

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BULLETIN 2/2009

### 1. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

#### **The Amalipe Centre starts a project to reduce school dropout**

Led by the idea that early school leaving (also known as ‘dropout’) is one of the main reasons for the economic exclusion of Roma, Veliko Tarnovo based *Център за междуетнически диалог и толерантност ‘Амалипе’* [Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance] launched a project ‘Creating a Model to Reduce School Dropout of Roma Children’, financed by America for Bulgaria Foundation and aiming at a radical change in school curricula to include intercultural education, life skills and teaching methods and systematic work with Roma parents to strengthen their commitment to their children’s education. The project includes activities such as a seminar ‘Successful Practices for Keeping Roma Children at School through Forms of Intercultural Education’, formulating a theoretical model for reducing Roma children school dropout, publication of didactic and teaching materials and teacher training.

<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=172>

#### **Roundtable on the views of political parties on the integration of the Roma community**

On 28.06.2009 Open Society Institute – Sofia, US National Democratic Institute and Alumni Club of the Young Roma Internship Programme with the National Assembly organised a roundtable on the expectations and attitudes for active inclusion of the Roma community in the platforms of political parties. The main objective of the discussion was to present ideas and views of leading political parties on the integration of the Roma community. It gave the opportunity to discuss the main issues, proposals and mechanisms for including the community and on its expectations and attitudes. There was also the additional aim of improving the overall communication between representatives of main political parties and leaders of Roma non-governmental organisations by putting them into a debate about key issues of Roma integration.

[http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&event\\_id=72](http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&event_id=72)

#### **Attorneys’ anti-discrimination training**

On 19.06.2009 Sofia Bar Association held a training seminar for attorneys on anti-discrimination law, led by Bulgarian Helsinki Committee Legal Programme Director. The seminar was attended by over 50 attorneys – members of the Bar Association. The seminar covered topics like the scope of *Закон за защита от дискриминация* [Law on Protection against Discrimination], proof and burden of proof in anti-discrimination cases, proceedings before *Комисия за защита от дискриминация* [Commission for the Protection against Discrimination], etc. Bulgarian law and practice was looked at from the viewpoint of European anti-discrimination law in an interactive format, including discussions on specific practical problems.

<http://www.bghelsinki.org/index.php?module=resources&lg=bg&id=811>

## 2. LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AND AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

### **Youth in Action against Discrimination**

The Commission for the Protection against Discrimination in partnership with two non-governmental organisations launched a project 'Youth in Action against Discrimination' financed under the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission. The project aims at involving young people into active discussion and creative work, raising their awareness and civic commitment to anti-discrimination and equality, as well as encouraging dialogue and cooperation between formal and non-formal education. Project activities include regional youth meetings in six pilot municipalities with about 150 young people, municipal administrations, educational institutions and non-governmental organisations, some of which have already taken place. It is also envisioned to develop a website, an information brochure and a film.

<http://www.kzd->

[nondiscrimination.com/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1&limit=10&limitstart=10](http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1&limit=10&limitstart=10)

### **'I Want to Be' Sports Initiative**

The '*Искам да бъда*' [I Want to Be] sports initiative, implemented for a fourth consecutive year by *Държавна агенция за младежта и спорта* [State Agency for Youth and Sport] and supported by the Open Society Institute, took place in June 2009, aiming at encouraging interethnic tolerance through sport. Twelve football teams of children of different ethnicity from three Bulgarian municipalities played to win the trophy for fairplay, sportsmanship and tolerance. The project was supported by a media campaign, involving former and present players from the national football team, who appealed for interethnic tolerance in sport and in society. The initiative is part of the Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

[http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news\\_id=261](http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=261)

### **'I Do Not Sell My Vote' Campaign**

On 29.06.2009 a national campaign '*Не продавам гласа си!*' [I Do Not Sell My Vote] was launched by Open Society Institute – Sofia, US National Democratic Institute and Alumni Club of the Young Roma Internship Programme with the National Assembly. The campaign preceded the national parliamentary elections of 5.07.2009 and addressed the notorious phenomenon of 'buying' and 'selling' votes, especially in Roma neighbourhoods. It included the distribution of flyers and posters and direct campaigning among Roma communities in several towns. The campaign was a follow-up of similar initiatives, having taken place in 2005 and 2007.

