

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

**POLICY DEPARTMENT** **C**  
**CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**



# Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies

STUDY FOR THE LIBE COMMITTEE







European Parliament

**DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES**

**POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND  
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

**CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS**

# **Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies**

## **STUDY**

### **Abstract**

This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee. It evaluates the implementation, impact and outcomes of National Roma Integration Strategies in a selection of Member States (Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain) in the broader context of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. It concludes that these strategies suffer from severe implementation gaps and that Roma populations continue to live in significant socio-economic deprivation, suffer extensive discrimination and high levels of anti-Gypsyism. The study puts forward practical policy recommendations for enhanced implementation of Roma integration strategies in Member States, and for improved policies at the EU level that could support a more effective integration of disadvantaged Roma EU citizens.

**This study was commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ADOP** Anti-discrimination Operational Programme
- CSR** Country-specific Recommendation
- CNCDH** Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme  
(National Consultative Committee on Human Rights, France)
- CSO** Civil society organisation
- DIHAL** Délégation Interministérielle à l'Hébergement et à l'Accès au  
Logement (Interministerial Delegation for Accomodation and  
Access to Housing, France)
- EAFRD** European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
- EaSI** EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
- EC** European Commission
- ECHR** European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental  
Freedoms
- EFSI** European Fund for Strategic Investments
- EIB** European Investment Bank
- EIEZ** European Inclusion and Enterprise Zone
- ERDF** European Regional Development Fund
- ESIF** European Structural and Investment Funds
- ESF** European Social Fund
- EU** European Union
- EUSDR** EU Strategy for the Danube Region
- FRA** European Fundamental Rights Agency
- FSG** Fundación Secretariado Gitano
- ICERD** International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

## Racial Discrimination

- LIBE** Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee), European Parliament
- MECD** Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Ministry for Education, Culture and Sports, Spain)
- MEYSS** Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social (Ministry of Employment and Social Security, Spain)
- MSSSI** Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad (Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, Spain)
- MS** Member State
- NRIS** National Roma Integration Strategy
- NAR** Agentiei Nationale pentru Romi (National Agency for Roma, Romania)
- NCCEII** Bulgarian National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues
- NGO** Non-governmental organisation
- NMS** New Member State
- OMS** Old Member State
- SME** Small and Medium Enterprise
- TAIEX** Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
- UNAR** Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali (National Office against Racial Discrimination, Italy)
- UNDP** United Nations Development Programme



## **COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria
<b>FR</b>	France
<b>ES</b>	Spain
<b>HU</b>	Hungary
<b>IT</b>	Italy
<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>SK</b>	Slovakia

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background and aim

This study acts as follow up to the 2011 study on "Measures to promote the situation of Roma EU citizens in the European Union", which was commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)<sup>1</sup>. It looks at the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRISs) in a selection of Member States (Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain). The work considers the (limited) success of these strategies by considering a number of aspects, including: types of integration projects and activities, the funding available and any limitations associated with receiving any funding, the actors and the interactions between stakeholders, and national strategies. In the context of the policy, legal, and social issues outlined above, the study evaluates national Roma integration strategies as well as the affordances of the EU Framework more widely. This is achieved through the following aims:

- Evaluate the implementation, impact and outcomes, as well as the reasons for limited success, of the implementation of the 2011 EU Framework for NRISs in a proposed selection of Member States – Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Spain – through looking at their national strategies;
- Highlight cases of best practices in the Member States;
- Identify gaps and loopholes in the 2011 EU Framework for NRISs in the aforementioned Member States;
- Recommend actions for the enhanced implementation of the NRISs in Member States and for increasing the efficacy of the EU Framework for NRIS.

### Findings

This study finds that, although EU Member States have elaborated more or less detailed policy frameworks for addressing problems of Roma inclusion across key areas, deficiencies remain in the processes of implementation of the NRIS. These stem in large part from a range of technical factors:

- Limitations in available data, which hamper processes of evidence-based policy-making<sup>2</sup>;
- Ill-developed targets linked to precise time frames and measures pinning down broader policy objectives outlined in the strategy documents; where such targets do exist these tend to be vertical un-integrated policy targets;
- Failure to take an integrated holistic approach to the multi-sectoral and intersectional challenges of Roma inclusion;

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament (2011) *Measures to Promote the Situation of the Roma EU Citizens in the European Union*, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study No. PE 432.747 and "Country reports" (PE 432 751) written by Bartlett, W., Benini, R. and Gordon, C.

European Parliament (2011). *Measures to promote the situation of Roma EU citizens in the European Union - Country reports*. Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. Study number PE 432.751. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/432751/IPOL-LIBE\\_ET\(2011\)432751\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/432751/IPOL-LIBE_ET(2011)432751_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Open Society Foundation (2010). *No Data, No Progress: Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015*. Budapest: Open Society Foundation. Available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/no-data-no-progress-20100628.pdf>

- Insufficiently clear differentiation of roles and responsibilities between the different levels of government in Member States coupled with inadequate administrative capacity at all levels of government;
- Limitations in funding levels for Roma inclusion and weak alignment between policies and funds;
- Complex bureaucratic processes involved in applying for EU funds – exacerbated by the lack of necessary administrative and technical capacities of sub-national governments;
- Limitations on those who can apply for funding which has impeded the implementation and dissemination of good practice;
- Weak or non-existent monitoring and evaluation procedures;
- Poor communication between the different layers of government.

The study argues that the dearth of political will at all levels of national and sub-national government in Member States is hampering the implementation of the objectives laid out in the NRIS and accompanying policy documents.<sup>3</sup> The recommendations in the study seek to address the absence of the necessary political will at both the national and sub-national levels in Member States which has meant that policy objectives laid out in National Roma Integration Strategies suffer from severe implementation gaps and that, on the whole, Roma populations continue to live in significant socio-economic deprivation across the Union (diversity notwithstanding). It suggests that the EU needs to play a more proactive role in promoting the integration of Roma EU citizens through a series of changes to the EU Framework for NRIS.

## Recommendations

The study provides a number of policy recommendations, building on policy recommendations made in the 2011 study to the European Parliament in which the authors proposed that the EU prepare an EU-level Strategy for Roma Inclusion and establish an EU-level agency to support the development, implementation and monitoring of such a strategy together with a dedicated funding stream.

It is argued here that given the lack of political will in Member States the EU needs to take a more proactive role in incentivising national and sub-national elites to action the policies laid out in their policy frameworks and thus foster the necessary enabling conditions to integrate Roma populations economically, socially and politically. It is in the interests of Member States to create the conditions necessary to support sustainable economic growth in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 growth strategy notwithstanding the lingering effects of the economic and financial crisis and the continuing risk of further recession.

Therefore, at EU level, this study recommends:

- a dedicated and enhanced Roma desk should be established in the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion staffed with officials who can play an important proactive and coordinating role in bringing together existing

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<sup>3</sup> European Parliament (2011) *Measures to Promote the Situation of the Roma EU Citizens in the European Union*, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study No. PE 432.747 and "Country reports" (PE 432 751) written by Bartlett, W., Benini, R. and Gordon, C.

organisational, technical and financial capacities at the European level and across Member States to promote Roma inclusion initiatives in Member States.

- A primary responsibility of the Roma desk should be to act as the champion for the establishment of European Inclusion and Enterprise Zones (EIEZs) in areas with significant ethnic minority populations, a majority of whom are Roma, and characterised by high levels of socio-economic deprivation.
- Officials at the Roma Desk should be charged to establish an EIEZ advisory board at the European level to draw together representatives from already existing financing instruments, which would contribute funding, technical know-how, and expertise to the development, implementation and evaluation of regional development plans. These funding instruments would include the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and European Structural, Investment Funds (ESIFs), the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the European Progress Microfinance Facility. The Roma Desk would be responsible through the convening of the advisory board for supporting the creation of bespoke coordinated packages of funding with incremental dispersals linked to the meeting of concrete conditions.
- Another strand of the Roma Desk's work would be to put in place effective procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of Roma-designated programmes as well as supporting the establishment of domestic capacity at the national and regional capacity in Member States including where appropriate through supporting twinning and Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX) initiatives of the European Commission.
- A revamped EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies in the format of an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion as proposed by the European Parliament in 2011 should be developed with realistic targets in the key policy areas of education, employment, health and housing, with a stronger dimension focusing on women and children, responding to the need to treat women and children as both a cross-cutting policy area as well as an area of attention in its own right. The EU should cooperate with other international organisations such as the Council of Europe and United Nations as well as appropriate NGOs such as the European Roma Rights Centre building on existing capacities, research and experience of policy advocacy to support the development of this strand of an EU-level Strategy and concomitant policy frameworks in Member States.
- While the proposed set of policy recommendations puts forward an economically driven approach to Roma integration, the EU must continue its important work in the area of anti-discrimination in accordance with Article 19 (1) of the TFEU (Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union), Article 21 (1) Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Racial Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC).
- The EU must continue its work in the area of anti-discrimination. Despite the adoption of norms of anti-discrimination at the EU level, their transposition at the national level and a number of important rulings by the European Court of Human Rights the norms of anti-discrimination against the Roma have not become embedded in the practices of Member States. EU institutions should focus on improving the implementation, monitoring and expanding the scope of use of existing legal instruments. Key areas of focus should include: (i) awareness-raising

about the responsibilities of Member States for implementing the directives; (ii) education of Roma communities about their legal rights under EU directives. An important channel of this would be the increased training and support of legal mediators and associated NGOs. An example of good practice in this area is that of the PRAXIS group in Belgrade which is composed of a group of lawyers who take up anti-discrimination cases on behalf of disadvantaged Roma and represent them in strategic cases of litigation in Serbia;<sup>4</sup> (iii) the strengthening of equality bodies in member states including the better training of judges and support for progressive judges' associations in these countries; (iv) the monitoring of the work of the equality bodies in relation to Roma discrimination by the European Parliament possibly in conjunction with the ERRC; (v) support by Eurostat to national statistics agencies to improve their data collection capacities; (vi) support for NGOs involved in work on Roma discrimination to take a class action to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Roma populations in their countries; (vii) preparation of a compendium of ECtHR rulings and national court ruling in favour of the Roma across EU member states enabling a comparison of the consistency of treatment of Roma populations in different member states and developing a body of knowledge of court practice which can be disseminated across the European Union.

- A multi-agency approach should be adopted by DG for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality of the European Commission. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights should continue its monitoring, evaluation and policy advice role. Given its expertise in promoting the 'respect for and protection of minorities' and in combating racism and discrimination, the European Parliament should also play a key role in this area.
- The key to sustainability is domestic political will. In the absence of domestic political will, EU institutions will have to continue to draw on available legal means through the rulings of the ECHR as well as soft policy options to exert leverage on national governments to address Roma inclusion and discrimination issues. The EU needs to place greater emphasis on the sharing and exchange of good practice through the open method of coordination collaborations in the areas of education, employment, health and housing as well as interventions to support the inclusion of women and children with the intention that this would feed back into policy design and implementation processes in and across Member States, and also that socialisation mechanisms of 'naming and shaming' and 'establishing and maintaining good standards' carry important weight at the European level and in Member States.

At Member State level and for the National Roma Integration Strategies prepared by the Member States, this study recommends the following along four axes: design, funding, implementation, and monitoring and data collection.

## Design

- The language of the NRIS could be revisited to ensure that it is underpinned by firm, unequivocal policy commitments in particular policy areas – for example 'zero tolerance' for Roma discrimination and anti-gypsyism.
- Measures in all policy areas need to be underpinned with clear indicators, SMART (that is targets which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound)

<sup>4</sup> See Praxis.org.rs (2015). "Praxis - Legal Aid Against The Odds". N.p., 2015. Web. 18 Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.praxis.org.rs/index.php/en/>

targets and the allocation of necessary resources at national and/or sub-national levels.

- There is a need for greater clarity over the division of responsibilities between national and sub-national levels.
- Mainstreaming approaches should be combined with and complemented by Roma targeted interventions.
- The work that has been commenced on developing/reforming mainstreaming policies should continue to be promoted through the bringing together of, and sharing of experience of experts and relevant actors from Member States across different policy domains.
- Roma stakeholders should be involved in all stages of the policy process from design through to implementation and monitoring.
- Member States should consider espousing a territorial approach in certain areas of Roma policy design and delivery.

### **Funding**

- More work must be done to ensure that different elements of the NRIS are appropriately and adequately funded. While overall budget allocations may be quantified, individual measures may not have been separately costed.
- Efforts need to be undertaken particularly in new Member States (NMS) to reinforce absorption capacity given MS reliance on Structural Funds.
- MS should be better supported to more effectively access funding from EU funding mechanisms through the development of blended and flexible training programmes and materials with comprehensive guides translated into local languages which give students the opportunity to study in both online and face-to-face settings. Possible sources of funding include the European Investment Bank, the European Fund for Strategic Investments, European Structural and Investment Funds and the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.
- Co-funding approaches through the assembling of funding envelopes from EU and other international financing instruments alongside contributions from Member States (including from the public, NGO and private), need to be promoted as this is critical to ensuring the viability and sustainability of Roma inclusion and development programmes.

### **Implementation**

- Clearer prioritisation of key initiatives needs to be established.
- Effective methods of coordination of the implementation of policies among all stakeholders need to be developed.
- National governments should develop clear communication strategies for the communication of the NRIS to all relevant stakeholders at all levels underpinned by consistent language, clear commitments and unequivocal rejection of discriminatory practices.
- Sub-national authorities need to be more closely involved in the implementation phases and where necessary supported by additional training.
- Member States should foster increased dialogue and cooperation with Roma representatives.

## **Monitoring and data collection**

- Robust monitoring capacities need to be developed drawing on good practice in monitoring in comparable policy areas from international organisations and member states.
- While some developments have been undertaken to improve monitoring capacities, greater robustness in monitoring and evaluation would strengthen the strategies.
- Improvements in data collection at the national level would further support evidence-based policy initiatives and more effective target setting and resource allocation.
- While recognising the considerable obstacles in collecting accurate data, EU support should be directed at improving the collection of socio-economic data to support evidence base policy processes possibly with input from Eurostat.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### KEY FINDINGS

- The study analyses the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies in a selection of EU Member States;
- The study is based on a literature and policy review and case studies of seven EU Member States (BG, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK, SP);
- The study evaluates the implementation, impact and outcomes of the EU Framework for NRISs;
- It highlights cases of best practice in a selection of EU Member States;
- It provides recommendations for specific measures to improve the lives of Roma citizens in key policy areas.

This study evaluating the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies (NRIS) was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE).

This brief introductory section goes on to outline the aims and objectives of the current research project, and provides details on the methodology used for this study, including the justification of the choice of our seven case studies of EU Member States: four new Member States, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia and three old Member States, France, Italy and Spain.

Section 2 provides an overview of the policy background to the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies in the Member States of the European Union with a particular focus on the governance of Roma participation, the legal environment and the EU policy framework. Section 2 also provides brief details of the situation of the Roma population in each of the aforementioned Member States.

Section 3 contains an analysis of the questionnaire results structured in accordance with the key dimensions identified for the evaluation of the National Roma Integration Strategies: design, appropriateness, effectiveness and sustainability.

Section 4 points to constructive policy developments in key policy areas of education, employment, health and housing crucial to promoting social inclusion alongside an emphasis on measures undertaken to counter discrimination based on the underlying recognition that the social inclusion agenda must go hand in hand with concerted and consistent efforts in the area of anti-discrimination. These may in due course point to areas of good practice based on further research and analysis to be shared across Member States.



Section 5 presents two sets of policy recommendations, the first outlining proposed changes to EU-level interventions in the context of the EU Framework on National Roma Integration Strategies and the second mapping policy recommendations against key aspects of the policy process at the national and sub-national levels: design, implementation, funding and sustainability. These are underpinned by a clear recognition that developing the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies presents fundamental political and institutional challenges at different levels of government and those effective responses at the EU level need to move beyond technical solutions.

### **1.1. Aims and objectives**

This study acts as follow up to the 2011 study on "Measures to promote the situation of Roma EU citizens in the European Union", which was commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)<sup>5</sup>. This current study looks at the implementation of the NRISs in a selection of Member States. The work will consider the (limited) success of these strategies by considering a number of aspects, including: types of integration projects and activities, the funding available and any limitations associated with receiving any funding, the actors and the interactions between stakeholders, and national strategies. In the context of the policy, legal, and social issues outlined above, the study will evaluate national Roma integration strategies and the EU Framework more widely. This will be achieved through the following aims:

- Evaluate the implementation, impact and outcomes, as well as the reasons for limited success, of the implementation of the 2011 EU Framework for NRISs in a proposed selection of Member States – Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Spain – through looking at their national strategies;
- Highlight cases of best practices in the Member States;
- Identify gaps and loopholes in the 2011 EU Framework for NRISs in the aforementioned Member States;
- Analyse the feasibility and requirement for common solutions to recurring problems;
- Recommend concrete actions/measures to improve the lives of Roma citizens in the Member States in the areas of employment, education, housing, health as well as the fight against anti-gypsyism and discrimination by taking into account differences between men and women and the intersectional character of the discrimination that they face, together with actions for enhanced implementation of the NRISs.

### **1.2. Methodology and case studies**

This study was built on a literature and policy review and case studies of seven EU Member States.

An in-depth literature review was conducted by identifying European legislation, policy documents from European and international organizations, national documents, academic literature, and all documents relating to the NRISs and their implementation, where possible. The desk research aimed to paint a comprehensive picture of the current situation of Roma populations, provide background to the aims of the NRISs, and to open a

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<sup>5</sup> European Parliament (2011) *Measures to Promote the Situation of the Roma EU Citizens in the European Union*, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study No. PE 432.747 and "Country reports" (PE 432 751) written by Bartlett, W., Benini, R. and Gordon, C.

discussion on the implementation of the NRISs and the measures to protect Roma populations more generally across Europe.

In addition, a detailed template led an evaluation of the NRISs in each of the seven Member States identified for this study. This template focused questions on the design, appropriateness, effectiveness and sustainability of the Strategies. Each dimension was broken down into a series of guided questions to facilitate the process of data collection and ensure comparability across the findings. To support the findings from the policy documents and available academic literature for each Member State, interviews were conducted with local stakeholders where possible, to ensure all issues relating to the implementation of the NRIS were correctly identified.

