



Council of the  
European Union

197712/EU XXVII. GP  
Eingelangt am 27/09/24

Brussels, 27 September 2024  
(OR. en)

13899/24

SOC 717  
ANTIDISCRIM 145  
GENDER 232  
JAI 1437  
FREMP 373  
COHOM 163  
EDUC 376

## COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	25 September 2024
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2024) 422 final
Subject:	REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the implementation of the national Roma strategic frameworks in light of the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation and the Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation

Delegations will find attached document COM(2024) 422 final.

Encl.: COM(2024) 422 final

Brussels, 25.9.2024  
COM(2024) 422 final

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

**on the implementation of the national Roma strategic frameworks in light of the EU  
Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation and the Council  
Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Commission has put equality at the heart of its agenda, striving to build a Union of Equality where all people can live free from discrimination. To achieve this goal, the Commission has been implementing dedicated equality strategies<sup>1</sup>.

As part of this endeavour, the Commission has strengthened its commitment to Roma living in the EU and beyond<sup>2</sup> by adopting in October 2020 a new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation<sup>3</sup> (EU Roma strategic framework).

The framework builds upon the core values of equality and non-discrimination as well as respect for human dignity and human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. It also reflects lessons learnt from the evaluation of the previous EU framework<sup>4</sup>. Advancing the situation of Roma is a matter of fundamental rights, fairness and cohesion. It also benefits the economy, by helping people who are underrepresented or excluded from the labour market into jobs, thus addressing labour and skills shortages.

Europe still has a long journey ahead to achieve true equality for the Roma, its largest ethnic minority<sup>5</sup>. Marginalisation remains widespread, and many Roma continue to endure significant discrimination, antigypsyism, and socio-economic exclusion in their daily lives. That is why a key novelty of the EU Roma strategic framework is its comprehensive three-pillar approach to promote: (i) equality; (ii) social and economic inclusion; and (iii) participation of Roma in political, social, economic and cultural life. This framework is complemented by a Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation adopted unanimously on 12 March 2021<sup>6</sup>, through which Member States committed to adopt and implement national Roma strategic frameworks.

The EU framework sets out EU-level objectives<sup>7</sup> and – for the first time – quantitative targets to be met by 2030. Member States were encouraged to translate these into their national Roma frameworks to be developed by 2021. In line with a common but differentiated approach, the Commission invited all Member States to include a series of common features and minimum commitments. At the same time, Member States with significant Roma population (i.e. well

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<sup>1</sup> [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#); [EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#); [EU Roma strategic framework](#); [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#); [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#).

<sup>2</sup> The reference to ‘Roma’, as an umbrella term, encompasses a wide range of different people of Romani origin such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels and Boyash/Rudari; and groups such as Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as traveller populations, including ethnic Travellers or those designated under the administrative term ‘gens du voyage’ and people who identify as Gypsies, Tsiganes or Tziganes, without denying their specificities.

<sup>3</sup> [EU Roma strategic framework](#).

<sup>4</sup> [EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020](#).

<sup>5</sup> [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: Roma and Travellers](#).

<sup>6</sup> [Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation \(2021/C 93/01\)](#).

<sup>7</sup> [EU Roma strategic framework objectives](#): 1. Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination; 2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion to close the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population; 3. Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust; 4. Increase effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education; 5. Increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment; 6. Improve Roma health and increase effective equal access to quality healthcare and social services; 7. Increase effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services.

above 1%)<sup>8</sup> were invited to include more ambitious commitments. In order to measure progress towards achieving the EU-level targets, the Commission made available a portfolio of indicators<sup>9</sup>, from which Member States can choose, as appropriate for their national context.

In January 2023, the Commission, in its stock-taking report<sup>10</sup>, assessed the national Roma frameworks against the commitments made by Member States in the Council Recommendation, and provided guidance for areas that required improvement. These areas are:

- the functioning of the national Roma contact points (NRCPs)<sup>11</sup>;
- fighting and preventing antigypsyism;
- eliminating segregation in education and housing;
- setting targets and indicators;
- mainstreaming Roma inclusion; and
- enhancing the participation of Roma.

The Commission invited Member States to use this guidance<sup>12</sup> to renew or update their national Roma frameworks and/or related action plans to make them more ambitious, including by allocating the necessary resources from national budgets and/or EU funds.

As planned in the EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation, Member States should report to the Commission every two years on progress achieved, starting from 2023. These reports serve as a basis for the biennial Commission's reports to the European Parliament and the Council.

The present Commission's report assesses the implementation of national Roma frameworks and their suitability for achieving progress towards the 2030 targets. It is based on reports submitted by the Member States, and covers the period between the adoption of the new national Roma frameworks in 2021/2022 and June 2023<sup>13</sup>. The report focuses on the areas identified in the Commission's initial stock-taking as requiring further improvement and monitoring, while also briefly addressing other sectoral areas and the use of funds. It reflects the situation until June 2023, including all improvements of – and amendments to – the national Roma frameworks. Future reports will capture progress on implementation of the whole scope of the EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation.

In addition to the reports submitted by Member State, this Commission's report includes contributions gathered through the 16th European Platform for Roma Inclusion<sup>14</sup> organised in

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<sup>8</sup> These countries are BG, CZ, EL, HU, RO, SK and ES. Four Member States have large Roma populations (BG: 9.94%, RO: 9.02%, SK: 8.63%, HU: 7.49%) and three Member States have smaller Roma population (CZ: 1.90%, EL: 1.63% and ES: 1.55%). See [Council of Europe 2012 estimates](#).

<sup>9</sup> [Portfolio of indicators](#), developed by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in cooperation with the national Roma contact points (NRCPs), national statistical offices and the Commission.

<sup>10</sup> [Assessment report of the Member States' national Roma strategic frameworks \(COM/2023/7 final\)](#).

<sup>11</sup> National representatives appointed to act as contact points for the national Roma strategy with the authority to coordinate its development and implementation at national level.

<sup>12</sup> This guidance was presented and discussed with the NRCPs in March and December 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Following the adoption of their new national Roma strategic frameworks, Member States [shared them with the Commission](#) between May 2021 and June 2022.

<sup>14</sup> The [16th European Platform for Roma Inclusion \(EPRI\)](#) brought together national governments, the EU, international organisations, and Roma civil society. It provided a forum to discuss progress in the implementation of the national Roma frameworks, with a particular focus on desegregation in housing and optimal use of EU funds

Madrid on 30 November 2023, the meeting of the Roma Civil Society Organisations' (CSO) Consultation Group<sup>15</sup> organised on 12 December 2023, and a public call for evidence<sup>16</sup>.

## 1. PROGRESS MADE

This section assesses the actions undertaken by Member States<sup>17</sup> since the adoption of their national Roma frameworks in the areas identified by the Commission in 2023 as requiring improvement. It also briefly addresses other sectoral areas and the use of funds. It includes examples of promising developments in Member States<sup>18</sup>, and guidance for further improvement in line with the EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation, taking into consideration the common but differentiated approach across Member States.

