

Serbia and Montenegro

In Serbia and Montenegro, many good researchers on Roma issues are trying to identify and classify the Roma's most pressing problems. A number of human rights and humanitarian organizations exist, and they are attempting to exert influence on government policies and to at least partially assist the Roma in their survival and education. A specialized state structure was established in Serbia and Montenegro called the Secretariat for Roma National Strategy within the Union Ministry for Human and Minority Rights established with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In 2002, it developed a strategy for Roma integration, a strategy for the education of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia, and a strategy for combating Roma poverty in Serbia and Montenegro. For the Decade of Roma Inclusion two separate National Action Plans were elaborated—for Serbia and for Montenegro.

In Serbia and Montenegro, the Roma face a double burden. On the one hand, they are a marginalized group. On the other hand, many are internally displaced persons and refugees. The situation is particularly difficult for Roma women, who have very few rights and considerable family obligations, many which start at a young age. According to NGOs, up to 90 percent of Roma women get married before reaching the age of 16, and up to 80 percent of marriages are arranged through intermediaries.

In the case of Serbia and Montenegro, the current survey was expanded to include three representative samples (for Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo), producing three different data sets. This was done in an effort to reflect more adequately the development challenges without making a statement on the political status of the different entities. In the publication the three data sets are presented separately.

Serbia

Counting the Roma population in Serbia and Montenegro has turned into a most complicated task due to the internal displacement and migration of thousands of Roma after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the wars that followed. According to the 1991 census, the number of Roma in Serbia and Montenegro was 143,519 people. According to the census undertaken in Serbia excluding Kosovo in March 2002, the number of Roma living in Serbia (excluding Kosovo) was 108,193 (or 1.44% of the total population). Scholars claim that the Roma who associate themselves with other ethnic groups for the purposes of national censuses could amount to about 300,000 people in Serbia. One must add to this figure about 100,000 to 120,000 Roma, mostly internally displaced from Kosovo, and a negligible number of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The latest research shows that 46,238 officially registered, internally displaced Roma, have settled in areas already inhabited by local Roma. Specialists think that at least 70,000 more internally displaced Roma have settled after 1999 in these areas without registration.

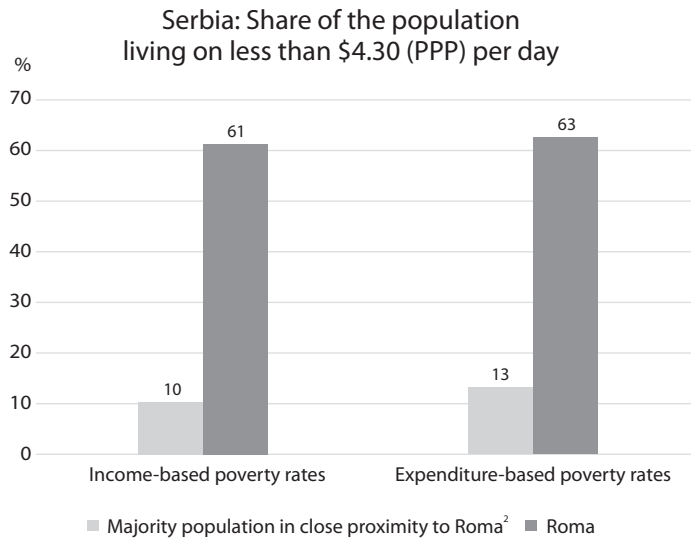
Another issue related to post-conflict population movement is resettling Roma returnees from Western Europe. These are people who escaped armed conflict and are now expected to return (mostly to Serbia) even though they face problems with housing and access to basic social services. It is a concern regularly highlighted by some of the representatives of the international community in Serbia (i.e. UNHCR, OSCE etc). The exact number of returnees is not available, but the issue is putting increasing pressure on the relevant institutions—in part because of the unclear magnitude of the problem and the lack of data (including identity registration).

Statistics are unable to determine the average life expectancy in these ghettos, nor can they define the infant mortality coefficient as compared to the country average. Illiteracy exceeds 35 percent, and the unemployed are all over the country. Serbian social scientists have introduced a new term in order to situate (find the right social place for) the Roma community. They call them *an ethno-class*, thus concluding that there is no other ethnic group in Europe that, in mass numbers, has been deprived of economic, political and cultural rights, their chances of survival reduced to the minimum.

