EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING SITUATION IN REGIONS OF THE PEARLS PROJECT

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the key messages of the thematic working group on early school leaving is that "a better understanding of ESL [early school leaving] in Europe requires a closer examination of the situation in different regions"[1] Exactly this was done by the PEARLS consortium: The partners took a close look at their resp. regions – what is necessary in my region and my school in order to prevent ESL?

PEARLS means "Preventing Early School Leaving Through Inclusive Strategies", it is a European strategic partnership in the field of school, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission.

The project partners from Romania, Turkey, Hungary, Croatia and Germany did empirical research (expert interviews and questionnaires for teachers and parents) in order to collect information and findings   as well as literature research. From these findings the partners will implement tailor made support measures – at schools - for pupils at risk of ESL.

2. OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF "EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING" IN EACH PEARLS PARTNER COUNTRY

In statistical terms, European early school leaving (ESL) rates are measured as the percentage of 18-24 year olds with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training.[2] In Germany, Croatia, Romania and Hungary this definition applies.

In Turkey, the national education up to high school is regulated, there is a 4 years + 4 years + 4 years system (elementary school, middle school, and high school). All children are obliged to attend the school for eight years time (elementary and middle school. There are two definitions related to ESL in Turkey: 1) Students who start attending school after age 6 and leave the school before 8th grade, and 2) The children who stay out of the national education system. No official statistic statistics related to the early school leavings or the quality of the education in the Roma neighborhoods exist in Turkey. However, some studies indicate that there exists the problem of early school leaving among the Roma people, immigrants, and some other disadvantaged groups in Turkey[3].

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[1] Reducing early school leaving. Key messages and policy support. Final report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving. Ed: European Commission. November 2013, p. 10

[2] Reducing early school leaving. Key messages and policy support. Final report of the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving. Ed: European Commission. November 2013, p. 8

[3] Unicef.org.tr,. "Unicef.Org.Tr". N.p., 2016. http://unicef.org.tr/sayfa.aspx?id=41. Last access 19.12.2015

3. EDUCATIONAL SITUATION IN THE RESP. PEARLS REGIONS

3.1. BERLIN - GERMANY

The federal state of Berlin has 3,4 Mio inhabitants, the unemployment rate is 11,1%. From the total number of inhabitants 496,000 people have a foreign nationality. The unemployment rate is 21,2 % with foreigners.[4]

The share of early school leavers in Berlin, aged 18 to 24 was 13,5% in 2014. Berlin belongs to 3 out of 16 federal states of Germany with the highest numbers of early school leavers. In Berlin also the rate of early school leavers who are unemployed is very high: 69%.[5] These figures include people without graduation but also those with graduation (from "Hauptschule" or "Realschule"), but who are not part of any kind of education any more.

The latest figures for youngsters without any graduation are from school year 2011/12: 2339 pupils in Berlin left high school without completing grade nine. Pupils who drop out mainly come from so called special schools ("Förderschulen") – in Berlin the share of pupils from special schools was 26,7 % in 2011/12. One quarter of the young people without graduation in Berlin has a foreign nationality and 47,8 % have a so called "migration background"[6] (see Bildung in Berlin und Brandenburg, p. 98).

3.2 CROATIA - MEÐIMURJE COUNTY

The Republic of Croatia has the lowest dropout rates in the EU. One of the important national policies, and that also concerns early school leaving is the policy concerning the Roma minority.[7] Medjimurje faced with the problem of early school leaving just among this population but just copying measures from the National Strategy for Roma and the Action

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[4] Statistik Berlin Brandenburg. https://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/statistiken/inhalt-statistiken.asp, last access 13.01.2016

[5] Internationale Bildungsindikatoren im Ländervergleich. Ed.: Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder. Wiesbaden. 2015, p.59.
https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Internationales/Bildungsindikatoren1023017157004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile last access 13.01.2016

[6] There are different definitions of „with migration background" – most of them include – that one of both parents come/s from a country other than Germany – the year of immigration plays a role and the language mainly spoken at home. See: Bildung in Berlin und Brandenburg, p. 256 f..(Bildung in Berlin und Brandenburg. Ed.: Regionale Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung Berlin-Brandenburg. 2013.
https://www.bildungsbericht-berlin-brandenburg.de/pdfs2013/bildungsbericht_2013.pdf) last access 21.12.2016

[7] National Roma Inclusion Strategy From 2013 To 2020,
http://www.uljppnm.vlada.hr/images/23102013/national%20roma%20inclusion%20strategy%202013-2020.pdf; Action Plan For The Implementation Of The National Roma Inclusion Strategy For The Period 2013 - 2015;http://www.uljppnm.vlada.hr/images/23102013/action%20plan%20for%20the%20implementation%20of%20nris%202013-2015.pdf, last access 21.12.2015.

