which was in 2011, 105,738 inhabitants claimed to be Roma, which represented 1.96% of the total population of Slovakia (Table 1). Compared to 2001, there were 15,818 Roma more in Slovakia, and their share in the total population of Slovakia increased from 1.67% to 1.96%. In 1991, the share of Roma was 1.44%, so the growth of the share over the past 20 years can be considered regular. In the census years 1991, 2001 and 2011, the Roma ethnicity was always the third most numerous in Slovakia, after the Slovak and Hungarian ethnicities.

Table 1 Development of the number of Roma and their share in the territory of Slovakia during official population censuses and growth indices in ten-year intervals.

Year	Number	Share in %	Index
1921	8 035	0.25	
1930	31 188	0.90	n**
1991	75 803	1.44	1.161*
2001	89 920	1.67	1.186
2011	105 738	1.96	1.176
2021 1. ethnicity	67 179	1.23	0.635
2021 2. ethnicity	88 985	n**	n**
2021 overall	156 164	2.86	1.477

Source: Horváthová (1964), SOBD 1991, 2001, 2011, 2021

*average growth index for a 10-year period, assuming a 10-year increase of 7,435 Roma

** – the data was not detected

In the official population census in 2021, 67,179 citizens of Slovakia reported Roma ethnicity as their first ethnicity and 88,985 Slovak citizens reported Roma ethnicity as their second. The growth index of Roma 2021/2011 according to registration for the first ethnicity is only 0.635. Together, the first and the second, however, 156,164 claimed Roma ethnicity, the 2021/2011 growth index in this case is 1.477. Both 2021/2011 growth indices, 0.635 – only the first ethnicity and 1.477 – both the first and the second ethnicity, are significantly different from the census trends in 1991, 2001 and 2011 (Table 1).

In our opinion, the official figure for the number of Roma in Slovakia in 2021 should be considered to be 61,179, i.e. the number of Roma who stated their Roma ethnicity first in the order. The 88,985 inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity, who listed their Roma ethnicity as the second in order, should be listed as Slovaks, Hungarians, or Ruthenians, Ukrainians, or another ethnicity, because they listed one of the mentioned ethnicities as their first ethnicity. An interesting paradox emerged from the results of the population census in 2021. Those inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity who considered themselves to be “true” Roma (first ethnicity) are significantly fewer than there were Roma in 2011, on the other hand, those who “felt” like Roma (both first and second ethnicity) are more than they indicated trends from the 1991, 2001 and 2011 censuses.

At the initiative of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma communities, the first general survey after the establishment of the Slovak Republic was carried out already in 2004, which was to map the living conditions of the Roma. “Atlas of Roma communities in Slovakia 2004” was prepared. The subjects of the census were persons who were generally considered to be Roma in the assessed locality. The results were slightly surprising. The authors of the atlas counted 281,379 inhabitants of the Roma ethnic group in Slovakia, which was three times more than those who claimed to be Roma in the official census in 2001. However, according to the authors of the atlas, a certain part of the Roma population was not “captured”, according to their estimates, they lived in Slovakia in 2004 320,000 inhabitants of Roma ethnicity. For the government, but also for the public, it was a surprising finding that up to half of this number lived integratedly, dispersed among other residents. The other half lived in concentrations either inside cities and communes or separately on the outskirts of communes, or segregated spatially separated from communes. This other half lived in their own enclaves and to a greater or lesser extent preserved the culture and way of life inherited from their ancestors. This second half of the Roma, roughly 150,000 people, was to become the subject of the government's interest (Hajko, 2015, p. 114-115).

Inaccuracies in unofficial surveys of Roma ethnic residents are mainly a consequence of the survey methodology and, to a lesser extent, the very difficult task of capturing all Roma ethnic residents in the survey (Mušinka et al., 2014, Ravasz et al., 2020). In Table 2, we can see that the share of the Roma ethnic population in the total population in Slovakia regularly increased after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, from a value of 2.12% in 1927 to a value of 7.66% in 2019. The trend of increasing the share of the population of the Roma ethnic

group in the total population will almost certainly continue in the coming years. According to the forecast of Šprocha (2014), according to the medium variant, there should be 549 thousand inhabitants of the Roma ethnic group living in Slovakia in 2025 and 589 thousand at the end of 2030, while their share of the population of Slovakia will be 9.9%, or 10.6%. Similarly, Vaňo (2001, 2002) and Vaňo and Haviarová (2002) spoke about the development of the population of the Roma ethnic group in Slovakia.

As stated by several authors and also in our opinion, the results of the census of the population of the Roma ethnic group for the needs of the 2013 and 2019 Roma community atlases, as shown in Table 2, are certainly not overestimated, on the contrary. The authors of these atlases indicate that at least 10-15% of the population of the Roma ethnic group are not “captured” during unofficial censuses for various reasons. Ravasz et al. (2020) responsible for the preparation of the Atlas of Roma communities 2019 state that at the time of the census there were probably at least 450 thousand inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity living in Slovakia.

Table 2 Development of the population of the Roma ethnic group and its share of the total population in Slovakia by unofficial surveys

Year	Number	Share in %	Method of detection
18. st.	20 000	1.05	Hungarian census - unofficial
1893	36 237	1.4	Hungarian census - unofficial
1927	62 192	2.12	records by communes
1938	60 000	2.05	police records
1947	84 438	2.48	records according to ZNB territorial districts
1955	114 000	3.58	hygienic-epidological field research services
1966	165 006	3.74	records by communes
1970	159 275	3.52	records by communes at the time of the official SOBD
1980	199 853	4.01	records by communes at the time of the official SOBD
1989	253 943	4.81	records of national committees
2004	281 379	5.23	inventory for the atlas of Roma communities
2010	352 924	6.49	census of the Roma ethnic group by commune
2013	402 840	7.44	inventory for the atlas of Roma communities
2019	417 535	7.65	inventory for the atlas of Roma communities

Source: Horváthová (1964), Podolák (2000), Vaňo and Haviarová (2002), Matlovičová et al. (2012), Mušínska et al. (2014), Ravasz et al. (2020); modified by the authors.

2.2 Distribution of Roma/inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity in Slovakia

Already at the end of the 19th century, when, according to the census, 36,231 Roma lived on the territory of Slovakia, their spatial distribution was quite signifi-

cantly differentiated. There was a small number of Roma population in northwestern Slovakia (regions of Liptov, Turiec and Orava), where their share of the total number was well below the Slovak average of 1.40%. The regions of eastern and southern central Slovakia were characterized by a high share of the Roma population (regions of Gemer 15.3% of their total number in Slovakia, Šariš 9.1, Spiš 8.5, Zemplín 7.7 and Abov 7.7), while a high the share was also in two counties in southwestern Slovakia (regions of Bratislava 11.9 and Nitra 11.5). Even before the “Victory February 1948”, when in 1947 a census of the Roma population was carried out in Slovakia according to the territorial districts of the National Security Corps stations, there was a shift of the “centre of gravity” of the distribution of the Roma population towards the east (Košice 10.91% of their total number in Slovakia, Levoča 10.39, Prešov 9.81 and others) and stations in the south-west of Slovakia the shares of the Roma community decreased (Bratislava 8.06, Nitra 7.33). Northwest Slovakia also had a low proportion of Roma ethnic groups in this census (stations of Martin 1.93, Ružomberok 1.43 and Žilina 0.95). In 1947, according to this census, 84,438 Roma lived in Slovakia (2.3 times more than in 1893), which represented about 2.5% of Slovakia's population (Šprocha and Tišliar, 2016; Korec et al., 2022 and others).

After 1948, we already encounter the assessment of the distribution of the Roma population at the level of communes, districts and regions, while comparing the distribution in individual years of the census or enumeration is not easy due to changes in the territorial and administrative organization of Slovakia.

In the following assessment of the spatial distribution of the Roma population in Slovakia and its changes, we will be based on the territorial-administrative division of Slovakia into districts, which began to apply in 1968, when there were 38 districts in Slovakia. Two reasons led us to this. The first is the fact that the districts of 1968 better reflect the geographical structure of the country, i.e. they better correspond to functional urban regions compared to districts as they were defined in 1997. The second is the fact that when evaluating the distribution and changes in the distribution of the Roma population, we consider it more appropriate to compare these larger units, also in the context of their relationship to the historical regions of Slovakia (Novohrad, Gemer, Abov, Spiš, Šariš and Zemplín). Understandably, during the transformation of districts from 1997 to districts from 1968, it was necessary to make a number of calculations related to the adjustment of district boundaries in 1997 by communes.

