

SERBIA – ZONE OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION*Petar Veselinović¹, Vladimir Mičić², Dalibor Miletic³***Summary**

A fall in the population's living standard and the growth of poverty in Serbia are, first of all, the consequence of a significant decrease in the economic activity. The problem of poverty and social exclusion is additionally intensified and made bigger by the world economic crisis influence. The subject of the paper is the analysis of the current situation, which is crucially significant for solving the stated problems, i.e. suppressing negative phenomena which are the cause of poverty and social exclusion. The paper is aimed at gaining an insight into basic causes responsible for poverty in Serbia as the basis for the determination of necessary measures and activities for problem solving. The poverty indicators used in the analysis are the poverty rate, poverty depth and severity. Solving poverty problems is the priority task Serbia has to deal with on its way to integrate into the EU and it requires reaching new strategies for reducing poverty as well as its efficient implementation.

Key words: *poverty, social exclusion, poverty indicators, social protection, Serbia*

JEL: *I30, I32*

Introduction

Poverty is a problem which a large number of countries are faced with, irrespective of the level of their development. After the Second World War, in the time period of an intensive economic and social development, the issue of poverty was only sporadically present. Poverty was not much talked about in developed European countries, either, because it was considered to be practically eradicated; nor was it talked about in the countries of the so-called real-socialism, where, by definition, there could be no poverty at all. That issue was marginalized and various euphemisms were used for poverty.

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In the last decade of XX century, attention was drawn to different forms of poverty, especially amongst social and ethnic groups. In that time period, the issue of poverty became a subject matter of interest in countries in transition and in Serbia as well.

In the time when the World Economic Crisis is dictating who will have three, two, one, and who will have no meal at all during the day, poverty is a problem which must be looked in the eye. Daily information from which we learn that yet another family are queuing for a warm meal in community kitchens, that there is yet another unemployed person in the labor market and that one person more died from bitter cold – warns us that poverty is out there, around us. Yet, data about the number of the unemployed, the poor and the hungry show us how big the problem is.

On Serbia's territory, there are over 750,000 unemployed people, and the number of the poor has been increasing since the second half of the year 2008. We should bear in mind the fact that official data about the number of the poor are not always valid and, most frequently, do not correspond with data which EU has. Rural areas are specially affected by poverty, and differences are deepening between rural and urban areas. In that sense, much more attention should be paid to this problem; we should jointly work at all levels and provide a stronger institutional support for reducing poverty and social exclusion.

Methodological aspect of observing poverty in Serbia

To measure poverty, countries use the poverty line which corresponds with the level of their development, their social norms and values. When poverty is assessed at the world level, the opted-for poverty line must be the same for all countries and is expressed in a shared unit of measure.

For a long time, the World Bank was using two international lines of poverty – the lower one, at the level of 1 USD, and the higher one at the level of 2 USD per person per day. Recently, the line of extreme poverty has been lifted from 1 to the level of 1.25 USD daily, which corresponds with the standards of the poorest countries in the world. The line of 2 USD daily is still applicable for regions and countries with mid-level revenue⁴.

As a natural and simple measure of poverty, there is the number of the poor (*head count* – HC) or the share of the poor in the overall population of a country, termed as the coefficient of poverty (*head count ratio* – HCR). Simultaneously, the number of the poor is determined by the number of individuals (*i*) whose income is less than the poverty line ($y < p$).

Put it this way: *y*–the income (or spending) which an *i* individual has in his or her society ($i=1,2,...n$), *p*–the poverty line, *n*–the total population and *m*–an average income. The coefficient of poverty:

4 World Bank, Development Economics Research Group (2010): *Living Standards Measurement Study*, Washington, available at: <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:22510787~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:469382,00.html>

$$HCR = \frac{HC}{n}$$

Although they are simple and easy to calculate, the mentioned parameters have certain shortcomings. First, they do not provide us with information about to what extent individual incomes lag behind the poverty line. Besides, there are no visible differences in incomes among the poor.