### 1.1 NATIONAL ROMA CONTACT POINTS

NRCPs are appointed in all Member States to coordinate Roma strategies at national level. As a minimum commitment, the EU Roma strategic framework invited Member States to give their NRCP a clear mandate and sufficient resources/staff to fulfil their mandate, including outreach at local level. Additionally, Member States, in particular those with significant Roma populations, were asked to ensure that their NRCPs are involved in the design of social-inclusion policies and universal services, including, where relevant, in decision-making on the programming and monitoring of EU funds. In its 2023 assessment, the Commission highlighted that, overall, Member States had not strengthened their NRCPs sufficiently in the areas of funding and staffing.

Over the reporting period, 15 Member States (CY, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, IE, NL, FR, LV, PT, RO, SE, HR, SK) strengthened the role of their NRCPs, e.g. by expanding their staffing or increasing the allocated budget. Other measures taken by Member States include: (i) reconfiguring their institutional set-up; (ii) establishing the role of Commissioner for Roma affairs; (iii) creating a monitoring committee for strategic framework implementation; (iv) developing links with Roma communities and fostering dialogue with Roma CSOs; and (v) contracting technical support for implementation and monitoring. In 12 Member States (BG, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IT, PT, SI, SK)<sup>19</sup>, the NRCPs participate as full members in monitoring committees for EU co-funded programmes.

To be able to carry out their roles effectively, the NRCPs of 10 Member States (BE, CZ, EE, ES, HR, HU, IT, LT, PL, SI) indicated that they require additional support or resources from the national level. Generally, most respondents in the call for evidence reported that the NRCPs had insufficient resources and limited capacities in decision-making processes and implementation of EU-funded programmes.

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for this purpose. Civil society organisations have been consulted on the content of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion.

<sup>15</sup> The CSO consultation group is a forum for the regular exchange of information between the Roma and pro-Roma CSOs and the Commission services on important developments affecting Roma at national and EU level.

<sup>16</sup> [Call for evidence](#).

<sup>17</sup> MT, which declared that it has no Roma population, is not included in the assessment.

<sup>18</sup> AT, IE, LV, PT are in the process of renewing their national Roma frameworks.

<sup>19</sup> In the case of RO, the [National Agency for Roma](#), which has the role of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the national Roma framework, is part of the EU funding-monitoring committees.

### Examples of promising developments

- Czechia has appointed a Roma woman as Government Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs to promote Roma inclusion and strengthen policy implementation and cooperation with the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs.
- Croatia's NRCP has been allocated increased budget and staff. It has strengthened cooperation with the regional and local levels and provides anti-discrimination training to public service providers involved in implementing EU funds.
- The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities was designated as an intermediary body for the Programme Slovakia<sup>20</sup> to supervise the design and implementation of projects for Roma inclusion. The NRCP has been allocated increased resources, resulting in a workforce of 112 individuals<sup>21</sup>.
- Greece has set up a Government Commission for Roma Social Inclusion to enable strategic planning, systematic monitoring and evaluation of the 2021-2030 Roma national strategy, and the effective coordination of all involved ministries and bodies of the central government for implementing measures to promote social inclusion of Roma.

### Guidance for further improvement

In line with the EU Roma strategic framework, Member States, in particular those with significant Roma populations, should:

- ensure an appropriate institutional mandate – and sufficient staff and financial resources – for their NRCPs and strengthen NRCPs' capacities for: (i) cross-sectoral coordination; (ii) mainstreaming and monitoring; and (iii) engagement with regional and local authorities and stakeholders;
- further strengthen the NRCPs' role in decision-making, the design of calls for proposals and the implementation of EU-funded programmes.

## 1.2 COMBATING ANTIGYPSYISM

Antigypsyism is the root cause of Roma exclusion, and it manifests itself in various forms such as anti-Roma racism, discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, stigmatisation, hate speech and hate crimes.<sup>22</sup> The EU Roma strategic framework identifies the fight against both discrimination and antigypsyism as a key objective and cross-cutting priority in each policy area. Following the Council Recommendation, Member States should consolidate efforts to adopt and implement measures to fight antigypsyism. According to the 2023 Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the EU<sup>23</sup>, 65% of EU citizens consider that discrimination against Roma is widespread in their countries, compared with 61% in 2019<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> [Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Programme Slovakia](#): for support from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus and the Just Transition Fund under the 'Investment for jobs and growth' goal in Slovakia.

<sup>21</sup> Following the October 2023 coalition deal in Slovakia and the forming of the new government, the previous Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities was replaced, and a new Plenipotentiary of Roma background was appointed. The role of the Plenipotentiary's office as an intermediary body for the Slovakia operational programme remained unchanged.

<sup>22</sup> [Reference Paper - Stop Antigypsyism!](#) And [Council Conclusions on measures to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and desegregated housing, and to address segregated settlements](#), adopted on 9 October 2023 by EPSCO.

<sup>23</sup> [2023 Eurobarometer](#).

<sup>24</sup> [2019 Eurobarometer](#).

In 2023, the Commission found that a number of Member States had not yet set out plans to fight and prevent antigypsyism, and strongly encouraged them to do so as soon as possible. Member States were also asked to review their objectives and measures to fight antigypsyism and to adjust their level of ambition in order to match the scale of the problem.

Most Member States (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK) reported that they had developed specific measures to tackle antigypsyism. Altogether, 13 Member States (AT, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LU, PT, RO, SI, SK) include antigypsyism and anti-Roma discrimination as a separate category in their anti-discrimination reports or surveys. Most Member States also explicitly recognise antigypsyism in their legal frameworks and/or policies (BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FR, HR, IE, LV, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK). Equality bodies in 21 Member States (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK) record cases of antigypsyism and/or anti-Roma discrimination.

Member States reported on implementing a range of initiatives, such as: (i) training for law enforcement, judges, prosecutors, civil servants, service providers, and school institutions; and (ii) the organisation of dialogue platforms with Roma civil society. However, the scope of these measures is limited. CSOs responding to the call for evidence encouraged Member States to step up their efforts to fight against antigypsyism, stressing that antigypsyism was a root cause preventing access of Roma to many areas of life. They also stressed the necessity of preventing discriminatory practices in law enforcement.

There are positive developments in this area. However, more work is needed to recognise antigypsyism and its negative impact on Roma people's lives, as well as to implement effective measures to prevent and eliminate it in the long term.

#### **Examples of promising developments**

- France is conducting training for civil servants (police officers, magistrates, teachers) on antigypsyism and monitoring online hate speech against Roma.
- Germany has appointed its first Federal Government Commissioner against Antigypsyism and for the Life of Sinti and Roma. It has strengthened efforts to tackle antigypsyism at regional level through federal state treaties and framework agreements between public authorities and Sinti and Roma civil society<sup>25</sup>.
- Through a parliamentary resolution, Slovakia has recognised anti-Roma racism as a specific form of racism, in line with the working definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)<sup>26</sup>.

#### **Guidance for further improvement**

Given the fact that antigypsyism continues to manifest itself in many Member States<sup>27</sup>, those Member States that have not yet done so should:

- draw up solid targets and indicators to maximise the effect of policies in this area;

<sup>25</sup> See for example: [Central Council welcomes appointment of federal-state commission on antigypsyism as a historic step.](#)

<sup>26</sup> For example: [IHRA, Slovakia adopts the working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination - IHRA.](#)

<sup>27</sup> See for instance: [Truth and Reconciliation Process to Address Antigypsyism in Europe - Stop Antigypsyism!.](#)

- fully implement the cross-cutting measures tackling antigypsyism in sectoral policies;
- proactively ensure training opportunities for law-enforcement authorities focused on the protection of fundamental rights, and make use of training provided by CEPOL<sup>28</sup>.