From Figure 1, it is clear that during the monitored 50 years, the “centre of gravity” of the distribution of the Roma population has shifted sharply to the east and south of central Slovakia, i.e. to the former East Slovak region (today the regions of Košice and Prešov; the historical regions of Spiš, Šariš, Zemplín and Abov) and to the south of the former Central Slovak region (today Banská Bystrica region; historical regions of Gemer and Novohrad). The increase in the share of some districts of the mentioned regions is really extreme. The share of the Roma population in the total number of inhabitants increased during the observed 50 years from 1970 to 2019, e.g. in the territory of the original Rimavská Sobota district from 11.90 to

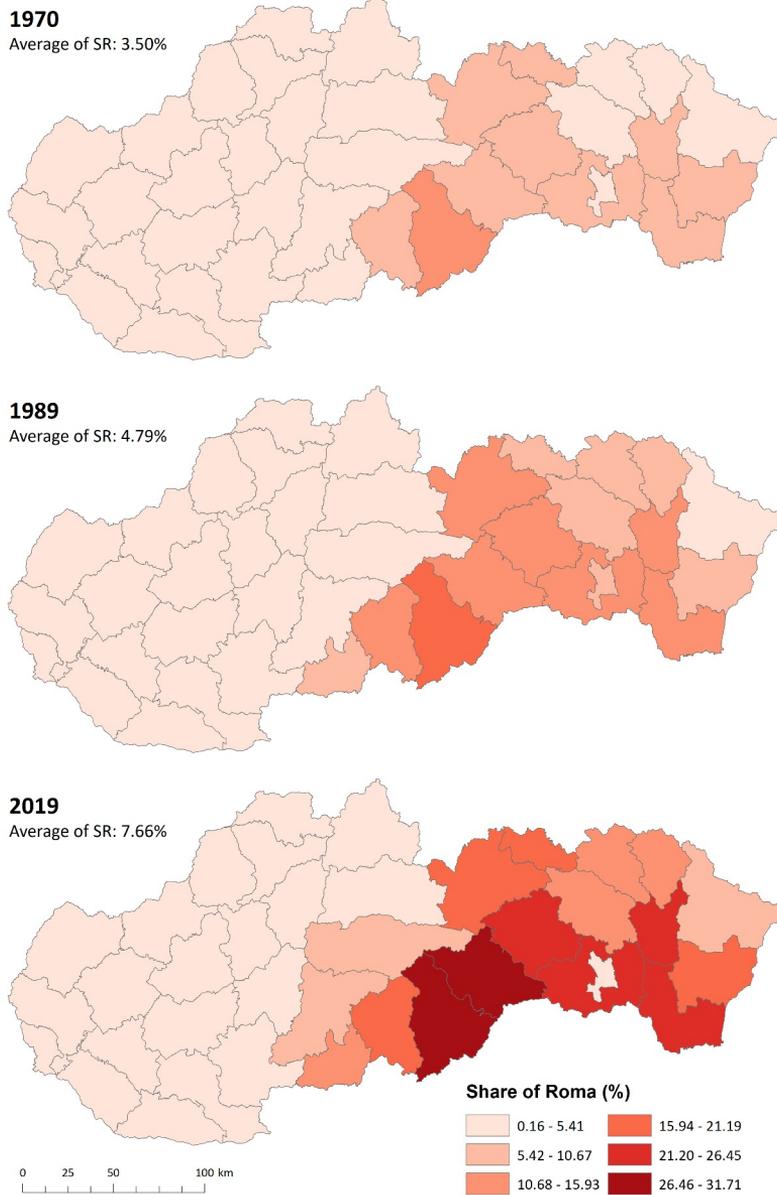


Figure 1 Development of the share of the Roma population in the districts of Slovakia. Source: SOBD (1970); Ravasz et al. (2020); SOBD (2021)

31.63% (a 2.61-fold increase in the share), Rožňava district from 10.60 to 27.50% (2.59), Spišská Nová Ves district from 8.54 to 24.23% (3.60), Vranov nad Topľou district from 8.93 to 24.89% (3.58), Košice-vidiek district from 8.40 to 21.75% (2.59), Trebišov district from 7.19 to 21.46% (3.21) and Lučenec from 6.90 to 20,13% (2.74). The share of the Roma population in the land district of Prešov increased 4.01 times, Stará Ľubovna 3.81, Poprad 3.10 and Svidník 3.03 times.

Table 3 shows the shares of the mentioned regions in the total number of Roma population in Slovakia in 2019, which are high. To the dominance of the regions of Košice and Prešov, the south of the Banská Bystrica region adds a high share. As many as 77.45% of the Roma ethnic population of Slovakia live in the territory where only 33.82% of its total number live.

The last column of Table 3 shows the share of Roma ethnic population from the total population of the regions. The value of this indicator in the regions of Košice and Prešov regions is twice and in the south of the Banská Bystrica region even three times higher than the Slovakian average, while the rest of the territory has a value of 2.61% at the level of one third of the average (7.66%). The concentration of the Roma population in eastern Slovakia and southern central Slovakia is extreme.

Table 3 Distribution of the Roma population in 2019 according to selected regions of Slovakia

Region	Population	Share in %	Roma population	Share in %	1
Košice region	782 216	14,35	133 988	32,09	17,13
Prešov region	808 931	14,84	127 128	30,45	15,72
East Slovakia (overall)	1 591 147	29,19	261 116	62,54	16,41
Banská Bystrica region-south	252 389	4,63	62 270	14,91	24,67
East Slovakia (overall) + Banská Bystrica region-south	1 843 536	33,82	323 386	77,45	17,54
Other territory	3 605 734	66,18	94 150	22,55	2,61
Slovakia	5 449 270	100	417 536	100,00	7,66

1 – The share of the Roma population in the region out of the total population in the region in %

Source: Ravasz et al. (2020), SOBD (2021)

Figure 2 shows the extraordinary dynamics of the growth of the share of the Roma population in the districts of eastern Slovakia and southern central Slovakia after 1970. Eight districts in the south of the mentioned area (Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava, Spišská Nová Ves, Košice-vidiek, Vranov nad Topľou, Trebišov

and Michalovce) creates a continuous strip where the share of the Roma population from the total number of inhabitants of the district increased by more than 11% over the monitored 50 years. The district of Stará Ľubovňa in the north of Slovakia was added to this belt with a value of 11.64%. Extreme values of the increase exceeding the limit of 15% were reached by four districts: Rimavská Sobota 19.73, Rožňava 16.90, Vranov nad Topľou 15.96 and Spišská Nová Ves 15.69. On the other hand, the strip of districts stretching in the west of Slovakia from the districts of Bratislava-vidiek and Dunajská Streda via Považie region to the north to the district of Dolný Kubín recorded a decrease, or increasing the share to the level of up to 0.5%.

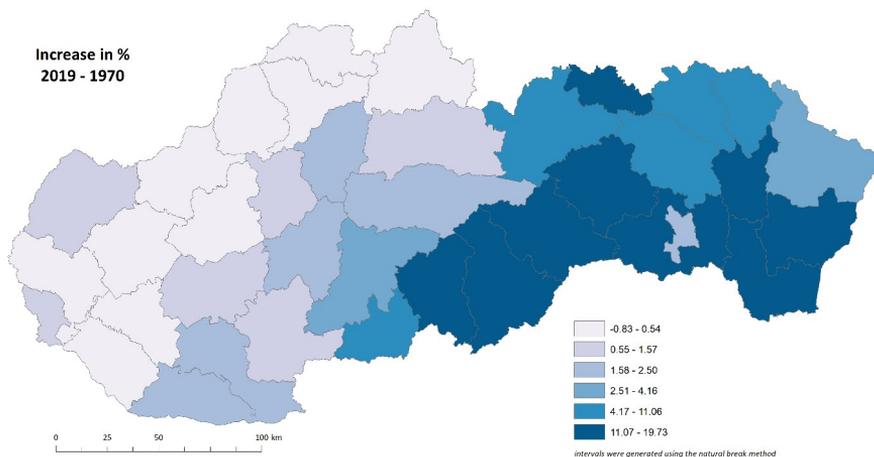


Figure 2 Increase in the share of the Roma population in the districts of Slovakia in the period 1970-2019. Source: SOBD (1970); Ravasz et al. (2020); SOBD (2021)

2.3 Communes of Slovakia with a high share of Roma population

Table 4 shows the list of communes where in 2019 the share of Roma ethnic residents from the total number of inhabitants of the commune was higher than 75%. In 2019, there were 51 communes in Slovakia with a share equal to or higher than 75%. More than 90% of the Roma population live in 19 communes. In 2019, more than 50% of the population of Roma ethnicity was recorded in 160 communes in Slovakia. Communes with a share higher than 75% are located exclusively in three regions, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice. Of the 160 communes with a share higher than 50%, only three are located outside these three regions, all three in the Nitra region (Selice in Šal'a district (62%), Šarovce (60%) and Šalov (56%) in Levice district).