To gain an insight into the depth of poverty, the measure of the deterioration of the average income (or spending) from the poverty line is used. When the average income (spending) of an individual is divided by the average revenue (spending) of a society, it results in the coefficient (rate) of the poverty gap (*poverty gap ratio* – PGR), where p is the poverty line, y_i is the revenue, n is the total population number, and m is the average revenue:

$$PGR = \frac{\sum_{y_i < p} (p - y_i)}{n \cdot m}$$

This measure shows how big the poverty gap i.e. income deficit is compared to resources which can be used to eliminate it. Actually, this coefficient does not measure poverty as such, either, but it measures resources needed for its eradication.

While measuring poverty in Serbia, the absolute poverty line is used, representing the spending necessary for satisfying minimal living needs. The poverty line consists of: 1) the line of food – spending necessary for satisfying the basic needs for food (the line of extreme poverty), and 2) other household expenditures (clothes and footwear, hygiene, education, healthcare, transport).

So, the total poverty line is defined in two steps. It is determined as an overall spending of a household, whose spending on food corresponds with the minimal consumer basket. The poor are those whose spending is below the defined national absolute poverty line. That line differs from one country to another depending on the structure of the consumer basket. In order to make an international comparison, it is converted into American dollars of the same purchase power.

The most frequently used poverty indicators in Serbia are: 1) poverty index (coefficient or rate) – (PO), 2) poverty depth (gap) – (P1) and 3) poverty severity – (P2)⁵.

Since the year 2002, poverty in Serbia has been measured and analyzed on the basis of data generated from carrying out The Living Standard Survey (LSS). Until the year 2001, there had been no official poverty line; however, the minimal consumer basket was defined, and it referred to a four-member household, and, actually, represented the poverty line⁶.

5 Bogičević, B., Krstić, G., Mijatović, B. (2002): *Siromaštvo u Srbiji i reforma državne pomoći siromašnima*, Centar za liberalno-demokratske studije, Beograd, p. 20.

6 Ibid, p. 13.

The first LSS (2002-2003), professionally assisted by the World Bank, enabled the preparation of the Strategy for Poverty Reduction in the year 2003. The continuity of poverty measuring was enabled thanks to the preparation of the second LSS in the year 2007. That enabled the monitoring of poverty phenomena in Serbia.

Since the year 2007, poverty statistics in Serbia have been based on data generated from The Household Spending Survey (HSS). Starting from the COICOP classification⁷, the household spending is defined as the sum of expenditures for food and other current expenditures, which include purchased products, own production and gifts. The HSS provides *the* crucially needed continuity in monitoring data related to poverty. It will have been effective until the adoption of the Survey of Incomes and Living Conditions (SILC), which is applied in the EU member countries.

However, there are methodological differences between the HSS and the LSS with respect to data collection. With the HSS, data on spending relate to the whole year, whereas with the LSS, they only relate to one month (June). The HSS does not contain data about the assessment of the value of the rent for owners of an apartment or house, nor does it contain data about the assessment of the services of using permanent consumer goods, for the reason of a lack of needed data.

Spending defined in that manner is deflated by the regional indices for the food price generated from the HSS. In that way, the higher spending of a household is exclusively the result of spending on bigger quantities or on more quality products, not the result of higher prices. Since data about spending are collected at the household level, the total spending is distributed among the members of the household by using the OECD Equivalence Scale, where the head of the household is given weight 1, each adult member of the household (14-year-olds and older) weight 0.7, and children (under 14 years old) weight 0.5⁸.

The value of the absolute poverty line in Serbia (defined in the year 2006) is calculated via the application of an appropriate annual index of consumer prices. The poverty profile describes who the poor are, according to characteristics such as the place of residence of the household (the location and region), the status which the head of the household and the household members have in the labor market, and the demographic structure of the household (sex, age, household size, number of children).

To gain an insight into poverty, a Social Map was made in mid-2011, merging data provided by 130 Centers for Social Work, Republican Agency for Statistics of Serbia (SORS), National Service for Employment, and Pension and Disability Insurance Fund. That enabled the latest data about the trends of the poverty and social exclusion of Serbia's population.

