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PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

A Union of Equality:

**EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation and its
accompanying proposal for a revised Council recommendation on national Roma
strategic frameworks for equality, inclusion and participation**

{COM(2020) 620 final} - {COM(2020) 621 final}

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GLOSSARY

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
AI	Amnesty International
CCME	Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
CEU	Central European University
CoE	Council of Europe
COMECE	Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
CRR	Centre for Reproductive Rights
CSRs	Country Specific Recommendations
DG	Directorate-General
DG AGRI	DG Agriculture
DG CNECT	DG Communications Network, Content and Technology
DG COMM	DG Communication
DG EAC	DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG ECFIN	DG Economic and Financial Affairs
DG EMPL	DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG ENV	DG Environment
DG ESTAT	DG European Statistics
DG HOME	DG Migration and Home Affairs
DG HR	DG Human Resources and Security
DG JRC	DG Joint Research Centre
DG JUST	DG Justice and Consumers
DG MOVE	DG Mobility and Transport
DG NEAR	DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REFORM	DG for Structural Reform Support

DG REGIO	DG Regional and Urban Policy
DG RTD	DG Research and Innovation
DG SANTE	DG Health and Food Safety
DG SG	DG Secretariat General
DG SJ	DG Legal Service
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
EaSI	Employment and Social Innovation Programme
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EFC	European Foundation Centre
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
ENS	European Network on Statelessness
EP	European Parliament
EPHA	European Public Health Organisation
EPSCO	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
EQUINET	European Network of Equality Bodies
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERGO Network	European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network
ERIAC	European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
ERIO	European Roma Information Office
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
ERTF	European Roma and Travellers Forum
ESF	European Social Fund

ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ESIF/ESI Funds	European structural and investment funds
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
EU-MIDIS	European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey
EURoma	European network on social inclusion and Roma under structural funds
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisation working with the homeless
fn	Footnote
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FSG	Fundación Secretariado Gitano
Habitat	Habitat for Humanity
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISG	Inter-service Group (EC internal)
ISSA	International Step-by-Step Association
IRU	International Romani Union
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NEETs	Not in employment, education or training
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organisation(s)
NRCP(s)	National Roma contact point(s)
NRIS	National Roma integration strategies and integrated sets of policy measures
ODIHR	OSCE Offices for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OHCHR	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
OPC	Open public consultation
OPRE	Operational Platform for Roma Equality
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSF	Open Society European Policy Institute

Phiren Amenca	Phiren Amenca International Network
RAA	Roma Active Albania
RED	Racial Equality Directive
REDI	Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative
REF	Roma Education Fund
ternYpe	ternYpe International Roma Youth Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

This document accompanies the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation 2021-2030 and the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on national Roma strategic frameworks for equality, inclusion and participation - as adopted by the Commission on 6 October 2020.

As set out in the [roadmap](#) for the initiative¹, no impact assessment was carried out. Instead, this document serves to explain the chosen policy approach, the consultation activities carried out and the intervention logic. The expected impacts strongly depend on the level of commitment to Roma equality and inclusion that Member States agree to in the Council recommendation and the national Roma strategic frameworks put in place thereafter. The initiative aims to raise commitment by proposing a portfolio of indicators with associated measures and targets for Member States to include in their national Roma strategic frameworks according to the specific situation of their Roma communities, as evidenced by data (wherever available). Nonetheless, an impact assessment cannot predict the level of ambition to which Member States are willing to commit. In addition, besides the general challenges of quantifying and monetising equality, non-discrimination and respect for fundamental rights, carrying out an impact assessment in the area of Roma equality and inclusion faces serious limitations in terms of ethnic data collection in the Member States.

2. POLITICAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

2.1. Political, legal and economic context

The ‘EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020’ (‘the (EU) Framework’) – adopted by the Commission² on 5 April 2011 is ending. Its main objectives were to tackle the socio-economic exclusion of Roma³ in the EU and enlargement countries by promoting their equal access to education, employment, health and housing⁴. The Framework invited Member States to design national Roma integration strategies and set achievable national goals to meet four EU Roma integration goals:

1. *Ensure that all Roma children complete, as a minimum, primary school education.*
2. *Cut the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population.*
3. *Reduce the gap in health status between the Roma and the rest of the population.*
4. *Close the gap between the share of Roma with access to housing and to public utilities (such as water, electricity, and gas) and that of the rest of the population.*

¹ This package of Communication and proposal for a Council Recommendation is referred to as ‘the initiative’ or ‘the (EU) strategic framework’ throughout this document.

² COM(2011) 173 final.

³ The term ‘Roma’ is used as an umbrella term to refer to a number of different groups e.g. Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal). It includes Travellers, the populations designated under the administrative term ‘Gens du voyage’ as well as people who identify themselves as Gypsies, Tsiganes or Tziganes without denying the specificities within these groups. The term also refers to those perceived as being Roma irrespective of their origin.

⁴ For the enlargement region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey), a fifth goal, access to civil documentation, was added.

For the enlargement region, the Framework included the Commission's commitment to help the region to improve the inclusion of Roma under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), strengthen the involvement of civil society, and closely monitor progress in the framework of the enlargement process.

In 2013, Member States adopted the Council Recommendation⁵ on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, reinforcing the EU Framework and constituting the first EU soft law instrument explicitly targeting Roma. The Recommendation:

- provided guidance to Member States to make their measures for Roma integration more effective and strengthen implementation of their National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS);
- recommended that Member States take effective policy measures to ensure equal treatment for Roma, including equal access to education, employment, healthcare and housing; indicated specific measures allowing for each of the four goals — ensuring equal access to education, employment, healthcare and housing — to be met;
- set out that these goals could be achieved either through mainstream or targeted measures, including specific ones to prevent or compensate for disadvantages, or by a combination of both, paying special attention to the gender dimension;
- reinforced the focus on anti-discrimination, referring explicitly to antigypsyism, and extended the work on Roma integration to new horizontal and structural areas beyond employment, education, health and housing;
- called on Member States to combat all forms of discrimination, including multiple discrimination, faced by Roma children and women, and fight violence, including domestic violence, against women and girls, trafficking in human beings, underage and forced marriages, and begging involving children, in particular through the enforcement of legislation; and
- called on Member States to communicate to the Commission on an annual basis, starting from 2016, the measures taken in line with the Recommendation and progress achieved in implementing the strategies⁶.

The Western Balkan partners endorsed the processes launched by the 2011 EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and, with the support of the European Commission and of the Regional Cooperation Council, took part in National Roma Integration Strategies, annual reporting on its implementation, Roma Country Seminars, National Platforms, Roma surveys, and established National Contact Points. In doing so, they have gone beyond their initial commitments and have demonstrated their capacity to align with requirements initially intended only for EU Member States.

The Western Balkans partners, similarly to the EU Member States Semester process, present annual Economic Reform Programmes (ERP), including reforms to boost competitiveness and improve conditions for inclusive growth and job creation. ERPs report on social inclusion, poverty reduction and equal opportunities, including Roma.

Council Conclusions of 8 December 2016⁷ asked the Commission 'to carry out a mid-term evaluation of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020 and to propose a post 2020 strategy on Roma integration, and include therein a proposal

⁵ EPSCO Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States.

⁶ The Western Balkan governments and Turkey started their annual reporting as of 2017.

⁷ [Council Conclusions](#) (EPSCO) of 8 December 2016: *Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration*.

for a revision of the Council Recommendation’. The Commission carried out the **mid-term evaluation of the Framework**, adopted in December 2018 a report⁸ on the evaluation and published the evaluation Staff Working Document⁹. The table below summarises the main findings of the mid-term evaluation.

Table 1: Summary of the findings of the mid-term evaluation with assessment by evaluation criterion

Evaluation criterion	Overall assessment	Detailed assessment	
RELEVANCE	Positive with limitations	Four priority areas were and remain key	
		Some shortcomings in initial design	
		Positive for equity between Roma and non-Roma	
		Negative for not targeting specific subgroups among Roma	
EFFECTIVENESS	Limited regarding progress towards Roma integration goals	Some progress towards the education goal	
		No progress towards the employment goal	
		Limited progress towards the health goal	
		No progress towards the housing goal	
	Positive regarding coordination	Positive regarding EU-level governance	
		Positive at EU and national level in promoting cooperation	
COHERENCE & EFFICIENCY	Positive at EU level	Coherence between EU framework and several EU policy, funding and legal instruments (Europe 2020, ESIF, antidiscrimination legislation, enlargement)	
		Variable mainstreaming into other policy instruments (insufficient, for example, under the European Pillar of Social Rights, Youth Guarantee)	
	Limited at national level & Limited regarding reported and monitoring systems	Insufficient mainstreaming into national public policies	
		NRIS contributed to fighting discrimination, hate speech and hate crime in some MS, while their contribution was minor in others. National funding allocated to the extent required by co-financing of ESIF. Limitations in implementation and alignment of ESIF with Roma integration goals. Reporting developed gradually, focusing on measures rather than results. Weaknesses to be addressed.	
		Comparable data for several, but not all Member States	
		Civil monitoring by coordinated NGO coalitions piloted since 2017	
		Costs and benefits not conclusively evaluable, quantifiable and attributable. While costs are short- to mid-term, the majority of potential benefits are long-term.	
	EU ADDED VALUE	Positive	Political
			Governance
			Financial
Limited sustainability requires continued EU engagement			

Assessment categories: ● very positive ● positive ● limited ● negative ● very negative ● unsorted

The evaluation demonstrated that the Framework’s ambition of ‘putting an end to the exclusion of Roma’ had not been achieved. The Commission’s evaluation report concluded, *inter alia*, ‘the evaluation has shown that the EU Framework is the beginning of a process that, despite many limitations and taking into account the massive task involved, has shown positive results and an initial change in trends’. This clearly showed its EU added value, in particular by placing Roma inclusion high on EU and national agendas and mobilising EU policy, legal and funding instruments. Without it, Roma inclusion would have received lower political commitment, less financial support and attention at national levels. It also underlined that ‘while the initial phase has achieved

⁸ COM(2018) 785 final.

⁹ SWD(2018) 480 final.

some tangible, albeit insufficient results, the evaluation submits that the overall process be strengthened and become better focused, with an emphasis on improved political commitment, the introduction of specific measurable targets and rigorous monitoring, and more effective implementation supported by sufficient funding and participatory governance systems’.

Since the finalisation of the evaluation, the Council, the European Parliament (EP) and EU-level and national civil society organisations have all called on the Commission to propose a strengthened EU Roma policy initiative for post-2020¹⁰. In February 2019, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution¹¹ on ‘the need for a strengthened post-2020 Strategic EU framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies and stepping up the fight against anti-Gypsyism’. The Resolution calls on the Commission ‘to act on the calls made by Parliament, the Council and numerous NGOs and experts and propose a Strategic EU Framework on National Roma Inclusion Strategies for the post-2020 period (...)’.

In September 2019, to enable better and informed policy making, the Commission adopted the 2019 report on the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, focusing on lessons learnt from the implementation of Roma inclusion measures and national strategies¹².

In October 2019, EPSCO¹³ adopted Council Conclusions on the Economy of Wellbeing¹⁴ inviting the Commission to ‘RENEW the commitment on Roma inclusion by developing new policy initiatives, including the adoption of a post-2020 European Framework Strategy’¹⁵. Detailed information about the contributions from EU-level, national and local civil society organisations is included in [Annex 1](#) summarising stakeholder consultations.

Reacting to these calls in January 2020, the Commission included a new initiative on Roma equality and inclusion in the ‘Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions’ Communication¹⁶ and its Work Programme¹⁷ for 2020 and published a roadmap. The adjusted Work Programme for 2020 reconfirmed this initiative¹⁸. Additionally beneficial for the new initiative is also the context created by the [European Green Deal](#)¹⁹. With its potential to reshape profoundly Europe’s political landscape, governance and economy, it requires environmental, climate and social transitions, guided by the goal of reducing inequalities.

¹⁰ See in particular calls from the [Parliament, the Council](#) and [civil society organisations](#).

¹¹ The [resolution](#) called on the Commission ‘to act on the calls made by Parliament, the Council and numerous NGOs and experts and propose a Strategic EU Framework on National Roma’. One should note that the EP Resolution did not ask for a specific antigypsyism initiative but ‘to place the fight against anti-Gypsyism at the heart of the Strategic EU Framework, including by adding a specific anti-discrimination goal, along with other goals (...)’.

¹² COM(2019) 406 final, SWD(2019) 320 final.

¹³ Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council.

¹⁴ The [Council Conclusions](#); which invite the Commission to ‘RENEW the commitment on Roma inclusion by developing new policy initiatives, including the adoption of a post-2020 European Framework Strategy’.

¹⁵ See also the [European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2020](#) on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: combating negative attitudes towards people with Romani background in Europe ([P9_TA\(2020\)0229](#)).

¹⁶ COM(2020) 14 final.

¹⁷ COM(2020) 37 final.

¹⁸ COM(2020) 440 final.

¹⁹ COM(2019) 640 final.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the extreme exposure of excluded and marginalised Roma communities to both short-term negative health and fundamental right impacts and mid-term socio-economic impacts, and the urgent need for a more efficient and comprehensive policy response with guidance from the European level. The use of restrictive measures in the legitimate aim of protecting public health in some Member States reinforced discrimination and violence against marginalised Roma²⁰. The spread of fake news, the improper narratives of political figures and [ethnification](#) of the issue in the media, portraying Roma living in settlements or ghettos as a public threat or their use as scapegoats accentuated fear and hate against the Roma²¹.

When it comes to the **EU legal framework**, the Racial Equality Directive prohibits discrimination including harassment based on racial or ethnic origin²². The Charter of fundamental rights of the EU prohibits discrimination on any grounds including on race and ethnic origin and ensures the protection of the rights of the child²³. In addition, the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA obliges Member States to criminalise hate speech and hate crime, including against Roma²⁴, while Directive 2012/29/EU establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime²⁵, paying particular attention to victims who have suffered from biased or discrimination-motivated crimes. The Audio-visual Media Services Directive calls upon the Member States to ensure that audio-visual media services do not contain incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of a group based on any of the grounds referred to in Article 21 of the EU Charter, which include race and ethnic origin²⁶.

2.2. Aligning EU funds and policy

The EU's main instrument of investment in people and implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) shall support, complement and add value to Member States' policies to ensure equal opportunities, access to the labour market, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion. In particular, Principle 1 on quality and inclusive education, Principle 3 on equal opportunities, Principle 4 on active support to employment, Principle 19 on access to adequate housing, and Principle 20 on access to essential services should serve as a basis for programming both mainstream and targeted measures.

²⁰ In a [press release](#) of 8 April 2020, FRA presented their report [Coronavirus pandemic in the EU: Fundamental Rights Implications](#), which looks at the measures across 27 EU Member States to address the pandemic during February and March 2020. The UN SG policy brief [Coronavirus and Human Rights: We are all in this together](#) touches upon the hindered enjoyment of human rights for marginalised communities, revealing underlying structural inequalities; see pp 11, 12.

²¹ Roma and (pro-)Roma civil society organisations came together and drew attention to the disproportionately negative impacts of the coronavirus outbreak and the security measures associated with it; for details, see this [ERGO report](#), [OSF's brief](#) on warning signs from six countries, and [ENAR's interactive EU-wide map](#) covering coronavirus negative impact on the fundamental rights of racialized groups (Roma included).

²² 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](#)).

²³ [OJ C 303, 14.12.2007, p. 17](#).

²⁴ [OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 55](#).

²⁵ [OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57](#).

²⁶ Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) ([OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, pp 69–92](#)). The Directive also strives that Member States ensure that media service providers do not include or promote discrimination based on, among others, racial or ethnic origin.

Support for Roma communities should come under all specific objectives, with the ultimate goal of *inclusion of Roma into mainstream education, the mainstream labour market, mainstream healthcare, mainstream housing and essential services and mainstream society in general*. Exclusion of Roma from the specific objectives would constitute discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin, forbidden by the Council Directive 2000/43/EC²⁷. The principle of **explicit but not exclusive targeting** requires guarantees that the interventions reach Roma but also other marginalised communities. The aim of targeted programmes is to provide additional support to promote effective equal access for Roma and other marginalised communities facing similar disadvantages to rights and mainstream services.

The gravity of the individual challenges in each policy area and the interdependence of the problems calls for a **multi-dimensional integrated approach**, combining investments in employment, education, healthcare and housing. Within these policy areas, ESF investments must be coherent with other EU funds and programmes, including ERDF, EAFRD, InvestEU, EaSI and the new Recovery and Resilience Facility. Therefore, Roma inclusion should be addressed through multiple specific objectives by different funds in an integrated manner.

Likewise, outcomes-based funding from the relevant facilities and any of the available resources could promote and support comprehensive and multi-focal interventions. The latter have a preventative scope, seeking to intervene at the root cause level, involve local communities in the co-design and co-production of projects, promote transparency and accountability for results achieved, as well as innovation and collaboration of involved stakeholders.

In the case of marginalised groups including Roma, there is a clear need of **reinforced administrative capacity** at the local level, including capacity and capability building for local authorities and grassroots civil society organisations. This point is crucial for effective participative planning, ownership, efficient and transparent management and sustainable implementation.

2.2.1. The 2014-2020 programming period

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) contributed to the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) up to 2020²⁸. To increase the effectiveness of the funds, the Cohesion Policy regulatory framework included ex-ante conditionalities. Under the social inclusion objective, one of the conditionalities required the existence of a national Roma integration strategy. Generally, tangible and visible Roma inclusion measures receive support by ESI Funds in the 2014-2020 period responding to the challenges identified. The complex needs of Roma communities accounted for the promotion of an integrated approach, coordinating different measures supported by several funding streams, such as the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development (EAFRD) and others.

The ESF played a significant role in supporting the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies during the 2014-2020 programming period. The negotiations of

²⁷ 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](#)).

²⁸ COM(2011) 173 final.

this period's operational programmes paid particular attention to putting in place the right policy framework for Roma integration as well as securing the clear correspondence between the Country Specific Recommendations on Roma integration and ESF programming. The assessment of modifications to ESF operational programmes has also considered this.

The 2014-2020 specific investment priority on Roma integration has allowed 10 Member States²⁹, including those with a Country Specific Recommendation on Roma, to program more than €1.5 billion for the integration of marginalised communities, including Roma. In addition, the other ESF investment priorities on social inclusion as well as the other thematic objectives on employment and education can also be mobilised in favour of Roma. By the end of 2019, the ESF has supported 3.9 million participants who were migrants, of a foreign background or part of a marginalised community, such as the Roma.

However, implementation on the ground is lagging behind, with big gaps between available allocations to these investment priorities and selected operations. Concerning evaluation, an overarching issue highlighted by a recent [study](#) is the lack of robust evidence on the impact of interventions. A rigorous implementation of a results-focused approach might improve investments on Roma inclusion.

The ERDF financed several important Roma integration areas, such as access to inclusive (non-segregated) early childhood education and care, primary education, infrastructure developments in health and social services, support to regeneration of deprived urban and rural areas, and non-segregated housing actions. Overall, €21.5 billion ERDF has been allocated to measures mentioned above, which fall under the growth objective in the 2014-2020 period.

The EAFRD has supported the basic services development in rural areas and local bottom up initiatives under LEADER. In this sense, 14 billion euros EARD has been allocated to those measures under the programming period 2014-2020 under the Common Agricultural Policy.

Tackling segregation in housing and education is a complex and critical issue, challenging for both ERDF and ESF measures. Taking into account these challenges, the Roma policy objectives and the EU anti-discrimination law provisions, the Commission prepared a [guidance](#) for Member States on the use of EU Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation. Its aim is to help in designing calls to support building inclusive education and housing measures for Roma, and in response to the infringement procedures launched against Czechia, Hungary, and Slovakia. Member States (Czechia, Hungary, Romania) receive support on the implementation of the guidance note from contracted experts.

Additionally, the 2014-2020 programming period saw a reinforcement of both the urban and territorial dimensions of the Cohesion Policy. Accordingly, several Member States prioritised addressing the needs of people living in disadvantaged micro-regions or segregated neighbourhoods. Hungary and Slovakia launched comprehensive programs for Roma. They targeted Roma communities by using territorial indicators (e.g. most deprived micro-regions, localities with high density of Roma people) and introduced

²⁹ BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO, and SK.

complex measures. Romania used a newly introduced tool, i.e. the community-led local development, for Roma integration measures.

The IPA II programme played a significant role in supporting the implementation of national Roma integration policies in the Western Balkans and Turkey during the 2014-2020 period. The amount of funds has significantly increased compared to IPA I, especially concerning regional projects. IPA financed a broad number of important Roma integration areas. Especially important has been the assistance in the fields of education, housing, local level and support to CSO.

2.2.2. *The 2021-2027 programming period*

The new **Recovery and Resilience Facility** will support investments and reforms essential to a lasting recovery and foster economic and social resilience and social cohesion. In order to receive support, Member States will have to draw up recovery and resilience plans addressing the economic and social impacts of the crisis; the digital and green transitions and the relevant priorities identified in Country Specific Recommendations under the European Semester. Support will be provided in several policy areas (including those covered by the sectoral objectives in this framework) and will take account of the effective inclusion of disadvantaged groups, including Roma.

In the Commission proposals for the 2021-2027 Common Provisions Regulation (“CPR”) and ESF+ Regulation, Article 6(1) of the ESF+ proposal ensures that all programmes shall promote equal opportunities for all, without discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation throughout their preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Paragraph (2) of the same article calls on Member States and the Commission to support specific targeted actions to promote equality and non-discrimination.

Specific objective (viii) under Article 4(1) ESF+ refers to promoting the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, such as the Roma³⁰. This specific objective is linked to the thematic enabling condition 4.3.2 of a National Roma Integration Strategy (Annex IV CPR), whose criteria have been identified based on the findings of the 2018 evaluation of the EU Framework and the 2019 report on implementation at national level. The criteria to be met relate to: a) the need to prevent and eliminate segregation; b) reflecting diversity among Roma (gender dimension, situation of Roma youth); c) arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review of Roma inclusion measures, including setting a baseline, and measurable targets; d) arrangements for mainstreaming at regional and local level; and e) arrangements to ensure that design, implementation, monitoring and review is in cooperation with Roma civil society and other stakeholders. Member States programming under specific objective (viii) will have to ensure compliance with the thematic enabling condition on Roma.

Specific objective (viii) will also count towards the obligatory thematic concentration for all Member States related to social inclusion, as stated in Article 7(3) ESF+ proposal: *‘Member States shall allocate at least 25% of their ESF+ resources under shared management to the specific objectives for the social inclusion policy area set out in points (vii) to (xi) of Article 4(1), including the promotion of the socio-economic integration of third country nationals’.*

³⁰ Agreement in trilogue for splitting SO (viii) of Commission proposal.

Moreover, to enhance the link with the European Semester, Article 7(2) ESF+ proposal includes an obligation that *‘Member States shall allocate an appropriate amount of their ESF+ resources under shared management to address challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and Article 148(4) TFEU and in the European Semester falling within the scope of the ESF+ as set out in Article 4’*.

Therefore, Member States with challenges in the field of Roma inclusion within their Annex D and Country Specific Recommendations should thoroughly address these through the ESF+.

Concerning **partnership**, Article 8(1) of the ESF+ Regulation calls on Member States to ensure adequate participation of social partners and civil society organisations in the delivery of employment, education and social inclusion policies supported by the ESF+ strand under shared management.

Furthermore, according to Article 8(2), an appropriate amount of ESF+ resources under shared management must be allocated in each programme for the capacity building of social partners and civil society organisations. Therefore, support for the **capacity building of civil society organisations, including those representing Roma communities**, remains a priority. The Code of conduct on partnership remains in force for the preparation of the post-2020 programmes and throughout all the stages of implementation.

The 2021-2027 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance will continue to support reforms and alignment with EU requirements at regional and national levels by the enlargement countries. Additional relevant EU funds, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, may also be mobilised in the programming period 2021-2027 to support socio-economic inclusion, equality and participation of Roma in the neighbourhood region.

Lastly, according to the draft CAP Strategic Plan regulation, the CAP specific objective 8 will be dedicated to “promote employment, growth, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including bio-economy and sustainable forestry”.

3. PROBLEM DEFINITION

3.1. What are the problems?

Despite the existence of policy, legal and funding frameworks at national and EU level, the marginalisation of Roma persists and many of the estimated 10-12 million Roma in Europe³¹ continue to face inequalities, socio-economic exclusion, antigypsyism³² and discrimination in their daily lives³³.

³¹ Council of Europe estimates were included as an Annex to COM(2011) 173 final; the estimated shares of Roma in EU countries range from 10.3% in Bulgaria, 9.1% in Slovakia, 8.3% in Romania, 7.5% in Hungary, 2.5% in Greece, 2% in the Czech Republic, 1.6% in Spain to less than 1% in most of the other countries (a large number of which living in remote rural territories). As regards the enlargement region, the CoE estimates range from 9.59% in North Macedonia, 8.18% in Serbia, 3.83% in Turkey, 3.18% in Albania, 2.95% in Montenegro, 1.47% in Kosovo to 1.09% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Estimates for the Eastern Neighbourhood region range from approximately 2.49% in Moldova to less than 0.6% in the rest of the region. CoE does not provide any estimates for the Southern Neighbourhood region.

There is a risk that the mid- to long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including adverse socio-economic impacts, hit the most rights-deprived and marginalised Roma communities the hardest, contributing to further inequalities and discrimination³⁴.

Reducing inequalities and preventing their possible further increase because of the crisis, overcoming exclusion and discrimination, and achieving inclusive prosperity and equity require long-term commitments.

Structural changes need time and real impact, such as impact resulting from the better education of Roma children, which may not become visible for at least another generation.

Too many Roma face extreme poverty, unemployment, sub-standard education in segregated schools and classes, inadequate housing, poor health and wellbeing. **Social exclusion** reinforces resentment against Roma, making their marginalisation socially acceptable and bolstering antigypsyism. Roma women, in particular, continue to fare worse than Roma men and women in the general population in key areas such as health, education and employment³⁵. Many Roma also face specific geographical vulnerabilities linked to rural remoteness.

The Roma integration indicators scoreboard (2011-2016)³⁶ presents changes in the situation of Roma in nine EU Member States as recorded by two surveys of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) carried out in 2011 and in 2016. It uses 18 indicators in four main thematic areas (education, housing, employment and health) and the crosscutting area of poverty. For the Western Balkans, surveys carried out in 2011 and 2017 followed the FRA methodology³⁷. In addition, new survey data for five Member

³² Antigypsyism is a historically rooted structural phenomenon, which may appear at institutional, social and interpersonal level. As stated by [ENAR](#), it is ‘fuelled by deeply rooted negative stereotyping by mainstream society’. Despite the consensus on the understanding of antigypsyism, the debate on the terminology is ongoing. The first official text to speak of ‘anti-Gypsyism/Romaphobia’ is considered the EP resolution on the situation of Roma in the EU adopted on 28 April 2005 (preamble paras C, R, decisions 3, 4, 8, 25). Subsequent resolutions employ the same terminology, e.g. EP resolution on the situation of Roma women in the EU adopted on 1 June 2006 (decision 22), EP resolution on a European strategy on the Roma adopted on 31 January 2008 (preamble para L, decision 4). For more evidence on the use, see Michaël Guet, *Speech for the Anti-Discrimination Workshop under the Hungarian Presidency of the Decade for Roma Inclusion* (Budapest, 16 April 2008) pp 1-4 (‘2008 speech’). The Commission recognises antigypsyism and uses the spelling proposed by the Alliance against Antigypsyism, while accepting that different terms might be appropriate in national contexts. See the Commission’s [Conclusions paper on Antigypsyism: increasing its recognition to better understand and address its manifestations](#), November 2017 and Jarmila Lajčáková, Marek Hojsík and Mirjam Karoly, [Combatting Antigypsyism](#), Expert report building on forward-looking aspects of the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, January 2020.

³³ For detailed data describing the socio-economic situation of Roma, see SWD(2019) 320 and Annex 2 with national baselines. For trends over time, see SWD(2017) 286 final/2 and SWD(2018) 480 final.

³⁴ See reports stemming from [civil society organisations](#) (fn 21) and from equality bodies alike. Notably, Equinet published an online [data explorer](#), an interactive tool giving access to their coronavirus database, which documents national equality bodies’ responses to the situation. The information, constantly updated, comprises actions taken, statements published, and complaints received in the coronavirus context.

³⁵ FRA, [Roma women in 9 EU Member States](#), 2019.

³⁶ SWD(2017) 286 final/2.

³⁷ For the situation in the Western Balkans enlargement countries, see [World Bank analysis](#), the [Regional Roma Survey Briefs](#) and the [RCC Balkan Barometer](#).

States with a lower share of Roma communities³⁸ confirmed the overall trends in socio-demographic situation and experiences of discrimination identified in the surveys covering Member States with larger Roma population.

Overall, progress in Roma integration has been limited since the Framework's adoption in 2011, albeit with significant differences across policy areas and countries³⁹. While there has been some progress in education and health, the employment and housing conditions recorded no progress. In education, the progress achieved between 2011 and 2016 related to improvements in early school-leaving, early childhood education and compulsory schooling⁴⁰. However, the situation with respect to segregation has further deteriorated and, based on the Racial Equality Directive, the Commission has initiated infringement procedures over the school segregation of Roma children against three countries⁴¹. Roma poverty risk and self-perceived health status has improved between 2011 and 2016⁴², but medical coverage continues to be limited⁴³. Access to employment did not improve in any statistically significant way and the share of young Roma not in employment, education or training has even increased⁴⁴. The housing situation remains difficult⁴⁵. Roma women and children continue to be victims of violence, including trafficking in human beings⁴⁶.

In Western Balkans, the regional Roma survey data of 2011 and 2017 show that little progress toward Roma inclusion was achieved in the five priority areas identified by the Commission: education, employment, health, housing and essential services, and documentation. Notably, data show a substantial deterioration in labour force participation and employment across Western Balkans, with a consequent lack of progress in narrowing the gaps relative to non-Roma neighbours.

Discrimination and antigypsyism⁴⁷ continue to contribute to severe disadvantages in all spheres of life, despite evidence of a reduction in Roma's discrimination experiences when accessing some service areas. Roma keep facing deep-rooted negative public perceptions and prejudice. In October 2019, the Commission released the most recent

³⁸ BE, FR, IE, NL, and SE. The Roma and Travellers Survey was conducted in 2019. Its first results are feeding the national baseline data included in Annex 2. See FRA (2020), [Roma and Travellers in six countries](#).

³⁹ SWD(2017) 286 final/2 and SWD(2018) 480. Additionally, the report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies includes an assessment of the situation in EU Member States and enlargement countries; see [COM\(2019\) 406 final and SWD\(2019\) 320 final](#).

⁴⁰ The share of early school leavers dropped from 87% to 68%, attendance of early childhood education increased from 47% to 53%, while the percentage of compulsory-schooling-age children attending education jumped from 86% to 90%; based on [SWD\(2017\) 458 final— FRA Roma integration scoreboard](#).

⁴¹ CZ, SK, and HU.

⁴² The rate of poverty risk dropped from 86% to 80% accompanied by a dramatic increase in the health status perceived as (very) good from 55% to 68%. See *ibid*.

⁴³ Medical insurance coverage rates recorded no significant changes, fluctuating from 76% to 74%. See *ibid*.

⁴⁴ As an example, 63% of young Roma were NEET (not in education, employment or training) in 2016 as opposed to 56% in 2011. *Ibid*.

⁴⁵ For instance, the share of people living in households without tap water reached 30% in 2016 (i.e. remained at roughly the same level as in 2011, that is, 29%). Similarly, no changes occurred in the case of those living in households without basic sanitary facilities, with percentages staying at roughly the same level in 2016 (38%) as in 2011 (36%), *ibid*.

⁴⁶ For example, COM(2019) 406 final; SWD(2019) 320 final, SWD(2018) 473 final, SWD(2018) 480 final, [EESC opinion: The situation of Roma women](#) (Exploratory opinion from the European Parliament) SOC/585-EESC-2018.

⁴⁷ See fn 32, fn 57 and section [7.2.2](#).

Eurobarometer survey results⁴⁸ on the perception of Roma in the general population, following up Eurobarometer surveys in 2012 and 2015. The results reveal that acceptance of Roma in different spheres of life has improved. Sixty-four percent of Europeans (10 percentage points more than four years before) would feel comfortable working with a Roma colleague and 48% (nine percentage points more than four years before) would welcome Roma as the partner of their children. There are however significant differences between the Member States. At the same time, 61% of the respondents feel that discrimination against Roma is widespread in their country, with this ground considered as more widespread than any other is. Only 19% (albeit seven percentage points more than in 2012) of the respondents think their country's efforts to integrate its Roma population are effective.

Data from the 2019 Balkan Barometer⁴⁹ issued by the Regional Cooperation Council reveal that although there is an overall minor, but positive trend since 2017 towards the inclusion of Roma into Western Balkan societies, Roma in the Western Balkans remain victims of negative socio-economic biases and continue to profit from fewer affirmative actions than other minorities in the societies. Approximately 75% of the Western Balkans populations respond positively towards working or doing business with Roma while 20% would feel comfortable welcoming Roma as a partner or a partner of their children. However, about 66% express a feeling of discomfort when faced with this latter scenario.

Furthermore, the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak came to widen the longstanding exclusion, poverty and discrimination against Roma⁵⁰. In response to the crisis, some Member States⁵¹ and the [enlargement countries](#) put in place both mainstream and targeted emergency and preventive measures to protect their population, including marginalised Roma communities. However, several emergency measures, such as hand washing with warm water, proved a challenge for the 30% of Roma living in households with no tap water. Compliance with personal hygiene recommendations was also questionable, as 40% of Roma lack sanitary facilities in their dwellings. In some Member States, up to 80% of Roma live in cramped, overcrowded neighbourhoods, which made physical distancing, a key element of preventive public health measures, next to impossible⁵². In remote rural territories, Roma face even more disadvantages: isolation, high concentration of poor people and lack of population diversity, absence of alternative solutions in case of unavailability of basic public services, high risk of exploitation and abuses. The lack of economic activity locally, the limits in municipality's own margin of manoeuvre (including means, political will or competences), and insufficient public transport prevents the population from benefitting from job and education opportunities in neighbouring urban centres.

Additionally, the mid-term socio-economic impacts of the pandemic risk engendering further inequalities for the Roma. For instance, remote learning through digital education is most often not accessible and/or affordable for marginalised Roma children, lacking adequate or any IT equipment, and/or internet connection or sometimes, even

⁴⁸ Special Eurobarometer 493: [Discrimination in the EU](#).

⁴⁹ 2019 [RCC Balkan Barometer](#). The Balkan Barometer has been issued annually since 2016.

⁵⁰ See fn 20.

⁵¹ For further information on the impact and the measures or actions undertaken by Member States to approach the coronavirus crisis with respect to Roma communities, as reported by National Roma Contact Points and DG JUST's civil society and partner organisations, see this [overview report](#).

⁵² According to data sourced from [FRA's EU MIDIS II](#). On a slightly more general scale, this [informal overview](#) is a work-in-progress compilation of links and references with information on how the coronavirus pandemic affected the health and well-being of migrants and members of ethnic minorities.

electricity. Absent effective targeted support measures, inequalities in education risk further deepening. In addition, due to the containment measures, Roma women's disproportionate exposure to domestic violence and abuse heightened their vulnerability during the health crisis.

Many Roma living in segregated settlements found themselves cut from any source of income and formal or informal economic activity, leading to rising unemployment and poverty. The COVID-19 outbreak halted most business activities, which led to income and job losses. For the Roma working in Western European Member States in the highly insecure non-formal sector (seasonal jobs, unregulated contracts) and generally lacking financial buffers (i.e. savings), the consequences were dire. The loss of jobs pushed waves of Roma to return to their (predominantly Eastern European) home countries. Against a background of ineffective access to social protection, many Roma EU mobile workers saw themselves deprived of any social or unemployment benefits. Moreover, on top of the current experiences of discrimination across the EU, once returned at home, they faced new instances of discrimination, which translated into heightened insecurity, online and offline hate comments, and scapegoating⁵³.

Overall, the difficulties Roma in Europe face can be summarised as follows:

Rights

- Persisting inequality and discrimination (including stereotypes, hate speech, scapegoating of Roma, lack of recognition by the majority population of such instances of discrimination)

Equitable (re)distribution

- Insufficient Roma participation in quality mainstream (including distant) education
- Insufficient Roma participation in paid, quality and sustainable (self-) employment, with high rates of Roma working in the informal sector
- Insufficient Roma access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services⁵⁴
- Poor Roma health and insufficient Roma access to quality health and preventive services
- Inter-generational transmission of poverty and material deprivation among Roma
- Insufficient access to financial services

Representation

- Lack of participation of Roma in policy- and decision-making (including political representation), lack of civic engagement and electoral participation

⁵³ A collection of 191 cases gathered from media and NGO reports between January and April 2020 evidences violations of fundamental rights of racialized groups (including Roma) by country in a range of key areas including healthcare, housing, employment, racist violence and speech, as well as racial profiling and police brutality. For details, see ENAR's [interactive EU-wide map](#) with related key findings and UN SG's policy brief (fn 20). For more Roma-specific evidence, see [ERGO report](#) and [OSF's brief](#) on warning signs from six countries.

⁵⁴ Such as tap water, adequate sanitation, waste collection- and management services, electricity, gas.

3.2. What are the problem drivers?

Roma exclusion and inequality has existed for centuries, with problem drivers often interrelated, varying according to specific country situations, depending on external factors⁵⁵ and needing comprehensive approaches. Problem drivers and hence the need for public intervention relate to behavioural biases, equity (of endowments, process and outcomes)⁵⁶. They are also connected to governance/regulatory problems and the inter-generational transmission of poverty. More specifically, the problem drivers can be grouped as follows:

Related to behavioural biases

- **Antigypsyism, stereotypes and prejudice among the general public.** These can be due to a number of co-existing factors,⁵⁷ such as the portrayal of Roma in education, political narratives and media, coupled with a general lack of knowledge and awareness (of the mutual benefits of Roma equality and inclusion and the challenges of exclusion and discrimination, including general ignorance about slavery, deprivation of rights, persecution and Holocaust). Rising populism in Europe (further exacerbated in times of crises, like during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw an [ethnisation](#) of the issue in the media) also plays an important role⁵⁸
- As a result of such narratives and attitudes, **lack of trust** among Roma towards mainstream institutions and non-Roma⁵⁹, but also lack of rights awareness and underreporting of discrimination and hate crime
- **Stereotypes and prejudice within Roma communities** (as well as traditional expectations towards Roma women)

Related to lack of equity⁶⁰ as driver

- Territorial inequalities related to lacking basic infrastructures and basic services in some rural areas affecting also, but not only, Roma population
- Specific obstacles to equal participation in education, such as misdiagnosis and misplacement of Roma children in special education or other forms of school and class segregation, including unequal or no access to online and/or distance learning
- Specific obstacles to equal participation in vocational training and employment, such as ineffective outreach of employment services, discrimination by employers, overrepresentation of Roma in parallel systems (such as public work

⁵⁵ Including the socio-economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

⁵⁶ See Tool no. 14 of the [Better Regulation Tool](#).

⁵⁷ For a detailed analysis on the multiple facets and features of the concept and phenomenon of antigypsyism, which turn it into a specific form of racism requiring an adequate, distinctive approach, different from other forms of racism, see section [7.2.2](#) (discussing one discarded policy option of tackling antigypsyism within a wider EU anti-racism policy).

⁵⁸ This [report](#) points to several instances of anti-Roma rhetoric employed to justify taking additional restrictive measures in Roma communities that did not apply to the rest of the population, within the context of measures to fight the coronavirus crisis. For more information on the fundamental rights implications, see [FRA's Bulletin](#).

⁵⁹ This was exacerbated further by the unequal access to information during the coronavirus pandemic. Physical segregation, lack of education, (digital) illiteracy and lack of access to the internet deprived many marginalised Roma of timely preventive information but also increased mistrust in the authorities, leading to misinterpretation of and protests against confinement measures.

⁶⁰ For choice of terminology, see the Tool no. 14 of the [Better Regulation Tool](#), pp 82-90.

schemes not leading to the formal labour market) or concentration of Roma in socio-economically disadvantaged regions

- Specific obstacles to equal access to social protection services due to the high participation of Roma in informal labour markets and limited access to decent jobs
- Specific obstacles to Roma access to healthcare services, such as lack of medical insurance, lack of identity documents, discrimination by health professionals, segregation in healthcare facilities, health impacts of living in segregated areas, overcrowded housing (as proven by experience with barriers to preventive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic), suffering from environmental hazards
- Specific obstacles to Roma access to adequate housing and basic infrastructure (water supply, sewage, road access, etc.), spatial segregation with regard to the location of housing, discrimination by landlords and public authorities, but also poverty leading to reduced financial means for repair works, renovation, payment of bills
- Specific obstacles to Roma access to financial services, with few financial institutions trusting Roma and thus precluding support needed through, e.g. microfinance
- High share of Roma children living in low work-intensity households

Related to governance

- Political commitment to Roma equality and inclusion at national level depends on political will of changing governments
- Lack of national quantitative and/or qualitative goals against which to monitor, measure and evaluate
- Public interventions failing to achieve objectives/poorly implemented/enforced/out of date/lacking relevance (for example, by not addressing the needs of EU mobile and migrant Roma and diversity overall as rendered obvious during the COVID-19 crisis)
- Lack of capacity of local, regional, national authorities to ensure outreach to disadvantaged/Roma, effective safeguards and inclusive public services, lack of capacity and ability to structure and implement projects
- Lack of good practices and working models for inclusion, which in turn contributes to the lack of political will and imagination and lower levels of investment
- Lack of rights awareness and civic duties among Roma, as well as lack of mutual reciprocity in obligations
- Insufficient evidence to monitor the approach of law enforcement when Roma are affected as victims (e.g. forced labour, trafficking in human beings, usury, child rights, domestic violence)
- Lack of Roma empowerment, lack of cooperation and trust among Roma and non-Roma, and among stakeholders of Roma inclusion

Related to inter-generational transmission of poverty

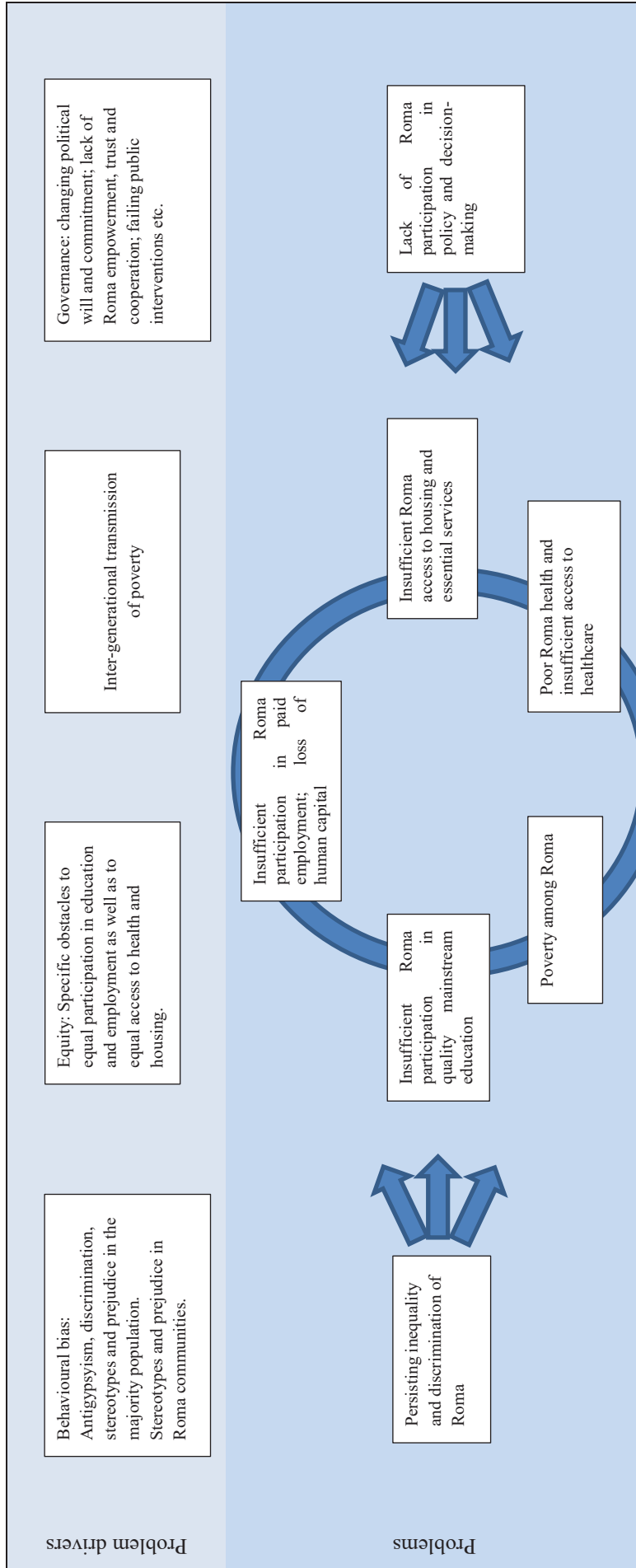
- Roma families trapped in a cycle of poverty often have either limited or no resources, no buffers to rely on in times of crises, no means to get out of poverty and provide themselves and their children with a better future. Low income and lack of basic financial literacy lead to barriers such as the impossibility to cover even bare necessities in times of crises, let alone pay for early education and care,

schooling and school material, transportation, housing and utilities such as water and electricity, and access to finance and microfinance institutions to create or support micro or small businesses

- Lower ‘mental bandwidth’ associated with living in scarcity, which also impedes long-term planning ability and hampers resilience

The chart below summarises the problem drivers and problems this initiative addresses.

