



# **Baseline Study on Roma Housing in the Municipality of Prilep**

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## List of Acronyms

ESA - Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia

SSO - State Statistical Office

EIDHR - European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

LSGU - Local Self-Government Unit

PE - Public Enterprise

LLG - Local Leader Group

MoLSP - Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

IMCSA - Inter-municipal Center for Social Affairs

MoES - Ministry of Education and Science

NAP - National Action Plan

UN - United Nations

UNHCHR - United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

HRBA - Human Rights Based Approach

RIC - Roma Information Center



# 1. Introduction

This Baseline Study is part of the project “Roma Housing Rights for Sustainable Urban Development” implemented by Habitat Macedonia in collaboration with “ROMA S.O.S.” - Prilep, “Sumnal” - Skopje (Chair) and “Cherenja” - Shtip. This project has started in December 2015 and is financed by the European Union, under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The Project is being implemented in three municipalities: Prilep, Shtip and Chair (Skopje). Its aim is to strengthen the inclusion and participation of local Roma communities in social inclusion processes in the area of housing. The project will strengthen the local mechanisms for collaboration and networking; motivate participation of Roma in decision-making processes at local level, in the process of community development, urban development and social inclusion. The project, inter alia, will implement the following activities:

- Establishment of Local Leader Groups (LLG) in the three municipalities;
- Mentor support for LLG during the project implementation;
- Conducting over 15 workshops and trainings at local and national level;
- Preparing and publishing three baseline studies for Shtip, Prilep and Chair, that will give an overview and analysis of the housing situation and the level of urbanization in the so called Roma settlements;
- Preparation of a Study on the Sustainable Urban Development of Sub-standard Settlements, which will analyze the status of housing and urban development, with a focus on local and national policies in the fields of housing and urbanization processes.

The general aim of this Baseline Study is to define the conditions in the housing and urbanization of Roma settlements in the municipality of Prilep.

The specific objective is to determine the problems related to the housing, right to housing and access of local self-government in relation to the urban development of Roma in the aforementioned municipalities.

The basis for the development of the Baseline Study was the survey conducted in 600 families who live in the so called Roma settlements in the municipality of Prilep. During the development of the



Baseline Study, a series of meetings was organized with citizens and responsible persons in the municipality of Prilep and relevant institutions. Also analysis of current legal solutions that regulate the housing in the country and in the municipality was carried out. With this Baseline Study, we will try to present the current situation of Roma in the municipality of Prilep and help to better understand the problems and needs of Roma community related to the housing. Moreover, the Baseline Study should serve as a basis for defining the priority needs of the local community, for mobilization of citizens and their inclusion in the decision-making processes at local level, as well as for increasing the involvement of local authorities in the housing area and sustainable urban development.

In all three municipalities where the project is being implemented, i.e. in the so called Roma settlements, a certain improvement of housing conditions has already been noticed. This is due to several factors: increased awareness of citizens regarding the housing and change of living habits of Roma community, as well as increased number of initiatives of the local government for improving the living conditions in the suburb settlements.

## 2. Municipality of Prilep

In historical resources, Prilep had been mentioned for the first time in 1014. The city territory and its surrounding area had been one of the most important strategic, political and military areas of this part of the Balkans.

The municipality of Prilep<sup>1</sup> is located in the central part of the southern region of the Republic of Macedonia, and in the northern part of the biggest wheat producing region in the country, Pelagonia. The municipality stretches 1,195 km<sup>2</sup> and according to the area, it is the biggest municipality in Macedonia. There are in total 59 inhabited places - the City of Prilep and 58 villages. As concerns the number of citizens, the municipality is on the fifth position out of 84 municipalities in total. The municipality also spreads on one part of the uplands of Mariovo, which borders with the Republic of Greece.

According to the Census in 2002, 76,768 citizens had been registered in the municipality of Prilep, of whom 93.2% were Macedonians. Of the total population in the municipality of Prilep, 89% (69,704 citizens) live in the city, whereas the remaining ones or 11% (7,064) citizens live in the rural areas.

The distance of Prilep from the City of Skopje is 135 km, and the distance from the two airports in the country is 130 km from the airport "Alexandar the Great" in Skopje and 125 km from the airport "St. Paul" in Ohrid.

Prilep is 50 km far from the southern border of Macedonia (with Greece). There is a railway line passing through the city, which connects Bitola, Veles, Prilep and Skopje, and through Skopje, the city is connected with other countries. The distance of Prilep from Thessaloniki, Greece (airport and sea-port) is approximately 210 km, and it is connected with Skopje and Thessaloniki via the highway E-75 and trunk road A-3. The distance from the sea-port in Durrës, (Albania) is 240 km, and from the sea-port in Igoumenitsa (Greece) is 350 km.

Prilep is part of the Pelagonia Planning Region. The Pelagonia Planning Region plays a significant role in enhancing the favorable business environment and supports the process of increasing the domestic and foreign investments and competitiveness of the entire economy by fostering the entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as by promoting the tourism and natural and cultural values.

According to data from the State Statistical Office, the Skopje Region had the biggest share in the GDP of the Republic of Macedonia in 2011, with 42.4%, whereas the Northeast Region had the smallest

<sup>1</sup> Strategy for Local Economic Development of the Municipality of Prilep, 2014-2020, December 2014.

share, with only 5.5%. The share of Pelagonia Planning Region in the GDP of the Republic of Macedonia in 2011 was 11.6%.

The economy of the municipality of Prilep plays an important role in the economy of the Republic of Macedonia. Data from the State Statistical Office (MAKSTAT Database, 2013) show that in the country there are 71,290 business entities registered. If this number is compared to the number of business entities in the municipality of Prilep, which is 2,763, it can be concluded that Prilep contributes significantly to the economy of the country,

As in other regions, the micro and small enterprises are the most important drivers of the economic development. Micro and small enterprises participate with 99% in the overall production.

The economy in Prilep is mainly focused on the following sectors: tobacco industry, food industry, mining, agriculture (with the tobacco as the most important crop), textile industry, trade, industry for production of machinery and robotics, metal processing industry etc.

The biggest portion of revenues of population in the municipality of Prilep is earned from agriculture, with tobacco, cereals and vegetables as the most important crops. The stock breeding is also very much present in the municipality of Prilep.

Through the trunk road A1 - section Gradsko - Prilep, the municipality of Prilep is connected with the motorway Kumanovo - Gevgelija, which is actually the connection with the capital city and all other municipalities from the central and eastern part of the country. The trunk road A-3 is the connection with Bitola and the border crossing Medjitlia and Republic of Greece, as well as with Prespa and Ohrid Regions, whereas with the western part of the country, Prilep is connected via the regional roads R-1303 with Kichevo and R-1306 with Krushevo.

The road network in the municipality of Prilep consists of roads and streets. Municipal roads connect the city with populated places, and with the national roads, or they provide a connection with tourist, sport and recreational centers and cultural and historical sites of local importance. Forty four (44) roads are categorized as municipal roads in the municipality of Prilep. The total length of the municipal road network is 220 km.

The length of the street network in the City of Prilep is 170 km, while the length of the street network in populated rural areas is 100 km. Eighty-five percent of all city streets with length of 170 km are with modern asphalt roadways, whereas the remaining 15% are gravel roads and only a small portion are unpaved.

Republic of Macedonia, including Prilep as part of it, belongs to the area with moderate continental climate. The municipality of

Prilep and the surrounding area are located at an altitude of 550-700 meters. The Prilep Field is surrounded by high mountains (1,500 m) which create conditions for this moderate continental climate.

The average annual minimum temperature according to the measuring point in Prilep is 6.1°C, whereas the absolute maximum temperature is as high as 39.4°C.

Roma population in the municipality of Prilep as well as in most of other municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia is concentrated in one part of the city, in one or several settlements. In Prilep, they are living in the settlement "Trizla". This community has a tendency of creating new neighborhoods in the areas surrounding the city, such as: Tri Bagremi, Gorna Debarca and alike. In Prilep, according to the last Census, there are 4,433 Roma, but the associations of citizens who work in this area, think that their number is higher, approximately between 6,000 and 7,000 Roma.

According to the information from the Employment Service Agency (31.12.2016) regarding the unemployment rate of Roma community in Prilep, there are 760 Roma who are unemployed, of who 331 are women.

During the past ten years, in the part of the city populated by Roma population, several infrastructure projects have been carried out, such as placing asphalt on streets, blanket course of crushed stone, construction of water supply and sewage networks, street lights, improvement of conditions in the local school, construction of a mosque for the population with Islam religion etc. Nevertheless, there is still a need for improving the streets in the community, the street lighting, hedging the river beds and alike.

Regarding the housing conditions and conditions in the local environment, a survey was conducted among 600 selected citizens who were considered a representative sample, all of whom were Roma, from the entire territory populated with Roma population. Also semi-structured interviews were conducted by representatives of the local self-government and workshops for the citizens in the so called Roma neighborhoods. The most active party in this survey was the local leader group consisting of citizens of "Trizla".

### 3. Home and Housing

Home is where one starts from - Thomas S. Eliot said. We could add that the home is the “safe place”, a place where we feel protected and surrounded by people we love and respect.

