

THE PROFILE OF ROMA IN MAJORITY MEDIA* – A Scheme for a Theoretical Research Framework –

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Abstract:

Having recently acquired national minority status, Roma in Serbia were and still are the most frequent target of social distance practiced by the majority people as well as other minorities. Apart from refusing to socialize with them, the majority has created a series of negative stereotypes and prejudices, with few examples of positive attitude. The Serbian media have rarely stood up against such tirades, usually fuelling or, more often than not, instigating them.

Having ascertained the conditions through the analysis of several empirical reports, the authors in this work suggest a list of concrete acts in the media, whose realization would contribute to the genuine appreciation and overcoming of the unenviable position of the Romani national minority in our country, as well as the countries in the region.

Key words: Roma, Serbia, Social Position of Roma, Majority Media, Profile of Roma, Stereotypes and Prejudice, Social Distance, Positive Discrimination.

The Roma in Serbia

According to the census in 2002, there are 108,193 Roma in Serbia. However, demographers estimate that there is a considerably bigger number of the Roma in Serbia, about 450,000. The difference between the established and the estimated number of the Roma is the consequence of "ethnic mimicry", i.e. of the decision of the Roma themselves, who, during the census, declared to be members of some other nationality instead of Romani (Jovanović 2003). The majority of them are in the South-east Serbia, and in some municipalities (Surdulica, Bujanovac, Bojnik, Vladičin Han) the participation of the Roma in total population goes up to 1/3 of the population (*Nacionalne manjine u SR Jugoslaviji /National Minorities in FR Yugoslavia/ 2002:78*). The census data reveal that only 21.9% of

the Roma finish primary school, 7,8% finishes secondary and only 0.3 % have college or academic education. Almost 80% of children who attend schools for children with special needs are of Romani nationality. Nowadays, there are dozens of Romani social and political associations. Since 1989, there is the Committee for Romani life and culture studies under the Serbian Academy of Science and Art, and "The New Testament" and "The Five Books" have been translated to the Romani language. There are broadcasts in the Romani language on the National TV and daily radio broadcasts. In addition, the first independent Romani media have been founded.

The social position of the Roma in our country has been determined for decades by the following characteristic indicators (Митровић 1996:815):

- 1) *residential (spatial) segregation* (life in *ghetto* settlements/districts);
- 2) massive *unemployment* or working on *underpaid, unappreciated and stigmatizing jobs* (street cleaners, undertakers and helpers in factories);
- 3) unavailability of *educational possibilities* (high percentage of the illiterate people and of people with unfinished primary education and a negligible percentage of individuals with college and academic education);
- 4) low levels of *social and health care*;
- 5) the lack of *political participation* as a resource for mobilization and protection of ethnic and cultural identity.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia granted the Roma the status of a national minority in 2002 by adopting the *Law for the protection of rights and liberties of national minorities*. Thus were fulfilled the necessary institutional preconditions for intensifying the process of overall social and economic emancipation of the Roma. Soon afterwards, the first *National council of the Roma from Serbia and Montenegro* was formed, and the Serbian Government

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founded the *Council for national minorities of the Republic of Serbia*. The Romani representatives and the representatives of other national minorities in Serbia participate equally in its work.

The World Bank and The Institute for Open Society organized, in Budapest, in June 2003, the conference "The Roma in Broadened Europe – The Challenges of the Future". On the Conference the high representatives of the countries participating – Serbia and Montenegro, Hungary, Romania, FYR Macedonia, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia and Bulgaria – agreed to start the programme called *The Decade of the Roma Inclusion 2005-2015* and set the fields of education, health, housing and employment as their priorities. The goals of the programme were the reduction of unacceptable differences between the Roma and the rest of the society as well as putting an end to discrimination through development and implementation of national action plans in the areas of priority along with the active participation of national Romani communities in the realization of the Decade. The formal announcement of the beginning of the programme implementation on the international level was held on February 2, 2005 in Sofia when the Prime Ministers of the countries participating signed the *Decade Declaration*. After that, The Government of Serbia, The Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and The National Council of the Romani Minority marked the beginning of the "Decade of the Romani Inclusion" in Serbia on April 7, 2005 in Belgrade.