The study covers seven case studies: Bulgaria (BG), France (FR), Hungary (HU), Italy (IT), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK) and Spain (SP)) to provide a detailed evaluation of the issues facing each State, the design and implementation of their respective NRIS, and practices and procedures implemented to improve the situation of the Roma population. These case studies were selected for their coverage of the regions of Europe, as well as for their large Roma populations. Approximately two thirds of the Roma EU citizens reside between and within the new Member States (NMS), while the remaining one third can be found in the old Member States (OMS). According to Council of Europe estimates<sup>6</sup>, among the NMS, Romania has the largest Roma population estimated between 1.9 million and 2.5 million Roma people, followed by Bulgaria (700,000 to 800,000), Hungary (500,000 - 1 million), and the Slovak Republic (380,000-600,000). Among the OMS, Spain (with 500,000 - 1 million) has a relatively high Roma population similar to Hungary (500,000 - 1,000,000). Among countries with smaller Roma populations, France (300,000-500,000) has a Roma population similar to that of Slovakia<sup>7</sup>. The smallest populations are in Italy (120,000-180,000), though Italy has a large number of Roma immigrants, many from the countries of the former Yugoslavia such as Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>8</sup>. Bulgaria, Hungary, Spain and Romania have significantly larger Roma populations than other countries, with together well over half of the total.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2014). *Roma Integration – 2014 Commission Assessment: Questions and Answers. Memo, Brussels, 4 April 2014.* Page 8. Available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-14-249\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-249_en.htm)  
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<http://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680088ea9>

<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2014). *Roma Integration – 2014 Commission Assessment: Questions and Answers. Memo, Brussels, 4 April 2014.* Page 8. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-14-249\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-249_en.htm)

<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2014). *Roma Integration – 2014 Commission Assessment: Questions and Answers. Memo, Brussels, 4 April 2014.* Page 8. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-14-249\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-249_en.htm)

## 2. BACKGROUND

### KEY FINDINGS

- Roma EU citizens have significantly lower living standards on average than other EU citizens;
- Roma living in isolated or segregated communities experience higher levels of poverty than those in more integrate environments;
- Anti-gypsyism is on the increase in several EU Member States;
- In New Member States, policies and action plans for Roma integration, though well developed, are poorly funded and on the whole weakly implemented;
- In Old Member States, Roma integration policies are poorly developed with the exception of Spain;
- In 2013 the Council issued a Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures;
- All Member States have transposed the Racial Equality Directive into national law;
- Despite that, discrimination against Roma persists in the fields of education, employment, access to health services and housing;
- EU Structural and Investment Funds are a powerful resource to support national Roma integration strategies that have not yet been effectively utilised.

The Roma EU citizens are one of the most marginalised groups in the EU, facing deep and intractable social problems related to low levels of education, high unemployment, inadequate housing, poor health, and wide-ranging discrimination, all of which are inter-related and create a vicious circle of social exclusion, from which they find it difficult to extract themselves on their own.<sup>9</sup> In EU countries where most Roma live, unemployment rates for Roma are three times higher than for the general population.<sup>10</sup> Mortality rates and life expectancy are significantly below the EU average.<sup>11</sup> In addition they often suffer segregation in education and housing, a significant factor in their social exclusion. Roma children enrolled in segregated schools are at high risk of becoming unemployed or working in low skilled jobs in the informal sector. Roma communities in segregated neighbourhoods

<sup>9</sup> European Parliament (2011) Measures to Promote the Situation of the Roma EU Citizens in the European Union, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study No. PE 432.747 and "Country reports" (PE 432 751) written by Bartlett, W., Benini, R. and Gordon, C

<sup>10</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014) *Roma survey – Data in focus. Poverty and Employment: the Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Matrix (2014). *Roma Health Report: Health Status of the Roma Population. Data Collection in the Member States of the European Union*. Brussels: Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/social\\_determinants/docs/2014\\_roma\\_health\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/2014_roma_health_report_en.pdf)

often have limited access to basic services.<sup>12</sup> Their situation worsened during the period of post-communist transition in Eastern Europe, which had a negative impact on their employment and living conditions.<sup>13</sup> Programmes focused on Roma in the NMS and Candidate States, largely instigated as the result of EU conditionality during their accession process, have not been able to adequately address basic needs for income support, job creation and adequate housing and health services, although some progress in improving access to education has been made.<sup>14</sup> Data on household expenditures in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, from a survey carried out in 2000, provide evidence of the extreme poverty of the Roma populations in the three countries.<sup>15</sup> Ten years later, a survey carried out by the Fundamental Rights Agency showed that poverty was still endemic among the Roma in the eleven Member States<sup>16</sup> included in the survey, with eight out of ten Roma at risk of poverty (defined as having an equivalised household income below 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income, with the highest levels reported in Portugal, Italy and France.<sup>17</sup> In addition, between 70% and 90% of the Roma report living in conditions of severe material deprivation, far above the corresponding non-Roma population.<sup>18</sup>

There are also significant differences in poverty rates within the Roma population. In particular, Roma people living in isolated communities have higher poverty than those living in more integrated environments. In addition, over recent years, the economic crisis has further aggravated social and economic conditions, and has added further stress to the precarious situations of many Roma communities. In Bulgaria in 2015, for example, almost double the number of Roma lives at risk of poverty compared to the total population, and a third of the Roma live in absolute poverty.<sup>19</sup> In Hungary in 2015, almost two-thirds of Roma live at risk of poverty, and almost half live in absolute poverty.<sup>20</sup> In Romania in 2015, three-fourths of the Roma live at risk of poverty, although the gap with non-Roma has reduced since 2005.<sup>21</sup> The same is true for absolute poverty in which around 40% of Roma live. In Spain, about three-fourths of the Roma live at risk and about one-third lives in absolute poverty and poverty is much more present for Roma compared to non-Roma, and these gaps have increased since 2005.<sup>22</sup> Cuts in social spending and reduced welfare expenditure have limited their capacity to provide social assistance to indigenous Roma populations, as well as to new arrivals from the NMS. The situation of the Roma

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<sup>12</sup> European Roma Rights Centre (2010). *Standards do not Apply: Inadequate Housing in Romani Communities*, Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre. Available at: <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/standards-do-not-apply-01-december-2010.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Zoon, I. (2001) *On the Margins. Roma and Public Services in Romania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia*. New York: Open Society Institute.

<sup>14</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *A Lost Decade? Reflections on Roma Inclusion 2001-2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation.

<sup>15</sup> Ringold, D. et al. (2005) *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*, Washington: The World Bank.

<sup>16</sup> Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain

<sup>17</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2012). *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey Results at a Glance*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2012). *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey Results at a Glance*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

community, whether in settled communities or recent immigrants from other EU countries, has therefore worsened further. It should also be pointed out that there are income inequalities within the Roma community itself, with some Roma groups experiencing far greater levels of poverty and social exclusion than others.<sup>23</sup>

In many cases, Roma communities reside in marginalised and segregated communities, which can be found in both urban and rural areas. Such spatial concentrations hinder Roma integration into local labour markets, and access to utilities, health services, education, housing, and transport. Local economic and social development is therefore needed to address the multi-dimensional problems of the Roma population living in specific localities to break the “poverty-trap” in which the Roma EU citizens find themselves today. It is in this difficult economic context that an improved European strategy needs to be designed in order to support the social inclusion of this marginalised population, across all the countries of the EU.

The history of the Roma has created a mixture of traditions, beliefs and social values, resulting in differences in culture and life styles between different Roma groups. This has led to diverse degrees of integration both in the OMS among which the largest Roma population is found in Spain, or in the NMS among which large Roma communities live in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. A European strategy towards the Roma therefore needs to address a variety of problems and to confront differences in institutional capacity and commitment between countries, and should take into account the different circumstances in which the Roma population lives in Europe today. The social inclusion of the Roma in line with EU values, laws and principles is needed to prevent ethnic tensions rising, and in order to provide better life chances and improved access to facilities and public services, ensuring a decent quality of life for all Roma EU citizens. It also makes economic sense, as improved employment rates among the Roma will contribute to future economic growth and competitiveness and a reduced burden on the European welfare state.

Violent anti-Gypsyism is one the most powerful mechanisms of Roma exclusion. In many countries, Roma are subject to racist violence, which has sometimes resulted in serious injuries and deaths.<sup>24</sup> Although such violence has been prevalent in Europe for centuries, there has recently been a notable increase of serious incidents in a number of Member States, including serious cases of racist violence, stigmatising anti-Roma rhetoric, and generalisations about criminal behaviour.<sup>25</sup> Such incidents have been condemned by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and his Special Representative for Roma issues, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Council of Europe Group of Eminent Persons, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, as well as various international governmental and non-governmental organisations.<sup>26</sup> These statements make

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<sup>23</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014) *Roma survey – Data in focus. Poverty and Employment: the Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Amnesty International (2014) *"We Ask for Justice": Europe's Failure to Protect Roma from Racist Violence*. London: Amnesty International.

<sup>25</sup> Council of Europe (2012). Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 February 2012 at the 1132nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). Available at: [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl\(01.02.2012\)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl(01.02.2012)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

<sup>26</sup> Council of Europe (2012). Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 February 2012 at the 1132nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). Available at:

the point that in addition to positive measures targeted at the Roma population, measures to combat anti-Gypsyism and discrimination targeted at the non-Roma population are also important. Therefore, the Council of Europe has called for all Member States to adopt specific and comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in line with international and European standards; to set up anti-discrimination bodies equipped to promote equal treatment and to assist victims of discrimination; and to ensure that this legislation is effectively implemented.<sup>27</sup>

EU countries take different positions in recognising the Roma as an ethnic minority, a factor that has some bearing on the extent to which countries have adopted specific policies targeted towards the Roma, although this is not a determining factor. Three of the Old Member States included in this study - France, Italy and Spain - do not recognise the Roma as an ethnic minority. France, with a traditional policy of assimilation into French nationality of the Roma, discriminates against travelling people and treats Roma immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania as third-country foreigners.<sup>28</sup> However, non-recognition as an ethnic minority does not prevent the implementation of targeted programmes. For example, among the NMS, while Bulgaria exceptionally does not recognise Roma as an ethnic minority, this has not prevented Bulgaria from introducing focused programmes for the Roma, while in the OMS, Spain has some successful targeted Roma policies.

## 2.1. Governance of Roma Participation

Across Europe, there is much diversity in the institutional arrangements, in the degree of policy discretion at national and sub-national levels, and in administrative capacities at different levels to manage the design and implementation of policies, action plans, and measures targeted at Roma populations. This is in part related to the governance structures of the different countries, as well as to the size of the Roma population in the Member States. In a number of countries an inter-ministerial committee has been set up under the responsibility of a particular ministry or government department or office to advise on and coordinate Roma policy (BG<sup>29</sup>; IT<sup>30</sup>; RO<sup>31</sup>; SK<sup>32</sup>). In other countries, a particular ministry usually the ministry of internal affairs or a ministry in the field of social policy is the point institution (HU<sup>33</sup>, SP<sup>34</sup>). In France there is no specific government authority in charge of the National Roma Strategy, since France does not recognise the Roma as a distinct ethnic group.<sup>35</sup> In some Member States, sub-national levels of

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[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl\(01.02.2012\)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl(01.02.2012)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

<sup>27</sup> Council of Europe (2012). Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 February 2012 at the 1132nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). Available at:

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl\(01.02.2012\)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Decl(01.02.2012)&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

<sup>28</sup> Nacu, A. (2012). *From silent marginality to spotlight scapegoating? A brief case study of France's policy towards the Roma*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38(8): 1323-28

<sup>29</sup> In Bulgaria, the responsible body is the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

<sup>30</sup> In Italy, the responsible body is the National Office on Anti-Racial Discrimination.

<sup>31</sup> In Romania, the responsible body is the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, coordinated by the Vice Prime Minister and headed by the president of the National Agency for the Roma.

<sup>32</sup> In Slovakia, the responsible body is the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma communities

<sup>33</sup> In Hungary, the responsible body is the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice – State Secretary for Social Inclusion.

<sup>34</sup> In Spain the responsible body is General Directorate of Childhood and Family Services, within the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

<sup>35</sup> French policy towards the Roma is a function of the Managing Authorities of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, without any specific distinction being made for projects directed towards the Roma or any other ethnic group. As stressed in the French National Strategy for Roma Integration, "the term 'Roma' refers to a concept of ethnicity, which cannot be used under French law to construct public policies...The

government are directly involved in the implementation of national policies (BG<sup>36</sup>, ES<sup>37</sup>, RO<sup>38</sup>, SK<sup>39</sup>). This diversity in institutional arrangements has implications for the effective design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of policy.

The Decade for Roma Inclusion initiative gave an impetus to the preparation of policies geared towards Roma issues. Most NMS now have a clearly identifiable strategic document dealing with Roma inclusion, and in most cases there is an associated Action Plan which identifies specific measures and instruments in the areas of education, employment, health, and housing. However, these strategies and action plans suffer from inadequate financial resources and weaknesses in their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the projects are short-term and lack an integrated focus.

In contrast, most of the OMS have no, or a very poorly developed, strategic and policy framework towards Roma inclusion, with the exception of Spain (out of the countries in this study). In Italy there are some measures and instruments developed at regional or local level, usually focusing on just one or more policy areas, and usually delivered through uncoordinated and discrete projects with variable funding. Spain, a newer MS with a sizeable Roma population, has more comprehensive institutional and policy arrangements. The strategic orientation towards Roma inclusion in France is extremely limited, with a focus on the control of the movement of the travelling people, and in the case of Roma EU citizens from Bulgaria and Romania the policies under the transitional regime are purposefully discriminatory in regard to access to employment.

In recent years Roma have become more active in the European transitional political space. Responding to discriminatory policies, including forced evictions and ethnic profiling, Roma activists have begun to bypass national political structures and approach the EU as an ally in redressing discriminatory policies in its Member States<sup>40</sup> and Roma elites are developing a strong transnational identity partly as a consequence of their interaction with the EU policy environment<sup>41</sup>.

## 2.2. EU Policy Framework

Due to persistent discrimination, the Roma have been long-standing victims of systematic (and intersectional) discrimination at the national and supra-national levels. Numerous studies, including from EU institutions, have demonstrated the breadth of such discrimination patterns and the prejudices that result from them.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to access to

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French government therefore firmly refuses to allow any differentiation of rights based on belonging to a community defined by its origin."

<sup>36</sup> In Bulgaria, local implementation is expected on the basis of specific annual action plans of municipal councils

<sup>37</sup> In Spain, institutional coordination with autonomous communities is organised through the Special Committee of the National Social Inclusion Action Plan; technical cooperation with autonomous communities and the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) is organised through the Roma Technical Cooperation Group.

<sup>38</sup> In Romania, both Regional and County Offices of the National Agency of the Roma are responsible for implementing and monitoring the Strategy at local level.

<sup>39</sup> In Slovakia, the Association of Towns and Municipalities in Slovakia is the key partner for implementation of the Strategy at local level.

<sup>40</sup> McGarry, A. (2011). *The Roma Voice in the European Union: Between National Belonging and Transnational Identity*. *Social Movement Studies*, 10(3): 283-297.

<sup>41</sup> Herakova, L. L. (2009). *Identity, Communication, Inclusion: The Roma and (New) Europe*. *Journal of International & Intercultural Communication*, 2(4): 279-297.

<sup>42</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014) *Roma survey – Data in focus. Poverty and Employment: the Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf)

European Parliament (2013) *Empowerment of Roma Women within the European Framework of National Roma Integration Strategies*. Brussels: European Parliament Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study PE 493.019 written by Crowley, N., Genova, A. and Sansonetti, S. Ringold, D. et al. (2005). *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle*. Washington: The World Bank.

justice investigations that focus on the formal attributes of access, such as access to a lawyer or national spending on legal aid, the international system of minority rights protection supports the recognition of the Roma through provisions related to minority physical existence, cultural existence and identity, and participation in public affairs.<sup>43</sup> At an international level, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) requires its signatories to implement policies to eliminate racial discrimination, whether direct or indirect discrimination. At a European level, Member States are bound by the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity. Minority rights law captures the group dimension of Roma disadvantage.

The European Union has adopted legislation which, inter alia, aims to combat certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law<sup>44</sup>; to implement the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (the Racial Equality Directive)<sup>45</sup>; and to establish a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (the Employment Equality Directive)<sup>46</sup>. The Racial Equality Directive provides that "there shall be no direct or indirect discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin" (Article 2(1)). The EU Charter on Fundamental Rights has also been important, as has the establishment of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

In addition, in 2013 the Council adopted the first ever guidance on Roma in the form of a Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, which aims to strengthen the implementation of the NRISs<sup>47</sup>, i.e. the Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States. The Recommendation provided guidance to Member States on enhancing the effectiveness of their measures to achieve Roma integration and on strengthening the implementation of their national Roma integration strategies. It set out a series of recommended policy measures in the fields of education, employment, health and housing as well as horizontal policy areas including ant-discrimination, protection of Roma women and children, poverty reduction through social investment and empowerment measures. Furthermore, it recommended a set of structural measures that Member States were encouraged to take, including local action involving regional and local authorities and local civil society in developing, implementing and monitoring their national strategies. Other structural measures that were recommended included the introduction of monitoring and evaluation policies, support for the work of national bodies promoting equal treatment of Roma, providing an adequate mandate to National Contact Points for the NISR to fulfil their mission to coordinate the cross-sectoral monitoring of Roma integration policies, and promoting trans-national cooperation on issues related to Roma mobility, mutual learning and dissemination of best practice. While Recommendations of the Council of the EU do not have legal force, they do provide a political steer to the direction in which national policies are expected to move. The Recommendation intended to build on the various recommendations previously set out in the European Parliament resolutions, the Council

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<sup>43</sup> Kostadinova, G. (2011). *Minority rights as a normative framework for addressing the situation of Roma in Europe*. Oxford Development Studies, 39(2): 163-183

<sup>44</sup> Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law

<sup>45</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin

<sup>46</sup> Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation

<sup>47</sup> Council of the European Union (2013). *Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels 9 and 10 December 2013*. Available at:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf)



conclusions and the Commission communications on Roma integration. It aims to complement existing Union anti-discrimination legislation in order to help make its implementation and enforcement more effective. The force of the Recommendation is persuasive, and part of the EU soft law. As such it is expected that Member States will incorporate its guidance into legislation, without compulsion to do so.

In the accession countries, EU policy has been particularly relevant owing to the use of conditionality principles. The Copenhagen criteria for accession countries require respect of minority and human rights among the enlargement countries. Conditionality had a large effect on the adoption of laws to prevent discrimination and supportive of minority rights, however in practice implementation of these national policy frameworks has been weak.<sup>48</sup> Since the accession of the Central and Eastern European countries to the EU in 2004 and 2007 there has been some backsliding, despite the efforts of civil society organisations to promote the interests of the Roma and reduce their deep exclusion from these societies.<sup>49</sup>

All Member States have introduced national laws that transpose the Racial Equality Directive. The Directive on the right to move and reside freely within the EU (Directive 2004/38/EC) establishes the conditions for EU citizens to move in the Union. However, responses of EU Member States to the exercise of freedom of movement by Roma have often resulted in their explicit exclusion, even though they are EU citizens and holders of rights.<sup>50</sup>

In reacting to this situation, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution<sup>51</sup> calling on the Commission to adopt an EU strategy on Roma Inclusion to be implemented at all political and administrative levels based on the provisions of the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental rights and relevant EU legislation. The Resolution stressed that the inclusion of the Roma is both a responsibility of all the Member States and the EU Institutions. The envisaged EU Strategy would make use of existing EU funds for building new houses or renovating existing ones, and for infrastructure investment that would improve local utilities, communications systems, education and measures for access to the labour market, enabling an overall inclusion of Roma within the EU society. The Resolution also called on the Commission to pay particular attention to requests for technical assistance that would improve the effectiveness of existing instruments for the integration of Roma communities.

Instead of adopting an EU Strategy as called for by the European Parliament, in 2011 the EU published a Communication that set forth a framework approach, called the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies<sup>52</sup>, calling for Member States to set 'clear policy commitments'. The Council of the EU adopted the Framework on 24 May 2011.<sup>53</sup> This Framework invited all Member States to present a strategy for Roma inclusion or policy measures aimed at the Roma populations within their wider social inclusion

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<sup>48</sup> European Parliament (2011) Measures to Promote the Situation of the Roma EU Citizens in the European Union, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study No. PE 432.747 and "Country reports" (PE 432 751) written by Bartlett, W., Benini, R. and Gordon, C

<sup>49</sup> Sobotka, E. (2011). *Influence of Civil Society Actors on Formulation of Roma Issues within the EU Framework*. International Journal on Minority and Group Rights, 18(2), 235-256.