Table 4 Communes in Slovakia with the highest proportion of Roma ethnic residents in 2019

Order	Commune	District	Region	Population	Roma population	Share in %
1	Lomnička	Stará Ľubovňa	PO	3021	3021	100
2	Luník IX	Košice	KE	6907	6907	100
3	Sútor	Rimavská Sobota	BB	568	562	99
4	Jurské	Kežmarok	PO	1027	1006	98
5	Kecеровce	Košice-okolie	KE	3580	3500	98
6	Petrová	Bardejov	PO	913	886	97
7	Cakov	Rimavská Sobota	BB	331	318	96
8	Barca	Rimavská Sobota	BB	571	548	96
9	Šivetice	Revúca	BB	364	349	96
10	Radnovce	Rimavská Sobota	BB	969	921	95
11	Kesovce	Rimavská Sobota	BB	240	228	95
12	Stráne pod Tatrami	Kežmarok	PO	2016	1907	95
13	Vtáčkovce	Košice-okolie	KE	1163	1086	93
14	Nitra nad Ipľom	Lučenec	BB	368	339	92
15	Trenč	Lučenec	BB	564	519	92
16	Drňa	Rimavská Sobota	BB	145	131	90
17	Sása (RA)	Revúca	BB	202	182	90
18	Kaloša	Rimavská Sobota	BB	821	739	90
19	Kameňany	Revúca	BB	840	756	90
20	Jarovnice	Sabinov	PO	6866	6042	88
21	Hostišovce	Rimavská Sobota	BB	234	206	88
22	Rybník	Revúca	BB	171	150	88
23	Výborná	Kežmarok	PO	1266	1091	86
24	Slizké	Rimavská Sobota	BB	237	201	85
25	Dulovo	Rimavská Sobota	BB	246	207	84
26	Ostrovany	Sabinov	PO	2210	1856	84
27	Rankovce	Košice-okolie	KE	923	766	83
28	Rokycany	Prešov	PO	1096	894	82
29	Richnava	Gelnica	KE	3086	2498	81
30	Hucín	Revúca	BB	946	766	81
31	Bystrany	Spišská Nová Ves	KE	3620	2900	80
32	Čičava	Vranov nad Topľou	PO	1269	1015	80

33	Janice	Rimavská Sobota	BB	300	240	80
34	Varadka	Bardejov	PO	224	179	80
35	Pašková	Rožňava	KE	354	283	80
36	Jelšovec	Lučenec	BB	334	267	80
37	Martinová	Rimavská Sobota	BB	218	174	80
38	Varhaňovce	Prešov	PO	1456	1158	80
39	Červenica	Prešov	PO	776	613	79
40	Cigelka	Bardejov	PO	581	459	79
41	Vrbnica	Michalovce	KE	1160	916	79
42	Lipovec	Rimavská Sobota	BB	102	80	78
43	Podhorany	Kežmarok	PO	1901	1475	78
44	Bôrka	Rožňava	KE	581	448	77
45	Rakúsy	Kežmarok	PO	3085	2344	76
46	Doľany	Levoča	PO	719	546	76
47	Roštár	Rožňava	KE	614	461	75
48	Uzovská Panica	Rimavská Sobota	BB	782	587	75
49	Gortva	Rimavská Sobota	BB	530	398	75
50	Kamenná Poruba	Vranov nad Topľou	PO	1480	1110	75
51	Hostice	Rimavská Sobota	BB	1027	770	75

Source: Ravasz et al. (2020), SOBD (2021)

Also worthy of attention is the information presented in Table 5 and Figure 3, which show the population growth indices of communes that had more than 1,000 inhabitants in 2019 and at the same time the share of the Roma population in them was higher than 75% in 2019. The growth of the population of these communes in the period from 1950 to 2019 was very high. It was 40 years of the “communist” period, the specifics of which in relation to the Roma population will be pointed out later, and 30 years of democratic independent Slovakia, which also had particularities in its approach to the Roma population. The growth indices of the monitored communes are extremely high when we consider that the population growth index of Slovakia 2019/1950 is 1.58 and the growth index 2019/1970 is 1.20. It is of particular interest that out of the 18 communes that “fell” into the monitored group, only one, Hostice, is outside the regions of Prešov and Košice.

Table 5 Indexes of population growth (2019/1950 and 2019/1970) of selected communes in Slovakia with a share of Roma ethnic group higher than 75% in 2019

Order	Commune	Region	Population			Population 2019	Roma population 2019	Share in % 2019	2019/1950	2019/1970
			1921	1950	1970					
1	Lomnička	PO	674	473	689	3021	3021	100	6.39	4.38
2	Stráne pod Tatrami	PO	291	321	501	2016	1907	95	6.28	4.02
3	Jarovnice	PO	1006	1359	2234	6866	6042	88	5.05	3.07
4	Rakúsy	PO	633	647	1130	3085	2344	76	4.77	2.73
5	Vtáčkovce	KE	226	257	419	1163	1086	93	4.53	2.78
6	Bystrany	KE	588	846	1407	3620	2900	80	4.28	2.57
7	Richnava	KE	698	722	1291	3086	2498	81	4.27	2.39
8	Kecerovce	KE	695	862	1282	3580	3500	98	4.15	2.79
9	Ostrovany	PO	340	556	1002	2210	1856	84	3.97	2.21
10	Podhorany	PO	580	508	629	1901	1475	78	3.74	3.02
11	Jurské	PO	277	305	450	1027	1006	98	3.37	2.28
12	Varhaňovce	PO	359	435	724	1456	1158	80	3.35	2.01
13	Výborná	PO	436	441	522	1266	1091	86	2.87	2.43
14	Kamenná Poruba	PO	357	525	782	1480	1110	75	2.82	1.89
15	Rokycany	PO	295	399	658	1096	894	82	2.75	1.67
16	Vrbnica	KE	309	457	614	1160	916	79	2.54	1.89
17	Čičava	PO	364	544	714	1269	1015	80	2.33	1.78
18	Hostice	BB	725	857	936	1027	770	75	1.20	1.10
19	Luník IX	KE	---	---	2439*	6907	6907	100	---	2.83*

* The data refers to 1991, respectively. to share 2019/1991

Source: Retrospective lexicon of communes of the ČSSR 1850-1972 (1978), Ravasz et al. (2020), SOBD (2021)

2.4 Distribution of the Roma population according to basic housing categories

According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, there were 1,217 residential concentrations of the Roma population in the Slovak Republic, in which 336,413 inhabitants lived. We can describe the living conditions in these concentrations as inappropriate for the 21st century (Ravasz et al., 2020). The vast majority of the inhabitants suffer from material lack and social deprivation and, overall, significantly reduced life opportunities.

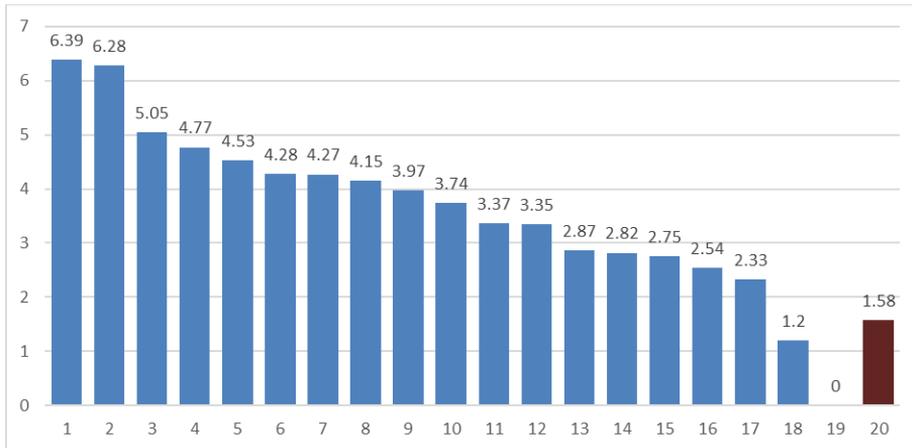


Figure 3 Indices of population growth 2019/1950 of selected communes in Slovakia with a share of Roma ethnicity higher than 75% in 2019. Source: Table 5

Table 6 shows the number and share of ethnic Roma residents living in the three basic housing categories in Slovakia. We consider the fact that up to 80.57% of the Roma ethnic population in Slovakia live in larger or smaller concentrations to be alarming. The fact that almost 67% of them live in concentrations on the outskirts of the commune and inside the commune, and only less than 14%, which is up to 57,139 inhabitants, live in concentrations outside the commune can only be viewed positively. Only less than 20% of the population of Roma ethnicity live integrated with the majority population in the communes of Slovakia.

Table 6 Categories of concentration of Roma ethnic population in Slovak communes in 2019

Housing category	Number	Share in %
Outside the commune	57 139	13.68
On the outskirts of the commune	150 107	35.95
Inside the commune	129 167	30.94
<i>Concentrations together</i>	336 413	80.57
<i>Integrated in the commune</i>	81 122	19.43
Roma population, overall	417 535	100

Source: Ravasz et al. (2020), SOBD (2021)

The basic goal of this sub-chapter was to show that the concentration of the Roma population is extremely high at all four basic levels, from the local level, through the district and regional levels, to the state level, which is a very unpleasant

phenomenon when dealing with issues of the quality of life of this ethnic group. Understandably, this unfavourable concentration of the Roma population is important to evaluate with the general social and economic backwardness of the regions of this concentration.

3 EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA

The aim of this chapter is to point out the fact that in the past, before the Second World War, the inhabitants of the Roma ethnic group had relatively good conditions for obtaining funds, considering the economic life in Slovakia (fragmented private agriculture and forestry, stagnant industry, numerous craft production and others) for a living. Moreover, before 1939, only around 60-65 thousand Roma lived in Slovakia, which represented 2-2.2% of Slovakia's population. Economic life in Slovakia began to change rapidly after the Second World War, but especially after November 1989, which did not favour the Roma population in the context of its application on the labour market. The rapid growth of their number in Slovakia was also important in connection with the possibility of their employment.

3.1 Original occupations of Roma

We have to realize, as Jurová (2002, p. 22-23) states, that in India, the ancestors of the Roma were no longer peasants growing basic foods, shepherds, artisans producing basic foods, shoes or clothes. They engaged in and made a living from “unclean professions” such as sweeping and removing dirt, washing clothes, preparing wood for burning corpses, pulling and processing skins, and others. Other professions they engaged in were nomadic blacksmiths, musicians, dancers, trainers of animals, especially snakes and monkeys, and the profession of “professional cattle thieves” was quite common. Anyone who visited India at the end of the 20th century could see that the Harijans, excluded from the caste system of Indian society, still made a living from the mentioned occupations (Horváthová, 1964; Korim, 2007).

In connection with the “professions” of the Roma population in Slovakia in the last century, shortly after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, information by Fibingerová (1994, p. 82) about the ways in which the Roma population secured means of subsistence 100 years ago is interesting. The mentioned author states that e.g. in the Košice region, in 1924, 6.54% of local Roma of productive age supported themselves by crafts and small production (blacksmithing, basketry, etc.), 8.27% by musical activities, 0.92% by horse trading and peddling, wage labour 83.65% through work and 0.76% through other sources of livelihood, which more or less corresponded to the livelihood of their “tribesmen” in India.

In a similar way, Kandráčová (2007) and Hajko (2015) also describe the provision of livelihood among Roma in the past. Hajko (2015) states that at the end of the 19th century, Roma found “employment” in several activities, while in addition to short-term wage work, they preferred blacksmithing and musicianship. However,

many of them also worked as occasional helpers in agriculture, horse traders, maids and servants in households, day labourers, and begging also persisted.

However, Horváthová (1964) points out that the data on Roma “jobs” should only be understood as indicative, because only a few of them could make a living from one “job” and thus the majority of Roma engaged in two or more ways of making a living at the same time, while often helping themselves and petty thefts. In the past, the Roma quite naturally found their place in the then still little industrialized society with fragmented agricultural production. They made a living from traditional Roma professions, which the society of that time needed, but which left the Roma a certain freedom.

The situation with the employment of Roma ethnic residents began to change significantly, as we have already stated, after 1990. Yes, difficulties with their employment began earlier, but the political change after February 1948 allowed their forced labour placement. The statement of the mayor of Pečovská Nová Ves is interesting. “Before 1989, the employment of Roma in our commune (Pečovská Nová Ves) was relatively high. Its decline before the establishment of the Slovak Republic was relatively moderate. However, when high subsidies for the unemployed came during the first Mečiar’s government in 1993-1996, Roma gradually left work. At that time, it did not pay off for them to be employed at a salary of slightly more than 5 thousand per month. In 1995, I fired the last Roma, Mr. Andrej Červeňák. Then he said to me: Mayor, why am I leaving? Everyone in the settlement laughs at me that they won’t lift a finger in a month and 15-20 thousand crowns will come to the family”. In 2019, Pečovská Nová Ves had 2,709 inhabitants, of which 28%, i.e. 753 inhabitants of Roma ethnicity (Ravasz et al., 2020). It is obvious that, in addition to changes in the nature of the economy, the new social policy of the state also had an impact on the significant increase in unemployment among Roma in Slovakia. Here it is surprising that not one of the following governments was able to turn this sick social system upside down and start building it on merit (Baňas, 2011).

“One of the important aspects of the issue of Roma employment is the fact, whether someone likes it or not, that there will have to be a greater migration of people. Let’s not have any illusions that, for example, in Jarovnice, where 88% of the 6,866 inhabitants are Roma, i.e. 6042 persons, where 200-250 people are born annually, the vast majority of Roma origin, a factory will be established that will provide suitable employment for perhaps 5 thousand people. Many people from Lipany go to Bratislava and other cities to work. At the same time, the saddest thing is that the most educated and capable people are leaving the communes of our district. Not a single citizen from the Roma community has moved out of Lipan in the last 5 years. Migration for better paid work could solve the problem of Roma unemployment. After all, our goal is to be a person who is fully integrated into society. A decent person, with a decent wage, not a person with an outstretched begging hand. A person who receives something from society, we will not pretend that he took it for free and he will not pretend that you were obliged to give it to me anyway” (Vokál, 2011).

A large group of the Roma minority, who for various reasons, including the mentioned social policy of the state, left the labour market at the beginning of the transformation and have not been able to return to it until now found themselves in the circle of poverty. The economic crisis in 2008-2009 only accentuated these negative tendencies. It is obvious that the further development of Slovakia without solving the problems of the extremely large Roma community is practically impossible. It is necessary to look for solutions related to the inclusion of the Roma community in the context of using the potential of their labour force. It is the labour market that should play a key role in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty of Roma ethnic residents in Slovakia, who actually live on the fringes of society, in large concentrations in segregated and separated settlements, or in concentrations inside rural communes and towns (Marcinčin and Marcinčinová, 2009; Mušinka and Benč, 2011; Marcinčin, 2011; Šuvada and Slavík, 2016; Korec et al., 2022 and others).

3.2 Social and economic context of high unemployment of the Roma population

Regardless of the reasons that led to the current situation, the current situation cannot be accepted, not only from the point of view of the constitutionally guaranteed basic living conditions and international obligations of the Slovak Republic. As already mentioned, the current situation is economically unsustainable in the long term and from the point of view of public finances. It is not possible to finance a social system in the long term, to which a significant and ever-growing percentage of the population does not contribute and is almost exclusively the recipient of funds from public sources.

The possibilities for residents of excluded communities to break free from the environment of concentrated and generational poverty in which they live are minimal. The state has the responsibility to implement policies aimed at improving the alarming situation and, at the same time, the obligation to look for all available tools and possibilities to start the process of permanent change. Despite the adoption of a large number of materials of a legal, conceptual and programmatic nature, the search for optimal models of legal regulation, the expenditure of a considerable amount of financial resources and the implementation of programs and measures aimed at solving the situation outlined above, as well as certain partial successes achieved in some localities, the overall situation is clearly worsens. According to available information, the number of segregated and separated settlements with a large concentration of the Roma population, as well as the number of their inhabitants, is continuously growing. We don't have to say anything, but in the last 30 years no relevant progress has been achieved even in the area of living conditions, health status, level of education and employment (Korec et al., 2022 and others).

According to Buzalka (2023), the key test of reform policies will be the issue of excluded Roma communities, whose current state is, among other things, also a consequence of ignoring the needs and representation of the countryside. Excluded Roma are therefore, according to the cited author, a key problem for building.

In Slovakia, there are several positive examples of local enterprises that increase the participation of Roma in the work process. So far, however, there is no systematically elaborated supporting public policy that would deal productively with the local circulation of value and the functioning of power. The reason, in addition to the indifference and ignorance of decision-makers, is either too much reliance on the market model or the bureaucratic state, as the two primary sources of successful Roma integration (Buzalka, 2023).

One of the key problems of long-term unemployment of Roma is understandably the concentration of Roma in the economically weakest regions of Slovakia, where it is very difficult to solve the problem of high Roma unemployment (Jurásková et al., 2004; Matlovič, 2005; Korec et al., 2022 and others).

Marcinčin (2011) seems to summarize the above facts when he says that several factors prevent Roma from entering the formal labour market – low qualifications, high level of indebtedness, inadequate setting of social and family policy by the state and often poor health resulting from life conditions. Prejudices on the part of employers and, after starting employment, on the part of employees also play a significant role.

Mončeková (2017), on the other hand, emphasizes that with regard to the employment of socially excluded Roma from settlements, state support should be aimed at improving their basic educational level and creating basic hygiene and work habits. The creation of a consultation and advisory institution for employers would also help, as well as finding incentives for employers to employ a certain number of Roma.

4 MEASURES TAKEN BY THE STATE TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF ROMA

It is obvious that within this article it is not possible to list all the measures (laws, decrees, regulations, measures and others) that the state took in connection with the effort to improve the living conditions of the Roma in its territory, or to integrate them into the majority population. Using selected documents received from the government level, we want to show that, at least since 1761, the efforts of individual governments were great, and therefore it is somewhat surprising that they were not very successful. We divided the monitored time trajectory into three periods, which differed quite significantly in terms of the political and general social climate, including the economy, also in the context of the relationship to the solution of the “Roma question”.

4.1 The period until 1948

15th-16th century: Hungarian capitals and cities began to take measures to settle Roma, assimilate them with the local population and regulate their itinerant way of life. These reactions at the level of capitals and cities were a reaction to the

increase in their number in Hungary and the emerging problems in the contacts of Roma with the local population.