Living in a descent home enables the further human development. A number of documents, reports and declarations emphasize the fact that the housing represents a basis for the human development, as it has an impact on his/her health condition, social security, education, working and earning income, as well as on many other primary needs and rights for decent living.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the Organization of the United Nations, in Article 25 highlights that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control”.<sup>2</sup>

According to the National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion of the Republic of Macedonia, “social exclusion in terms of housing is a rather complex social phenomenon strongly interrelated with other forms of social marginalization. The three primary barriers to decent housing - economic, cultural and legal, are concomitantly in relation with persons who face social exclusion on these grounds, as well as with the places of living which are marginalized due to certain social circumstances”.<sup>3</sup>

In everyday life, housing is most often linked only with the place where the individual or the family lives, without linking it with other aspects of the social and economic development, such as the health, education, economic activity, social capital, community development etc.

The problem of poor housing in the Republic of Macedonia is particularly prominent during the past years. Housing in substandard conditions, both in urban and rural areas is mainly a consequence of the long process of transition of the society, which caused impoverishment of the majority of citizens. Families whose members were capable to work lost their jobs, especially those living in cities, and despite the fact that they are owners; they are not capable to invest in maintaining their homes, or invest in construction or buying new

2 Article 25 (1), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, OUN, 1948, according to: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

3 The National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion of the Republic of Macedonia 2010 - 2020 p.

homes. Thus, most of the families in urban areas live in small flats which are overpopulated because they accommodate several generations. They have weak thermal insulation both on the walls and windows and have not been well maintained, which is the main cause of a wide range of problems related to the internal infrastructure of buildings.

According to the research of the World Bank<sup>4</sup> of urban housing, substandard living conditions are causing:

- loss of physical capital due to devaluation of the home,
- impairment of social capital,
- impairment of opportunities for finding a job and economic security,
- impairment of physical and health security,
- inability to use the home as a source for generation of income.

When analyzing the housing problems, it must be viewed from two standpoints - social and individual. Nevertheless, it must also be highlighted that these two different stand points are also inter-related. When analyzing the housing from a social stand point, the following should be taken into consideration: demographic changes, quality and locations of current residential fund, construction of new flats, purchasing power of population and economic development of the community. The individual, bearing in mind his/her own needs is interested in the quality of the supply and how affordable it is.

Of course, demographic characteristics of population, including the contemporary transformation of families, family income, culture of living, age structure and size of the family are also important when defining the housing needs. Other factors with significant impact are the following: infrastructural coverage, price of utilities and security of the adjacent surrounding of the flat, protection of residential right, protection of the environment etc., the provision of which should be supported by various entities, but most of all by institutions of the system.

## Housing of Roma population

Housing conditions of Roma population, which is an extremely endangered category of citizens, are utterly unfavorable and represent risks for the health, social security, education and employment, thus placing this category of citizens on the margins of the society.

<sup>4</sup> <http://go.worldbank.org/M0LW0G49O0>.

The report “Roma Community in the Republic of Macedonia - Conditions and Challenges in Housing and Health” highlights the following: “Roma families very often live in inappropriately built sub-standard homes, with no proper water supply system for drinking and sanitation; homes of Roma families are small, planned only for performing and satisfying the basic needs, with a living space of less than 5 square meters per family member in more than 50% of this population. As high as 77% of families have toilets (or outhouses) in their yards, and 58% use a tap for water supply outside of their home; furthermore, almost 10% of the Roma population do not have a water supply system for drinking water and daily hygiene. It is estimated that approximately 50% of these families still do not have an appropriate solution for the waste water from their homes”<sup>5</sup>

According to the last census in the Republic of Macedonia (2002), the entire population counts approximately 2 million citizens, of whom 53,879 or 2.66% are Roma. Almost 60% of the entire population of the Republic of Macedonia live in cities. This is also typical for the Roma population, who mainly live in cities, with some minor exceptions. The census shows that 43% of Roma live in the capital, and half of them are citizens of the municipality of Shuto Orizari.

The documentation that has been developed during the ten-year work of “Habitat-Macedonia” on improving the substandard housing, shows the following problems related to the housing of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia:

- living in illegally built houses,
- overpopulated homes, with several generations living in the same house,
- discrimination in using the right to housing,
- substandard quality of homes, which is a risk for the health and safety,
- non-citified settlements and problems related to utilities,
- insufficient initiatives (on national and local level) for overcoming the problems related to the housing of Roma community.

Realization of the **right to housing** requires active inclusion of the entire community, first of all, inclusion of national and local authorities, as well as leaders of Roma community. Mechanisms for participation of citizens in decision-making processes are insufficiently developed, as well as the capacities of citizens who do not know well their housing rights.

<sup>5</sup> Roma Community in the Republic of Macedonia - Conditions and Challenges in Housing and Health, Milevska-Kostova Nada, Eminova Enisa, 2008.

Living in substandard dwellings, with inappropriate sanitation, ghettoization, lack of water supply, sewage, power supply, deteriorated health conditions are frequent problems of this community.

The housing right is contained in numerous international documents which impose on the signatory countries obligations for undertaking activities for improving the living conditions of all citizens in the country. This right has been globally accepted by the United Nations and other world forums, which resulted with its incorporation in a number of conventions of human rights. At the same time, the ratification of these documents reflects the readiness of the state to respect and ensure the human right for housing, thus obliging itself to recognize the right to a relevant housing standard.

The efforts of the United Nations in regard to the housing rights and urban planning are the most evident in the three conferences “Habitat” which have been organized since 1976 until present. The first “Habitat” conference (“Habitat I”) took place in Vancouver, United States of America in 1976. The outcome was the Vancouver Declaration for Human Settlements, by which governments have started to recognize the need for development of sustainable human settlements and the consequences of fast urbanization, especially in developing countries. The second “Habitat” conference (“Habitat II”) took place in Istanbul in 1996. Its focus was on the right to appropriate housing. The document adopted at this conference imposes an obligation on the states to develop action plans, which include the obligation of the Government to help the population in resolving their housing issues. As a result of the reached agreement at the special session of the General Assembly of the UN, a “Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium” was adopted in June 2001<sup>6</sup>. This document has once again confirmed the commitment of states to ensure access to adequate housing, which implies healthy, safe and financially affordable housing which also includes basic utilities, traffic accessibility, freedom of choice, and legal security of users of flats. The third “Habitat” conference (“Habitat III”) on housing and sustainable urban development was held in October 2016, in Quito, Ecuador, and ended successfully with the adoption of the New Urban Agenda. This New Urban Agenda is a document in the form of an action plan, which establishes new global standard for achieving sustainable urban development throughout the world and reviews the current ways of living in cities.<sup>7</sup>

In the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultur-

6 “Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium”, June 2001.

7 See more on: <http://unhabitat.org/>.



al Rights, the General comment no. 4 which refers to Article 11<sup>8</sup> of this Convention, the Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations, *inter alia*, defines the term “adequate housing” as a legal security in housing<sup>9</sup>.

Bearing in mind the overall transition process in the country, the modern style of living caused a number of changes not only in the housing, but also in other areas of life, which are following the contemporary trends. As mentioned in the Housing Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia (2007-2012), the transition towards market economy imposed a different valuation system, where the apartment is not only a social category, but first of all, a market category. However, it does not mean that the Republic of Macedonia, which is defined as a social state by the Constitution, will not take care of its own citizens. This commitment, which is also defined in the Constitution, must be achieved by harmonizing the legislation and institutions in charge of the housing, while at the same time continuing the privatization process of the housing stock by establishing a holder of ownership.

The Law on Housing regulates the types of facilities for housing, management of residential buildings, relations among owners of separate parts and third parties, community of owners, database of apartments, tenancy relations in housing, manner of managing and maintaining facilities, rights and obligations of the state, municipalities, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje in relation to the housing, inspection and management supervision and other housing related issues<sup>10</sup>. This law is particularly important for the citizens because it precisely regulates the management of residential buildings and stipulates the rights and obligations of owners of separate parts; relations among owners in a residential building, as well as between owners and third parties; defines the rights and obligations of communities of owners; rights and obligations of licensed managers of buildings and prescribes sanctions for failing to respect

8 Article 11, paragraph 1 reads: “States, signatories of this Convention, recognize the right of every person and his/her family to adequate standards of living, which includes adequate food, clothing and housing, and constant improvement of living conditions. States, signatories of this Convention will undertake relevant steps for ensuring this right, recognizing that the international cooperation is of crucial importance if based on a freely express will”. (Housing Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia, 2007-2012, p.6, MoLSP, 2007).

9 Housing is expressed in various forms, including renting public or private accommodation, joint housing, leasehold, possession, accommodation in emergencies, informal settlements, including taking over a territory or property. Regardless of the type of housing, all persons should have a certain level of security in their housing, which guarantees legal protection against forced eviction, mistreatment or other threats. (Housing Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia, 2007-2012, p.6, MoLSP, 2007).

10 <http://www.domuvanje.org.mk/03.php> (last time visited in October 2016)

the legal provisions.

Issues in the area of housing at local level are part of the scope of work of a large number of institutions. According to the competences and responsibilities of the local self-government unit, the Council and Mayor<sup>11</sup> are the key bodies in the municipalities. The local self-government is directly in charge of the local economic and urban development of the municipality. See more on the jurisdiction and competences of the municipality in Annex 1.

Housing of Roma is defined as one of the sectoral priorities of our state. During the Roma Decade, national actions plans for housing had been developed, which in some municipalities were further developed into Local action plans for housing adopted by the municipal councils. In general, these plans are focused on improving the conditions of Roma through legalization of houses built without construction permits and enhancing the infrastructure and living conditions in Roma settlements.

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11 Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia no. 5/2002, Law on Local Self-Government.