Before the authorized state institutions lies, already well started, a decade of patient work on creating realistic political, social, economic and cultural preconditions for overall social integration of the Roma. By continuous introduction of the particularities of the Romani ethnos to the surrounding majority, the reasons of social animosity towards them will be gradually reduced and their status as equal citizens affirmed. The political measures taken will raise the levels of educational achievements, living conditions and economic power. Also, the Romani voice will be heard when the guarantees for their full presence on all levels of decision-making and their active role in the public sphere are provided. The full support to creating the necessary preconditions for affirmation of Romani identity must, without fail, be given by the Serbian media. However, this should be done in a more complex and inclusive way than has been done in the past.

The image of minorities in the media

Based on our own experience, we can say that we get information about the problems of national minorities primarily from the media. "This is why it is important to discover what kind of messages about the minorities is being created by the media, how the media report their activities, which minorities are favored and which are neglected" (Tatalović 2003). Our perception of the minority cultures as values depends in great part on these reports. The media are not merely "the reflection of a society", but also "the window into a society".

There have been regular and detailed reports on the role of the mass media from the former SFRY in creating the public opinion about the minority issue (Радојковић 2003; Živković 2004; Filipović 2004; Vilović 2003; Kanižaj 2006; Zeković 2006). In their analyses, the authors agree that the media very often ignore or speak negatively about minorities. The members of minorities have been depicted as different and dangerous; they are described with prejudices, generalizations and stereotypes; they are given the main roles in articles and radio and TV broadcasts about incidents and conflicts; they are connected to the main causes of quarrels, misunderstandings and unsolved problems or, in the political sense, they are perceived as generators of ethnic conflicts; the underestimation and intolerance towards them is propagated; they are the victims of the media manipulation and abuse. In the sea of sensationalistic statements that appall the audience, hardly ever does a "pearl" of tolerance, inclusion in the community life, understanding and co-existence appear.

Along with the Albanians and the Muslims (the Bosniacs), the Roma are the national minority which has always been received by the Serbian majority with a high level of xenophobia, great ethnic distance and a number of prejudices and ethnic stereotypes which represent a significant psychological barrier to integrative processes. The data from empirical research of the Center for sociological research of the Faculty of Philosophy in Nis (Тодоровић 2007а) prior to the latest one are very disturbing. According to this research, a standard high percentage of people who would reject marital relations with the Roma is followed by the fact that almost one third of the participants would avoid being friends and neighbors with the Roma.¹ Apart from using impurity as a "synonym" for the Roma,

¹ More about the social distance from the Roma in Serbia in Тодоровић 2007б.

more than a half of the Serbian people describe the Roma as dishonest and rude. The range of positive stereotypes is centered on their being sensitive, peaceable, hospitable and generous as well as being friendly to other peoples (Todorović and Milošević 2004). The situation is no better in their environment (Marko 2004; Babić 2006).

The editors and the journalists in the majority media amply deepen the afore mentioned prejudices, even contribute to creating the new ones, and forget that the Roma are, just like everybody else, only people with the same short-comings, virtues and hardships. Here and there, albeit rarely, they are sentimentally represented as merry people who sing and dance all the time. More often, the national attribute "Romani", without mentioning names and surnames or followed by initials only, is put in a negative context and connected to questionable or bad intentions; it is often used to evoke the need for precaution, to evoke hostility and even violence. The background should be completely different. Instead of focusing on negative news about the Roma, the focus should be put on finding affirmative stories and giving the opportunity to the Roma for their voice to be heard.

Media reports on the Roma: examples from Serbia (and Bulgaria)

Lela Milošević and Gordana Stojić-Atanasov (2003) have conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the articles in two Serbian daily newspapers with high circulation – *Политика* and *Блиц* – in 2002. The manner of reporting about the Roma in the press creates about them the image of a social group in need of help (they point to the necessity of improving their social and economic positions and objectively state the incidents which included the Roma as victims), but some texts are characterized by qualitatively negative generalizations. The published writings are about politics and culture (the elections, the activities of the international organizations and the local government, conflicts), and the most common themes were: measures for improving the positions and rights of the Roma, Romani education, skinheads' attacks and verbal and physical violence against the Roma. The positive articles describe the lifestyle and customs of the Roma. Two thirds of the texts are concerned with the collective identity of the Roma, and only one third considers Romani men and women as individuals. Other people talk about their activities: 10% of the participants

in social events are quoted, 5% are paraphrased, and the rest (85%) are merely mentioned.² Only every fourth news story from the Romani life is accompanied by visual representations, usually group photos.