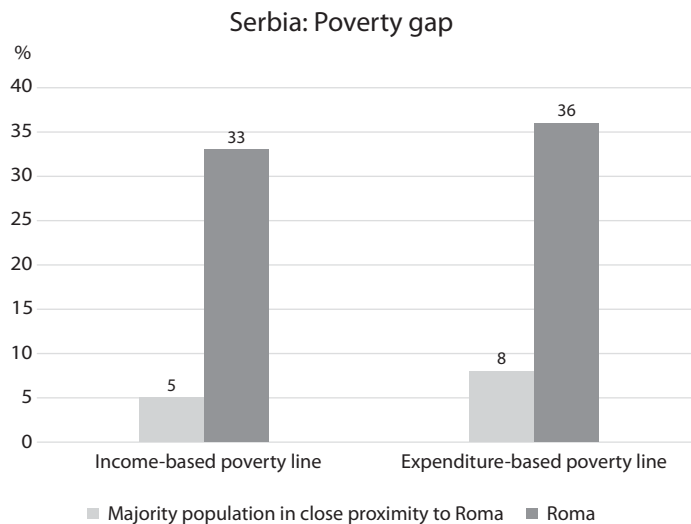
Their excluded condition makes it difficult for the government to carry out integration policies and requires huge financial resources to address their needs. Some 60 percent percent of the Roma are living at or below the absolute poverty level defined as \$4.30 PPP, although statistics may not always capture the whole picture—particularly the high presence of Roma in the informal sector (such as selling at market places) and within seasonal and occasional occupations. The accumulations of local and internally displaced Roma in towns and outlying ghettos are facing the threat of rapidly spreading epidemics.

The National Action Plan for Serbia developed in 2004 covers four areas: education, health, housing and employment. Additional action plans for Serbia covering other areas (i.e. media, internally displaced persons, gender, discrimination, culture, social protection etc.) are being developed and should be finalized by March 2005. The next step is to implement these policies.

Poverty and unemployment



The graph outlines the share of the population living below \$4.30 (PPP)¹ per day. (\$4.30 is the poverty line accepted by the World Bank and UNDP for international comparisons in developed economies). Per capita income is calculated using an OECD equivalence scale, which means that per capita income and expenditures are not simply “totals divided by the number of household members”, but divided by “an equalized number of household members” (for more details see the Glossary).

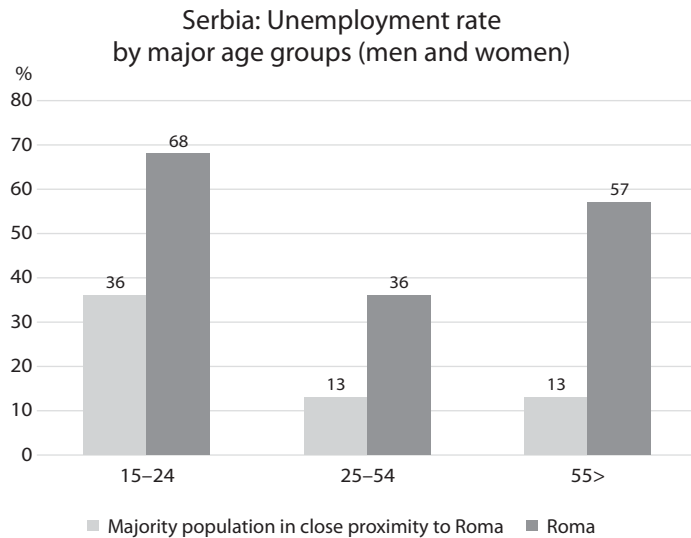


The graph shows the depth of poverty: how poor are those below the poverty line? A lower poverty gap means that more people are closer to the poverty line (with greater chances of rising above it). A higher poverty gap means that more people are closer to the bottom with fewer chances to improve their condition (see the Glossary for more details).

¹ For an explanation of PPP (purchasing power parity) please see the Glossary.