## 4. Housing in the Municipality of Prilep

According to the 2002 Census, there are 53,879 Roma<sup>12</sup> (i.e. 2.66% of the total number of population) living in the Republic of Macedonia. According to the State Statistical Office's estimates of 31.12.2015, the total population in the Republic of Macedonia is 2,071,278 citizens<sup>13</sup>, of whom 54,871 are Roma.

Roma are significantly younger population in relation to the majority of population in the countries where they live (European countries). A total of 25-30% of Roma are at the age below 15, which is higher than the average of 10% of the majority populations. Also, the demographic data indicate that the Roma population in the Republic of Macedonia, on average, consists of younger population compared to the average age in our country. Due to the different birth rate and mortality rate relative to the national average, Roma children have greater share than older people in their own ethnic group. It is evident that the birth rate among Roma population is twice higher than the average in the country, but also the mortality rate among Roma children, which is twice higher than in other ethnic groups.<sup>14</sup>

In the Municipality of Prilep, there are 76,768 citizens, of whom 4,433 are Roma. The biggest portion of Roma population in the municipality of Prilep live in the settlements "Trizla 1" and "Trizla 2", in the so called neighborhoods: "Mexico", "Deboj", "Dabnichka", "Novo Selo" and "Tri Bagremi". The municipality of Prilep has adopted documents pertaining to the needs and problems of Roma, such as the Local Action Plan for Employment of Roma 2012-2015<sup>15</sup> and Local Action Plan for Roma Health in the Municipality of Prilep 2011-2015<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, the problems and needs of Roma population are taken into consideration in all documents developed by the municipality: Strategy for Local Economic Development of the Municipality of Prilep-2014 - 2020<sup>17</sup>, Local Action Plan for Children's Rights in the Municipality of Prilep<sup>18</sup> and Local Youth Strategy 2011 - 2015<sup>19</sup>.

Unemployment is one of the biggest problems of Roma popula-

12 <http://www.stat.gov.mk/publikacii/knigaIX.pdf>.

13 <http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto.aspx?id=2>.

14 Analysis of Roma situation in Gostivar, p. 7, "Habitat Macedonia", Skopje 2012.

15 [http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/akcioni/LAP %20 %20Romi %20Prilep %20 FINAL.pdf](http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/akcioni/LAP%20%20Romi%20Prilep%20FINAL.pdf).

16 <http://www.prilep.gov.mk/informacii/mk/akcioni-planovi-1/>.

17 [http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/strateski/Strategija %20za %20LER %20na %20 Opstina %20Prilep %202014-2020.pdf](http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/strateski/Strategija%20za%20LER%20na%20Opstina%20Prilep%202014-2020.pdf).

18 <http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/akcioni/lpapidopp.pdf>.

19 [http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/akcioni/Lokalna %20Mladinska %20Strategija %20Prilep.pdf](http://www.prilep.gov.mk/content/file/akcioni/Lokalna%20Mladinska%20Strategija%20Prilep.pdf).

tion not only in Prilep, but also in general, in the whole country. It has a direct impact on the living conditions of Roma, including the housing. The lack of opportunities for earning income for living impedes the further development of the individual, the family and the community. According to the latest data from the Employment Service Agency (ESA) regarding the unemployment in Prilep, a total of 6,712 unemployed people were registered by 31.12.2016<sup>20</sup>, of which 760 are Roma and 331 are Roma women. (See Table 1 and 2 for a presentation of the level of education of unemployed Roma citizens in the Municipality of Prilep and their age structure.)

**Table 1.** Level of education of unemployed Roma citizens in the Municipality of Prilep<sup>20</sup>

Municipality	Total unemployed Roma		No education and primary education		Incomplete secondary education		Completed secondary education		Completed secondary education		Post-secondary education	
	are	Women	are	Women	are	Women	are	Women	are	Women	are	Women
Prilep	760	331	730	320	8	3	21	7	0	0	1	1

**Table 2.** The age structure of unemployed Roma in the Municipality of Prilep<sup>21</sup>

Municipality	15-19		20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60 +	
	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W	are	W
Prilep	16	11	56	26	59	32	89	43	110	52	107	40	97	40	88	38	78	28	60	21

As concerns the use of employment measures by Roma population, ESA's data show that in Prilep, in 2016, 75 Roma applied for some of the measures from the Operational Plan of ESA, whereas contracts for use of these employment measures were concluded with 65

<sup>20</sup> Data obtained from the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia through a request for obtaining access to information of public nature.

<sup>21</sup> Data obtained from the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia through a request for obtaining access to information of public nature.

of them. A certain number of unemployed Roma do not register in the local employment centers.

Legalization of illegally constructed houses is one of the key problems related to the housing of Roma. During the period 2011-2015, 281 families in Prilep filed an application for a loan under the project Legalization of Roma Housing, implemented by “Habitat Macedonia”, and approval was granted to 261 families.

The association “ROMA S.O.S.” is one of the three active organizations in the municipality of Prilep, whose target group is the Roma population. On the other hand, the office of “ROMA S.O.S.” is the only one located in the settlement “Trizla 2”, where approximately 95% of Roma population live, hence, the activities they implement are the most accessible to those who really need them.

The fact that the office is open every day for 8 hours, and the staff of the association is available and open to respond to the community’s needs, the following activities are being implemented on a continuous basis:

- strengthening the legal capacities (information, assistance, legal advice and education for implementation of legal provisions during realization of their rights),
- representation (direct cooperation with institutions, relevant organizations and other organizations in charge of right protection, monitoring implementation of legislation, legal correspondence: writing petitions, complaints, applications, requests, statements and reports when identifying errors and omissions in procedures, filing urgent requests, reactions, as well as organization of public meetings or press-conferences in case of becoming aware that institutions have been silent regarding certain requests or have failed to undertake protective measures),
- strategic litigation (preparation of legal analysis of legal provisions that are considered as systematic impediments during realization of rights, raising initiatives before legislative bodies for amendments and supplements in the legislation, documenting cases of people who faced unequal treatment when accessing various services, direct cooperation and consultations with law firms and judiciary bodies for providing support during legal procedures to persons who faced violation of their rights),
- - non-discrimination (monitoring the implementation) of the Law on Prevention and Protection of Discrimination, documenting cases of people who faced discrimination, submission of petitions

to the Commission for Protection from Discrimination and monitoring the procedures, direct cooperation and consultations with other associations, members of the National Network for Protection from Discrimination.

- - fight against poverty (direct cooperation and consultations with other associations, members of the Macedonian Platform against Poverty, initiation of field activities for dealing with poverty),
- - protection of women and children (conducting targeted surveys and training on specific issues, promotion of education for gender equality, monitoring and promotion of public policies).

All of the aforementioned activities are in the light of encouraging and mobilizing the Roma community, public actualization of problems/obstacles, communication and coordination of stakeholders, as well as promotion and enhancing the civil rights.

## 5. Methodology for Development of the Baseline Study

Baseline Study on the Status of Roma Housing in the Municipality of Prilep, in essence is a participatory analysis, prepared via a survey of 600 citizens in the so called Roma neighborhoods in Prilep, semi-structured interviews with representatives of the local self-government and regional units of relevant ministries and representatives of the civil society, consultations with the Local Leader Group (established under this project), contribution of individuals and people involved in the activities of the association of citizens "ROMA S.O.S.", use of data, opinion and analysis of published documents and alike.

For the effective development of the Baseline Study, the successful cooperation with the association of citizens "ROMA S.O.S." was of crucial importance, because it worked on the implementation of the project, as well as with the local self-government of the municipality of Prilep.

Another important factor for the successful development of this study was the involvement of representatives of the Roma community in conducting the survey. Namely, members of the Local Leader Group, after having passed the training, became the actual interviewers who visited the homes of their townsmen and through a conversation with them, they filled in the questionnaire. This method of work contributed in acquiring higher level of knowledge about the housing, especially among the members of the Local Leader Group. They are expected to continue with their efforts to make the so called Roma settlements a decent place for living, providing opportunities for development to each individual and to the entire community. The survey among the population was conducted during August 2016 and was coordinated by the civil society organization "ROMA S.O.S." and the project manager. The survey was divided in three sections. The first section covered general data, the second section covered the situation of the home, and the third section covered the adjacent local environment.

The questionnaire included the following variables:

- number and composition of households,
  - level of education,
  - social and economic situation of households,
  - infrastructure conditions in the adjacent surrounding.
- Among the surveyed individuals, 54% were women and 46%

men. Percentage of surveyed Roma living in the municipality of Prilep was 13.54%. The survey was participatory and the initial findings were presented to the Local Leader Groups and involved representatives of the local self-government, hence, their remarks and comments have been included in the recommendations.

The entire process of the survey was conducted in several phases.

## **5.1. Consultative Meetings**

### ***Meetings with representatives of the local government***

Three meetings were held with a representative of the Unit for Local Economic Development and Cross-Border Cooperation from the municipality of Prilep. Meetings had a form of semi-structured interviews.

The first meeting was organized prior the beginning of all activities, with the main purpose to obtain information about the activities and documents of the municipality related to Roma population and Roma settlements, as well as to hear about the plans of the municipality referring to Roma population and the settlement where this population live.

The second meeting was held prior the implementation of the questionnaire, in order to find out what the actual situation was in relation to the process of legalization and the cooperation between the municipality and civil society organizations.