Period 1758-1773: during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa, “the first comprehensive concepts of state Roma policy, which aimed at the assimilation of Roma” were adopted. In 1761, the empress issued the Regulations on the method of emancipation of Gypsies, the ultimate goal of which was supposed to be the rapid assimilation of Gypsies with other subjects. With these orders, the empress pursued several goals, among other things, she tried to accommodate the feudal lords and increase their income by acquiring more subjects. The empress and her son Joseph II were convinced that the only possible way to improve the living standards of the Gypsies was to eliminate the differences between them and the local population. In the empress's decrees, it was ordered that the Gypsies should stop nomading and should settle in a permanent place (i), they should build proper houses in the row of other subjects (ii), they should support themselves mainly by agricultural work or learn proper crafts (iii), children should attend schools and walk properly dressed (iv), hygiene issues (v) and others should be consistently enforced (Horváthová, 1964; Jancura, 2018). According to Augustini ab Hortis (1995), the queen meant it very well. However, according to the mentioned author, the regulations she issued “hit the Gypsies in the most sensitive place”, because they take away their freedom and their age-old way of life. But at the same time, the author added, “there is no other way to improve this people”.

Period 1782-1784: Maria Theresa’s son Joseph II continued the policy of improving the position of the Roma. The regulations he issued were mainly aimed at improving the school attendance of Gypsy children (i), improving the hygienic conditions of Gypsies (ii) and making Gypsies attend religious services and Christian ceremonies (iii) (Matlovič, 2005).

Year 1916: In this year, the Decree of the Hungarian Government was issued to change the way of life of the Gypsies. The regulation was aimed exclusively at nomadic Gypsies, who were forced to settle in designated communes. The main goals of the regulation were to limit begging and theft, to give them the opportunity to earn a living by work, and also to recruit new taxpayers and soldiers.

Year 1928: The state issued a regulation on the introduction of Roma ID cards, on the movement of nomadic Roma and on the establishment of a central dactyloscopic register of Roma. The introduction of "nomadic letters" for Roma basically legalized their nomadic way of life. However, the ban on staying in one place for more than three days essentially prevented a slow gradual transition to a settled life (Matlovič, 2005).

Year 1945: After the end of World War II, the state proceeded to appoint Roma security officers in the regions of Košice and Prešov (regions with the largest Roma communities) and to appoint an interdepartmental commission to prepare national guidelines for defining and solving the Roma issue. These appointments were the first measures to systematically address the way of life of the Roma in Slovakia.

4.2 The period 1948-1989

Year 1952: The issuance of the directive “On the adjustment of the conditions of persons of Gypsy origin”, which began the survey of Roma settlements, mainly the state of housing, health and hygiene, can be considered an important step in the systematic approach to solving the unsatisfactory living conditions and way of life of the Roma.

Year 1956: Four years later, a procedure for the liquidation of the most backward Roma settlements was developed at the level of the territory of Slovakia, with an effort to solve the housing of the Roma with the help of the state by allocating company apartments, settling the Czech border area, providing state subsidies for housing and other measures.

Year 1958: In the first half of this year, a resolution on “Work among the Gypsy population” was issued, the aim of which was to merge the Roma population with the majority by eliminating deficiencies in individual areas. This resolution is considered to be the beginning of the period of forced assimilation of the Roma, which was applied until 1972.

Year 1959: In this year, a census of Roma was carried out on the basis of anthropological features, language, way of life and other facts, and the principles of the concept of dispersion and removal of the Roma population from places of high concentration were adopted.

Year 1965: In this year, the government of the Czechoslovak Republic issued a resolution in which the government laid out the “Concept of the liquidation of Gypsy settlements and dispersion of the Gypsy population” to other parts of the republic, basically from the territory of Slovakia to the Czech Republic. As part of the implementation of this resolution, “fellowship regions” were designated in the Czech Republic, which were obliged to accept Gypsies from Slovakia. The Central Bohemian and South Bohemian Regions were designated for Gypsies from the West Slovak Region, the South Moravian Region was to receive Gypsies from the Central Slovak Region, and the North Moravian and Eastern Bohemian Regions were designated as “friendship regions” for the Eastern Slovak Region. In this year, the “Government Committee for the Issues of the Gypsy Population” was also created, but it was abolished already in 1968.

Year 1972: After political and social normalization, the implementation of the “Concept of comprehensive social and cultural integration of the Roma” began in the Czechoslovakia, which set four main goals: solving the level of housing, eliminating increased crime, education of Roma children and youth and re-education of adults, and inclusion of all those able to work Roma into the labour process (Jurová, 2000). We see that 210 years after the decrees on the method of emancipation of the Gypsies issued by Maria Theresa in 1761, the main goals of the tasks connected with the improvement of the life of the Gypsies remain practically the same.

4.3 The period after 1989

Year 1991: Even before the establishment of the Slovak Republic, the “Principles of the Governmental Policy of the Czechoslovak Republic towards the Roma Minority” were adopted by the federal government of the Czechoslovakia, which included, among other things, an expression of the ethnic acceptance of the Roma and also an expression of the ethnonym “Gypsies” used until then. What is interesting about this step of the government is the fact that the issues of Roma life were an important topic of the government very soon after the “Velvet revolution”.

Year 1996: The Government of the Slovak Republic quickly realized the importance of the issue of Roma life, which began to change quite significantly after 1989 (e.g. a drop in employment, a change in the obligation to attend school, etc.) and adopted the document “Concept of Access to Citizens Requiring Special Care” and created “Office of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Citizens Requiring Special Care”.

Year 1997: The Government of the Slovak Republic adopted an important document “Conceptual intentions of the Government of the Slovak Republic to solve the problems of the Roma in the current socio-economic conditions”, in which the basic principles of solving the Roma problem were determined – the civil principle, the principle of solidarity, the principle of participation, the principle of personal responsibility, the principle of positive stimulation of citizens and the principle of solving the problem at the place of origin. The adopted principles responded to the key issues connected with the life of the Roma, unfortunately their application in practice was very slow.

Year 1999: The first government of Mikuláš Dzurinda also adopted shortly after taking office the “Strategy of the Government of the Slovak Republic for solving the problems of the Roma national minority and a set of measures for its implementation – Stage 1”.

Year 2000: A year after the first stage, the “Elaborated Strategy of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of the Roma National Minority in a Set of Specific Measures for the Year 2000 – Stage 2” was adopted, which contained 282 specific measures, among others, it also included the creation of conditions for the development of Roma communities where the situation is critical – low socio-economic status, social exclusion, problems in education, housing, health and hygiene, which primarily affected large concentrations of the Roma population in segregated settlements, separated settlements on the outskirts of communes and settlements inside communes.

Year 2003: In view of the slow progress in solving issues related to the life of Roma, in 2003 the “Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 278/2003”, which determined the main objectives for solving the Roma issue for the period 2003-2006 with a vision until 2010. The resolution emphasized work mainly in three areas, housing, education and employment, and the support of activities aimed at the integration of marginalized Roma groups, which was included in the “Operational Program Basic Infrastructure” following the “National Development Plan as the main program document for drawing aid from EU structural funds”.

Period 1999-2005: in the pre-accession period to the EU, the adoption of superior European and also its own internal materials culminated in Slovakia. In this period, the governments of Slovakia approved 75 resolutions concerning the Roma, where the basic procedures for solving the problems of the Roma for a longer period were outlined.

Year 2008: In the middle of Robert Fico's first government, the government took a more fundamental position towards the Roma and adopted the material "Medium-term concept of the development of the Roma national minority in the Slovak Republic, solidarity - integrity - inclusion 2008 - 2013". Already from the title of the material, it follows that the government viewed the Roma as a national minority that needed a special approach, distinguishing between two groups of marginalized Roma communities, residents living in separated and segregated Roma settlements at a low social and cultural level, and residents living in rural communes and cities at an average level (Hajko, 2015).

Year 2012: Another government also realized the seriousness of the situation related to the life of the Roma and approved the resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 1/2012 of January 11, 2012 "Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the Integration of Roma by 2020". This strategy contained a "Description of the situation of Roma communities in Slovakia and priority policies in the areas of education, employment, health, housing, financial inclusion, non-discrimination and approaches towards majority society". It was the so-called Roma integration initiative through communication.

Period 2005-2015: During this period, Slovakia became part of a group of states in Central and Eastern Europe (in addition to Slovakia, it included the Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) that entered the Decade of Inclusion of the Roma Population 2005-2015. The group set itself the basic goal of "reducing differences in the key results of economic development and the development of the living standards of the Roma through the implementation of political reforms and programs aimed at breaking the vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion of the Roma". The decade focused on improving four main areas of Roma life: housing, education, employment and health. A number of partner organizations participated in the activities of the "decade", mainly the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the Council of Europe, the European Roma Information Office, the European Forum of Roma and Nomads and the Open Society Institute (Hajko, 2015, pp. 119-120).

Year 2021: At the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Slovak government adopted the document "Strategy for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma until 2030", which developed 5 priority areas: education, housing, employment, health and the fight against anti-Roma racism and support for participation, while each area evaluates in three levels, starting points, global goal and sub-goals. In the same year, the government of the Slovak Republic adopted the "Vision and strategy for the development of Slovakia until 2030: long-term strategy for the sustainable development of the Slovak Republic - Slovakia 2030", which defines the direction of public

policies in order to achieve visible change in the area of equality and inclusion of Roma.