<sup>50</sup> This situation seems to be especially common in France. See: Astier, H. (2014, 13 February). France's unwanted Roma. BBC.co.uk. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25419423>

<sup>51</sup> European Parliament (2011). *Motion on an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2010/2276(INI)) at the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs*. Brussels: European Parliament. available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2011-0043&language=EN#title>

<sup>52</sup> European Commission (2011) An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 5.4.2011, COM(2011) 173 final

<sup>53</sup> Council of the European Union (2011) An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 – Council Conclusions, 10658/11, Brussels, 24 May 2011.

actions. These national strategies were to be designed (or consist of adapted policies) to align with the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, and to meet the EU's Roma integration goals and the overall targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. Funding for the framework was to come from national budgets and from utilizing EU and international funding, such as the EU structural and cohesion funds, earmarked for social inclusion or the plight of the Roma more specifically. More specifically, and in proportion to the country's Roma population, minimum standards should be achieved in four policy areas (access to education, employment, healthcare and housing).

The European Commission's Joint Report on the application of Council Directive 2000/43/EC (Racial Equality directive') and of Council Directive 2000/78/EC (Employment Equality Directive') highlights continuing shortcomings in the practical implementation of these Directives.<sup>54</sup> While noting their transposition into national law in most cases as a single national act considerable weaknesses remain in their implementation and application. While equality bodies have been established across the European Union, with considerable variation in their competences and available resources, these bodies are evidently failing to adequately protect victims of discrimination.<sup>55</sup> There is evidence of underreporting of incidents of discrimination. This has been compounded by a paucity of equality data and low levels of awareness among Roma populations of their existing protection under law. The report also underlines concerns about dearths in the understanding of the concept of indirect discrimination in national courts.

Bearing in mind the 2010 European Parliament Resolution, the provisions of the European Commission Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, the limited success of NRIS and the continuing shortcomings in the implementation of EU directives, it is appropriate to review the reasons why progress has been slow in key policy areas which are critical to ensure the integration of Roma population across the European Union. The consideration of the four policy areas of education, employment, health and housing in this study is combined with an examination of the cross-cutting policy areas of anti-Gypsyism, discrimination and gender equality.

**Access to education:** Roma populations lag significantly behind the rest of the population in school completion rates. Many Roma children still have a very low education status and very low school participation rates.<sup>56</sup> School segregation is also practiced in several countries with Roma children being placed in special schools, although there has also been some progress in desegregation.<sup>57</sup> Research by the FRA shows that only one out of two Roma children attend pre-school kindergarten, and while with the exception of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, nine out of ten Roma children attend compulsory schooling, most subsequently drop out and only 15% of Roma children complete upper-secondary general

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<sup>54</sup> See European Commission (2014). *Commission Staff Working Document. Annexes to the Joint Report on the application of the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) Accompanying the document Joint Report on the application of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin ('Racial Equality Directive')* {COM(2014) 2 final}. Brussels, 17.1.2014. SWD(2014) 5 final.

<sup>55</sup> For specific details about equality bodies and their competences in Member States see European Commission (2012). *Developing Anti-Discrimination Law in Europe: The 27 EU Member States, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey compared*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012. Written by Chopin, I., and Uyen Do, T

<sup>56</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Available at:

[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014\\_roma-survey\\_education\\_tk0113748enc.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Greenberg, J. (2010). *Report on Roma Education Today: from Slavery to Segregation and Beyond*. Columbia Law Review, 110(4): 919-1001.

or vocational school.<sup>58</sup> More recently, the FRA carried out a survey in 11 EU Member States which revealed several inter-related education problems facing Roma children: low preschool attendance, a high risk of segregated schooling compounded by prejudice and discrimination, high drop-out rates before completing secondary education and low literacy rates.<sup>59</sup> The FRA concluded that EU Member State action is urgently needed in these areas.

**Employment:** One of the targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy has been to raise employment rates in the EU, yet employment rates for Roma are well below target, especially in the NMS.<sup>60</sup> Lack of educational qualifications coupled with residential segregation and discrimination reinforce processes of exclusion from the formal labour market. Survey evidence has revealed a relatively high level of labour market discrimination in, for example, Slovakia and Hungary where the employment rate of the Roma dropped dramatically after the onset of the economic transition in 1989.<sup>61</sup> While all countries have adopted formal equality legislation, few have supported labour market equality in practice. In 2011, it was discovered that fewer than one out of three Roma are in paid employment, and one in three Roma adults are unemployed.<sup>62</sup>

**Healthcare:** Roma have also faced direct and indirect discrimination when accessing health care services<sup>63</sup>, generally aggravated by the lack of culturally sensitive health care provision, the lack of interpreters for those Roma who do not speak the majority language well enough, and the almost complete absence of Roma health workers and physicians.<sup>64</sup> Stigma attached to being a Rom often manifests itself in denial of health care, exclusion from access to services, segregation of Roma within medical facilities, and verbal abuse and degrading treatment by health professionals.<sup>65</sup> The latest research by the Agency for Fundamental Rights shows that in 2011, one out of three Roma aged 35 to 53 suffer from health problems that limit their daily activities and that 20% of Roma are not covered by any form of medical insurance.<sup>66</sup>

**Housing:** Throughout Europe, most Roma occupy the lowest socio-economic strata of society, contributing to their political marginalisation and a survivalist agenda. In Central and Eastern Europe, many Roma live in segregated neighbourhoods, which in urban areas resemble ghettos. Accommodation is frequently dilapidated and overcrowded and many

<sup>58</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2012). *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey Results at a Glance*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014\\_roma-survey\\_education\\_tk0113748enc.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014) *Roma survey – Data in focus. Poverty and Employment: the Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> Kertesi, G. and Kezdi, G. (2010). *Roma employment in Hungary after the post-communist transition*. Budapest Working Papers on the Labour Market, BWP-2010/9, Budapest: Institute of Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>62</sup> Kertesi, G. and Kezdi, G. (2010). *Roma employment in Hungary after the post-communist transition*. Budapest Working Papers on the Labour Market, BWP-2010/9, Budapest: Institute of Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>63</sup> Kuhlbrandt, C., Footman, K., Rechel, B. and McKee, M. (2014). *An examination of Roma health insurance status in Central and Eastern Europe*. *European Journal of Public Policy*, 24(5): 707-712.

<sup>64</sup> Rechel, B., Blackburn, C., Spencer, N., and Rechel, B. (2009). *Access to health care for Roma children in Central and Eastern Europe: findings from a qualitative study in Bulgaria*. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 8(1): 24.

<sup>65</sup> Matrix (2014). *Roma Health Report: Health Status of the Roma Population. Data Collection in the Member States of the European Union*. Brussels: Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/social\\_determinants/docs/2014\\_roma\\_health\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/2014_roma_health_report_en.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2012). *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey Results at a Glance*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf)

Roma live in conditions that are not legally sanctioned.<sup>67</sup> On average, in most Roma households more than two persons live in one room, and about 45% of Roma in the EU live in households that lack at least one basic household amenity, whether an indoor kitchen, an indoor toilet, an indoor shower or bath, or electricity.<sup>68</sup>

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies requests Member States to a) set achievable goals for Roma integration addressing, at a minimum, the four aforementioned areas, b) identify disadvantaged neighbourhoods or micro-regions, c) allocate sufficient funding from national budgets, d) propose monitoring and review mechanisms, e) to consult Roma civil society and regional/local level authorities, and f) to appoint a national contact point. The European Commission assesses progress in relation to these aims through annual reports.<sup>69</sup>

**Anti-Gypsyism**, hate speech and hate crime have been on the rise across Europe.<sup>70</sup> Many people hold unfavourable views on Roma including 85% in Italy and 66% in France.<sup>71</sup> Many marginalised Roma children attend segregated schools or classes: 58% in Slovakia, 45% in Hungary, 29% in Bulgaria, and 26% in Romania.<sup>72</sup> In Slovakia, more than one fifth of Roma children up to the age of 15 attend special schools and classes for children with mental disabilities. Less than half of respondents would be comfortable or indifferent if their son or daughter had a relationship with a Roma person (45%); especially low proportions are found in Bulgaria (13%) and Slovakia (17%).<sup>73</sup>

**Discrimination:** A Eurobarometer survey on discrimination found that most respondents would be at ease if one of their work colleagues belonged to a group at risk of discrimination, yet among these groups the Roma are the least welcome with only 63% of people saying they would be at ease working with a Roma person.<sup>74</sup> By country, the lowest proportions at ease are found in Italy (only 37%), Slovakia (41%) and Bulgaria (43%). In Italy and France two thirds of marginalised Roma feel discriminated against when looking for paid work.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> European Roma Rights Centre (2010). *Standards do not Apply: Inadequate Housing in Romani Communities*, Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre. Available at: <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/standards-do-not-apply-01-december-2010.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2012). *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey Results at a Glance*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> European Commission (2012) *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework*, Brussels, 21.5.2012, COM(2012) 226 final

European Commission (2013) *Steps Forward in Implementing National Roma Integration Strategies*, Brussels, 26.6.2013, COM(2013) 454 final; European Commission (2014) *Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Justice

European Commission (2015) *Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies 2015*, Brussels, 17.6.2015, COM(2015) 299 final

<sup>70</sup> European Commission (2015). *Progress Made by EU Member States in Roma Integration*. Brussels: Directorate General Justice and Consumers.

<sup>71</sup> Pew Research Center (2014). *A Fragile Rebound for EU Image on Eve of European Parliament Elections*. Pew Research Center. Page 9. Available at:

[http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12\\_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf](http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Available at:

[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014\\_roma-survey\\_education\\_tk0113748enc.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> European Commission (2015). *Discrimination in the EU in 2015*. Special Eurobarometer Report 437, Brussels: European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers.

<sup>74</sup> European Commission (2015). *Discrimination in the EU in 2015*. Special Eurobarometer Report 437, Brussels: European Commission Directorate General for Justice and Consumers.

<sup>75</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014) *Roma survey – Data in focus. Poverty and Employment: the Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-employment_en.pdf)

**Gender equality:** The extent of social exclusion is greater for Roma women than for Roma men.<sup>76</sup> While 85% of Roma men say that they can read and write, only 77% of Roma women can do so; and while 14% of Roma men say that they have never been to school, compared to 19% of Roma women. Across the Member States, only 21% of Roma women are in paid work, compared to 35% of Roma men.<sup>77</sup> There are fewer differences between Roma men and women in relation to health status and housing conditions. In relation to discrimination, more Roma men (27%) than women (22%) report that they have experienced discrimination when looking for work.<sup>78</sup>

### 2.3. EU Structural and Investment Funds

Several EU financial instruments can be used for the integration of Roma and to support the NRISs. While no specific budgets are allocated to Roma people, several instruments address areas relevant to Roma needs. The largest amount of available financing is related to the Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) allocated to the Member States. Despite being EU money, ESIF are under the responsibility of Member States, which have to manage these budgets in the framework of the National Strategic Framework and the Operational Programmes. The ESIF include the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). ESIF can be an important financial and policy tool in the implementation of the NRISs. The ESF can be used to develop projects aiming to support Roma vocational training and access to employment. It can be used in the education field to co-finance training measures, facilitate links between schools and the Roma community, put in place measures to avoid early school leaving, and promote adult education. Moreover, the ESF includes an investment priority under ESIF Objective 9 that specifically refers to Roma: "Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma", while other ESF objectives can also be used to fund projects relevant to Roma integration and inclusion. The ERDF can be used to complement investments made with national, regional or local funding for infrastructure and housing projects aiming at improving Roma conditions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in urban areas, in segregated rural settlements, as well as disadvantaged micro- regions. The EAFRD could be used to tackle disadvantaged micro-regions where many Roma rural settlements are located.

Unfortunately, inefficient managing models and coordination mechanisms hinder the implementation of these instruments.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the level of expenditure is very low especially in countries with large Roma populations and where the absorption capacity of ESIF is limited in some of the New Member States. Specific barriers to the use of ESIF instruments to fund Roma integration projects include lack of political will, limited technical capacity in local administrations, the requirement of co-financing in a situation of weak public finances, complex administrative rules and difficulties in establishing adequate guidelines for intervention.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Discrimination against and Living Conditions of Roma Women in 11 EU Member States*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender_en.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Discrimination against and Living Conditions of Roma Women in 11 EU Member States*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender_en.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Discrimination against and Living Conditions of Roma Women in 11 EU Member States*. Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender_en.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> European Commission (2012). *What works for Roma Inclusion in the EU: Policy and Model Approaches*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/whatworksfor\\_romainclusion\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/whatworksfor_romainclusion_en.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> EURoma (2014). *Making Use of European Structural and Investment Funds for Roma Inclusion: A Guide for Local Authorities*. Madrid: Fundacion Secretariado Gitano. Available at:

A specific EU instrument that is of relevance to Roma integration is the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The majority of European Roma lives in the 14 countries of the Danube Region, and Roma integration is one of the main aims of the EUSDR. It is a place-based approach that supports Roma integration explicitly but not exclusively. Priority Area 9 of the EUSDR ("Investing in people & skills") defines the economic and social inclusion of Roma as a crucial objective, calling in particular for fair access to housing and employment markets.

## 2.4. Country specific background

### Bulgaria

The Bulgarian NRIS estimates the population of Roma in Bulgaria at 325,343 (or 4.9% of the Bulgarian population)<sup>81</sup>, however, estimations vary as the national census may underreport on the number of Roma. This is because Bulgarian official data is based on self-identification as a certain ethnicity and people of Roma origin can also refrain from providing a response. The Council of Europe estimation is thus far higher: that 750,000 people from Roma origin live in Bulgaria (minimum estimate 700,000; maximum estimate 800,000) or 9.94% of the population, leading Bulgaria to have one of the highest shares of Roma among the EU Member States<sup>82</sup>. The Roma population in Bulgaria is fairly young: the Bulgarian NRIS reports that 72.6% of the Roma population is less than 40 years old<sup>83</sup>.

Roma experience high levels of poverty in Bulgaria<sup>84</sup>. A World Bank study from 2010 reports that nearly '9 out of 10 Roma had a per capita income equal to the income of the poorest four-tenths of the population, with 67% of Roma being among the poorest 20% of all people in Bulgaria<sup>85</sup>. The Roma population of Bulgaria is spread across all regions and districts of the country. Concentration is more evident at the lowest territorial level and particular neighbourhoods. According to the Open Society Institute data as reported in the Civil Society Monitoring Report, the highest proportion of Roma lives in the following three districts: Montana (29%), Sliven (28%) and Yambol (27%)<sup>86</sup>. Based on the official statistics collected by the NSI census, the Bulgarian NRIS identifies four districts with large Roma populations, but reports different figures: Montana (12.7%), Sliven (11.8%), Dobrich (8.8%), and Yambol (8.5%)<sup>87</sup>. The difference in figures results from the fact that NSI is based only on self-reported part of the population, while OSI & Civil Society Monitoring Report use a survey<sup>88</sup> conducted among 1000 Roma households.

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[http://www.euromanet.eu/resource\\_center/archive/109047.html](http://www.euromanet.eu/resource_center/archive/109047.html)

<sup>81</sup> Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy Of The Republic Of Bulgaria (2012 - 2020)*. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_bulgaria\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_bulgaria_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> Council of Europe (2012). *Estimates and official numbers of Roma in Europe. Document prepared by the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Roma Issues, updated on 2 July 2012*. Available at:

<http://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680088ea9>

<sup>83</sup> Secretariat of the National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy Of The Republic Of Bulgaria (2012 - 2020)*. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_bulgaria\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_bulgaria_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> ERRC (2012). *Parallel Report by the European Roma Rights Centre Concerning Bulgaria*. Available at:

<http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/bulgaria-cedaw-submission-25-june-2012.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> ERRC (2012). *Parallel Report by the European Roma Rights Centre Concerning Bulgaria*. Page 3. Available at:

<http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/bulgaria-cedaw-submission-25-june-2012.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> Dimitrov, D., Grigorova, V., Decheva, J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Bulgaria*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 17. Available at:

[http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG\\_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report\\_EN.pdf](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report_EN.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> Council of Ministers of Bulgaria (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic Of Bulgaria (2012 - 2020)*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_bulgaria\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_bulgaria_strategy_en.pdf)

Observers comment on the fact that the poorest regions in Bulgaria according to socio-economic data by EUROSTAT are also those regions with the highest proportion of Roma, though no study has yet confirmed the correlation between these two tendencies<sup>89</sup>.

One quarter of Roma children are educated in special segregated schools<sup>90</sup>. More than 40% of Roma are unemployed, including many long-term unemployed, in part due rapid urbanization which exacerbated the skill mismatch between existing skillsets in the Roma population and the needs of the labour markets<sup>91</sup>. The recent economic crisis has further worsened this position, where Roma are either in a permanent state of unemployment or are only employed temporarily and in very low paid jobs<sup>92</sup>. About half of Roma live in segregated neighbourhoods in overcrowded accommodation. Closely related to the issue of unemployment in the Roma population and poor infrastructure, the health situation of Roma citizens is a persistent challenge with 30% of Roma not having access to health insurance<sup>93</sup>, infant mortality rates being double that of the total population, and a lower life expectancy of Roma than for the population as a whole<sup>94</sup>.

## France

France bans the use of ethnicity-based concepts in French laws and public policies, which includes the concept of Roma<sup>95</sup>. For this reason, there is no national official data on the number of Roma in France. Council of Europe estimates are at 400,000 Roma in 2012, amounting to 0.62% of the population<sup>96</sup>. According to the barometer of the French National Consultative Committee on Human Rights (CNCDH), the percentage of respondents who think that Roma and travellers are the main victims of racism in France has reached to 19%, i.e. a six-fold increase since 2003<sup>97</sup>. Similarly, a survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre in March-April 2014 in seven Member States (7,022 people interviewed), revealed that, on average, 66% of French citizens express a negative view towards Roma<sup>98</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> Survey within the project "Beyond programming – measuring progress on the road to Roma inclusion in Bulgaria within the decade of Roma inclusion 2005-2015 and the national Roma integration strategy 2012-2020".

<sup>89</sup> Dimitrov, D., Grigorova, V., Decheva, J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Bulgaria*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 17. Available at:

[http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG\\_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report\\_EN.pdf](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report_EN.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 15. Available at:

[http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2005). *Roma: Human Development Challenges and Opportunities, Bulgarian National Report*. UNDP Reports Site. Available at: <http://roma.undp.sk/>; Gatenio Gabel, S. (2009). *The growing divide: the marginalisation of young Roma children in Bulgaria*. International Journal of Social Welfare, 18: 65–75. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2397.2008.00562.x. p.66. Available at:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2397.2008.00562.x/pdf>

<sup>92</sup> Todorov, T. (2014). *Roma Matrix Country Report: Bulgaria*. Roma MATRIX 2014. Page 24. Available at:

<https://romamatrix.eu/file/806/download?token=vSdECbZI3n3d1bHHpsMAbLR0457cwV1sA0Im2T4qjsA>

<sup>93</sup> United States Department of State (2013). *Bulgaria Human Rights Report, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013: Bulgaria*. Page 26. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/220473.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 18. Available at:

[http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> Government of the French Republic (2011). *An equal place in French society: French government strategy for Roma integration within the framework of the Communication from the Commission of 5 April 2011 and the Council conclusions of 19 May 2011*.

Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_france\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_france_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> European Commission (2014). *Memo: Roma Integration – 2014 Commission Assessment: Questions and Answers, Annex: Roma population figures – Council of Europe estimates*. Page 8. Available at:

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-14-249\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-249_en.htm)

<sup>97</sup> Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH) (2014). *La lutte contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie – 2013*. Paris: La Documentation française. Page 207. Available at <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/144000199.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> Pew Research Center (2014). *A Fragile Rebound for EU Image on Eve of European Parliament Elections*. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/05/12/chapter-4-views-of-roma-muslims-jews/> or [http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12\\_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf](http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/2014-05-12_Pew-Global-Attitudes-European-Union.pdf)

Exclusion from employment, education, healthcare, and housing of the French Roma is also confirmed by recent studies conducted by the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA). For example, the FRA study on employment shows that about only 28% of Roma were in paid employment against 49% for their non-Roma neighbours. A similar report, outlining data collected on education, indicated that only 52% of Roma aged 6-15 had pre-school experience, compared to 95% of non-Roma of the same age range<sup>99</sup>. Among those aged above 16, 25% of Roma respondents self-reported being illiterate against 0% among the non-Roma sample<sup>100</sup>. France also ranked second among the 11 countries surveyed regarding the proportion of Roma respondents aged 16 and above who experienced discrimination in education in the past year (18%)<sup>101</sup>.

The marginalization of the Roma in France is furthered by the French government's active policy of forced evictions, which has been denounced by organizations including the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe and the European Agency for Fundamental Rights<sup>102</sup>. An average of 260 people was evicted a week over 2014<sup>103</sup>.

## Hungary

Roma are the largest ethnic minority group in Hungary: according to estimates in the NRIS and by the Council of Europe, the Roma population in Hungary is approximately 750,000, accounting for 7.49% of the total population in Hungary<sup>104</sup>. Most of the Roma live in two northern counties: Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, where nearly a quarter of the country's Roma live, and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, which is home to about 18 percent of Hungary's Roma. The age composition of the Roma population is substantially younger than that of the non-Roma population in Hungary. According to data from the Hungarian Government, the poverty rate amongst the Roma population in 2009 was around 70%<sup>105</sup>. The average income is 43% less than the average for the population as a whole and two-thirds live in absolute poverty<sup>106</sup>.

Roma children are well provided with pre-school education, with no significant gap compared to the total population; however, only 23% of Roma children fail to attend compulsory education, and only 19% attend post-compulsory secondary education<sup>107</sup>. It is

<sup>99</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Roma survey – Data in focus Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Page 17. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014\\_roma-survey\\_education\\_tk0113748enc.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Roma survey – Data in focus Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Page 26. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014\\_roma-survey\\_education\\_tk0113748enc.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency (2014). *Roma survey – Data in focus Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Page 49. Available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014\\_roma-survey\\_education\\_tk0113748enc.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014_roma-survey_education_tk0113748enc.pdf)

<sup>102</sup> European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) (2015). *Census: Forced evictions of migrant Roma in France (year 2014)*. Available at: <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/report%20forced%20evictions%20-%20final%20en.pdf>

<sup>103</sup> European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) (2015). *Census: Forced evictions of migrant Roma in France (year 2014)*. Page 1. Available at <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/report%20forced%20evictions%20-%20final%20en.pdf>

<sup>104</sup> European Commission (2014). *The European Union and Roma – Factsheet Hungary*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_country\\_factsheets\\_2014/hungary\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_country_factsheets_2014/hungary_en.pdf)

<sup>105</sup> Ministry of Social Administration and Justice of Hungary (2011). *National Social Inclusion Strategy. Extreme poverty, child poverty and Roma*. Page 25. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_hungary\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_hungary_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 19, 47. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>107</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 45. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)



estimated one in five Roma children are educated in segregated schools, as opposed to only 2% of ethnically Hungarian children.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, higher education attainment within the Roma community is low: only 1% of Roma attend higher education compared to 18% of the Hungarian population as a whole. The Roma population is also disadvantaged in the labour market, and unemployment significantly exceeds unemployment rates of the non-Roma population of Hungary. Roma are far more likely to be unemployed than others; the unemployment rate among Roma adults is 30% compared to 7% for the whole population.<sup>109,110</sup> Only one third of Roma adults have a job (compared to over one half of the Hungarian adult population as a whole)<sup>111</sup>, and it is estimated that only 13-16% of Roma women are employed.<sup>112</sup> The Hungarian Roma population also suffers from poor housing: the FRA estimates that over 40% of Roma lack basic amenities. However, relatively few Roma live in overcrowded conditions, and almost all Roma have access to health care services. Infant mortality is 9.5 per thousand, two thirds higher than for the whole population. Life expectancy for Roma is 65 years, five years less than for the population as a whole.<sup>113</sup>

## Italy

Recent EC estimates find that there are approximately 130,000 to 150,000 Roma in Italy, accounting for 0.25% of the total of the Italian population.<sup>114</sup> There are three main subgroups that can be identified and who have different legal status: a) Italian Roma and Sinti; b) Roma from the former Yugoslavia, who came as war refugees in the 1990s and are non-EU citizens or even stateless, and finally, c) Roma from Eastern Europe, mainly from Romania and Bulgaria (therefore EU citizens). The Italian administrative structure exacerbates the already difficult issue of establishing a figure for the total Roma population in a territory: the Italian structure is characterized by shared responsibilities between states, regions, and local authorities, and relevant data collected is inconsistent across the country. The Roma population is young: according to recent studies, 60% of them are under 18 years old and 30% is less than five years old.<sup>115</sup>

As in many other Member States, educational attainment and school attendance rates are lower in the Roma community than in the wider population, and as a consequence, there are also high levels of illiteracy found in the Roma population. According to an EU inclusive

<sup>108</sup> Council of Europe (2006). *Follow-up report on Hungary (2002-2005). Assessment of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights*. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=984085&Site=CommDH&BackColorInternet=FEC65B&BackColorIntranet=FEC65B&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

<sup>109</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 46. Available at:

[http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> Reporting similar figures are found in the Roma Inclusion Index 2015, which reports that 22% fewer Roma are employed than others and 11% more Roma are represented in informal work than others, while 12% more Roma are long-term unemployed than others. See: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Page 45. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> Balogh, L. et al. (2013). *Updated Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 and 2013*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat. Page 15. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file30\\_hu\\_updated-civil-society-monitoring-report.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file30_hu_updated-civil-society-monitoring-report.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 47. Available at:

[http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>114</sup> European Commission (2014). *The European Union and Roma – Factsheet Italy*. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_country\\_factsheets\\_2014/italy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_country_factsheets_2014/italy_en.pdf)

<sup>115</sup> Strati, F. (2011). *Italy - Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma - A Study of National Policies*. Social Research Study (SRS). Page 8. Available at:

[http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11\\_07\\_it\\_strati\\_promoting\\_the\\_social\\_inclusion\\_of\\_roma.pdf](http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11_07_it_strati_promoting_the_social_inclusion_of_roma.pdf)

survey<sup>116</sup>, the employment rate of Roma and Sinti is around 34%. The survey also revealed that gender is an important issue: legally employed Roma and Sinti women represent only 11.5% of the entire sample, as opposed to 34.4% of the occupied Italian women who reside in Italy.<sup>117</sup>

Roma also experience severe marginalization and discrimination in housing. Between 40,000 and 50,000 Roma people are estimated to live in camps in 2010.<sup>118</sup> These camps are settlements typically composed by metal pre-fabricated containers, where they live in an extremely degraded environment at the margin of society<sup>119</sup>. The camps are very often deprived from water, electricity and other facilities. Health status is linked to poor living conditions: examples include lack of hygiene and access to water, overcrowding in flats, no private bathrooms, and the presence of rats. Roma life expectancy is ten years lower than the general population and Roma infant mortality rate is at least twice as high as the national average.<sup>120</sup>

## Romania

Romania's Roma population is estimated at around 1,850,000 people, corresponding to approximately 8.3% of Romania's population.<sup>121</sup> In Romania, there are deep, pervasive gaps between the situation of Roma and non-Roma in Romania, especially with regards to poverty, education, employment, healthcare, and housing, the situation of women and children, and discrimination. According to the Ministry of Labour, Family, and Social Protection, the poverty risk for Roma is 10 times higher than the risk for non-Roma, and 33% of Roma were living beneath the poverty threshold measured in 2013, compared to only 3.4% of non-Roma in this situation.<sup>122</sup> This marks a change from the 2011 Census data, according to which more than half of Roma citizens were found to be suffering from absolute poverty in 2011, compared to 13% non-Roma. In 2015, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of Roma, at 84%, is almost 3 times higher than among neighbouring non-Roma. The rate of Roma households in severe material deprivation is alarmingly high at 90%, and almost half of Roma households have very low work intensity.<sup>123</sup> The labour income of

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<sup>116</sup> The sample of interviewed people was 1,668. Fondazione Casa della Carità "Angelo Abriani" (2012). *National Report on Good Practices for the Social and Labour Inclusion of Roma People in Italy*. Soros Foundation Romania. Available at:

[http://www.gitanos.org/upload/03/32/ITA\\_National\\_Report\\_on\\_Good\\_Practices\\_for\\_the\\_social\\_and\\_Labour\\_Inclusion\\_of\\_Roma\\_People\\_in\\_Italy\\_public\\_policies\\_report\\_2.pdf](http://www.gitanos.org/upload/03/32/ITA_National_Report_on_Good_Practices_for_the_social_and_Labour_Inclusion_of_Roma_People_in_Italy_public_policies_report_2.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> Soros Foundation Romania (2012). *National Report on Good Practices for the Social and Labour Inclusion of Roma People in Italy*. Page 191. Available at:

[http://www.gitanos.org/upload/03/32/ITA\\_National\\_Report\\_on\\_Good\\_Practices\\_for\\_the\\_social\\_and\\_Labour\\_Inclusion\\_of\\_Roma\\_People\\_in\\_Italy\\_public\\_policies\\_report\\_2.pdf](http://www.gitanos.org/upload/03/32/ITA_National_Report_on_Good_Practices_for_the_social_and_Labour_Inclusion_of_Roma_People_in_Italy_public_policies_report_2.pdf)

<sup>118</sup> Cittalia - Fondazione Anci (2011). *Le politiche di integrazione urbana e la marginalità: il caso dei Rom e Sinti in Italia*. Progetto "Strategie locali di lotta alla povertà: città a confronto". Page 18. Available at:

[http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Strumenti/StudiStatistiche/Documents/INTEGRAZIONE\\_URBANA.pdf](http://www.lavoro.gov.it/Strumenti/StudiStatistiche/Documents/INTEGRAZIONE_URBANA.pdf)

<sup>119</sup> Associazione 21 Luglio Onlus (2015). *Annual report 2014*. Roma: Associazione 21 luglio. Page 24. Available at:

[http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11\\_07\\_it\\_strati\\_promoting\\_the\\_social\\_inclusion\\_of\\_roma.pdf](http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11_07_it_strati_promoting_the_social_inclusion_of_roma.pdf)

<sup>120</sup> Matrix (2014). *Roma Health Report, Health status of the Roma population, Data collection in the Member States of the European Union, Executive Summary*. Brussels: Directorate General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission. Page 5. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/social\\_determinants/docs/2014\\_roma\\_health\\_report\\_es\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/2014_roma_health_report_es_en.pdf)

<sup>121</sup> Government of Romania (2015). *Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to Roma Minority for 2015-2020*. Government of Romania. Page 7. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_romania\\_strategy2\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_romania_strategy2_en.pdf)

<sup>122</sup> Ministerul Muncii, Familiei și Protecției Sociale (2014). *Strategia națională privind incluziunea socială și reducerea sărăciei (2014-2020)*. Government of Romania. Page 10. Available at:

[http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Proiecte\\_in\\_dezbatere/2014/2014-12-29\\_HG\\_SIncluziune-Anexa1.pdf](http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Proiecte_in_dezbatere/2014/2014-12-29_HG_SIncluziune-Anexa1.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> World Bank (2014) *Diagnostic and Policy Advice for Supporting Roma Inclusion in Romania*, Washington: The World Bank.

working age Roma men in Romania is estimated to be only one fifth of that in the general population and among Roma women, this is even lower at just over one tenth.<sup>124</sup>

In education, Roma have a very low level of participation in education.<sup>125</sup> Only one third of Roma children attend pre-school education compared to two thirds of all Romanian children, and only four fifths of Roma children attended compulsory education<sup>126</sup>. Inclusion in education drops even further at post-compulsory level with just one tenth of Roma children attending upper-secondary education, and only 1% going on to attend higher education. The literacy rate among the Roma population is 86%. The employment rate of the Roma population, at 30%, is only one half that of the population as a whole, and half of the employed are engaged in informal activity.

With respect to access to health services, only about half of Romanian Roma has health insurance. A 2013 survey<sup>127</sup> revealed that 11% of Roma respondents reported that they needed health care in the year prior, but did not benefit from it – twice the proportion of non-Roma in the same situation.<sup>128</sup>

## Slovakia

Slovak strategic governmental actions and documents, such as the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPs/INCL) 2004 – 2006<sup>129</sup> and the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion for the years 2008 – 2010<sup>130</sup>, have characterised the Roma as the group most threatened by poverty and social exclusion in Slovakia. Empirical data<sup>131</sup> suggests that the phenomenon of “islands of poverty” in Slovakia overlap for the most part with regions and locations hosting large numbers of Roma.

According to UNDP estimates the size of the population is approximately 400,000 (approximately 7% of the total population in Slovakia)<sup>132</sup>. There is no reliable data on the size of Roma population in Slovakia as in the census nationality is based on subjective self-

<sup>124</sup> World Bank (2014) *Diagnostic and Policy Advice for Supporting Roma Inclusion in Romania*, Washington: The World Bank.

<sup>125</sup> Roth, M., and Moisa, F. (2011). *The right to education of Roma children in Romania: European policies and Romanian practices*. International Journal of Children's Rights, 19(3): 501-522.

<sup>126</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 57. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> European Roma Rights Centre (2013). *Hidden Health Crisis: Health Inequalities and Disaggregated Data*. Available at: <http://www.errc.org/article/hiddenhealth-crisis-health-inequalities-and-disaggregated-data/4214>

<sup>128</sup> European Roma Rights Centre (2014). *Written Comments of the European Roma Rights Centre, Concerning Romania for Consideration by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the 53rd Session* (10-28 November 2014). Available at: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ROU/INT\\_CESCR\\_CSS\\_ROU\\_18426\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ROU/INT_CESCR_CSS_ROU_18426_E.pdf)

<sup>129</sup> Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (2004). *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2004-2006 (NAP/inclusion) Slovak Republic*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_inclusion/docs/nap\\_incl\\_2004\\_sk\\_en\\_version.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/nap_incl_2004_sk_en_version.pdf)

<sup>130</sup> Slovak Republic (2008). *National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion for the years 2008 – 2010*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2564&langId=en>

<sup>131</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2010). *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma Households in Slovakia*. Page 5. Available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> In the following we are using information from the UNDP Report on the Roma households in Slovakia 2012. Since there are no official registers data on Roma we use data coming from representative sample surveys among the Roma population. United Nations Development Programme (2010). *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma Households in Slovakia*. Page 5. <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>; Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (2013). *ATLAS of Roma Communities in Slovakia*. Page 7. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9653\\_file2\\_atlas-romadecade.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9653_file2_atlas-romadecade.pdf)

declaration, and experts estimate<sup>133</sup> that the number of Roma who do declare themselves to be of Roma ethnicity is far less than actual figures. In Slovakia, many Roma are subject to extreme poverty and marginalization: the total income of an average Roma household is significantly lower than the total income of an average household in the general population, as is the case with the level of living conditions, the level of educational attainment, and the level of unemployment.

The level of unemployment of the Roma population is significantly higher (up to seven times higher) than in the general population in Slovakia. The poor living conditions in segregated settlements, probably also supported by a less consistent approach to personal health and worse access to health care, is expressed at a higher age in the significantly higher occurrence of chronic illness of their residents.<sup>134</sup>

## Spain

Spain has a large Roma population, with figures estimated to be around 725,000 to 750,000, though variations suggest the actual number sits between 500,000 and 1 million<sup>135</sup>. The Roma population is spread across the Spanish territory, with the largest concentration in Andalusia (approximately 40% of the Spanish Roma), followed by Catalonia, Valencia and Madrid<sup>136</sup>. Spain has a long history of combating the marginalization of the Roma, and promoting their social and economic inclusion.

The impact of the economic crisis on the Spanish Roma population is highlighted in a report from the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), which illustrates the long-term and harsh effects on Roma individuals and groups, with demands for assistance rising over the past years and indicates that Roma progress is stagnating, or even declining, with many Roma returning to states of poverty and marginalization despite the progress made over the last decades<sup>137</sup>. The EC found that, in 2013, '72 % of the Roma population were in a situation of social exclusion and 54% in severe exclusion, more than double the figure of 2009 (26 %)'<sup>138</sup>.

The level of formal education in the Spanish Roma population is low in comparison to the rest of the population, with 34% fewer Roma completing compulsory primary education and 29% fewer Roma completing secondary school, compared to rates in the general population<sup>139</sup>. The academic level of adult Roma is characterized by high illiteracy rates and high school leavers' rates. There are also gender differences in educational attainment among the Spanish Roma, such as higher illiteracy rates found among Romani women

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<sup>133</sup>United Nations Development Programme (2010). *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma Households in Slovakia*. Page 31. <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>

<sup>134</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2010). *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma Households in Slovakia*. Page 31. Available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Report-on-the-living-conditions-of-Roma-households-in-Slovakia-2010.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Ministry Of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*. Ministerio De Sanidad, Servicios Sociales E Igualdad: Centro De Publicaciones. Available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/SpanishRomaStrategy.pdf>

<sup>136</sup> Ministry Of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*. Ministerio De Sanidad, Servicios Sociales E Igualdad: Centro De Publicaciones. Available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/SpanishRomaStrategy.pdf>

<sup>137</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2013). *El Impacto De La Crisis En La Comunidad Gitana*. Page 10. Available at: [https://www.gitanos.org/upload/09/50/el\\_impacto\\_de\\_la\\_crisis\\_en\\_la\\_comunidad\\_gitana.pdf](https://www.gitanos.org/upload/09/50/el_impacto_de_la_crisis_en_la_comunidad_gitana.pdf)

<sup>138</sup> European Commission (2015). *Commission Staff Working Document: Country Report Spain 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances* {COM(2015) 85 final} SWD(2015) 28 final. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015\\_spain\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_spain_en.pdf)

<sup>139</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2015). *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*. Budapest: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 69. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810\\_file1\\_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf)

(especially older generations) than men, and a '6% difference in the proportion of Romani men and women who reach compulsory secondary education'<sup>140</sup>. The Spanish NRIS highlights a high activity rate of its Roma population in employment and economic activity; it attributes this to the characteristically young population accessing the labour market earlier. However, the Strategy also acknowledges the low levels of formal education or qualifications among the Roma population, resulting in 'large scale employment in poorly paid, temporary activities and with precarious working conditions'<sup>141</sup>.