7 Republički zavod za statistiku (2011): *Siromaštvo u Republici Srbiji, 2008–2010*, Beograd, p. 2.

8 Ibid, p. 2.

One of Serbia's important goals in the process of joining the EU is its active participation in the European process of social inclusion, which requires the development and improvement of the methodology for monitoring an individual's and social groups' inclusion. This means a gradual transition from the poverty monitoring framework to the social inclusion monitoring framework according to the EU methodology which does not only monitor poverty but both poverty and social exclusion, simultaneously observing relative poverty measured by incomes not by consumption. From the moment of obtaining the status of the EU membership candidate country, Serbia must adopt the *Joint Inclusion Memorandum*, which will improve the present policies which only partly deal with issues of social inclusion and develop a strategic framework that will take into consideration the whole specter of exclusion⁹.

The social exclusion monitoring methodology ensures the comparability of the basic indicators of the condition of social inclusion with the EU member countries, those that are in the EU accession process and neighbor countries; however, it indicates the specificities of the social inclusion problem in Serbia. For that purpose, the poverty risk rate can be used to show the share of individuals whose revenue, according to the consumer unit, is less than 60% of the national revenue median per consumer unit in the total population¹⁰.

Poverty and social exclusion

The time period between the two World Wars, on the territory of this country of ours, the terms "indigent" and "socially weak" were used instead of "poor". In 1922, the Law on the Protection of the Indigent was brought, comprising the principle of public protection, i.e. "taking care of all old persons who, because of their age and feebleness, cannot make their own living on their own funds at all, nor have anyone to take care of them, but are not included in the Law on the Disabled"¹¹.

In the postwar time period, M. Radovanović also dealt with the phenomenon of poverty and pauperism. He highlighted the key determinants of poverty: class inequality in the society and individuals' unequal share in the distribution of social wealth. According to him, pauperism is connected with miserable lodging conditions, poor educational, a deteriorated health condition and an individual's bad market position¹².

9 Vlada Republike Srbije, Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva i Republički zavod za statistiku (2011): *Praćenje socijalne uključenosti u Srbiji - pregled i trenutno stanje socijalne uključenosti u Srbiji na osnovu praćenja evropskih i nacionalnih pokazatelja*, Beograd, available at: <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Pregled-stanja-socijalne-ukljucenosti-u-Srbiji-maj-2010.pdf>, pp. 4-5

10 Ibid, p. 17.

11 Zelenović-Lakićević, M. (1987): *Socijalna ugroženost*, Institut za socijalnu politiku, Beograd, pp.7-8.

12 Ibid, p. 10.

Some authors, M. Živković among them, used the term “socialist poverty”, which was not acceptable because poverty in socialism did not have a mass character, nor did it represent a permanent social phenomenon¹³. The adequate expression for poverty in the then Yugoslav professional literature was “social insecurity”.

The definition of poverty broadly used in Serbia today reads: “Poverty is rather a dimensional phenomenon which, apart from insufficient incomes for satisfying the basic living needs, understands as well aspects related to human rights such as the impossibility of employment, inappropriate lodging conditions and an inadequate approach to social protection, healthcare, educational and communal services”¹⁴.

The concept of social exclusion i.e. a contemporary approach to poverty overlaps with a wider understanding of poverty. Not only does it mean material or pecuniary poverty but it also means social, cultural, political and other forms of poverty, i.e. it represents a process weakening the tie between an individual and his or her community. Those ties can be economic, political, socio-cultural or spatial. The more features that exclude an individual, the more vulnerable he or she becomes.

Table 1. Poverty and Social Exclusion

	Poverty	Social exclusion
Aspect	Individual	Society
Characteristics	Single dimensionality	Multidimensionality
Perspectives	Static process-condition	Dynamic process
Basic concept	Low incomes as a form of inequality	Limited social participation
Dimensions of inequality	Vertical and distributive	Polarized (outside-inside) and participative
Indicators	Income-based (material)	Economic, social, cultural, political (non-material)

Source: Bohnke, P. (2001): Nothing Left to Lose? Poverty and Social Exclusion in Comparison Empirical Evidence on Germany, Research Unit “Social Structure and Social Reporting”, Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB), p. 11, available at: <http://skylla.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2001/iii01-402.pdf> and Šućur, Z. (2004): Socijalna isključenost: pojam, pristupi i operacionalizacija, Revija za sociologiju, Hrvatsko sociološko društvo, Vol. 35, br. 1-2, 2004, pp. 45-60, Zagreb, available at: http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=toc&id_broj=1380