### 1.3 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING

In line with the Council Recommendation and the EU Roma strategic framework's objectives and targets, Member States should: (i) promote effective equal access for Roma to quality education, employment, housing, and healthcare; and (ii) combat discrimination in these areas, in line with the applicable EU legal framework.

In its 2023 assessment, the Commission noted that the measures planned by Member States are most extensive in the area of education; however, measures in the areas of employment, health and housing are not always sufficient to match the scale and complexity of the challenges encountered by Roma. The Commission therefore strongly encouraged Member States with significant Roma populations to increase their level of ambition.

Over the reporting period, 14 Member States (AT, BG, DE, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, PT, RO, SE, SK) have either strengthened existing measures in education, employment, and health or adopted additional measures which can benefit Roma. These measures include approaching Roma inclusion in an integrated manner, combining activities to tackle discrimination and antigypsyism with (i) measures promoting better access to services and rights; and (ii) investments in the professional development of Roma through active labour market policies, including for women and young people. Member States also reported progress in: (i) preventing and addressing the problem of Roma dropping out of school; (ii) facilitating access to healthcare services; and (iii) addressing intersectional discrimination affecting vulnerable groups.

Although Member States have included various measures tackling socio-economic inclusion of Roma in sectoral areas, progress is slow, and more efforts are needed. Measures remain often limited to projects rather than systemic changes.

In the feedback to the call for evidence, some stakeholders stressed the need for Member States to address ongoing barriers which prevent many Roma from accessing healthcare such as extreme poverty, discrimination, lack of education and spatial segregation. These barriers have serious impact on their health status and life expectancy. Stakeholders further invited Member States to: (i) commit to develop health indicators; (ii) include Roma health mediators in their strategies; (iii) monitor housing through a health impact assessment; and (iv) integrate consideration of environmental justice in their policies and measures.

#### Examples of promising developments

- Bulgaria has devised a housing strategy with a focused programme to aid vulnerable individuals directly, offering affordable housing and renovations. Previous initiatives include the amended 2007 Health Ministry Ordinance to provide obstetric care and examinations for uninsured women and conduct examinations outside the scope of compulsory health insurance for children and pregnant women.

<sup>28</sup> [CEPOL](#) is an agency of the European Union dedicated to developing, implementing, and coordinating training for law-enforcement officials.

- The Hungarian programme for disadvantaged children “Sure-Start Children Centres”<sup>29</sup> is focused on early childhood development and the care of children under the age of 3. Centres are started with the support of EU funds, and sustained financing is provided via the national budget. Another EU-funded initiative called “Growing Opportunities”<sup>30</sup> provides training in social care and healthcare to mainly Roma women. By the end of 2021, more than 1,000 participants had obtained national qualifications and over 80 percent of them have achieved sustainable, meaningful employment in social welfare or other sectors.
- Italy is implementing the Acceder-e project, inspired by the Spanish Acceder initiative, helping disadvantaged people to find work. Additionally, a national project, funded by the ESF and ESF+, “Educational Inclusion of Roma and Sinti Minors”, conducts information and awareness-raising campaigns in schools, training centres, academic institutions, and the media to combat anti-Roma sentiment and prejudices.
- Romania is using funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility for a variety of actions benefiting disadvantaged groups in rural areas, such as mobile medical units for breast and cervical cancer screening, integrated community centres with medical services, and a network of day care centres for children at risk of being separated from their families.
- Spain is continuing to implement the Acceder<sup>31</sup> programme, backed by the ESF, to help young Roma in accessing the labour market through job placement and training. Spain’s ESF-funded Cali<sup>32</sup> initiative promotes equal opportunities and social and labour inclusion for Roma women, thus combatting multiple discrimination. Additionally, the ESF+ supported Kumpania<sup>33</sup> programme provides tailored socio-educational services for Roma young people and families, promoting enrolment in education, and encouraging young Roma to remain in education, including post-compulsory education.
- In Ireland, the Supporting Travellers and Roma (STAR) pilot projects contribute to improving education outcomes, creating an inclusive school community, as well as promoting a culture of respect and protection for the identity of Travellers and Roma<sup>34</sup>.

### Guidance for further improvement

The Commission calls upon the Member States, especially those with significant Roma population, to:

- increase access and participation of Roma children in quality inclusive and desegregated education; and reduce early school leaving and underachievement in basic skills, in line with the Council recommendation on Pathways to School Success<sup>35</sup>;
- increase the level of ambition in relation to the integration of Roma in the labour market, fully implement initiatives to activate underrepresented groups and persons in vulnerable situations, including Roma;
- ensure access to housing and essential services – such as tap water, safe and clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, waste collection and management services, environmental services, electricity, gas, transport, financial services and digital communications including physical infrastructure;

<sup>29</sup> [European Social Fund Plus: Hungarian project promotes well-being of pre-school children.](#)

<sup>30</sup> [European Social Fund Plus: Hungarian unemployed find work and self-esteem.](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Acceder Programme.](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Cali Programme.](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Kumpania Programme.](#)

<sup>34</sup> See for instance: [Minister Foley announces tender process for the independent pilot project, aimed at tackling education disadvantage in Traveller and Roma communities.](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Council recommendation on Pathways to School Success.](#)

- focus on Roma's health literacy/awareness and immunisation, in particular for children and adolescents; introduce or extend the role of health mediators and integrate it into the healthcare system; and increase knowledge and sensitivity among medical and social staff on anti-discrimination for Roma and other communities with a minority racial or ethnic background.

### **Segregation in education and housing**

Segregation<sup>36</sup> is one of the most extreme forms of racism and exclusion and is prohibited by EU law.<sup>37</sup> With the EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation, Member States with significant Roma populations were invited to include in their national frameworks a plan or set of measures to eliminate segregation in education and housing.

In its 2023 assessment, the Commission noted that the Member States' desegregation plans in education and housing were not sufficient to successfully address the full scale of the problem. Therefore, it called on the Member States to step up their efforts in these areas, and notably to address the issue of misdiagnosis, leading to the inappropriate placement of Roma children in special-needs education.

In tackling these problems, the Commission strongly encouraged Member States to fully use available EU funding. EU funds provide significant support to Member states to tackle segregation. Under cohesion policy, prevention of any discrimination based on, inter alia, racial or ethnic origin, and the respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union are horizontal principles for the preparation and implementation of programmes. Member States are also required to put in place relevant strategic frameworks, including measures to prevent and combat segregation, as a precondition for investments.<sup>38</sup>

Over the reporting period, the Member States with a significant Roma population indicated their awareness of the need to address both spatial and educational segregation, including the interlinkages between these two issues. Overall, 14 Member States have reported that they face the phenomenon of segregation, with two (EL, FI) facing spatial segregation, and 12 Member States (BE, BG, CZ, ES, HR, HU, IT, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK) facing both spatial and educational segregation<sup>39</sup>. However, progress is limited and generally slow. Judging by the data provided by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) Roma Survey 2021<sup>40</sup>, the situation remains of serious concern. As raised during the 16th European Platform for Roma Inclusion, a lack of political will and capacity at local level is one of the main obstacles in tackling educational and spatial segregation.

