



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 2 July 2013

11857/13

**SOC 561
POLGEN 132
JAI 584
EDUC 287
FREMP 101
COHOM 144
FSTR 69
FC 37
REGIO 144**

COVER NOTE

from:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director
date of receipt:	1 July 2013
to:	Mr Uwe CORSEPIUS, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

No Cion doc.:	COM(2013) 454 final
Subject:	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Steps Forward in Implementing National Roma Integration Strategies

Delegations will find attached Commission document COM(2013) 454 final.

Encl.: COM(2013) 454 final



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 26.6.2013
COM(2013) 454 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**STEPS FORWARD IN IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION
STRATEGIES**

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**STEPS FORWARD IN IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION
STRATEGIES**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission's Communication *An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*¹ called on Member States to adopt or further develop a comprehensive approach to Roma integration and endorse a number of common goals. These goals cover the four pillars of education, employment, health and housing and aim to speed up the integration of Roma. The Heads of State or Government of all EU Member States endorsed this approach.²

In response to this call, the Member States presented national Roma integration strategies. The national strategies varied according to the size of the Roma population and the challenges Member States needed to address³. The European Commission assessed these strategies⁴ in 2012 and concluded that, to make progress on the four pillars, it was necessary to prioritise on several structural pre-conditions that are indispensable for a successful implementation of the strategies, and amongst them: working with local and regional authorities and civil society; allocating proportionate financial resources; monitoring and enabling policy adjustment; fighting discrimination convincingly; and establishing national contact points for Roma integration.

The present communication focuses on these structural pre-conditions as, although some steps have been taken at policy level in the Member States, in particular to better coordinate all stakeholders active on Roma integration, effective changes are still insufficient. Furthermore, to encourage further efforts by the Member States, the Commission commits, with this communication, to provide additional support to the Member States notably on their use of EU funds for Roma integration.

2. THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES — CRUCIAL FOR THE CREDIBILITY OF POLITICAL COMMITMENTS AND FOR GRASSROOTS CHANGE

Ensuring the effective implementation of the national Roma integration strategies is crucial. In the current economic context, it is essential to take adequate measures and

¹ COM(2011) 173 final, 5.4.2011.

² European Council conclusions, EUCO 23/11 of 23 and 24 June 2011, following the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) *Council Conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*, 106665/11, 19.5.2011.

³ In this communication, the term 'strategy' covers integrated sets of policy measures and strategies.

⁴ Communication *National Roma integration strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework* and the accompanying staff working document SWD (2012)133 final.

use available resources more efficiently to address the socio-economic integration of Roma. This is why the Commission follows progress made by the Member States closely, both within the Europe 2020 process and in the specific context of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies.

As part of the Europe 2020 process, close monitoring of Roma inclusion and its coherence with mainstream policies will continue on an annual basis up to 2020. To make progress towards the Europe 2020 employment, social inclusion and education targets, Member States with larger Roma populations will have to tackle the challenges of Roma inclusion highlighted in the 2012 European Semester. In these Member States, integrating Roma people will not only bring social, but also economic benefits.⁵ In the 2013 European Semester the Commission has proposed to strengthen and further refine recommendations relevant for Roma inclusion for the most concerned Member States⁶.

In the context of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies, the Commission strengthened dialogue with a number of Member States. Bilateral meetings took place in 2012 and 2013⁷, bringing together the relevant national authorities and experts from the Commission to discuss the detailed assessment of the national Roma integration strategies and ways to ensure their effective implementation.

In addition, a network of the Member States' National Contact Points for Roma integration was set up to facilitate multilateral exchanges of experience, peer learning and cooperation among the Member States⁸.

Finally, to help Member States measure progress on Roma integration, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) set up an ad hoc working group⁹. Its main objective is to help participating Member States set up effective monitoring mechanisms to obtain reliable and comparable results¹⁰.

⁵ In four countries, full Roma integration in the labour market could bring economic benefits of around € 0.5 billion and tax benefits of around € 175 million annually. World Bank, *Roma Inclusion: An Economic Opportunity for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia*, September 2010.