5 SELECTED PROBLEMATIC PHENOMENA ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROMA POPULATION

There are a number of negative phenomena associated with the life of the Roma population in Slovakia that recur regularly. These phenomena are, among other things, the cause of the hostility of the majority population towards the Roma population. One of these phenomena is the poor health status of the inhabitants of Roma settlements in Slovakia, especially those who live in concentrations outside the commune, on the outskirts of the commune or inside the commune. Compared to the majority, it is worse in the long term. The main factors of this condition are widely known. These are mainly unsatisfactory living conditions, a low level of health awareness and a reduced standard of personal and communal hygiene due to insufficient infrastructure (access to drinking water and hot water, work with waste, etc.). An important factor is insufficient nutrition and, as a consequence of poverty, reduced real access to health care due to the lack of funds needed to travel to medical facilities.

These generally known findings were also confirmed by a survey in 145 separated and segregated Roma settlements. Living conditions in these settlements contribute to the spread of infectious and chronic diseases and epidemics such as jaundice, tuberculosis, inflammation of the parotid glands, scabies, as well as the frequent occurrence of various types of epidemiologically significant arthropods (lice, bed bugs, cockroaches and others).

The second frequent negative phenomenon associated with the Roma population in Slovakia is mutual coexistence, especially its increased criminality, which is probably a consequence of the "traditions" of the Roma population in obtaining a living and, on the other hand, a lack of means to ensure a living. We will briefly discuss some of these negative phenomena for clarity.

5.1 Problems related to the health status of the Roma population

Jaundice, or *viral hepatitis A* (VHA). The district of Vranov nad Topľou in the Prešov region belongs to the districts with a high proportion of Roma ethnic residents. According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, 19,771 Roma lived in the district in 2019, which represented 24.89% of the total population of the district. Of the mentioned number, 18,221 lived, i.e. 92.16% in concentrations and only 7.84% integrated. Of the 18,221 inhabitants of the Roma ethnicity living in concentrations, 2,952 (14.9%) lived in concentrations outside the commune, 12,232 (61.9%) in concentrations on the outskirts of the commune, and 3,037 (15.4%) in concentrations inside the commune.

According to the mentioned distribution of dwellings, it is not surprising that at the end of 2023, quite a few cases of jaundice were recorded in the district, or viral hepatitis A (VHA). The first cases of the disease were recorded on September 4, 2023, and by November 9, 2023, 129 cases were registered (Regional Office of Public Health in Vranov and Topľou). The rising trend of the disease was noted in the district right from the appearance of the first cases. On November 9, 2023, there were already 10 active outbreaks in the district in the communes of Večec, Hencovce, Zámutov, Poša, Sedliská, Banské, Sol', Kamenná Poruba, Vranov nad Topľou and Sačurov.

Until November 30, 2023, 997 cases of viral hepatitis type A were reported in eastern Slovakia. The situation was so serious that in the event of further deterioration of the situation, the mayors and hygienists in the regions of Prešov and Košice considered guarding the communes where jaundice broke out (Madro, 2023).

Tuberculosis (TB). The Poprad district in the Prešov region is one of the districts in Slovakia with an above-average proportion of Roma ethnic residents. According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, 12,920 inhabitants of Roma ethnicity lived in the district in 2019, which represented a share of 12.57% of the total population of the district. All 12,920 of the mentioned number of ethnic Roma lived, i.e. 100%, in concentrations on the outskirts of the commune.

Hranovnica is one of the most problematic communes in terms of the incidence of tuberculosis. Since from the beginning of 2023 until August 2023, 16 infected people were registered in the Roma settlements there, of which 6 were children, while one adult even succumbed to the disease, on Friday, August 25, 2023, the staff of the National Institute of Pneumology and Physiology in Vyšné Hágy began to detect the presence of tuberculosis with people from the local settlement directly in the field. Due to the high number of cases, it was necessary to conduct an active investigation of the contacts of affected persons. If the situation were not resolved, there could be up to 100 positive cases in 2024 (Ivan Solovič, head of the department).

Cooperation with patients who should be examined was difficult. "Either they are afraid of the examination or they do not have the financial means and do not come to the examination in Vyšné Hágy" (Angelika Farkašová, mayor of Hranovnica). It turned out that the method that worked almost thirty years ago "under communism" is the most effective. Directly to the Roma settlement the soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic brought a mobile X-ray machine and the doctors began to investigate 180 adults and 252 children (TASR 1, 2023).

Occurrence of epidemiologically significant arthropods. Nitra is a regional city with approximately 80,000 inhabitants. According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, 2,220 inhabitants of Roma ethnicity lived in the city in 2019, which represented only 3% of the total number of city residents. 1,900 of the mentioned population of the Roma ethnic group lived, i.e. 85.59% in 5 concentrations (Nitra-Staré mesto, Borová street; Nitra-Horné Krškany, Orechov dvor; Nitra-Mlynárce, Telgártska street.; Nitra-Dolné Krškany, streets of Roľnícka and Dvorčanská and Nitra-Dražovce, streets of Jána Zelenáka and Ščašného).

Of this total number of 1,900 Roma residents, 450 (23.7%) lived in Orechov dvor, the only concentration outside the commune, and the remaining 1,450 (76.3%) lived in concentrations inside the mentioned urban districts of the Nitra. Orechov dvor is located in the southern part of the city and part of the Nitra-Horné Krškany city district. Children from Orechov dvor mainly attend kindergarten and elementary school in this part of the city. Orechov dvor is connected to the centre of Nitra by regular public transport.

The problem with the occurrence of various types of epidemiologically significant arthropods occurs in the Orechov dvor location for a long time and repeatedly with greater or lesser intensity (Alena Gregušová, Regional Office of Public Health in Nitra). In the locality, residents from the marginalized Roma community live almost exclusively in conditions with a low hygienic standard, which creates “suitable” conditions for the introduction and spread of various types of insects, such as bed bugs, child lice, cockroaches, bed bugs and mites, among which includes scabies, the presence of which can be risky for a person, as it can cause him to develop unpleasant transmissible skin diseases.

The city management was informed about the critical situation with an extraordinary spread of insects (bedbugs, lice and cockroaches) in the summer of 2023 already at the beginning of July 2023, which was confirmed by several sources. The city started disinsection in August. Such a large overpopulation as it was in 2023 occurred in Orechov dvor after five years. The cost of disinfection in 2023 was about 30,000 euros (disinfection itself, provision of temporary accommodation, solution of electrical plugs to make disinfection effective, replacement of locks on doors and parts of windows, and others). The amount indicated in the city budget is a large item.

It is a generally known fact that the biggest health risk in Roma settlements, not only in Nitra, but throughout Slovakia, is long-term head lice infestation, rodent bites, excessive spread of cockroaches, scabies, bed bugs, jaundice type A and chicken pox (Hojčušová, 2022).

5.2 Problems of living together with Roma ethnic residents

Aggressive activities of Roma. Before 1975, the commune of Dražovce was an independent rural commune with a population of around 2,200. In that year, it was annexed to Nitra. The residential part of this district is about 4 km from the centre of Nitra. A significant intervention in the classic rural structure of this part of the city was the construction of the Jaguar Land Rover car factory in the southern part of the cadastre in 2019. Until 1989, the Nitra-Dražovce commune was an absolutely problem-free part of the city in the context of coexistence with the Roma population. Two families of Roma residents lived here for a long time in very good relations with the majority.

However, everything started to change when, after the “Velvet revolution”, new unknown Roma families started moving to the Nitra-Dražovce commune, buying relatively cheap family houses of very low quality. These houses were located in the old centre of the commune, on the neighbouring streets of Jána Zelenáka and Ščas-

ného. Very quickly, a large concentration of the Roma population arose here. Currently, around 400 Roma residents live here.

The inhabitants of this part of the city wrote a petition several times, e.g. already in 2018, in which they point to the long-term unresolved problems of this part of the city of Nitra connected with the way of life of the Roma population. In the petition, they write that sometimes they are literally afraid to go out on the street, because serious crimes by local Roma residents are a daily occurrence. “In Dražovce, there is literally looting, unadaptable Roma knock down fences, steal ripe and unripe fruits and vegetables from gardens. They then sell the stolen fruits and vegetables. Minor children verbally and physically attack grandmothers who go to church in the morning or evening. The girls are afraid to take the bus to school or work from Dražovce to Nitra, their parents have to drive them there and back by car. Residents often do not report crime to the police because they are afraid”, said Pavol Varga, MP for Nitra-Dražovce local council.

Residents point to the fact that Roma residents make it difficult to revitalize Dražovce as a traditional commune, which has great potential for using its values to develop tourism and agrotourism (monuments of an old Slavic settlement, the Romanesque church of St. Michael, a shooting range, natural features, the nearby Zobor hill, traditional viticulture and others).

The former mayor of Nitra, Jozef Dvonč, says that it is unrealistic to deal with 3,000 Roma in Nitra. However, he asks what happened to them after 1989, why they stopped going to work, why we don't have parasitism as a crime in our legislation and who is responsible for it.