While writing the report on human rights in Serbia in 2006, the associates of the Belgrade center for human rights, followed the work of daily newspapers *Политика*, *Вечерње новости* and *Блиц*, weekly magazines *Време* and *Нин*, the news agencies – national news agency *ТАНЈУГ*, private agencies *БЕТА* and *ФОНЕТ*, and internet pages of Radio *Б92*. We have singled out the information referring the members of the Romani national minority (*Human rights in Serbia in 2006*.2007:195-96, 211, 212):

"The Roma, whose number varies between 108,000 (according to 2002 census) and 800,000 (according to the estimates of the activists in Romani organizations), are the most compromised ethnic group in Serbia. Only one in 100 of the Roma lives more than 60 years, and their average life span is 40. About 80% of the Roma are completely or functionally illiterate, and less than 10% of Romani children go to kindergartens. Only 15,000 out of estimated 80,000 of Romani children go to Primary schools, and only 28% of the former finish it. About 7,8% of the Roma finish high schools and only 3 out of 1,000 finish colleges and faculties (*Данас*, March 31, p. 6; *Време*, May 4, pg 38 and *Политика*, April 8, p/ 10).

The social and economic position of the Roma in Serbia is testified by the data indicating that they are the only inhabitants of more than 600 unhygienic settlements and that the percentage of the unemployed among them is 90% (*Време*, February 14, pg 38).

The Roma are the most common victims of nationality-based incidents.

In mid-February, Bogdan Vasiljević, an employee of the sport and recreation center Krsmanovača in Šabac, was sentenced to a year parole because he refused to allow the Roma to enter the swimming pool on June 8, 2000 (*Блиц*, February 14, pg 13).

² The authors give an example where in the press releases from the reception organized on the World Day of the Roma 2002 by the representatives of the Romani minority, there have been quotes of the President and the Federal Minister for National and Ethnic Relations, but not a word from the organizers themselves.

During the same month, the Human Rights Fund (HRF), on behalf of the Romani citizen Dragiša Ajdarević, before the Regional Court in Niš, brought charges against Oliver M. and Nataša M. who had beat up Ajdarević in April 2004 because of his Romani origin.

In March, the Regional Court in Novi Sad sentenced Dolf Pospiš to a year in prison for provoking national, racial and religious hatred by writing Nazi symbols on the walls and threatening to kill the underage DJ for his slightly darker tan in 2004 (*Вечерње новости*, March 28, pg 12).

Towards the beginning of June, G17+ excluded their local official from Pančevo, Zlatko Bekić, against whom the charges were brought for provoking national, racial and religious hatred. During a party meeting, Bekić declared, "we should not worry about the Roma and the Jews since there are already gas chambers ready for them" (*Политика*, June 9, pg 7). During the same month, the unknown persons insulted and beat up three people of Romani nationality in a Belgrade neighborhood Borča. The police have identified the offenders and brought charges against them, but no information about the further development of the case were available at the time when this report was finished (*БЕТА*, June 20). A few days later, the inhabitants of the Romani settlement in Jagodina complained that unknown persons had stoned their neighborhood for a few nights (*Вечерње новости*, June 26, pg 11).

In July, in Ripanj, seven Roma were beaten up by a group of young people who they claimed were skinheads. The police qualified this incident as a common fight (*Блиц*, July 10, pg 14). Some ten days later, in Valjevo, a group of Romani high school kids has been attacked, and the local police again claimed it was nothing but a fight (*БЕТА*, July 21). Towards the end of the month, in the police station in Novi Sad, the police allegedly beaten up four Romany young people who suffered serious body injuries. The police stated that the young people were interrogated for theft, that they were in possession of stolen goods and said the investigation was to be started. Prior to completion of this report, there was no further information about this case (*БЕТА*, July 28, *ТАНЈУГ*, July 29).

In November, in Belgrade, two skinheads were arrested for physical assault on one of the Roma and charges were brought against them (*Блиц*, November 18, p. B5). During the same month, a group of hooligans in Jaša Tomić, allegedly beat up a Romani woman. Romani activists claimed that the assault

was nationality based, while the inhabitants claimed that it was a common fight (*Вечерње новости*, November 8, p. 16).

In the beginning of February, two Romani minors, allegedly, were beaten up by the police in Subotica. According to the claims of the minors and their parents, they were beaten up in order to confess to theft. The police confirmed that they were taken into custody, but denied torturing them (*БЕТА*, February 23).

In July, five police officers from Novi Sad allegedly beat up four Romani men and insulted them on nationality basis. The police officers acquired a confession to theft and a statement that they were not beaten up by them by way of torture (*Вечерње новости*, August 1 and 2, pg 12).