⁶ Based on the Commission's proposal adopted on 29 May 2013 five Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania) receive Country Specific Recommendations relevant for Roma inclusion. These recommendations on the one hand address the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies (ensuring effective delivery, including via better coordination between stakeholders, allocation of funding, robust monitoring and mainstreaming Roma inclusion goals in all policy fields), and on the other hand specific policy developments in the field of education (especially the need to ensure effective access to quality inclusive mainstream education starting with pre-school) and employment (promoting activation measures, supporting transition to the labour market).

⁷ BG, FR, HU, IT, RO, SK.

⁸ Within this network, a working group, reflecting the diversity of situations and experiences concerning Roma in the EU, was set up to discuss further the challenges and workable solutions. The issues identified fed into a proposal for a legal instrument aiming to provide more support and guidance to Member States on promoting Roma inclusion presented in parallel with this Communication http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nationalcontactpoints_en.pdf

⁹ Ten Member States (BG, CZ, ES, FI, FR, IT, HU, RO, SK, UK) participate in this working group, which also includes experts from Eurofound and the United Nations Development Programme.

¹⁰ Croatia has already begun preparing to join the process of the EU Framework and is actively participating in the network of National Contact Points and the FRA working group on monitoring.

The Commission has analysed the progress made in 2012 in implementing national strategies on the basis of Member States' input, and contributions from experts and civil society¹¹, as well as findings brought out by the FRA.

2.1. Structural pre-conditions for efficient implementation

(a) Involving regional and local authorities and working closely with civil society

The EU Framework highlighted the need for a continuous dialogue between national, regional and local authorities and Roma civil society in designing, implementing and monitoring national strategies. Most Member States took measures in this respect. However, they were often perceived as ineffective by stakeholders in terms of enabling them to actively participate in the implementation and monitoring of national strategies.

(1) Involving local and regional authorities

As highlighted in the Commission's 2012 progress report, the active involvement of local and regional authorities at all stages of the Roma inclusion process is a crucial pre-condition for success.

Involving local and regional authorities	Member States that have taken such measures
Structured dialogue set up	AT, BE, BG, CZ, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LV, NL, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK
Promotion of exchange of experience and cooperation among local authorities	BE, BG, CZ, DK, FI, FR, HU, IT, SE, ES, SI, UK
Allocation of resources for Roma integration to local and regional authorities	AT, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EL, FI, FR, IE, IT, PL, RO (planned), SE, SI, SK,

A year later, it can be concluded that most Member States need to make further efforts and involve local authorities more closely and systematically in developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing policy¹². Roma integration policies and action plans should be developed as an integral part of

¹¹ Including conclusions highlighted during a dialogue between Commissioners and civil society representatives on 15 May 2013, as well as reports from civil society coalitions organised by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation in six Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Spain) and two enlargement countries (Albania, FYROM), reports from the network of independent experts on social inclusion (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1025&langId=en>), the report from the European Roma Information Office, *Discrimination against Roma in the EU in 2012*, the written feedbacks from Eurocities and from Eurodiaconia and research papers from the Academic network on Romani studies (http://romanistudies.eu/news/contributions_from_members/).

¹² Some Member States made extra efforts to promote the international networking of their local authorities, e.g. participating in the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion. Others have appointed regional or local coordinators to better identify problems in the Roma communities or coordinate the implementation of the strategies at the local level.

regional and local public agendas: they should set a clear baseline, quantified targets and specific measures so as to translate the four pillars of the national Roma integration strategy into action at the local level. To implement these plans, local and regional authorities should be given appropriate financial and human resources. Their capacity to manage, monitor and evaluate Roma inclusion should be improved.

(2) Working closely with civil society

The Commission's 2012 progress report pointed out that involving civil society should go beyond merely consulting it when developing strategies. Civil society needs to play an active role in implementing and monitoring national strategies. The capacity building of grassroots civil society at local level, in particular among Roma, is crucial for the success and sustainability of integrated local action plans.