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<sup>36</sup> On different forms of segregation, see: [2014-2020 Guidance for Member States on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation](#).

<sup>37</sup> [Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin](#), OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22–26.

<sup>38</sup> See, for instance, the thematic enabling conditions on education, on social inclusion and poverty reduction and on Roma inclusion strategic policy frameworks, [CPR, Annex IV](#).

<sup>39</sup> The Member States most affected by these phenomena are home to a large share of the total Roma in the EU (over 80%).

<sup>40</sup> [EU FRA Roma Survey 2021: Roma in 10 European Countries](#): 48% of Roma live in severe material deprivation, and 80% of Roma are at risk of poverty. In 2021, 52% of Roma children aged 6-15 faced segregation in education. The problem of segregation was particularly pronounced in SK, BG, HR and RO, with almost two thirds of Roma children in BG and SK attending a school where all or most of the other children are Roma. The data show a worsening of segregation, as in 2016 44% of Roma children aged 6-15 faced segregation in education.

Educational segregation continues to be a major challenge for several Member States, showing a worsening of the situation, with minimal to no progress<sup>41</sup>. Only three Member States (CZ, ES, HU) reported that they put in place regional or local programmes or plans for desegregation in education. Five Member States (CZ, ES, HR, HU, SK) undertook to make an estimate of the scale of this issue. Improving the data on educational segregation in all Member States is of great importance, especially in those with large Roma populations and in which the segregation of Roma children in education has been reported.

On the basis of the EU Racial Equality Directive, the Commission opened three infringement cases – against CZ (2014), SK (2015), HU (2016) – for discrimination against Roma children in education. In 2023, the Commission referred Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to effectively tackle this issue<sup>42</sup>. The Commission is closely monitoring the situation of Roma children in educational systems in the concerned Member States.

To tackle spatial segregation, 14 Member States (BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IT, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK) have developed specific measures. Of these 14 Member States, nine use EU funds (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HU, IT, PT, RO, SK) for this purpose. Several Member States with significant Roma populations (BG, CZ, RO, SK) are (i) implementing social housing and relocation programmes; (ii) improving infrastructure in localities populated by Roma; (iii) eradicating shantytowns; and (iv) monitoring the presence of Roma in segregated localities.

Eight Member States (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, IT, RO, SK) indicated that they had an estimate of the scale of spatial segregation. However, up-to-date details about the number of Roma living in segregated housing are generally not available, and this makes it difficult to properly measure progress. The main challenges faced by Member States in this area include: (i) a shortage of affordable housing and caravan pitches (BE, CZ, ES, FI, HR, NL, PT, RO); (ii) access to utilities and other infrastructure (BE, BG, EL, HU, SI, SK); (iii) poverty (CZ, FI, HU, RO, SK); (iv) illegal/informal housing and (the risk of) evictions (BE, BG, RO, SI, SK); and (v) antigypsyism (CZ, ES, SK).

Attention to this issue is demonstrated by recent Council conclusions<sup>43</sup> recommending that Member States make the best use of available financial tools and ensure the complementarity of these tools with EU funds<sup>44</sup> to improve the housing situation of Roma and end housing segregation. This was also the theme of the 16th European Platform for Roma Inclusion<sup>45</sup> in November 2023. Participants underlined the urgency of improving economic and living conditions in the excluded and segregated settlements or shanty towns in which many Roma live, through an integrated approach with the long-term goal of residential desegregation. This urgency was also voiced by most respondents to the call for evidence. The CSO Consultation

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<sup>41</sup> [FRA Roma Survey 2021](#): The survey results show that segregation in education was particularly pronounced in Slovakia, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania in 2021. There, more than half or (in Bulgaria and Slovakia) almost two thirds of these children attend a school where all or most of the other children are Roma. Overall, the trend shows that the share of children in segregated education has increased by 8 percentage points on average.

<sup>42</sup> See: [The European Commission decided to refer Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union](#) for failing to effectively tackle the issue of segregation of Roma children in education (19 April 2023).

<sup>43</sup> [Council Conclusions on measures to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and desegregated housing, and to address segregated settlements](#), adopted on 9 October 2023 by EPSCO.

<sup>44</sup> ESF+, ERDF and rural development programmes at the national and regional levels, as well as instruments and initiatives under NextGenerationEU and InvestEU.

<sup>45</sup> [16th European Platform for Roma Inclusion](#): Ensuring equal access to adequate desegregated housing through better use of EU and national funds.

Group stressed the need for a holistic approach in this area, that can extend beyond building or renovating homes, to also promote desegregation and foster diversity and inclusion in the receiving neighbourhoods.

### **Examples of promising developments**

- Bulgaria launched comprehensive programmes at municipal level for desegregation of schools, prevention of secondary segregation and anti-discrimination, funded by ESF+, targeting more than 17.800 children and pupils from vulnerable groups, providing training to more than 3.500 staff and involving 345 schools in desegregation activities.
- Spain provides subsidies to local authorities to improve degraded residential areas, build and renovate housing, and end the problem of shantytowns.
- Finland implemented a joint project of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of the Environment to prevent school segregation<sup>46</sup>.
- Croatia's 2023-2025 action plan includes measures to reduce the share of Roma children attending segregated primary school education. A programme for desegregation in education at regional and local levels for 2023-2025 was adopted in October 2023.
- Between July 2022 and November 2023, Romania benefitted from the Technical Support Instrument (TSI)<sup>47</sup> to plan and develop integrated interventions to support people living in informal settlements, including Roma. The project resulted in recommendations to improve the existing methodology used to identify informal settlements in most urgent need for intervention, and capacity building for Romanian authorities to plan and carry out interventions at central and local level.

### **Guidance for further improvement**

The Commission calls on Members States with a significant Roma population to:

- ensure that estimates of educational and housing segregation are established as soon as possible and used in developing integrated desegregation programmes; and strengthen their efforts in preventing and eradicating segregation in education and housing;
- encourage local and regional authorities to put in place and implement action plans and establish proper mechanisms of coordination and co-operation to prevent and eradicate educational and spatial segregation;
- identify EU, national, regional and local resources to support the eradication of housing segregation affecting Roma.

## **1.4 MONITORING, TARGETS, AND INDICATORS**

The EU Roma strategic framework introduced for the first time EU headline targets for each of its policy objectives. Member States were invited to set out national baselines and quantitative and/or qualitative targets towards these EU targets, and to use the portfolio of indicators drawn up by the FRA. Available options for the collection of equality data can include either ethnically disaggregated data or relevant socio-demographic proxy data, or a combination of both.

<sup>46</sup> [Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, Right to Learn development programmes](#): Quality and Equality in Early Childhood and Comprehensive School Education Programme.

<sup>47</sup> [Technical Support Instrument \(TSI\)](#).