Plan for the implementation of the national strategy for Roma inclusion increased coverage of the Roma population attending school. [8]

The following data of Medjimurje County stems from 2011[9]:

Međimurje County (description of the region)
Area : 729.58 km square
Number of Cities 3
Population: 114,414
Center of the area: City of Čakovec: 27.526 inhabitants
The number of unemployed: 6,830
Illiterate population older than 10 years: 911 (0,87%)
Roma population in the county: 2,887 people
Number of primary schools 30, number of high schools 7

3.3 TURKEY

Analyzing the studies on the social problems in Turkey, Roma people are one of the main groups suffering from poverty, unemployment, and some other social problems such as social exclusion. The lack of legal statistics about Roma people also creates a difficulty for the academicians to study the social, economic and educational problems of the Roma community.
In the Tekirdağ city center, there is one large Roma neighborhood called Aydoğdu and another neighborhood where the Roma people live called Çiftlikönü. In total, around 15.000 Roma people live in the Tekirdağ city center. If the other towns in the Tekirdağ region are included, this number reaches almost 100.000 Roma people. In the East Thrace region where Tekirdağ is located, there is approximately 300.000 Roma people residing.

In the Thrace region, there are three main cities, Edirne, Kırklareli, and Tekirdağ. Edirne is one of the main places where there is a large population of the Roma people. In many of the towns, the Roma neighborhoods are socially disintegrated from the rest of the population. The unemployment rate in the East Thrace region is around 10% which is lower than the Turkey average, 13% thanks to the large industrial zones in the region. However, the unemployment rate is quite high among the Roma people, many of them cannot find permanent jobs. Recycling garbage, being musician, cleaning jobs, selling fish, frog leg and snail are some of the most important jobs done by the Roma people. The access to the labor markets is not completely provided because of their education level and the prejudice against Roma.

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[8] According to: Medjimurje County in numbers 2011, Čakovec, 2012, Ed.: State Administration Office in Međimurje County (http://www.udu-mz.hr/?task=group&gid=8&aid=259; last access 21.12.2015) The publication contains the official results from the Census of the Croatian population in 2011.
[9] Čakovec, 2012, Ed.: State Administration Office in Međimurje County (http://www.udu-mz.hr/?task=group&gid=8&aid=259). The publication contains the official results from the official list of the Croatian population in year 2011.

Although the official statistics indicate that there is no crucial problem of illiteracy or attendance to the schools providing the obligatory education services, some studies indicate that there is a negative picture in the Roma people's community in terms of attendance[10].

3.4 HUNGARY

Regional differences in early school leaving are prominent in Hungary. In Central Hungary (Közép-Magyarország) and South Plains (Dél-Alföld), the rate stands at 7.2% and 8.4% respectively, while in North Hungary (Észak-Magyarország), it is at 18.4%. There seems to be a correlation between early childhood education and later chances of dropping out. Participation in early childhood education and care for children aged 4 is at 94.7% in Hungary, which is above the EU average. Since among the early school leavers there are more children coming from disadvantaged families living in poverty, there is probably a connection between ESL, unemployment and poverty, phenomena that are also geographically concentrated. This explains why ESL is also higher in disadvantaged regions.