Working closely with civil society	Member States that have taken such measures
Structured dialogue with civil society set up at national level	BE, BG, EE, ES, DK, FI, FR, HU, LV, LT, SE, SI, UK
Encouraging the active involvement of civil society and Roma representatives at local level	BE (regional level), BG, CZ, ES, FI, HU, LV, PT, SE, SI,
Financial support for developing the capacity of civil society	EE, ES, FR, LV, SE, SI

In the second year of implementation of the national strategies in most Member States, the legitimate representation of Roma and the involvement of all the relevant civil society organisations remain insufficient. **To be able to provide a meaningful contribution, civil society organisations, in particular local organisations representing Roma, must have the appropriate capacity to better access public funding, to help making it available swiftly and effectively to those directly concerned, and to effectively participate in the development, implementation and monitoring process of Roma integration policies. Only a few Member States provide adequate support for civil society organisations to play such a role. Although mechanisms are in place to incorporate the views of Roma, they do not ensure a significant impact of these views on policies. All Member States should ensure that regular consultation mechanisms operate efficiently and transparently and that they cover the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the strategies. Dialogue should be encouraged across various kinds of civil society organisations and researchers working in all areas relevant for Roma inclusion. Co-operation with civil society should also be encouraged when setting up local action plans.**

(b) Allocating proportionate financial resources

The EU Framework invited Member States to allocate sufficient funding for Roma inclusion measures from national budgets, to be complemented, where appropriate, by EU and international funding, co-funding from EU funds is available mainly from

the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

In the Commission's 2012 progress report, weaknesses in allocating financial resources matching the policy commitments made in the strategies remained a major obstacle to implementation. Specific, transparent budgetary allocation for the action plans is an absolute pre-condition. In addition, a territorial approach should be used, addressing the specific needs of those areas most affected by poverty or target groups at the greatest risk of discrimination or exclusion.

Allocating proportionate financial resources	Member States that have taken such measures
Integrated approach to allocating financial resources	EL, ES, FI, HU, IT, LV, SI, SK,
Territorial approach to allocating financial resources	CZ, EL, ES, HU, IT, PL, SE, SK
Involvement of local and regional authorities and civil society in planning the use of EU funds	BE, BG, CZ, ES, FI, IT, RO, SI, SK (initial steps)

Although some progress has been made since the previous report, the financing of national strategies is not yet adequate. **In some Member States, the implementation of the national strategy is delayed because insufficient resources are allocated from the national budget.**

Reflecting the challenges identified in the European Semester exercise, all Member States should ensure that appropriate measures are taken to include Roma integration in the Partnership Agreements on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds¹³ for the period 2014–2020 in proportion to the size and situation of their Roma communities. Key policy priorities for Roma inclusion have been highlighted in the country-specific recommendations within the European Semester and Commission position papers for the negotiation of Partnership Agreements with several Member States. National budgetary commitments remain essential to ensure the sustainability of Roma inclusion measures.

The European Social Fund is the main EU financial instrument for investment in Roma inclusion in the fields of employment, education and social inclusion. The European Regional Development Fund has invested in housing as part of an integrated approach in a number of Member States, yet in most cases this funding possibility for Roma inclusion could be further exploited. To this aim, the Member States could draw on the pools of skills and resources developed by coalitions of international organisations aiming to support projects for Roma inclusion at local level.

¹³ European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The Commission proposals for EU cohesion policy in 2014-2020 provide the basis for an integrated approach combining the financing possibilities of the ERDF and the ESF in order to achieve the EU Roma integration goals. Member States should also envisage using support possibilities made available under rural development policy. Furthermore, the Commission Communication *Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion*¹⁴ urged Member States to use EU resources for social investment during the next programming period (2014–20). The Commission also proposed to allocate an adequate share of EU cohesion funding to investment in people, employment and social policy reforms through the European Social Fund (ESF)¹⁵. It also proposed that at least 20 % of this amount be allocated in each Member State to social inclusion, also including the integration of Roma. This would ensure that the overall allocation of funding to social inclusion increases and better reflects the challenges in this area. The Member States' and regions' use of the new specific investment priority on the integration of marginalised communities such as Roma within the European Social Fund (proposed by the Commission for the programming period 2014-2020) will allow a better assessment of what is spent on measures to integrate Roma.