The third meeting was held after the implementation of the questionnaire and its analysis. At this meeting, data and answers regarding the citizens' interests were obtained, resulting from the analysis of the questionnaire, which are necessary for the final analysis.

### ***Meetings with LLG (Local Leader Group)***

The Local Leader Group worked on the implementation of the questionnaire. Three meetings in total were organized with the LLG. The objective of the first meeting was to meet the group, get a general impression about their dedication and give them information about the area where the questionnaire was to be implemented; the second meeting was organized prior the implementation of the questionnaire with the purpose of providing a training about the manner of conducting the survey; the third meeting was held after the implementation of the questionnaire in order to obtain information about the implementation from the members of LLG, i.e. the response of the



population, and if there were any problems and comments during the survey.

The Local Leader Group is a non-formal body of the Roma community which participates in the process of identification of local priorities in the area of housing and works on their integration in development strategies on national and local level through their training, field research and advocating their needs before the local self-government, i.e. decision-makers.

The Local Leader Group is a link between the planning processes on local and national level, in the light of realization of housing right of Roma population and overall fight against poverty.

The Local Leader Group established direct cooperation with the aforementioned representatives of LSGU by their inclusion in workshops and meetings, with the aim of heaving constructive discussion about potential solutions and overcoming the problems of Roma community.

During the establishment of the Local Leader Group, three key criteria were taken into consideration for achieving proportional representation by gender, age and place of living. Identified persons are active and well-known in the Roma community in Prilep, that is, they have a prior experience in similar activities implemented by "ROMA S.O.S."

### ***Meetings with local public enterprises***

Meetings were organized with representatives of public enterprises "Komunalec" and "Vodovod i kanalizacija" (Water supply and sewage) in order to obtain information about the conditions and problems that the population have in these sectors. Also, information was obtained regarding the conditions of Roma community homes: whether they were legal, whether they could meet the requirements for legalization, what their problems and challenges were during the legalization and future plans for construction. The obtained information was useful in the process of making the analysis.

### ***Meetings with local population and representative of civil society organizations***

At the meetings held with the local population, interviews were conducted for obtaining more information, similar to the questionnaire for the survey, but they also contained other questions for addressing other issues so as to make a comparison between the results

of the survey and the interviews.

Also, meetings were organized with representatives of the civil society organization “ROMA S.O.S.”, which assisted in collecting relevant information for determining the situation of Roma community in the municipality, the activities of CSOs in relation to improvement of living conditions, presentation of the experiences from the cooperation with the local self-government and other public institutions.

## 5.2. Analysis of Documents

A number of legal document adopted by the Assembly and Government of the Republic of Macedonia were analyzed, as well as local documents adopted by the Municipal Council. The following documents were analyzed: Roma Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015; Housing Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2007-2012; Action Plan for Implementation of the Housing Strategy 2007-2012; National Action Plans for: education; health; employment (2005-2015); Local Action Plans for Housing; Local Action Plan for Employment of Roma 2012-2015; Local Action Plan for Health of Roma Population; Laws on: housing; social care; financing the local government units: acting upon illegally constructed object; subsidizing credits for purchase of a house/flat; territorial organization.

## 5.3. Survey

The questionnaire was developed by the team hired for making the analysis in cooperation with “Habitat Macedonia” and “Roma S.O.S.”, according to project’s needs. The questionnaire was prepared and implemented after the first meetings with LSGU and LLG.

The survey was conducted by way of a field survey - interviews “face to face” in Roma households in Prilep, in particular in the part of the city mostly populated by Roma population: “Trizla”, “Dabnichka”, “Tri Bagremi”, “Mexico”, “Novo Selo”, “Deboj”, during July and August 2016, on a sample of 600 respondents, by trained members of the Local Leader Group. The research was conducted on an eligible sample bearing in mind that only Roma households were covered<sup>22</sup>.

The survey for determining the housing conditions consists of

22 For the purposes of this analysis, the term “household” was defined according to the definition used by the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia: A household is any family or other community of persons who state that they live together and jointly spend their income for basic living needs (housing, food etc.) whether or not all members are permanently located in the place where the household is settled or some of them temporarily stay in another place, i.e. abroad, for working, studying or other reasons, where the stay abroad is less than 1 year.

three sections and contains 43 questions. The first section contains 6 questions referring to demographic data about the respondent (age, gender, education, place of living). The second section contains 25 questions, referring to housing conditions of the respondent. These question help to analyze the social and economic status of the family, the physical condition of the home (number of rooms, windows, etc.), access to services, such as water supply, sewage, waste collection, power supply. The third section of the questionnaire contains 12 questions referring to the living conditions in the community. These questions analyze the condition of roads, access to institutions, green areas, as well as the potential threats in the place of living in relation to the housing. The six hundred respondents were equally distributed in all areas populated with Roma citizens ("Trizla", "Deboj", "Mexico", "Tri Bagremi", "Dabnichka", "Novo Selo") in order to obtain a real picture about the conditions in the local environment populated with Roma population.

Prior the implementation of the questionnaire, a pilot testing was conducted in order to check its applicability. That is, to check whether the questions were clear enough, what the opinion of citizens was about it and how much time was needed for its implementation. The pilot-testing was carried out by individuals from the Local Leader Group.

### ***Analysis of the questionnaire***

Analysis of the questionnaire and entering of data in the database was carried out by the team hired for the development of the analysis. The team analyzed only the primary responses to the questions, not making any cross analysis or comparison, i.e. it did not determine the dependent relations among them. The presentation of data in percentages is presented in 21 Graphs.

### ***Development of the Baseline Study***

The development of the Baseline Study actually includes all prior steps. However, the actual writing of the analysis is a description of the conditions in the municipality through the description of the settlement - the community, population in the municipality, ethnic map, employment, education, followed by a comparison with the data on national level, and of course, separately for the Roma population, description of the landscape and infrastructure in the municipality and settlements, characteristics of homes and alike. The Baseline Study

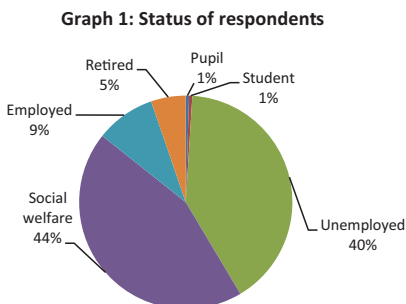
contains the results of the implemented questionnaire and ends with conclusions and recommendations.

#### **5.4. Presentation of the Baseline Study on the Housing and Urban Development of Roma Population in the Municipality of Prilep**

This meeting was attended by representatives of organizations which implement the project, “Habitat Macedonia” and “ROMA S.O.S.”, Local Leader Group which implemented the questionnaire, representatives of the Center for Civil Initiative which developed the analysis, a representative of the local self-government unit of Prilep and a representative of the public enterprise “Vodovod i Kanalizacija” (Water supply and sewage). The presentation of the analysis was followed by a discussion upon it. This meeting ended with a range of recommendations directed towards competent institutions.

## 6. Survey Findings

### 6.1. Structure of Respondents



The structure of respondents was the following: 54% women and 46% men. Their average age was 42 years.

As concerns the status of respondents, 44% are beneficiaries of social welfare, 2% are still in the process of completing their education, pupils and students, 40% are unemployed, 9% employed and 5% retired.

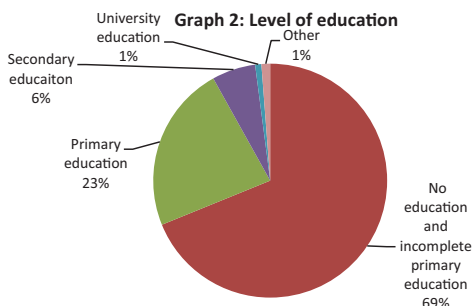
According to level of education, 69 % have not completed primary education, or they have no education at all, 23 % are with primary education, 6 % with secondary education and 1 % with higher education.

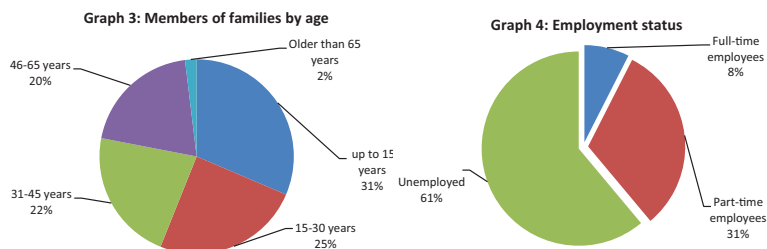
According to the status and education of respondents, majority of them have low level of education or have no education at all, they are beneficiaries of social welfare and unemployed.

According to the survey, the average number of members per Roma household in Prilep is five members (4.85); the highest average is in the neighborhood "Mexico" - 5.07.

According to the obtained results of the survey, 51% are female members and 49% male members of households.

Out of the all respondents, 59% are members of a family consisting of parents and children, 30% are members of a broader family, i.e. families where in addition to parents and children, there are also grandmother, grandfather, uncles, aunts and alike, 5% are single parents, 2% are more families living together and 4% are only married couples.





According to their age, children are the most numerous in the families - 31% by the age of 15, 20% consist the age groups from 15 to 30, 31 to 45 and 46 to 65 years of age, whereas the least of all are the members of families older than 65 - 2%. In the families with population capable to work, the biggest portion (61%) are unemployed, 31% work only occasionally, and only 8% are employed on regular basis.