The Hungarian school system has a hierarchical structure as Kádárné Fülöp Judit writes. The high school offers general education with baccalaureate at the end, and it is a kind of preparatory for those who aim to study in universities. The technical college offers profession and baccalaureate as well. A technical school is an educational facility where the students do not take a baccalaureate, and from the 10th grade they learn a profession. Pupils choose one of these after the 8th grade in their primary education. Their choice is based on their school results, and their future vision what is influenced by their families' patterns and possibilities. Therefore the school system models roughly the social differences, and the social disparities are conserved and reproduced by the inequalities in the standard education. (Kádárné, 2011)[11] The children of parents with a university degree are ten times more likely to go to a high school than to a technical school; while the children of parents with a low level of education are eight times more likely to go to a technical school than to a high school. (Liskó, 2003)[12]

Most of the disadvantaged and multiple disadvantaged children end up in a technical school, which provides the lowest prestige education. These are the children who are already at high risk for leaving school due to their socio-cultural background (bad educational and financial situation of the parents). The number of students with Special Educational Needs is also the highest (13%) in technical schools, compared to other public educational facilities. "The technical school has basically become the form of secondary education for the disadvantaged students; therefore the development of these technical schools will determine greatly the long term chances of the disadvantaged students." (Liskó, 2008)[13]

The Losonci school, a partner in the PEARLS project, is located in the middle of the 8th district of Budapest, among housing blocks built during the socialist regime. The 8th district is one of the poorest and most diverse part of the capital – from ethnical, cultural and social point of view as well. Roma from different cultural groups, many immigrants (mainly Chinese and Vietnamese live here.

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[10] Çameli, Tuba. "Kız Çocuklarının İlköğretime Erişiminde Türkiye'den Örnekler". *Sabancı Üniversitesi*. N.p., 2015. Last access 30.12.2015.

[11] Kádárné Fülöp Judit: A lemorzsolódás mérésének lehetőségei a közoktatásban. http://adatbank.mtakti.hu/files/dokum/8.pdf , 2011 last access 22.1.2016

[12] LIskó Ilona: Kudarcok a középfokú iskolákban. Kutatás Közben sorozat, 250. sz. Oktatáskutató Intézet, Budapest, 2003

[13] Liskó Ilona: Szakképzés és lemorzsolódás, in: Zöld könyv a magyar közoktatás megújításáért, Oktatás és gyermekesély kerekasztal, Fazekas Károly-Köllő János-VargaJúlia Budapest, 2008

The Losonci school has been functioning for 33 years. The majority of the pupils come from Orczy quarter and Magdolna quarter of the district. The statistics of the district show that people of these parts of Józsefváros are the most disadvantaged.

3.5 ROMANIA

The North East of Romania, where the PEARLS partner institutions Gipsy Eye (NGO) and the Cozmesti school are located, is made of six counties: Iasi, Bacau, Vaslui, Suceava, Neamt and Botosani. The economy of the North East region is mainly based on agriculture, especially towards the north, even though there are a number of industrial cities. The region is known to be one of the poorest of Romania. The last data about ESL in Nord-Est are from 2013 and the average is 20.02%, [14]the highest ESL rate in Romania.

4. MAIN PROBLEMS OF THE CHILDREN IN THE RESP. SCHOOL/REGION, REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT GRADUATION

4.1 GERMANY/BERLIN

There are no studies in Berlin which explicitly name reasons for actual individual drop outs of pupils. But in publications for teachers, like "Schuldistanz - Handreichung für Schule und Sozialarbeit, 2015"[15] it is said that a detailed diagnosis of pupil's disengagement is necessary in order to be able to stop that process.

Disengagement can start at a low level, e.g. with frequent daydreaming and less engagement (unremarkable turn away from class) or disturbing, disobeying, being delayed (remarkable turn away from class). At the beginning the pupil might stay away for a couple of hours. In Berlin "regular absenteeism" starts at 11 to 20 missed days per term, a pupil is said to be resigned when he/she stays away from school more than 21 days per term.

Disengagement and lack of interest in school can be triggered by many factors, which are often linked (see Schuldistanz 2015, p. 6ff):

- Family (unemployment, poverty, violence, addiction, negative attitude of parents towards school
- School (lack of possibilities to participate, bad relationship to teacher(s), lack of approval, teacher centered and - from the point of view of the pupil - remote from everyday life.
- Individual factors: weak self-confidence, not able/used to stand to the rules; tremendous difficulties in reading and writing
- Fear (mobbing, exam stress)

These factors can be reinforced by:

- Lack of support (system)
- Weak school management of absenteeism
- clique – members do rarely go to school

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[14] The Nord Est Development Agency, the Nord-Est Region Development Strategy 2014-2020, pg. 11

[15] Schuldistanz- Handreichung für Schule und Sozialarbeit. Ed.: Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft. Berlin. 2015 http://www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/sen-bildung/hilfe_und_praevention/schuldistanz_broschuere_akt..pdf?start&ts=1453289323&file=schuldistanz_broschuere_akt..pdf, last access 20.1.2015

- no belonging to class or school

Situation of Roma

In the Berlin district "Neukölln" some young Roma had to leave school because of racist discrimination by other groups. The *4. Roma-Statusbericht* states that information about the Roma minority is necessary - for teachers, social workers and for all pupils (regardless their background) – in order to tackle anti-Roma attitudes. The district Neukölln uses publications of the Federal Agency For Civic Education (see 4. Roma-Statusbericht 2014. p.21).