<http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=news&id=173>

### 3. RESEARCH

#### **Publication of the book ‘Selected Standards of Anti-Discrimination Law’**

In May 2009 *Български хелзинкски комитет* [Bulgarian Helsinki Committee] presented the book ‘Selected Standards of Anti-Discrimination Law’, which is the second book in the series ‘Anti-Discrimination Law in Bulgaria: Standards and Practice’ after ‘Caselaw of the Supreme Administrative Court and the Administrative Court of the City of Sofia under the Law on Protection against Discrimination’, presented in March 2009. The book, written by the BHC Legal Programme Director Margarita Ilieva, contains a selection of European, international and comparative standards of anti-discrimination law, reflecting key problems and challenges in the jurisprudence on the Bulgarian Law on the Protection against Discrimination. Examples are included from the case law of the EC Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights, as well as of domestic courts in EU jurisdictions and UN bodies.

<http://www.bghelsinki.org/index.php?module=resources&lg=bg&id=811>

#### **Publication of the book ‘Roma Dropouts’**

In June 2009 the book ‘*Отпадащите ромци*’ [Roma Dropouts], written by researchers from the Institute of Sociology with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences with the support of the Open Society Institute in Sofia, was presented. It looks at the problems, related to the mass-scale dropping out of Roma children from school and from the educational system as a whole. The book reports that between 1990 and 2007 between 10,000 and 33,000 children, mostly Roma, dropped out of school each year, creating an increasing group of young uneducated people, unprepared from the conditions of the labour market, while the measures undertaken so far are allegedly fragmentary and unsystematic. In the book, the phenomenon of ‘Roma dropouts’ is analysed by means of a varied set of qualitative and quantitative methods and from the perspective of different key stakeholders.

[http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news\\_id=258](http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=258)

[http://osi.bg/downloads/File/Presenta-Otpadashti%20romi-9\\_06\\_2009.ppt](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/Presenta-Otpadashti%20romi-9_06_2009.ppt)

#### **Presentation of analysis ‘What Political Parties Offer on the Roma Issue’**

Prior to the national parliamentary elections of 5.07.2009 the Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance presented an analysis, entitled ‘What Political Parties Offer on the Roma Issue’ and authored by Deyan Kolev. The analysis looks at the election platforms of political parties and their campaign activities and attempts to describe what they offer on the Roma issue and whether they give Roma representatives in their lists of MP candidates actual chances of being elected. Concerning platforms, the analysis finds that, with some notable exceptions on the part of the now winning political party *ГЕРБ* [GERB], most parties avoided the topic and others included just some generalised principles. As for Roma representatives in MP candidates’ lists, many parties offered a couple of more or less leading positions to Roma in the lists, which drives the author to the conclusion that, as in most previous parliaments, there will be Roma MP’s, but their number will be disproportionately low.

[http://amalipe.com/files/file/analizi/partii\\_romi.pdf](http://amalipe.com/files/file/analizi/partii_romi.pdf)

#### 4. Official / unofficial statistical data

##### **Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minorities in Bulgaria**

On 21.07.2009 a team of researchers from the Open Society Institute in Sofia presented its report 'Социални дистанции и етническите стереотипи за малцинствата в България' [Social Distances and Ethnic Stereotypes about Minorities in Bulgaria]. The report looks at space and labour, as well as educational distances among the ethnic majority and different groups of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria. The team surveyed 1,144 adult persons as a regionally stratified nationally representative sample. Regarding space distances, the report finds, *inter alia*, that Bulgarians are most willing to have as closest neighbours citizens from other EU Member States (55.0 per cent), while Roma are among the least preferred groups (26.3 per cent). As for educational distances, Bulgarians again prefer, *inter alia*, citizens from other EU Member States (23.2 per cent), if their children have to study in classes where representatives of ethnic and national minorities are more than 2/3 of the students, while Roma are preferred by 4.1 per cent.  
[http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news\\_id=268](http://osi.bg/?cy=10&lang=1&program=1&action=2&news_id=268)  
<http://osi.bg/downloads/File/SocialDistancesReport.pdf>

##### **Survey on discrimination against refugees and immigrants**

In July 2009 the Commission for the Protection against Discrimination released preliminary results of the survey it commissioned on discrimination in employment, education and access to goods and services against refugees, immigrants and other groups of foreigners in Bulgaria. The survey included 1,202 adult Bulgarian citizens and 515 refugees, immigrants and other foreigners in the country. In its section on ethnic tolerance, the survey finds, *inter alia*, that 56 per cent of Bulgarian citizens would agree to have as neighbours immigrants, refugees and other groups of foreigners, while for marrying/living in co-habitation with a refugee/immigrant/another foreigner the percentage drops to 35 per cent and for allowing one's child to marry/live with a representative of those groups the share of those agreeing rises to 41 per cent.  
[http://kzd-nondiscrimination.com/images/stories/pdf/Komisija\\_po\\_diskriminacia\\_160709.ppt](http://kzd-nondiscrimination.com/images/stories/pdf/Komisija_po_diskriminacia_160709.ppt)