13 Ibid, p. 11.

14 Vlada Republike Srbije (2003): *Strategija za smanjenje siromaštva u Srbiji*, Beograd, p. 6. available at: <http://www.mos.gov.rs/sites/default/files/down/siromastvorezime.pdf>

Social exclusion is mostly used when threatened social groups are investigated, such as children, young people, the old, the unemployed, the disabled or Roma people¹⁵. In the European Social Charter, the notion of social exclusion appeared for the first time in the year 1989. In 1996, the EU introduces “The right of protection from poverty and social exclusion”. Table 1 accounts for the key differences between poverty (more narrowly understood) and social exclusion.

The basic characteristics of poverty in Serbia

The fall of Serbia’s population’s living standards and the growth of poverty in Serbia in the last decade of XX century are the result of a big decrease in the economic activity. In the year 2000, the gross domestic product (GDP), both in total and per capita, was half the level of the one achieved around the end of the 1980’s. Such a fall in the economic activity is the consequence of the general political and economic crisis.

The hyperinflation in the year 1993 contributed to impoverishment and the expansion of the grey economy, which became a way out for a significant part of the population to survive. Hard economic and social conditions were additionally made more difficult when a huge number of refugees and displaced people came. The living standard of one part of the population was influenced by the impossibility of using the right to incomes and private properties in the republics of the Former Yugoslavia. The population needing more social aid was increasing, and the state’s economic possibilities of providing social aid were becoming fewer.

The most important cause of increasing poverty was the fall in income per capita and the growth of inequality in the distribution of incomes in the last decade of XX century and the first decade of XXI century. In the last decade of XX century, official unemployment increased, as well as the covered one, because the number of the employed was decreasing more slowly than was the dramatic fall in the economic activity. Until the end of that time period, covered unemployment reached the level of around one-third of total unemployment. Such a condition in the labor market had as a consequence a fall of real salaries and delays in their payment.

Economic crimes and corruption which is still present in Serbia also represent one of the significant causes of poverty. The World Economic Crisis of the year 2008 can also be marked as a cause of the increase in poverty.

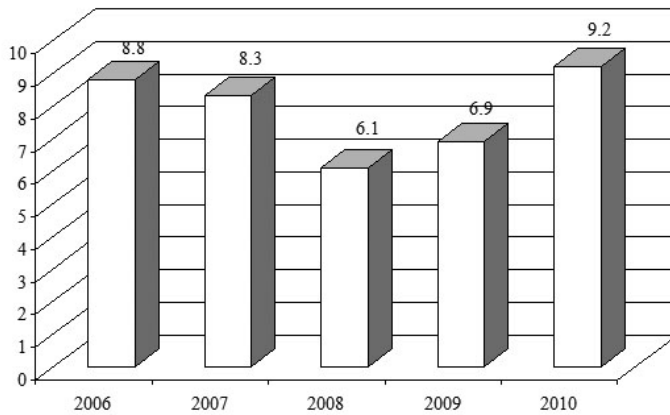
Since the year 2002, Serbia has been carrying out the LSS according to an internationally acknowledged methodology, and, in that way, data about poverty have been generated. The total poverty line for a four-member household defined in a standard manner was 222 USD per month, i.e. 72 USD per consumer unit per month. The surveys carried out in the

15 Vlada Republike Srbije (2012): *Socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva, Ka većoj socijalnoj uključenosti u Republici Srbiji na putu evropskih integracija*, Beograd, available at: <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/?p=10075>

years 2002 and 2003 accounted for the fact that around one million people lived below the absolute poverty line, in other words 14% of the population were poor.

Since the year 2007, the HSS has been used. Having in view this method of analysis, the time period between 2006 and 2010, when we monitor the poverty rate, can be divided into two stages (Chart 1). Stage I relates to the time period from 2006 to 2008, when the poverty rates were showing a falling trend, i.e. when the rate of the poor was reduced from 8.8% to 6.1%. Stage II followed – the poverty rate grew to be 9.2% in 2010, and the poor population's spending, according to the consumer unit, was on average lower than the poverty line, which was 8,544 dinars monthly.