In its 2023 assessment, the Commission encouraged all Member States to review and amend their national Roma frameworks, as necessary, to develop specific quantitative targets that will help the EU to collectively achieve the EU-level headline targets by 2030.

During the reporting period, about half of Member States developed specific quantitative and/or qualitative targets for one or more of the objectives set out in their national strategies. It is a positive development that 10 Member States (AT, BE, CY, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, PT, RO) have committed to request technical assistance from FRA to further develop targets and indicators.

The Commission recognises the efforts undertaken by Member States, in particular those with significant Roma populations, to set targets in all or most areas covered by the objectives of the EU Roma strategic framework. However, these targets do not always correspond to the EU headline targets<sup>48</sup>. Altogether, 15 Member States (BE, BG, CY, CZ, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SK), including those with a significant Roma population, have quantitative targets for at least some of the EU-level objectives, mainly in the area of education, antigypsyism and discrimination, and employment.

This may still not be sufficient to adequately measure whether the EU will collectively achieve by 2030 the minimum progress set by the EU-level targets. This concern was shared by stakeholders in the call for evidence. Challenges reported by Member States in drawing up indicators, baselines and targets include: (i) a lack of data on individuals' ethnicity<sup>49</sup>; (ii) difficulties related to defining who is Roma/Traveller (AT, BG, CZ, FI, HU, IT, RO); (iii) the reluctance of concerned communities to engage on this topic; and (iv) a complex administrative structure implementing measures for Roma inclusion.

#### **Examples of promising developments**

- France's monitoring system for the national Roma framework has set quantitative and qualitative targets and indicators. It also adopted a territorial rather than ethnic approach to address the situation of vulnerable EU citizens living in slums and 'gens du voyage' (Travellers). France also monitors online hate speech and discriminatory comments towards Travellers and Roma communities.
- Hungary and Slovakia have set quantitative targets and indicators in line with the EU-level headline targets for most of the objectives of the EU Roma strategic framework.
- Italy set up a monitoring and evaluation unit to coordinate data collection and analysis from administrative bodies and existing sources, focusing on areas of their Roma strategy.

#### **Guidance for further improvement**

The achievement of the minimum progress by 2030 set by the EU targets requires a significant, sustained and aligned collective effort. The Commission calls upon Member States to:

- revise their targets to align them more closely with the EU-level targets, in particular in Member States with a significant Roma population;

<sup>48</sup> Some Member States set national targets that cover issues other than those addressed by the EU level targets for a given objective of the EU Roma Strategic Framework.

<sup>49</sup> Collecting data on ethnicity is sometimes prevented by national data-protection legislation, for instance in BE, DE, EL, ES, FR, HR, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI.

- make better use of both the EU Roma strategic framework's portfolio of indicators and the examples of proxy data based on socio-economic data<sup>50</sup> (both of which can be used to overcome the difficulties related to collecting data on ethnicity).

## 1.5 MAINSTREAMING

The EU Roma strategic framework invited Member States to include in their national Roma frameworks a combination of targeted and mainstream measures. These should take into account specific and local challenges and explicitly address the barriers that deprive Roma of equal access to mainstream policies. The Council Recommendation asks Member States to mainstream Roma equality, inclusion and participation in EU and national policy initiatives.

The 2023 Commission assessment highlighted that measures described in the national Roma frameworks which relate to mainstream social-inclusion policies often lack detail about how Roma will benefit from them. It therefore invited Member States to set safeguards to: (i) prevent omissions or the superficial inclusion of Roma issues in mainstream policies; and (ii) enable NRCs to assume a cross-sectoral mainstreaming and coordination role in this process.

Altogether, 11 Member States (BG, CZ, EL, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, RO, SI, SK), including all those with a significant Roma population, are actively pursuing efforts to make their mainstream equality and inclusion measures more accessible for Roma. These efforts include introducing explicit safeguards and criteria for inclusiveness, such as: (i) ethnic-group targeting (BG, ES, HR, HU, IE, RO); (ii) social-group targeting (CZ, SK); (iii) territorial targeting (CZ, ES, HR, HU); and (iv) specialised institutional setups such as Roma mediators (BG, EL, ES, RO) or local pacts for solidarity (FR).<sup>51</sup>

One of the main roles performed by the NRCs is cross-sectoral coordination in mainstreaming Roma issues through all equality and inclusion policies, services, and related programmes of direct relevance for Roma. This role is systematically performed at national level in 23 Member States<sup>52</sup>, and also at regional and local levels in 20 Member States<sup>53</sup>, in direct cooperation with relevant authorities. This highlights a clear trend towards integrating Roma issues into broader equality and inclusion policies. However, feedback shared by the CSO Consultation Group indicates that mainstream policies often do not sufficiently reach local Roma communities. Areas for improvement include the need for wider adoption of inclusive safeguards and ensuring the effective implementation of these safeguards at regional and local levels.

### Examples of promising developments

- Since 2016, the Polish Ministry of Justice has been funding a programme implemented by local and regional authorities to provide free legal aid, free civic counselling, and legal education for disadvantaged groups<sup>54</sup>.
- In the Netherlands, the Knowledge Institute Inclusive Society<sup>55</sup> collects and shares expertise with policy makers and social workers on how to improve the living situation of Roma and Sinti. Subsidies have been provided for 111 new caravan pitches, alongside a legislative

<sup>50</sup> [EU Roma strategic framework – Portfolio of indicators](#).

<sup>51</sup> See for example: [Pacte des solidarités \(18 September 2023\)](#).

<sup>52</sup> All Member States except for DK, LT, LU.

<sup>53</sup> All Member States except for DK, IE, LU, LV, NL, SE.

<sup>54</sup> See: [Free legal aid - Unpaid help](#).

<sup>55</sup> [Knowledge Institute Inclusive Society](#).

proposal on public housing requiring municipalities to map the housing needs of specific groups, including caravan dwellers.

- The Czech NRCP successfully submitted a proposal in the inter-ministerial procedure for a draft law on housing<sup>56</sup> to make the draft law more inclusive and ensure that the needs of Roma are taken into account in this key legislation.

### **Guidance for further improvement**

The Commission encourages Member States which have so far not done so to:

- address and remove the specific barriers that prevent Roma from benefiting from mainstream policies and measures;
- ensure effective coordination of mainstreaming efforts at national, regional and local levels, and across sectors, to generate a positive impact in the lives of Roma communities.

## **1.6 PARTICIPATION**

Promoting the participation of Roma through empowerment, cooperation and trust is one of the key objectives of the EU Roma strategic framework and a proposed common feature for all national frameworks. The Council Recommendation echoes this objective. The 2023 Commission assessment called on Member States to strengthen national Roma platforms or their equivalent consultative and participatory processes.

The importance of Roma participation is reflected in the actions of most Member States. Altogether, 20 Member States<sup>57</sup> reported that Roma NGOs participate in the design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of measures to tackle antigypsyism. Roma NGOs in eight Member States participate in measures to fight spatial segregation (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HU, RO, SI, SK) and educational segregation (BG, CZ, ES, HR, HU, PT, RO, SK). A number of Member States (BG, EL, ES, HR, HU, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK) also developed measures to strengthen the participation of a broad spectrum of Roma civil society in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of their national Roma frameworks. Currently, 10 Member States (BG, EL, ES, FI, HR, HU, IT, RO, SI, SK), including almost all of those with a significant Roma population, have Roma and/or pro-Roma NGOs participating as full members in the monitoring committees of their EU-funded programmes.

