



Essential Elements & Thematic targets
***Strengthening Roma participation under the 2020 EU Strategic Framework
for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation and National Roma Integration
Strategies***

Essential Elements:

- It is essential that the new Framework has concrete common objectives (headline targets) at EU level, which Member States can then translate into national targets (on the model of Europe 2020).
- Progress towards the targets needs to be monitored at EU level according to a joint methodology (similar to Europe 2020, the Open Method of Coordination), where Member States submit progress reports that are assessed at EU level, with policy triggers and recommendations based on indicators.
- The implementation of the new Framework needs to be fully integrated into the European Semester, and work in synergy with other key economic and social processes, such as the successor of Europe 2020, the European Pillar of Social Rights, UN Sustainable Development Goals, OSCE Action Plan for Roma and Sinti, CoE Roma and Travellers Action Plan 2019-2021.
- To ensure coherence and a level playing field between all Member States, enlargement countries need to be included on equal footing and their progress towards better Roma inclusion and combatting antigypsyism tracked as part of accession talks.
- The EC should require the mandatory adoption of NRIS in all Member States, including reference to the budgetary means for their implementation, and set up a follow up tool in order to ensure systematic EU monitoring of compliance with the rule of law and fundamental rights by national, regional and local authorities across the EU, in ensuring the equal treatment of Roma.
- The EC needs to promote the collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity on the Roma population, including through Eurostat periodical data collection and welcoming the contributions of national authorities as well as CSOs, as to improve the reliability and transparency of the evaluation and monitoring system, which is currently weak.
- The post-2020 EU Roma Framework and NRIS should be scaled up in a way that puts combating antigypsyism at their core.



- The next EU Roma Framework must demand that all Member States formally acknowledge and recognise the concept of antigypsyism. Governments need to concede that fighting discrimination is not sufficient when they have failed to recognise the widespread antigypsyism in European societies. The next European Commission document needs to ask Member States to include mechanisms to prevent antigypsyism in their national legal framework and the NRIS.
- Recognition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism as a specific form of racism against Roma needs to include: fighting discrimination as a manifestation of antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism; reinforcing the efforts combatting hate speech and hate crime as specific manifestations of antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism – beyond the general ground already embedded in the EU/national legislation pertaining to “race or ethnicity”.
- There should be an establishment of facts and understanding of causes, manifestations and impact of antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism through independent, expert-driven processes of reparations, such as establishment and support to operation of “Truth and Reconciliation Committees” and/or “Independent expert commissions on antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism” for historic injustices such as forced sterilisations of Roma women, school segregation of Roma children and similar injustices based on the specific country context.
- EU institutions and national governments should address and end any form of structural antigypsyism, including all forms of segregation, forced evictions, environmental injustice and other manifestations of antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism, including in education, employment, health and housing. Ensuring a rights-based approach and implementation of the Rule of Law that will strengthen the understanding of Roma as communities deprived of their rights rather than vulnerable.
- Drawing on the mainstreaming approach applied to immigrant integration policies, a similar strategy needs to be undertaken by the European Commission and Member States in regard to Roma inclusion in order to address multiple and intersectional discrimination (to protect EU mobile Roma, migrant Roma, Roma women, children and youth, Roma LGBTQ+, Roma with disabilities, elderly persons).
- Measurable EU and national anti-discrimination indicators need to be introduced in the key areas of education, employment, housing and health, in addition to social inclusion programmes, including ambitious targets and concrete objectives, to be monitored on an annual basis.
- Segregation must be defined as illegal in housing and in education, in conformity with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (ICERD), which “condemns in Article 3 apartheid and racial segregation and obliges parties to ‘prevent, prohibit and eradicate’ these practices in territories under their jurisdiction and includes “an obligation to eradicate the consequences of past policies of segregation, and to prevent racial segregation arising from the actions of private individuals.”
- The European Commission and Member States should have clear, measurable objectives in improving access to justice; the fight against discrimination, antigypsyist speech and crime should be included in the post-2020 Framework and NRIS as well as in EU policy tools such as: the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, the Race Equality Directive and the Country Specific Recommendations used in the framework of the European Semester.
- The European Commission and Member States need to raise awareness about complaints of alleged ill-treatment by police officers, including complaints with a possible racial motive. These should be investigated by a fully autonomous body outside the structures of the Interior Ministry or the police. Victims or witnesses of police ill-treatment should be provided with protection against harassment and victimisation.
- The European Commission needs to ensure structural and impact indicators to measure progress in fighting antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism in the post-2020 EU Roma Framework and NRIS. Indicators should also capture the most problematic forms of antigypsyism, such as hate crime,

education and residential segregation, structural and environmental racism, lack of access to high-quality public services and inter-ethnic tensions.