Chart 1: Problem drivers and problems



4. WHY SHOULD THE EU ACT?

4.1. Legal basis

Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU, Articles 10 and 19(1) TFEU; Article 21(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

4.2. Subsidiarity: Necessity of EU action

Underlying shared values, such as equality and fundamental rights, and common objectives, such as economic prosperity, social cohesion and solidarity between Member States, call for a European role in Roma equality and inclusion policies. In addition, transnational mobility of Roma across EU Member States, in the context of freedom of movement and of the migration of Roma from third countries, makes Roma inclusion a joint EU-level objective.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the extreme exposure of excluded and marginalised Roma communities to both short-term negative health impacts and medium term socio-economic impacts. Many Roma communities suffered disproportionately because of their overall limited access to basic hygiene and sanitary infrastructure, limited access to clean water and healthcare services, high levels of economic precariousness, overcrowded households and segregated, overcrowded settlements or camps. There is also a clear risk that, because of the mid-term socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, inequalities will further increase. Distance and digital education, for instance, is often not accessible and/or affordable for marginalised Roma children, thus aggravating inequalities in education. The lockdown cut many Roma living in segregated settlements from any source of income and (formal or informal) economic activity, leading to rising poverty. Europe needs to ensure that the most disadvantaged do not disproportionately carry the burden of the pandemic and inequalities widen.

Stopping targeted EU action on Roma inclusion is likely to reduce political commitment and focus on Roma inclusion in both the EU Member States and enlargement countries, and lead to a sharp decrease in available funding. Stopping EU action is also likely to result in less and looser monitoring of the situation of Roma. At present, the effects of the EU Framework are unlikely to last after 2020 if there is no further EU guidance, monitoring and support. Most of the current national policies and structures created around the NRIS (NRCs, systems of coordination, monitoring and reporting, systems of consultation with civil society and Roma organisations) would stop or would be less functional and become more symbolic, if the EU Framework did not continue after 2020⁶¹. There is need for increased efforts at national level as well as more time to consolidate working structures, to align and mobilise further other policy, legal and financial instruments and to monitor better the impact of policies to feed policy learning and review. This view was also supported by a majority of the respondents to the public consultation⁶² (almost 60%), who believe that the EU still has a major role to play in supporting national, regional and local authorities as they cannot effectively improve the situation of Roma on their own.

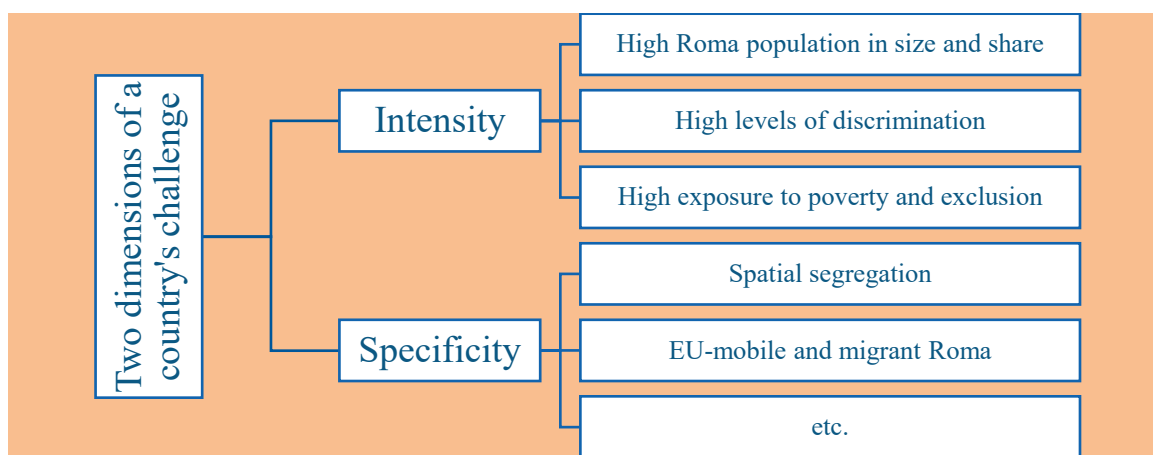
⁶¹ SWD(2018) 480 final.

⁶² See [Annex 1: Stakeholder Consultations](#).

It is important, however, to take into consideration that while all countries face challenges with guaranteeing inclusion and equality for Roma population, the scale and relevance of the challenges is different in two dimensions⁶³:

- **Intensity:** Intensity refers to the size and share (percentage) of the Roma population, but also to the extent to which they suffer a legacy of exclusion and discrimination. Roma exclusion tends to be more intense in economically less developed countries with a higher level of poverty among the general population.
- **Specificity:** There are specific problem drivers and specific issues that especially apply to some countries, but not to all (intra-EU mobility, migration, spatial segregation, problems with civil documents, etc.).

Chart 2: Intensity and specificity



In terms of policy responses, following the adoption of the EU Framework in 2011, Member States either adopted a specific strategy for Roma integration or are using a “set of measures” inscribing the topic into mainstream policies⁶⁴. The preferred courses of action differ also in terms of balance between the use of mainstream and targeted measures for Roma inclusion, allocation of specific funding, setting of baselines, use of national goals and related indicators as well as mandate and structure of the National Roma Contact Points.

4.3. Subsidiarity: Added value of EU action

The evaluation of the Framework clearly demonstrated the added value of EU action and the need for continuation. In particular, EU action so far has: (i) put Roma inclusion on the political EU and national agendas; (ii) raised attention to Roma issues in countries with smaller Roma populations; (iii) strengthened existing structures for Roma

⁶³ Expert Report on Country Clustering prepared for the 1 October 2019 workshop (internal reflection paper; unpublished). The report started from the widely shared agreement that the EU Framework had created important policy experiences, implementation structures and institutional awareness and sought to “provide a better understanding of the differences between Member States”.

⁶⁴ While the 2011 Communication call for a strategy in all countries, the 19 May 2011 EPSCO conclusions granted more leeway to Member States. It is here that reference was first made to ‘sets of measures’, calling on Member States ‘to prepare, update or develop their national Roma inclusion strategies, or integrated sets of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies, for improving the situation of Roma, by the end of 2011, taking into account their specific circumstances (...)’.

integration and contributed to the creation of new ones; (iv) ensured stability through its multiannual character; (v) provided policy guidance, monitoring and reporting frameworks supporting greater accountability and transparency; (vi) provided opportunities for mutual exchange and cooperation; (vii) enabled — through its comprehensive approach — Roma inclusion to be addressed from various policy perspectives as well as collaboration between different political and governmental levels; and (viii) ensured that European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) support implementation of the NRIS. While highlighting this clear EU added value, the evaluation⁶⁵ also identified weaknesses, pointing to **specific reform priorities** that should guide a reinforced and revised strategic framework.

‘The evaluation finds that without the EU Framework, Roma issues would receive less attention in the EU policy agenda. In some countries, NRIS may cease to exist; in others, they may become weak, further reducing political commitment to Roma inclusion. The ending of the Framework would result in less and looser monitoring and reporting. Some current national policies and targeted structures would stop or turn less functional and more symbolic’⁶⁶.

With regard to the enlargement region, the evaluation concluded that the objectives of the Framework have equally been promoted in the enlargement countries and finds that enlargement countries should be guided by a future EU Framework; this would allow for the use of further guidance and conditionalities during the accession process.

5. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Activities carried out to consult stakeholders for the preparation of the initiative and its results are summarised in [Annex 1](#).

6. OBJECTIVES: WHAT IS TO BE ACHIEVED?

Taking into account all of the above, the Commission identified the following general and specific EU-level objectives in the area of Roma equality, inclusion and participation for the EU strategic framework 2021-2030.

6.1. General objectives

To contribute to promoting equality and combatting exclusion of Roma with their active involvement.

6.2. Specific objectives

In order to reach the general objectives, the initiative puts forward seven mutually reinforcing specific objectives. These include three **horizontal objectives**, linked to the three main political priorities (general objectives) of the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation:

- **EQUALITY:** Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination
- **INCLUSION:** Reduce poverty and exclusion and close the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population

⁶⁵ COM(2018) 785 final.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

- **PARTICIPATION:** Promote participation by empowerment, cooperation and trust

Four **sectoral objectives** underline the continued relevance of the four policy areas of the framework. With regard to education, employment, healthcare, housing, as well as essential services, all three horizontal goals (ensuring substantive equality, socio-economic inclusion and participation of Roma) are relevant:

- Increase effective access to quality inclusive mainstream education
- Increase effective access to quality and sustainable employment
- Improve Roma health and increase effective access to quality healthcare and social services
- Increase effective access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services⁶⁷

Table 2: Hierarchy of policy objectives

General	Specific
Contribute to promoting equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination of Roma</i> • <i>Promote participation by empowerment, cooperation and trust</i>
Contribute to combating exclusion of Roma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increase effective access to quality inclusive mainstream education</i> • <i>Increase effective access to quality and sustainable employment</i> • <i>Improve Roma health and increase effective access to quality healthcare and social services</i> • <i>Increase effective access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services</i> • <i>Reduce poverty and exclusion to close the socio-economic gap between Roma and non-Roma</i>

7. POLICY OPTIONS AND FINAL POLICY CHOICE

7.1. Policy options considered for this initiative

The baseline scenario considered was that the EU Framework ended in 2020 and the Commission adopted an identical Framework providing for a continuation of the current policy approach for the time after. This option was purely hypothetical, as the adoption of an identical EU Framework would ignore the learnings from the evaluation. It would have implied, inter alia, not addressing key findings such as the need for a reinforced approach regarding discrimination and antigypsyism and the importance of addressing the diversity within the Roma population.

The following policy options were considered in more detail:

- No new EU level initiative ('do less')

⁶⁷ E.g. tap water, adequate sanitation, waste collection and management, environmental services, electricity, gas, access to transport, financial services and digital communications (in line with principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights). An operational objective under this sectoral objective is promoting environmental justice and fighting environmental deprivation (see Annex 2 to COM(2020) 620 final).

- Option focusing on ‘doing differently’ - Antigypsyism
- Option focusing on ‘doing differently’ - Anti-poverty
- Option presenting a reinforced comprehensive policy approach to Roma equality inclusion and participation building on the current EU Framework and the evaluation findings (‘do better’)
- Option to renew and strengthen Member States’ commitment to Roma equality, inclusion and participation building on the 2013 Council Recommendation (‘do more’)
- A combined option (‘do more and better’)

7.2. Description of the policy options and their key advantages and disadvantages

The first step was the examination of the coherence between the thematic focus of each option with the specific objectives of the initiative. The table below summarises coherence between policy content of the policy options considered and the specific objectives in a simplified manner (√ = coherent; √√ = very coherent; - = not coherent). The table considers coherence and not potential effectiveness.

Only options 5, 6 and 7 had the potential to be strongly coherent with all seven specific objectives set out for this initiative.

Table 3: Potential coherence between areas covered by options and specific objectives

OPTIONS	Specific objectives addressed						
	HORIZONTAL			SECTORAL			
	antigypsyism and discrimination	poverty	participation	education	employment	health	housing
1. No new EU Roma initiative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Continuation of EUFW for NRIS as it is – baseline	-	√	√	√√	√√	√√	√√
3. Single focus on antigypsyism	√√	-	√√	-	-	-	-
4. Single focus on poverty	-	√√	-	√	√	√	√
5. Reinforced comprehensive policy approach	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
6. Stepped up political commitment of MS	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√
7. Combined option	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√

The second step was the detailed consideration of each potential option.

7.2.1. No new EU level initiative (‘do less’)

The EU Framework ends in 2020 and the Commission could have decided not to replace it. Other key instruments would have remain in place, such as the Race Equality Directive, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia, and the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma

integration in the Member States⁶⁸. In addition, there would also have been the relevant general EU policies (such as the European Semester, anti-trafficking measures, etc.) and EU programmes, such as the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and/or their successors, including relevant specific objectives and enabling conditions but also instruments of international organisations such as the Council of Europe's thematic action plan for 2021-2025.

Without a new initiative at EU level, however, there would have been a risk of disconnection between general EU policies and programmes, on the one hand, and efforts in the area of Roma equality, inclusion and participation, on the other. That would have also led to inconsistency between the ESF+ enabling condition for the specific objective on integration of marginalised communities requiring the existence of a national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework and the non-existence of a corresponding EU Framework in that area. In addition, the 2013 Council Recommendation might have become less effective, if not revised in order to accommodate for policy learning. Some of its elements (such as Commission monitoring based on Member States' reports) would have become dysfunctional or stopped working in the absence of an EU instrument.

At national level, National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) or integrated sets of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies currently exist in all Member States (except Malta) and the enlargement countries. However, many of them expire in 2020 as their lifespan followed that of the EU Framework. National Roma-specific or general laws, policies and funding programmes relevant for Roma inclusion are in place but risked discontinuation. The evaluation confirmed that an EU-level initiative was key for political commitment at national level.

Giving continuity to the processes triggered by the 2011 EU Framework is in itself a value, as much of the policies and instruments have resulted in structures, practices and monitoring cycles that have incrementally improved over the years. One could mention, for example, the reporting tool for Member States or the coordinated civil monitoring at EU level feeding the Commission's monitoring, guidance and support activities or the respective consultation processes and participation structures at national and EU levels. Changing the policy direction and scaling down existing structures and practices would have disrupted this incremental process.

7.2.2. Option focusing on 'doing differently': tackling antigypsyism⁶⁹

Instead of a new EU Framework, the Commission could have envisaged a new initiative focusing exclusively on antigypsyism, either separately as considered during the preparations of this policy package in 2018-2019 or within the broader EU anti-racism initiative⁷⁰. The scenario would have asked Member States to acknowledge antigypsyism as a specific form of racism and strengthen non-discrimination and the fight against antigypsyism in national anti-racism strategies. Moreover, it could have asked Member States to specify explicitly which general anti-discrimination measures or measures in

⁶⁸ However, the Council asked in its 2016 Council Conclusions for a revision as part of a proposal for a post-2020 EU Roma initiative.

⁶⁹ For a definition of the concept and choice of terminology, see fn 32.

⁷⁰ Favoured by the political momentum engendered by the worldwide "Black Lives Matter" protests, the European Parliament adopted on 17 June 2020 a resolution titled "[The anti-racism protests following the death of George Floyd](#)". Initiated by the Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup, the proposal aimed at strengthening both anti-racist narratives and actions, while addressing manifestations of structural racism in the USA and in Europe, including police brutality. See also the Communication 'A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025' ([COM\(2020\) 565 final](#)), 18.9.2020.

other areas address antigypsyism and how. Member States could have been asked to include specific measures to address both Roma (rights awareness, facilitating access to legal remedy or building identity) and the general public in their national Roma and/or wider anti-racism strategies (e.g. by raising awareness about historical discrimination, segregation and persecution). For instance, one could add processes about the recognition of the persecution and extermination of Roma during 1933-1945 and the public representation of Roma culture, including Truth and Reconciliation processes at national level.

Before turning to the implications of such a policy choice, the particular nature of the phenomenon of antigypsyism warrants some further conceptual clarifications.

As explained above⁷¹, antigypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, expressed, among others, through violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination⁷². Used in a narrow sense, it refers to anti-Roma attitudes or the expression of negative stereotypes in the public sphere or hate speech. In a broader sense, it implies hidden manifestations as part of a broad spectrum of discriminatory expressions and practices. As stated, antigypsyism **‘is not just another type of racial discrimination**. It is, at the same time **similar, different and intertwined with racism**’⁷³.

Indeed, as highlighted by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), whose field of action covers all groups subject to racism in Europe, Roma constitute their ‘most frequent customer’⁷⁴. It is when dealing with their situation in any given country that ECRI employs, almost exclusively, words like ‘segregation’ and ‘exclusion’. This preoccupying situation, fact-based from ECRI’s country-specific reports, translates into Roma not enjoying equal dignity, being discriminated, targets of racist violence and facing persistent intolerance.

The specificities of anti-Roma racism⁷⁵ could be summarised as follows:

- The *persistence of prejudice*: a historically and geographically *permanent racism* that has endured for centuries without waning;
- The *systemisation*: a systematic, regular, repetitive racism, to the point where it almost seems to indicate a sort of ‘acceptance of that kind of racism’ within society;

⁷¹ See fn 32. The phenomenon targets is directed towards Roma, Sinti, Travellers, and others who are stigmatised as ‘gypsies’ in the public imagination.

⁷² European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), [General Policy Recommendation no. 13 on combatting anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma](#), adopted on 24 June 2011.

⁷³ ‘Anti-Gypsyism means the total of resentments focused on Roma, and based on various racist, social or other motives. Because of that anti-Gypsyism is part of a social phenomenon that includes stereotypes as well as their political instrumentation. The enmity against Roma needs specific images of the Gypsy; those images have been produced and reproduced in all European societies for centuries. Meanwhile, the images of the Gypsy function as fixed codes (as signals for a political position that enables definitions of the ‘stranger’ and the ‘native’) – and are easily evoked from both the individual and the collective memory at any time. Research on anti-Gypsyism wants to identify these images and indicate their functions,’ Valeriu Nicolae cited in M Guet, 2008 speech, p 5.

⁷⁴ Speech delivered at the 2008 Warsaw Conference by Isil Gachet, Executive Secretary of ECRI, as presented in M. Guet, 2008 speech, p. 5.

⁷⁵ As summarised in ECRI’s [General Policy Recommendation no 3](#) on the fight against racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies, adopted on 6 March 1998. The preamble of their [General Policy Recommendation no. 13 on combatting anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma](#), reiterated, ‘anti-Gypsyism is an especially *persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace* form of racism.’

- The *violent nature of manifestations of racism towards Roma*: a racism commonly put in practice, facilitated to a certain extent by the notion of impunity in the minds of perpetrators. For instance, racist statements or the use of violence never condemned by politicians at local or state level, with sometimes the politicians being the perpetrators themselves (the scapegoating of Roma and the public statements feeding anti-Roma sentiment during the COVID-19 pandemic are the latest in a long line of such manifestations);
- The *generalisation 'all Roma are alike'*: common to other racialized groups but with the specificity of '*common punishment*' – a crime committed by a Roma individual leads to the punishment of the entire community;
- A certain '*hypocrisy*' when addressing the phenomenon and often a *blame put on the victims of discrimination*. For example, the same authorities blaming Roma for not sending their children to school are forcibly evicting Roma families whose children were attending school or the situation where authorities support segregation or the enrolment in schools for mentally disabled.

To effectively combat these phenomena, analysing the features and manifestations of racism and intolerance is a necessary step but insufficient. Recognising that antigypsyism exists as a specific form of racism is the first step, followed by naming it, widely addressing through reinforced focus, and lastly, having the support of the Roma community.

In view of its widespread nature and deep roots in social and cultural attitudes and institutional practice, antigypsyism has caught the attention of the academia as well, with significant work to date on anti-Roma racism and their link to the exclusion and marginalisation mechanisms⁷⁶. However, the understanding of how **contemporary forms of antigypsyism** differ from earlier ones and the difficulties in challenging them have received less attention. Indeed, the acceptance of antigypsyism as almost 'normal', not requiring any attention is evident in the face of the existing social and political debate on all forms of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, afro-phobia, etc. and the accompanying efforts for advocacy, legal restrictions, education, and more. Even the lack of an adequate term to describe the resentment against Roma for many decades attest to the so-called 'reasonable antigypsyism'⁷⁷.

In the face of this evidence, researchers have begun to discuss about the so-called '**invisibilisation of anti-Roma racism**'. Reportedly, this trend to 'invisibilise' the racializing dimensions of Roma's marginal living conditions is deemed a feature of the 'de-politicisation' of societal problems facing the Roma⁷⁸.

In view of the considerations above, antigypsyism transpires as a form of racism that requires a specific approach, different from other forms of racism, such as in the context of a policy covering social inclusion and discrimination. This is consistent with the

⁷⁶ See, among others, Aidan McGarry, '*Romaphobia: The Last Acceptable Form of Racism*' (Zed Books, London 2017); Sebijan Fezjula, '[The Anti-Roma Europe](#): Modern ways of disciplining the Roma body in urban spaces' Rev. Direito Práx. Vol 10 no 3 Rio de Janeiro July/September 2019 Epub 16 September 2019; Huub van Baar, Ana Ivasiuc and Regina Kreide (eds), '*The Securitization of the Roma in Europe*' (Palgrave Macmillan 2019).

⁷⁷ M. Guet, 2008 speech, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Baar, Ivasiuc and Kreide, '[The Invisibilization of Anti-Roma Racisms](#)' in *op.cit.* The article discusses the trend based on examples from Slovakia and the UK, while highlighting the importance of the national context with regard to different outcomes and the extent of Roma separation.

findings of the 2011-2017 evaluation, whose unequivocal wording did not hint at a shift towards an EU initiative focusing exclusively on antigypsyism:

‘A clearer focus on fighting antigypsyism and discrimination should **complement, not replace the inclusion approach**. This could both strengthen the enforcement of anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation and increase effectiveness of social inclusion policies.’