The NRIS, corroborated by the Roma Decade for Inclusion, states that there is a significant improvement in the living conditions of the Roma over the past decades. According to data collected by the FSG in 2007, across more than 90,000 Roma homes '88.1% of Roma people resided in normalised housing, and only 3.9% in slums, although a further 7.8% live in deteriorated or sub-standard housing' (NIRS, p. 7). Despite this, housing is still a problem for the Roma communities in Spain, as substandard housing and slums remain.<sup>142</sup>

There has been an improvement in the health status of the Roma community present in Spain over the past decades, though generally the health of Roma people is still lower than non-Roma, even at a similar socio-economic level, seen in indicators such as 'lower life expectancy, higher rates of being overweight, lower dental and ocular health, higher rates of self-medication and lower access to gynaecological, oral and ophthalmological services'<sup>143</sup>.

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<sup>140</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 10. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>141</sup> Ministry Of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (2014). *Estrategia Nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana 2012-2020 Plan Operativo 2014-2016*. Page 6. Available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/PlanOperativoPoblacionGitana2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> Housing problems have increased with the crisis with a multitude of families who have been evicted from their homes. See Council of Europe (2014). *Fourth Opinion on Spain of the advisory committee of the framework convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. Paragraph 107 to 109. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680307ecc>

<sup>143</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Page 14. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

## 3. NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES

### KEY FINDINGS

- The study considers aspects of the National Roma Integration Strategies across dimensions of design, appropriateness, effectiveness, and sustainability.
- In the dimension of design, the study finds that all the NRIS covered by this study refer to the main elements of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies: education, employment, housing, and health.
- However, the study also finds that many NRIS have major issues concerning the definition of precise indicators and measurable benchmarks.
- Many of the NRIS also lack clear funding allocations at regional, national, and international levels.
- Most Member States in this study made attempts to involve Roma civil society or stakeholders in the preparation and design of their strategies.
- In the dimension of appropriateness, the study finds that, though the NRIS all refer to the four main elements of the EU framework, there is variety to which degree the specific measures of the EU Framework have been addressed by national NRIS documents. The study discusses good and poor examples of how Member States have chosen to align the NRIS to existing national policy priorities.
- All Member States covered by this study have appointed national contact points for the implementation of the NRIS, though the administrative capacity of these actors varies in practice.
- In the dimension of effectiveness, the study finds there is little information provided on the progress made by individual Member States, and where they do provide it, it is not linked to the objectives or targets. Few NRIS provide clear timetables.
- In the dimension of sustainability, there are serious issues surrounding the security of funding, the lack of financial commitment, and weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. There are only a few suggestions from Member States on how to encourage dialogue and dissemination across regional, national, and international stakeholders.

### 3.1. Design

#### 3.1.1. Key dimensions

All the NRIS covered by this study cover the key dimensions of education, employment, housing and health, as outlined in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. A number of Member States go above these, and provide objectives and targets in additional dimensions, such as 'combating anti-gypsyism and discrimination' (e.g. France, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia), 'culture and media' (e.g. Bulgaria), or

'women and children' (e.g. Spain). Slovakia also includes 'financial inclusion' and 'targeting the majority society – initiative of integrating the Roma through communication' as separate key dimensions, with the largest number of dimensions out of all the Strategies covered by this study. Many of the references to extra dimensions are not pulled through the strategies with accompanying targets, indicators, or specific activities.

### 3.1.2. Objectives, targets, and indicators

The European Commission provides the following definitions for objectives and indicators as part of its Smart Regulation Guidelines:

- 'Objectives link the analysis of the problem to the options for the policy response. They set the level of policy ambition' [...] <sup>144</sup>;
- 'An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative measure of how close we are to achieving a set goal (e.g. policy outcome)'; <sup>145</sup>

In other words, objectives set the ambition (what does the Strategy mean to achieve), targets set the associated action or aim (what is the associated desired result or change over time, or by what degree), and the indicators allow for measurable accountability of progress (a specific measure which can indicate achievement of the target). <sup>146,147</sup>

While most MS part of the study identify objectives, there are major issues with the definition of precise indicators and measurable benchmarks in the NRISs. For example, Hungary identifies a number of objectives as part of its strategy, but does not support this with the identification of any indicators and only a couple of weak targets. Or, similarly, in Bulgaria, identified indicators do not allow for a measure of impact or success (e.g. for housing, the number of municipalities which have made a needs assessment), as there is no previous data available to provide a baseline, nor does the Strategy identify targets in relation to many of its indicators (e.g. for housing, the Bulgarian strategy defines no specific targets, while listing various indicators for the field, including the previously mentioned one).

The Spanish NRIS is one of the only Strategies covered by the study to link targets with specific (measurable) indicators, applauded by in the Civil Monitoring Report on Spain produced by Decade for Roma Inclusion. <sup>148</sup> The Civil Monitoring Report, does however, question the reasonable nature data for some of these indicators can be collected given the Spanish NRIS relies on specific studies to obtain this data, which in turn depends on funding for these studies. <sup>149</sup> However, the Strategy fails to identify targets with quantifiable

<sup>144</sup> The European Commission further defines objectives as needing to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. See European Commission (2014). *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 up to 2030*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/impact/ia\\_carried\\_out/docs/ia\\_2014/swd\\_2014\\_0015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/impact/ia_carried_out/docs/ia_2014/swd_2014_0015_en.pdf); European Commission (2014). *Tool #13: How to set objectives*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/tool\\_13\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/tool_13_en.htm)

<sup>145</sup> European Commission (2014). *Tool #35: Monitoring Arrangements and Indicators*. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/tool\\_35\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/tool_35_en.htm)

<sup>146</sup> Independent Research Forum (2014). *Goals, Targets and Indicators Definitions and key concepts for the post-2015 development agenda*. Available at: [http://www.irf2015.org/sites/default/files/publications/Retreat%20%232\\_Background\\_Paper\\_2\\_and\\_3\\_GTI\\_and\\_Criteria.pdf](http://www.irf2015.org/sites/default/files/publications/Retreat%20%232_Background_Paper_2_and_3_GTI_and_Criteria.pdf)

<sup>147</sup> An example is: an objective of 'increase in Roma pre-school education completion', with an example target of 'an increase of X%', and an indicator of 'pre-school enrolment rates' or 'pre-school completion rates'.

<sup>148</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>149</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Page 41. [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

benchmarks, leaving the measurable nature of the efforts undertaken as part of the strategy open.

The quality of the NRISs is also affected Member States' understanding of what an objective, target, or indicator is, with these terms being used interchangeably or incorrectly. An example of this can be found in the Romanian NRIS where the Strategy does not mention explicit targets, but uses the term to refer to indicators, attaching expected results for them at an intermediary stage (2016) and a final stage (2016). The 'Indicators' column is a better approximation of what is usually meant by 'targets'<sup>150</sup>. The Civil Monitoring Report on Romania observes that 'the [Romanian] NRIS was created under the pressure of EC deadlines and was not sufficiently focused on observing the minimum standards of policy formulation, with no effective evaluation of previous exercises and no relevant baseline or targets to be achieved'.<sup>151</sup> Or, as in the Bulgarian Strategy, which includes predominantly output indicators as opposed to outcome indicators (they refer to whether something has happened, but do not aim to measure impact, nor do they refer to a baseline to use for evaluating longer term effects). Examples include:

- 'Implementation of a project for integrated urban regeneration and the eradication of unhealthy habitat in Ferentari district' (acts as both an objective and an indicators in the Romanian Strategy);
- 'Number of persons who have undergone training; Number of persons employed; Number of persons who have undergone training in business starting and managing' (employment indicators from the Bulgarian Strategy).

The Slovak NRIS uses the term objectives rather than presenting measures, but those objectives are de facto measures. There is also inconsistency in the Slovak NRIS, which makes a distinction between 'global' and 'partial' objectives, where some of the policy areas or dimensions are supported by a 'global objective', while others are not. Alongside these issues, the Slovak NRIS does not set targets.

There are also problems with the reasonability or measurability of the targets, and the realistic nature by which they can be achieved at an interim (or end stage) of the NRIS. Examples of this include:

- 'Increasing the level of educational inclusion of the Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority, including from traditional Roma communities, at a similar level to that of the general population' (objective from the Romanian NRIS);
- 'Providing Roma children with sustainable access to quality education' (objective from the Hungarian NRIS);
- 'Enrolling and retaining in the educational system all Roma children and students, ensuring for them high quality education in a multicultural environment' (objective from the Bulgarian NRIS).

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<sup>150</sup> Targets explicitly mentioned as such are "the lowering of early school drop-out rate to a maximum of 11.3 % (in 2013, early school drop-out rate was 17.3 %)" (p. 20), "an employment rate of at least 70 % of the population aged between 20 and 64" (p. 22) and "the reduction of the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 580,000 persons." (p. 11) – although it is not clear whether the latter refers to the national or the EU level. *Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens belonging to Roma Minority for 2015-2020*. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_romania\\_strategy2\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_romania_strategy2_en.pdf)

<sup>151</sup> Moisă, F. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Romania*. Page 7. Available at:

[http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file24\\_ro\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file24_ro_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)



### 3.1.3. Funding

A number of Member States (in this study Bulgaria and France) do not allocate any national funds in their NRIS. Italy and Spain do identify national funds, such as the fund for policies related to rights and equal opportunities in the Ministry of the Interior (an available €15 billion for the realization of systemic actions on the part of the Italian National Strategy UNAR), or the Anti-discrimination Operational Programme (ADOP) in Spain (an available €42 million for Roma activities over 2007 – 2013). However, neither specifies an allocation for activities to be conducted under the auspice of the NRIS or, in Spain's case, national funding beyond 2013.

In its first observations on the NRISs<sup>152</sup>, the EC finds that 8 countries give no indications of funding at all (including France), and 5 countries (including Spain) do not provide budget allocations. The remainder of the MS are scattered in either indicating national budget allocations or international/EU funding (out of the EU27 only Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia provide allocations for both).<sup>153</sup> Despite these obvious gaps in financial commitment, the EC's comments on the NRIS proposals include a general statement for all Member States to allocate proportionate financial resources or to allocate financial means to specific fields in the Strategies, but mostly focused on EU funds: 'Member States should make more and better use of EU Funds for Roma inclusion as part of their efforts to improve their absorption rate'.<sup>154</sup>

Exceptionally, the Romanian strategy provide reference to both national and EU funding sources, and allocates specific amounts of national funding to each policy priority (a total of €48,349,000<sup>155</sup>), as well as identifying possible international sources of funding (such as the Swiss Financial Mechanism, the Global Fund, and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism). Similarly, the Slovak strategy states that, across all policy areas, there is a total of 142 million EUR for the funding period 2007 – 2015, and a separate financing structure for Education Policy of a total of 11 million EUR.<sup>156</sup>

Also, the EC states that the Council uses the country-specific recommendations part of the European Semester to identify funding priorities within the use of EU funds and provide more general feedback on progress and the state of Roma inclusion in their territories, though, for example, in 2013 and 2015 only 5 of the CSRs touched on Roma or NRIS issues (for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia).<sup>157</sup>

<sup>152</sup> European Commission (2012). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions: National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework* {SWD(2012) 133 final}. COM(2012) 226 final. Page 15.

<sup>153</sup> European Commission (2012). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions: National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework* {SWD(2012) 133 final}. COM(2012) 226 final. Page 15.

<sup>154</sup> European Commission (2012). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions: National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework* {SWD(2012) 133 final}. COM(2012) 226 final. Page 15.

<sup>155</sup> Government of Romania (2015). *Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens Belonging to Roma Minority for 2015-2020*. Page 44. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_romania\\_strategy2\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_romania_strategy2_en.pdf)

<sup>156</sup> Government Office of the Slovak Republic (2011). *Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020: Annex No. 2 Summary of impacts of the public administration budget in the frame of Revised National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005 – 2015 for the period 2011 – 2015*. Page 74. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9323\\_file21\\_roma\\_slovakia\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9323_file21_roma_slovakia_strategy_en.pdf).

<sup>157</sup> European Commission (2015). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions - Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies 2015*. Brussels, 17.6.2015 COM(2015) 299 final. Page 3.

### 3.1.4. Roma stakeholder involvement

Most Member States in this study, with the exception of Italy, made attempts to involve Roma civil society or stakeholders in the preparation and design of their strategies. However, there are immediate issues with these attempts, ranging from the level of incorporation of the results from consultations, or the degree to which stakeholders were involvement in reality.

For example, in Bulgaria, Roma stakeholders were consulted, but the concerns and issues raised were not incorporated into either the Bulgarian Strategy or the following Action Plan.<sup>158</sup> Both documents mention planned involvements of Roma stakeholders in the implementation of the NRIS, but no practical steps have been made to realize this, nor do the documents provide elaboration on how this may take place.

The Slovak government did not consult Roma NGOs and stakeholders as part of the design of the NRIS, though the NRIS was based on available materials, some of which were created in full or in part by Roma stakeholders. It did consult the Office of the Roma Plenipotentiary, which is a governmental organization representing the interests of Roma, not an independent NGO or CSO. Roma stakeholders have implemented projects which have been included under the NRIS umbrella.

In France, the NRIS mentions that the *Commission Nationale Consultative des Gens du Voyage* (National Consultative Committee of Travellers), members of which include representatives of Roma associations, should be consulted on policies targeted at Roma or other disadvantaged groups more widely. However, the French Court of Auditors has raised doubts on the strength of this Commission<sup>159</sup>, regarding its effects and consistency (both in the production of agreed reports, such as annual updates, and in, for example, attendance of its members at its meetings). The practical impact of the Commission's involvement in the NRIS at either design or implementation stages could potentially be more minimal due to a perceived lack of commitment from the Commission.

The Spanish government involved the State Council of Roma People, representing 20 CSOs, in the design of the NRIS. This process was explained as a 'participative work progress' between the Directorate General of Family and Childhood Services of the MSSSI and the State Council in NRIS, mostly consisting of meetings and consultations<sup>160</sup>. However, the Civil Monitoring Report on Spain produced by Decade for Roma Inclusion states that 'due to the timing, it was not possible to discuss the Strategy within the framework of the meetings of the State Council of the Romani People, and, thus, the Strategy was not formally approved by this Council'<sup>161</sup>. Other CSOs were also approached for input, though some of these organizations later stated that the consultation process was limited, in part due to timing.<sup>162</sup> Similar issues were raised in Romania, where civil society raised concerns

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<sup>158</sup> Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria (2011). *Action Plan for Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012- 2020) and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015*. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9305\\_file2\\_bg-action-plan-updated.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9305_file2_bg-action-plan-updated.pdf)

<sup>159</sup> Cour des Comptes (2012). *L'accueil et l'accompagnement des gens du voyage*, Paris: Cour des Comptes. Page 36-38. Available at: <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/124000552.pdf>

<sup>160</sup> Ministry Of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012 -2020*. Page 53. Available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/SpanishRomaStrategy.pdf>

<sup>161</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 37. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>162</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation.

that issues raised during the consultation process were not incorporated in the final strategy: 'Although the legal framework regarding the process of consultation with the civil society was observed, the recommendations from this area did not benefit of a serious analysis, the fact that none were not included in the strategy standing as a proof for this'.<sup>163</sup>

In Italy, no Roma stakeholders were involved in the design of the Strategy, although the NRIS foresees the creation of a Forum of Roma and Sinti communities.<sup>164</sup>

## 3.2. Appropriateness

### 3.2.1. NRIS alignment with priorities of the EU Framework

All of the Strategies covered by this study refer to the four main elements of the EU Framework: education, employment, housing, and health. However, in its report 'National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU'<sup>165</sup>, the European Commission reveals that there is variety to which degree the specific measures of the EU Framework have been addressed by national NRIS documents.

The table below, adapted from the European Commission's first implementation report to cover the seven countries of this study, shows how there are elements from the EU framework that are not addressed by some countries, with certain measures (e.g. for education, 'increasing tertiary education', or employing qualified 'civil servants in the public sector' for employment) referred to by very few countries.

**Table 1: NRIS Alignment with EU Framework Measures across seven MS<sup>166</sup>**

Education	Endorsement of the general goal	BG, ES, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Concrete goals to reduce education gap	BG, ES, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Widening access to quality early childhood education and care	ES, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Measures to ensure that Roma children complete at least primary school	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Reducing secondary school leaving	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Increasing tertiary education	ES, HU, IT
	Measures aimed at preventing segregation	ES, HU, RO, SK
	Support measures	ES, HU, IT, RO, SK
Employment	Endorsement of the general goal	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK

Page 35. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>163</sup> Impreuna Agency (2012). *Romanian Government's Strategy of Inclusion of the Romanian Citizens belonging to Romani Minority for 2012-2020 - The position of the Împreună Agency for Community Development*. Agentia Împreună. Page 2. Available at: [http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/reuniuni/Impreuna\\_Agency\\_Paper-meeting\\_2012\\_March\\_1st.pdf](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/reuniuni/Impreuna_Agency_Paper-meeting_2012_March_1st.pdf)

<sup>164</sup> Associazione 21 Luglio Onlus (2015). *Annual report 2014*. Roma: Associazione 21 luglio. Page 24. Available at: [http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11\\_07\\_it\\_strati\\_promoting\\_the\\_social\\_inclusion\\_of\\_roma.pdf](http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11_07_it_strati_promoting_the_social_inclusion_of_roma.pdf)

Bormioli, S. et al. (2014). *La tela di Penelope: Monitoraggio della società civile sull'attuazione della Strategia Nazionale d'Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti e dei Caminanti in Italia nel 2012 e 2013*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.21luglio.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/9773\\_file10\\_it\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_it.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/9773_file10_it_civil-society-monitoring-report_it.pdf)

<sup>165</sup> European Commission (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU*. COM (2012) 226, 21 May 2012. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_nat\\_integration\\_strat\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nat_integration_strat_en.pdf)

<sup>166</sup> Adapted from: European Commission (2012). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions: National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework {SWD(2012) 133 final}*. Brussels, 21.5.2012 COM(2012) 226 final, page 7.

	Concrete goals to reduce the employment gap	BG, ES, FR, HU, RO, SK
	General measures under the principle of equal treatment to reduce the employment gap	FR
	Additional or specific measures for Roma	BG, ES, HU, RO, SK
	Access to micro-credit	ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Civil servants in the public sector	None
	Personalised services	HU, IT, RO
	Integrated approach	BG, ES, HU, SK
Health	Endorsement of the general goal	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Concrete goals to reduce the health gap	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	General measures relying on existing structures to reduce the health gap	FR
	Access to quality healthcare especially for children and women	ES, FR, HU, IT, SK
	Additional measures	BG, ES, HU, RO SK
Housing	Endorsement of the general goal	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	Concrete goals to reduce gap in access to housing and public utilities	BG, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK
	General measures relying on existing structures	None
	Access to housing, including social housing	BG, ES, IT, HU, SK
	Addressing the needs of the non-sedentary population	FR
	Integrated approach	ES, FR, HU, RO

### 3.2.2. Priority sector alignment with existing national policy priorities

**In the policy area of education**, there are few examples of **good alignment**. One example is:

- SK: The NRIS is aligned with the national priority on inclusive education

There are more examples of **poor alignment** in education policy:

- BG: Desegregation in schools is a national priority but not mentioned in the NRIS
- FR: Education priorities include reinforcing basic knowledge and skills at primary school level; increase coverage at pre-school level; fighting educational inequalities and reinforcing teaching of civic values. NRIS priorities are only partially aligned with these.
- HU: the NRIS does not mention de-segregation in schooling
- RO: there is no specific measure in the NRIS that would fit with the priority to increase participation in tertiary education, or to increase its quality, efficiency and accessibility in spite of marked university places for Roma.