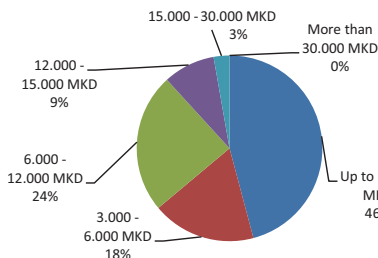
## 6.2. Home Conditions

The purpose of questions in the second section of the questionnaire was to determine the home conditions from financial point of view, the living conditions and alike.

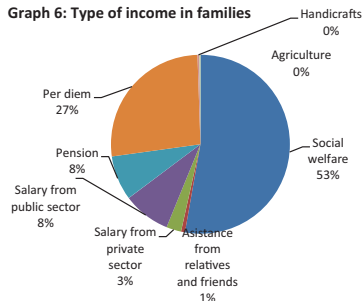
### *Family income*

The income of 46% of respondents reaches 3,000 denars per month, 18% ranges between 3,000 and 6,000 denars, and 24% between 6,000 to 12,000 denars, whereas only 5% of respondents earn between 15,000 to 30,000 denars per month. The types of income among respondents are the following: 53% receive social welfare, 8% receive salary from the public sector and pensions, 3% receive salary from the private sector, 27% receive per diem, and 1% earn from handicrafts. These data show that the biggest portion of income in the households comes either from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection or from the daily work of Roma population. Roma men in Prilep earn their per diem by cutting or chopping wood, working as construction workers, transporters, or simply as physical workers, whereas women earn their per die mainly as scrub women, housemaids or by working in fields as tobacco pickers and alike.

**Graph 5: Monthly income in households**



**Graph 6: Type of income in families**

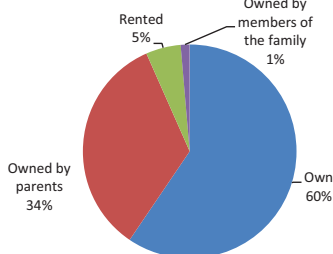


### *Types of dwellings*

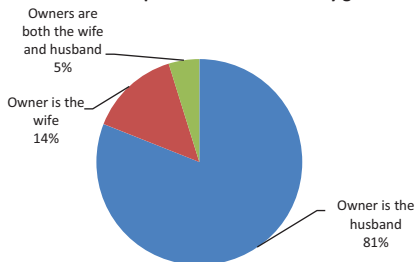
Almost all of the respondents or 99% stated that they lived in houses. In this part of the city - the settlement "Trizla", the majority of Roma population, but also other ethnic groups, live in houses.

As concerns the ownership of homes where they live, in 81% of respondents, the owner is the husband, 14% the wife, and in only 5% of respondents, both the husband and wife are owners of their homes. 60% of respondents live in their own homes, 34% live in homes owned by their parents, 1% live in homes owned by other members of the family and 5% live in rented flats. These data show that in the Roma community in Prilep, still according to the tradition, owners are either the husbands or their parents. The positive side of this picture is that more than 90% of them live in their own homes or in homes of their parents and have no problems related to earning money for monthly rent or moving frequently from one flat to another and alike. The following information shows in what kind of homes they live. The most important thing is that Roma have own homes.

**Graph 7: Home ownership**

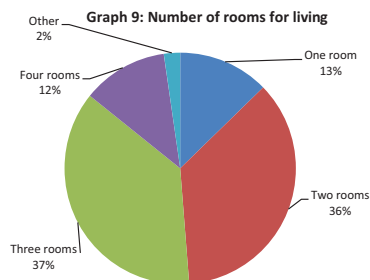
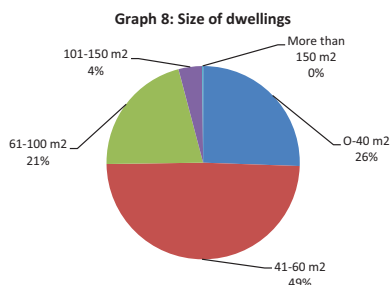


**Graph 7.1: Differentiation by gender**



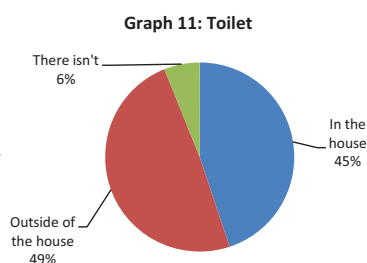
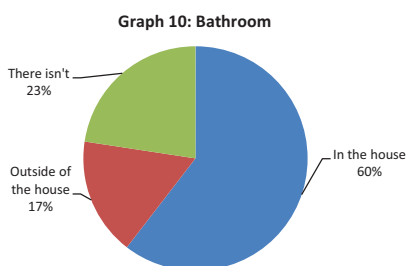
Only half of the respondents live in homes of nearly 50 square meters, consisting mainly of two or three rooms. Twenty percent live in homes of size up to forty square meters, and the same percent-

age live in homes of size between sixty to one hundred square meters. This information point to the fact that Roma community live in own homes with two or three rooms, with size of approximately fifty square meters.



The most problematic premises for citizens in these neighborhoods are the toilets, bathrooms and kitchens.

According to obtained data, 45% have toilets in their own house, 49% have toilets in the yards, and 6% of respondents answered that they did not have any toilets. As concerns the bathrooms, 60% have a bathroom in their own house, 17% have a bathroom outside of their house, and 23% do not have any bathroom. 44% of respondents said that their kitchen was in the same area with the living room, and 26% said that it was in a separate room, whereas 30% did not have any kitchen.

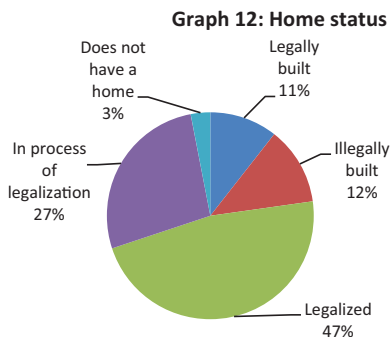


In addition to the toilet, bathroom and kitchen, the number of windows is also not the same, i.e. they do not have windows in every room of their homes. Namely, 75% have windows in all rooms, 1% do not have windows in any of their rooms, whereas rooms that rarely have windows are the kitchen, bathroom and toilet.



It should be taken into consideration that 10%-15% of Roma population live outside of the construction zone of the city. It has already been announced that there are plans for adoption of documentation for urbanization of this part of the city.

### ***Legalization***

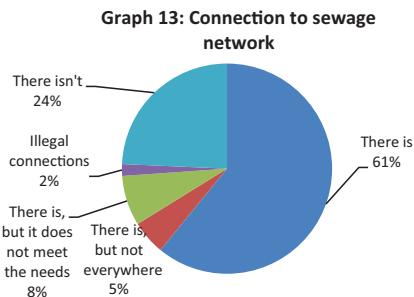


As concerns the legalization, Prilep is one of the leading cities in the country in terms of implementation of this process. During the first deadline in 2011 and the additional deadline in 2016, a total of 18,376 requests for legalization have been filed, of which 60% were completed. The degree of legalization is almost the same in all parts of the city, as there is no region which is better or worse

in this respect. Hence, legalization in the part of city populated mostly by Roma population is approximately 60%.

According to the survey, 11 % live in legal homes, 47 % managed to legalize them, and 27 % are still in the process of their legalization. 12% of the respondents live in illegal homes, and 3% do not have a home.

### ***Water supply and sewage***

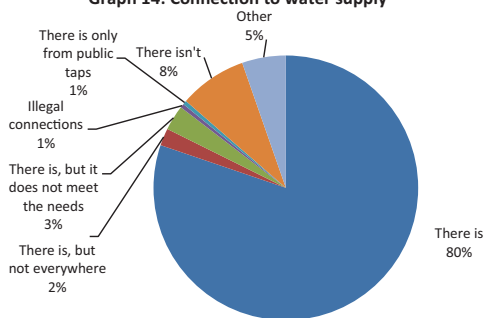


The biggest part of this area of Prilep has a good water supply and sewage network; however, there are still parts in this community which have problems in this respect. This survey gives a clear picture of the water supply and sewage network in each part of the city.

According to the survey, 61% of the local community

is connected to a sewage network, 5% is connected but not everywhere, and in 8% of the community the network does not meet the needs, in 2% there were illegal connections, and in 24% of the local community there is not sewage network. A total of 54% of respondents say that they are connected to a sewage network, 40% are not connected and 6% are connected but only up to their yard. Part of the respondents who said that their homes were not connected to a sewage network are living in neighborhoods of “Dabnichka” and “Mexico”, even though there is a sewage network in this local community.

**Graph 14: Connection to water supply**



According to the survey, 80% say that there is a water supply system in the local community, 8% say that there is no water supply system, and the remaining ones consider that there is a water supply system but not everywhere or that it does not meet the local community needs.

As concerns the water supply network in their homes, 82% are connected, 13% are not connected and the rest of the respondents are not connected everywhere in their homes, but either in their yard, or in their kitchen, or only in their toilet. Also, some of the respondents who have problems with the water supply network are living in areas of “Dabnichka” and “Mexico”, even though this local environment is connected to a water supply system.

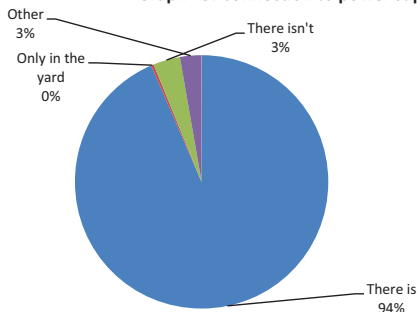
As concerns how regular the drinking water supply is, 76% say they have regular water supply, 10% say not regular, and the remaining ones say that there are interruptions in the water supply.