Instead, the evaluation suggested a strengthened, clearer focus on fighting antigypsyism and discrimination. This would complement and not replace the focus on social inclusion, increasing the effectiveness of policies and strengthening the enforcement of anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation. Taking into account the various features of antigypsyism would support Member States in responding effectively to discrimination and racism faced by Roma.

Replacing the social inclusion approach would have led to a loss for mainstream social policies at EU and national level of their capacity to compensate for disadvantages Roma face. Being a radical shift from current policy, it would have disrupted the ongoing learning processes launched by the EU Framework. The approach also risked reinforcing an ethnic conception of Roma inclusion, further fuelling anti-liberal and/or anti-European populists against Roma (isolation of Roma as an example of undeserved protection by supposedly interfering forces from Brussels). Moreover, strong positions⁷⁹ from a variety of stakeholders (civil society included) alerted on the dangers of ignoring the multiple, reissued calls for an explicit focus on antigypsyism (together with the focus on social inclusion and fighting poverty). Such dangers would outweigh the risks of focusing rather solely on antigypsyism as policy option. Addressing antigypsyism under a possible broader EU policy approach to racism could serve as an important mainstreaming initiative to complement the EU strategic framework’s focus on equality by fighting antigypsyism while contributing to the effectiveness of efforts to promote Roma inclusion and participation.

Additionally, one should note that, in light of the experience with the proposal for a horizontal [Equal Treatment Directive](#) (negotiated for over 10 years), the adoption of a new EU law specifically in the field of fighting antigypsyism would not be realistic. The EU has adopted a number of binding legal instruments to ensure equality and non-discrimination that are crucial for fighting antigypsyism: the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on combatting Racism and Xenophobia, already transposed by Member States⁸⁰. The Race Equality Directive already prohibits both direct and

⁷⁹ See the EP [resolution on anti-Gypsyism in Europe](#), [resolution on the need for a strengthened post-2020 initiative](#) (requesting to step up the fight against antigypsyism), and the [Report on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism](#). Additional material supporting a policy choice with a strengthened focus on antigypsyism without abandoning the inclusion approach as well as the choice for terminology is abundant. See, among others, the [Alliance against Antigypsyism, the Council of Europe](#), the FRA paper on [anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion](#), the [EU High Level Group on combating racism and xenophobia](#), the expert recommendations during the [2019 Conference on anti-Gypsyism](#) under the previous AT presidency, statements at ministerial level of the current DE Presidency, etc.

⁸⁰ For instance, since 2019, the High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance has established specific working groups together with national authorities, civil society and the support of FRA and CEPOL to reinforce the actions of the Member States in recording and reporting of hate crimes as well as to ensure recognition and criminalisation of bias-motivation by law enforcement. [Commission’s SWD on Countering racism and xenophobia in the EU: fostering a society where pluralism, tolerance and non-discrimination prevail](#).

indirect discrimination based on ethnicity. Efforts should be rather devoted to enforcement of the existing legislation, its correct application, guidance and training, where necessary, and financial support for the effective implementation and enforcement of legislation at the national level. It is also of utmost importance to support continuously the work of equality bodies, including by following up the implementation of the Commission Recommendation on standards for equality bodies⁸¹.

7.2.3. *Option focusing on ‘doing differently’: Anti-poverty*

Instead of a new EU Framework, the Commission could have envisaged a new initiative focusing exclusively on combating poverty. The initiative could have promoted social inclusion among disadvantaged groups, with or without specific targeting of Roma. The initiative could have asked Member States to address most extreme social exclusion and poverty more effectively in their national social inclusion strategies and to design specific measures for the most disadvantaged. These could have covered the whole life cycle with enhanced social protection, development of human capacities and activation for employment programmes.

Presenting such an initiative would, however, not have been in line with the findings of the evaluation which concluded that ‘(...) the lack of a specific non-discrimination goal and targeted strategies and action to fight antigypsyism were among the key weaknesses. While discrimination and social exclusion reinforce each other, any Roma can be exposed to discrimination, but not all are socially excluded’⁸². An initiative not taking a rights-based and targeted approach risked diluting policies for Roma into policies targeted at socially excluded people, without any differentiation. It would not have taken into account their specific needs and discrimination experiences nor included explicit safeguards to ensure that mainstream policies effectively reached out to Roma. Roma inclusion would have risked being understood as the exclusion of the poor. A combined approach of compensating for socio-economic disadvantages and tackling discrimination would have been compromised.

Stakeholders confirmed this view during the 1 October 2019 [workshop](#), when replies to a SLIDO question showed that 90% of the participants shared the view that a new post-2020 EU initiative should address antigypsyism, discrimination and socio-economic inclusion simultaneously. The [expert recommendations](#) made at the Austrian EU Presidency Conference on antigypsyism held in November 2018 expressed the same view. Participants confirmed therein that, to ensure effectiveness of social inclusion policies, the fight against discrimination and antigypsyism should feature as an additional priority area in a future EU Framework.

7.2.4. *Option presenting a reinforced comprehensive policy approach to Roma equality inclusion and participation (‘do better’)*

The Commission’s initiative has to take into account the key lessons learnt from the evaluation:

Table 4: Translating evaluation results into reform priorities for more effective strategies

⁸¹ COM(2018) 3850 final.

⁸² COM(2018) 785 final.

1. Strengthen focus on equality to complement the socio-economic inclusion approach

The four policy areas (education, employment, health and housing) and the integrated approach across these areas continue to be key for Roma socio-economic inclusion. However, there is need for a clear focus on equality with a specific objective on non-discrimination and fighting antigypsyism. The focus on fighting antigypsyism and discrimination should also be a crosscutting priority that complements but does not replace the inclusion approach. This joint focus should ensure that Roma have effective access to economic and social justice.

2. Promote participation by empowerment and building cooperation and trust

Strategies should encourage meaningful Roma participation at all stages of policy-making at local, national and EU level, promote political, economic and cultural participation of Roma and a sense of belonging as full members of society. Additionally, they should promote empowerment and capacity building of Roma, civil society, as well as public authorities, and build cooperation and trust between stakeholders and between Roma and non-Roma.

3. Combine effective mainstreaming and Roma targeting

The new EU strategic framework aims to combine effective mainstreaming and targeting. It promotes inclusive reform of mainstream policies, also under the European Semester, when enforcing the Racial Equality Directive and when negotiating the use of 2021-2027 EU funds. Governments are encouraged to follow a twin approach of making mainstream services inclusive and providing additional targeted measures. The aim of targeting is to provide additional support to promote effective equal access for Roma to mainstream rights and services. This should be reflected in future strategies, which should serve as planning instruments for using national and EU funds for Roma-targeted action and inclusive mainstream reform.

4. Reflect diversity among Roma

Member States should ensure that strategies cover all Roma on their territory and reflect the needs of diverse groups. They should bear in mind how different aspects of identities might combine to increase discrimination. They should set qualitative and quantitative objectives addressing diversity in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, mobility and other dimensions in all relevant areas. While inclusion measures should target marginalised Roma, measures promoting participation should address all Roma, and measures fighting antigypsyism should reach out to society.

5. Ensure a common but flexible approach to national strategies

The new EU strategic framework should remain flexible to accommodate country differences, while increasing Member States' accountability and commitment to full implementation of the strategies. The size and intensity of the challenges Roma face in various Member States should be reflected by differentiated objectives, levels of investment, types of policy solutions and EU level support across different Member States.

6. Improve target setting, data collection, monitoring and reporting to enable policy learning

A common portfolio of indicators with accompanying quantitative and/or qualitative objectives for the national level to measure output, outcome and impact has the potential to improve effective progress towards Roma equality, inclusion and participation. The EU strategic framework proposes the use of specific, measurable, ambitious and realistic targets, including common EU headline targets, the latter complemented by nationally set targets in line with specific challenges based on available data. There is need for regular collection of data to feed reporting, monitoring, reinforce transparency and accountability and promote policy transfer and learning⁸³.

In line with the results of the evaluation, the focus of such an initiative would be on the areas of education, employment, health and housing as well as on fighting poverty and exclusion, advancing non-discrimination and the fight against antigypsyism, including through increasing Roma participation. In addition, building on the evaluation, country differences in terms of the situation of the Roma should be considered. A pragmatic proposal for such an initiative could be a ‘common, yet differentiated approach’.

As outlined above⁸⁴, all countries face challenges in terms of equality, inclusion and participation of Roma, variable in terms of intensity and specificity. Policy responses by Member States to a new EU level initiative could therefore vary. While adhering to minimum commitments, Member States could be advised to choose additional specific actions, in line with the respective challenges that Roma face in each country. The Commission could thus propose a common EU Framework with shared minimum commitments, but at the same time different degrees of political commitment according to the specific situation of the countries and the respective challenges that Roma face.

Account taken of these differences, statistically representative quantitative **equality data collection** can support policy design and measurement of progress in several countries, while not in others. Similarly, several Member States will opt for using **targeted 2021-2027 EU funding** (in combination with mainstream EU and targeted or mainstream national funds) to support the implementation of their strategies, while others will use mainstream EU or national funds⁸⁵. In countries where Roma make up for a significant share of the population, promoting their equality and inclusion has a clear economic significance. It justifies the use of EU funds for both Roma targeted action and inclusive mainstream reforms, the need for data collection to support policy design, monitoring and review, and the need for more EU guidance and support.

In terms of ambition, two sub-options for such a ‘do better’ initiative exist, one with purely qualitative EU-level objectives and another with quantitative (and qualitative) EU-level objectives. In both cases, Member States could be asked to translate EU-level objectives into national objectives:

⁸³ To conform to a human-rights-based approach to data collection, national authorities are encouraged to consult the [European handbook on equality data \(2016 revision\)](#), [Guidelines on improving the collection and use of equality data \(2018\)](#); and [Data collection in the field of ethnicity \(2017\)](#). Member States are encouraged to allocate necessary resources to carry out such data collection and profit from the support of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to strengthen their capacities to this end.

⁸⁴ See section [4.2](#) and chart 2 above.

⁸⁵ See Annex 3. EU mainstreaming and funding initiatives.

7.2.4.1. A new EU Framework presenting a reinforced comprehensive policy approach to Roma equality, inclusion and participation - setting qualitative EU-level objectives

This sub-option has the disadvantage of setting out qualitative EU-level objectives only, similar to the current EU Framework and its four Roma integration goals, which risks not being specific and measurable enough to monitor progress.

7.2.4.2. An initiative presenting a reinforced comprehensive policy approach to Roma equality, inclusion and participation - setting out qualitative and quantitative EU-level objectives

This sub-option could set qualitative and quantitative EU-level objectives and propose differentiated national quantitative and qualitative objectives taking into account country differences. To facilitate take-up at national level, a portfolio of quantitative and qualitative indicators applicable to diverse country situations and agreed with Member States could complement it. This sub-option would provide for improved monitoring, reporting and evaluation arrangements.

7.2.5. *Option to renew and strengthen Member States' commitment to Roma equality, inclusion and participation ('do more')*

Importantly, both sub-options presented under 7.2.4 would leave out a critical issue identified as weakness of the current EU Framework, namely the fragmentation in implementation due to its voluntary nature. The low take up of the Roma Integration Goals included in the 2011 EU Framework was a particular reality across Member States.

To mitigate this issue, the Commission could decide to present an initiative aiming at a higher level of ambition and increased Member States' commitment to progress further and faster in Roma equality, inclusion and participation. To this end, the Commission could propose to revise the 2013 Council Recommendation.

In terms of ambition, two sub-options are possible, differentiating from the degree of Member States' acceptance:

7.2.5.1. An initiative reflecting policy learning from the evaluation and aiming at a renewed Member States' commitment towards more effective national measures through a soft-law instrument but not endorsing the use of SMART qualitative or quantitative targets and indicators for monitoring progress (similar to the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration)

The benefit of such a soft law initiative includes a renewed and strengthened commitment by Member States to improved national strategic frameworks for Roma equality, inclusion and participation, continued guidance on the design and implementation of national strategies and its governance structures, such as the National Roma Contact Points. However, it would not address the advantages of sub-option 7.2.5.2.

7.2.5.2. An initiative reflecting the findings of the evaluation and aiming at a renewed Member States' commitment towards more effective national measures through a soft-law instrument and endorsing the use of SMART qualitative and/or quantitative objectives towards EU

headline targets via the use of indicators adjustable to diverse country situations

This sub-option would in addition mean a clear commitment from Member States for monitoring progress towards national quantitative and/or qualitative objectives as their contribution towards meeting EU level objectives and headline targets⁸⁶. The political commitment would thus be stronger than in the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration. This would be in line with the findings of the evaluation of the EU Framework⁸⁷, which stressed the importance of country-specific objectives and working towards common goals.

The collection of data for qualitative/process indicators is not standardised. However, since 2016 Member States have started reporting to the Commission on process indicators relevant to the 2013 Council Recommendation's substantive policy areas. The development of a reporting and monitoring system at EU level, in addition to national monitoring systems (in line with the minimum core requirements for national strategic frameworks) are the pathways to achieving the common goals in the seven specific objectives. Thus, the portfolio of indicators developed in the context of the Working Party on Roma indicators and reporting coordinated by the FRA encompasses both criteria. First, it reflects the criterion of setting quantitative outcome indicators. Second, it responds to the criterion of developing process indicators by looking at the institutional set-up (compliance with the EU Framework for national strategic frameworks), proposing types of measures and assessing the quality of the decision-making.

In light of the EU objectives and headlines targets, the Commission proposal for a draft Council Recommendation calls on Member States to include national quantitative and/or qualitative targets in their national strategic frameworks, adapted to the national circumstances and the options related to the collection of available ethnically disaggregated (or proxy) equality data.

‘According to the evaluation, complementing the four priority areas with a focus on fighting discrimination and antigypsyism as both a crosscutting requirement and a separate area and specifying a **portfolio of individually adaptable Roma integration objectives with accompanying targets and indicators** would improve the framework's effectiveness and relevance. Country-specific targets could be selected from a detailed list of optional targets and indicators per area (differentiated targets in a common framework). Governments should update their objectives and priorities according to their national circumstances based on data’⁸⁸.

7.2.6. *A combined option ('do more and better')*

Such an initiative would combine two or more of the above options or build on elements of several of the scenarios above. Such an option could, in particular, combine the ‘do better’ with the ‘do more’ options in a comprehensive and integrated approach, while

⁸⁶ Due to the constraints related to data collection in various Member States and thus different baseline situations, the use of SMART qualitative and quantitative targets and indicators would apply to a cluster of countries where such quantitative (either ethnically disaggregated or proxy) equality data is available. The aim is to ensure that Member States commit to objectives and indicators that they can adjust, based on their own country situations (differentiated targets within a common framework).

⁸⁷ COM(2018) 785 final.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

strengthening the focus on fighting antigypsyism, including a specific objective on fighting poverty among Roma as well as a specific objective on promoting meaningful participation of Roma. A combined option would address the need for close cooperation between and comprehensive approaches of all stakeholders. In doing so, it would equip all stakeholders, including Roma themselves, with what they need to achieve faster progress towards Roma equality, inclusion and participation.

Different levels of political ambition of such a combined initiative are possible, depending on the EU's and national commitment in terms of target setting. A combination of sub-options 7.2.4.2 and 7.2.5.2, namely, an EU strategic framework initiative with qualitative and quantitative EU-level and national objectives, would be most suited to address the magnitude of the challenges, as it is the most ambitious option.

Building on the current EU Framework, an ambitious new EU strategic framework would send a strong political signal from the Commission and provide a strong EU added value. In addition, presenting an ambitious proposal for a revised Council Recommendation for national Roma strategic frameworks on equality, inclusion and participation at the same time with the EU strategic framework could ensure that Member States and the Commission work hand in hand. This would entail a commitment by Member States to set national quantitative and/or qualitative targets towards meeting the EU level objectives and headline targets. A combined option has the potential to increase significantly coherence and effectiveness. In particular, effectiveness would be strengthened if the Communication sets out EU level objectives and headline targets, and the Recommendation confirms Member States' commitments to include in their strategies clear national contributions towards these common targets⁸⁹.

7.3. Additional considerations regarding the policy choice and retained option

The last step consisted of the examination of the coherence between the options and the political support for the post-2020 initiative, as expressed publicly by Council, the European Parliament and civil society.

Key reference documents, such as the EPSCO Council Conclusions of 24 October 2019 on the Economy of Wellbeing⁹⁰ or the February 2019 European Parliament Resolution on 'the need for a strengthened post-2020 Strategic EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies and stepping up the fight against anti-Gypsyism'⁹¹ were supportive of a new initiative. However, they were not explicit about the expected policy instruments with which the Commission should deliver the requested initiatives.

As already set out above, the [EPSCO Council Conclusions](#) of 8 December 2016 entitled 'Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration' clearly asked the Commission **'to propose a post 2020 strategy on Roma integration, and include therein a proposal for a revision of the Council Recommendation'**. Only the combined option (option 7) would be fully coherent with this request.

⁸⁹ See section [8.3](#) below.

⁹⁰ The [Council Conclusions](#) invite the Commission to 'RENEW the commitment on Roma inclusion by developing new policy initiatives, including the adoption of a post-2020 European Framework Strategy'.

⁹¹ The [resolution](#) called on the Commission 'to act on the calls made by Parliament, the Council and numerous NGOs and experts and propose a Strategic EU Framework on National Roma.' One should note that the EP Resolution did not ask for a specific antigypsyism initiative but 'to place the fight against anti-Gypsyism at the heart of the Strategic EU Framework, including by adding a specific anti-discrimination goal, along with other goals (...)'.

Civil society's views benefited of equal consideration (see [Annex 1](#) setting out consultation activities and results). In this respect, option 7 again is clearly the option with the potential to accommodate most adequately the majority of views expressed and requests made⁹². Additionally, the experience of the disproportionately negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Roma communities clearly supports the choice of option 7, as most adequate to deal with all underlying challenges in a comprehensive way.

Based on the above, the options discarded were the following:

- No new EU level initiative ('do less')
- Option focusing on 'doing differently': Antigypsyism
- Option focusing in 'doing differently': Anti-poverty
- Option presenting a reinforced comprehensive policy approach to Roma equality inclusion and participation ('do better')
- Option to renew and strengthen Member States commitment to Roma equality, inclusion and participation ('do more')

Consequently, the retained option was the one combining the comprehensive policy approach with stepped up political commitment of Member States through a revised soft-law initiative.

Accordingly, that was the reason why the [roadmap](#) for the initiative published between 17 February and 16 March 2020 announced a Communication presenting the post-2020 EU strategic framework accompanied by a proposal for a revised Council Recommendation as the likely type of initiative.

8. OTHER METHODOLOGICAL INFORMATION

8.1. Expected Impacts

While respecting the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines, a detailed assessment of the economic, social, fundamental rights and environment impacts was not carried out. The main reasons for this decision were as follows:

- The expected impacts strongly depend on the level of commitment to Roma equality, inclusion and participation agreed to by the Member States, namely, the ambition reflected in the Council Recommendation once adopted and the national strategic frameworks put in place thereafter. The initiative aims to raise commitment by proposing a set of specific objectives and a portfolio of qualitative and quantitative indicators with associated types of measures, which are for Member States to include in their national strategic frameworks according to their Roma communities' specific situation. Nevertheless, an impact assessment cannot predict the level of ambition to which Member States would be willing to commit in the end.
- In addition to general challenges of quantifying and monetising equality, non-discrimination and respect for fundamental rights, carrying out an impact assessment in the area of Roma equality, inclusion and participation would face serious limitations in terms of ethnic data collection in the Member States.

⁹² See [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

However, as the evaluation of the 2011-2020 EU Framework found, the situation of the disadvantaged represents a loss of human capital and resources for Europe's economies. It is clear, that the disadvantages faced by the Roma, which the initiative aims to tackle, bear an impact on Europe's economies and societies.

Indeed, in countries with a higher share of Roma, they represent a growing proportion of the school age population and the future workforce. Therefore, achieving equality, inclusion and participation of Roma is not only a joint responsibility but also an opportunity. Roma will benefit in terms of recognition, rights, redistribution of resources, better life outcomes and representation that is more effective. Europe's economies and aging societies will also see positive impacts.

Progress in socio-economic inclusion and equality of Roma has the potential to decrease labour and skills shortages in times of adverse demographic developments, reduce social expenditures and be beneficial for the economy. The latter benefits will be particularly visible in terms of productivity growth through better education and upskilling of a previously excluded young Roma labour force. This could benefit employers, through an increased and better skilled labour pool, in times of shrinking labour supply. It could also improve sustainability of pension systems in ageing societies thanks to upskilled Roma participating in the labour market. Progress in equality and inclusion can also have fiscal benefits such as increased contributions to national budgets (increased tax payment, social security, indirect taxes, such as VAT or excise tax) and affect the use of public goods and services (reduced take-up of social welfare, unemployment or child support benefits).

Positive economic and financial consequences of Roma equality and inclusion could in turn foster a climate of greater openness within and less discriminatory attitudes by the majority population. This could have positive consequences for European society, in particular with regard to tolerance, respect for minorities and social cohesion.

The initiative has positive consequences for the protection of fundamental rights. It reinforces implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, in particular Article 21, which prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including race and ethnic origin.

Finally, the initiative pays specific attention to marginalised Roma living in environmentally degraded areas and Roma employees working under less favourable environmental conditions. Evidence consistently shows higher rates of illness and mortality among Roma linked to poor housing conditions, higher exposure to air, water and ground pollution, poor diets, higher vulnerability to food insecurity⁹³. Such living conditions turned dire with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw national and local authorities take confinement measures/actions that pushed marginalised Roma into further exclusion and segregation⁹⁴.

⁹³ [EEB/ERGO](#), *Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe*, 8 April 2020.

⁹⁴ See ENAR's [interactive EU-wide map](#) for a detailed account of such instances touching on racialized groups at large. For more Roma-specific evidence, see [ERGO report](#) and [OSF's brief](#) on warning signs from six countries.

8.2. Reflecting the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and related needs of marginalised Roma communities in the post-2020 initiative

From the outbreak of the unprecedented health crisis, the Commission [called on](#) Member States to ensure protection of the most exposed disadvantaged groups, insisting on the increased exposure of Roma communities and the need to deliver safely the much-needed support.

