



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 7 October 2020
(OR. en)

11605/20
ADD 1

SOC 599
ANTIDISCRIM 102
GENDER 116
JAI 798
FREMP 91
COHOM 64
EDUC 356

COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director

date of receipt: 7 October 2020

To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

No. Cion doc.: COM(2020) 620 final ANNEX 1

Subject: ANNEX to the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation

Delegations will find attached document COM(2020) 620 final ANNEX 1.

Encl.: COM(2020) 620 final ANNEX 1



Brussels, 7.10.2020
COM(2020) 620 final

ANNEX 1

ANNEX

to the

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

**A Union of Equality:
EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation**

{SWD(2020) 530 final}

Annex 1: Guidelines for planning and implementing national Roma strategic frameworks

TACKLING ANTIGYPSYISM

Thanks to the work of the Alliance against Antigypsyism, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe¹, there is emerging consensus that antigypsyism (a specific form of racism against Roma) contributes to persistent Roma exclusion. As antigypsyism and exclusion form a vicious circle, they should be tackled together. Fighting discrimination and antigypsyism will contribute to the success of inclusion measures, which in turn will foster greater openness and acceptance in society. Fighting antigypsyism and promoting diversity and inclusion require the participation of society as a whole, Roma and non-Roma communities alike. They involve Roma empowerment and tackling mainstream (including institutional) attitudes and behaviour. Equality bodies could be privileged partners for National Roma Contact Points (NRCP) in providing standards for implementation and championing the stronger anti-discrimination focus in strategies.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- **include a stand-alone focus on the fight against antigypsyism**, in order to:
 - 1) recognise antigypsyism and the responsibility to act against it;
 - 2) recognise the historical dimensions of antigypsyism, in particular the Roma Holocaust; raise awareness of Roma history and promote reconciliation;
 - 3) raise awareness of the mutual benefits of diversity and inclusion; construct positive narratives; foster role models; support inter-community encounters and inter-cultural learning to fight stereotypes and misinformation about Roma in education, the media, the arts, culture and history;
 - 4) fight discrimination as a manifestation of antigypsyism;
 - 5) combat hate speech and hate crime as manifestations of antigypsyism and encourage the reporting of bias-motivated crime, harassment and violence;
 - 6) promote access to justice for victims of antigypsyism and discrimination;
 - 7) raise awareness among Roma of their rights; and
 - 8) dismantle and prevent systemic/institutional/structural discrimination² experienced by Roma;
- **prevent and fight antigypsyism as a cross-cutting/horizontal priority** in all sectoral policy areas, in order to:
 - 1) fight segregation, bullying and harassment in education; sensitise school staff;
 - 2) fight discrimination in (access to) employment and sensitise employers;
 - 3) fight discrimination in access to good-quality healthcare; eliminate parallel, segregated services; prevent human rights violations (e.g. forced abortion and forced sterilisation); sensitise healthcare workers;
 - 4) fight spatial segregation; prevent forced evictions without alternative housing; sensitise authorities; and
 - 5) regularly collect equality data (data on experiences of discrimination; data from equality bodies on incidents of discrimination).

¹ [Antigypsyism — a reference paper](#), Berlin/Budapest, 2017; [European Parliament Resolution of 15 April 2015 on the occasion of International Roma Day — Anti-gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II](#); [European Parliament report on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU – fighting anti-gypsyism \(2017/2038\(INI\)\)](#); [European Parliament Resolution of 12 February 2019 on the need for a strengthened post-2020 strategic EU framework for national Roma inclusion strategies and stepping up the fight against anti-gypsyism](#); [ECRI 2012 General Policy Recommendation No 13 on combating anti-gypsyism and discrimination against Roma](#); [Council of Europe, Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the rise of anti-gypsyism and racist violence against Roma in Europe](#).

² Systemic discrimination results from inequalities embedded in legislation, policy and practice. They are often not embedded by intent but because of a range of institutional factors in the formulation, implementation and review of legislation, policy and practice. See [Roma and traveller inclusion: towards a new EU framework, learning from the work of equality bodies](#).