Dragana Mašović (2000) conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses of the texts about the Roma in daily newspapers by monitoring the issues of seven daily newspapers during a seven-day period. It is important to mention that three of the newspapers were of pro-Government orientation, three were considered to be pro-oppositional, while the seventh was a local newspaper published in Niš. In 49 newspapers, there were only eight articles mentioning the Roma. Apart from the fact that there is not enough space dedicated to the Roma in the daily issues (no texts or short and poor texts), general attitude towards them contains yet another problem. All the texts are situated on less attractive positions in the newspapers, and, usually, the articles lack critical comments that would have given a more detailed local representation and better explanations. Then, the motives for writing about the Roma are not the difficulties they are facing, but what they have done, what has been done for them or they are merely used as a means of political propaganda. The themes about the Roma which are considered worth writing about, i.e. worthy of public attention, are either trivial or tragic, and often lacking their personal opinion. In addition, the lack of ethnically mixed articles could have long-term consequences. The texts about Roma are usually related to the Roma exclusively. The exception is made when people are mentioned because of their being connected to the topic by duty.

It is concluded in the work that it is not realistic to expect the media to shape our lives by creating a false image of inter-ethnic co-operation and giving too much attention to infrequent positive occurrences. The media cannot create the relations between ethnic groups if they do not exist, notices the

author, but what should be expected of them is to recognize this lack of communication as the key problem and to devote their significant attention to it.

Nataša Simeunović (2007), a post-graduate at the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade, performed an analysis of the texts from the tabloid daily newspaper *Kypup* between 2003 and 2007. Aware that earlier research regarded tabloids as frivolous newspapers, less sensitive towards ethnic minorities in comparison to "serious" daily newspapers and given over to simplified and sensationalistic writing, nevertheless the author justifies her choice of the given press medium by the fact that, in domestic conditions, it influences the forming of values of a vast circle of readers who are of various educational levels and age.

In the absence of reports about so-called positive stereotypes (The Roma are merry, hospitable, love freedom, music and dance), the author turned to systematization and explaining of the string of negative stereotypes which, as their consequence, could (and really do) provoke further intolerance towards the Romani people. The published texts supported and additionally strengthened the following attitudes of the majority: 1) the Roma ask for charity³, 2) the Roma are dirty⁴, 3) the Roma are lazy⁵, 4) the Roma

are criminals⁶ and 5) the Roma are like animals⁷. Discriminatively intoned contents of the news have unjustly labeled the Romani minority in general and lead to the conclusion that it represented a social hazard.

The summary of the image of the Roma in the media in our country will be complemented by an overview of available research on public opinion about the Roma in Bulgaria, the country in the Balkans in which the social position of the Romani minority is the worst and in which they are perceived as "the social hazard". Their way of life is depicted as a deviation from the norm and, therefore, a danger to normality (Milivojević 2003). There is an insistence on their incidental and criminal actions. They are openly blamed for their own poverty and social exclusion because of their unwillingness to finish schools, their asking for charity, aggressiveness etc. (Mantarova 2006). Elisaveta Ignatova (2006) studied the relations towards the Roma created by the electronic media and, beside examples of the foundations of positive values, she also recorded those with the racist background. They were about the comments on inter-ethnic relations in a daily ten-minute show under the aggressive title *Ataka* (The Attack), which was on during the prime time on a private cable TV channel.⁸ Up until the moment when the

³ "The adult Roma make their children ask for charity and, while the father of the family spends his whole day in a pub, his children "earn" up to 1,000-1,500 dinars" (*Šalju decu u prosjačenje*, Kurir, August 26, 2003).

"At the main bus station, for days, there is a great throng! Bags and pouches all over, hugs and kisses on the platforms, strict watchmen on the ramps and queuing at the windows which sell tickets to seaside... Gypsies of all ages beg the passers-by for some money" (*Krkljnac na štajgi*, Kurir, July 17/18, 2004).

⁴ "Dissatisfied natives of the Block 72 also fear that the coming of the Roma will affect public order and the hygiene of their common space and bring the prices of their apartments down to a minimum (*Stoj, Cigani!*, Kurir, July 12, 2005). "As we speak, in the scenery made of cardboard huts, mud, garbage and immense flocks of seagulls, nothing less than "Hamlet" starring the Roma is being filmed!" (*Hamlet na deponiji*, Kurir, January 16, 2006).