Due to problems with unadaptable Roma residents, the only grocery and drug store in Dražovce has been closed several times. Due to frequent thefts, he regularly has a shortfall, while even an SBS employee is not enough for thieves. Deputy Varga pointed out that the shortfall they have to cover is taken into account in the salaries of shop workers, but even so, they are afraid to speak out directly against these fellow citizens (Regionálne správy z lokality Dražovce (SITA), WebNoviny.sk, 2018).

The influence of the Roma ethnic population on the 2023 parliamentary elections. For the first time since the establishment of independent Slovakia in 1993, the Roma population had a relatively significant influence on the parliamentary elections. Everything indicates that it was the Roma population that ensured the entry into the parliament of the political party OĽaNO and friends. It is a new phenomenon associated with the Roma population in Slovakia, which is, among others, mainly due to their unhappy living conditions, including a lack of financial resources.

In time for the early parliamentary elections in 2023, the Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) party changed its name. The word “friends” was added to the brief OĽaNO, under which the platforms Ordinary People, Independent Candidates, NOVA, Free and Responsible, Pačivale Roma and Magyar Szívek were united. A big surprise after the votes were counted was that in all the rural communes in the east of Slovakia, where more than 1,000 Roma people live,

the coalition OĽANO and friends, the Christian Union and For the People won with a significant margin in the parliamentary elections.

The electoral gains of the aforementioned coalition were truly unprecedented in several communes. It won 92.05% in the communes of Lomnička, 91.66% in Jurske, 91.02% in the Luník IX housing estate in Košice, 86.36% in Kecerovce, 86.22% in Jarovnice, 76.98% in Krížová Ves, and 76.67% in Rakúsy, 76.32% in Podhorany, 70.36% in Žehra, 66.94% in Bystrany, 66.27% in Ostrovany, 63.96% in Výborná and 63.32% in Richnava. In the Prešov region, in addition to those already mentioned, she also received more than 70% of the votes in the communes of Stráne pod Tatrami, Červenica, Cigeľka, Malý Slivník, Chminianske Jakubovany and Ihľany, and in the Košice region in three other communes, Vtáčkovce, Rankovce and Vrbnica. This follows from the official election results approved by the Statistical Office.

Three remarks should be made about the above results. The fact is that the OĽANO and friends movement has considered the Roma issue one of its priorities since its entry into politics (i). It is also known that in the current election period the OĽANO and friends movement is the only political party in the National Council of the Slovak Republic that has representatives from the Roma community in its ranks (ii). Important in the election campaign before the elections in 2023 was the fact that four members of the movement, the Roma, MP Peter Pollák Jr., boxer Viliam Tankó, social worker Lukáš Bužo and teacher Anežka Škopová did a really honest job (iii). In the end, all four joined the parliament.

Already during the campaign before the elections, there were many warnings that the chairman of the party OĽANO and friends Matovič promises the Roma residents who will go to vote for the coalition in which the movement “OĽANO and friends” is 500 euros. It was not discussed whether the 500 euros was conditional on the voters receiving it only if this coalition gets into the government or “only” into the parliament. Roma Pavol Šándor from Medzilaborce voted for the movement and claims that Matovič promised 500 euros. The mayor of Medzilaborce, Vladislav Višňovský, stated that “the Roma got Matovič into the parliament, there is no doubt about that”.

Suspensions of electoral corruption in the regions of Košice and Prešov were investigated by the National Criminal Agency, and corruption was not confirmed. Political scientist Radoslav Štefančík said about these results: “It is not natural for this coalition to have such high support in the communes. I'm afraid there will be some problem with that” (TASR 2, 2023, Vančo and Kozinková, 2023).

6 CONCLUSIONS

Buzalka (2023) points out that the current status of the Roma community in Slovakia, its exclusion and the problem of integration are unsustainable, while he considers its alienation from the majority population by modernity from the communist period to be crucial. Postmodernism of the 21st century accentuated this

alienation even more. Therefore, as the cited author says, the current integration policies should be significantly re-evaluated, which still mainly deal with only two areas of the complex exclusion of the Roma community, namely the material and infrastructural deficiencies of the excluded communities. According to the quoted author, the huge problems of excluded Roma communities should be considered a much bigger failure of Slovakia than stolen highways and theft for “our people”, while the pro-reform government and the so-called “progressives”. When solving the problems of the life of Roma citizens, it is necessary to respect their culture, traditions and the deeply rooted way of life of this ethnic group.

Despite the fact that in the last two decades, a whole series of projects, activities and activities, including the preparation of Roma community atlases in 2004, 2013 and 2019, which had the ambition to partially fill this gap, the fact is that the research of individual aspects of the life of the Roma population there is a lack of high-quality, exact and comprehensive data that would concern the entire Roma community in Slovakia (Mušinka and Kolesárová, 2012; Radičová, 2020).

The worst living conditions in Slovakia are experienced by the Roma minority living in large concentrations, either in segregated and separated Roma settlements or in concentrations within the commune. Despite the long history of the Roma population on the territory of Slovakia and efforts to improve their living conditions, it is still not possible to improve the aforementioned situation, achieve equality of the Roma population with the majority population and gain their respect in society.

How to evaluate the causes and factors of this state? What is behind the unsuccessful effort to improve it? When looking for an answer to these questions, it is good to remember one of the four recommendations for scientific work made by the winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, Paul Krugman, which is “simplify, simplify, simplify”. Yes, we are aware that the solution aimed at improving the life of the Roma population in Slovakia is certainly not easy. There are a large number of causes and factors that must be taken into account and respected, and there are also a number of interconnected phenomena behind the solution to this, we are not afraid to say, “catastrophic” situation. But on the other hand, we think that there are several basic facts that make it impossible to improve the life of the Roma population in Slovakia.

The causes of unsuccessful efforts to solve the persistent way of life of the Roma population, from living conditions, through education, employment and behaviour in public, must be sought between two imaginary “actors”, the Roma population and the state. On the one hand, there are the Roma, with their history, their own widely understood culture, hierarchy of values and approach to life. Paraphrasing their evaluation in the literature, which says that the Roma are the embodiment of freedom, they don't have to be responsible, they don't have to have moral inhibitions, they do not have to observe hygiene, or go to work for 8 hours, they can live without inhibitions and others (Hancock, 2005). On the other hand, there is the state, which tries to improve the living conditions of the Roma population and integrate them fully into society by adopting laws, regulations, decrees and other regulations. To do this, use a number of other options, including financial incentives.

The basic question before us now is which side of the two mentioned actors is “more accountable for”, or who has a greater contribution to the fact that the solution to improve the life of the Roma population cannot be achieved? Basically, there are only these two actors, the Roma and the state. It’s very simplistic, but it’s true, and this is the basic question. We do not dare to answer it unequivocally, but based on history, a whole range of research and essential literature, we allow ourselves to answer as follows.

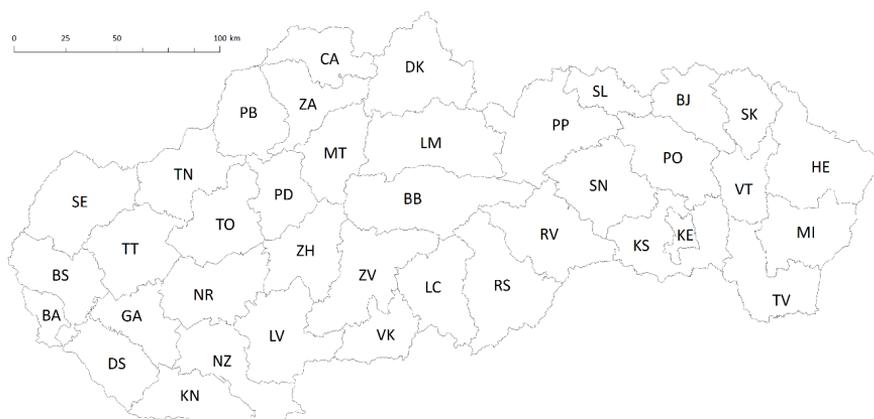
Before 1939, the Roma themselves had a greater share in the persistence of the poor living conditions of the Roma population and their exclusion from society on the territory of Slovakia. There are two main reasons for this assessment. Relatively few of them lived in Slovakia before this year (i) and the prevailing economic activities were generally favourable for their employment (ii). From the aforementioned decree of Maria Theresa in 1761 until the beginning of the Second World War, the Roma had relatively good conditions to gradually integrate into the majority.

After 1948, practically until 1989, the inability to solve the “Roma issue” moved closer to the state, the state had a greater share in the ever-deteriorating situation of the Roma. It is obvious that there were again mainly two reasons, changes in the state's economy, strong industrialization and collectivization of agriculture in the communist era (i) and the rapid growth of the number of Roma population in the territory of Slovakia and its spatial concentration (ii), which made the search for a solution of the Roma issue significantly more difficult and subsequently the steps taken by the state. We have already pointed out the ideological background of the bad approach in the years 1948-1989 and the resulting bad approach of the state. After the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993, the state was able to name the basic causes of the existing situation and the goals for its solution. However, the state often reacted formally, trying to eliminate the most visible shortcomings, while taking a more “vigorous” approach to correcting the existing situation.