The NRCPs play a vital role in facilitating dialogue, consultation and cooperation with Roma CSOs through various platforms. Setting up and strengthening national Roma platforms is crucial for improving the contribution of Roma NGOs to policy implementation. There are now 18 Member States that have put in place such structures and processes at national level, such as national Roma platforms (AT, BE, BG, EE, EL, ES, HU, IT, LT, PT, SI), an equivalent process (HR, FI, FR, PL, SE, SK), a combination of both (LV, RO), and one (DE) planning to set up a national Roma platform.

Participation and representation of Roma is also ensured through the position of elected councillors, with 10 Member States (BG, EL, ES, HR, HU, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK) having Roma elected at either municipal or regional council level. The appointment of Roma to high-profile political and leading positions within government structures is another illustration of ways to

<sup>56</sup> The [bill on housing support](#) was approved by the Czech government on 12 June 2024 and is pending adoption by the Czech Parliament.

<sup>57</sup> All Member States except for AT, DK, ET, LT, LU, PL.

increase Roma participation in policy and decision-making processes. Examples include the Czech government's Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs and the Slovak government's Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.

The input received through the call for evidence highlighted some positive developments (BG, CZ, ES, IE). Roma NGOs seem to be more involved in consultative mechanisms than in the past. However, more work is needed to: (i) promote active citizenship among Roma; (ii) support capacity building and leadership in Roma NGOs; (iii) raise awareness of human rights; and (iv) provide resources for greater involvement of young Roma in decision-making processes.

#### **Examples of promising developments**

- Finland is actively involving the regional advisory boards on Romani affairs and local Roma working groups in the implementation of its national Roma framework.
- Slovenia continues to co-fund its radio and television programmes for the Roma community.
- Latvia has hired a Roma representative as a full-time assistant in its national Roma platform, supported by the 'Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme' (CERV)<sup>58</sup>.

#### **Guidance for further improvement**

To promote greater representation and participation of Roma, the Commission:

- calls on all Member States to: (i) maximise the active involvement of Roma in every aspect of implementing their national Roma frameworks (including through the national Roma platforms, as well as in relevant EU-funded programmes); and (ii) further build the capacity of Roma civil society so it can cooperate meaningfully with the NRCPs and authorities to that effect;
- strongly encourages all Member States affected by spatial and educational segregation to closely involve Roma NGOs in tackling these challenges, including through the development and implementation of integrated and comprehensive EU-funded desegregation programmes.

## **1.7 FUNDING**

The EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation invite Member States to: (i) make more ambitious and concrete commitments for the use of national and EU funding for Roma equality; and (ii) make full use of the funding available under the EU's 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework and NextGenerationEU.

Ensuring the complementarity of different funds, Member States with significant Roma populations (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HU, RO, SK) have allocated or earmarked a combination of funds to implement their national Roma frameworks.

At the same time, as reported in replies to the call for evidence, CSOs still face many challenges in accessing and implementing EU funds. Some stakeholders pointed out that funding allocations are not sufficient for the scale of interventions needed. An integrated and multi-dimensional approach combining investments in employment, education, healthcare, and housing is necessary.

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<sup>58</sup> [Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.](#)

In February 2023, Vice-President Jourová and Commissioner Dalli organised exchanges with Roma and pro-Roma NGOs from BG, CZ, HU, RO, and SK to identify challenges in making effective use of EU funds. Participants mentioned the need to: (i) simplify requirements for accessing EU funds; and (ii) promote capacity building for grassroots CSOs, municipalities, and other local stakeholders. As a follow-up to these exchanges, the Commission services compiled a list of promising practices<sup>59</sup>.

#### **Examples of promising developments**

- Germany is funding, from its national and federal state budget, several projects and research on fighting antigypsyism and discrimination as well as on fostering resilience and remembrance among Sinti and Roma.
- In 2023, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society allocated EUR 1.2 million from its national budget to support initiatives to combat and prevent racism and intolerance, including antigypsyism.
- In Spain, the Government of Galicia funded the Fundación Secretariado Gitano to implement the ‘Employment Boost’ programme in six cities between 2021-2022. The programme promoted employment-integration pathways for recipients of social inclusion and minimum income, including Roma.

#### **Guidance for further improvement**

The Commission encourages Member States to:

- make effective use of available EU funds through a multi-dimensional integrated approach, particularly via ESF+ allocations in Member States to support socio-economic integration of marginalised Roma, ERDF as well as the Recovery and Resilience Facility. This should combine investments in employment, healthcare, desegregated quality education and housing, together with efforts to reinforce administrative capacity at the local level, including capacity building for local authorities and grassroots civil society organisations. The opportunity of the mid-term review of cohesion policy funds should be leveraged for this purpose, where applicable;
- make use of existing technical support through TSI, including as part of the TSI 2025 call, to further strengthen the capacity of central and local authorities, address challenges and priority areas identified in the EU and national strategic frameworks, and bridge existing implementation gaps;
- identify, implement and share promising practices, including those identified by the Commission services, for potential replication as appropriate for national, regional and local contexts and facilitate more direct ways to provide assistance and capacity building to grassroots CSOs, municipalities and other local stakeholders.

## **2. PROMOTING ROMA EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION IN ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES**

All Western Balkans countries and Türkiye adopted new national Roma frameworks to align with the EU Roma strategic framework and the Poznań commitments for the Western

<sup>59</sup> [EU funding for Roma equality, inclusion and participation - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-articles/detail/12345)

Balkans<sup>60</sup>, as a clear sign of commitment as part of the accession process. The newly adopted strategies embed the fight against antigypsyism and recognise the role of NRCPs.

Nevertheless, there is still room to improve these strategies. Further alignment with the EU Roma strategic framework would include strengthening the capacities of NRCPs and their funding. With the exception of Serbia, which already complies with the requirement, there is an urgent need to ensure NRCPs are involved in the national committees that monitor the use of EU funds.

Although the implementation of strategies is uneven, there is a clear drive to either strengthen existing monitoring mechanisms or set up new ones, by using a combination of qualitative and quantitative targets. However, a number of these targets are rather general, which will make it difficult to properly measure progress. Western Balkan countries expressed interest in obtaining technical assistance from FRA to further develop their monitoring systems.

Antigypsyism is for the first time included in the national Roma frameworks, although the frameworks only set out a limited number of measures to address it. In the Western Balkans, most equality bodies deal with cases of discrimination against Roma, but antigypsyism is not yet included as a distinct category in anti-discrimination reports and surveys in these countries. There has been considerable progress in the recognition of segregation in the areas of both education and housing in the national Roma frameworks compared to previous ones. Nevertheless, in practice, measures on desegregation are limited in scope, with no EU funds being invested in tackling this problem.

On mainstreaming, only some of the existing education and employment policies in the Western Balkans and Türkiye include Roma specifically, and these policies are still not ambitious enough to generate visible impact. On encouraging the participation of Roma in formal employment and on civil society, most national Roma frameworks do not include sufficient measures to promote: (i) capacity building; (ii) the empowerment of Roma civil society; and (iii) the involvement of Roma women and young people in decision-making processes.