There are no figures to be found on ESL among Roma. But the *4. Roma-Statusbericht* states that some youngsters from Bulgaria and Romania need assistance in learning to learn – first of all, and in all relevant eras of basic skills:

> " […] it is necessary to develop tailor-made services to give the young people a chance to break out of the vicious cycle of distance from education, segregation and lack of chances for participation." (ibid. p. 16).

4.2 CROATIA

Education of the Roma minority

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sport complements the database for the Roma minority on an annual basis, takes into account the data at the end of the previous school year and at the beginning of the current school year. The data is published in the *Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the national strategy for Roma inclusion of the Croatian Government Office for Human Rights and National Minorities* [16].

Pre-school

End of 2013/2014. – The number of children enrolled in pre-school / pre-school is 300, of which 100 (44 male (m), 56 female (f)) in integrated preschool programs and 200 (106m, 94f) in preschool.

Beginning of 2014/2015. - The number of children involved in preschool is 300, of which 98 (43m, 55f) in integrated preschool programs and 202 (105m, 97f) in preschool

Primary education

End of 2013/2014. - The number of students belonging to Roma 1616 (822m, 794f) in 23 primary schools

During 2013/2014. - The number of students who dropped out 24 (12m, 12f)

Beginning of 2014/2015. - The number of students belonging to the Roma minority is 1,615 (820m, 795f) in 24 primary schools

Secondary education

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[16] Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the national strategy for Roma inclusion of the Croatian Government Office for Human Rights and National Minorities; http://www.uljppnm.vlada.hr/images/izvjesce_ap_%20nsur_final.pdf last access 7.1.2016

End of 2013/2014. - The number of pupils of Roma national not the smaller 143 (82m, 61f) in 6 high schools

During 2013/2014. - The number of students who dropped out 27 (14m, 13f)
Beginning of 2014/2015. - The number of students belonging to the Roma minority is a 190 (111m, 79f) in 6 high schools.

4.3 TURKEY

Many Roma people in the Thrace area marry at early ages starting from 13 and, after becoming a family, they try to survive through the social assistance from their parents. A lot of Roma live in segregated neighborhoods, many children do not attending compulsory education institutions, despite the existence of a legal penalty for their parents. Official statistics do not indicate any early school leaving problem, but it is estimated that almost 80% of the Roma pupils are not attending school. Interviews with the Roma and responsible officers relevant to the education of the Roma people prove the early school leaving situation.

From the view of many Roma pupils, education does not mean much, because they cannot imagine how to develop their life standard in the future and they are not aware of the possible contribution of education to their lives. In the Roma people's neighborhood in Tekirdağ, almost 10.000 poor people are residing and only a few of them hold a university degree, but those don't have a permanent job either. Many of the pupils have developed an understanding of life which does include education in schools. Instead, they observe their parents and youngsters in the neighborhood as "role models". In most cases the "role models" are advising them to be a part of the segregated culture.

4.4 HUNGARY

In the quarter where Losonci school is located segregation affects local schools. Its main reason is spontaneous - the parents tend to enrol their children in schools with higher prestige.[17] The relatively low status of the school is reflected not only in its popularity amongst parents but also in the success rate of its students. The number of pupils who continue their studies in (low prestige) technical schools (without baccalaureate) is higher than the national average.

Living standard of the pupils' families - based on a research (questionnaire) with pupils[3] [i]is relatively low:

TOTAL: 220	very poor: 8	poor: 28	average: 147	well-to-do: 34	rich: 3

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[3]It does not necessarily reflect the reality, but characterize the pupils' opinion and notion about their micro-society

The same research indicates that from 220 pupils 195 get meal for a reduced price, 165 get the school books free and 149 get child care support from the local government/state. These kinds of support and allowances can be requested if the income per capita of the family is low or, if there are 3 or more children in the household. As a consequence it is a good measure to evaluate the economic standard of the households. On this basis we can say that the majority of the children studying in Losonci school live in relative deprivation.