⁵ "A new brand of "Milka" chocolates is being sold these days in the subway at Zeleni Venac by the price of unbelievable 100 dinars per 3 bars! The sweet bars are in the authentic wrapping that differs from the original only in the last letter of the name. Namely, instead of "Milka", they are called "Milke" and their expiry date is valid. The sellers of the cheap chocolate are the Roma who get their dessert from here and there and do not actually know who

and where from brings it" (*Tri Milke za sto dindži*, Kurir, February 18, 2006).

⁶ "They mainly live by social aid and theft. They quarrel and fight, and, recently, there has been a fight of two Romani children which resulted in one of them attacking the other with a knife... The local residents claim that the Roma steal dead poultry from the garbage bins of the local farm and sell it afterwards" (*Tortura*, Kurir, December 4, 2006).

"The word is going that, three years ago, she fell in love with a Romani man, Slobodan, who, after a month, made it possible for five men to rape her. After that, she started to sell her body out of despair. She and L.L. claim that prostitution is impossible without patrons" (*Robinje*, Kurir, June 29, 2006.).

⁷ The joke of the day in a weekend edition: "A man is walking down the street. He sees a guy carrying a Gypsy over his shoulder. / Hey you! What have you done? / Well, don't you know?! It's an open season on Gypsies. You go to a hunting society, you take a gun and.../ The man goes, takes the gun, sees two Gypsies near a dumpster, shoots and kills them./ A policeman approaches him, takes out his hand-cuffs and arrests him./ But why? Isn't it allowed to hunt the Gypsies? /Well, yes, but not on their breeding grounds!" (*Kurir*, December 27/28, 2003).

⁸ During the electoral campaign, the leader of the "Ataka", Volen Siderov, held a series of seven lectures with the topic "Gypsy terror" on a private television "Skat". This

host-journalist of the show became politically involved and attained unexpected success on the elections on all levels in the country in 2005, media analysts, the elite and the politicians paid no attention to his xenophobic and insulting statements aimed at the members of ethnic minorities, and the Roma especially. In addition, the Muslim Roma in Bulgaria are perceived as *the reservoir of Islamic fundamentalism*. In serious academic debates (Колев 2005; Тодорова 2005) the assumptions of spreading untraditional, radical Islam among the socially deprived, isolated, poor and hopeless people were openly considered. It was cited that the Romani followers of Islam, those of Christian origin not being excluded, fulfill all given criteria.

Topalova and Novakov (2006) monitored the articles of different political orientations and attitude towards the Roma in three daily newspapers with large circulations – "Cera" and "Новинар" with the moderate political position and "Атака", the paper of the extremely nationalistic political party between 2000 and 2006. "Cera" published considerably more articles with positive connotation than with negative and placed two times less reports on criminal activities of the members of the Romani population than "Новинар". Over the period of six years only one fifth of the articles in "Cera" and "Новинар" contained the ethnonym "Gypsy", while the rest (over 80%) contained the ethnonym "Roma" which is politically more acceptable in public debates. "Cera" and "Новинар" used the ethnonym "Gypsy" in the negative context in only 5.8% of their titles, i.e. in 4.8 % of the cases. In "Атака" however, after only six months of the foundation of the party with the same name, there were 98 articles the titles of which contained the words "Gypsy" and "Roma" ("Cera" published a total of 335 in six years and "Новинар" of 215 texts, among which, as we have already underlined, there were more of those with positive background), and 79% of them were of negative quality. In this manner, the Roma are labeled by the media in an unacceptable way when it comes to practicing politically correct public speech, and the majority of them act as catalysts and call for stigmatization and discrimination of the weakest ethnic group in the country. The titles with the negative connotation comprise 70.4% of the total number of published articles, and, among these, in 88.7% of the

cases the articles are dedicated to the description of the criminal action of the "sooty guys". The prevailing image of the Roma is completely transparent: the lowest positions on all ladders are guaranteed; they are "the bad guys" who should be not only avoided, but also publicly branded and severely punished. It is obvious that there await us many further efforts to annul the consequences of these manipulations of public opinion and to promote the language of tolerance towards ethnic minorities on both national and regional levels.

From "The Roma next to us" to "The Roma with us"

The Roma are the most socially neglected minority in our surrounding. There are various causes for such a state. They are without strong regional concentration, they live in unurbanized areas, at the outskirts of cities first of all. They have the highest rate of illiteracy and the lowest rate of employment (Đorđević, D. B., Živković, J. and D. Todorović 2002a, 2002b; Jakšić and Bašić 2002, 2005). They do not have social or political power, and their representation in governmental institutions is insignificant (Bašić 2004).⁹ The Roma belong to a group towards which the majority peoples express deep prejudices and stereotypes which prevents their development of the higher levels of adaptation and integration on the level of primary and secondary social relations (Đorđević 1998; Jakšić 2001/2002). They are accused of being responsible for their own fate, unable to change reality and beyond any help.