FIGHTING MULTIGENERATIONAL POVERTY
(with a child protection focus and better use of EU funds)

Tackling multigenerational poverty and exclusion is crucial to improving the situation of marginalised Roma. Exclusion and discrimination in access to education, employment, healthcare and housing affect children's development and may in turn affect their future parenthood, leading to further disadvantage for their own children. The vicious circle of exclusion and discrimination is bound to continue unless there is significant intervention to address comprehensively the root dynamics and plan a better future for the next generation. This requires a **focus on children** and must be sustained over time.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- mobilise relevant expertise at all levels of governance to formulate child protection measures; allocate adequate resources to early childhood education and care and education (e.g. scholarships, mentorships, after-school support), nutrition, personal development and work with families;
- encourage participation in early childhood education and care;
- protect women, children and youth through strategies to fight crimes such as trafficking in human beings, including for all forms of exploitation as relevant (sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging and the exploitation of criminal activities for forced and exploitative sham marriages), and enable their access to assistance, support and protection;
- improve access to community - and family - based services for people with disabilities and children deprived of parental care; strengthen measures to prevent institutionalisation through support for families in precarious situations and people with disabilities;
- ensure the long-term sustainability of support measures for children and their families, so as to improve conditions for the next generation;
- base the planning of financial support and investment on accurate analysis of the root causes of marginalisation (socio-economic exclusion and discrimination); collect more granular evidence through systematic evaluations and analysis of the types of national, regional and local intervention that (do not) work and why, to deepen understanding of the obstacles to inclusion; involve all stakeholders (local authorities, civil society, Roma/non-Roma stakeholders with possibly diverging views) in analytical work;
- analyse the use of EU funds in cooperation with managing authorities – if monitoring reports find that funds have not been used effectively to achieve inclusion goals, engage with local/managing authorities and stakeholders to understand why and address any obstacles that are identified; and
- establish close links between NRCPs and the authorities responsible for monitoring EU funds; ensure that the use of EU funds for Roma creates real opportunities for participation and has the intended day-to-day impact for them, rather than benefiting other interests.

PROMOTING ROMA PARTICIPATION

Roma participation in shaping public affairs is a pre-condition and an enabler of equality and inclusion, and promotes democratic and efficient governance. Roma participation and empowerment are about giving people a voice and enabling them to act in new, life-affirming ways. Inclusion opens the way for action and gives people the opportunity to participate. Participation and empowerment are principles and processes for bettering people's living conditions and life outcomes. Supporting meaningful Roma participation in policy-making at local, national and EU level is a pre-condition for tackling exclusion. Roma-led and pro-Roma civil society organisations are particularly important actors. When coordinating the development of national strategic frameworks, NRCs are encouraged to promote participatory models, e.g. by facilitating thematic working groups that develop needs assessment, priorities, targets, action in key fields, bringing together national, regional, local and non-governmental actors, and ensuring Roma participation. These models and structures could subsequently be used for monitoring and evaluating implementation.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- set out minimum compulsory aspects and channels of Roma participation in policy development, implementation and monitoring, and the programming of EU funds, including by written protocols of participation setting out the mandate (scope and nature of engagement), composition (principles for selecting members), working methods and expected outcomes of consultation and participation bodies, with a view to ensuring effective cooperation, trust and accountability³;
- create opportunities for Roma communities' empowerment at the local level to enable community ownership and action aimed explicitly at bringing about social and political change. Mobilising communities should be seen as a deliberate inclusive and participatory process involving Roma people, local authorities and organisations;
- ensure that Roma are represented in all their diversity (including nationals and non-nationals, marginalised and integrated, women, children and young people) in policy and consultation processes;
- improve local action by engaging more Roma professionals to act as mediators and help overcome the persistent lack of trust between Roma and majority communities;
- promote civil society cooperation between Roma-focused and mainstream organisations, especially those targeting children's, young people's and women's rights;
- use EU and other funds to provide regular capacity-building support (in equality screening, participation, etc.), in particular for grassroots and local civil society; and
- *in countries with a significant Roma population:*
 - promote positive action to increase Roma participation in national and local administration in the fields of equality and inclusion, research, etc.; and
 - consider establishing national Roma umbrella organisations for sustained consultation and participation in policy discussions. These should receive core institutional grants from national governments or regular civil society support funds.

³ Violetta Zentai, Georgeta Munteanu and Simona Torotcoi, [The quality of participation in a post-2020 EU initiative for Roma equality and inclusion](#), expert reports building on forward-looking aspects of the evaluation of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies, 2020, pp. 41, 59-60.