- Cross-cutting priorities that are currently unaddressed or under-addressed need to be included, such as antigypsyism, intersectional discrimination, poverty, material deprivation, housing evictions, discrimination, child protection, gender mainstreaming, LGBTQI+, environmental racism, diversity within Roma groups etc., Roma participation, Roma identity and cultural heritage.
- The European humanitarian response to Covid-19 should *de facto* focus on the most vulnerable groups, including marginalized Roma communities and all racialized minorities, making sure they are reached in all Member States, Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries.
- There is a need to systematically review antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism and Roma exclusion through the setting up of structural and process indicators.
- A formal mechanism to regularly analyse and assess the impact of laws and regulations regarding anti-discrimination and of policy decisions on public finances, economy, environment and gender equality needs to be put in place.
- The dissemination of misinformation, hate speech and the scapegoating of Roma by the media, politicians or public figures needs to be monitored and sanctioned, including the ethnicising of crimes allegedly committed by Roma in the public discourse.
- The adoption of NRIS should be conditioned to national funding allocation for the minimum set objectives.
- Enabling conditions in EU funding allocation should be ensured at national level in line with the ESF+ objective 4.3.2 (Promoting socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma).
- The post 2020 strategy should include minimum standards or clear rules on the implementation of the right to participation to ensure full and effective participation of Roma at all levels and all stages of the EU Strategy and NRIS design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Where relevant rules in support of CSOs' active participation in human rights are already in place at national level, authorities should ensure that these are implemented in practice. This involves making available adequate human and financial resources to allow for proper participation processes, and providing public servants with training on, and sufficient time for, engaging such organisations. Tools and methods used by public authorities for implementing participation could be diversified and improved. Full use should be made of the newly adopted Council of Europe 'Guidelines for meaningful civil participation in political decision-making'.
- The Roma Civil Monitor should be made a condition in the implementation of the NRIS post-2020 in all Member States. The European Commission should involve enlargement countries in the improved institutional setup to monitor progress, discuss challenges and agree on priorities during implementation. Roma-specific targets should continue to be part of the opening and closing benchmarks in the relevant accession chapters. The initiative should be revised also by enhancing the capacity and resources of NGOs in Member States, by the allocation of specific funding. The process should include consultation with civil society organisations.
- The EU and Member States should invest in capacity building programmes for Roma grassroots and local CSOs through the EU Funds and national mechanisms to participate in local policy plans and their implementation. The European Commission should encourage national governments to use the EU Funds.
- Roma women and youth must be at the centre of all policies and processes. Gender mainstreaming needs to be effectively implemented and monitored throughout thematic areas.
- Recruit Roma in decision-making position at local, national and EU level, including the European Commission.

- Make Roma participation a condition (under funding and beyond) in the design and implementation of the National/local Roma strategies, by suggesting a minimum benchmark of 50% based on self-identification, with a provision on gender equality.
- Ensure that funding is made available for CSOs working on the protection and promotion of the EU's foundational values of fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law; including for small grassroots organisations. Such funding should cover, as appropriate, the variety of activities of CSOs, such as service provision, watchdog activities, advocacy, litigation, campaigning, human rights and civic education and awareness raising.
- Establish mechanisms for exchanging and disseminating good practices, creating spaces for reflection and critical thinking, promoting some level of coordination between existing dialogues, while respecting their differences. Start a discussion on quality assurance standards, criteria and guidelines for participation, compulsivity, including the time necessary for proper, effective participation.
- Member States should find appropriate means to finance civil dialogue and strengthen the capacity of CSOs to take part; the European Commission should review the EU Framework to support Roma CSOs at national level; the European Commission should include Roma participation/democracy among the horizontal priorities of the EU Framework, building on good examples of strengthening NGOs during the pre-accession period.
- The European Commission and Member States should consider favouring multi-annual and core funding over short-term project-based funding, which would allow for a more sustainable basis for the work of CSOs as well as long-term planning. For the sake of more effective application procedures, two-step procedures could be used more frequently, where initial applications are short, and only preselected projects from the first round are required to deliver a full application file. Audit and reporting requirements placed on CSOs and other associations should be proportionate to public funding made available and to the size and structure of the receiving organisation. In the context of co-funding, the requirements should be proportionate and take better account of the scope of projects and the type of organisations applying.
- Roma CSOs and activists in the EU face physical and verbal attacks, harassment and intimidation by non-state actors. These incidents take place both online and offline. Member States should refrain from the stigmatisation and victimization of human rights defenders and CSOs. Moreover, they should actively condemn hate speech and hate crimes committed against CSOs and fully implement their positive obligations under international law and applicable EU law to protect CSOs and their members. Data on hate crimes against human rights CSOs should be collected and published. The European Commission should react promptly when national administrative or legal provisions restrict the access of national civil society organisations to EU funds.
- Ensure that the Enlargement region remains a specific priority in the post2020 EU Roma strategy.
- Build on the enlargement experience and on the successes of neighbouring countries, while acknowledging its specificities: The Poznan Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process, which was signed on highest level by the Prime Ministers of the Enlargement countries, can inspire EU Member States.
- The EC should strengthen the role of enabling conditions by: 1) requiring that national programming is in compliance with the (updated) National Roma Strategies; 2) ensuring that national mainstream policies support (or at least do not hinder) the integration of Roma; and 3) developing effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms of national and local Roma inclusion action plans.

Thematic targets:

Education

- **Ensure equitable access to quality mainstream education for all Roma children and increase the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in quality integrated primary education to 90%, and in secondary education to 50%.**
- **Ensure full implementation by 2030 of the UN Sustainable development Goal 4 on Quality Education for Roma**
 - By 2030, ensure that all Roma girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
 - By 2030, ensure that all Roma girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
 - By 2030, ensure equal access for all Roma women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
 - By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
 - By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
 - Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender- sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
 - By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States
- Systematically monitor and end school and class segregation or misdiagnosis of Roma children; build explicit desegregation programmes and revise national law on education, where relevant. Access to EU funds can be made as a condition. The EC should highlight to Member States that, in exceptional cases, if circumstances do not make it possible to close segregated primary schools, then very considerable investment in high quality education is necessary to compensate for pupils' disadvantages and enable them to continue in desegregated secondary education.
- Promote quality, inclusiveness and results in education through incentives (funding and reform of teacher training), attracting the best teachers to disadvantaged schools/regions.
- The development of inclusive education and teacher training are conditions for an effective desegregation policy. Improvements can also prevent 'white flight'. The EC needs to encourage national governments to use ESIF and IPA resources to be invested primarily into sustainable structural changes, rather than the daily operation of the schools (such as to cover wages or purchases of equipment with a short-term depreciation period).
- Ensure the teaching of Romani language and history in schools, including about the Holocaust and slavery of Roma across Member States. Invest in schoolbooks and teaching materials with the support of Roma scholars and civil society.
- Invest in supportive remote learning equipment and access to the Internet (computers/tablets) for Roma students. Ensure that EU emergency funds allocated for tackling Covid 19 specifically reflect the needs of Roma and vulnerable children.
- Anti-bullying measures and anti-Roma bias among teachers must be addressed within schools legislation and accompanied by teacher training.
- The EC should ask Member States to monitor enforcement action taken by school inspectorates, and provide further powers to such authorities as needed.

Employment

- **Increase the Roma employment rate in the public sector to the rate equivalent to the proportion of Roma in the overall population: 75% of the Roma population aged 20 to 64 should be in quality and sustainable work.**
- **The EU Roma Framework should ask Member States to fully implement, by 2030, UN Sustainable Development Goal 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, as well as most principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights dealing with quality employment, by ensuring that the Roma have access to decent jobs, with adequate pay, security, and employment rights.**
- Support skills training for the Roma population and thus encourage employment in the private, public and third sectors, access to finance and adequate social protection to promote self-employment and special measures from which Roma-owned businesses could benefit, such as tax incentives.
- The EC could promote public employment schemes as a temporary solution for unemployment, but they should also be used as an opportunity for re-qualification and further training.
- The post-2020 MFF needs to include targeted measures for Roma entrepreneurs under the umbrella of the new ESIFs. The post-2020 Entrepreneurship Action Plan could mention Roma as a specific target category, and secure civil society involvement through the process.
- The EC and Member States must put in place concrete strategies to combat antigypsyism on the labour market, both from employers and employment agencies. The EC could encourage Member States to use EU funds to initiate antigypsyism training for PES employees to raise their awareness and skills.
- The EC should encourage Member States to strengthen measures supporting initial work experience or providing on-the-job training, using the full potential of the European Social Fund (ESF). It can promote the use of the Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis of the EaSI programme and thereby target Roma explicitly to improve their access to microfinancing.
- The EC needs to put greater emphasis on youth in the EU Roma Framework 2020-2027, in particular on the transition from education to employment, and ensure that Member States make youth employment a priority in their NRIS.
- Regularise informal work: make sure seasonal jobs, craftsmen, artists (singers) or small business entrepreneurs and self-employed persons are covered by employment contracts giving access to decent work rights.
- The EC and Member States need to secure separate employment conditions for young Roma who face severe exclusion and discrimination on the labour market solely due to their ethnicity, and combat the ethnic pay gap.