(c) Monitoring and enabling policy adjustment

The EU Framework invited the Member States to set up sound monitoring and evaluation methods to assess the results and impacts of Roma inclusion measures and enable policy adjustments where necessary. The 2012 report concluded that the Member States need to make stronger efforts in this respect.

Monitoring transformation and enabling policy adjustment	Member States that have taken such measures
Mapping of the situation of Roma ('baseline') undertaken or under way	CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK
A monitoring system to measure the results and impacts of the national strategy	Initial steps: BG Under development: BE, ES, FI, HU, IT, SE
Identification of areas with extremely poor Roma communities	CZ, EE, EL, FR, HU, PL, RO, SK
Involvement of all major stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process	AT, CZ (planned), FI, HU, IT (planned), LT (planned), SE (partially), SI, SK (planned)
Cooperation established with National	BG, CZ, EL, ES, FI, HU, IT, LV, RO,

¹⁴ Communication *Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion* — including implementing the *European Social Fund 2014-2020*, COM(2013) 83 final; and Commission Recommendation: 'Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage' COM(2013) 778 final, 20.02.2013.

¹⁵ In line with the commitment made at European level to reduce the number of people living in poverty by 20 million by 2020.

Statistical Offices	SK, UK
Planned regular reporting and evaluation	BE, BG, CZ, EL, FI, HU, LT, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK

Despite clear efforts since the last report¹⁶ to put in place a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to systematically and consistently produce data (not necessarily using ethnic criteria) on the impact of Roma integration measures, this remains a challenge in most Member States. As highlighted by the working group on monitoring set up by the FRA, a monitoring system should be able to provide accurate feedback to governments at various levels: on the one hand, on progress towards the goals in the national strategy and in the **local action plans**; and on the other hand, on improvements in the socio-economic situation of Roma and in their fundamental rights compared to the majority population (monitoring ‘the gap’).

There is a great need to regularly compare data to rigorously evaluate the impact of the measures on the ground against the baseline. In particular, there is still a general lack of impact indicators. In addition, in most cases, the extent to which other stakeholders are involved in monitoring, evaluation and policy review, in line with the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion¹⁷, is unclear. Possible synergies with existing EU policy indicators should be explored.

(d) Fighting discrimination convincingly

The EU Framework called on the Member States to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against and that the respect of their human rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the European Convention of Human Rights is guaranteed. The Commission's 2012 progress report stated that Member States should ensure that anti-discrimination legislation¹⁸ is effectively enforced in their territories and that they fight discrimination convincingly. The report also highlighted the significant number of Roma living in the Member States that are legally staying third-country nationals, who face the same challenges as migrants coming from outside the EU. They must enjoy the same rights as those granted to other non-EU migrants.

Measures to fight discrimination	Member States that have taken such measures
Enforcing anti-discrimination legislation	AT, DK, SE

¹⁶ Some Member States have indicated having used surveys, micro-censuses, territorial poverty mapping, etc.

¹⁷ The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion were presented at the first Platform meeting on 24 April 2009. They were annexed to the Council conclusions of 8 June 2009. They comprise: 1) constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies 2) explicit but not exclusive targeting 3) inter-cultural approach 4) aiming for the mainstream 5) awareness of the gender dimension 6) transfer of evidence-based policies 7) use of EU instruments 8) involvement of regional and local authorities 9) involvement of civil society 10) active participation of Roma.

¹⁸ In conformity with their obligations under the Treaties, Member States are required to transpose in their national legal order the provisions of Directive 2000/43/EC on the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and accordingly implement these transposing measures.

at local level	
Raising awareness (including in public administrations)	AT, BG, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, PT, RO, SI
Increasing awareness among Roma of their rights	AT, FI, LV, SE, SI
Tackling multiple forms of discrimination against Roma women	RO (initial steps)
Fighting against human trafficking and the labour exploitation of children	CZ, DK, HU, NL

Despite the commitments made by the Member States and anti-discrimination legislation in all Member States, racism towards and discrimination against Roma continue. The segregation of Roma children in education is still widespread in several Member States¹⁹. Civil society and academic reports²⁰ confirm various examples of discrimination, including less favourable access to education, health, police protection and housing compared to the majority population. The persisting challenges of integrating Roma who are EU citizens into their societies, continue to have a direct impact on wider EU relations with third countries. For example, some countries apply visa requirements to the nationals of certain Member States because of issues relating to Roma integration²¹. The same challenges can arise for third-country national Roma who migrate to the EU²².