The diversity of social groups and the diversity of cultures, which appear in the school induce the teachers to apply various methods in teaching - projects, thematic days and weeks, cooperative technics and differentiation. As the living standard of the pupils is low, the cultural and social education in the school has to be an additional key-element. 60-65% of pupils are Roma, they practice the Roma tradition and custom, but it is important to realize that they come from different Roma groups with different traditions and facing different social acceptance (e.g. the Musicians - Romungro group whose members were originally musicians - are assimilated into the Hungarian society, other groups stick more to specific Roma traditions).

Study results of pupils (2014-2015) in the school:

Average marks	Number of pupils	Number of excellent pupils /marks	Number of very good pupils/ marks	Number of failures (If someone fails one or two subjects has a chance to take an exam, but in case of more than two subjects he/she has to repeat the whole school year)		
				one subject	two subject	more subjects
3.375	250	4	4	31	22	30

Future aims of the pupils in relation with their studies:

	Primary school	skilled worker (technical school)	baccalaureat	vocational school baccalaureat)	BA	MA	PhD
Total: 220	6	20	49	59	29	31	26

The research concludes that the family background of the pupils is poor, the conditions for an efficient learning environment are not provided at home. This difficulty causes a big difference between the results and the desires of the pupils. Therefore the school has to accept the responsibility to reduce the gap and provide special help to these pupils in their studies in order to compensate for the shortcomings.

For now, data show that there is a big discrepancy between students' chances for further education and their ambitions.

Further education of the 8th class (after primary school) in the 2014/2015 school-year

	High School	Vocational school / technical college	Technical school	rejected
Total	13	54	5	1

Accordingly, a vast majority of students go towards forms of education where students are the most exposed to the dangers of ESL.

The table below shows the most typical difficulties the pupils struggle with in the last six school-years.

	nr of pupils	disadvantages	multiple disadvantages	Installation, learning and behavior problems	Special Educational Needs	pupils at risk	free meals	day care	migrant	absent more than 250 hours
2010	597	348	152	110	15	225	286	339	32	21
2011	609	380	156	114	17	204	370	355	30	30
2012	582	354	149	121	15	212	341	369	32	12
2013	539	347	134	128	18	211	346	324	36	24
2014	536	175	103	125	18	211	284	326	44	20
2015	533	76	81	133	23	197	315	300	50	20

4.5 ROMANIA

In the North East region, there are many factors that make early school leaving an important phenomenon involving pupils, their family, the authorities and the schools.

The most important causes of ESL are related to the social environment. The economic problems of the families play an essential role in the decision of continuing or not finsishing the school. Many families from the region face difficulties in assuring daily food for the children and "snack" for school, assuring proper clothing and hygiene. They also face

problems in assuring good conditions for living and studying in their often poorly equipped houses.[18]

The Roma families are facing multiple factors that makes school a very difficult mission for the children. Beside the problem of material resources, most of them are also facing lack of cognitive support with homework and school tasks from parents and sometimes a non Roma-friendly, i.e. discriminatory environment in the community and school. In Iasi County there are several cities and villages where Roma families live in closed communities. For a long time, the Roma children attended segregated schools with low quality of education process. This affected the relation between schools and parents and contributed to a lack of confidence of the families in the school system.[19]

5. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?

5.1 GERMANY/BERLIN

5.1.1 School based measures (see Schuldistanz 2015, p. 21 ff)

a) Transparent regulations of presence and absence
All teachers put down times absent according to the rules which were made by all staff members. So it is clear when which steps will follow (e.g. call parents, letter to the parents, invitation of parents, conference with colleagues).

b) Provide opportunities for participation of pupils
Pupils need actual opportunities on democratic decision making, e.g. with regard to formulate rules behavior and sanctions. In some schools pupils can become mediator, thus help to solve conflicts among peers. Pupils who do not feel ownership of their education and do not have a voice in the school may lose interest and become at risk of ESL.

c) Teacher's role and networking
The teacher has tremendous influence on the pupils' behavior (this was well documented by John Hattie in 2011 *"Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning".* That doesn't mean – teachers have to solve each and every problem on their own, but they should be able to organize support – e.g. by the school's social worker, parents, youth welfare etc.

d) Involvement of parents
- Create an atmosphere of friendly welcome in your school, all parents should feel invited and valued.