REFLECTING DIVERSITY

It is crucial to recognise the diversity among Roma people and communities when designing national strategic frameworks. The EU Roma strategic framework promotes empowerment of Roma women, young people and children (and Roma living with disabilities, elder Roma, LGBTI+ Roma and EU mobile citizens) to overcome socio-economic gaps, fully exercise their rights, realise their potential and be active agents of change.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- assess the needs and situation of all (including non-national, non-EU and stateless) Roma;
- address multiple discrimination and intersectionality, which increase the severity of exclusion;
- target the most marginalised Roma groups with inclusion and anti-poverty measures (without excluding other groups in a similar situation) and address all Roma with measures promoting participation, and Roma and non-Roma with measures preventing and fighting antigypsyism and discrimination;
- establish specific goals and targeted measures for Roma women, children and young people, those with disabilities, elder Roma, EU mobile citizens, stateless Roma and those from non-EU countries (as relevant) and break down indicators by sex and age;
- address the gender dimension in all areas, especially education, employment, healthcare, child support and fighting (multiple) discrimination, including (domestic) violence and exploitation; promote participation and ensure that measures are gender-responsive;
- support Roma women's access to justice to prevent/overcome domestic violence and other human rights violations;
- engage in transnational cooperation to tackle the challenges and opportunities arising from transnational mobility of Roma more effectively, ensuring access to education, employment, housing, healthcare and other social services; and
- end statelessness among Roma by ensuring universal birth registration and access to identity documents, formal statelessness determination procedures and universal access to services.

COMBINING MAINSTREAM AND TARGETED APPROACHES

While anti-Roma discrimination and exclusion justify a continued targeted approach, the aim of targeting is to promote effective inclusion and equality for Roma in all spheres of life. That pre-supposes inclusive reform of mainstream policies, which requires a smart combination of targeted and mainstream approaches. Targeted policies should be temporary and serve to mitigate the additional disadvantages and discrimination that Roma face. Targeting should be explicit (though not necessarily based on ethnicity), but not exclusive, i.e. not exclude non-Roma in the same situation.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- spell out how the specific targeted measures (safeguards) address the barriers that prevent Roma from accessing and benefiting from mainstream policies, and how public policies are made more inclusive of Roma;
- promote access to rights and mainstream services for Roma with additional targeted support, but without creating permanent parallel structures;
- target intervention territorially to ensure that it takes account of local conditions; combine territorial and social group targeting in broad interventions (e.g. to tackle extreme poverty) and ensure that they reach the Roma population;
- *in countries with a significant Roma population:*
 - subject key mainstream policy measures to screening/audit to assess their impact on Roma equality and inclusion;
 - set out how EU funds will be used for inclusive reform of mainstream policies (e.g. desegregation in education or housing) and for targeted action; and
 - set out arrangements for mainstreaming Roma equality, inclusion and participation at regional and local levels.

UPSCALING MEASURES TO PREVENT/MITIGATE THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF CRISES ON ROMA

All the core challenges facing the EU today (including the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, and the green and digital transitions) have a Roma equality and inclusion dimension. Particular care should be taken to ensure that discriminated and marginalised groups, in particular among Roma, are not forced to bear a disproportionate share of the burden from crises and transitions, and that emergency responses and longer-term growth strategies involve targeted additional support for their inclusion. Lessons should be learned from the coronavirus pandemic, which affected marginalised Roma communities disproportionately and saw them exposed to the worst short-term health and medium/long-term economic impacts. National Roma strategic frameworks should help mitigate the effects of the coronavirus crisis and equip us better to deal with any such occurrence in the future.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- plan effective data collection and monitoring of socio-economic impacts (by age, sex and medical need) to ensure effective and tailored policy measures that respond to the existing/future pandemics;
- take account of short-, medium- and long-term needs and involve those concerned in developing and implementing measures;
- support local authorities' efforts to address the most immediate needs of Roma communities (e.g. access to shelter, including food and water, access to free health services and financial support for Roma families in precarious economic situations);
- prioritise efforts to tackle structural inequalities and Roma communities' lack of access to basic services and infrastructure;
- ensure that measures and/or actions using EU and national funding reach out to and address the needs of the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities;
- promote access to safe and clean drinking water for Roma⁴;
- improve access to sanitation and ensure the continuity of basic utility services in the event of a pandemic;
- promote health literacy in the Roma population;
- promote the dissemination of accurate, clear and evidence-based information and awareness-raising campaigns as effective tools against discrimination and xenophobia;
- provide for regular monitoring of environmental conditions and risks specifically affecting disadvantaged Roma communities and take action to remedy hazardous or unhygienic conditions; and
- promote consistency between emergency and recovery measures, and mainstream initiatives such as the 'green deal', digitalisation, the European pillar of social rights, the Sustainable Development Goals, the European Semester and mainstream strategies, programmes and reforms.