As an immediate response to the crisis, the Commission proposed several instruments of potential support to disadvantaged groups such as Roma. The [COVID-19 Response Investment Initiative \(CRII\)](#) and the [COVID-19 Response Investment Initiative Plus \(CRII+\)](#) enabled the rapid mobilisation of available allocations under the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). The [EU Solidarity Fund](#) provided additional assistance of up to €800 million to the worst affected countries in order to alleviate the financial burden of the immediate response measures. NRCs were encouraged to coordinate with Managing Authorities the planning and implementation of EU funded emergency and midterm measures. The EURoma transnational learning network of ESF managing authorities and NRCs also launched a survey among its members on the use and planned use of EU funds for Roma-targeted measures in the COVID-19 context⁹⁵.

When it comes to the enlargement countries, the COVID-19 response has been notable in the Western Balkans as well as Turkey including the targeting of disadvantaged communities and the Roma⁹⁶. For the Western Balkans, the European Commission took significant initiatives to support the region to tackle the COVID-19 crisis. The ‘Commission Communication on the support to the Western Balkans in tackling COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery’⁹⁷ secured important financial support to address the immediate health crisis and resulting humanitarian needs⁹⁸. During March–May 2020, the RCC Roma Integration Action Team coordinated regular meetings with each Western Balkan country, in close cooperation with the NRCs and the Commission⁹⁹. The objective of the meetings was to coordinate the efforts of different stakeholders, to propose targeted and mainstream measures when needed and to ensure that disadvantaged Roma needs remain known and are high in the country agenda when deciding on the COVID-19 responses.

Beside the financial back-up and targeted assistance, the Commission engaged in an intensive dialogue with stakeholders¹⁰⁰ to assess the impact of the crisis on marginalised Roma. The NRCs, which proved their strong coordination role¹⁰¹, EU-level civil society networks¹⁰², and implementers of projects directly funded by the Commission reported

⁹⁵ See the [EURoma Snapshot on initial measures adopted within ESI Funds to deal with the impact of COVID-19 crisis on marginalised Roma communities](#).

⁹⁶ [COM\(2020\) 315 final](#).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Western Balkans [Regional Cooperation Council actions](#) in support to Roma Communities as response to the coronavirus crisis.

⁹⁹ The regular meetings were also [attended](#) by relevant Ministries, the Commission and EU Delegations, CSO and international actors.

¹⁰⁰ In particular with the NRCs and civil society organisations (including ERGO, OSF), FRA and implementers of directly funded projects.

¹⁰¹ In several Member States, they took a proactive role with efforts to connect multiple stakeholders and monitor local implementation, as highlighted in this [overview](#).

¹⁰² See recommendations for measures provided under ERGO’s [EU Recovery Plan](#) and [OSF's brief](#) on warning signs from six countries.

on immediate and mid-term priority measures for the current 2014-2020 and the future 2021-2027 financial programming period and how updated national strategic frameworks could help mitigate negative impacts of the pandemic in marginalised Roma communities. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) sent updated information on a regular basis. Subsequent videoconferences¹⁰³ and follow-up input brought additional information on the situation in Member States and short and longer-term measures suggested to address it.

NRCs and civil society representatives drew attention to the following emergency response measures (already implemented in some Member States and enlargement countries):

- Provide access to clean water;
- Provide access to free health services for all in need including those without health insurance, targeting physical and mental health;
- Provide access to sanitation, protective gear and medicines;
- Provide access to mass testing according to health conditions and level of risk of people living in dense settlements;
- Provide access to information on virus-spread prevention through different means of communication and in Romani language (leaflets, posters, word of mouth, TV, radio, social media);
- Provide access to safe quarantine measures to avoid virus spread including access to food and housing meeting conditions for self-isolation;
- Provide testing (without stigmatisation), particularly in dense and challenged localities;
- Provide facilities, access to Wi-Fi and additional support to build digital skills for distance education;
- Strengthen the position of health mediators, education mediators and other field workers, the gatekeepers in Roma communities;
- Ensure continuity of basic utility services during the pandemic;
- Subsidise consumption costs for the most disadvantaged and those who have lost income;
- Ensure that social welfare is extended to cover informal workers, EU mobile Roma who have recently returned;
- Protect people affected by temporary loss of income, informal entrepreneurs and precarious workers.

In addition to the emergency responses, mid- and long-term measures required to eradicate the longer-term socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis,¹⁰⁴ as suggested by NRCs and [civil society representatives](#), should fit into the main priority areas:

- *Health*: make public health investment including marginalised Roma a top political priority, with special funding to sustain sanitation measures initiated during the crisis; expand primary health coverage; improve access to all levels of healthcare and preventive care, implement mass vaccination programmes; and strengthen the

¹⁰³ The videoconferences were organised as follows: on 27 April 2020, a videoconference with OSF and ERGO representatives with Vice-President Jourová and Commissioner Dalli; on 28 April 2020, a discussion with NRCs as a dedicated session of the Working Party meeting on post-2020 indicators on Roma equality, inclusion and participation. A follow-up videoconference with civil society representatives took place on 29 May 2020.

¹⁰⁴ For further recommendations on human-rights- compliant response and recovery measures, see this UN SG policy brief (fn 20).

position of Roma health mediators through education and provision of necessary equipment; monitor the quality of health services including on instances of discrimination;

- *Employment*: support the utilisation of active labour market policies, social economy and social enterprises to absorb and strengthen workplace-related skills of Roma at risk of poverty; recognition of workers who are part of non-formal economy (easier access to legal status for migrant workers, if needed); accelerate the transition of young people from education to employment through coaching, mentoring, traineeships, business incubators, and dual education; support schemes for businesses providing employment to disadvantaged people, including socially responsible public procurement; support financial literacy;
- *Education*: compensate all pupils from socially deprived backgrounds by strengthening social bonds through extracurricular activities such as outdoor school (educational) trips, school educational trips with non-Roma peers, free school club access; strengthen the work of school psychologists and social educators; compensatory tutoring of all children in need (including marginalised Roma) by community centres or local NGOs to mitigate the effects of the crisis on school performance; improvement of IT skills for Roma children, teachers and parents from marginalised communities; provision of broadband access, adequate digital infrastructure, teaching material and Roma education mediators equipped for distance learning; provision of distance learning premises (with IT and internet access) within the marginalised localities such as public libraries or community centres; scholarships for Roma to become teachers;
- *Housing and essential services*: improve access to water supply and sanitation, make a priority for Member States to tackle overcrowding and poor quality housing; develop and financially support Travellers' housing needs (halting and family sites);
- *Social and child protection*: provide greater support for the expansion of social protection to Roma by means of advisory services and financial incentives; ensure that food aid distribution meets the needs and maintain actions post-crisis; prevent the institutionalisation of children;
- *Intra-EU mobility for work*: improve cooperation on the mobility of EU citizens with a specific focus on marginalised people;
- *Institutional reform*: enhance the capacity of authorities to implement inclusive mainstream policies and integrate lessons from the management of emergencies.

Additionally, to *fight antigypsyism and discrimination*, NRCs and civil society organizations proposed the following measures: police and media awareness-raising training; investigating and sanctioning police abuse; spreading positive images about Roma and benefits of multiculturalism and inclusion in media; condemnation through better legal investigation of anti-Roma hate speech¹⁰⁵ and hate crime; and sanctioning and prosecuting fake news spreaders and anti-Roma hate speech related to COVID-19. Moreover, OSF proposed to make sure that information imparted by the government about the pandemic respects privacy rights and avoids an ethnicised/racialized view of the health crisis. In addition, they suggested to pay attention that the most important information (such as new legislation and available remedies) is available in *Romanes* (in Member States where primarily *Romanes* is spoken in Roma communities); and support organizations and initiatives providing alternative, well-informed and credible information and narratives about the Roma.

¹⁰⁵ In some Member States, equality bodies took action to condemn fiercely instances of [online anti-Roma hate speech](#) perpetuated by public figures by applying a fine.

The awareness of the immediate, mid- and long-term challenges raised by unprecedented health crisis translated into the need to feed the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic into the initiative. The Commission opted for a comprehensive approach, including collection of information and sharing of practices to inform policy learning.

To provide the necessary evidence base, FRA prepared, at the Commission's request, a thematic report¹⁰⁶ on the fundamental rights impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Roma. The summary report evolved in a forward-looking reflection on the situation in the context of the Roma inclusion policies implemented (or initiated) in the latest programming period. Inevitably patchy due to data collection constraints and fragmentation, it served nevertheless to inform the discussion on gaps revealed by the pandemic and inspire the quest for better approaches in the future.

According to the findings of the research, the pandemic experience revealed the need of focused and concerted action in three dimensions. One is **fighting discrimination, prejudice and antigypsyism**, another is **diminishing social inequalities**, with a third dimension of actions centred on **genuine participation and promotion of Roma agency**.

In parallel, discussions continued with NRCs and civil society¹⁰⁷ focusing on how the initiative could mitigate the crisis' impact on marginalised Roma communities. The Commission further cooperated with the FRA on the development of a portfolio of Roma equality, inclusion and participation indicators with associated targets and types of measures. The portfolio, based on the inputs from the Working Party on Roma indicators (with participation of NRCs and Statistical offices from Member States), proposed measures that included those emerging from the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

On a general note and taking into account the considerations above on the expected impacts and the lessons of the pandemic, the measures proposed under the strategic EU framework rely on solid evidence and policy learning. Sources for reflection ranged from the findings of the evaluation¹⁰⁸ of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020¹⁰⁹ to the extensive public and targeted stakeholder consultations¹¹⁰ and to previous assessments on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies and measures, including reflections on the limited effectiveness of integration measures and strategies¹¹¹. The measures also take into account the conclusions of a 2019 meta-evaluation of interventions for Roma inclusion, aimed as a consolidated view of the outcomes of evaluations of Roma inclusion measures to condense knowledge on what works, what does not and why with a view to provide guidance for the design of future

¹⁰⁶ 'Implications of COVID-19 on Roma and Traveller Communities. Overview of evidence from 15 EU Member States'. Thematic report by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, July 2020 (unpublished). The report is based on research carried out by FRANet, the research network of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights in the Member States, for the purpose of the Agency's monthly bulletins on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Additional FRANET research on the impact of the pandemic on the Roma and Travellers in 15 EU Member States served to complement this work. The Member States are those covered by the EU MIDIS II 2016 survey (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain) and five of the countries covered by the 2019 [Roma and Travellers Survey](#) (Belgium, France, Ireland, Sweden, and the Netherlands), FRA (2020).

¹⁰⁷ The videoconferences took place on 19 May 2020 (civil society organisations) and 25-26 May 2020 (NRCs).

¹⁰⁸ [COM\(2018\) 785 final](#), [SWD\(2018\) 480 final](#).

¹⁰⁹ [COM\(2011\) 173](#).

¹¹⁰ For a summary of consultations, see [Annex 1: Stakeholder Consultations](#).

¹¹¹ [COM\(2019\) 406](#), [SWD\(2019\) 320](#), [all annual reports](#).

evidence-based measures¹¹². Therefore, the new EU strategic framework puts forward evidence-based measures, the best possible choice in terms of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts towards Roma equality, inclusion and participation.

8.3. Targets and monitoring

In order to send a clear political message on the ambition needed to progress further towards Roma equality, inclusion and participation, and building on the specific objectives, the Commission proposes interrelated EU-level headline targets to be reached until 2030 for each of the seven objectives.

The suggested EU headline targets build on the specific objectives as laid out in the [roadmap](#) for the new EU strategic framework and take into consideration relevant guidelines¹¹³:

- Targets should be *precise and concrete*, not open to interpretation, and *measurable*, even in light of data limitations. Collaboration with the FRA, the Member States and civil society during the preparations of the initiative was fundamental in this respect. The FRA chaired a working party established to discuss and agree on indicators and operational objectives for the post-2020 period;
- Targets should be *achievable*, taking the latest available FRA survey data as baseline but also the wider socio-economic context;
- Targets should be *relevant*, namely linked to the seven specific objectives, and *time bound*, namely achievable by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030;
- Targets should be *in close alignment* with forthcoming initiatives¹¹⁴.

The EU level headline targets have been expressed as minimum progress to be achieved by 2030 towards closing the gap between Roma and the general population, which remains the long-term aim in order to reach effective equality. At the same time, the baseline situation (of Roma, as well as of the general population) is also specified together with the minimum progress to be reached in each area with respect to the situation of Roma. The values for general population are provided for the indicators where they exist. The caveats that need to be considered when analysing values, limitations in comparability between the values for Roma and the values for general

¹¹² [A meta-evaluation of interventions for Roma inclusion](#) (September 2019), aimed as a consolidated view of the outcomes of evaluations of Roma inclusion measures to condense knowledge on what works, what does not and why with a view to provide guidance for the design of future evidence-based measures.

¹¹³ Atkinson, T et al, [Social Indicators: The EU and Social Inclusion](#) (2002). There are three main criteria for a portfolio of indicators: a) to be balanced across different dimensions; b) to be mutually consistent and of a proportionate weight; and c) to be as transparent and accessible as possible to EU citizens. Individual indicators, instead, should: a) capture the essence of the problem and have a clear and accepted normative interpretation (i.e. agreed on by stakeholders, experts, countries, politics); b) be robust and statistically validated; c) be responsive to policy interventions but not subject to manipulations; d) be measurable in a sufficiently comparable way across Member States and comparable as far as practicable with the standards applied internationally; e) be timely and susceptible to revision; and f) not represent a burden on a Member State, enterprise, or the EU's citizens when it comes to its measurement.

¹¹⁴ At the time of writing, discussions were ongoing for the development of an Action Plan to implement the [European Pillar on Social Rights](#). Additionally, the targets were set after consultation of the Commission services, and already take into account those of the forthcoming European Education Area.

population and reference to the source of values for general population are covered in Annex 2.

In addition, to operationalise monitoring of and reporting on the effectiveness of the initiative, operational objectives or subareas for action were identified for some of the specific objectives above. For example, promoting awareness of Roma history, culture, recognition and reconciliation is considered as an operational objective under fighting and preventing antigypsyism and discrimination, while fighting environmental discrimination, promoting environmental justice is considered an operational objective under the specific objective of increasing effective Roma access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services.

The portfolio fully takes into account the fact that not all countries are in a position to include quantitative targets in their national strategic frameworks, primarily due to data constraints but also to policy choices in terms of mainstream versus targeted policies for Roma. They can still set targets in view of the proposed process indicators.

The portfolio of indicators attached to the Communication and developed in collaboration with FRA, civil society and the Member States, is an integral part of this initiative. It will serve as a joint measurement framework for the next 10 years. Its aim is to help Member States translate the specific objectives above and the EU headline targets associated into operational objectives, and national quantitative and/or qualitative targets, taking into account the different baseline situations in the countries as well as the availability of ethnically disaggregated or other equality data (differentiated targets within a common framework). Governments should thus adopt their objectives and prioritise according to their national circumstances based on available data¹¹⁵.

The proposed indicators take due account of indicators used by Eurostat for the general population, including for monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and other EU indicator sets, while complemented with more Roma-specific indicators. Comparability with relevant Eurostat indicators is ensured to the extent given by survey methodologies¹¹⁶.

The indicators relevant for monitoring together with the baseline value against which progress is to be measured are available in Annex 2 to the EU Roma strategic framework¹¹⁷.

In line with the commitments made and the specific national situations, countries are invited to adopt national Roma strategic frameworks. Thereafter, they should monitor and implement them appropriately by using the portfolio of indicators annexed to the Communication and select from measures proposed by the draft Council Recommendation.

Member States are invited to report biannually to the Commission on ongoing and new measures, together with information on the progress achieved in each thematic area when

¹¹⁵ While Member States with ethnically disaggregated (or proxy) equality data can set corresponding national targets to express their commitment towards the below EU headline targets, for Member States without quantitative equality data process indicators (as set out in Annex 2 to COM(2020) XXX) can serve as a guidance.

¹¹⁶ For nine Member States (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HU, HR, PT, RO, SK) the 2016 EUMIDIS2 data can be used. For five Member States (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE), data is available from the 2018-2019 Roma and Traveller Survey, FRA (2020), [Roma and Travellers in six countries](#). See [Annex 2](#) with baseline data on EU headline indicators, which covers both data 2016 and 2019 data sets.

¹¹⁷ Annex 2 to COM(2020) 620 final.

implementing their respective national Roma strategic frameworks. To increase transparency and allow for policy learning, national reports should be made public, while national strategic frameworks and finalised implementation reports should be discussed in national parliaments.

The table below provides a summary of the envisaged monitoring, reporting and evaluation cycle:

Table 5: The EU Roma strategic framework reporting cycles

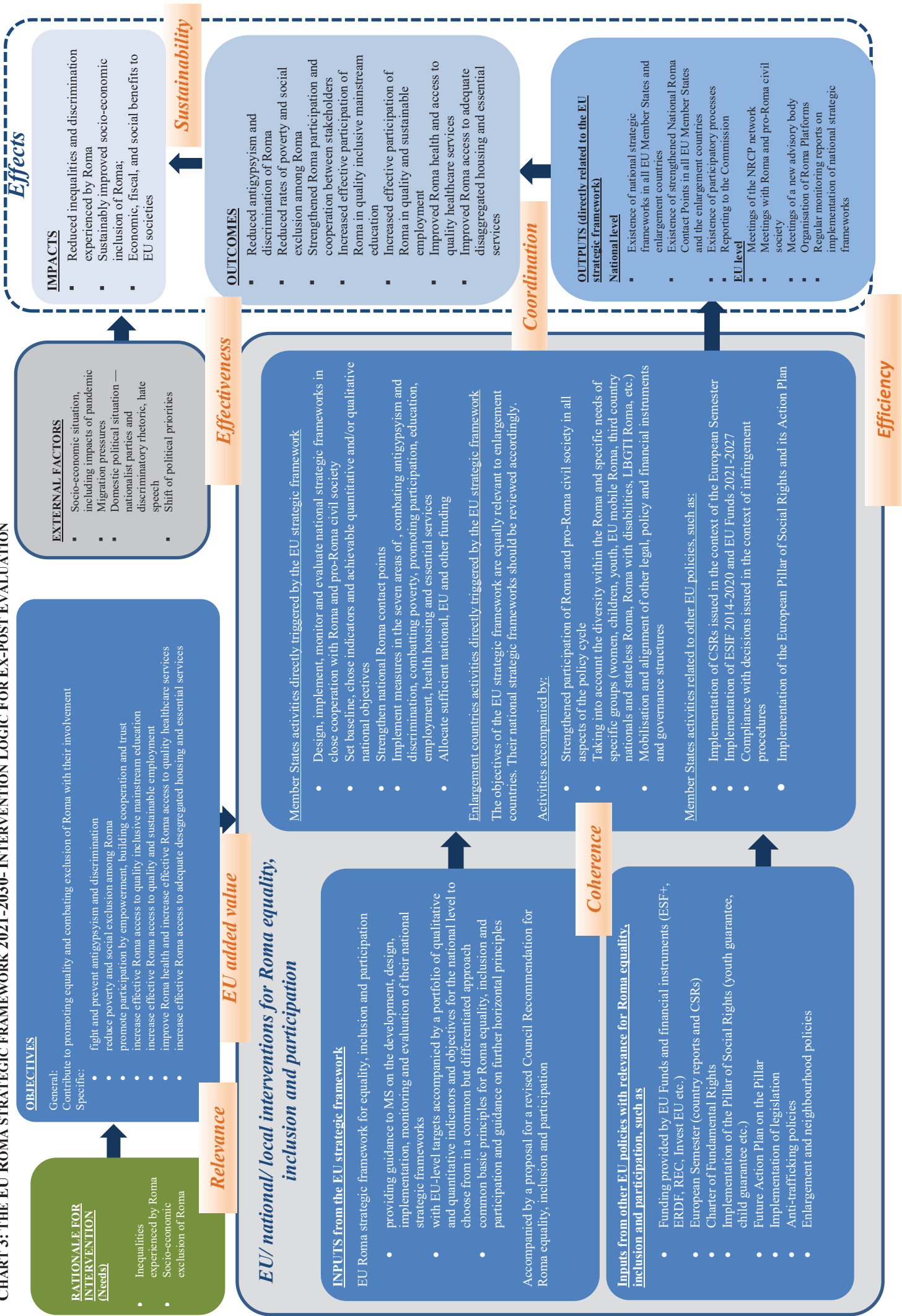
Regular surveys (FRA)	Reports from NRCPs	Report on the use of EU-funds	Civil monitoring	Commission monitoring reports	Evaluations and future policy proposal
Data collection: 2020 Results: 2021	National strategies: 2021		1 st round of national civil reports: spring 2022	Commission report on strategies: autumn 2022	
	National implementation reports: 2023		2nd round of national civil reports: spring 2024	Commission report on implementation: autumn 2024	
Data collection: 2024 Results: 2025		Report on milestones of output indicators: 2024			In-depth evaluation of the new EU Roma strategic framework
	National implementation reports: 2025		3rd round of civil reports: spring 2026	Commission report implementation: autumn 2026	
Data collection: 2028 Results: 2029	National Implementation reports: 2027	Report on targets of output indicators: 2029	4th round of civil reports: spring 2028	Commission report on implementation: autumn 2028	
	National Implementation reports: 2029				Commission follow up proposal: 2030 Ex-post evaluation

9. INTERVENTION LOGIC FOR EX-POST EVALUATION

Finally, the intervention logic for ex-post evaluations below was constructed. It takes into account the main criteria which of ex-post evaluations should include, i.e. effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value. It adds two additional criteria, namely sustainability and coordination.

The intervention logic illustrates that in progressing towards Roma equality, inclusion and participation, the new EU strategic framework does not operate independently of other legal, policy and financial instruments but mobilises and aligns with these instruments and their concrete activities to reach its specific objectives. Outputs, outcomes and impacts of the EU Roma strategic framework depend on the smooth running of these other instruments (see also Annex 2 to the Communication). The intervention logic also acknowledges the influence of commonly shared, and sometimes adverse, external factors, including the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the effectiveness of the initiative.

CHART 3: THE EU ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2021–2030– INTERVENTION LOGIC FOR EX-POST EVALUATION



ANNEX 1: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

1. Introduction

This annex is a synopsis report of the stakeholder consultation activities undertaken to inform the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation 2021-2030 adopted by the Commission on 6 October 2020. The aim of this report is to provide an overview of consultation activities and their outcome and to inform stakeholders about how their contributions were taken into account in the preparation of the initiative.