On funding, the strategies drawn up by countries in the Western Balkans underline the importance of using the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)<sup>61</sup>, national funding as well as funding from other donors. Nevertheless, the amounts allocated at national level in these countries remain too small to adequately address the scale of the challenges and to ensure sustainability. The potential of IPA, the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), the Western Balkans Investment Framework, and the new Growth Plan and Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans should be fully explored to ensure improved funding for supporting the implementation of the national Roma strategies.

Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia are candidate countries, which formally began their accession negotiations. They both have a national Roma framework, while in Georgia Roma issues are addressed under broad strategies dealing with national minorities<sup>62</sup>. In this context, the EU Roma strategic framework was presented by the Commission services as part

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<sup>60</sup> [Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process.](#)

<sup>61</sup> [Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance \(IPA\).](#)

<sup>62</sup> Ukraine: 2021-2030 Roma Strategy (action p), responsible body: State Service for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience, under the Ministry of Culture; Moldova: '2022-2025 programme for supporting the Roma population', responsible body: Agency for Interethnic Relations.

of the reference EU *acquis*. In the bilateral screening, all three candidate countries will explain: (i) the state of their work to align with the EU *acquis*; (ii) future challenges that they anticipate; and (iii) next steps they intend to take.

#### **Guidance for further improvement**

The Commission calls upon the enlargement countries to:

- guarantee adequate institutional mandate, staff and financial resources for the NRCPs and strengthen their role in the decision-making and implementation of EU funded programmes;
- revise national targets to fully align them with the EU level targets and guarantee regular and public monitoring;
- increase the mainstream of Roma policies in the areas of direct relevance, ensure the use of EU Funds to improve the implementation of Roma inclusion policies as well as enhance fighting and prevention of antigypsyism for instance through training for law enforcement authorities.

### **3. EU ACTION**

Making progress on Roma equality, inclusion and participation is a joint endeavour. Member States hold the main responsibility for making progress in the areas covered by the EU Roma strategic framework and the Council Recommendation, while the Commission has been supporting this process by mobilising a wide range of tools and resources.

#### **Enforcing EU legislation**

During the reporting period, the Commission continued its monitoring of enforcement and application of: (i) the Racial Equality Directive; (ii) the Victims' Rights Directive; and (iii) the Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia. Where necessary, it launched infringement cases to prompt changes in national legislation and practice.

The adoption in 2024 of two new EU directives strengthening national equality bodies<sup>63</sup> is a major step to help to enforce non-discrimination rules (including on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin) and better help victims to access justice. The Directives require Member States to: (i) guarantee the independence of equality bodies; (ii) secure for these bodies the staff, financial and technical resources needed to fulfil their mission; and (iii) provide them with powers to prevent discrimination, promote equality, and better assist victims of discrimination at no cost, including in rural and remote areas. When raising awareness about the rights protected by the Racial Equality Directive and the existence and services of equality bodies, Member States and equality bodies will have to focus on groups whose access to information could be hindered. For example, some groups may not have access to information due to their precarious economic status, their level of literacy or their lack of access to online tools, all of which may be issues for part of the Roma population. Member States will have to transpose the new rules by June 2026.

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<sup>63</sup> [Council Directive \(EU\) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment](#). [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men](#).

## **Mainstreaming Roma equality in EU policy initiatives and mobilising EU funds for Roma**

Over the reporting period, the Commission has continued to mainstream Roma equality, inclusion and participation in relevant EU policies, legislation and funding programmes, including through its internal Task Force on Equality.

For example, in the area of employment, the EU action plan to address labour and skills shortages<sup>64</sup> presents new actions for Commission, Member States and social partners to support underrepresented groups, including Roma, to find work or training. The Commission's approach to harnessing talent in Europe's regions<sup>65</sup> underlines the importance of encouraging underrepresented groups into formal employment. The ALMA (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve)<sup>66</sup> initiative is designed to empower disadvantaged young people aged 18 to 29, including Roma, not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

In the area of education, the proposal to enhance the Quality Framework for Traineeships<sup>67</sup> seeks to improve pathways for young people to gain professional experience and boost their skills and their access to the labour market, with attention to persons in vulnerable situations, including Roma. In addition, the Council recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills in education and training<sup>68</sup> highlights the need to close digital skills gaps among some population groups, such as Roma.

In the area of health, the Commission urged Member States to ensure equal access without barriers to quality and affordable healthcare and social services, especially for those groups most at risk or those living in marginalised or remote localities including Roma<sup>69</sup>. In addition, two EU4Health funded projects specifically address the health of Roma.<sup>70</sup>

In the area of housing, a toolkit provides an overview of funding opportunities at the EU level to invest in social housing and associated services<sup>71</sup>, and examples of projects to develop an integrated approach on desegregation and social inclusion of Roma communities.

Making the best use of EU funds is necessary to achieve sustainable impact on the lives of marginalised Roma communities. The Commission stepped up its internal coordination<sup>72</sup> and continued to facilitate engagement and cooperation among governmental administrations by bringing together the NRCs, the EU funds' managing authorities and intermediary bodies to improve the use of EU funds to support Roma equality and inclusion, also through the EURoma Network<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> [COM\(2024\) 131 final of 20 March 2024](#).

<sup>65</sup> [COM\(2023\) 32 final of 17 January 2023](#).

<sup>66</sup> See: [ALMA: an active inclusion initiative for young people](#).

<sup>67</sup> [COM\(2024\) 132 final of 20 March 2024](#) and [COM\(2024\)133 final](#).

<sup>68</sup> [Council Recommendation on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training](#).

<sup>69</sup> [COM\(2023\) 298 final of 7 June 2023](#).

<sup>70</sup> [ShowUp4Health](#) (building trust in Roma communities and internally displaced people for NCD Prevention) and MENTBOX (identifying and customising promising mental health interventions).

<sup>71</sup> European Commission, Social housing and beyond – Operational toolkit on the use of EU funds for investments in social housing and associated services (2024).

<sup>72</sup> For example, a new Subgroup dedicated to EU funding for Roma equality, inclusion and participation was established under the Roma Inter-service group.

<sup>73</sup> [EURoma. European Network on Roma equality under EU funds](#).

Under the ESF+, 15 Member States have programmed resources to support Roma inclusion, reaching a total EU contribution of EUR 1.574 billion (2.246 billion total contribution) to support measures in areas of employment, social inclusion, education and skills, access to services including healthcare and housing, non-discrimination and capacity building.

For the 2021-2027 period, approximately EUR 19.6 billion of ERDF were allocated to inclusive growth areas, comprising measures that should address Roma inclusion in the relevant Member States. These include support for infrastructure development, equipment, and access to mainstream quality services and non-segregated housing, together with investments in inclusive education, employment, health, social and childcare.

Member States have also received, under the TSI, support to strengthen the capacity of their public administrations at central, regional, and local level to tackle challenges confronting marginalised Roma populations. The TSI has notably helped Romania develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to implement its national Roma strategy.