### ***Power supply***

A total of 87% of citizen say that there is power supply in their local community, 7% say that there is no power supply, and the rest of them say that there is, but not everywhere. The majority of citizens who think that there is insufficient power supply are living in the area of “Dabnichka”.

As concerns the individual power supply, 94% of respondents confirmed that they had power supply in their homes, 3% did not have, and 3% did not answer to this question.

**Graph 15: Connection to power supply**



Power supply is available in the area covered by the urban plan, i.e. the area located in the construction zone.

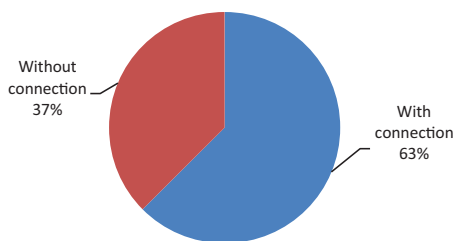
The most frequently used domestic appliance by Roma population in Prilep is the TV, whereas the least used is the vacuum cleaner. As concerns the heating, it is provided on individual basis in their homes, and

the biggest percentage 58% are using hard fuel, wood, coal, pellets, whereas the remaining ones electricity and oil. The majority of men in this community earn their income by cutting, chopping and storing wood for some of the local companies or households. It is worth to mention that some of them do illegal cutting of wood and sell it on the market to earn for living. During the past several years, the Forest Police organized actions on several occasions to prevent groups of citizens to illegally cut wood in the surrounding of Prilep.

Moreover, this way of heating, that is, more families using wood and less electricity and oil, is also used on the remaining territory of the municipality of Prilep. It means that citizens choose the way of heating on individual basis since there are no possibilities for organizing collective heating in Prilep.

## ***Internet***

**Graph 16: Internet**



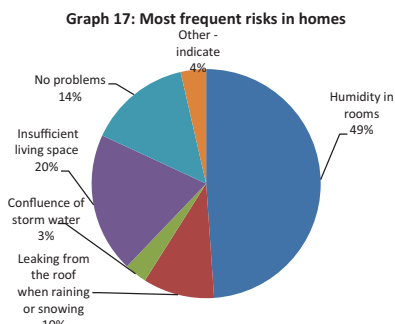
Nowadays, the Internet in the world is most often used for communication, information and lately also for shopping, payment, education and alike. Sixty-three percent of respondents say that they have and use the Internet, and thirty-seven percent say they do not have Internet.

Twenty percent of respondents say that they do not have the skills to use the Internet. These numbers point to the fact that in this

part of Prilep, the Internet is available and that the number of users is not small. It is estimated that the younger population is the biggest user of the Internet. The Internet is most often used via cable operators, but nowadays more and more via mobile phones.

### ***Floor and furniture***

The floor and furniture are one of the biggest problems of citizens in this part of the city. Namely, 55% of them have cement as a floor, 30% use laminate, 8% parquet, and 7% earth. 66% of respondents have sufficient furniture in their home, whereas the remaining ones do not have sufficient furniture.

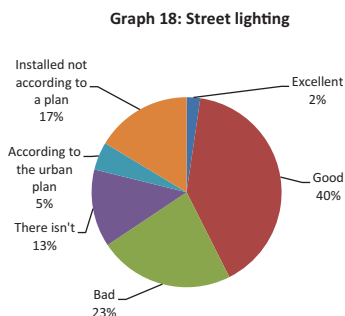


The most frequent problems in regard to the home infrastructure are the humidity in their rooms, in almost half (49%) of their homes, the small living space (20%) and leaking from the roof (10%).

Such living conditions, with cold floors and humid walls have negative impact on the health of this category of citizens. Nevertheless, it is worth to mention that during

the past several years, construction of new houses has been noticed, as well as reconstruction and refurbishment, which gives hope that the percentage of those with cement floors will decline, and consequently the humidity in the houses.

## **6.3. Local Environment**



In addition to assessing their homes, the respondents also expressed their opinion regarding the local environment where they live.

Almost half of them think that there is a good lighting in their local environment, whereas the remaining ones think it is not good, not well planned or that there is no street lighting. The biggest problem with

lighting is present in the areas of “Dabnichka” and “Deboj”.

Part of the population has remarks regarding the speed of replacing broken street light bulbs, that is, they have to wait quite long after reporting it.

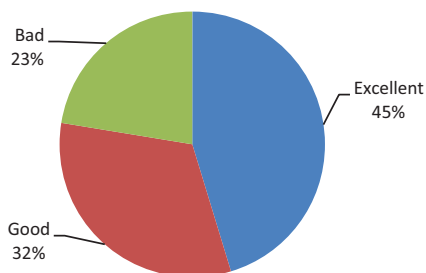
As concerns the streets and their infrastructure, half of the respondents say that in their area there are unpaved streets, 13% there are illegal streets, and 23% say there are asphalt streets.

Half of the respondents think that either there are not any or there are insufficient number of parks and 22% think that the parks are good.

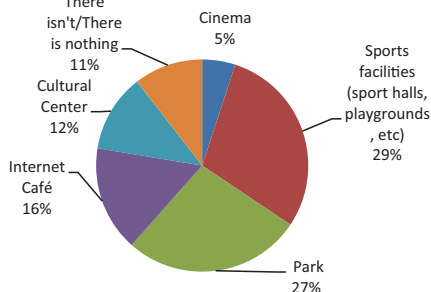
As concerns the waste collection, 77% think that it is collected in a good and excellent manner, and 23% of respondents think that it is collected in a bad manner; 88% of citizens say that the waste is collected once a week, and only 12% answer that it is done several times a week. As concerns the rubbish bins, 99% of respondents say that they use family rubbish bins and 1% dumpsters.

As concerns the cleanliness of streets, citizens in this part of the city are not satisfied with it. Twenty percent of them responded that the cleanliness was good.

**Graph 19: Waste collection**



**Graph 20: Locations for recreation and leisure**



The area of Prilep populated with Roma is equipped with the following facilities: a primary school, outpatient clinic, green market, kindergarten and in the vicinity, there are also two secondary schools. To the question about the types of health services offered in their place of living, almost 38% of respondents answered that the services of a family doctor were offered, 23% dental services, 15% gynecologist, 14% visiting nurse, and 10% other health services.

The following facilities were mentioned as places for recreation and leisure available in the local environment and most frequently used by the local population: sport facilities

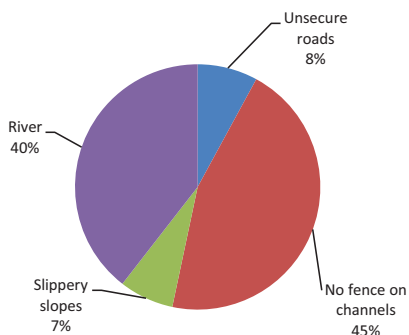
(20%), park (27%), Internet cafe (16%), cultural center (12%), cinema and others.

This is how the respondents assessed the distance of education and health institutions: 56% think that their school is far 10-30 minutes' walk, i.e. no further than 5 km, 39% think it is far up to 10 minutes' walk, and 5% think that is far more than 30 minutes' walk.

Health institutions are at a distance from 10 to 30 minutes' walk (47%), 9% up to 10 minutes' walk, over 5 km (27%) and 11% have no outpatient clinic near them. Those who do not live in the vicinity of an outpatient clinic and those who say that the outpatient clinic is the furthest are living in the area called "Novo Selo".

Regarding the question about the living conditions in terms of infrastructure, the majority of respondents say that they live poorly, and the remaining ones say that they live a good or average life.

**Graph 21: Objects endangering the safety**



As concerns the objects that endanger the safety of population in this part of the city, they pointed out the river and not fenced channel.

Citizens in this area of Prilep need help in relation to increasing the safety by fencing the river and channel. The need for fencing has two aspects: the first is related to the safety, i.e. to prevent children to enter into the river or the channel and get hurt and

the second is related to the hope that the fence will also reduce the pollution of this space.

To the question: What would you change in your environment? a large number of recommendations also referred to the river and channel, i.e. their cleaning and fencing, followed by recommendations for asphaltting the streets, finalizing the water supply and sewage network, improving the lighting and employment of larger number of young people of the Roma community.

#### **6.4. Findings from the Meetings with Representatives of the Local Self-Government and Public enterprises**

According to responsible persons for water supply and sewage in the City of Prilep, the information is that every part of the urban construction zone in Prilep is covered with new water supply and sewage network. This means that the coverage with water supply network is 100%, whereas by March-April 2017, the coverage with sewage network will also reach 95 to 100% , since that is the period when the phase for renovation of the sewage network will, under the project for construction of a facility for treatment of waste water. It should be taken into consideration that there are still dwellings located outside of the construction zone of the city, for which there is no urban plan. In these areas, there is no legal obligation for construction of a water supply and sewage network. Such parts of the municipality are supplied with technical water in yards or dwellings, and taps for supply with drinking water from the city water supply network. In general, the most problematic areas in relation to the water supply and sewage network are “Tri Bagremi” and “Gorna Debarca”, which are located outside of the urban zone.

The common issues arising from the analysis and the information provided by responsible persons is that all areas within the city are covered with a water supply network, most of which is new. The most problematic is the area outside of the construction zone, where the water supply and sewage cannot be constructed.

Responsible persons for street lighting in Prilep said that 95% of this part of the city was covered with street lighting, and currently they have been working on several project for installing new lines of street lighting. These projects will cover part of the street “Debarca” and part of the street “Beogradska”. In the course of the last couple of years, the municipality of Prilep has installed new lighting, for example, on the streets “Erdogan Shabanoski”, “Goran Minoski”, “Dabnichki Zavoj” and lighting of the kindergarten “Trizla” which also lighted the area around it. Again, the problematic areas in relation to street lighting are those located outside of the urban zone, i.e. areas which are not connected to the electric power grid, such as “Tri Bagremi”.

The local government informed that 70% to 90% of streets in the construction zone are covered with asphalt, concrete, paving bricks or stone squares). They have no legal grounds and obligation to work outside of the construction zone. During the past 7-8 years, they intensively worked on arranging the streets, predominantly, placing

sewage and water supply networks and replacing them where necessary, final construction of roadways in this region, which means that each year they managed to finalize 3-4 streets. The project "Facility for treatment of waste water" which is still ongoing, made the biggest investment in the Roma settlement "Trizla" since there had been the least investments in the sewage prior the project implementation. After the placement of the sewage system on all streets under this project, a modern final construction will be made.

Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that approximately 10-15% of Roma population live outside of the construction zone of the city. It has been announced, according to the Law on Legalization, that in future, the Council of the Municipality of Prilep will adopt urban documentation for this part of the city, in addition to the positive opinion given to already legalized objects.

The public utility enterprise "Komunalec", the responsibility of which is to maintain and take care of the parks, informed that in this part of the city there are 4 parks equipped with the necessary requisites that are maintained on a daily basis. They also pointed out that the configuration of the terrain, the too small distance from house to house and lack of free space are preventing the construction of new and wider parks with more requisites, such as the one in the neighborhood "Tochila" in Prilep.

The collection of waste is also organized by the public utility enterprise "Komunalec". The waste in this settlement is registered in the public utility enterprise as region 4, which means that this settlement has equal treatment in terms of waste collection as all other settlements in the city. The waste is collected once a week from the homes, always on the same day, whereas in the course of the week, the utility company also clears the small rubbish dumps. Trucks for waste collection pass along all streets. The only area where they cannot drive is "Debarca" since it is a very small settlement, difficult to access with a vehicle, because there are no streets. The dwellings are built on rocks in an area out of the urban part of the city. Nevertheless, whenever the truck passes nearby, or near the bridge, it can collect the waste if it is brought to these places. This public utility enterprise, 4-5 times per year clears out 6-7 larger rubbish dumps in this settlements, and twice a year it clears the river bed of Dabnichka River, once with machinery and once it is done by the employees of the enterprise. Citizens of the settlement "Trizla" were given rubbish bins for waste selection - green for organic waste and yellow for paper and plastic. A total of 1000 rubbish bins were distributed to 500 families. Currently, such rubbish bins are being distributed in the settlement "Varosh", whereas the rest of families from "Trizla" will receive such rubbish bins in the course of the next year. As concerns the waste collection,



especially from illegal rubbish dumps, employees of the public enterprise “Komunalec” say that the organization or clearing is not the problem, but the fact that the waste does not come from the citizens of the settlement, but it is also brought here from other parts of the city. In relation to the preservation of the environment, the public enterprise “Komunalec” plans to work on education of population.

The public enterprise “Komunalec” says that they maintain the hygiene of public areas more frequently. In this part of the city, they clean on a daily basis 10 streets, compared to the settlement “Rid” which is more densely populated, but its streets are cleaned less, that is, once or twice a week, and not a daily basis. The hygiene of streets is most often the responsibility of the citizens who live there, especially the streets which are not so frequent and are used only by pedestrians.

The representatives of the municipality of Prilep say that the street infrastructure has been constantly increasing during the past several years, and they plan to keep the pace, but only in the areas which are located in the construction zones. The problems occur when it comes to providing water supply, sewage and electric power supply in illegal settlements which are not included in the urban plan and for which there are no legal grounds for the municipality to provide the necessary infrastructure. More than 95% of street lighting in the city is provided with eco-friendly light bulbs, and the remaining part of the city will also be equipped with such light bulbs in the near future. Employment is not under the jurisdiction of the municipality, nevertheless, it has created conditions by opening economic zones for building new factories and creating new jobs.

The findings regarding the housing conditions and urbanization of Roma settlements in the municipality of Prilep by members of the local community, representatives of the local government, representatives of the public utility enterprise “Vodovod i kanalizacija” (Water supply and sewage) and project partners are summarized in the conclusions and recommendations which are a constituent part of this Baseline Study.

## 7. Conclusions

**Settlement.** “Trizla” is a settlement located at the outskirts of the City of Prilep. Almost 90% of its population are Roma. Some of them have difficulties in getting access to almost all kinds of services. It is divided in 4 areas, called “neighborhoods” by local citizens: “Novo Selo”, “Dabnichka” (along with “Tri Bagremi”), “Mexico” (along with “Debarca”) and “Deboj”. The General Urban Plan (GUP) does not include “Tri Bagremi” and “Debarca” and this is the reason why the local self-government and public utility enterprises are continuously facing various challenges in providing the housing rights to these citizens.

Young people are the predominant population. Roma families in “Trizla” mainly consist of five members. The average age of respondents was 42 years. According to the age, children are the most numerous in the families, namely there are 31% of children by the age of 15, whereas the structure of adults is as follows: 25% between 15 and 30 years, 22% between 31 and 45 years, 20% between 46 and 65 years and only 2% who are older than 65.

**Own dwellings.** A large number of respondents or 95% live in their own homes, and only 5% in rented houses. Minimum two generations live in one home, and in as high as 86% of the cases, the home is owned by the husband or by the oldest man in the family, and very rarely by the wife or some other woman in the family. Roma citizens live in houses of 40-60 square meters consisting of two or three rooms. They do not live in residential buildings.

**Humidity is the biggest problem in their homes.** The most frequent problems related to the infrastructure of their homes are the following: humidity in rooms 49%, leaking from the roof 10% and small living space 20%. Houses built in the higher locations of the settlements (rocky terrain) are particularly concerned by this problem due to the natural conditions. Almost all houses located near the storm water drain channel on “Debarca” street (“Mexico”) have problems with the humidity, as well as the citizens of “Tri Bagremi”.

**Toilets and bathrooms in homes.** The obtained data show that 45% of respondents have toilets in their homes, 49% have toilets in their yards and 6% of respondents do not have toilets at all. As concerns the bathrooms, 60% have a bathroom in their houses, 17% have a bathroom outside of their houses and 23% do not have a bathroom at all.

**Legalization.** According to the information provided by the local self-government, legalization on the entire territory of the municipality is an ongoing process, and approximately 60% of filed cases

have been completed. According to data obtained during this survey, the biggest number of homes in “Trizla” will become legal very soon. Namely, 11% of citizens live in legal homes, 47% have already legalized their homes, and 27% of them are in a process of legalization, whereas 12% of respondents live in illegal homes and 3% do not have homes at all.

Some of Roma citizens still have not managed to regulate the status of their homes, that is, their homes are not registered anywhere. Their homes were built illegally and have not been legalized, yet. The reason for this situation is the fact that these houses were built outside of the construction zone (“Tri Bagremi” and “Debarca”). Moreover, houses whose owners live outside of Macedonia, have not started the legalization either, since during the two periods when the public calls were announced according to the Law, they were not in Macedonia,

**Electricity.** The neighborhood “Debarca” has the biggest challenges as concerns the connection to the power supply grid, considering that this neighborhood does not have access to the grid (it is not part of the General Urban Plan, hence the power supply company EVN has no obligations in this respect whatsoever). Although 94% of respondents said that they had access to power supply, there is no information whether these connections are legal or illegal. However, the fact that illegal connections to power supply grid are still a problem on field, must be taken into consideration.

**Water supply and sewage.** According to the representatives of the enterprise for providing water supply and sewage in the city, all homes that are part of the urban construction zone in this area of Prilep are provided with new water supply network and sewage. Namely, the coverage with water supply will have reached 100% by March-April 2017, whereas the coverage with sewage will have reached 95-100%, since that is the period when the phase for reconstruction of the sewage network under the project for construction of a facility for waste water treatment will end. It must be taken into consideration that there are still dwellings outside of the construction zone of the city which is not covered by the urban plan (“Tri Bagremi” and “Debarca” have no conditions for direct, individual access to safe drinking water, therefore, taps were installed in these neighborhoods upon the initiative of “ROMA S.O.S.” in 2014). In these areas, there is no legal basis for construction of water supply and sewage network, since they are not part of the General Urban Plan. Illegal houses are neither registered, nor connected to the power supply grid and water supply and sewage networks.

**Streets.** Citizens wish the street conditions in “Trizla” to be improved, to be asphalted and alike. Half of the respondents said

that most of the streets are still not asphalted, that is, they are still unpaved. The local self-government informed that 70% to 90% of streets in the construction zone are built according to the contemporary standards (asphalt, concrete, paving bricks and stone squares). They have no legal grounds and obligation to work outside of the construction zone. The project “Facility for treatment of waste water” which is still ongoing, made the biggest investment in the Roma settlement “Trizla” since there had been the least investments in the sewage prior the project implementation.