2. Overview of consultation scope and objectives

Consultations for the initiative did not have to start from scratch. Consultation activities complemented those already carried out in the context of the evaluation of the EU Framework¹¹⁸. The scope and objectives of these additional consultations were aligned with the remaining needs in terms of data collection, taking into account the extensive consultations carried out already for the above-mentioned evaluation¹¹⁹. In particular, in the context of the evaluation's consultation strategy, an online open public consultation was conducted in the second half of 2017. It included a substantial number of forward-looking questions, which now fed the preparation of the initiative. This was justified as opinions and views of stakeholders do not change within such a short time span.

To further complement the activities carried out in the context of the evaluation of the EU Framework, a range of targeted consultation activities were conducted. The key thematic aspects covered in the targeted consultations included opinions and advice on:

- policy options for the new initiative
- how to address antigypsyism, Roma participation and the diversity of Roma in the post-2020 EU strategic framework and in national frameworks
- how to improve monitoring and measurement of progress through indicators and objectives

Stakeholders consulted included those already identified for the evaluation¹²⁰:

- National Roma Contact Points (NRCs)
- Stakeholders representing national, local, regional and municipal authorities and other public or mixed entities such as social services, housing, health, education service providers
- Representatives of non-governmental and civil society organisations (EU umbrella organisations and organisations active in Member States and enlargement countries on national/regional/local levels)

¹¹⁸ An overview of these activities can be found in the Evaluation of the EU Framework for NRIS up to 2020, [SWD\(2018\) 480 final](#), Annex 2. The Commission adopted in December 2018 a Communication reporting on the evaluation; see [COM\(2018\) 785 final](#).

¹¹⁹ The evaluation is based on an extensive desk review of secondary literature, reports and databases, interviews with stakeholders in 16 other EU Member States, interviews at EU level and in three enlargement countries, an open public consultation, a survey among non-governmental organisations, 2016 survey data from FRA (EU-MIDIS II) and a validation workshop.

¹²⁰ While all the stakeholder types targeted were approached, representatives of organisations representing business and professional associations did not respond to the OPC. The other stakeholder groups were effectively reached through the various types of consultations activities indicated below.

- Representatives of international organisations and institutions active in the area of Roma integration in EU countries and/or enlargement countries
- Representatives of research and academic institutions
- European-level experts with a stated interest in Roma integration issues
- EU and non-EU citizens, including members of Roma communities
- Representatives of organisations representing churches and religious communities
- Representatives of business and professional associations

The well-established network of NRCPs and regular meetings of EU-level civil society and international organisations¹²¹ organised by the Commission ensured regular exchanges and consultation on the above key thematic aspects throughout the preparations. A new dedicated thematic subgroup of the NRCP network (Working Party on Roma indicators and reporting facilitated by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, FRA) served as additional forum for discussion and decision-making regarding indicators and monitoring of progress.

In addition, the Commission pursued the following main types of consultation activities to reach out to the stakeholders listed above. More information about methodology and outcomes is provided in the next chapter.

Open public consultation:

- an open public consultation carried out between July and October 2017, which featured a substantial number of forward-looking questions; the OPC questionnaire and the summary report were translated into all EU languages;

Targeted stakeholder consultations prior to the 1 October 2019 workshop on future policies for Roma:

- a targeted consultation of stakeholders on their views on the findings of the evaluation of the EU Framework published in December 2018; stakeholders were invited to present written comments between February and May 2019; a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings were held between June and October with contributing organisations.

Workshop:

- a workshop with stakeholders on 1 October 2019 in Brussels, Belgium, which brought together 130 participants to gather views on future policies for Roma (policy options, measuring progress, fighting antigypsyism, promoting participation, addressing the diversity among the Roma);
- workshop follow-up: publication of discussion papers on the themes set out above for the workshop on [EUROPA](#), providing the possibility for written comments until 31 October 2019, also for stakeholders that did not have the opportunity to attend the workshop;

Targeted stakeholder consultations after the workshop:

¹²¹ The regular members of this stakeholder group are: *EU umbrella non-Roma organisations*: AI, Armée du Salut, CCME, COMECE, Eurochild, EUROCITIES, ECMI, Eurodiaconia, EAPN, EFC, ENAR, ENS, EPHA, FEANTSA, Habitat, ISSA, Salvation Army. *EU umbrella Roma organisations*: ERTF, ERGO Network, ERIO, ERIAC, EURoma, ERRC, TernYpe, IRU, OSF, Phiren Amenca, REDI, and REF. *International organisations*: CoE, OHCHR, ODIHR, UNICEF, WHO. *Partners*: EFTA, Equinet, and FRA. *EU institutions*: EESC. *Academia/Research*: CEU.

- in the context of a contract with external experts providing advice to the Commission, three feedback groups composed of 8 to 10 stakeholders were established to review and contribute to the external experts' work before finalisation and delivery of the [final reports](#) at the beginning of 2020¹²²;
- the Roma Civil Society Monitor, a pilot [project](#) which built Roma civil society's capacity to independently monitor the implementation of (and thus assess gaps in) the NRIS;
- bilateral and multilateral consultation meetings with civil society and international organisations on individual and collective inputs, in addition to regular meetings organised by the Commission;
- participation of Commission representatives in numerous events and conferences organised by stakeholders to inform, update and seek further feedback for the initiative (such as the ESF Committee, the Social Dialogue Committee, the EESC, the EURoma transnational learning network, civil society organisations, etc.);
- organisation of a high-level event in cooperation with the German EU Presidency on 12-14 October 2020 in Heidelberg, Germany, to launch the initiative. The event brought together 250 participants representing relevant national authorities from the EU Member States, enlargement countries, international organizations, EU-, national- and local level NGOs, European Institutions and media;

Roadmap:

- the publication of the [Roadmap](#) for the initiative, which allowed to gather feedback from EU-level and national (pro-)Roma NGOs, public authorities, researchers and academics, and individual EU citizens.

In addition, a Commission-internal Inter-service Group (ISG) was set up for the preparation of the initiative. It was composed of several Commission services¹²³ and met on 7 October 2019, 9 December 2019 and 17 June 2020. The ISG was consulted in writing on 8 April 2020.

3. Description of consultation activities and outcomes

What follows is a short overview of the main types of consultation activities pursued by the Commission to reach out to the stakeholders, with a brief description of the process, its findings and how it fed the new initiative.

3.1. Open public consultation (OPC)

The OPC carried out by the Commission for the evaluation aimed to collect the views of stakeholders on the achievement and challenges of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies between 2011 and 2016, in order to identify specific areas that would need prioritising during the remaining implementation period (until 2020). In addition, the OPC included several forward-looking questions, which fed into the reflections on the new post-2020 policy initiative.

¹²² The reports focused on the question of how to address three specific issues in the post-2020 initiative: antigypsyism, Roma participation and the diversity among the Roma in Europe.

¹²³ DG JUST, DG SJ, DG ECFIN, DG EMPL, DG HR, DG AGRI, DG MOVE, DG ENV, DG RTD, DG CNECT, DG JRC, DG REGIO, DG EAC, DG SANTE, DG HOME, DG NEAR, DG ESTAT, DG COMM, DG SG, DG REFORM, EEAS, and FRA.

The online OPC ran between 19 July 2017 and 25 October 2017 on the website of the European Commission. It was open for anyone to participate and translated into all EU languages. Out of the 240 responses received to the survey, 165 replies came from organisations and 75 from individual citizens. Of the 165 responding organisations, 106 answered on behalf of an NGO, think tank or an association (EU-level, national, regional and local non-governmental organisations (Roma and pro-Roma)) active in EU and/or enlargement countries, 44 on behalf of a public administration, and 15 on behalf of other organisations (such as equality bodies). 202 of the 240 respondents specified their ethnicity: 91 identified themselves as Roma and 111 as non-Roma. A full [report](#) on the public consultation results is published on EUROPA as well as a [summary report](#). In addition, 28 position papers were received as part of the OPC, equally available as an [attachment](#) on [EUROPA](#).

Noteworthy preliminary findings, which fed into the design and implementation of the new initiative, include:

On the causes of exclusion and the policy's role in addressing them:

- an overwhelming majority of survey respondents (between 86 and 95% depending on the thematic area with antidiscrimination receiving the highest percentage) agree on the need for targeted public interventions in the fields of education, employment, healthcare, housing and anti-discrimination;
- the survey confirmed that discrimination remains the first cause of Roma exclusion (94% of respondents), followed by Roma communities' lack of participation in developing inclusion measures, limited political commitment, institutional capacity and insufficient funding;
- for a majority of the respondents (almost 60 %), the EU has a major role to play in supporting national, regional and local authorities, because Member States alone cannot work towards Roma inclusion goals. EU funding programmes and initiatives, monitoring included, are critical to drive reform and secure political commitment at the national level;
- respondents consistently stated that both EU institutions and national authorities should work together to develop measures to improve Roma inclusion. They see a stronger role for the EU than for national authorities in: (i) monitoring and enforcing European non-discrimination and anti-racism legislation and (ii) making access to funding conditional on developing and implementing ambitious Roma policies;
- national authorities are expected to play a bigger role in measures such as: (i) community building between Roma and non-Roma; (ii) non-discrimination; (iii) training for public officials on how to achieve Roma inclusion; (iv) making Roma history and culture part of school curricula; and (v) providing policy guidance to authorities;
- key challenges identified by the respondents include: (i) the insufficient incorporation of Roma inclusion into other policies and instruments at both European and national level; (ii) rising discrimination and antigypsyism at both European and national level; and (iii) insufficient funding allocated to Roma inclusion at the national level.

On the priority areas for action at European and national levels:

- respondents identified access to education as a clear priority (67 % at European level and 76 % at national level), with the following priorities coming next in

line: access to employment (49.2%); fighting discrimination (47.9%); addressing antigypsyism (40.9%); access to housing and essential services (37.6%); access to healthcare (35.3%); and empowerment and participation of Roma (social, economic, political, cultural) (29.3%).

3.2. Targeted stakeholder consultations prior to the workshop

Targeted consultations with stakeholders across Member States and enlargement countries took place both before and after the 1 October 2019 workshop on future policies for Roma.

The Commission initiated a targeted consultation of stakeholders on their views on the findings of the evaluation of the EU Framework published in December 2018. The stakeholders were invited to present written comments from February until May 2019. After careful analysis of the 12 position papers received from nine stakeholders (see below), the Commission services organised and hosted several bi- and multilateral meetings feeding into the design of the post-2020 initiative:

- Meeting with Eurodiaconia on 28 May 2019, focusing on the topic of EU-mobile Roma;
- Meeting with FEANTSA on 29 August 2019, which added input on how to address EU mobile Roma and the issue of homelessness;
- Meeting with EUROCITIES on 29 August 2019, which concluded on the need to involve cities in policy-making, setting up a multi-level governance mechanism of Roma inclusion, and improving access of cities to funding;
- Meeting with Alliance against Antigypsyism¹²⁴ on 2 September 2019, during which the need for stronger policy mainstreaming of Roma inclusion policies was highlighted, along with concrete antigypsyism measures;
- Meeting with Open Society Foundations¹²⁵ on 5 September 2019 to discuss their position paper on future EU Roma policy, which concluded on the need to address antigypsyism, intra-Roma diversity and a mainstream approach in policy design;
- Annual meeting with civil society and international partners on 16 September 2019, which concluded on the need to ensure a better participation of international Roma networks to European events, on a better link between the future Roma inclusion policy and EU funds, and to regulate the status of nomadic Roma throughout national strategies;
- Meeting with European Environmental Bureau and ERGO Network on 18 September 2019 related to the project “Mapping environmental discrimination of Roma communities”, which set out the need to include the topic of environmental discrimination and racism in the post-2020 policies;
- Meeting with EUROCHILD and International Social Security Association on 26 September 2019 on vulnerable Roma children, which concluded on strengthening synergies of EU Roma inclusion and the implementation of the Commission recommendation on investment in children¹²⁶ and the Child Guarantee.

In addition, the Commission took part in a meeting organised by Eurodiaconia at the European Economic and Social Committee premises on 26 June 2019 on the future of the

¹²⁴ ENAR, ERGO Network, and the Central Council for German Sinti and Roma also attended the meeting.

¹²⁵ ERIAC, ERRC, REF, and REDI also attended the meeting.

¹²⁶ 2013/112/EU, Commission Recommendation of 20 February 2013 ‘*Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage*’ (OJEU L 59/5).

EU Roma Strategy, which highlighted the need to include the post-2020 initiative in Council conclusions on ‘economies of wellbeing’; the full report is available [here](#).

The reflections spurred by the above mentioned written contributions, meetings and events feeding the initiative were extensive, allowing only for a short overview for the purpose of this report:

- Stakeholders called for an ambitious post-2020 strategy, featuring concrete and pragmatic social inclusion and anti-poverty interventions, fundamental rights, antidiscrimination considerations, and antigypsyism as a specific objective and horizontal priority;
- Contributors suggested that the new initiative takes intra-EU poverty migration (EU-mobile Roma) into account;
- According to civil society, priorities should be a combined targeted and mainstream approach to Roma policies, higher coordination, strengthened Roma and pro-Roma civil society involvement, including Roma youth, funding mechanisms, data and monitoring, including a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on citizenship rights and access to civil documentation;
- Other suggestions included taking into account new phenomena shaping social policy, such as digitalisation, environmental racism and ecological challenges.

3.3. Workshop on future policies for Roma

A workshop on future policies for Roma was organised by the Commission in Brussels on 1 October 2019. The workshop brought together 130 participants representing a wide range of stakeholders, including NRCPs from the EU and the enlargement region, Members of the European Parliament, representatives from civil society active at the European, national and local levels, representatives from international organisations, and staff from the European Commission services. Asked anonymously about their ethnic background¹²⁷, 35% of the participants self-identified as being of Roma origin.

Divided into four sessions, the workshop gave participants the opportunity to discuss on the following topics: policy options for EU action and measuring progress in Roma equality and inclusion post-2020, fighting antigypsyism and promoting Roma participation post-2020, and addressing the diversity within the Roma population post-2020. To facilitate the discussion, [background papers](#) had been prepared in advance, together with a set of questions for the debate. A full [report](#) of the workshop is available on EUROPA. For those unable to attend the workshop, the Commission provided an opportunity to submit written comments within one month from the event. The 25 [contributions](#) received are equally available on EUROPA.

The workshop’s starting point were the evaluation findings. It enabled participants to provide feedback on the selected themes for discussion. The feedback was given through an open discussion, facilitated by members of the Commission and external experts. Participants were invited to share their views openly at the workshop or to send them in writing later.

Highlights from the four sessions include:

- Participants supported various combinations of the six mutually exclusive basic options for EU action on Roma equality and inclusion post-2020 presented at the

¹²⁷ Via SLIDO.

workshop¹²⁸. However, there was general support for an ambitious initiative, including a Council recommendation¹²⁹, with a stronger focus on fighting antigypsyism alongside the social inclusion approach;

- For measuring progress in the post-2020 initiative, the participants agreed on the set-up of differentiated, country-specific targets under a common EU Framework¹³⁰. They also supported the inclusion of new indicators¹³¹.
- Combatting antigypsyism came across as a desired standalone priority area, to be also tackled horizontally within the four main policy areas. As for participation, discussions highlighted the importance of institutional accountability (e.g. by ensuring access of Roma to reports from NRCPs), as well as increased Roma participation in public institutions and National Roma Platforms;
- On intra-Roma diversity, participants highlighted that the post-2020 EU initiative would bring strong added value through focusing on Roma groups such as women, youth and children, EU mobile Roma, elderly people, LGBTI+ people and people with disability, or refugees from Syria and migrants from South and Eastern Europe.

The online publication of the [background papers](#) provided the possibility for written comments by stakeholders that did not have the opportunity to attend the workshop. Until the end of October, 25 [contributors](#) added input to the reflections on the new post-2020 initiative as follows:

- On policy options for EU action, civil society suggested the adoption of an option 7 (combination of options 3, 5 and 6) that would consist of a new Council Recommendation on Roma inclusion and combating antigypsyism. Under a strengthened rights-based approach, socio-economic inclusion should go hand in hand with combatting racism and discrimination;
- On measuring progress, civil society called for ambitious targets and concrete objectives that should undergo robust monitoring, with a focus on the development of targets to measure Member States' answers to antigypsyism;
- On fighting antigypsyism and promoting Roma participation, stakeholders agreed that antigypsyism should be at the core of the future initiative and that Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations should be involved through meaningful consultation processes and engagement in all future policies at all stages, without overlooking intersectional aspects, i.e. prior exclusion of Roma women and young adults;
- On addressing intra-Roma diversity, contributions suggested that non- or under-addressed issues be included as crosscutting items under the new initiative, such as gender equality, EU-mobile Roma (especially with respect to social housing, education, and employment), and environmental justice.

¹²⁸ Option 1: No new EU initiative, Option 2: EU Framework is carried forward as it is, Option 3: Antigypsyism approach, Option 4: Anti-poverty approach without specific targeting of Roma, Option 5: A revised EU Framework, Option 6: Broadened approach on equality and inclusion.

¹²⁹ In line with civil society's approach, who also called for a Council Recommendation under an 'option 7' (see further below).

¹³⁰ As proposed in the Communication on the mid-term evaluation, adopted by the Commission in December 2018; see [COM\(2018\) 785 final](#).

¹³¹ Such as, for example, residential segregation, affordability of housing, mapping of evictions, homelessness, child rights related indicators, but not child marriage, child and maternal mortality rates, participation, learning achievements, type of jobs, the need for a crosscutting indicator on environmental justice.

3.4. Targeted consultation activities after the workshop

Following the workshop, the Commission continued to take part in various events relevant to the design of the post-2020 initiative and to organise stakeholder consultations to give every opportunity to provide feedback that would feed into the new policy:

- European Economic and Social Committee event on Roma housing¹³² on 14 October 2019, which highlighted the need to consider mobile Roma and environmental issues when devising housing policies, to take desegregation measures and the institutionalisation of Roma children;
- Joint Research Centre event on ‘Reinforcing the evidence base on Roma inclusion’ on 18 October 2019, which presented a [meta-evaluation](#) of what works for Roma inclusion and concluded on the need to improve the evidence base for the evaluation of Roma inclusion interventions;
- Bilateral meeting with the European Network on Statelessness on 13 November 2019, which called on the Commission to incorporate a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on citizenship rights and access to documentation in the new post-2020 initiative;
- European Economic and Social Committee event on Roma employment on 15 November 2019, which included reflections on the economic empowerment of Roma and the need to improve their employability;
- ERGO Network Annual Public Conference¹³³ on 19 November 2019, which called for targeted and mainstream educational measures in the post-2020 initiative, a shift of focus on the majority population to dismantle structural barriers of access for Roma, and more efforts for real inclusion and increased investments in inclusive schools;
- Event organised by FEANTSA on 19 November 2019 as a follow-up to the report on the notion of worker in the context of low-wage and low-hour employment;
- Event of the EURoma Network on 21-22 November 2019 on the future national Roma integration strategies and their linkage to the 2021-2027 ESIF, which called for more improved post-2020 NRIS (in terms of length, continuity, scale and resources of investments) and a holistic approach (targeted and mainstream measures);
- Meeting with Eurogroup for Animals on 5 December 2019, which included reflections on how Member States’ increased efforts to reduce poverty of the Roma in the post-2020 narrative will indirectly affect animal welfare;
- Event organised by EEB, ERGO Network and the EP to launch the draft report ‘Pushed to the wastelands. Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe’ on 22 January 2020. The discussions supported the idea to include environmental issues affecting Roma communities under the antigypsyism priority¹³⁴;

¹³² Attendees included representatives of employers, employees and civil society.

¹³³ The event drew together ERGO Network members from the grassroots level, European and enlargement countries civil society organisations and other Brussel-based stakeholders, and EU policymakers across the institutional spectrum.

¹³⁴ Two follow-up online meetings were organised. On 2 April 2020 with EEB and FRA, discussing further the topic and the related monitoring challenges, and on 8 April 2020, for the official launch of the final report and additional discussions.

- Meeting of the technical working group of the ESF Committee on 5-6 February 2020, which discussed alignment between the post-2020 ESF+ programming and the development of the post-2020 initiative;
- Meeting with the EEA/Norway Grants Financial Mechanism on 10 February 2020 for an informal exchange on Roma-specific and Roma-relevant indicators to ensure complementarity of efforts;
- Consultation with civil society and international partners on 17 February 2020, which collected input based on the expert paper on reinforcing the fight against antigypsyism under the post-2020 initiative;
- NRCPs meeting of 18-19 February 2020, which gathered Member States' input on the expert reports and indicators and reporting for the post-2020 initiative;
- Roma Civil Society Monitor, a three-year pilot [project](#) aimed to strengthen Roma civil society's involvement in the monitoring of national Roma integration strategies. The project came to end in March 2020 with country-specific reports on gaps in implementation of policies for Roma inclusion;
- Videoconference with NGO experts (OSF and ERGO) on 20 April 2020 to take stock of the COVID-19 crisis' impact on marginalised Roma communities across Member States and the short-, mid- and long-term measures to be adopted in response;
- Event (online) organised by Equinet on 7 May 2020 on policy formation to present the [Perspective on Roma and Traveller Inclusion](#): Towards a new EU Framework – Learning from the work of equality bodies. The exchanges on experiences, actions and complaints received by equality bodies across Member States fed the reflections¹³⁵ on how to integrate the lessons of the pandemic into the post-2020 initiative;
- Several rounds of consultations with the NRCPs, statistical offices, civil society organisations and the FRA under their relaunched Working Party on Roma indicators and reporting (as of March 2020)¹³⁶. The aim was to develop collaboratively a portfolio of robust and policy-relevant indicators to measure progress on Roma equality and inclusion after 2020¹³⁷.
- High-level event (online) under the German EU Presidency on 12 October 2020 in Heidelberg, Germany, to launch and discuss the new post-2020 initiative.

¹³⁵ Subsequent to the online event, the dedicated Working Group on policy formation provided further substantial input to specific areas, thus feeding the reflections on the development of the initiative.

¹³⁶ Active between 2012 and 2015 to develop the reporting framework on the 2013 Council Recommendation, it was relaunched in 2020 at the request of the Commission to address conclusions from the evaluation and support the development of the EU strategic framework with a portfolio of Roma equality, inclusion and participation indicators and associated objectives, targets and types of measures.