Several Member States include measures in this direction under their national Recovery and Resilience plans. For instance, Bulgaria envisages the construction of 20 centres for young people from vulnerable groups, including Roma, for their upskilling in digital and financial areas to boost their employability and social inclusion.

The European Semester continues to monitor the situation of Roma and to guide Member States' reforms and investments to tackle persistent challenges. In the context of the 2024 European Semester cycle, country-specific analysis highlights challenges faced by Roma communities in certain Member States (BG, CZ, EL, HU, RO and SK). In this context, the 2025 mid-term review of cohesion-policy funding<sup>74</sup> provides an opportunity for Member States to assess and better target their programmes to address challenges related to Roma inclusion, notably those mentioned in the 2024 country-specific recommendations.<sup>75</sup>

### **EU action and support to promote Roma participation**

The Commission has continued its cooperation with the Member States holding the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU and with the European Parliament to ensure that Roma equality, inclusion and participation remain high on the political agenda. Cooperation with stakeholders includes the Roma Civil Monitoring initiative<sup>76</sup>, the CSO Consultation Group, the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet)<sup>77</sup> and the EURoma Network. The Commission has also supported the European networks of Roma organisations and provided them with the opportunity to implement schemes to support local Roma CSOs. In addition, the Commission has cooperated with the European Parliament and with Roma civil society to jointly mark days of significance for Roma, such as International Roma Day (8 April)<sup>78</sup>, the EU's Roma Week<sup>79</sup>,

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<sup>74</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions](#): The Member State shall submit an assessment for each programme on the outcome of the mid-term review, including a proposal for the definitive allocation of the flexibility amount referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 86(1), to the Commission by 31 March 2025.

<sup>75</sup> 2024 European Semester: [Country Reports - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#), [Country Specific Recommendations / Commission Recommendations - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>76</sup> [Roma Civil Monitor 2021-2025](#).

<sup>77</sup> [Equinet – European Network of Equality Bodies \(equineteurope.org\)](#).

<sup>78</sup> [International Roma Day](#).

<sup>79</sup> [EU Roma Week](#).

and the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day (2 August)<sup>80</sup>. The Commission has secured a strong partnership with the CSO Consultation Group for the organisation of the annual European Roma Platform for Roma Inclusion, so as to ensure meaningful exchanges with all stakeholders concerned<sup>81</sup>.

Through the CERV programme, the Commission continued to assist NRCPs to set up or strengthen the national Roma platforms and ensure Roma participation in decision-making processes, in particular by Roma women and youth. The 2024 call for proposals for NRCPs has been reformed to allow for applications by NRCPs in partnership with Roma and pro-Roma CSOs.

### **EU action and support to promote equality and fight antigypsyism**

The Commission continued to promote positive narratives and Roma role-models, and the fight against antigypsyism, stereotyping, anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech. It did this through both the High-Level Group on Combating Hate Speech and Hate Crime<sup>82</sup> and the High-Level Group on Non-Discrimination, Equality and Diversity<sup>83</sup>.

The Commission continued its joint work with the Council of Europe, through the ongoing EQUIROM programme to promote – among others - unbiased and ethical media reporting on Roma<sup>84</sup>. A new joint programme entitled ‘Roma Memory’<sup>85</sup> was also launched in June 2024 to promote awareness and remembrance of the Roma Holocaust.

The follow up on the Communication *No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred*<sup>86</sup> will explore how to maximise the potential of data collection and analysis by FRA on Roma equality, inclusion and participation to contribute to EU efforts in the fight against hatred.

Through the CERV programme, the Commission continues to fund projects which combat racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination, including manifestations of antigypsyism. Additionally, the Erasmus+ programme funds projects which promote Roma inclusion in education, culture, sport, and health. As part of the efforts to achieve the European Education Area (EEA) by 2025, the EEA Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training published an issue paper on tackling different forms of discrimination in and through education and training, including on discrimination against Roma.<sup>87</sup>

Other EU initiatives to promote Roma equality include: (i) HERO<sup>88</sup>, on housing and employment for vulnerable Roma families; (ii) the joint EU and Council of Europe programmes INSCHOOL<sup>89</sup> on education and (iii) ROMACT<sup>90</sup> for local stakeholders and authorities to

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<sup>80</sup> [European Parliament Resolution on the occasion of International Roma Day - Anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II.](#)

<sup>81</sup> [European Roma Platform & Roma Summits.](#)

<sup>82</sup> [High-Level Group on combating hate speech and hate crime.](#)

<sup>83</sup> [High-Level Group on non-discrimination, equality and diversity.](#)

<sup>84</sup> [Journalism Excellence Awards 2024.](#)

<sup>85</sup> [Roma Holocaust Remembrance and Education \(RomaMemory\).](#)

<sup>86</sup> No place for hate: a Europe united against hatred, [JOIN\(2023\) 51 final.](#)

<sup>87</sup> [Issue Paper: Tackling different forms of discrimination in and through education and training.](#)

<sup>88</sup> [HERO Project: Housing and Empowerment for Roma \(hero-project.org\).](#)

<sup>89</sup> [Inschool Project - Inclusive schools Making a difference for Roma children \(coe.int\).](#)

<sup>90</sup> [ROMACT - BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ROMA INCLUSION AT LOCAL LEVEL \(coe-romact.org\).](#)

properly use EU funds to improve the living conditions of the most marginalised, including the Roma.

## **CONCLUSION**

Member States and enlargement countries have started to put in place the necessary structures and processes for the effective implementation of their national Roma frameworks. They have developed and started implementing new programmes and actions in line with the guidance provided by the Commission in its 2023 stock-taking. Several Member States have strengthened the role of their NRCPs by allocating more resources and reinforcing cross-sectoral coordination. There are some positive developments in fighting and preventing antigypsyism at the national level. In addition, a number of Member States are prioritising inclusive education and Roma participation.

However, based on the information provided by Member States in this first round of reporting, the current level of ambition is still insufficient to guarantee the achievement of the minimum progress set by the EU 2030 targets. Altogether, 12 Member States and the enlargement countries still lack clear targets associated with realistic indicators to measure the progress and impact of measures, including at regional and local levels. Moreover, some NRCPs lack institutional capacity to mobilise other governmental departments, local authorities, and CSOs in the implementation of the national Roma frameworks, EU cohesion policy programmes, and the Recovery and Resilience Plans.

Preventing and combating antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma is a prerequisite for sustainable progress in all other areas. Member States and enlargement countries should proceed rapidly and decisively with the implementation of their programmes and measures in this respect. Member States affected by widespread and persistent spatial and educational segregation, in particular those with large Roma populations, should tackle these issues more vigorously by setting clear targets and devising integrated interventions that match the scale of the problem. They should make optimal use of available EU funding for this purpose.

To achieve the positive change envisaged by the EU Roma strategic framework, more efforts are needed. The upcoming FRA Roma survey, to be released in 2025, will be instrumental in measuring progress and will feed into the 2026 Commission report on progress in implementing the EU and national Roma frameworks.

The Commission, following this assessment and its initial guidance from 2023, invites the Member States to use these findings in the implementation of their national Roma frameworks and their next reporting, which is due in 2025.

The Commission is firmly committed to support Member States in building together a Union where equality, inclusion and participation are a reality for Roma people.

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