Currently, in our opinion, the share of these two actors in the continuation of the bad situation is balanced, they have an equal share in it. To a very slow solution, or both actors contribute equally to the fact that the poor situation of the Roma population in Slovakia is not being resolved and is worsening. The Roma population mainly by clinging to their “traditional” way of life, the state mainly for alibi solutions to this situation. In the next sentence, there is also an explanation for accepting Krugman's recommendation “simplify, simplify, simplify”.

At the end, one note, which we partially mentioned in the work of Korec et al. (2022) and Hajko (2015) also drew attention to this. Despite centuries of living in Slovakia, Roma are different from Slovaks. They are facing (for a century, two centuries?) the fundamental question of whether they are willing to change from within. They can appeal to the majority population to show more friendliness towards them than was the case until now, which is practically impossible. The burden of change therefore remains on the Roma, without that it will not work.

Appendix 1 Identification of the districts of Slovakia



BA – Bratislava	BB – Banská Bystrica	BJ – Bardejov	BS – Bratislava okolie
CA – Čadca	DK – Dolný Kubín	DS – Dunajská Streda	GA – Galanta
HE – Humenné	KE – Košice	KN – Komárno	KS – Košice okolie
LC – Lučenec	LM – Liptovský Mikuláš	LV – Levice	MI – Michalovce
MT – Martin	NR – Nitra	NZ – Nové Zámky	PD – Prievidza
PO – Prešov	PB – Považská Bystrica	PP – Poprad	RV – Rožňava
SE – Senica	RS – Rimavská Sobota	SK – Svidník	SL – Stará Ľubovňa
SN – Spišská Nová Ves	TN – Trenčín	TO – Topoľčany	TT – Trnava
TV – Trebišov	VT – Vranov nad Topľou	ZA – Žilina	ZH – Žiar nad Hronom
ZV – Zvolen	VK – Veľký Krtíš		

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Rómovia na Slovensku – dá sa z tohto začarovaného kruhu vystúpiť?

Súhrn

Podľa viacerých odborníkov a vedeckých bádateľov je situácia veľkej časti rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku zlá a neustále sa zhoršuje. Tento stav je podľa nášho názoru, ak odhliadneme od možno nie najlepších politík a prístupov štátu, regionálnych i obecných inštitúcií k rómskej otázke, dôsledkom najmä troch skutočností.

Prvou je fakt, že spoločenský vývoj po druhej svetovej vojne, hlavne vývoj ekonomiky (industrializácia, kolektivizácia poľnohospodárstva, neskôr mechanizácia/robotizácia, informatizácia, globalizácia a iné), „zobral“ Rómom ich tradičné povolania, ktorými sa dlhú dobu dokázali užiť. Druhou skutočnosťou je prudký rast ich počtu a podielu z celkového počtu obyvateľov Slovenska, pri súčasnej ich vysokej koncentrácii vo vybraných regiónoch, čo podľa viacerých autorov nahráva ich odolnosti voči vonkajším vplyvom a tým sťažuje možnosť ich začlenenia sa do ekonomiky a spoločenského života regiónu a štátu. No a tretia skutočnosť, ktorú treba rešpektovať, je nebývalá sila, ktorou Rómovia „lipnú“ na svojom tradičnom spôsobe života, na svojej kultúre a hodnotách, čo sa v konečnom dôsledku prejavuje na pretrvávajúcom spôsobe ich života.

Hodnotenie štyroch základných javov života rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku, ktoré je urobené v predložennom článku, do značnej miery umožňuje pochopiť tento súčasný nelichotivý stav. Vývoj počtu rómskeho obyvateľstva a jeho rozmiestnenie na Slovensku je prvým z nich, zamestnania rómskeho obyvateľstva v minulosti a problémy jeho zamestnávania dnes druhý, kritický pohľad na opatrenia prijímané štátom na zlepšenie životných podmienok rómskeho obyvateľstva tretí a prezentovanie vybraných problematických javov spojených so životom rómskeho obyvateľstva štvrtým. Tieto štyri javy nie je možné ignorovať pri úvahách nad riešením súčasného, možno povedať, už kritického stavu života rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku.

Pred rokom 1939 mali, podľa nášho názoru, väčší podiel na pretrvavaní zlých životných podmienok rómskeho obyvateľstva a jeho vylúčení zo spoločnosti na území Slovenska, samotní Rómovia. Ako hlavné dôvody tohto hodnotenia je potrebné uviesť hlavne dva. Na území Slovenska ich pred týmto rokom žilo relatívne málo (i) a prevažujúce hospodárske aktivity boli vcelku priaznivé pre ich zamestnávanie (ii). Od nariadenia Márie Terézie v roku 1761 až po začiatok druhej svetovej vojny mali Rómovia pomerne dobré podmienky začleňovať sa postupne do majority.

Po roku 1948 sa prakticky až do roku 1989 presúvalo nezvládanie riešenia „rómskej otázky“ bližšie k štátu. Je zrejmé, že to boli opäť hlavne dva dôvody, ktoré boli v pozadí. Prvou boli zmeny v hospodárstve štátu – silná industrializácia a kolektivizácia poľnohospodárstva v tejto komunistickej ére (i) a druhou spomínaný prudký rast počtu rómskeho obyvateľstva na území Slovenska a jeho priestorová koncentrácia do vybraných regiónov, vrátane vytvárania osobitných sídelných štruktúr (ii). Tieto fakty, do určitej miery sťažili hľadanie riešenia „rómskej otázky“ a následne prijímané kroky štátu. Avšak ideologicky zlý postoj k otázke Cigánov na Slovensku v rokoch 1948-1989 a z toho vyplývajúci zlý prístup štátu bol zrejмый.

Po vzniku Slovenskej republiky v roku 1993 si štát veľmi rýchlo uvedomil zlú situáciu rómskeho obyvateľstva a z toho vyplývajúce nielen sociálne, ale aj economic-

ké negatívne dôsledky. Základné príčiny existujúceho stavu a aj ciele na jeho riešenie boli dobre pomenované. Na druhej strane sa však zdalo, že štát často reagoval iba formálne, snažil sa eliminovať najviditeľnejšie nedostatky, niekedy sa javili jeho prístupy k riešeniu úloh spojených so životom rómskeho obyvateľstva až alibistické. Štát mal zaujať „razantnejší“ prístup k náprave existujúceho stavu.

Príčiny neúspešných snáh o riešenie pretrvávajúceho spôsobu života rómskeho obyvateľstva, od podmienok bývania, cez vzdelanie, zamestnávanie a správanie na verejnosti, je potrebné, podľa nášho názoru, hľadať medzi dvomi pomyselnými „hráčmi“, rómskym obyvateľstvom a štátom. Znie to trochu zjednodušene, ale v zásade sú tu len títo dvaja hráči, Rómovia a štát. Áno je to zjednodušené, ale podľa nášho názoru je to tak a toto je základná otázka: na ktorej strane je (väčšia) chyba, resp. kto má väčší podiel na tom, že sa riešenie zlepšenia života rómskeho obyvateľstva nedarí dosiahnuť? Na jednej strane sú Rómovia, s ich históriou, im vlastnou široko chápanou kultúrou, hierarchiou hodnôt a prístupom k životu. Je Róm ozaj stelesnením slobody, nemusí byť zodpovedný, nemusí mať morálne zábrany, nemusí dodržiavať hygienu, či chodiť 8 hodín do práce, môže žiť bez zábran a iné, ako sa pýtal Hancock (2005)? Štát sa snaží prijímaním zákonov, nariadení, vyhlášok a iných predpisov zlepšiť životné podmienky rómskeho obyvateľstva a začleniť ho plnohodnotne do spoločnosti. K tomu využívať celý rad ďalších možností, vrátane finančných stimulov. Robí to však najlepšie ako sa dá?

V súčasnosti, teda viac ako 30 rokov po vzniku samostatnej Slovenskej republiky, je podľa nášho názoru, podiel týchto dvoch hráčov na pretrvávajúcom zlého stavu vyrovnaný, majú na ňom rovnaký podiel. K veľmi pomalému riešeniu, resp. prakticky k neriešeniu až k zhoršovaniu zlej situácie rómskeho obyvateľstva na Slovensku prispievajú obidvaja hráči v zásade rovnakým dielom. Rómske obyvateľstvo hlavne lipnutím na svojom „tradičnom“ spôsobe života, štát hlavne pre trochu alibistické riešenia tejto situácie.

Na samotný záver je potrebná jedna poznámka, ktorú sme čiastočne uviedli už v práci Korec a kol. (2022) a upozornil na to aj Hajko (2015) i viacerí ďalší autori. Rómovia sú napriek stáročia života na Slovensku iní ako Slováci. Stoja (už storočie, dve storočia?) pred základnou otázkou, či sú ochotní zmeniť sa zvnútra. Môžu apelovať na majoritnú populáciu, aby ukázala väčšiu ústretovosť k nim ako tomu bolo doteraz, čo sa však prakticky už nedá. Bremeno zmeny ostáva teda na Rómoch, bez nej to nepôjde.