Without systemic measures to fight discrimination and racism towards Roma, the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies cannot yield the expected results. Most Member States carry out awareness-raising activities to promote Roma inclusion²³. **At the same time, however, public authorities should do much more to explain the social and economic benefits²⁴ of Roma inclusion to their societies**

¹⁹ In particular in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

²⁰ This includes: reports from the national experts on social inclusion; European Roma Information Office, *Discrimination against Roma in the EU in 2012*, 2013; Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation in collaboration with Open Society Foundation's Making the most of EU Funds for Roma Programmes and Roma Initiatives Office, *Interim Civil Society Reports on the Implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies and Decade Action Plans*, 2013; Amnesty International report *Roma: Demanding Equality and Human Rights*, April 2013; research papers from the Academic network on Romani studies (http://romanistudies.eu/news/contributions_from_members/); written contribution from members of Eurodiaconia.

²¹ For instance, Canada has expressed serious concerns following the increase in the number of asylum applications lodged by the nationals of certain Member States.

²² The Commission's remarks in Communication *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework*, COM(226)2012 final, 26.5.2012 are still valid today: "The current situation of Roma living in poor conditions in enlargement countries had consequences in terms of the increased number of Roma temporarily migrating to EU Member States under visa-free regime and even applying for asylum. This can have a negative impact on the visa liberalisation, which is one of the greatest achievements towards the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU."

²³ Some of them (AT, BG, ES, FR, LV) organise training sessions for their civil servants (e.g. teachers, the police and the judiciary) to prevent discriminatory behaviour against Roma and counteract prejudice.

²⁴ World Bank, *Roma Inclusion: An Economic Opportunity for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia*, September 2010.

at large. To step up the fight against discrimination, it is also necessary to raise awareness about rights, duties and opportunities among Roma themselves and ensure tools to protect and enforce their rights, such as through Equality Bodies. The Member States must do more to combat stereotyping and deal with racist or otherwise stigmatising language or behaviour that may constitute incitement to discrimination against Roma.

Member States should do more to effectively fight child labour, prohibit begging involving children, fully enforce legislation on underage marriages, fight forced marriages and deal more effectively with the issue of human trafficking, including through international cooperation.

Addressing steadily and comprehensively the lack of registration of Roma in national population registers, as well as the lack of personal identity papers, where relevant, is an absolute pre-condition for ensuring equal access to education, public services, social protection systems, minimum living conditions, housing and healthcare.

(e) National Contact Points for Roma integration

The EU Framework invited Member States to set up National Contact Points for Roma integration²⁵ (NCPs) with the authority to coordinate the development and implementation of the strategy. The Commission's 2012 progress report stressed that these National Contact Points should be fully enabled to effectively coordinate Roma inclusion across policy areas.

Measures to enable the National Contact Points to work efficiently	Member States that have taken such measures
Coordination between sectors at national level	AT, BE, BG, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LV, RO, SE, SK
Coordination among various levels of government (from national to local)	AT, BE, BG, DK, CZ, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LV, NL, RO, SE, SI, SK
Involvement of the National Contact Points in planning the use of EU funds	BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, SK

All National Contact Points participate in the network set up in October 2012 and have real concerns regarding Roma integration. Despite clear progress in developing their commitment and coordination role, there is room for improvement with regard to their status, capacities, resources, mandate and the political support they receive: **National Contact Points should be given appropriate human and financial resources; they must have the formal authority and competence to coordinate processes across ministries and various levels of government and ensure that Roma inclusion is integrated into all relevant public policies; they should contribute to the definition and implementation of relevant policies and be**

²⁵

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nationalcontactpoints_en.pdf

involved in the strategic planning for the use of EU funds. They should also facilitate dialogue and exchanges between all stakeholders and explore synergies with any relevant initiatives²⁶.

3. ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES

In its EU Enlargement Strategy 2012-2013 as well as in the more detailed Progress Reports country by country, the Commission highlights that Roma remain particularly disadvantaged across the Western Balkans. In many countries discrimination remains to be addressed in terms of access to education, employment, social and health care, housing and personal documents.

Whilst some progress has been made over recent years leading to some initial improvements in education and health, sustained efforts are still needed. **These include allocating appropriate resources for implementing policies for Roma integration. Challenges remain in the effective implementation and enforcement of the legal and institutional framework.** In several countries multiannual strategies for improving the situation of Roma and related action plans have either been recently adopted (Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) or reviewed and improved (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia²⁷). Turkey has still to develop a systematic approach and comprehensive strategy to foster Roma integration.

Enlargement countries should continue to act on the operational conclusions jointly agreed with the Commission at the 2011 national conferences. These conclusions are being reviewed annually in the context of the structural policy dialogue. They concern five issues: registration, education, health, access to work and housing. The Commission stepped up its efforts in 2012 by providing targeted financial assistance for the implementation of the operational conclusions in several countries. Better use was made of the financial Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) by providing more support measures aimed at including Roma in society and improving their status and living conditions and by helping countries develop, review and implement their national strategies, under both national and regional programmes. The Commission will continue to support policies and concrete measures aimed at improving the situation of Roma, including measures under the Decade for Roma inclusion²⁸, as part of these countries' EU accession processes.

²⁶ Such initiatives include the National Contact Points on Integration, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, etc.

²⁷ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

²⁸ The Decade for Roma inclusion, which embraces all enlargement countries except Iceland, Kosovo and Turkey, serves so far as a platform and bridge for policy coordination, exchange of experience and information sharing between participating EU Member States and the enlargement countries, whilst promoting civil society participation on the national and local level and complementarity with other international initiatives.

4. CONCLUSIONS — THE WAY FORWARD

Two major conclusions can be drawn from assessing the progress made by the Member States over the past year: some Member States significantly rethought or developed their strategies in concrete terms, in particular by seeking to organise horizontal and vertical dialogue as well as coordination for the implementation of their strategies; however, some of the necessary preconditions for successful implementation are still not in place and progress is therefore very slow on the ground.

To speed up progress on Roma integration along the four pillars of access to education, employment, healthcare and housing, the Commission is offering additional support to the Member States by:

- (a) upholding the attainment by the Member States of their policy goals and commitments
 - presenting in parallel with this Communication a proposal for a Council Recommendation on enhancing the effectiveness of measures to achieve Roma integration. The findings of the Commission's 2012 progress report²⁹, of the high-level exchanges with civil society and Roma representatives, and of this report led the Commission to propose to Member States moving up a gear in Roma integration by means of a legal instrument to be adopted by the Council;
 - pursuing bilateral and multilateral exchanges with the National Contact Points for Roma integration and other national authorities involved in the implementation of policy measures for Roma inclusion;
 - further reviewing progress on Roma integration in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, as Roma integration should be part of Member States' overall efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, increase employment, reduce school drop-out rates and increase educational attainment.
 - improving dialogue and cooperation between all stakeholders through the next meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion;
 - monitoring the implementation of the Race Equality Directive in administrative practices.
- (b) providing support through EU funding
 - completing national resources by setting out a framework for how EU funding³⁰ (European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

²⁹ Communication *National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework*, COM(226)2012 final, 26.5.2012 and accompanying Staff Working Document SWD(2012)133.

³⁰ Commission staff working document, *Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020 for the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund*, of 14.3.2012, SWD(2012) 61 final, Part II.

(EAFRD)) could support the inclusion of marginalised communities such as Roma in the Member States between 2014-20. Furthermore, use of private and third sector resources should be promoted to increase the leverage on investment in Roma integration.

- proposing that some Member State make use of the investment priority "Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma" , or set specific objectives related to the labour market integration, access to education or social inclusion of Roma people for the next programming period to reflect the findings of the European Semester;
- proposing a new social investment policy framework³¹, based on three elements³², that could contribute to Roma inclusion.

