

EPHA Position Roma Health in Europe - Summary

EPHA Recommendations on how to promote meaningful Roma integration in Europe

One of the **most universally disadvantaged** communities living in Europe is the **Roma**. The great majority of the estimated **10-12 million** Roma population is found at the **very bottom of the socio-economic spectrum**: they **suffer worse health** than the other populations in the countries due to their higher exposure to the range of **unfavourable factors that influence health**. Due to the multiplicity of their discrimination and social exclusion, the inequalities faced by the Roma population highlights **the cause for combating the social determinants of health across the board**.

● **To devise evidence-based, targeted political action and to improve the quality and quantity of available data on Roma** – Data evidence on health inequalities of Roma is available and shows a public health emergency which requires immediate political actions. However, data are often fragmentary and lacking in good quality information about Roma Health. While the devising of **evidence-based, targeted political actions** (e.g. medical caravans targeting the poor/Roma) are necessary to improve Roma health, **systematic research and data collection are needed** to fill the gap in the serious lack of information into their distinctive health needs and patterns of disease.

● **To secure sustainability of employment of Roma Health Mediators (RHM)** – RHMs are **experts of equal opportunity**, who in the course of mediation between Roma communities and various institutions facilitate the availability of public services – most especially in the areas of **education, housing, health care, social services** and the **labour market** – for the Roma. While the recognition of RHM as **an official professional qualification** is a precondition of their work, it is vital **to secure the sustainability of RHM roles** by providing appropriate working conditions.

● **To ensure the full implementation of the EU legislation on Roma integration at member state level which should result in real improvement of the Roma in the field.** – While recognising the special responsibility of Member States, the EU itself bear a considerable part of that joint responsibility. Therefore, both the EU and Member States must ensure:

- the active involvement of civil society in the preparation and assessment of national Roma integration strategies (NRIS).
- that Roma integration remains part of the European Semester and that there will be meaningful follow up actions when Member States receive Roma-related Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)
- the respect of EU legislation on the equal treatment of Roma; both the EU and Member States have to take all necessary measures to ensure that Member States comply with the Racial or Ethnic Discrimination Directive (2000/43/EC¹) and the Equal Treatment Directive in Employment and Occupation 2000/78/EC².
- the adoption of the new Equal Treatment ('Article 19) Directive to provide Roma with higher levels of legal protection against discrimination.

● **To include social rights into the mandate of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)** –The FRA's mandate covers Roma integration and discrimination based on ethnic or social origin, but it does not have a mandate to **monitor social rights**, which would be essential for collecting better data in the field of Roma integration.

● **To involve civil society in the funding process and provide financial support for local Roma NGOs** – The involvement of local civil society in the EU funding process intended to improve Roma integration is a prerequisite for the **transparency and accountability of the EU funding programmes, in order to make sure that financial support actually reaches the Roma in need**. It is essential to provide **financial support for the operation of local Roma civil societies**.

- The full **EPHA Position on Roma Health in Europe** is available at no cost at www.eph.org/6003

¹ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin,

² Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation