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The Evaluation project on the Impact of Inclusion Policies under the Open Method of Co-ordination is co-ordinated by the **MEU Programme** at the European Centre for Minority Issues:

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Information about the project, including reports and publications, news and events can be found at

[www.ecmi-eu.org/projects/omc/](http://www.ecmi-eu.org/projects/omc/)

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**MEU Programme**  
Minorities in the EU

## The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities

Evaluation of the Impact of Inclusion Policies under the Open Method of Co-ordination in the European Union: Assessing the Cultural Policies of Six Member States

**2006**



An Evaluation Project under the EU's  
Social Protection and Social Integration Policy

## The Project

This project proposes to evaluate the cultural policies introduced in National Action Plans (NAPs) on Social Inclusion under the European Union's Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) by six member states (Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Sweden) in terms of their impact on promoting the social inclusion of ethnic minorities, including Roma/Sinti groups. The specific added value of this evaluation will be the piloting of a set of Common Inter-Cultural Indicators (CICIs) feasible for cost-effectiveness analyses and benchmarking within the EU.

Although there is widespread agreement that "culture counts," there seems to be less understanding of what addressing cultural aspects of social exclusion entails. However, the evaluation of the success rate of cultural policies raises a number of issues in terms of the definition of culture. Do we operate with thin or thick definitions? Do we operate with a bracketed definition, or must we take a holistic approach? What areas of cultural life contribute to the promotion of social inclusion, and which ones risk exclusion? How do we link culture to socio-economic Products, or must we search for different sources? Not only does the complex reality of culture make it difficult to define tools for measurement, it has also been nearly impossible to map culture with a view to measuring and benchmarking.

Defining a common framework of comparable cultural indicators is fraught with problems and there is general scepticism regarding the link between culture and social inclusion. The complex reality of culture renders the goal of seeking comparable indicators virtually unattainable. However, even though precise rankings between member states are not possible, broad comparisons are, and changes over time can be discerned. There is therefore a dire need to develop a good working framework of cultural indicators that address the social exclusion of members of ethnic minorities within the EU.

## Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness of cultural policies of the NAPs of six member states aimed at the social inclusion of ethnic minorities through the piloting of a framework of CICIs. With the goal to enhance cultural policies in NAPs on Social Inclusion under the EU's OMC process, a number of specific objectives will aid in supporting this aim:

- Improved NAPs through increased use of inter-cultural indicators in policies on ethnic minorities, including Roma/Sinti groups
- Improved inter-cultural indicators through the piloting of a feasible framework of CICIs
- Improved capacity of member states' agencies to define and use inter-cultural indicators and integrate cross-sectoral co-operation
- Heightened awareness of previously applied research on the importance of cultural policies on social inclusion
- Improved knowledge and mutual learning of deficiencies in NAPs in terms of inter-cultural indicators
- Increased information flows of other social inclusion policies
- Enhanced capacity of the OMC to address inter-cultural challenges in the area of ethnic minorities

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## Outputs

This project will contribute to the further development of NAPs in the specific area of cultural policies aimed at promoting the social inclusion of ethnic minorities by working with stakeholders in the relevant ministries and government departments as well as civil society throughout the process of evaluation. Specific outputs will include:

- Separate evaluation studies of six NAPs on Social Inclusion that include cultural policies and represent member states of comparable size,
- Comparative analysis of the impact of cultural policies in NAPs on Social Inclusion
- Comparative analysis of the cost-effectiveness of cultural policies
- Proposal for an OMC framework of CICIs based on comparable member states and drawing on a regional outlook

## Methodology and Activities

Phase One of the project consists of field research in each of the selected member states involving sociological and cultural anthropological studies as well as communication studies that survey local actions and sources with a view to evaluate the extent of inter-cultural dialogue, exchange and understanding as well as the level of tolerance. Research tools will include stakeholder focus groups, questionnaires, interviews and seminars.

Phase Two comprises a major comparative study of the results found and includes economic cost-effectiveness and benchmarking analyses.

Workshop meetings for the consortium of research teams will be the main transversal activities (February, July and October). A final dissemination conference will introduce the results to the general EU public in Flensburg (October).