**Hygiene in the settlement.** In general, waste collection is not satisfactory since there are no dumpsters placed on streets, even though the public utility enterprise “Komunalec” collects the home waste once a week. Also, families cannot afford to buy rubbish bins for waste selection provided by the public utility enterprise “Komunalec” since they are not free of charge, and they are usually paid through the monthly bills. So, families who have unpaid bills, are not even informed about this possibility. The main streets are maintained according to a defined schedule by the street cleaners.

**Street lighting.** Almost half of the citizens think that the lighting is good in their local environment, 23% think that it is bad, and 13% think that there is no street lighting at all. Some citizens complain about the slow response when it comes to replacement of broken street light bulbs. The local self-government informed that 95% of this part of the city is covered with street lighting, and that currently they are also working on few other projects for new lines of street lighting. However, there are still problems with the areas outside of the construction zone of the city (“Tri Bagremi” and “Debarca”).

The workshop on Participatory Evaluation of results from the Baseline Study provided grounds for opening a consultation process with all stakeholders involved in the development of the Baseline Study. Recommendations from this evaluation are presented in the text below. During the workshop, which took place on 29th November 2016, some of the attendees who represented the local population said that some houses on the street “Dabnichki Zavoj” were cut off the water supply and sewage network. The advice was that it needs to be checked whether these are isolated cases, that is, one or two houses, or whether it is a whole section of the street “Dabnichki Zavoj”. Since at this workshop there was also a representative of the public utility enterprise “Vodovod i kanalizacija” (Water supply and Sewage), she sent a reply to this query few days later. This is the reply from the public utility enterprise “Vodovod i kanalizacija”: “The street “Dabnichki Zavoj” is fully covered with relevant water supply network. To present, all citizens who filed a request for connection to the network

and who meet the legal requirements, have been connected to the water supply network. Hence, we have no information that some citizens who live on the aforementioned street are not connected to the water supply network. If there are such cases, or if they live in some sections of the street “Dabnichki Zavoj”, we urge the citizens to file a request to the public utility enterprise “Vodovod i kanalizacija”, which will then be reviewed and further processed by the technical department”.

## **Recommendations Stemming from the Participatory Evaluation Held on 29th November 2016, in Prilep**

1. Education of population about the advantages when building facilities/houses where there are construction and natural conditions for that, i.e. where there is access to all infrastructure/utility services and minimum natural conditions, so as to avoid the negative impact on their homes.
2. To include the settlement “Trizla” in the city area, so as not to be treated as a ghetto. Investments should be made in construction of residential buildings and access to social flats for Roma outside of the settlement or near places where there have already been created conditions for decent housing and quality life.
3. Implementation of proper numbering of houses and addressing of streets in the settlement, which will make identification of houses easier in relation to access to all social and health services.
4. Placement of public dumpsters along the streets in the settlement “Trizla”, especially on the main streets, which will improve the general hygiene of citizens. Organization of environment protection actions in the community, which will also include the citizens and will be used for their education about the waste selection.
5. Access to sewage network for citizens living near the storm water drain channel on the streets “Debarca”/“Mexico”, on the spot assessment of potential harmful impact of the channel on the surrounding homes and occurrence of humidity and consequently, resolving the causes of damages on their homes.
6. Field control of water supply connections on the street “Dabnichki Zavoj”, in order to determine the individual and direct access to safe drinking water in the homes of citizens. This will help to inform the population about the possibilities for improving the access to water supply and define their status as users of water supply network.
7. Field control of street lighting in the settlement, especially on the streets “Dabnichka” and “Berovska”, during which the need for replacement of street light bulbs will be determined, improve the quality of lighting and enable normal and safe

- movement of citizens during the night hours. Review of the plan for street lighting and rearrange it according to the real needs and the frequency of movement of citizens on streets.
8. Approximately 23% of respondents do not have a bathroom and 6% of respondents do not have a toilet. In order to improve the quality of housing of Roma population in the municipality of Prilep, it is recommended to provide favorable financial instrument through which the population will be able to renovate their homes and provide decent homes to their families.
  9. Development of a Local Action Plan for Housing of Roma in the Municipality of Prilep, which will reflect the objectives of the National Action Plan for Housing of Roma 2016 - 2020, where priority should be given to local priorities identified by the Local Leader Group established under the project "Right to Housing of Roma for Sustainable Urban Development".
  10. Joint activities with citizens who violate the areas around Dabnichka River with illegal houses and prevent the normal driving of vehicles on the streets, including the vehicles of the public utility enterprise "Komunalec" for collection of waste. The normal functioning of streets will enable regular collection of waste and prevent creation of illegal waste dumps.
  11. Advise the citizens who have dwellings above the river, to relocate them and to place a transparent (wire) fence that will increase the safety of small children and will enable free access to the river.

Upon a recommendation by the Local Leader Group and the association "ROMA S.O.S.", which advocates for rights of Roma population in Prilep, and in consultation with the wider Roma population from the settlement "Trizla", the most important problem has been identified, which is the unsecured river flowing along the street "Dabnichki Zavoj". Therefore, the resolution of this problem should be the key priority when it comes to urbanization of the settlement "Trizla,

**KEY PRIORITY of the Roma community in  
the municipality of Prilep: safety of the  
environment and hygiene**

The safety and hygiene of the river flowing along the street “Dabnichki Zavoj” is a quite concerning issue for the local population. During the past years there were cases of drowning of children below the age of 6. Also, continuous throwing of waste is being registered in the river bed, which often time looks like a waste dump, and during certain periods of the year, various epidemic outbreaks of contagious diseases occur and general deterioration of citizens’ health.

The river should be protected with a wall fence<sup>23</sup>, the river bed should be cleaned and public dumpsters should be fixed on the fence. This will make safer the movement of citizens, reduce the risk of accidents among children, who spend most of the day playing by the river and reduce dumping of waste by local citizens. This will also prevent creating a waste dump in the river, improve the environment and health of citizens, as well as the general appearance of the settlement and city.

This requires development of a project design by the local self-government of Prilep and public utility enterprises in cooperation with local associations, as well as budget planning and allocation of financial resources. In parallel with this project, asphaltting of the street “Dabnichki Zavoj” should be planned, because it will improve the general hygiene both in the homes of the citizens and their environment.

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23 The type of fence will depend on the terrain around the river and financial resources provided for this purpose.



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## **Annex 1. Competences of the Municipal Council and the Mayor**

Pursuant to Article 32 of the Law on the Local Government, (1) the Council is a representative body of citizens which decides under the competences of the municipality. (2) For reviewing questions and determining proposals in a certain area, the council may establish permanent or temporary committees consisting of representatives from the council. (3) The composition and manner of election of members of committees referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article are regulated by a statute. (4) The composition of committees referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article should be in compliance with the proportional representations of political parties in the council.

Article 36 of the Law on Local Self-Government - The Council adopts the statute of the municipality and other regulations; 2. Adopts the budget of the municipality and annual account of the municipality. 3. Determines the amount of own sources of revenues for financing the municipality, within the scope defined by law; 4. Establishes public services within the competences of the municipality and supervise their work; 5. Appoints members in managing boards of public services; 6. Adopts operational programs and financial plans for financing the public services established by the municipality; 7. Adopts the reports for implementation of the budget and annual accounts of the municipality; 8. Makes decisions for issuing licenses for performing activities of public interest and local importance, in compliance with the law; 9. Adopts reports on the conducted work and annual accounts of public services, established by the committee; 10. Decides about the manner of working with the property of the municipality; 11. Decides about the manner of performing financial control of the municipality's budget, in compliance with the law; 12. Selects the person to manage the regional unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the municipality, in compliance with the law; 13. Reviews and adopts the annual report for public security of municipal area, and delivers it to the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Ombudsman; 14. May give recommendations to a person on managerial position in the regional unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the area of public security and traffic safety and 15. It performs other activities stipulated by law.

The Mayor, on the other hand, is directly responsible for implementation of policies defined by the Council, however, he is also authorized to initiate adoption of certain regulations by the Council. The Law on Local Self-Government, or more precisely Article 50

stipulated his/her competences.

Article 50 Competences of the Mayor (1) The Mayor: 1. Represents and acts on behalf of the municipality; 2. Controls the legality of Council's regulations; 3. Publishes Council's regulations in the official journal of the municipality; 4. Ensures the enforcement of Council's decisions, 5. Ensures the performance of activities delegated to the municipality by law; 6. Initiates and proposes adoption of regulations that fall within the competency of the Council; 7. Proposes the annual budget and annual balance sheet of the budget of the municipality; Executes the budget of the municipality; 9. Elects managers of public services established by the municipality, on the basis of a public job announcement; 10. Regularly informs the Council on the performance of his/her competences in accordance with the statute; 11. Resolves administrative matters regarding the rights, duties and interests of legal entities and natural persons in accordance with the law; 12. Adopts a regulation for organizational structure and job positions in the municipal administration; 13. Manages the municipal administration; 14. Decides on employment, rights, duties and responsibilities of employees in municipal administration, unless otherwise stipulated by law; Ensures proper and legal use, maintenance and protection of municipal property, in compliance with the law and statute and 16. Performs other activities stipulated by the law and statute. (2) The Mayor may authorize a responsible official of the municipality to take on the proceeding and to make decisions in administrative matters, as well as to sign acts.

## **Annex 2. Persons involved in preparing the Baseline Study on Roma housing in Municipality of Prilep**

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- Ljupco Mitreski - Head of Department of Streets and Roads

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- Vase Stoilkovska

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Roma Housing Rights for Sustainable Urban Development

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