Chart 1. The poverty rate in Serbia



Source: Republički zavod za statistiku (2011): Siromaštvo u Republici Srbiji, 2008–2010, Beograd, pp. 1-4 and Vlada Republike Srbije (2011): Prvi nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom ukljućivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji – Uloga lokalnih samouprava, Beograd, available at: <http://www.sindikats.rs/download/Nacrt-izvestaja-o-socijalnom-ukljucivanju.pdf>, p. 77.

During the year 2006, poverty depth (gap) and severity were not high. In 2007 and 2008, the decreasing trend continued, so poverty depth was 3.1%, i.e. to 2.5%. Poverty severity was 1.9% in the year 2007, i.e. 0.8% in the year 2008. The increase in poverty depth and severity in 2009 and 2010 shed light on other dimensions of this problem as well. At least 700,000 people in Serbia live on the edge of mere subsistence, but only one-third of them receive some sort of social aid.

The number of the poor who cannot satisfy their basic needs, either, increased especially in 2010, and below the poverty line, there are over 353,000 people. Even 42,279 single households, which, for the most part, belong to rural areas, live their lives below the poverty line. If we add to that 50,000 those who eat in Kitchens for the Homeless and Hungry, as

well as 58,000 extremely poor who receive food and hygienic packages, then these three groups of the population make one whole town of 150,000 citizens¹⁶.

The situation here is also additionally aggravated by the fact that 95,000 unemployed people above the age of 55 are close to the poverty line, too, and, at the same time, there are 21,353 of those no longer entitled to compensation in money from the agency, thus being potential users of the social protection system¹⁷.

In Serbia, he who is not rich is poor because the so-called middle class has practically vanished. In support of this allegation, we can also mention the fact that Serbia consumes 43.4 kilograms of meat per capita per annum, whereas in European countries, 85 kilograms are consumed. Pensioners with the lowest incomes are a specially threatened group of the population (Table 2).

Table 2. The number of pensioners with the lowest income (in RSD)

Agriculturalists		Self-employment		Employed	
Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number
Up to 5,000	3,971	Up to 12,077	8,309	Up to 12,077	136,998
5,000 – 6,000	1,092	12,077	2,136	12,077	86,548
6,000 – 7,000	23,640	12,077 – 14,457	7,660	12,077 – 14,457	108,848
7,000 – 9,321	3,771	14,457 – 16,866	5,144	14,457 – 16,866	119,632
9,321 – 9,495	177,503	16,866 – 19,276	5,331	16,866 – 19,276	142,551
9,495 – 13,410	6,583	-	-	-	-

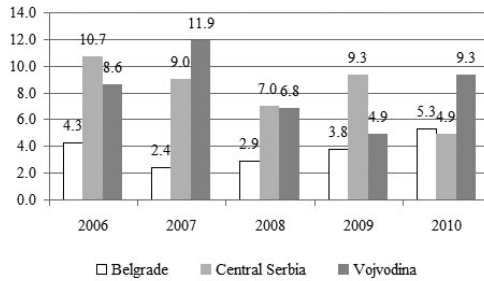
Source: Vlada Republike Srbije (2011): Prvi nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom ukljućivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji – Uloga lokalnih samouprava, Beograd, available at: <http://www.sindikats.rs/download/Nacrt-izvestaja-o-socijalnom-ukljucivanju.pdf>, p. 188-189.

As far as the regional spreading of poverty in Serbia is concerned, between the years 2006 and 2009, the largest number of the poor was in Central Serbia and Vojvodina, and the smallest number of them was in Belgrade. In the year 2010, there was a significant increase in poor population observed by region and in Serbia as a whole, due to the consequences of the World Economic Crisis (Chart 2).