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[18] Romanian Ministry of Education, Research on preventing and combating the school abandon, guide for teachers http://www.cie.roedu.ro/index_htm_files/2h.%20Prevenirea%20si%20combatarea%20abandonului%20scolar%20lb%20romana.pdf last access 23.01.2016
[19] Laura Surdu, Study on monitoring the application of the anti-segregation measures , RomaniCriss and Unicef, Bucharest 2008 pag.28

- Create a respectful communication, provide information in all different languages and in easy words.
- Provide possibilities for participation of parents in school life and class – and in decision making at school, e.g. for the school development.

Concrete possibilities are:

Parent's café for regular encounters
Starting point on a basic level to include parents into the sphere of school. Experts can be invited by the parents with regard to problems they face, e.g. rising rents, problems with authorities. The overall aim is to rise parent's interest for the performance and the possible problems of their pupils. The Richard school in Neukölln as well as the Otto Wels school in Berlin Kreuzberg have a parent's cafés.

"**District mothers**"
In the Berlin district "Neukölln" (with a large number of immigrants) the project "Stadtteilmütter" (district mothers) has been established. 79 mothers (May 2015) with a so called migration background provide advice to families about possible educational paths. They realised that the families were interested in education, but some were so bound up in everyday existence struggle (e.g. question of residence) that they hardly had any means to support their children.[20] Very few of these mothers are Roma and are able to translate between German and Romanes.

Backpack – provides language and family education in an everyday setting. At 20 pre-schools and five primary schools in Berlin this programme is being offered at the moment, it's main aims are the promotion of cooperation between educational institutions and the parental home and the promotion and appreciation of multilingualism and the holistic development of children.

School mediators for language and culture
Funded by means of the federal state of Berlin there are 14 mediators for schools in Neukölln (in 2014). The extent of cooperation depends on the needs of the school – however it is limited due to restricted finances. In some cases mediators are present the full school day, in others they organize single events, e.g. parents evenings and measures to enhance the number of parents who are involved in the sphere of school, some do visits at family's homes (see 4. Roma-Statusbericht 2014, p.15f.)

5.1.2 Pedagogical measures (see Schuldistanz 2015, p. 26f.)

Design of class/tuition
Should have links to student's life, should comprise collaborative learning, individual learning offers etc.. Teachers should regularly seek support from colleagues in order to further develop their tuition, e.g. supervision or peer counseling; positive relations between pupils and pupils as well between pupils and teacher are the basis of learning –the establishment

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[20] 4. Roma-Statusbericht. Kommunale Handlungsstrategien im Umgang mit den Zuzügen von Unionsbürgern aus Südosteuropa. Ed.: Bezirksamt Neukölln von Berlin. Abt. Bildung, Kultur, Schule, Sport. Berlin, 2014.p. 16

of a transparent evaluation system for teaching is one possibility. The importance for pupils to belong to the class and the school and the fact that pupils need approval needs to be taken care of – here the acknowledgment of skills and competences from informal settings provides opportunities.

Welcome classes
In different districts of Berlin there are so called "welcome classes" – in 2014 there were 33 of those "special learning groups for new arrivals without knowledge of German" in the Berliner district Neukölln. 12 children are in one class, the majority of them is from Bulgaria and Romania, in most cases Roma pupils. These classes seek prepare the children of various origins who cannot speak German so that they can join a regular class as quickly as possible (see 4. Roma-Statusbericht 2014, p.14.). In April 2014, there were across all Berlin districts 254 "welcome classes" with 2944 pupils (ibid, p.15).

Talks at early stage with pupils and parents
The teacher has to know exactly the reasons for school absenteeism for that resp. student. Together with pupils and teachers agreements have to be made up e.g. meet after 4-8 of weeks again in order to evaluate the process. Important condition: Pupils resp. parents are only open for criticism if they feel acknowledged and accepted (see Schuldistanz 2015, p. 30 f.)

5.2 CROATIA

Examples of good practice developed by the teachers, schools and local community

- Teachers and headmasters at the Međimurje county are dealing with extremely heavy issues of diversity management in their schools. In this schools is more than 50% Roma learners which do not know the Croatian language, (they speak only Roma Bayashi even though they live there for more than a hundred years). Their parents in past time was not motivated for schooling of their children. Two schools received Council of Europe Human Rights Court Judgement in the case *Orsos against Croatia* (2010). Schools and teachers were under strong pressure. They began to try to find solutions to the problems in cooperation with the authorities of the local community and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.
- This schools today is showing a huge progression. They developed specific measures and tools which help them to give every child equal chance for progression according to their ability.
- **Professional empowerment of teachers:** Headmasters with support of local and national educational authorities organised for their teachers various types of workshops; on how to manage diversity in their classrooms, on school mediation,

social skills develoment, human rights education, understanding and prevention of stereotypes and prejudices, etc;[21]

- **Program of visits of teachers to the homes of Roma children is developed**: school psychologists, pedagogues, teachers and headmasters developed a program of visits of teachers (classmaster) to the homes of Roma children in Roma settlements to better understand the conditions in which their students live, why they have problems in learning, to attract their parents to become partners in education of their children;

- **Pre-school education of Roma children**: It is organized one or two years of pre-school education to prepare children for primary school and had the opportunity to learn the Croatian language. It was founded Family Center for Roma and Kindergarten *Pirgo* in the Roma settlement in Kuršanec. It's construction was co-financed 20% by Čakovec City and 80% by the national budget. Now it is financed 30% by Čakovec and 70% by European founds.

- **Ensuring of better inclusion of Roma children:** 30 Roma assistants have been appointed with knovledge of Roma and Croatian language to assist students and teachers in overcoming of language barriers; to inform parents on achievement of their children and to help children to become better learners. Teacher develops a small dictionaries of Roma-Croatian language; organize useful workshops for Roma parents (how to use PC, efficient housekeeping; telling something good about achievements of their children to motivate them to come again).

- **A volunteer help in the learning:** It is organized volunteer help in learning among students and university students which is study for the teachers etc.

- **Intercultural activities organised at school and local community:** whole school approach in cooperation with local community and parents through celebration of specific days as it is World Roma Day on 8 April; The Children Rights Day on 20 November etc.

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[21] Professional training on the role of Roma assistants in teaching - Social Dimension Curriculum civic education - mediation as a part of school life and civic competences - the development of social skills, training with the following outcomes: Participants will acquire the core competencies of application modules for teachers mediators in which the gain commitment to the use and dissemination of communication skills that lead recognizing and overcoming rival, aggressive and destructive behavior through mutual understanding, respect, cooperation, acceptance and success of each individual and group/class/school/community as a whole, for non-violent conflict resolution and communication that enables collaboration and peer mediation.

Professional training for teachers of the Croatian language on which worked on the acquisition of the following outcomes : participants will gain basic intercultural skills , will be able to establish a satisfactory interaction and communication with people of another culture , acquire intercultural attitudes , knowledge and skills - the better to understand and respect different cultures , adopt effective behavior in other cultures - intercultural sensitivity , develop and expand personal knowledge and communicative competence in working with culturally different students.

- Results of all this activities are: less tensions and better understanding between Roma and Croatian people in local community and region, almost 100 percent of inclusion of Roma children, minimum drop out from the school, just in the case of the change of residence.

5.3 TURKEY

We consider the PEARLS project as an important opportunity to reach our goals. Depending on our experiences in Tekirdağ, we need to develop a proposal to offer to the governmental and the non-governmental organizations implementing strategies or working on the Roma people problems. Especially, if we can manage to develop an alternative method to increase the interest in the education institutions among the Roma youngsters, we believe we can develop our association, the Romans Aid and Solidarity Association, by receiving more educated members and do more projects in the future.

5.4 HUNGARY

The phenomena of early dropout could be remedied by the elimination of factors adding up to the objective disadvantages of the children, and by moderating the unfavourable effects of these, by

- Increasing, strengthening the retaining power of educational institutions

- Smaller classes

- Less compulsory lessons

- Less curriculum

- Differentiated, personal development - implementing Personal Development Dairy

- Interactive learning methods during classes

- Mentoring, peer-mentoring

- Diverse methods and curriculum according to the challenges of the modern age

- Suitable teacher training, development

- Improving school-family relations

- Emphasis on the quality rather than on quantity

- Focusing on the children/students and on the development rather than on the knowledge

- Changing from teaching to learning, supporting and helping children/students by that

It follows from the above-mentioned points that there is a need to facilitate the changes on the following levels:

- Governmental

- Educational political

- Institutional, organizational

- Class level

- Individual level (teachers and students)

In the framework of the Pearls project we can work on the class and individual level, offering activities, mentorship, and empowerment through the support measures. Within the project a mentoring, peer-mentoring program and a competence mapping activity are offered for pupils with the inclusion of teachers.