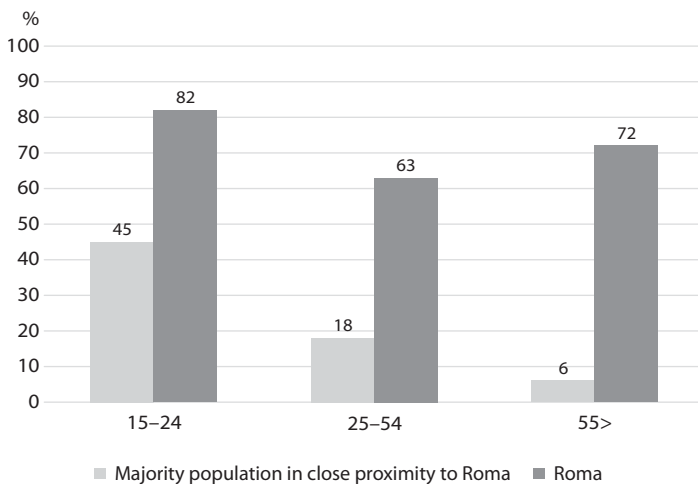
² Majority does NOT refer to the majority population representative for the whole country but rather it is a sample of the majority living in close proximity to Roma (see sections “General principles of the sample design” and “Majority boosters” in the “Introduction” chapter)

Unemployment

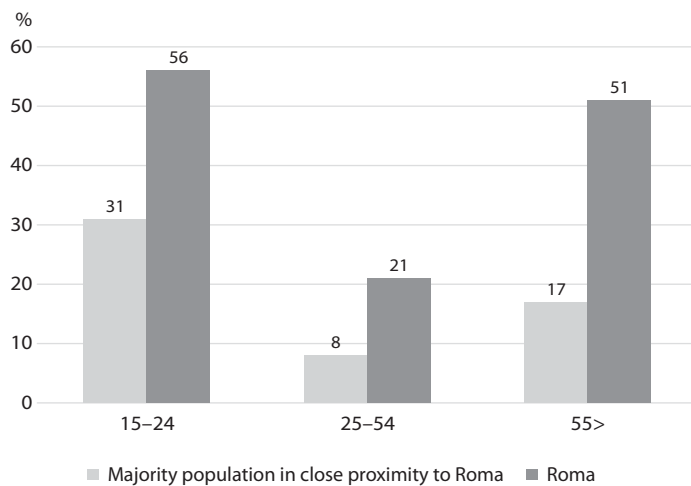


The graphs in this section illustrate the unemployed as a share of the labour force. Following the definition applied in Labour Force Surveys "Labour force" is defined as the working-age population (aged 15 and above) excluding people who are retired, in school and/or involved with housekeeping.

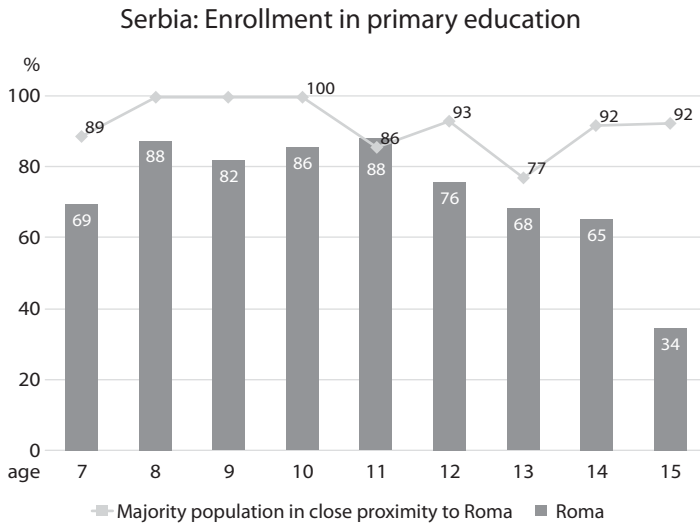
Serbia: Unemployment rate by major age groups (women)



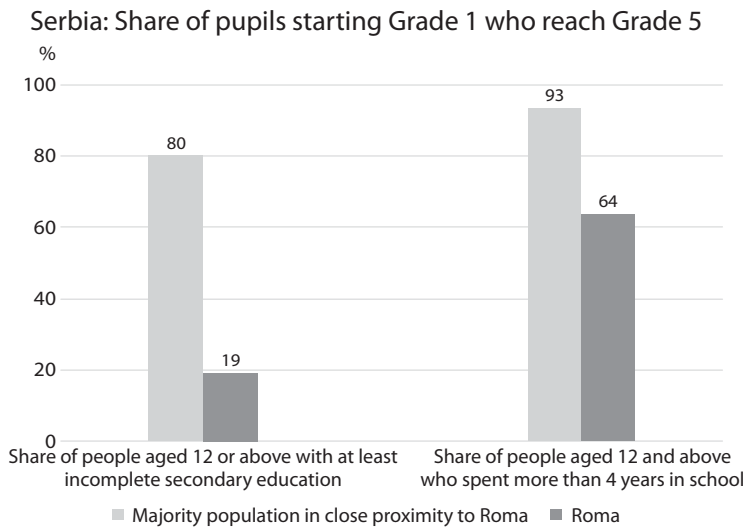
Serbia: Unemployment rate by major age groups (men)