¹³⁷ Nineteen Member States participated in the Roma Working Party and provided input to the portfolio of indicators, i.e. AT, BE, BG, CZ, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, LV, LT, LU, RO, SI, and SK. Between November 2019 and April 2020, FRA collected input from the NRCPs and Roma civil society on the post-2020 framework of indicators on Roma equality, inclusion and participation. Member States gave feedback on nine proposed thematic areas and 54 individual outcome indicators discussed in the background paper to the NRCP meeting held on 18-19 February 2020, titled “Draft portfolio of post-2020 Roma equality, inclusion and participation - thematic areas, indicators, and possible types (categories) of measures”. The NRCPs submitted their comments by email using a feedback template provided by the FRA in Excel format. The content and structure of the Portfolio built on Specific objectives proposed by the Roadmap. In addition, and responding to input by Member States received in the framework of the Roma Working Party, civil society, and international organisations (namely, Council of Europe, OSCE-ODIHR) provided their inputs and comments.

3.5. Roadmap of the ‘Initiative setting out the EU post-2020 Roma equality and inclusion policy’

In the context of the preparation of the follow-up initiative to the EU Framework, the Commission published the roadmap for an “Initiative setting out the EU post-2020 Roma equality and inclusion policy” on the [‘Have Your Say’ platform](#) seeking comments from EU citizens, EU-level and national NGOs, public authorities as well as academics and researchers. The feedback period was open from 17 February until 16 March 2020.

Overall, 33 contributors¹³⁸ provided input on the Commission’s roadmap, out of which 13 EU-level NGOs, nine national NGOs, one academic/researcher, one public authority, and nine EU individual citizens (including one Roma). Additionally, 15 NGOs and researchers provided feedback in a single joint statement¹³⁹. The Commission duly considered all the feedback received within the timeframe for the publishing of comments online. Where various website-related issues might have impaired contributors to post the comment within the deadline, the Commission accepted input submitted via e-mail.

Generally, contributors welcomed that the roadmap was clear in terms of problem descriptions, objectives and follow-up methods. They found positive the planned stronger focus on structural discrimination and antigypsyism. There was an overall support of the Commission’s focus on Roma empowerment beyond specific challenges around housing, health, education and employment. Similarly, the intention for the new initiative to present a common indicator framework for Roma equality and inclusion to better monitor progress was considered as positive.

Overall, the feedback to the Roadmap reinforced main elements highlighted in previous stakeholders’ contributions. None of the contributions received spoke out against any such initiative.

What emerged from the written feedback as expectations of the new EU post-2020 initiative refers mainly to the need to include the fight against antigypsyism as standalone goal and to develop set more ambitious targets with respect to Roma children and issues that regard them, such as school segregation and institutionalisation. While seeking to see a (reinforced) focus on Roma youth, access to water and sanitation, and promotion of Roma history and culture, the contributors suggested the inclusion of new goals and/or thematic areas, such as civil documentation and citizenship rights, mental health, and environmental discrimination.

Some opinions requested that the Commission designed the new initiative with a strengthened rights-based and intersectionality approach, ensuring effective access to

¹³⁸ *EU-Level Roma and pro-Roma NGOs*: a Joint Statement of 14 NGOs and one research centre, ERGO Network, IRU, CRR, REF, EPHA, EEB, ERIAC, ENS, ERRC, and Lumos Foundation. *National NGOs*: Roma Advocacy and Research Centre (SK), Civil Rights Defenders (SE), Senior Corporate Silver Spoon Environment and Nature Association (HU), Udruga Mladih Roma "Romska Budućnost" Rijeka (HR), Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña (ES), Pavee Traveller and Roma Centre (IE), Romu Kultūras Centrs Biedrība (LV), ETUCE, Afrikanische Frauenorganisation (AT), Centre For Civil And Human Rights Poradna (SK). *Public authority*: Gothenburg Municipality. *Academic and/or research centres*: Corvinus University Budapest. *Individual citizens (of whom one Roma)* from BE, DE, EL, IT, NL, SE, SK, and RO.

¹³⁹ Statement by the Alliance against Antigypsyism, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Centre for Policy Studies of the CEU, ENAR, ERGO Network, ERTF, ERIAC, ERRC, FSG, OSF, Phiren Amenca, RAA, REF, REDI, and ternYpe.

justice for all Roma and addressing specific challenges of EU mobile Roma. EU and enlargement Roma and non-Roma umbrella organisations, international organisations, EU institutions and enlargement governments highlighted the continued need for the new strategic framework to address Roma equality, inclusion, and participation to also guide the EU enlargement and neighbourhood regions in the context of the enlargement process. In addition, some contributors suggested to consider the challenges of the digital age through, for example, enhanced digital literacy to avoid further exclusion of the Roma. There were also voices requesting that the new initiative be of a more binding nature, as well as for the establishment of an independent monitoring body to ensure effective implementation.

4. Overall results from the consultations

Across the results of all the consultations, a number of common messages¹⁴⁰ relating to the design and implementation of the new post-2020 initiative on Roma equality, inclusion and participation stood out.

First, the view that an EU Framework in this policy area is still necessary to help realise positive changes related to Roma equality and inclusion across the key policy areas at national level. Without EU guidance, monitoring and support, effective improvement of the situation of the Roma is unlikely to occur across Member States and enlargement countries. This view became even stronger when the corona virus pandemic hit marginalised Roma communities hard, illustrating unaddressed inequalities, discrimination and socio-economic exclusion.

Second, the majority of stakeholders suggested that the post-2020 initiative should focus on concrete and pragmatic social inclusion and anti-poverty interventions, fundamental rights, antidiscrimination, with fighting antigypsyism as both a horizontal requirement and standalone priority area.

Additionally, it was suggested that bigger emphasis should be put on participation, child protection, the gender equality dimension, diversity within Roma groups, environmental justice, intra-EU mobility, non-EU Roma citizens, and lack of identity cards, stronger monitoring and indicators, as well as arts and culture and the protection of Roma cultural heritage. To keep up with current and future trends, stakeholders also requested taking into account new phenomena shaping social policy, such as digitalisation and ecological challenges.

The Commission addressed the majority of these common views in the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation 2021-2030. Despite some requests in this sense, the Commission did not propose a Directive covering the fight against antigypsyism. Adoption of new EU law specifically in the field of fighting antigypsyism was considered as unrealistic. The EU already adopted a number of binding legal instruments to ensure equality and non-discrimination that are crucial for fighting antigypsyism: the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on combatting Racism and Xenophobia, which have been transposed by Member States. The Racial Equality Directive already prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination based on ethnic origin. It was concluded, that in light of the experience with the proposal for a

¹⁴⁰ The results of the stakeholder consultations generally demonstrate a range of common aspects and shared areas of concern. However, not all stakeholder groups were equally involved. As visible from the overview above, the EU-level civil society was the most active contributor, with concrete positions on the new initiative.

horizontal Equal Treatment Directive (that has been negotiated for over 10 years), adoption of new EU law specifically in the field of fighting antigypsyism is not realistic. Efforts should be rather devoted to enforcement of the existing legislation, its correct application, guidance and training, where necessary, and financial support for the effective implementation and enforcement of legislation at the national level.

ANNEX 2. BASELINES FOR EU HEADLINE INDICATORS

This Annex presents the situation of Roma in 14 EU Member States¹⁴¹ as recorded by two FRA surveys in 2016 and in 2019. In 2016, the [Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey \(EU-MIDIS II\)](#) collected information on the situation of Roma in Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. In 2019, the [Roma and Travellers survey \(RTS\)](#) covered the selected groups of Roma and Travellers¹⁴² in Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

The surveys were all carried out using a similar methodology, applying a multi-stage probabilistic selection of respondents at all stages. Aiming at providing the results representative for the target population in a given country, the EU-MIDIS II applied random sampling methodologies in all countries, the Roma and Travellers survey applied random and non-random sampling methodologies at the last stage of sampling (selection of respondent)¹⁴³.

The Annex presents 18 **headline indicators** that had been developed and populated with data by the time of publishing. It also presents average values for the Member States in question, separately for the countries covered by EU-MIDIS II and for the countries covered by the Roma and Travellers countries. The values for general population are provided for the indicators where they exist. The caveats that need to be considered when analysing values as well as limitations in comparability between the values for Roma and the values for general population are provided directly under the respective table, including also the reference to the source of values for general population.

All sample surveys are affected by sampling error, as the interviews cover only a fraction of the total population. Therefore, **all results presented are point estimates underlying statistical variation**. Small differences of a few percentage points between groups of respondents are to be interpreted within the range of statistical variation and only more substantial divergence between population groups should be considered as evidence of actual differences.

Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Therefore, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total or based on cells with less than 20 unweighted observations are noted in parentheses. Results based on less than 20 unweighted observations in a group total are not published (-).

¹⁴¹ The distribution and density of Roma populations differ across Member States and a random sampling method as used in EU-MIDIS II is not always possible. Different data collection methods are needed for the countries and groups not covered by the EU-MIDIS II and the [Roma and Travellers survey](#) (country specific quantitative or qualitative methods).

¹⁴² Only groups covered by the term Roma and Travellers (that were possible to be under research through the quantitative probabilistic survey in individual countries) were included in the Roma and Travellers Survey. For other groups not covered by the survey, other methodologies will be used for research.

¹⁴³ FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) (2020), [Roma and Travellers in six countries](#).

1. Horizontal objectives

a. Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination

- i. EU headline target: cut the proportion of Roma with experience of discrimination by at least half

*Indicator 1: Share of Roma who felt discriminated against because of being Roma in any of the areas covered in the survey in the past 12 months**

Per country	Roma (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	26
BG	14
CZ	32
EL	48
ES	35
HR	37
HU	21
PT	47
RO	21
SK	30

Per country specific subgroup		Roma/ Travellers (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		45
BE	Caravan Dweller	19
	Roma	21
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	35
IE	Travellers	65
NL	Roma	76
	Travellers and Sinti	40
SE	Roma and Travellers	50

* Notes:

- Out of all Roma respondents (EU-MIDIS II: n=7875; RTS: n=3750), weighted results.
- The survey asked about discrimination on grounds of Roma background in at least one of the domains of daily life asked about in the survey: looking for work, at work, education (self or as parent), health, housing and other public or private services (public administration, restaurant or bar, public transport, shop). In EU-MIDIS II, the discrimination experience in 'access to health care' was asked only to those who needed a medical examination within the past 12 months.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE)

- ii. EU headline target: decrease the proportion of general population who feel uncomfortable having Roma neighbours by at least a third

*Indicator 2: Share of general population who feel uncomfortable having Roma as their neighbour**

Country	General population (%)	Country	General population (%)
EU-27	46	HU	57
AT	34	IE	46
BE	41	IT	59
BG	55	LT	67
CY	16	LU	31
CZ	53	LV	47
DE	47	MT	34
DK	44	NL	31
EE	56	PL	42
EL	64	PT	47
ES	22	RO	42
FI	52	SE	30
FR	52	SI	41
HR	33	SK	54

* Notes:

- Out of all respondents (n=28240), weighted results.
- Share of general population feeling (totally) uncomfortable (category 1-3 on a 7-point scale).

Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019. Data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT).

b. Reduce poverty and social exclusion

- i. EU headline target: cut poverty gap between Roma and general population by at least half

*Indicator 3: At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60% of median equalised income after social transfers)**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	80	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		16,8
BG	86	22,0
CZ	58	9,6
EL	96	18,5
ES	98	21,5
HR	93	19,3
HU	75	12,8
PT	n.p.	17,3
RO	70	23,5
SK	87	12,2

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		72	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			16,8
BE	Caravan Dweller	83	16,4
	Roma	74	16,4
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	n.p.	13,4
IE	Travellers	n.p.	14,9
NL	Roma	n.p.	13,3
	Travellers and Sinti	n.p.	13,3
SE	Roma and Travellers	70	16,4

* Notes:

- n.p. (not publishable): Values for FR, IE, NL, PT not be published because of high number of missing answers (>40%).
- Out of all persons in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n=31793; RTS: n=3306), weighted results.
- At-risk-of-poverty are considered to be all persons with an equalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold published by Eurostat (for EU-MIDIS II, the referent year of at-risk-of-poverty threshold is 2014, while for RTS it is 2018). The equalised disposable income is the total income of a household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3). The RTS and EU-MIDIS II questionnaires are asking for the net monthly household income (as exact number or as range). This deviates from the EU-SILC methods of disposable household income measurement.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [ile_li02] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

- ii. EU headline target: cut poverty gap between Roma children and other children by at least half

*Indicator 3.1: Children aged 0-17 at risk of poverty**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	85	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		19,6
BG	90	26,6
CZ	65	11,0
EL	98	22,7
ES	98	26,8
HR	95	19,7
HU	82	13,8
PT	n.p.	19,0
RO	78	32,0
SK	92	20,5

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		80	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			19,6
BE	Caravan Dweller	89	20,1
	Roma	85	20,1
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	n.p.	19,9
IE	Travellers	n.p.	15,8
NL	Roma	n.p.	13,1
	Travellers and Sinti	n.p.	13,1
SE	Roma and Travellers	76	19,3

* Notes:

- n.p. (not publishable): Values for FR, IE, NL, PT not published because of high number of missing answers (>40%).
- Out of all children aged 0-17 in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n=12290; RTS: n=1181), weighted results.
- At-risk-of-poverty are considered to be all persons with an equalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold published by Eurostat (for EU-MIDIS II, the referent year of at-risk-of-poverty threshold is 2014, while for RTS it is 2018). The equalised disposable income is the total income of a household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3). The RTS and EU-MIDIS II questionnaires are asking for the net monthly household income (as exact number or as range). This deviates from the EU-SILC methods of disposable household income measurement.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [ilc_li02] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

Indicator 4: Share of people living in household in severe material deprivation*

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	62	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		19,6
BG	58	20,9
CZ	51	2,8
EL	73	16,7
ES	52	5,4
HR	76	8,6
HU	68	10,1
PT	53	6,0
RO	70	16,8
SK	65	7,0

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		24	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			19,6
BE	Caravan Dweller	23	5,0
	Roma	30	5,0
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	22	4,7
IE	Travellers	31	4,9
NL	Roma	18	2,4
	Travellers and Sinti	3	2,4
SE	Roma and Travellers	28	1,6

* Notes:

- Out of all persons in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n=33785; RTS: n=11142), weighted results.
- Severe material deprivation is defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four out of nine items: unexpected expenses, a one-week annual holiday away from home, a meal involving meat, chicken or fish every second day, the adequate heating of a dwelling, durable goods like a washing machine, colour television, telephone or car, being confronted with payment arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments).

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [*ilc_mddd11*] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

Indicator 4.1: Children aged 0-17 in severe material deprivation*

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	66	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		6,5
BG	61	19,1
CZ	55	3,4
EL	73	18,6
ES	53	6,5
HR	76	7,6
HU	73	15,2
PT	49	5,7
RO	75	19,7
SK	71	9,0

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		24	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			6,5
BE	Caravan Dweller	21	6,9
	Roma	25	6,9
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	21	5,7
IE	Travellers	28	6,7
NL	Roma	15	2,3
	Travellers and Sinti	(5)	2,3
SE	Roma and Travellers	28	2,3

* Notes:

- Out of all children aged 0-17 in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n=13072; RTS: n=3529), weighted results.
- Severe material deprivation is defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four out of nine items: unexpected expenses, a one-week annual holiday away from home, a meal involving meat, chicken or fish every second day,

the adequate heating of a dwelling, durable goods like a washing machine, colour television, telephone or car, being confronted with payment arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments).

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [*ilc_mddd11*] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

c. Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust

- i. EU headline target: double the proportion of Roma who file a report when experiencing discrimination

*Indicator 5: Share of people who felt discriminated against (in any area) in the last 12 months and reported the last incident of discrimination because of being Roma**

Country	Roma (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	16
BG	24
CZ	24
EL	(8)
ES	7
HR	22
HU	9
PT	(7)
RO	15
SK	24

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		22
BE	Caravan Dweller	(31)
	Roma	27
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	15
IE	Travellers	28
NL	Roma	14
	Travellers and Sinti	21
SE	Roma and Travellers	27

* Notes:

- Out of all Roma respondents who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months (EU-MIDIS II: n=2238; RTS: n=1551); weighted results.
- Question: 'Last time you felt discriminated against because of your [ROMA BACKGROUND] [in area of life], did you report or make a complaint about the incident?'

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE)

2. Sectoral policy objectives

a. Increase effective Roma access to quality inclusive mainstream education

- i. EU headline target: cut at least in half the gap in participation in Early Childhood Education and Care (3+) between Roma and the general population

*Indicator 7: Share of children age 3 up to starting compulsory primary education age who attend early childhood education**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	42	

EU27 (EUROSTAT)		92,2
BG	58	79,8
CZ	24	86,7
EL	21	50,8
ES	86	97,5
HR	25	76,3
HU	71	92,2
PT	34	91,0
RO	28	80,5
SK	27	77,6

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		55	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			92,2
BE	Caravan Dweller	-	98,5
	Roma	65	98,5
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	26	100,0
IE	Travellers	64	100,0
NL	Roma	-	89,4
	Travellers and Sinti	-	89,4
SE	Roma and Travellers	89	95,1

* Notes:

- Out of all children aged between 3 years and the country-specific starting age of compulsory primary education (EU-MIDIS II: n=2570; RTS: n=665), weighted results.
- Different age groups for participation in early childhood education in countries: 3-4 years in UK and NL; 3-5 years in BE, FR, IE, SE, CZ, EL, ES, HU, PT, RO, SK; 3-6 years in BG and HR. (EU-MIDIS II: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2015), [The Structure of the European Education Systems 2015/16: Schematic Diagrams](#). Eurydice Facts and Figures, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union (Publications Office) ; RTS: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018). [The Structure of the European Education Systems 2018/19: Schematic Diagrams. Eurydice Facts and Figures](#). Luxembourg, Publications Office).
- Age is calculated on annual basis, hence the figures do not consider earlier or delayed start in primary education of an individual child.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [*educ_uoe_enra21*] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 03.09.2020.

- ii. EU headline target: reduce the gap in completion rate of upper secondary education between Roma and the general population by at least one third

*Indicator 8: Share of people aged 20-24 with completed at least upper secondary education**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	28	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		83,5
BG	28	84,4
CZ	38	88,3
EL	8	94,5
ES	24	74,0
HR	25	97,3
HU	32	86,6
PT	(9)	82,9

RO	20	83,4
SK	38	89,9

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		26	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			83,5
BE	Caravan Dweller	-	85,6
	Roma	(26)	85,6
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	(12)	88,5
IE	Travellers	(22)	94,1
NL	Roma	-	82,2
	Travellers and Sinti	(28)	82,2
SE	Roma and Travellers	44	84,6

* Notes:

- EU-MIDIS II: out of all persons in Roma households aged 20-24 (n=2917), weighted results; RTS: out of all Roma respondents aged 20-24 (n=426), weighed results.
- Survey question filled in by respondents for all 16-year-olds in the household: 'What is the highest level of education [NAME] has completed?'
- ISCED 2011 classification used.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [edat_lfse_03] 2019 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020

*Indicator 9: Early leavers from education and training, 18-24 years**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	68	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		10,2
BG	67	13,9
CZ	57	6,7
EL	92	4,1
ES	70	17,3
HR	68	3,0
HU	68	11,8
PT	90	10,6
RO	77	15,3
SK	58	8,3

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		62	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			10,2
BE	Caravan Dweller	(71)	8,4
	Roma	59	8,4
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	84	8,2
IE	Travellers	70	5,1
NL	Roma	(88)	7,5
	Travellers and Sinti	(62)	7,5
SE	Roma and Travellers	30	6,5

* Notes:

- EU-MIDIS II: out of all persons aged 18-24 in Roma households (n= 4152), weighted results; RTS: out of all Roma respondents aged 18-24 (n = 605),
 - "Early leavers from education and training denotes the percentage of the population aged 18-24 years having attained at most lower secondary education (ISCED 2011 levels 0, 1 or 2) and not being involved in further education or training. There are some deviations from the Eurostat definition. Eurostat includes persons who are not in education and training (neither formal nor non-formal) in the four weeks preceding the LFS survey. FRA asks for "currently attending school or vocational training" and not asking explicitly for non-formal education."
- Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [edat_lfse_14] 2019 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

- iii. EU headline target: work towards eliminating segregation by cutting at least in half the proportion of Roma children attending segregated primary schools

*Indicator 10: Share of children, 6-15 years old, attending schools where 'all or most of schoolmates are Roma' as reported by the respondents (selected countries only)**

Country	Roma (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	44
BG	58
CZ	29
EL	46
ES	31
HR	40
HU	60
PT	14
RO	28
SK	60

* Notes:

- Out of all children aged 6-15 in Roma households who are in education (n = 6518), weighted results.
- Survey question filled in by respondents for all children aged 6-15 years in education: "Now please think about the school [NAME] attends. How many of the schoolmates would you say are Roma: all of them, most of them, some or none of them?"