The third anniversary of Serbian inclusion in the *Decade of the Roma inclusion 2005-2015* is near. The interest for the Roma in the world, the challenges of European integration and the pressure from within by the "third" sector have directed the authorities in our country towards taking concrete measures to provide basic conditions for quality integrations of the Romani into the wider community. We are at liberty to say that there are no stigmatization of the Romani by the highest authorities in Serbia, which is confirmed by the statements of the leading Roma. Their further expectations are directed towards local officials and they range from reproaches for slow application of the law to accusations of exclusion from planning and participating in

radical right wing party won 8.25% of the votes on the parliamentary elections in 2005 using slogans "Out with the Turks and the Roma!", "Gypsies to work camps" and "No to Gypsinization!".

⁹ The Roma managed to provide, thanks to their political parties, two members of the Parliament before the last Parliamentary election in Serbia, but they did not manage to reach the limit in the election 2008.

local events. And for slow reaction and not punishing the individual cases of discrimination, of course. On the other hand, individual examples of breaking the law by the Roma themselves, on which the media abundantly report, provoke the negative odium of the majority citizens and encourage stigmatization "from below". Requests for realizing the rights of the Romani and other minorities are perceived as downright threatening to the majority rights. We are in for an exhausting effort to change the conscience of the citizens when it comes to the Roma.

Connoisseurs of the majority-minority relations point out that "the contemporary (general) approach overpowers the phrase "the problems of the Roma" towards "the problems of non-Roma" when it comes to understanding and accepting Romani uniqueness for the purpose of integrations and tradition preservation" (Hrvatić 2004:368). The roots of expectedly poor results of Romani inclusion in social space in Serbia, and, we dare say without exaggeration, in the majority of the Balkans countries, lie in the following: 1. acquired stereotypes (we most often meet Romani beggars and smugglers); 2. the existence of a significant social distance; 3. the lack of respect and understanding for the Romani language, history, tradition, art and customs (insignificant coverage in the media and educational programmes); and 4. rare close encounters of Romani and non-Romani citizens. In a nutshell, *in the insufficient knowledge among non-Roma about Romani culture*.

The important role in overcoming the discrimination and reaching the equal treatment of the Romani community in Serbian society in the future will be played by their media representation as a collective with the specific ethnic and cultural identities and tradition. After decades of creating stereotypes about the Roma, now it is time for the media to take on the main role in diminishing and removing the stereotypes connected to the Roma. The story about positive discrimination in the media space, apart from providing equal presence to the Roma, means additional sensitivity in editorial approach and reports on existential, social and cultural problems of everyday life which the Romani community is dealing with. Using the Roma as an example, the media will have the chance to promote collective comprehension of difference as not the bare putting up with others but as active respect and tolerance for them. The *Decade of the Roma*, which has already started, is an additional imperative.

Conclusion

The improvement of the media promotion of the Romani minority can be promoted by:

1. the development of higher sensibility by the majority media in the sense that they report more precisely on the differences and that editors and journalists be educated in the field of quality and adequate presentation of minority problems to the public;
2. introducing the public to Romani tradition and cultural creativity by appropriate programme contents on national and local public services in primetime;
3. starting a campaign to teach illiterate people how to read and write and raise awareness about the necessity of including the Romani children in the school system;
4. the encouragement of bilingual and multilingual shows in the electronic media with the purpose of acquiring and getting used to the language of the environment,
5. providing translations of the broadcasts in the Romani language for the wide audience who use the language of the majority as common communication channel;
6. broadening the programmes in the Romani language on the national TV- RTS;
7. employing a certain number of journalists of Romani nationality on national and local news services;
8. the organization of a training in journalism and technology for media associates from the Romani community in local areas (assistants in media teams; correspondent reports about daily events; team work in big radio broadcasts and campaigns, jobs in editorial offices which produce specialized show in the Romani language etc.);
9. encouraging the media to form Romani regional editorial offices;
10. founding and strengthening independent and professional Romani media;
11. the affirmation of the ethical attitude that it is unacceptable to report about individual incidents in a way which brands the whole community;
12. pointing out and criticizing open racist outbursts and the community itself if it does not punish them;
13. discovering affirmative stories instead of focusing on negative news about the Roma;
14. investigative reports in the media about aspects of the marginalized position of the Roma.

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