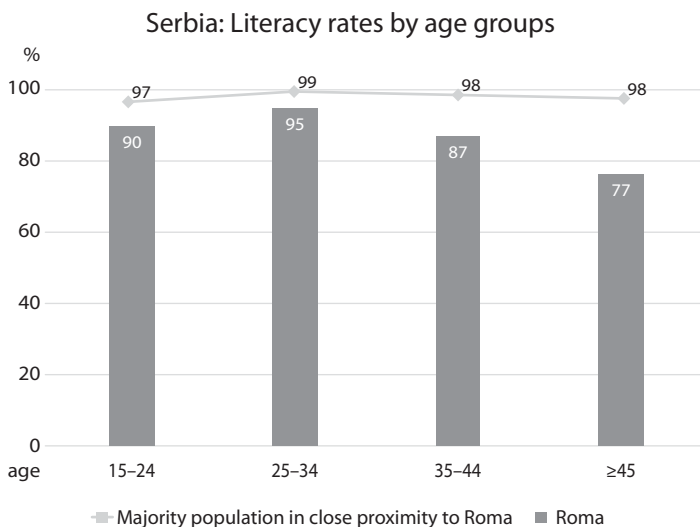
Education



The graph shows children by age who attend school as a share of those who should attend based on their age. The values are determined from the share of “yes” answers to the question “Does the household member still attend school or training?” when the person concerned is of primary school age (7–15).



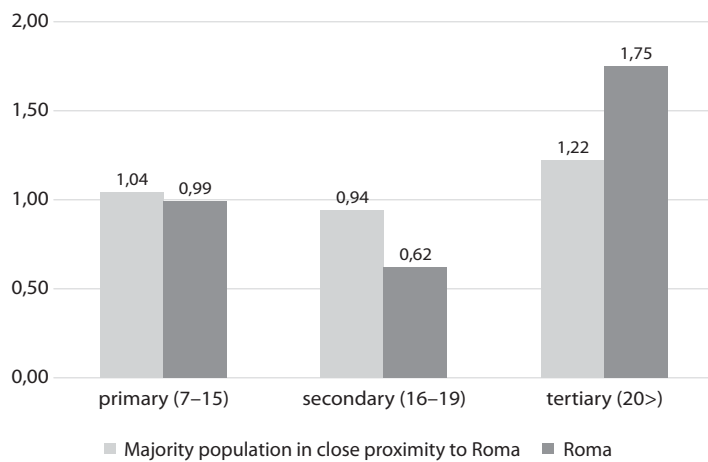
The first dataset in the graph shows the people who completed grade 5 as a share of those aged 12 (i.e. of those who should have completed it). The second dataset shows the people who completed grade 5 as a share of all aged 12 and above. The difference between the two data sets indicates the incidence of repeaters (pupils repeating a school year).



The graph shows those who are literate as a share of the population aged 15 and above. The values are based on the share of those who can read and write, broken into four age groups: 15–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45 and above. The survey question was “Can the household member read and write?”

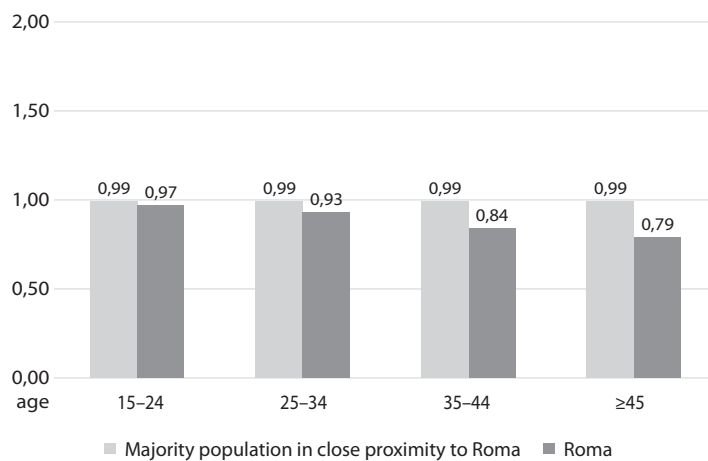
Gender equality and empowerment of women

Serbia: Ratios of girls to boys by education level



The graph shows the distribution of “yes” answers to the question “Does the household member still attend school or training?” broken down by sex and age for the three “school-age groups”: primary (7–15 years old), secondary (16–19) and tertiary (above 20).