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK).

b. Increase effective Roma access to quality and sustainable employment

- i. EU headline target: cut at least in half the employment gap between Roma and the general population

*Indicator 11: Share of people who self-declared their main activity status as 'paid work', 20-64 years**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	43	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		73,1
BG	49	75,0
CZ	43	80,3
EL	52	75,1
ES	24	61,2
HR	21	71,6
HU	49	66,7
PT	38	76,1

RO	45	70,9
SK	43	82,1

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		38	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			73,1
BE	Caravan Dweller	38	70,5
	Roma	50	70,5
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	37	68,0
IE	Travellers	15	75,3
NL	Roma	22	80,1
	Travellers and Sinti	55	80,1
SE	Roma and Travellers	47	73,4

* Notes:

- Out of all persons aged 20–64 in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n = 17806; RTS: n = 6491); weighted results.
- The “paid work rate” is based on the questions: “Please look at this card and tell me which of these categories describes your current situation best?”; “Did you do any work in the last 4 weeks to earn some money?” The General population employment rate is based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) concept: Employed population, 20-64 years, consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [*lfsa_ergan*] 2019 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020

- ii. EU headline target: cut the gap in the NEET rate between the Roma and the general population by at least half

*Indicator 12: Share of young people with current main activity in neither employment, education nor training**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	62	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		10,1
BG	63	13,7
CZ	50	5,7
EL	59	10,1
ES	76	12,5
HR	73	10,6
HU	49	11,8
PT	50	8,0
RO	62	14,7
SK	64	5,5

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)			
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			10,1
BE	Caravan Dweller	41	9,3
	Roma	30	9,3
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	61	12,1
IE	Travellers	70	11,0
NL	Roma	36	4,3

	Travellers and Sinti	17	4,3
SE	Roma and Travellers	30	10,3

* Notes:

- Out of all persons aged 16-24 in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n = 5,670; RTS: n = 2,088), weighted results.
- General population: 15-24 years
- Comparability between EU-MIDIS II / RTS and the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition and age bands. Considering 15-year-olds would show values lower by a few percentage points for those who are not in employment, training or education. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week, whereas EU-MIDIS II / RTS asked about self-declared main activity. EU-MIDIS II / RTS also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [edat_lfse_20] 2019 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

iii. EU headline target: cut at least in half the gender employment gap for Roma

Indicator 13: Gender employment gap – difference in the paid work rate between women and men, 20-64 years*

Country	Roma			General population		
	Difference (% points)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Difference (% points)	Women (%)	Men (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	27	29	56			
EU 27				11,7	67,2	78,9
BG	29	35	64	8,6	70,7	79,3
CZ	23	32	55	15,0	72,7	87,7
EL	59	22	82	12,4	69,0	81,4
ES	14	16	31	20,0	51,3	71,3
HR	19	12	31	7,1	68,1	75,2
HU	26	36	62	10,5	61,5	72,0
PT	34	21	55	7,2	72,7	79,9
RO	37	27	63	19,0	61,3	80,3
SK	22	32	54	4,7	79,7	84,4

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers			General population		
		Difference (% points)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Difference (% points)	Women (%)	Men (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		27	25	52			
EU 27 (EUROSTAT)					11,7	67,2	78,9
BE	Caravan Dweller	(15)	(31)	46	8,0	66,5	74,5
	Roma	21	39	60	8,0	66,5	74,5
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	51	13	64	11,9	62,1	74,0
IE	Travellers	-4	17	13	15,5	67,6	83,1
NL	Roma	12	16	29	9,3	75,5	84,8
	Travellers and Sinti	45	35	80	9,3	75,5	84,8
SE	Roma and Travellers	10	42	52	13,0	66,9	79,9

* Notes:

- Out of all persons aged 20–64 in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n = 17806; RTS: n = 6491), weighted results.
- The “paid work rate” is based on the questions: “Please look at this card and tell me which of these categories describes your current situation best?”; “Did you do any work in the last 4 weeks to earn some money?” The General population employment rate is based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) concept: Employed population, 20-64 years, consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [lfsa_organ] 2019 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020

c. Improve Roma health and increase effective Roma effective access to quality healthcare and social services

- i. EU headline target: cut in half the life expectancy gap between Roma and non-Roma

*Indicator 14: Difference in life expectancy at birth (general population v. Roma)**

Country	Country specific subgroup	Women (difference in years)	Men (difference in years)
EU 5 (RTS)		10,4	10,2
BE	Caravan Dweller + Roma	13,6	14,2
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	10,9	7,9
IE	Travellers	8,2	8,4
NL	Roma	n.p.	n.p.
	Travellers and Sinti	8,3	12,5
SE	Roma and Travellers	10,1	11,6

* Notes:

- Shows the difference in life expectancy at birth between general population and Roma and Travellers estimates for 2016. Life expectancy estimations for Roma and Travellers with the orphanhood method (Luy, 2009 Estimating mortality differentials in developed populations from survey information on maternal and paternal orphanhood', European Demographic Research Papers No. 2009-3, Vienna Institute of Demography).
- Country results based on unweighted data.
- Because of small sample sizes, Caravan dwellers and Roma in Belgium are merged and the estimates for Roma in the Netherlands suppressed (n.p.).
- EU 5 weighted for country population size and it excludes NL Roma.
- Not available for EU-MIDIS II countries

Source: FRA, RTS 2019 (unweighted data); General population: Human Mortality Database (data downloaded: 4 March 2020)

d. Increase effective Roma access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services

- i. EU headline target: reduce the gap in housing deprivation by at least one third

*Indicator 16: Share of people living in housing deprivation (living in an apartment too dark, leaking roof, no bath/shower, no indoor toilet)**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	61	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		17,9
BG	70	23,8
CZ	33	9,7
EL	50	16
ES	33	18,9
HR	69	13,9
HU	63	25,7
PT	70	32,8
RO	83	32,9
SK	61	7,1

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		35	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			17,9

BE	Caravan Dweller	45	23,3
	Roma	24	23,3
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	55	17,5
IE	Travellers	39	15,3
NL	Roma	26	17,7
	Travellers and Sinti	13	17,7
SE	Roma and Travellers	23	13,2

* Notes:

- Out of persons in Roma households (EU-MIDIS: n = 33785; RTS: n = 11142), weighted results.
- Showing proportion of population living in a household with at least one item of housing deprivation (living in an apartment too dark, leaking roof, no bath/shower, no indoor toilet).

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [tessi 291] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

ii. EU headline target: cut the gap in overcrowding by at least half

*Indicator 17: Share of people living in household that does not have the minimum number of rooms according to the Eurostat definition of overcrowding**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	78	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		17,1
BG	76	41,6
CZ	83	15,7
EL	92	2,7
ES	64	29,2
HR	85	8,2
HU	88	39,3
PT	63	9,6
RO	76	46,3
SK	84	15,2

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma / Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		48	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			17,1
BE	Caravan Dweller	40	5,7
	Roma	54	5,7
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	54	4,7
IE	Travellers	46	20,1
NL	Roma	21	4,1
	Travellers and Sinti	16	4,1
SE	Roma and Travellers	60	35,5

* Notes:

- Out of all persons in Roma households (EU-MIDIS: n = 33648; RTS: n = 11142), weighted results.
- Overcrowding rate: A person is considered as living in an overcrowded household if the household does not have at its disposal a minimum number of rooms equal to one room for the household; one room per couple in the household; one room for each single person aged 18 or more; one room per pair of single people of the same gender between 12 and 17 years of age; one room for each single person between 12 and 17 years of age and not included in the previous category; one room per pair of children under 12 years of age.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [ilc_lwho05a] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 29.05.2020.

- iii. EU headline target: ensure that at least 95% Roma have access to tap water

*Indicator 18: Share of people living in households without tap water inside the dwelling (selected countries only)**

Country	Roma (%)	General population (%)
EU 9 (EU-MIDIS II)	30	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)		2,3
BG	23	8,9
CZ	2	0,3
EL	9	0,2
ES	2	0,2
HR	34	1,1
HU	32	3,4
PT	14	0,6
RO	68	25,6
SK	27	1

Country	Country specific subgroup	Roma/ Travellers (%)	General population (%)
EU 5 (RTS)		8	
EU27 (EUROSTAT)			2,3
BE	Caravan Dweller	32	0,1
	Roma	5	0,1
FR	Travellers (Gens du voyage)	14	0,3
IE	Travellers	10	0
NL	Roma	(1)	0
	Travellers and Sinti	3	0
SE	Roma and Travellers	(0)	n.a.

* Notes:

- Out of all persons in Roma households (EU-MIDIS II: n = 33785; RTS: n = 11142), weighted results.
- The general population indicator *ilc_mdho05* (EU-SILC 2018) used is a proxy comparator for the absence of tap water inside the dwelling. It represents the share of total population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household - EU-SILC survey n.a. not available for Sweden.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016 (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HR, PT, RO, SK); FRA, RTS 2019 (BE, FR, IE, NL, SE); Eurostat Data Explorer [*ilc_mdho05*] 2018 (General population), downloaded on 04.06.2020.

ANNEX 3. EU MAINSTREAMING AND FUNDING INITIATIVES

RELEVANT EU POLICY INITIATIVES
<p>The European education area (the Commission's flagship education and training initiative) aims to provide quality, inclusive education for all by ensuring that everyone acquires basic skills and competences to lead a successful life. It encourages Member States to provide targeted support for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups at all levels and in all sectors of education and training, starting with access to quality early childhood education and care. Initiatives include 'Pathway to School success' to combat under-achievement and promote completion of secondary education, and dedicated action to ensure student wellbeing and help teachers cater better for individuals' (including Roma pupils') learning needs. Besides EU-level action, a renewed cooperation framework (ET 2030) will continue to provide Member States with opportunities to share good practice. Under the Erasmus+ programme, the Commission is co-financing the Inclusive schools: making a difference for Roma children project currently implemented by the Council of Europe¹⁴⁴.</p>
<p>The Commission adopted in September 2020 a new Digital education action plan aiming to support the digital transition of education and training systems in Europe. It builds on the first (2018-2020) action plan and will have an extended length and scope covering formal education and lifelong learning. The new action plan will address lessons learnt and implications of the recent experience of online and distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The updated action plan will focus on boosting the digital capacity of educational institutions, including in terms of connectivity and equipment, and developing digital skills and competences for all. This initiative is extremely relevant for Roma, whose remote learning experience during the pandemic was one of heightened digital exclusion.</p>
<p>In line with the overall objectives of the 2019-2027 EU youth strategy (to promote social inclusion and eradicate discrimination), the EU programmes for young people (e.g. Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps) aim to improve social inclusion and equality. An inclusion and diversity strategy for youth activities under Erasmus+ includes action and support to overcome obstacles to participation, including those faced by minorities. Inclusiveness is a core goal for the European Solidarity Corps.</p>
<p>The Commission will continue to support the role of culture and cultural diversity in social cohesion and inclusion under its cultural policy frameworks (New European Agenda for Culture, European framework for action on cultural heritage and EU strategy for international cultural relations) and the Council's 2019-2022 Work Plan for Culture. The Creative Europe programme will continue to support projects that seek to remove barriers, encourage the inclusion and cultural participation of under-represented and disadvantaged groups, and contribute to social wellbeing and solidarity. The Commission proposal for the 2021-2027 Creative Europe programme prioritises the promotion of social resilience and inclusion through culture and cultural heritage.</p>
<p>The European pillar of social rights aims to foster equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. Implementation of the 20 principles of the pillar at EU and Member State level is in line with the commitment made by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in 2017 and confirmed in the European Council's 2019-2024 strategic agenda. This framework supports the implementation of the pillar, in particular principle 3 on equal opportunities, and will contribute to the action plan on its implementation, which the Commission will present in early 2021.</p>
<p>'Bridge to jobs' — reinforcing the youth guarantee extends outreach to a wider target group, for increased inclusiveness. Many young people, often from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. those with low skills, living in rural or remote areas, from migrant backgrounds or belonging to</p>

¹⁴⁴ This project involves support for school staff, teachers, students and parents to make up to 31 schools in five countries more inclusive. It will also support national stakeholders by proposing inclusive policy reform.

racial and ethnic minorities, in particular Roma) do not have access to quality education and training, or face barriers in the transition from school to work. The aim is to make sure that nobody is left behind. This will be done by improved, more targeted outreach and awareness-raising, addressing *inter alia* the challenges of living in rural or more remote areas. ‘Bridge to jobs’ is based on individualised action plans with more targeted preparation tailored to the young person’s preferences and motivation, barriers and disadvantages, including reasons for being unemployed or inactive.

Ensuring social fairness is a cornerstone of the [skills agenda](#). Having the right skills enables people to stay employed and handle job transitions more easily. This requires equal access to additional upskilling opportunities, regardless of gender, racial/ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, including for low-skilled adults and people with a migrant background. The Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET)¹⁴⁵ for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience calls for VET programmes to be inclusive *vis-à-vis* vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, low-skilled adults, racial/ethnic minorities (including Roma), people with a migrant background and people with fewer opportunities as a result of geographical location.

Roma children, like other disadvantaged children, do not have adequate access to services that are essential for their wellbeing and development, in particular early childhood education and care, education, healthcare and nutrition, housing and cultural/leisure activities. The [‘child guarantee’](#) initiative recommends that Member States ensure the affordability, accessibility and availability of inclusive quality services for children in need, thus breaking the cycle of poverty faced by too many Roma children in the EU.

People with disabilities still experience barriers to inclusion. The overall purpose of the European [disability strategy](#) is to promote a barrier-free Europe where they can enjoy their rights and participate fully in society and the economy. The strategy also implements the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) at EU level. The Commission is about to launch a new strategy for 2021-2030, which will build on the results of the current one. It will focus on the implementation of the relevant EU acquis and the UNCRPD. Accessibility to services and infrastructure will remain a key goal, together with a focus on employment to give people with disabilities better access to the open labour market. Independent living and health will also be among the priorities.

Migrants and Roma face many similar challenges (and Roma migrants constitute an important group in several countries) and more inclusive policies benefit both groups. The Commission will adopt an **action plan on integration and inclusion**, and create synergies between the action plan and this strategic framework as part of its efforts to make our societies more inclusive.

Traffickers exploit people’s vulnerabilities, including those of Roma women and children, which may be exacerbated by factors such as poverty, discrimination, gender inequality, violence against women, and lack of access to education and employment. The EU addresses trafficking in human beings comprehensively in all relevant areas¹⁴⁶. One priority is to counter the culture of impunity among users, exploiters and profitters. The Commission is working on a **new strategic approach towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings** as part of the security union. Action to eradicate people-trafficking will be further developed in upcoming initiatives to tackle organised crime, in particular in the Agenda on tackling organised crime, as foreseen in the EU Security Union Strategy¹⁴⁷.

As announced in the [2020-2025 gender equality strategy](#), the EU intends to propose a

¹⁴⁵ [COM \(2020\) 275 final](#).

¹⁴⁶ Under Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims ([OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1](#)).

¹⁴⁷ [COM\(2020\) 605 final](#).

Recommendation on the prevention of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, forced abortion and sterilisation, early and forced marriage, and ‘honour-related violence’. Some of this will also be relevant for Roma women and girls.

Through the [EU Platform of Diversity Charters](#), the Commission helps companies, public institutions and non-profit organisations to put diversity, inclusion and solidarity at the heart of their activity. Currently, 24 Member States have diversity charters, with over 12,000 signatories representing over 16 million employees. The signatories undertake to promote diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace, regardless of age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation, etc.

The **LGBTI+ equality strategy** will set out the Commission’s policy objectives and key actions to advance LGBTI+ equality in the period up to 2025. It will take account of the diversity of LGBTI+ people and pay particular attention to the most disadvantaged groups. It will take an intersectional approach, including in relation to ethnic origin, and create synergies with this framework.

RELEVANT EU FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

EU funds contribute to the implementation of national strategies. Given the complex needs of Roma communities, an **integrated approach** that coordinates measures supported by several funding streams is essential. ESF+ and ERDF investments under policy objective 4 will make key contributions to the implementation of the European pillar of social rights in 2021-2027.

The **ESF+** includes a specific objective on promoting the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma. Member States can use this objective to target Roma explicitly, i.e. provide additional support to promote effective equal access for Roma to rights and mainstream services. They can also target Roma communities under any other ESF+ specific objectives; this can be monitored through the output indicator for ‘minorities including marginalised communities such as the Roma’¹⁴⁸. Member States **for which** investment needs have been identified in the Annex D of the 2019 Country Reports or with serious challenges concerning the socio-economic situation of Roma communities identified in the CSRs, must follow a twin strategy. **This implies** making mainstream services inclusive **while in parallel implementing** targeted programmes **for** marginalised Roma communities. In such Member States; the **dedicated specific objective must be programmed in order to target Roma explicitly – but not exclusively - through the ESF+**. A thematic ‘enabling condition’ requires Member States to adopt a national Roma inclusion strategic policy framework as a pre-condition for using the funds to invest in this objective, with compliance ensured throughout the period. ESF+ funded Roma inclusion measures can also be implemented under social innovation objectives. The ESF+ will build on the experiences and good practices established under the current programming period, for respectively the ESF and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (**FEAD**).

The **ERDF** supports infrastructure developments in and access to inclusive (non-segregated) early childhood education and care and primary education, quality and mainstream employment, healthcare and social services, non-segregated housing and regeneration of deprived urban and rural areas.

Both funding instruments should follow the requirements of the horizontal enabling condition (on effective implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights) which strengthens the focus on non-discrimination in the programming of EU funds. It requires that all operations comply with non-discrimination criteria (Article 21), including on the basis of race.

Member States should ensure adequate **participation of regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, and equality bodies throughout the preparation, implementation and evaluation of EU funds programmes**¹⁴⁹. Also, appropriate EU funds resources under shared management must be allocated in each programme for **capacity-building** among social partners and civil society organisations¹⁵⁰ – support for capacity-building among civil society organisations, including those representing Roma communities, remains a priority. The [code of conduct on partnership](#) remains in force for the preparation of the post-2020 programmes and throughout their implementation. Member States should ensure the involvement of Roma in identifying needs and developing programmes.

The Commission encourages Member States to produce programming documents reflecting a **twin strategy** of providing programmes targeting Roma and making mainstream services inclusive through investment in public education, active labour market policies and public employment services, access to social and healthcare services, housing, and urban and territorial development, so that they reach out to Roma communities effectively.

Desegregation in education and housing will remain an important objective of EU-funded operations in 2021-2027¹⁵¹. Both the **urban and territorial dimensions** of cohesion policy should be reinforced. This could address the needs of people in disadvantaged micro-regions or segregated neighbourhoods and include the use of territorial instruments, such as integrated urban and territorial development and

¹⁴⁸ Draft [ESF+ Regulation](#), Annex 1, point 1b.

¹⁴⁹ Draft [CPR Regulation](#), Article 6, COM (2018) 375.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Article 8(2).

¹⁵¹ [Guidance for Member States on the use of EU funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation](#) should help in addressing these challenges.

community-led local development.

EU funds should be used to promote **transnational learning** regarding both policy and funding, such as the EURoma network of managing authorities and NRCs¹⁵². The Commission will continue to promote **socially responsible public procurement** that allows public authorities to spend national and EU funds to support Roma inclusion, e.g. by providing targeted job and training opportunities.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Commission has proposed several instruments to support disadvantaged groups such as the Roma. The coronavirus response investment initiative (**CRII**) and **CRII+** enabled the rapid mobilisation of non-utilised support from the European Structural and Investment Funds. Member States were encouraged to develop actions to reach the most vulnerable by setting up mobile or temporary healthcare facilities to contain the spread of contamination and treat patients on the spot, or supporting families experiencing homelessness/housing exclusion, including by means of counselling services.

To ensure sustainable, even, inclusive and fair recovery for all Member States, **Next Generation EU** including the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, provides additional budget and policy measures. Proposals include a €55 billion top-up of the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes under the new REACT-EU initiative (for the period to 2022). This is designed as a response to the socio-economic impacts of the crisis and includes a new thematic objective, ‘fostering crisis repair in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing a green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy’. The 2021-2027 regulatory framework provides for swift response to future exceptional circumstances. In addition, the ERDF can support important measures addressing the crisis needs of Roma communities, such as distance/online education and training, and better access to healthcare.

The **EAFRD** provides funding opportunities to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, where many Roma people live. It is also the basis for the bottom-up LEADER programme to implement local development action plans in rural areas; these may also include measures aimed at Roma inclusion or realised with Roma involvement.

The **InvestEU** integrated programme, to be financed jointly under Next Generation EU and the 2021-2027 MFF will also contribute to socio-economic resilience and strategic objectives of the Union. In particular, its social investments and skills window could meaningfully contribute to the social inclusion and equality objectives of the framework. Thanks to the EU guarantee, this window will mobilise investments for projects in areas such as education and training, healthcare, social entrepreneurship, microfinance and social innovation. It will pioneer new public-private partnership models for impact, unlocking the potential of philanthropy for social inclusion. Innovative financial products will seek to deliver improved social outcomes, including in the area of migration and Roma inclusion, through new business and finance models for cross-sectoral collaboration between public authorities, social service providers and investors. It will allow blending and combinations with other funds in indirect, direct and shared management.

Member States can request technical support to design and implement structural reforms to improve social inclusion and the integration of minorities. The **structural reform support programme** (SRSP) provides tailor-made expertise on a wide range of policy areas that are relevant for Roma inclusion in the labour market and equal access to healthcare, education and social services. The SRSP does not require national co-financing.

The Commission proposal for the 2021-2027 **asylum and migration fund** identifies and targets non-EU nationals that fall in the category of vulnerable groups. Co-financing for actions to support such groups comes at an exceptionally high rate (90% instead of the standard 75%).

¹⁵² [Network](#) launched in 2007 by Spain’s ESF managing authority.

Under the new [‘citizens, equality, rights and values’ programme](#), the Commission will directly support Roma equality, inclusion and participation through dedicated thematic priorities, such as:

- fighting antigypsyism;
- raising awareness of Roma history and culture and promoting recognition and reconciliation;
- fighting discrimination in access to quality mainstream education, employment, healthcare and housing;
- policy-relevant data collection and research on mobility;
- promoting transnational cooperation on the equality, inclusion and participation of mobile EU citizens; and
- community-building between Roma and non-Roma communities.

The programme will also support the application and enforcement of the Racial Equality Directive and quality data collection.

The future [Erasmus programme](#) will feature enhanced efforts to promote equity and inclusion by facilitating access by participants with fewer opportunities compared to their peers, where this situation limits or prevents participation in transnational activities (e.g. due to educational difficulties, economic and geographical obstacles, and cultural differences such as belonging to a national or ethnic minority). It will maintain support for projects dealing with topics of relevance for Roma and other minorities, building on experience from the [INSCHOOL](#) project.

For the new programming period, the Commission will develop, based on close cooperation with stakeholders, the first comprehensive **Inclusion and diversity strategy for the Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps Programmes**. It will set out a multi-faceted approach to making the programme more inclusive, including through the introduction of more flexible and accessible formats; support measures to help prepare and accompany participants; and financial measures to support those who would find it difficult to participate in the programmes.

The Commission proposal for the [EU4Health](#) Programme includes a transversal dimension of health inequalities in all its objectives and could provide best practices to be implemented through synergies developed with the other EU Funds and Programmes. Roma could also benefit from actions that could be taken to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

[Horizon Europe](#), the next research and innovation framework programme, will contribute to creating a more resilient, inclusive and democratic European society. It will support actions fostering structural change through the implementation of gender equality and diversity plans. It also considers gender equality, intersecting with grounds of discrimination such as race, sexual orientation or disability, a crosscutting priority.

The [Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance](#) has largely invested in supporting Roma socio-economic inclusion in all enlargement countries through IPA I and IPA II funds. Funds have been already allocated for e.g. support to local actions, displacement and return projects, housing, employment and education. The 2021-2027 Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance will continue to support reforms and alignment with EU requirements at regional and national levels.