5.5. ROMANIA

To prevent early school leaving is complex issue because it demands concrete interventions in order to reduce ESL to the lowest level possible. This should be a cooperative action that should eliminate or reduce the causes of the school dropout. For this reason, people from all the societal levels need to get involved. Measures include:

- Governmental programme which should target on preventing ESL. The ones which exist are limited and not flexible.

- Small and high quality NGO initiatives in the local community, targeting the beneficiaries directly and involving the parents.

- Efficient action from the local institutions, school, municipal authorities and others by supporting children with risk of ESL.

At the same time and more concretely, these program should content:

- ***Mentoring/Tutoring***

Tutoring, also a one-to-one activity is an effective practice when addressing specific needs such as reading, writing, or math competencies.

- ***Second Chance School***

Alternative schooling provides potential dropouts a variety of options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the student's individual social needs and academic requirements for a high school diploma

- *After-School Opportunities [22]*

Many schools provide after-school and summer enhancement programmes that eliminate information loss and inspire interest in a variety of areas. Such experiences are especially important for students at risk of school failure because these programs fill the afternoon "gap time" with constructive and engaging activities.

- **School and community mediator [23]**

The principal role of the school mediator is to support the participation of all the children from the community to the public education system through encouraging the implication of the parents in the school life. He facilitates the cooperation between the families, the community and the school.
On the other hand, other experts affirm that all of this action will have a low impact if they are not correlated with other measures to obtain the economic development of the community, village or city where the drop rate is high.[24]

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[22] Dr. Otilia Apostu, sociolog ,Dr. Ciprian Fartuşnic, educational politics expert School abandon in the Romanian school system and a possible model for good practice, pag 35

[23] Olivier Peyroux, Adriana Maria Rotaru, The Guide of school mediator in Romania (Ghidul mediatorului scolar in Romania),Craiova 2011 pg.15.

[24]National Institute of Educational Science 2014 " The children who do not go to school, research of the participation in education at primary and secondary school Bucharest 2012 Pg.82

6. CONCLUSION

Similar to the findings of the thematic working group on early school leaving (see footnote 1), this report shows that it is tremendously important to focus thoroughly on groups of pupils with similar problems and at the same time on the individual – when it comes to the prevention and the intervention of early school leaving. The PEARLS partners investigated thoroughly their target groups – thus they created the basis for the development of support measures at the resp. schools. These measures will be conducted in team work: in each partner country teachers of the PEARLS partner school as well as employees of PEARLS partner NGO will collaborate.

For example:

- In Hungary the Artemisszio foundation and the Losonci school will renovate a room in the Losonci school for a so called "club", where pupils can meet after school and the envisaged support measures will take place here. These are:

a) Competence mapping (DEET)

This is a digital empowerment tool. Formerly it was done by and designed for adults, so that changes need to be done. The aim is to let talented kids bloom more.

b) Mentor programme

Pupils from secondary level, who are obliged to do their community service (50 hours work as volunteers = civic engagement) will be mentors for children of the Losonci school. Artemisszio made a contact to a close by school, the headmaster and teachers are interested.

- In Turkey the focus lies in the involvement of Roma parents. The partners from the Romans Aid and Solidarity Association will invite Roma parents individually, will ask them in detail what they expect from school and from the resp. teacher. Later it is envisaged to create groups of parents, so they can support each other – with the supervision of the parents. The overall aim is to find individual ways to convince parents that education could bring advantages for the well-being and the standard of living.

Although all PEARLS project partners are highly motivated to actually implement the support measures, they are well aware, that they are not able to change structural circumstances, like poverty, unemployment, segregation etc.. – enormous problems for parents, that sometimes hinder them to take care of the education of their children. Nevertheless the individual approaches are very promising to improve the situation of certain children in the PEARLS regions.