**In the policy area of employment**, there are some examples of **good alignment**. These are:

- HU: The NRIS is well aligned with the national priority for employment promotion and support of the mobility of workforce
- SK: The NRIS is well aligned with the national priority to increase the employment rate.

- ES: The NRIS is well aligned, on a general level, with the national priority to promote training for Roma people to encourage their access and retention in employment and improve gender specific data on the employment of Roma people.

There are also examples of **poor alignment** in employment policy:

- BG: National objectives are to increase the employment rate and reduce the numbers living in poverty. However, there are very few activities in the NRIS that would contribute to raising the employment rate of the Roma or reducing their poverty rate.
- FR: Intensifying the guidance and training of jobseekers is a national priority, but there are no measures focused on the Roma in the NRIS. The same goes for the national policies to remove obstacles to employment, or to partner with companies to offer work experience to long-term job seekers, which are not priorities within the NRIS.
- RO: The national priority to build resilience and adaptability in the face of structurally caused unemployment is not addressed in the NRIS. The national priority to improve monitoring of policies that impact the labour market is not mentioned in the NRIS in relation to policies and measures related to the Roma.

**In the policy area of health**, there are some examples of **good alignment**. These are:

- SK: The NRIS is well aligned with the national priority to improve health conditions
- ES: The NRIS is partially aligned on a general level with the national priority to improve access to health services; reduce differences in health issues between the Roma and general population; ensure permanent knowledge of the Roma health situation

There are also examples of **poor alignment** in health policy:

- BG: The NRIS makes no mention of health priorities in relation to the Roma
- FR: The NRIS makes no mention of the national priority to reinforce prevention policies against obesity, alcohol, tobacco or other health issues. There is no specific mention in the NRIS about the national priority to facilitate access to health, or to adapt the health system to local needs

**In the policy area of housing**, there are some examples of **good alignment**. These are:

- RO: The NRIS is perfectly aligned with the national objective to offer free registration of houses in the Cadastre system, and partly with the objective to support durable urban development and the economic and social regeneration of disadvantaged communities from urban areas
- ES: The NRIS is partly aligned on a general level with the national priority to promote access to suitable and quality housing for the Roma people; decrease the number of slums; create a housing policy for Roma integration.

There are also examples of **poor alignment** in housing policy:

- BG: The NRIS does not have any priority over housing for Roma
- FR: The NRIS does not have any priority over housing for Roma, for example in relation to the national priority to increase the amount of social housing or to build housing where it is most needed.

Though many of the Strategies do acknowledge other areas, such as 'combating anti-gypsyism and discrimination' (e.g. France, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia), 'culture and media' (e.g. Bulgaria), or 'women and children' (e.g. Spain), many of the

references to extra dimensions are not pulled through the strategies with accompanying targets, indicators, or specific activities, or references to existing policy priorities.

### 3.2.3. Institutional responsibility for the strategy and the different elements

Each Member State has appointed a national contact point, as outlined in the table below.

**Table 2: National contact points**

Bulgaria	National Council for Co-operation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and Secretariat of the NCCEII (Administration of the Council of Ministers)
France	Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing ( <i>Délégation Interministérielle à l'Hébergement et à l'Accès au Logement (DIHAL)</i> )
Italy	National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR)
Hungary	Ministry of Human Resources, State Secretariat for Social Inclusion
Romania	Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection Secretary of State
Slovakia	Government of the Slovak Republic
Spain	Directorate General of Family and Childhood Services, of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality ( <i>Dirección General de Servicios para la Familia y la Infancia, Ministerio de Sanidad Servicios Sociales e Igualdad</i> )

In Spain, competency for many of the elements falls under the authority of the Autonomous Communities of Spain<sup>167</sup>, so they are closely involved in the implementation of the Strategy at a regional level. The Directorate General of Family and Childhood Services of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (MSSSI) does not have responsibility for a number of issues covered by the Strategy, in which case there is close collaboration with the Ministerial department that does (e.g. Ministry of Employment and Social Security (MEYSS) or the Ministry for Education, Culture and Sports (MECD)), a similar organization to the French Strategy, which also sees the national contact point work with the specific and relevant ministries (e.g. Ministry for National Education, or the Ministry for Equality of Territories and Housing) or governmental bodies like the National Working Group on Roma and the Interministerial Delegation for the Fight against Racism and Anti-semitism. The Bulgarian and Slovak Strategies clearly define key institutions/Ministries with institutional responsibilities for each of the key dimensions, as opposed to the more general identification done in the NRIS for Spain or France. However, the French Strategy is the only NRIS covered by this study that explicitly mentions the involvement of a Roma body in the implementation<sup>168</sup>, and in many of the national contact points there are no Roma employed or represented.

Beside the proposal of specific ministries, some Member States foresee the creation of additional bodies, such as in the Italian NRIS proposes the creation of a Steering Committee (*Cabina di regia*) composed of regional and local authorities to cooperate with the NCP, and of National Boards to work on the four specific policy areas of the NRIS.

### 3.2.4. Administrative capacity of actors

The Italian proposed institutional framework illustrates one of the problems encountered for the administrative capacity of actors. UNAR, the national contact point, is currently comprised of only a director, one public official and three experts, leading to immediate

<sup>167</sup> Andalusia; Aragon; Asturias; Balearic Islands; Basque Country; Canary Islands; Cantabria; Castile-La Mancha; Castile and León; Catalonia; Extremadura; Galicia; La Rioja; Madrid; Murcia; Navarre; and Valencian Community

<sup>168</sup> Resultant from comparison of the data collected across the seven countries in this study.

questions of the reasonable work that can be done in coordination of a national strategy. Other problems include the definition of clear roles of regional and local authorities. The Open Society Foundation's Review of EU Framework National Roma Integration Strategies<sup>169</sup> notes that the Hungarian NRIS does not specify the mandate of the National Contact Point with reference to either the design or the implementation of the Strategy. According to the Open Society Foundation's review, the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (the Hungarian national contact point) has neither got the necessary capacity nor experience to coordinate and implement Roma integration policies and needs additional technical assistance in order to coordinate, develop and implement effective integration policies. Similarly, the Civil Society Monitoring Report (2013)<sup>170</sup> for Hungary observes that the National Roma Self-Government implements several projects and programmes "whose magnitude, as highlighted by both NGO and professional positions, significantly exceeds its professional, organisational, and administrative capacities".

Similar observations are made in Bulgaria, where civil society has commented<sup>171</sup> on the low level of capacity of the NCCEII while being responsible for implementation on the national level and coordination of all relevant stakeholders. Decade for Roma Inclusion also discusses 'low level of support by state administration and poor communication with relevant ministries and bodies' in its Civil Monitoring Report on Bulgaria<sup>172</sup>.

The following table provides an overview of the administrative capacity for each of the seven Member States.

**Table 3: Member State administrative capacity**

Bulgaria	Reviews and studies report on the low level of capacity of the NCCEII which is responsible for implementation on the national level and coordination of all relevant stakeholders <sup>173</sup> . In addition to capacity, 'low level of support by state administration and poor communication with relevant ministries and bodies' <sup>174</sup> is observed. In addition to this, there is little coherence between the multiple institutions responsible for the implementation of the Strategy.
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<sup>169</sup> Open Society Foundation (2012). *Review of EU Framework National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS): Open Society Foundations review of NRIS submitted by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia*. Page 48. Available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/roma-integration-strategies-20120221.pdf>

<sup>170</sup> Balogh, L. et al. (2013). *Updated Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 and 2013*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat. Page 18. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file30\\_hu\\_updated-civil-society-monitoring-report.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file30_hu_updated-civil-society-monitoring-report.pdf)

<sup>171</sup> Dimitrov, D., Grigorova, V., and Decheva, J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Bulgaria*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG\\_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report\\_EN.pdf](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report_EN.pdf)

<sup>172</sup> Dimitrov, D., Grigorova V. and Decheva J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Bulgaria*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 19. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file4\\_bg\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file4_bg_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>173</sup> Dimitrov, D., Grigorova V. and Decheva J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Bulgaria*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG\\_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report\\_EN.pdf](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report_EN.pdf)

Integro Association (n.d). *Review of the National Roma Strategy of Bulgaria, 14th of February Razgrad, Bulgaria*, [http://www.ergonetwork.org/media/userfiles/media/Integro\\_Association\\_Reviewof\\_NIRS\\_Bulgariaeng.pdf](http://www.ergonetwork.org/media/userfiles/media/Integro_Association_Reviewof_NIRS_Bulgariaeng.pdf)

Council of Europe (2014). *ECRI Report on Bulgaria (fifth monitoring cycle), adopted on 19 June 2014*. Available at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dqhl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/bulgaria/BGR-CbC-V-2014-036-ENG.pdf>

<sup>174</sup> Dimitrov, D., Grigorova V. and Decheva J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Bulgaria*. Budapest, Hungary: Decade

France	The administrative capacity of France is difficult to assess as France has not proceeded with implementation of the NRIS: the Decade for Roma Inclusion Monitoring Report states that 'as far as we know, the issuing of this circular is the only act of public policy promoting NRIS, and it is couched in terms that are not explicitly those of inclusion, but of prioritising evictions from illegal settlements' <sup>175</sup> .
Hungary	The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues is the administrative unit responsible for the implementation of the NRIS, as well as the Action plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. However, according to the Open Foundations review, this unit has neither the necessary capacity nor experience to coordinate and implement Roma integration policies and needs additional technical assistance in order to coordinate, develop and implement effective integration policies <sup>176</sup> . Similarly, the Civil Society Monitoring Report <sup>177</sup> observes that the National Roma Self-Government implements several projects and programmes "whose magnitude, as highlighted by both NGO and professional positions, significantly exceeds its professional, organisational, and administrative capacities".
Italy	At national level, the office for the promotion of equal treatment and removal of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin (UNAR) is the appointed National Contact Point. However, the office responsible for the NRIS is comprised by a director, one public official and three experts, and the financial resources within the UNAR for implementation of the NRIS are not identified or estimated <sup>178</sup> . At the moment, no Roma people are part of the National Contact Point. Regions and municipalities have extensive autonomy in Italy, and are responsible for setting up Regional Tables in addition to the national structure. However, as of 2014, only 8 out of 20 regions had formally established Regional Tables <sup>179</sup> . The NRIS does not specify responsibilities or communication between the various stakeholders, with resultant administrative and organisational difficulties emerging <sup>180</sup> .
Romania	The National Agency for Roma (NAR) and the Central Department for Monitoring and Assessment (represented by the Prime Minister's counsellor) are the main bodies relating to the NRIS in Romania. It has been reported that the role of Prime Minister's counsellor is carried out by individuals with

of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 19. Available at: [http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG\\_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report\\_EN.pdf](http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2013/BG_civil%20society%20monitoring%20report_EN.pdf)

<sup>175</sup> Mile, S. (2014). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in France in 2012 and 2013*. Budapest, Hungary: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 7. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773\\_file5\\_fr\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en-1.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773_file5_fr_civil-society-monitoring-report_en-1.pdf)

<sup>176</sup> Open Society Foundations (2012). *Review of EU Framework National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS)*. Open Society Foundations review of NRIS submitted by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Page 42. Available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/roma-integration-strategies-20120221.pdf>

<sup>177</sup> Balogh, L. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Hungary*. Budapest, Hungary: Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file8\\_hu\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file8_hu_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>178</sup> Bormioli, S. et al. (2014). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Italy in 2012 and 2013*. Budapest, Hungary: Decade for Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 8. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773\\_file9\\_it\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en-1.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773_file9_it_civil-society-monitoring-report_en-1.pdf)

<sup>179</sup> Bormioli, S. et al. (2014). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Italy in 2012 and 2013*. Budapest, Hungary: Decade for Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 9. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773\\_file9\\_it\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en-1.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773_file9_it_civil-society-monitoring-report_en-1.pdf)

<sup>180</sup> Bormioli, S. et al. (2014). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Italy in 2012 and 2013*. Page 9. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773\\_file9\\_it\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en-1.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9773_file9_it_civil-society-monitoring-report_en-1.pdf)



	other government roles, suggesting weak levels of resources allocated to the oversight of the NRIS <sup>181</sup> . The NAR has seven regional offices, and counts 30 civil servant posts, again, suggesting low resources for the implementation of the Strategy.
Slovakia	Changes in government in Slovakia have caused the implementation of the NRIS and the Revised Action Plan to have suffered, with no steps to, for example, ensure sustainable budgetary commitments <sup>182</sup> .
Spain	Within the MSSSI, the Service for the Roma Development Programme has conducted the coordination for most Roma policies. However, the Decade for Roma Inclusion Civil Monitoring Report states that this is a 'relatively small unit within the central Government Ministry' and that 'its human and financial resources are scarce if we take into account the existing needs and challenges'. It does not have the capacity to implement its own initiatives, and therefore has a more general role <sup>183</sup> . The decentralised governance process in Spain also affects information and dissemination, and effective governance more generally.

### 3.3. Effectiveness

#### 3.3.1. Achievement of objectives/targets

To date, there is little information provided on the progress made by individual Member States, and where they do provide it, it is not linked to the objectives or targets (e.g. the Spanish Monitoring Report mentions activities which have fallen under the implementation of the NRIS, but does not attempt to evaluate them in relation to the framework set out by the NRIS).

#### 3.3.2. Operationalization of the objectives

Few Member States identify targets, benchmarks, or indicators which sufficiently operationalize the objectives they set out (see discussion in 3.1.2).

#### 3.3.3. Identification of and adherence to timetables

Few of the NRISs present a detailed timetable beyond brief mentions of annual or multiannual programme periods. For example, Spain divided its NRIS into 3-year periods to commence after 2012 (up to 2012, the Strategy would operate under an existing national programme). Bulgaria, similarly, proposed two time periods: the first to coincide with the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plan (2012 – 2014), and then a larger 7 year period from 2014 to 2020.

The Italian, Bulgarian, Slovak, and French NRIS all lack clear timetables, and do not provide an indication of interim stages or by when the Strategies should be at certain points beyond the end of the framework in 2020.

<sup>181</sup> Moisă, F et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Romania*. Budapest, Hungary: Decade for Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 32. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file24\\_ro\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file24_ro_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>182</sup> Lajčáková, J. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Slovakia*. Budapest, Hungary : Decade for Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Page 7. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file14\\_sk\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file14_sk_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>183</sup> Laparra, M. et al. (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Page 8. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

## 3.4. Sustainability

### 3.4.1. Sustainability of progress

Progress of the implementation of the Strategy as a whole across the Member States is difficult to ascertain at this point: almost no Member State has provided details of their progress to date, and where it is provided, it is extremely limited in its referral to the strategies and their objectives and targets. Together with this, the poor targets, baselines and indicators set by the majority of Member States, in addition to weak monitoring mechanisms, add additional problems in the sustainability of the Strategies.

However, there are other issues which challenge the sustainability of the NRIS. For example, there are issues of the security of funding and the lack of financial commitment made in the Strategies. In Italy, there are no specific national funding sources for the Strategy, and the planned budget depends almost wholly on EU funds.

Sustainability of the NRIS may depend in part on the amount of effort and resources being put into the issue of Roma integration previously: for example, Spain has been addressing these issues independently for three decades, and has moved these activities to fit within the NRIS. Therefore the sustainability of the efforts being made current is extended, as the NRIS was not the catalyst for the implementation of many activities in the first place. In addition to this, the Spanish government refers to policies which are more generally aimed at the population as a whole, or addressing a number of vulnerable populations, which are driven outside of the NRIS, and it is likely they will continue to be implemented.

The implementation of the Slovak NRIS, and subsequently the achievement of the objectives it sets out, is hindered by the lack of political will, and resistance, racial stereotyping, and anti-gypsism found in the majority of Slovak society<sup>184</sup>. For example, non-Roma parents may object to certain policies or practices in education, which they may feel disadvantages their child.

In most Member States, the economic situation has a large impact on housing and the available jobs, and general employment rate.

### 3.4.2. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The EU Framework requires Member States to set up a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism, in order to ensure the reporting of the socio-economic inclusion of the Roma and the progress made by the NRIS is substantial. However, none of the Member States covered by this study proposed evaluation mechanisms which are sufficient in evaluating the effects of activities undertaken as part of the strategies. In Hungary, Italy and France, there are no monitoring or evaluation mechanisms in place at all.

Other Member States have proposed minimal measures, such as the Bulgarian Strategy, which provides for an administrative monitoring mechanism where it collects information from national, regional, and local actors on the measures they are implementing, but it does not provide a mechanism for the evaluation of the effects or impact of these measures, particularly in relation to the targets or objectives set by the strategy. Other examples of the lack of a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism can be found in Spain, where there is no proposal for an evaluation system, but only a review mechanism for the review of Strategy.

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<sup>184</sup> Rorke, B. (2014). *Roma integration and a normal way of living*. Blog post: open Democracy. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/bernard-rorke/roma-integration-and-normal-way-of-living>

Other issues encountered in possibly attempts to monitor or evaluate the strategies relate to the collection of data. For example, though the Spanish NRIS does refer to a number of surveys in Spain (e.g. the Spanish National Health Survey, the Active Population Survey etc.), which will act as data sources for some of the indicators, the MSSSI stated in the 2011 Progress Report on the Decade of Roma Inclusion that that there was no official statistical data relating to race, ethnicity or other social circumstances, 'so socio-demographic variables about Roma population do not appear in government statistics of the population'<sup>185</sup>, and no legal possibility to collect this kind of data. Thus, if the aforementioned specific studies or surveys do not end up being conducted (e.g. due to issues of timing or financial resources), some of the indicators identified by the NRIS will not be able to be used for evaluative purposes. This is corroborated by the Monitoring Report on Spain published by Decade for Roma Inclusion: 'the fact that Spain has no law, rule or regulation of any kind defining the concepts of "race" or "ethnicity" [means that] as a consequence, no data on ethnicity can be gathered' (Decade of Roma Inclusion, p, 42<sup>186</sup>). France encounters a similar issue, as they cannot refer to ethnicity-based concepts, or produce statistics based on those concepts. This could be a reason for the lack of any kind of monitoring or evaluation procedure in the French NRIS. There are also no equivalent studies at EU or international level which would provide data on specific policies (for instance, the FRA survey provides information on the Roma population by country, but not in relation to specific policies or initiatives). Civil society, such as the Decade for Roma Inclusion, has called on countries to collect data in order to evaluate, and achieve inclusion: 'In order for the EU Framework for NRIS and the Decade of Roma Inclusion to be truly successful, we believe it is essential that states collect and disseminate data disaggregated by ethnicity and gender and report annually on the progress and the challenges of implementation, and that civil society does the same, so that state and civil society are working together to achieve real inclusion'<sup>187</sup>.

Flaws in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms may also arise from poor design of the Strategies: for example, the Romanian NRIS does not build on existing baseline data which would allow for monitoring over time, causing estimations of impact to be difficult<sup>188</sup>.

The European Commission set up a Working Party on Roma Integration Indicators in 2012, in an effort to consolidate national and European monitoring mechanisms<sup>189</sup>. Subsequently, this Working Party developed a reporting and indicator framework to guide Member States in their self-assessment, which will start from 2016.