⁴ The [Drinking Water Directive](#) (recital 31; Article 16) requires Member States to take account of the specific situation of minority cultures, such as Roma and travellers, whether or not settled, by taking the necessary measures to improve their access to water intended for human consumption.

ENSURING DIGITAL INCLUSION

As the coronavirus pandemic forced schools, campuses and offices to close, everyone turned to the internet for a lifeline. The mass shift to online education and telemedicine, etc. assumed that everyone had internet access. However, the crisis revealed startling [global disparities](#) in online and distance learning. Roma are often located in rural areas, areas that are still in behind when it comes to access to high speed broadband infrastructures. For marginalised Roma with little or no access to IT equipment or digital literacy, its impacts brought to light deep-seated structural inequalities, translating into risks of Roma children underperforming and lagging behind in their school work and adults being deprived of real-time information and job opportunities. Underlying challenges linked to inequality, discrimination and exclusion in the digital age must be tackled, to ensure that no-one is left behind. The successful deployment of digital technologies and Europe's resilience and social fairness depend on people having access to the necessary infrastructure, equipment and digital skills.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- tackle the digital exclusion of Roma by providing access to digital technologies, in particular access to and support for online and distance learning if education and training institutions close, as during the coronavirus pandemic;
- encourage synergies with other policy initiatives (especially those concerned with online public, e-government and commercial services), so as to improve the usability of public services and promote inclusive e-government, with specific measures to deliver public services to and connect Roma with a special attention to rural areas;
- boost digital skills and competences⁵ among Roma by:
 - 1) improving access to digital equipment and network connections (e.g. public internet access points in deprived areas);
 - 2) promoting basic digital skills and competences in a lifelong learning perspective and offering respective training;
 - 3) improving Roma's quality of use and participation in the information society; and
 - 4) promoting the reporting of online discriminatory practices in access to and the use of services;
 - 5) embedding digital literacy initiatives in local socio-economic contexts, adapting them to the specific needs and conditions of Roma communities;
 - 6) encouraging and supporting digital literacy⁶ initiatives that:
 - stimulate motivation and awareness as regards using the internet;
 - are affordable and sustainable;
 - feature content and delivery modes adapted to Roma (new teaching methods, informal learning, etc.); and
 - are accessible and usable;
- encourage the use of digital solutions for healthcare, for both patients and healthcare professionals, in order to ensure continuity of care and safe means of treatment; and
- revisit strategic frameworks for digital inclusion to assess barriers experienced by Roma.

⁵ The [Digital Competences for citizens framework](#) identifies five components of digital competence: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem solving.

⁶ The [Digital Competence for citizens' framework](#) defines information and data/digital literacy as the ability to articulate information needs; to locate and retrieve digital data, information and content; to judge the relevance of the source and its content; and to store, manage, and organise digital data, information and content.

DELIVERING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The environmental discrimination⁷ faced by numerous Roma communities is coming to public attention. This long-neglected reality has revealed its disproportionate effects during the coronavirus pandemic, which saw marginalised communities more vulnerable to contamination and other associated health issues. Health risks are compounded by inadequate living conditions and segregation, pushing Roma even further into socio-economic exclusion.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- recognise and tackle environmental discrimination, in particular as it affects marginalised Roma communities in segregated areas (as a manifestation of antigypsyism); promote understanding of how environmental discrimination and a lack of environmental services force marginalised Roma to live in environmentally degraded areas;
- focus on access to water, adequate sanitation, waste collection and management services, and fight persisting spatial segregation as a cause of environmental discrimination in the field of housing and essential services;
- tackle insufficient access of Roma to green living areas with recreational value;
- prevent environmental health risks and tackle the health impact of exposure to pollution and contamination; and
- ensure occupational health and safety for those working in less favourable environmental conditions.

⁷ Environmental discrimination is suffered by Roma living in segregated settlements among environmentally hazardous conditions (next to waste dumps, abandoned industrial sites or flood-prone areas) deprived of basic environmental necessities such as water and waste management. See [Pushed to the wastelands: environmental racism against Roma communities in central and Eastern Europe](#). For conceptual explanations and resources, see the Energy Justice Network's [website](#).

PROMOTING (AWARENESS OF) ROMA ARTS, HISTORY AND CULTURE

Roma art, history and culture are integral features of our European and national landscapes. However, over centuries, portrayals of Roma culture and identity have been romanticised and stereotyped, and this has exacerbated the alienation of Roma communities from mainstream societies. Cultural recognition should be built through Roma narratives.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- recognise and raise awareness and Roma ownership of the contribution of Roma art and culture to national and European heritage;
- support platforms to facilitate contacts between Roma and non-Roma at local level through the promotion of traditional and modern Roma arts, crafts and culture, and knowledge about Roma history;
- promote awareness-raising activities in cooperation with media operators in support of a self-constructed Roma identity and cultural heritage;
- combat anti-Roma prejudice and stereotypes;
- designate and commemorate 2 August as European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, to commemorate the victims of the Roma genocide in World War II;
- promote an integrated approach to Holocaust commemoration, by remembering the fate of the Roma on International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January, the day on which the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was liberated);
- integrate Roma communities in national cultural narratives, by including Roma arts, history and culture in collections in national archives, museums and permanent art exhibitions; allocate appropriate resources to preserving, conserving and developing Roma arts and culture, including through the promotion of festivals;
- include the Romani language and Roma history in school curricula and textbooks for both Roma and non-Roma students; promote multicultural awareness-raising activities and campaigns in schools; and
- provide opportunities for empowerment and support Roma entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals with local businesses that promote Roma traditions and culture.

PROMOTING SOCIAL INNOVATION AND POLICY EXPERIMENTATION

Social innovation and policy experimentation constitute new approaches from the field of social change that encompass ideas, practices and initiatives that intervene at the various levels of a system to catalyse deep shift and lasting positive impact. As such, they can be meaningful tools to promote Roma equality, inclusion, participation and empowerment.

EU policy defines ‘social innovation’ as activities that are social both as to their ends and means, and which relate to the development and implementation of new ideas (concerning products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act⁸. ‘Social policy experimentations’ mean policy interventions that offer an innovative response to social needs, implemented on a small scale and in conditions that enable their impact to be measured, prior to being implemented in other contexts or on a larger scale, if the results prove convincing⁹.

National Roma strategic frameworks should:

- support emergence of national alliances for learning and innovation for inclusion – bringing together actors from across the ecosystem (relevant Roma practitioner organisations together with business/industry, social incubators and change-makers’ networks, embassies, research organisations);
- launch joint co-creation processes with national/regional stakeholders, philanthropy and social purpose organisations to identify needs, available resources and opportunity for joint systematic action (including with available EU advisory support);
- support incubation of outcome-oriented projects addressing key social service areas (access to housing, utilities, basic public infrastructure and services etc.);
- catalyse and accumulate learning on working approaches on the different topics/sectors, while activating and capacitating key actors from the different sectors (public, private, civil) for joint collaboration;
- experiment with social policies (e.g. providing basic income guarantees) to generate models and test alternative delivery mechanisms for welfare benefits;
- explore mobilisation of private capital, and the pooling of funds with e.g. philanthropic organisations through possible matching schemes, to respond to unaddressed needs of the most vulnerable;
- explore new service or delivery models and expanded provisioning through outcome-oriented partnerships;
- support pooling and integration of targeted and flexible funding; and
- support the establishment of social innovation competence centres (to be supported through ESF+ transnational activities) and give mandate to support Roma inclusion needs.

⁸ Cf. Commission proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) 2018/0206 COD ([COM\(2018\) 382 final](#)), 30.5.2018, Article 2(16).

⁹ Ibid, Article 2(17).