The Commission invites the European Parliament to participate actively in a debate on the proposal for a Council Recommendation on enhancing the effectiveness of measures to achieve Roma integration.

The Commission will report once a year in spring – next report will be in 2014 – to the European Parliament and to the Council on progress made on the four pillars of education, employment, health and housing, based on information provided by the Member States, on data collected by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and on the contributions received from civil society organisations. The annual reports will benchmark the efforts made and progress achieved by Member States on Roma integration.

³¹ Communication *Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion — including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020*, COM(2013) 83 final; and Commission Recommendation: 'Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage', COM(2013) 778 final, 20.2.2013.

³² Making social systems better and more sustainable, implementing activating and enabling policies and supporting life-long social investment.

ANNEX

Examples of actions related to the structural pre-conditions of implementation

Example of the active involvement of local and regional authorities

In **Germany**, the government of the State of **Berlin** adopted a strategy on Roma inclusion on 7 August 2012. It calls for the development of a regional action plan on Roma inclusion. A steering group was set up including different Senate Departments of the Berlin government and local authorities that deal with Roma migrants. Civil society helped develop this regional action plan³³.

Examples of working closely with civil society

In **France**, a national monitoring group has been set up by the National Roma Contact Point. It brings together associations, representatives from the various Ministries involved, and local actors. It and its four thematic sub-groups were set up as a platform to exchange expertise and reach a consensus on the measures that need to be taken next. It will propose these measures to the inter-ministerial steering committee in charge of coordinating the implementation of France's strategy.

In **Latvia**, a call for proposals aimed at working closely with the Roma community was launched in October 2012. Financed by the State, the call, open to organisations representing Roma, aimed to encourage their participation in society and ensure cooperation between them and public authorities (local government and other stakeholders). Selected projects will include organising practical seminars to come up with local cooperation projects involving all stakeholders and developing a cooperation platform between employers and Roma.

Examples of underpinning the strategies with appropriate financing

Bulgaria has set up an inter-ministerial working group dedicated to mobilising EU funds for Roma integration. The group is chaired by the Ministry of EU Funds Management and comprises deputy ministers, experts from the managing authorities and operational programmes and representatives of Roma NGOs. It aims to propose instruments and schemes and verify the measures planned under each operational programme. It will prepare an annex to the national strategy setting out activities and sustainable financing to implement them. This annex has not been adopted yet.

In **Hungary**, based on an indicator system set up by national law, the most disadvantaged micro-regions were identified. These micro-regions suffer severe economic, employment and infrastructural problems. To develop them, targeted measures are used, consisting of social interventions, community and rural

³³

The Berlin strategy for Roma inclusion is available at <http://www.parlament-berlin.de:8080/starweb/adis/citat/VT/17/DruckSachen/d17-0440.pdf>.

development measures and human resource services.

Examples of robust monitoring systems

The **Hungarian** monitoring system will aim to measure the social impact of the national strategy and follow the state of play of its implementation. The system's four basic components are:

1. A set of indicators measuring societal changes, aligned to the targets set in the national strategy;
2. A regular reporting system being set up in cooperation with an external international consultant to monitor whether the measures in the action plan have been implemented;
3. Research;
4. A social inclusion information system enabling the collection of data in various policy areas. Local authorities will also use it to develop equal opportunity plans.

Estonia has recognised the need to further map the situation of Roma to determine the appropriate measures for Roma integration. The situation of Roma is therefore being assessed in a survey being carried out from 2012 to 2013. The aim is to use the findings to plan the next steps of the strategy.

Example of fighting discrimination

Spain carried out various activities to train police forces. Training on equal treatment and ethnic discrimination was given to 158 regional, local and national security forces in 2012.

In **Germany**, the Land of Schleswig-Holstein decided in 2012 to amend its constitution to recognise Roma and Sinti that are German nationals and live there as an ethnic minority.

In **Romania**, special places in secondary schools, vocational training classes and in universities in the public education system are earmarked every year for Roma pupils and students. Thus far around 15,000 Roma pupils and students have benefited from this form of positive action.