<sup>185</sup> Ministry Of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (2011). *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015. Progress Report 2011: Spain*. Page 1. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9300\\_file12\\_spain\\_-\\_decade-progress-report-2011-f.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9300_file12_spain_-_decade-progress-report-2011-f.pdf)

<sup>186</sup> Laparra, M. et al (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Spain*. Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file16\\_sp\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file16_sp_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>187</sup> Decade for Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2014). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 and 2013 Summary Report*. Page 5. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9772\\_file1\\_civil-society-monitoring\\_summary-report-1.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9772_file1_civil-society-monitoring_summary-report-1.pdf)

<sup>188</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation (2013). *Civil Society Monitoring on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Romania*. Page 31. Available at: [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file24\\_ro\\_civil-society-monitoring-report\\_en.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file24_ro_civil-society-monitoring-report_en.pdf)

<sup>189</sup> European Commission (2015). *Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions - Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies 2015*. Brussels, 17.6.2015 COM(2015) 299 final, page 12.

### 3.4.3. Mechanisms for dissemination of good practice

Across the Member States looked at in this study, there are a variety of dissemination practices proposed, incorporating a number of national and international actors.

**International level:** The Spanish NRIS allocates the responsibility of sharing good practices to the national contact point, the Directorate General of Family and Childhood Services. At an international level, it proposes to collaborate with the FRA and the Council of Europe to disseminate good practices with other Member States<sup>190</sup>, while Hungary's NRIS suggests the European Roma Platform as a forum for international exchanges<sup>191</sup>. The French NRIS refers to the Open Method of Coordination at EU level as a mechanism for dissemination of best practices<sup>192</sup>.

**National/regional/local level:** Most NRIS appoint a contact point for national/regional and local identification and dissemination of best practices. For example, the French appoint the National Consultative Committee of Travellers and the Departmental Consultative Committees of Travellers, while the Bulgarian Strategy identifies the NCCEII<sup>193</sup>. The Italian Strategy allocates the responsibility to the Forum of Roma and Sinti Communities, whose creation is proposed in the same document, but has not been realized.

The Spanish NRIS proposes some specific mechanisms for dissemination, such as seminars with the national contact point and the Autonomous Communities of Spain to discuss these issues, or identifying best practices in housing for Roma in association with the Autonomous Communities and local businesses.

The Strategies are fairly strong in discussing this aspect of the NRIS EU Framework, with a number of possible international and national options as mentioned above. However, it is not possible to comment on the use and practicality of these suggestions, as none of the follow-up documents (action plans, monitoring reports) provide details on the progress or success, if any, of these initiatives.

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<sup>190</sup> Ministry Of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (2014). *Estrategia Nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana 2012-2020 Plan Operativo 2014-2016*. Available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/PlanOperativoPoblacionGitana2014-2016.pdf>

<sup>191</sup> Ministry of Public Administration and Justice State Secretariat for Social Inclusion of Hungary. *National Social Inclusion Strategy – Extreme Poverty, Child Poverty, the Roma – (2011–2020)*. Page 97. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_hungary\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_hungary_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>192</sup> Government of the French Republic (2011). *An equal place in French society: French government strategy for Roma integration within the framework of the Communication from the Commission of 5 April 2011 and the Council conclusions of 19 May 2011*. Page 3. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_france\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_france_strategy_en.pdf)

<sup>193</sup> The NRSI clarifies that this will be achieved "In cooperation with the Committee of Culture, Civil Society and Media at the National Assembly, The Council for Electronic Media, the commission for Protection from Discrimination, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria and the public media – Bulgarian National Television, Bulgarian National Radio and Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, the National Council of Journalist Ethics (Commission of Ethics in the Printed Media and Commission of Ethics in the Electronic media). See: Council of Ministers of Bulgaria (2012). *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic Of Bulgaria (2012 - 2020)*. Page 18. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_bulgaria\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_bulgaria_strategy_en.pdf)

## 4. GOOD PRACTICES

### KEY FINDINGS

- Many good practice examples of policy initiatives can be identified that support the integration of Roma communities. These should be scaled up with adequate resources and administrative capacities.
- In the education sector, an increased pre-school participation of Roma children has been successfully introduced in several countries. This and other examples of good practice should be widely adopted.
- In the employment sector, support for the transition from school to work has been an important mechanism in several countries. This and other examples of good practice have been identified.
- In the health sector, increased access to preventive health services have been successfully achieved in some countries. This and other examples of good practice should be widely adopted.
- In the housing sector, social housing construction programmes have been implemented in several countries and should be widely disseminated along with other good practice examples.
- Fewer examples of constructive government policies have been identified.
- In relation to discrimination and anti-Gypsyism, several countries have implemented awareness raising activities. Along with other examples of good practice these policies should be widely adopted.

Across the different policy areas under investigation in this study – education, employment, health and housing as well as the cross cutting issues of gender, discrimination and the fight against anti-gypsyism - there are a range of examples of constructive policy initiatives that if successfully funded, implemented and evaluated, and over time scaled up with adequate resources and administrative capacities will support the integration of Roma communities. The dual focus of the EU on policies to ameliorate the socio-economic inclusion of Roma people and policies to counter Roma discrimination and anti-gypsyism interventions, which underpin the EU Framework on NRIS is clearly a positive way forward. At the same time as this study argues the challenge of optimising the impact of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the NRIS themselves lies less in the substance of individual or sets of policy interventions in particular areas and more in shortcomings in policy processes at the national, regional and local levels as well as in the fundamental lack of political will to implement NRIS at the national and sub-national levels of Member States.

To date we have identified the following examples of constructive policies – in many cases it is too early to designate these as 'good practice interventions' as many of these have yet to be fully implemented.

#### **4.1. Education**

- Increase of pre-school participation of Roma children (HU, RO, SK, ES). In the case of BG and HU compulsory pre-school programme have been introduced.
- Use of school lorries to deliver education to Roma children at the regional level (FR)
- National pilot project to support the inclusion and integration of Roma children into schools (IT)
- Introduction of holistic approach to education as championed by the Learning Communities programme in Spain which involves all those who directly or indirectly influence learning and development and students, including teachers, relatives, friends, neighbours of the district, members of associations and neighbourhood organizations and local volunteers and aimed at educational and social transformation (ES)
- Measures to address the continued segregation of Roma children (RO)
- Cash incentives to encourage school attendance have been introduced (HU)
- Wraparound care programmes at school – after school programmes (HU) and whole day programmes with extra-curricular activities (BG)
- Investment in infrastructure development, improving access for Roma children to quality early childhood education and care (BG)
- Measures to encourage parental involvement (BG), measures to support the education of young mothers (IT) and establishment of 'second chance' schools (HU)
- Reduction of absenteeism at primary school levels and early school leaving (ES), identification of school dropout as key element that needs to be addressed (BG) and introduction of pilot programmes to counter school dropout (FR, IT)
- Trainings for school teachers on Roma culture (FR)
- Network of Roma inspectors (RO, SK), training and employment of Romani language teachers (RO)
- Programmes and incentives to facilitate entry into tertiary education (ES, RO, HU)

#### **4.2. Employment**

- Creation of a national working group aimed at supporting the insertion of Roma into the labour market (IT)
- Setting targets for the increase in the number of Roma employees by 60,000 and of Roma female employees by 25,000 (RO)
- Support for transition from school to work (IT) including linking secondary education with labour market needs (SK) and improvement of professional qualifications of Roma (ES)
- Training of Roma mediators to promote employment among Roma (HU) and address problems associated with long-term reliance on social benefits and inactivation. (BG)
- Programme in HU to provide approximately 1000 disadvantaged persons (primarily Roma women) opportunities to gain qualification and employment in childcare and social services
- Focus on improving the efficiency of employment agencies (IT) and appointment of employment mediators to work in local employment offices (BG)

- Pilot scheme to establish so-called 'municipal firms' such as in the area of construction employing members of local Roma population (SK)
- Project aimed at creating small cooperative-associative structures (RO)
- Introduction of active labour market policies (HU) and ALMPs targeted at inclusion of Roma women in the labour market (IT)
- Targeted funding through microcredits for the professional re-insertion into the workforce for the creation, maintenance or development of an existing business. (FR)
- Establishing incentives to SMEs including Roma employment subsidies (RO)

### 4.3. Health

- Increased access to preventive health care and health education (RO, SK, HU) and vaccination campaigns directed at Roma families (IT, RO)
- Continued and reinforced health monitoring of Roma women (IT)
- Inclusion of qualified Roma in social services and medical programmes (IT) and targets for increase in number of Roma health mediators (RO)
- Establishment of national network of health mediators – provides a model for partnership between national and local governments for addressing challenges concerning Roma access to health services (BG), recruitment and training of mediators in certain areas (FR)
- Training for those working in basic healthcare services (HU)
- Appointment of field health workers (SK) and efforts to improve communication between members of Roma communities and healthcare professionals (SK)
- Programme to provide vocational training primarily to Roma women in the fields of social and child welfare services (HU)
- Financial incentives for paediatricians and general practitioners to fill empty practices in the most disadvantaged regions (HU)
- Setting SMART targets in terms of increased access to healthcare services (SK) and improvement in health outcomes (ES)
- Ensuring linkages in policy-making between health, education and reduction in social inequalities (ES)
- Project aimed at preventing the human trafficking of ethnic groups with a particular focus on the Roma minority (BG)

### 4.4. Housing

- Introduction of social housing construction programmes for disadvantaged groups including Roma in certain cases with EU co-financing (IT, RO, FR, BG)
- Aligning measures outlined in NRIS with national priorities regarding house registration (RO)
- Elimination of temporary, often sub-standard living situations including slums (ES), camps (IT) with SMART targets (ES)

- Linking financial support to the legal requirement of preparing desegregation plans a legal requirement at the municipal level structured according to target groups of disadvantaged groups or groups at risk of poverty. (HU)
- Integrating housing interventions with complementary activities in the areas of employment, training, health and social work (HU).
- Social support programmes for families facing homelessness (ES)

#### **4.5. Gender Issues**

Given the rather cursory mention of women and children in the EU Framework for NRIS, the absence of indicators or targets addressing the situation of Roma women and children and the weak political will in Member States to adopt a more proactive response to the challenges of Roma inclusion it is perhaps not surprising that few examples of constructive government policies in this area and resulting evidence of good practice have been identified.

- Gender mainstreaming in Roma education programmes (ES)
- Introduction of ALMPs targeted at inclusion of Roma women in the labour market (IT)
- Training programme for women in the fields of social and child welfare services (HU)
- Healthcare measures aimed at reducing inequalities with special focus on early childhood development (screening tests), youth and Roma women. (HU)
- Continuous and reinforced health monitoring of Roma women (IT)
- Network of actors working to combat discrimination against Roma focusing on gender issues and addressing intersectional character of issues facing Roma women. (ES)
- Awareness raising campaigns combating stereotypes about Roma women (RO)

#### **4.6. Discrimination and anti-gypsyism**

- Awareness-raising activities and activities countering discrimination against the Roma such as through the Dosta! Campaign (IT, RO, ES)<sup>194</sup>
- Training of Roma and public servants and members of judiciary, and so-called 'hate attorneys to work at the regional level (ES)
- Establishment of the principle of equal and non-discriminatory access to education (FR)
- Organisation of cultural events and festivals by Roma and pro-Roma NGOs to promote Roma culture directed at breaking negative stereotypes in society (SK)
- Introduction into the national curriculum of the compulsory topic of discrimination, exclusion and genocide of people, ethnic groups and nationalities and developing the holocaust curriculum to encompass the Roma/Gypsy genocide (HU)
- Amendment of the law related to violence against members of ethnic communities (HU)

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<sup>194</sup> The Dosta! Campaign is funded by the Council of Europe with the aim of countering anti-gypsyism and discrimination against the Roma. For more information, see: Dosta!., "Dosta!". N.p., 2015. Web. 18 Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.dosta.org/en/content/welcome-dosta>



- Introduction of a range of positive measures to contribute to the empowerment of Roma such as the establishment of the Roma Public Life Academy of Politics in HU and the promotion of Roma journalists (HU)
- Establishment of community development centres in part to promote interethnic dialogue and tolerance (BG)
- Establishment of national working group on discrimination and effective dialogue between the national Roma contact point and civil society actors (FR)
- Countering of anti-Roma discrimination and promotion of cooperation among key actors, through practical guides for legal practitioners, the police, Roma associations and people working in the media) (IT, RO, ES)
- Establishment of network of actors to combat discrimination against Roma across employment, health and education sectors (ES)

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

- In sum, although EU Member States have elaborated more or less detailed policy frameworks for addressing problems of Roma inclusion across key areas of education, employment, health, housing and the intersecting dimensions of gender equality, anti-gypsyism and discrimination, and good practice interventions can be evidenced in certain areas as outlined in section 4 of this study, deficiencies remain in the processes of implementation of the NRIS.
- Lack of political will at all levels of national and sub-national government in Member States is hampering the implementation of the objectives laid out in the NRIS and accompanying policy documents. In addition, unrealistic, untailed targets, disconnects between factors such as reporting procedures, and funding or capacity, as well as weak evaluation procedures and the absences of sanctions for non-performance all link to issues of implementation for the EU Framework.
- The study proposes the following at EU level:
  - a dedicated and enhanced Roma desk be established in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission to bring together existing organisational, technical and financial capacities at EU and national levels.
  - the establishment of European Inclusion and Enterprise Zones (EIEZs) to create a holistic approach to regional development in recognition of the intersectoral and intersectional challenges of Roma inclusion and the multi-dimensional character of development processes.
  - the establishment of an EIEZ advisory board at European level to draw together representatives from already existing financing instruments to contribute technical know-how, and expertise to the development, implementation and evaluation of regional development plans.
  - collaboration between the Roma Desk and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to support effective monitoring and evaluation procedures and the establishment of domestic capacity at the national and regional capacity from the Roma Office.
  - a revamped EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies in the format of an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion.
  - maintenance of continued work at EU level in the field of anti-discrimination.
- The study also lays out specific policy recommendations for the development of clarity, structure, collaboration, and effective methods for the NRIS at national level in the dimensions of design, appropriateness, effectiveness, and sustainability. The policy recommendations also aim to address multi-level governance structures involved in the process at national, regional and local levels.

Section 5 of this study is divided into three parts. Firstly a brief overview of the key findings in the study is presented summarising existing shortcomings in both National Roma Integration Strategies and accompanying policy frameworks in Member States as well as providing a critique of the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. Part 2 outlines a set of policy recommendations directed at strengthening

European-level leadership capacities and ensuring the accompanying organisational and financial infrastructure are in place to support Roma integration in response to the dearth of political will in EU Member States to address the challenge of Roma inclusion. In the third and final part of this section we lay out policy recommendations arising from the analysis of gaps in the design and implementation of policy interventions as well as of the multi-level governance structures involved in the process at the EU level, national level, and regional and local levels.

## 5.1. Overview of key findings

The case studies prepared for this study corroborate existing research findings on the shortcomings of the National Roma Integration Strategies in the context of the European Framework for NRIS. In sum, although EU Member States have elaborated more or less detailed policy frameworks for addressing problems of Roma inclusion across key areas of education, employment, health, housing and the intersecting dimensions of gender equality, anti-gypsyism and discrimination, and good practice interventions can be evidenced in certain areas as outlined in section 4 of this study, deficiencies remain in the processes of implementation of the NRIS. These stem in large part from a range of technical factors:

- I. Limitations in available data, which hamper processes of evidence-based policy-making.<sup>195</sup>
- II. Ill-developed targets linked to precise time frames and measures pinning down broader policy objectives outlined in the strategy documents; where such targets do exist these tend to be vertical un-integrated policy targets
- III. Failure to take an integrated holistic approach to the multi-sectoral and intersectional challenges of Roma inclusion
- IV. Insufficiently clear differentiation of roles and responsibilities between the different levels of government in Member States coupled with inadequate administrative capacity at all levels of government
- V. Limitations in funding levels for Roma inclusion and weak alignment between policies and funds
- VI. Complex bureaucratic processes involved in applying for EU funds – exacerbated by the lack of necessary administrative and technical capacities of sub-national governments
- VII. Limitations on those who can apply for funding which has impeded the implementation and dissemination of good practice.
- VIII. Weak or non-existent monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- IX. Poor communication between different the different layers of government.

However, many studies focus overwhelmingly on the technical aspects of the policy cycle in Member States to the exclusion of a serious consideration of political factors. We argue here that the dearth of political will at all levels of national and sub-national government in Member States is hampering the implementation of the objectives laid out in the NRIS and accompanying policy documents. These political elites, the small group of people occupying key positions in government institutions in Member States at national and sub-national levels, are in effect the 'gatekeepers' to the implementation and monitoring of the NRIS, technical shortcomings notwithstanding. This may be further exacerbated when different political parties are in government at regional and local levels<sup>196</sup>. This lack of political will combined with the insufficient 'bite' of the EU's soft power policy instruments –ill-targeted and complex funding processes, the broad (largely unrealistic) targets laid out in the EU

<sup>195</sup> McDonald, C. & Negrin, K. (2010). *Data, No Progress: Country Findings*. Budapest: Open Society Foundation. Available at: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/no-data-no-progress-country-findings>

Framework for NRIS and the weak impetus behind the promotion of practice-sharing through the Open Method of Coordination – mean that political elites in EU Member States simply have not had the incentives to comply in the further development, implementation and monitoring of their policy frameworks for Roma inclusion. This was a major downside of the Council May 2011 decision to leave the main responsibilities as well as the competences to improve the situation of the Roma in the hands of the Member States. In effect the NRIS remained virtually 'dead letters' at least in the early years of the EU Framework.<sup>197</sup> Arguably the 2013 Council Recommendation on Effective Roma Integration Measures was a direct response to these early disappointing results and injected some legal weight into addressing the challenge of Roma inclusion for the first time.<sup>198</sup> It is now time for the EU to take the next step and, as will be recommended below, move towards the upgrading of the EU Framework for NRIS to the adoption of an EU level Strategy for Roma Inclusion.

In addition a number of shortcomings have been identified with the 2011 EU Framework for Roma Inclusion. These include both technical as well as substantive issues:

- I. Unrealistic one-size-fits-all targets which fail to correspond to existing conditions on the ground in Member States.
- II. The declaratory nature of the EU Framework for NRIS prior to the above-mentioned 2013 Council Recommendation.
- III. Disconnects between annual reporting procedures, and funding and technical capacity support; in other words there have been failings in the alignment of different aspects of the development process.
- IV. Weak evaluation procedures and the absence of sanctions for non-performance (similar criticisms have been laid at the door of the regular reports produced on an annual basis for acceding and neighbourhood countries).
- V. Insufficient attention to the place of women and children and to addressing the intersectoral and intersectional nature of the challenges faced in supporting their social inclusion.