16 Ministarstvo rada i socijalne politike (2011): *Socijalni profil opština u Republici Srbiji*, Beograd, available at: <http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/cms/sr/pocetna/293>

17 Republički zavod za statistiku (2011): *Anketa o radnoj snazi, 2010*, Beograd, pp. 83-84.

Chart 2. Percentage of the poor in Serbia by region

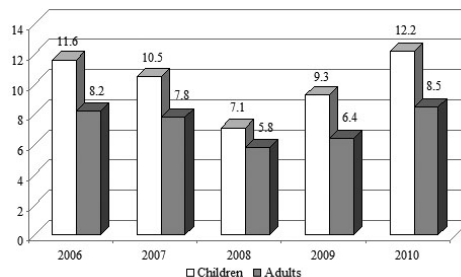


Source: Republički zavod za statistiku (2011): Siromaštvo u Republici Srbiji, 2008–2010, Beograd, pp. 1-4 and Vlada Republike Srbije (2011): Prvi nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom ukljućivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji – Uloga lokalnih samouprava, Beograd, available at: <http://www.sindikatar.rs/download/Nacrt-izvestaja-o-socijalnom-ukljucivanju.pdf>, p. 185.

On the basis of the demonstrated data, a conclusion we can reach is that, in the observed time period, there was a reduction in poverty in certain regions, first of all in Central Serbia and Vojvodina. The reduction in poverty in Central Serbia from 9% to 4.9% in the years 2007 and 2010, respectively, was the consequence of change in the manner of the calculation of poverty in Serbia.

A big problem Serbia is being faced with is the poverty of children and the young. Even 11.6% of children were poor in 2006. A partial recovery in this population was recorded in the time period from 2007 to 2009, when the percentage of poor children fell to 7.1% in the year 2008; however, in the year 2010, it significantly increased to 12.2%. When it concerns adult population, we can notice a slight fall from the year 2006 to 2009, only to record another increase in the percentage of adult poor population to 8.5% in the year 2010 (Chart 3).

Chart 3. Percentage of poor children and adults in Serbia

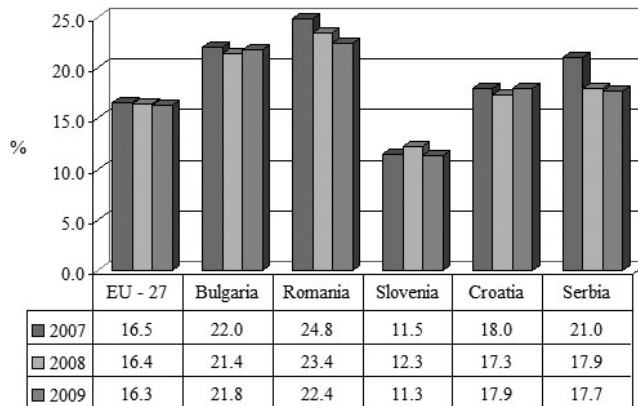


Source: Republički zavod za statistiku (2011): Siromaštvo u Republici Srbiji, 2008–2010, Beograd, pp. 1-4 and Vlada Republike Srbije (2011): Prvi nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom ukljućivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji – Uloga lokalnih samouprava, Beograd, available at: <http://www.sindikatar.rs/download/Nacrt-izvestaja-o-socijalnom-ukljucivanju.pdf>, p. 186-187.

When poverty classified according to the type of community in Serbia is in question, it is clearly evident that there is a domination of poor citizens in rural areas, which in the year 2010 reaches 13.6%, whereas the percentage of the poor in urban areas is significantly smaller, around 5%. It is very hard, if not the hardest, for refugees and displaced persons. Although there are no valid and precise data about the poverty of these groups, it is estimated that the poverty of refugees and the displaced is twice as big as the one of the rest of the population. It is also interesting that almost one half (49.2%) of Roma population in Serbia are poor, and that even 6.4% are extremely poor¹⁸.

As we can see in Chart 4, the poverty risk rate in Serbia had a falling trend in the time period 2007-2009. It was somewhat higher in comparison with the EU-27, where it was about 16.4%. In comparison with neighbor countries, Serbia’s risk rate is higher than in Slovenia, similar to the one in Croatia and lower than the ones in Bulgaria and Romania, the last two being countries with the highest risk rates. However, we should not forget that differences in the financial poverty risk rate do not reflect differences at the level of the development of the observed member countries; it is, however, important that the poverty depth, i.e. how far from the poverty line poor citizens’ incomes are, should be taken into consideration.

Chart 4. At-risk-of-poverty rate



Source: Eurostat, Statistics Database, Income distribution and monetary poverty, available at: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_li02&lang=en and Vlada Republike Srbije (2011): Prvi nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom ukljućivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji – Uloga lokalnih samouprava, Beograd, available at: <http://www.sindikatsindikat.rs/download/Nacrt-izvestaja-o-socijalnom-ukljucivanju.pdf>, p. 186-187.

18 Republićki zavod za statistiku (2011): *Siromaštvo u Republici Srbiji, 2008–2010*, Beograd, p. 2
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Conclusion

The problem of poverty and social exclusion is certainly one of the biggest problems not only in the contemporary world but in Serbia as well. No single progress can be negligent of famine and misery of the man at the beginning of XXI century. That contradiction is something that makes the world less understandable and nice. On the one hand, there are individuals drinking champagnes worth several thousand dollars, while on the other hand, there are groups of people with plastic buckets and dishes in their hands, queuing for one or two ladles of food. Pictures like these should make some influential people ask themselves: how to overcome this?

The problem is in that influence and power go hand in hand, so those who can solve this problem have no time for that because they are in a rush for their first, fifth or tenth million. However, one cannot say that the state does not wish to, at least, minimize this problem, because the population of a country creates its image.

Observed through the prism of indicators and figures, neglecting the hungry one, poverty and social exclusion in Serbia are increasing. The world economic crisis has directly provoked a fall in macroeconomic aggregates and the deterioration of the key economic indicators. Negative tendencies are followed by poverty growth. Until the very first signs of the crisis, poverty had been a problem whose solving was vaguely seen in the near future. This problem was being solved quite successfully, and year after year, the state prided itself on having fewer and fewer poor people. However, we should be very cautious when using official data because official statistical data of the number of the poor most frequently did not correspond with and were always less than the EU data. Was it because research and surveys were carried out insufficiently well, or because of an immoderate wish to be better and more successful in the EU eyes, yet the state often published unrealistic data.

The poverty reduction strategy had certain results; however, it is not applicable in the newly created conditions, when the economic crisis has hit the Serbian economy with full force, which is confirmed by the poverty rate growth figures. Solving the poverty problem in Serbia requires that all activists in the society should take part in bringing a new poverty reduction strategy and its efficient implementation. The process of reducing poverty and social exclusion will not be an easy and quick one in the period to come; it will take time and financial resources as well. Today, Serbia cannot take pride in allocating significant funds intended for ordinary people to suffer less from the consequences of the economic crisis.

Among other things, the development of partner relations between the Government, the profit sector, non-government organizations, the media, representatives of local self-governments and all citizens is crucially significant. The education of threatened and marginalized social groups and their inclusion in decision-making processes regarding life issues would also have an influence on gaining a more comprehensive insight into the status of these categories of the population and offering them adequate aid.

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SRBIJA - ZONA SIROMAŠTVA I SOCIJALNE ISKLJUČENOSTI

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Rezime

Smanjenje životnog standarda stanovništva i rast siromaštva u Srbiji, u poslednjoj deceniji, pre svega, posledica su značajnog smanjenja ekonomske aktivnosti. Problem siromaštva i socijalne isključenosti dodatno je zaoštren uticajem globalne ekonomske krize. Analiza stanja od presudnog je značaja za rešavanje ovog problema, odnosno suzbijanje negativnih pojava koje su uzrok siromaštva. Rešavanje problema siromaštva, kako na nacionalnom tako i na regionalnom nivou, prioritetan je zadatak na putu integracije Srbije u EU. U najširem smislu, cilj ovog rada je sagledavanje osnovnih uzroka koji su odgovorni za siromaštvo u regionima Srbije, kao osnove za utvrđivanje neophodnih mera i aktivnosti za rešavanje pomenutog problema.

Ključne reči: *siromaštvo, socijalna isključenost, pokazatelji siromaštva, socijalna zaštita, Srbija.*

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