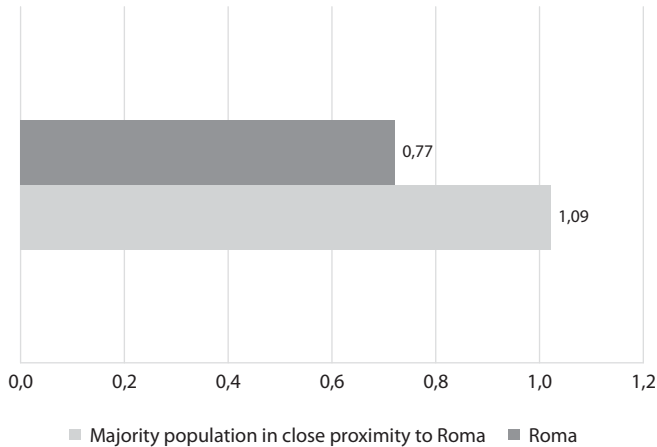
Serbia: Ratios of literate females to males by age groups



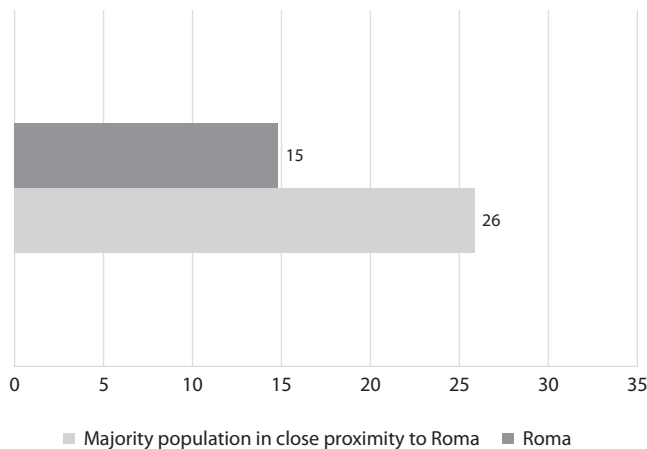
The graph outlines the “yes” answers to the question “Can the household member read and write?” broken down by sex and major age group.

Housing and living conditions

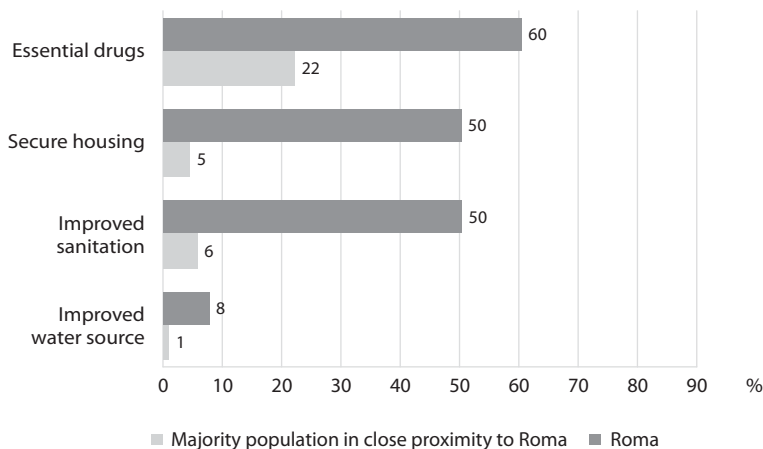
Serbia: Rooms per household member



Serbia: Square meters per household member



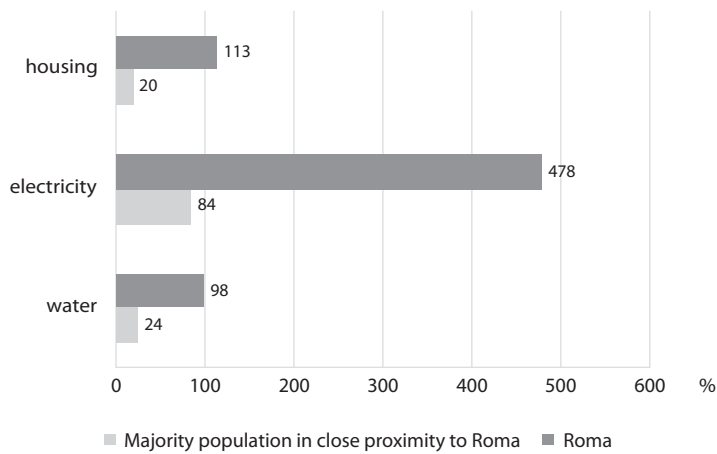
Serbia: Shares of the population not having access to:



The two graphs show how much living space Roma and non-Roma household members use. The first graph is based on data derived from the question "How many rooms does your household have in the dwelling you currently occupy?" The second one is based on "How many square meters is your current dwelling?" Data per capita in both are calculated using the total number of household members.

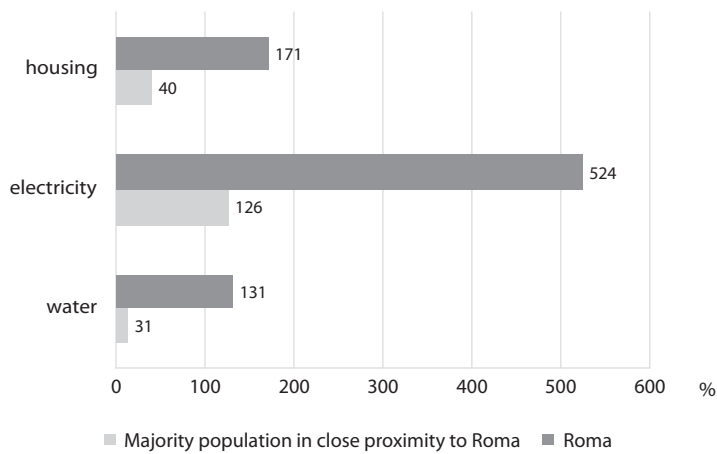
The "Essential drugs" section of the graph shows the share of households responding "Yes" to the question "Were there any periods in the past 12 months when your household could not afford to purchase medicines prescribed to/ needed by a member of your household?" "Secure housing" shows the share of those living in "ruined houses" or "slums". "Improved sanitation" shows the share of households not having a toilet or bathroom inside the house. "Improved water source" shows the share of the population living in households not having piped water inside the dwelling or in the garden/yard.

Serbia: Outstanding payments as a share of monthly household expenditures

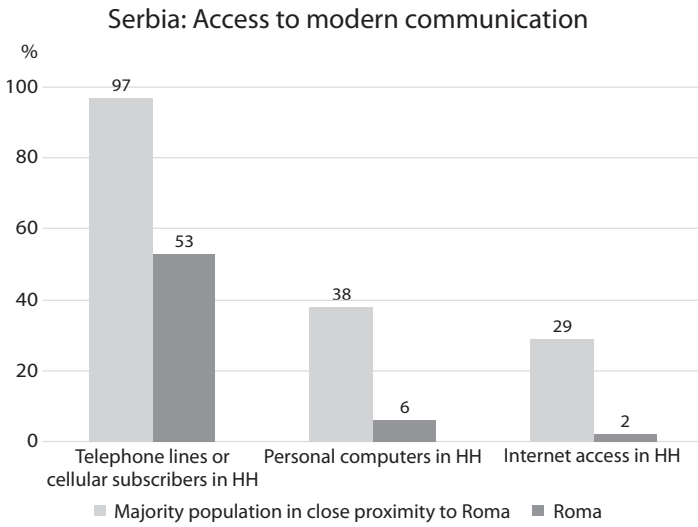


The graph shows the outstanding monthly payments for water, electricity and housing as a share of monthly household expenditures.

Serbia: Outstanding payments as a share of monthly household expenditures



The graph shows the outstanding monthly payments for water, electricity and housing as a share of monthly household income.



The first dataset in the graph shows telephone lines or cellular subscribers per 100 people. The values are based on the number of “yes” answers to the question “Do you have in your household a telephone or a mobile phone in functioning order?” and recalculated for a sample of 100 people. Households having both a telephone and a mobile phone were counted once. The second and third parts of the graph show the number of personal computers in use per 100 population and internet users per 100 people. The values are based on the number of “yes” answers to the question “Do you have here in your household a computer/internet connection in functioning order?” and recalculated for a sample of 100 people.