## 5.2. Recommendations on the EU Framework

The current policy recommendations build on policy recommendations made in the 2011 study to the European Parliament in which the authors proposed that the EU prepare an EU-level Strategy for Roma Inclusion and establish an EU-level agency to support the development, implementation and monitoring of such a strategy together with a dedicated funding stream.<sup>199</sup> The recommendations in the current study seek to address the absence of the necessary political will at both the national and sub-national levels in Member States which has meant that policy objectives laid out in National Roma Integration Strategies suffer from severe implementation gaps and that, on the whole, Roma populations continue to live in significant socio-economic deprivation across the Union (diversity notwithstanding). It is argued here that given the lack of political will in Member States the EU needs to take a more proactive role in incentivising national and sub-national elites to

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<sup>196</sup> Spain interviews for this study, November 19, 2015

<sup>197</sup> Falkner, G and Trieb, O. (2008). *Three Worlds of Compliance or Four? The EU-15 Compared to New Member States*. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46:2, 293–313

<sup>198</sup> Council of the European Union (2013). Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs. Council Meeting, Brussels 9 and 10 December 2013. Available at:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf)

<sup>199</sup> European Parliament (2011) *Measures to Promote the Situation of the Roma EU Citizens in the European Union*, Brussels: European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C – Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Study No. PE 432.747 and "Country reports" (PE 432 751) written by Bartlett, W., Benini, R. and Gordon, C.

action the policies laid out in their policy frameworks and thus foster the necessary enabling conditions to integrate Roma populations economically, socially and politically. Harnessing existing organisational, technical and financial capacities, the EU is well placed to establish incentives to foster the economically led integration of Roma people while at the same time developing its crucial work in the area of anti-discrimination. Therefore we propose the following set of broad initiatives to address the shortcomings manifested by the EU Framework for NRIS followed by a series of more specific policy recommendations to achieve improved outcomes at different stages of the policy process.

The rationale behind these proposals is the clear recognition that it is in the interests of Member States to create the conditions necessary to support sustainable economic growth in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 growth strategy notwithstanding the lingering effects of the economic and financial crisis and the continuing risk of further recession. Creating conditions to foster economic growth by educating Roma populations, enabling Roma people to live in acceptable housing conditions, improving health outcomes, and establishing pathways for them to (re-)enter and remain in the labour market can contribute to overcoming sluggish growth patterns across the European Union.<sup>200</sup> Without repeating the well-known problem of establishing accurate data on Roma population size across Member States suffice to say that the Roma potentially represent a large pool of young and untapped labour.

- We therefore propose that a dedicated and enhanced Roma desk be established in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission staffed with officials who can play an important proactive and coordinating role in bringing together existing organisational, technical and financial capacities at the European level and across Member States to promote Roma inclusion initiatives in Member States. This study has already identified the dearth of necessary capacities in the Member States combined with a fundamental absence of political will to address the challenge of Roma inclusion. It is therefore imperative that the EU institutions step in to provide proactive leadership to bridge this political vacuum. The Roma desk under the leadership of the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion would be in a position to either (i) initiate (see below) or (ii) respond to requests for project support emanating from Member States or groups of Member States. In an interim period the Roma desk would make up for the dearth of capacity at national and sub-national levels through mentoring projects through the process of development, contracting, implementation and evaluation, and in the process contribute to capacity-building in Member States thus building sustainable institutional capacities for the future. The Roma desk could also mobilise the technical assistance for Roma integration called for under the 2011 Resolution of the European Parliament on an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion.<sup>201</sup>
- A primary responsibility of the Roma desk should be to act as the champion for the establishment of European Inclusion and Enterprise Zones (EIEZs) in areas with significant ethnic minority populations, a majority of whom are Roma, and characterised by high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The impetus behind the

<sup>200</sup> The World Bank has promoted the case that the full integration of the Roma would enhance economic growth in the EU. See: Worldbank.org. 'Smart Economics From The Heart Of Europe'. N.p., 2015. Web. 29 Nov. 2015. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2012/04/01/achieving-roma-inclusion>; and POLITICO. 'Supporting Europe's Roma Is Good For Business'. N.p., 2013. Web. 29 Nov. 2015. Available at: <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/supporting-europe-s-roma-is-good-for-business/77673.aspx>

<sup>201</sup> European Parliament (2011). *Resolution on an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2010/2276(INI))*. available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP7-TA-2011-0092%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

establishment of EIEZs is the imperative of adopting a holistic approach to regional development in recognition of the intersectoral and intersectional challenges of Roma inclusion and the multi-dimensional character of development processes. By harnessing its technical, organisational and financial resources and bringing together teams of national, sub-national, international and where appropriate cross-border stakeholders and highly trained experts, the EU can make a real difference in creating conditions for development and growth in designated regions. In the process it can help to break cycles of deprivation and exclusion through upgrading the provision of housing and education, ameliorating health outcomes and creating employment opportunities by, inter alia, offering SMEs and other national and international financial investors and business actors attractive incentives for setting up in such EIEZs including with tax breaks for the employment and training of Roma people. In the first instance it is proposed that a pilot scheme be launched with the establishment of two EIEZs, including one in a cross-border setting, which would be evaluated at every stage through the process of development and implementation so that positive and negative lessons could be learned for future initiatives.

- Officials at the Roma Desk should be charged to establish an EIEZ advisory board at the European level to draw together representatives from already existing financing instruments, which would contribute funding, technical know-how, and expertise to the development, implementation and evaluation of regional development plans. The Roma Desk would be responsible through the convening of the advisory board for supporting the creation of bespoke coordinated packages of funding with incremental dispersals linked to the meeting of concrete conditions. These would include:
  - a. *European Investment Bank (EIB)* – though the EIB has concentrated much of its work in the area of infrastructural development, the EIB also has the mandate to work in the area of social investment. As is outlined on its website under the page on 'Corporate Responsibility Governance: 'EIB Group activities and decisions are driven by the need to improve environmental and social impacts, to foster governance, to strengthen the future viability of our counterparts' business activities contributing towards the attainment of the EU's objectives. This way, the EIB Group contributes to sustainable development and is held accountable by stakeholders and society.<sup>202</sup>. Investing both financial and technical expertise in the establishment of EIEZs would be integral to fulfilling the social mandate of the EIB. This can be done through investments in social infrastructure in the EIEZs, building schools, hospitals, roads, drainage and sanitation infrastructure, utility connections, communication networks and other forms of infrastructure that would support viable communities and the social and economic integration of the targeted zones.<sup>203</sup>
  - b. The *European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – Juncker Plan* - has been set up with the objective of mobilising private financing for strategic investments, which cannot be financed by the market alone and in particular to support strategic investments in infrastructure as well as risk finance for small businesses. Targeted funding should be channelled from the EFSI to

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<sup>202</sup> See Eib.org., 'Corporate Responsibility'. N.p., 2015. Web. 29 Nov. 2015. Available at: <http://www.eib.org/about/cr/index.htm>

<sup>203</sup> The 2011 European Parliament Resolution on a proposed EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion foresaw the use of EU funds for such infrastructure purposes.

support viable projects under the auspices of EIEZ initiatives directed at fostering Roma inclusion through creating the economic conditions to support sustainable socio-economic development of the proposed regional hubs. This would contribute to the fulfilment of the EFSI's objective targeting initiatives, which provide real social and economic value.

- c. *European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs)* – While some projects directed at improving the socio-economic conditions of EU Roma citizens funds have been dispersed in particular via the European Social Fund and the 2014 report 'Reinforcing Policy Learning for Roma Inclusion' on the use of Structural Funds for Roma inclusion noted that 'Roma are more visible in Operational Programmes', significant weaknesses remain in this area.<sup>204</sup> While additional steps have been taken to direct funds towards overcoming the challenges of Roma inclusion through the ESIFs including through the 2013 Council recommendation that national contact points contribute to the planning of the use of fund for Roma within Member States, more needs to be done.<sup>205</sup> The findings of the primary research undertaken for the current study echo the weaknesses outlined in earlier research studies.

Therefore it is proposed that funding from a range of structural fund instruments -- including the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) -- should be harnessed to support the development of the proposed EIEZ depending on the specific context.<sup>206</sup> This would enable European and domestic level policy-makers and stakeholders (i) to make better use of available funding and align funding more consistently and precisely with a prioritised set of developmental policies and accompanying measures, (ii) to overcome the administrative burden that currently hampers both the application processes and management of funds, (iii) to support the development of domestic capacity to apply for funding for other projects, (iv) to effectively implement and monitor the use of ESIFs as part of the process of building towards sustainable futures and (v) to foster improved cooperation across countries through the dissemination and sharing of good practice.

- d. *The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)* – whose stated objectives and intended actions are key dimensions in overcoming Roma inclusion including combating discrimination, guaranteeing adequate

<sup>204</sup> European Social Fund Learning Network (2014). *Reinforcing Policy Learning for Roma Inclusion: Joint report on the use of the Structural Funds for Roma inclusion based on country by country meetings: Key Findings and Proposals*. Available at:

[http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/22/80/Key\\_Findings\\_and\\_Proposals\\_Joint\\_Report\\_ESF\\_LN\\_Reinforcing\\_Policy\\_Learning\\_for\\_Roma\\_Inclusion.pdf](http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/22/80/Key_Findings_and_Proposals_Joint_Report_ESF_LN_Reinforcing_Policy_Learning_for_Roma_Inclusion.pdf)

<sup>205</sup> Around €26.5 billion was made available for social inclusion projects as a whole over the 2007-2013 period directed at socially excluded groups including Roma communities with the responsibility for managing these funds left in the hands of Member States.

<sup>206</sup> This is in line with the observation of the 2013 the Council Recommendation on Roma Integration that: "Regulation (EU) No .../2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council calls on Member States, where appropriate, to set out an integrated approach to addressing the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty, or of target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, with special regard to marginalised communities. Regulation (EU) No .../2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council for the 2014-2020 programming period includes an investment priority under the European Social Fund (ESF) focused on the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as Roma, complementing the other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)."

and decent social protection, combating long-term unemployment and fighting against poverty and social exclusion.<sup>207</sup>

- e. *The European Progress Microfinance Facility* – The European Progress Microfinance Facility (Progress Microfinance), launched in 2010, increases the availability of microcredit loans below €25,000 for the setting up or development of a small business.<sup>208</sup>
- Another strand of the Roma Desk's work is put in place effective procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of Roma-designated programmes as well as supporting the establishment of domestic capacity at the national and regional capacity in Member States including where appropriate through supporting twinning and TAIEX initiatives. In this context the Roma Desk needs to work closely with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, which has been charged with contributing 'to the monitoring and assistance of EU-wide efforts to implement the EU's plan for Roma inclusion'.<sup>209</sup> This will enable the EU to ensure that funds allocated for projects supporting Roma inclusion and anti-discrimination are effectively allocated and targeted at appropriate initiatives.
  - A revamped EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies in the format of an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion as proposed by the European Parliament in 2011<sup>210</sup> should be developed with realistic targets in the key policy areas of education, employment, health and housing, with a stronger dimension focusing on women and children, responding to the need to treat women and children as both a cross-cutting policy area as well as an area of attention in its own right. The inter-sectoral and intersectional nature of the challenges faced by Roma and children need to be fore-fronted in an upgraded EU Framework with stronger direction to Member States in terms of the revision and implementation of their own NRIS and supporting policy frameworks.<sup>211</sup> The EU should cooperate with other international organisations such as the Council of Europe and United Nations as well as appropriate NGOs such as the European Roma Rights Centre building on existing capacities, research and experience of policy advocacy to support the development of this strand of an EU-level Strategy and concomitant policy frameworks in Member States.
  - While the proposed set of policy recommendations puts forward an economically driven approach to Roma integration, the EU must continue its work in the area of anti-discrimination in accordance with Article 19 (1) of the TFEU (Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union), Article 21 (1) Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Racial Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC) and Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. It is evident that despite the adoption of norms of anti-discrimination at the EU level and their transposition into domestic law as well as a number of important rulings by the European Court of Human Rights in areas such as

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<sup>207</sup> See: Ec.europa.eu, 'EU Programme For Employment And Social Innovation (Easi) - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission'. N.p., 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

<sup>208</sup> See: Ec.europa.eu. "Progress Microfinance - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission". N.p., 2015. Web. 18 Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=836&langId=en>

<sup>209</sup> See FRA.europa.eu, 'Roma | European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights'. N.p., 2015. Web. 21 Nov. 2015. Available at : <http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/roma>

<sup>210</sup> European Parliament (2011). *Resolution on an EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2010/2276(INI))*. available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP7-TA-2011-0092%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

<sup>211</sup> In the existing EU Framework there are no indicators or targets addressing the situation of Roma women and children.



education and housing the norms of anti-discrimination against the Roma have not become embedded in the norms and practices of Member States (diversity across member states notwithstanding).<sup>212,213</sup> Given the absence of political will at the EU level to revise or introduce new union-wide directives in the area of the free movement of labour or in the area of anti-discrimination and racism, EU institutions should focus on improving the implementation, monitoring and expanding the scope of use of existing legal instruments. Key areas of focus should include: (i) awareness-raising about the responsibilities of Member States for implementing the directives; (ii) education of Roma communities about their legal rights under EU directives. An important channel of this would be the increased training and support of legal mediators and associated NGOs. An example of good practice in this area is that of the PRAXIS group in Belgrade which is composed of a group of lawyers who take up anti-discrimination cases on behalf of disadvantaged Roma and represent them in strategic cases of litigation in Serbia;<sup>214</sup> (iii) the strengthening of equality bodies in member states including the better training of judges and support for progressive judges' associations in these countries; (iv) the monitoring of the work of the equality bodies in relation to Roma discrimination by the European Parliament possibly in conjunction with the ERRC; (v) support by Eurostat to national statistics agencies to improve their data collection capacities; (vi) support for NGOs involved in work on Roma discrimination to take a class action to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Roma populations in their countries; (vii) preparation of a compendium of ECtHR rulings and national court ruling in favour of the Roma across EU member states enabling a comparison of the consistency of treatment of Roma populations in different member states and developing a body of knowledge of court practice which can be disseminated across the European Union.

- In accordance with this a multi-agency approach should be directed by DG for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality of the European Commission. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights should continue its monitoring, evaluation and policy advice role. Training opportunities and sharing of practice among judicial actors, members of civil society and Roma people about rights, obligations and sanctions where relevant should be made available and developed. National and sub-national governments should also be supported to develop communication and education strategies to raise the awareness of populations across Member States, including members of Roma communities, about their rights and obligations under European Union and domestic law.<sup>215</sup> This should be considered an integral part of

<sup>212</sup> See European Commission (2014). *Commission Staff Working Document. Annexes to the Joint Report on the application of the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) Accompanying the document Joint Report on the application of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin ('Racial Equality Directive')* {COM(2014) 2 final}. Brussels, 17.1.2014. SWD(2014) 5 final. See also European Commission (2012). *Developing Anti-Discrimination Law in Europe: The 27 EU Member States, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey compared*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2012. Written by Chopin, I., and Uyen Do, T.

<sup>213</sup> Notable cases in the area of education include *DH and Others v. The Czech Republic* (2007), Application No. 57325/00, Judgment date 13 November 2007; *Sampanis and Others v. Greece* (2008), App. No. 32526/05, Judgment date 5 June 2008 and *Horvath and Kiss v Hungary* (2013, App No. 11146/11, Judgment date 29 April 2013; and in the area of housing *Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria* (2012) App No. 25446/06, Judgment date 24 April 2013 and *Georgopoulos and Others v. Greece* (2008), App. No. 38361/97, Judgment date 5 February 2008. For further details of cases in other areas and a list of pending cases, see: <http://www.errc.org/strategic-litigation-european-court-of-human-rights>

<sup>214</sup> See: Praxis.org.rs (2015). "Praxis - Legal Aid Against The Odds". N.p., 2015. Web. 18 Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.praxis.org.rs/index.php/en/>

<sup>215</sup> As called for in the 2013 Recommendation of the Council. Council of the European Union (2013). Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs. Council Meeting, Brussels 9 and 10 December 2013. Available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf)

the fight against anti-gypsyism. Given its experience and expertise in working to promote the 'respect for and protection of minorities' and in combating racism and discrimination, the European Parliament should also be called on to play a proactive role in this area.

- The key to sustainability is domestic political will, which is currently the 'elephant in the room' of the EU Framework for NRIS and wherein the challenge to the future sustainability of the Framework lies.
  - a. In the absence of domestic political will, EU institutions will have to continue to draw on available legal means through the rulings of the ECHR as well as soft policy options to exert leverage on national governments to address Roma inclusion and discrimination issues.
  - b. The EU needs to place greater emphasis on the sharing and exchange of good practice through the open method of coordination collaborations in the areas of education, employment, health and housing as well as interventions to support the inclusion of women and children with the intention that this would feed back into policy design and implementation processes in and across Member States, and also that socialisation mechanisms of 'naming and shaming' and 'establishing and maintaining good standards' carry important weight at the European level and in Member States.

### **5.3. Recommendations for National Roma Integration Strategies**

In the final part of this section we lay out policy recommendations arising from the analysis of gaps in the design and implementation of policy interventions as well as of the multi-level governance structures involved in the process at national, regional and local levels.

#### **5.3.1. Design**

- The language of the NRIS could be revisited to ensure that it is underpinned by firm, unequivocal policy commitments in particular policy areas – for example 'zero tolerance' for Roma discrimination and anti-gypsyism.
- Measures in all policy areas need to be underpinned with clear indicators, SMART (that is targets which are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) targets and the allocation of necessary resources at national and/or sub-national levels.
- There is a need for greater clarity over the division of responsibilities between national and sub-national levels.
- Mainstreaming approaches should be combined with and complemented by Roma targeted interventions.
- The work that has been commenced on developing/reforming mainstreaming policies should continue to be promoted through the bringing together of, and sharing of experience of experts and relevant actors from Member States across different policy domains.
- Roma stakeholders should be involved in all stages of the policy process from design through to implementation and monitoring.
- Member States should consider espousing a territorial approach in certain areas of Roma policy design and delivery.

### 5.3.2. Funding

- More work must be done to ensure that different elements of the NRIS are appropriately and adequately funded with commitments reaching beyond theory and into practice. While overall budget allocations may be quantified, individual measures may not have been separately costed.
- Efforts need to be undertaken particularly in NMS to reinforce absorption capacity given MS reliance on Structural Funds.
- MS should be better supported to more effectively access funding from EU funding mechanisms through the development of blended and flexible training programmes and materials with comprehensive guides translated into local languages which give students the opportunity to study in both online and face-to-face settings.
- Co-funding approaches through the assembling of funding envelopes from EU and other international financing instruments alongside contributions from Member States (including from the public, NGO and private), need to be promoted as this is critical to ensuring the viability and sustainability of Roma inclusion and development programmes.

### 5.3.3. Implementation

- Clearer prioritisation of key initiatives needs to be established.
- Effective methods of coordination of the implementation of policies among all stakeholders need to be developed.
- National governments should develop clear communication strategies for the communication of the NRIS to all relevant stakeholders at all levels underpinned by consistent language, clear commitments and unequivocal rejection of discriminatory practices.
- Sub-national authorities need to be more closely involved in the implementation phases and where necessary supported by additional training.
- Member States should foster increased dialogue and cooperation with Roma representatives.

### 5.3.4. Monitoring and data collection

- Robust monitoring capacities need to be developed drawing on good practice in monitoring in comparable policy areas from international organisations and member states.
- While some developments have been undertaken to improve monitoring capacities, greater robustness in monitoring and evaluation would strengthen the strategies.
- Improvements in data collection at the national level would further support evidence-based policy initiatives and more effective target setting and resource allocation.
- While recognising the considerable obstacles in collecting accurate data, EU support should be directed at improving the collection of socio-economic data to support evidence base policy processes possibly with input from Eurostat.

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