Health care

- **Ensure universal health insurance coverage among Roma, at least 95%, and reduce the disproportionate exposure of Roma to public health and environmental harms.**
- **Ensure achievement of SDG 3 Good health and Wellbeing, SDG 6 on Clean water and Sanitation and SDG 7 on Affordable and clean Energy & SDG 16 for Roma by 2030.**
 - By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
 - By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
 - By 2030, combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

- By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services
 - Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
 - By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
 - By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
 - By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
 - By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
 - By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
 - End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- Prevent and eliminate segregated healthcare services and ensure reparations for victims of forced sterilization.
 - Address the prevention and fight against drug addiction, HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, cardiovascular diseases, premature birth, with an emphasis on harm reduction policies.
 - Monitor and fight discrimination in access to health and sensitise health professionals to Roma needs.
 - Scale up and reinforce the health mediators' scheme and introduce it where it does not yet exist. Ensure that Roma health mediators are recognised as jobs in the official registry and paid adequately according to their work and the value they bring.
 - The EC should ask Member States to adopt laws explicitly recognising the human right to water and sanitation and ensure that all people in the country enjoy access to safe drinking water and sanitation; ensure that informal housing conditions do not prevent people from enjoying the right to safe drinking water and sanitation; adopt policies and allocate budgets for connecting Roma settlements to public drinking water and sewerage systems; and ensure that adequate safe drinking water and sanitation facilities are available in Roma neighbourhoods and settlements.

Housing

- **Legalise those informal settlements where Roma live; alternatively, provide permanent, decent, affordable and desegregated housing for Roma currently living in informal settlements that cannot be legalized for justified reasons.**
- **The EU Roma Framework should ask Member States to fully implement principle 19 of the European Pillar of Social Rights regarding housing and assistance for homeless, to ensure that quality, affordable housing is accessible also to Roma.**
- Define segregation as illegal in housing, in conformity with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination (ICERD)
- Ensure with priority funding and investment in infrastructure and adequate living conditions for all Roma, with access to safe water, sanitation, garbage collection and electricity, especially in the context of Roma vulnerability under Covid-19. This is also an opportunity to invest in green sustainable housing.
- Prevent forced evictions by early warning and mediation, organise support for people at risk of eviction and provide adequate alternative housing, focusing particularly on families.



Annex 1: Essential Elements & Thematic targets in strengthening Roma participation under the 2020 EU Strategic Framework for Roma EQUIP and NRIS

- The EC should ensure targeted funding for addressing Roma housing exclusion from a dedicated single fund, which tackles extreme poverty. Alternatively, if such a fund will not be launched in the MFF, then the EU should encourage Member States to ensure that substantial resources are made available in national programming for inclusive housing projects accessible to Roma, in the framework of multi-fund programmes combining the ERDF and ESF.

Poverty (cross-cutting dimension)

- **The EU Roma Framework should ask Member States to fully implement, by 2030, UN Sustainable Development Goal 1 on No Poverty, as well as the entirety of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as 80% of the Roma in Europe are currently experiencing poverty and social exclusion.**
- The EC should annually measure Roma poverty through Eurostat using the combined AROPE indicator – those at risk of poverty, material deprivation, and households with low work intensity – to be able to keep track of the multifaceted aspects of poverty and social exclusion in Roma communities.
- Member States, Enlargement and Neighborhood Countries should put in place measures to ensure better coverage and take-up of social benefits, such as adequate minimum income schemes, by making them automatic, reducing red tape, eliminating conditionalities and sanctions, and tackling stigma and discrimination against Roma or other recipients.
- Make the fight against poverty and social exclusion a transversal dimension through the four key dimensions of the EU Roma Strategy and NRIS, ensuring that quality, sustainable employment opportunities, inclusive education, quality housing, and adequate healthcare contribute to the overall improvement of Roma wellbeing and quality of life.