

LEAPING FORWARD

Adapting the post-2020 EU Roma Framework to the real needs of beneficiaries

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Acronyms and abbreviations

EU- European Union

EC- European Commission

NRIS- National Roma Integration strategies

MS- Member States

ECD- Early childhood development

OSF- Open Society Foundation

EPHA- European Public Health Alliance



Context

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) was set up in 2011 to challenge a number of social and economic issues faced by Roma in EU countries. It resulted in European and national policy instruments and mechanisms, aiming to combat Roma exclusion in five key areas: education, employment, housing, health and antidiscrimination. The European Commission (EC) plays a crucial role in the entire process providing tools, programmes and funds for Roma inclusion as well as recommendations in response to reports released by European bodies, Member States (MS) and civil society in relations with Roma current situation. Since the EU framework has been adopted, some positive results have been recorded in certain countries in the field of education and employment; however, they lack sustainable effects and cannot help Roma to get out of their disadvantaged position.

Despite the efforts for achieving the objectives of the EU framework, Roma exclusion remains a persistent issue in European countries, regardless of the size of the Roma population. Roma live at the margins of society - in deep poverty in their home countries but also, as mobile workers in host countries in Western Europe. Access to housing and healthcare has not been improved and Roma continue to face inequalities in key areas such as health, employment and education. The EU framework has not proved to be efficient in combatting poverty and social exclusion, leading to a significant gap between Roma and the rest of the European population. The NRIS did not achieve any improvements in the two closely connected areas of health and housing as most of the Roma continue to live in the outskirts of cities, in isolated, under-developed and contaminated areas with poor infrastructure and substandard housing conditions, harming health and early childhood development. Such living conditions increase the health hazards for Roma and expose them to higher risk from epidemics, infectious diseases and accidents (fires, floods, electric shocks, road accidents) and illustrate the gravity of social exclusion and discrimination against the community.

In fact, severe forms of discrimination¹ have been observed in countries with a high number of Roma population as well as amongst Roma mobile workers in Western Europe and Travellers, although such practices remain under-documented due to

the lack of official desegregated data on ethnic, gender and age criteria. In this context, desegregated data collection, monitoring and reporting becomes an essential factor for better design and implementation of policies within the next programming period. Furthermore, it allows discrimination in social, economic and environmental fields (which not only affects Roma, but also represents a threat for EU fundamental rights and principles) to be challenged more effectively.

When it comes to social aspects, discrimination and exclusion have significant consequences on physical and mental health and wellbeing. Recent research shows a notable difference between life expectancy of Roma and non-Roma. Roma live 10 years less² than the majority population, highlighting the impact of health inequalities on vulnerable groups. A study focusing on national policies conducted by the European Social Policy Network found that Roma in European countries are the most disadvantaged in accessing healthcare systems, and are particularly vulnerable when accessing health and preventive services, including women's health programmes.³ High child mortality rate among Roma, linked to socio-economic factors, is observed in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic-countries with larger Roma populations.⁴ This alarming evidence regarding the current health status of Roma, which also affects public health and economic competitiveness of the EU, reinforces the urgent need to tackle health inequalities in next EU Roma Framework.

In its mid-term evaluation review⁵ the European Commission (EC) not only acknowledged the need for further action in regards to the NRIS, but also the need to take an inclusive approach, combining mainstream policy and specific programmes, targeting Roma in particular, enhancing the fight against discrimination. In the wake of the public consultation that accompanied the EC's mid-term review, EPHA issued "five key recommendations for better health", prerequisites for achieving the objectives in other fields of the EU framework.⁶ These recommendations, addressed to the European Commission, EU national governments and civil society, remain valid and still await a reaction. This paper builds on the previous recommendations and reinforces the importance addressing social and economic factors to reduce health inequalities. It looks beyond health and makes a case for the next EU Roma Framework to take action on the various determinants of health, includ-



ing ethnic discrimination (as manifest in the specific and particularly persistent form of antigypsyism) and to adoption of intersectional lens. It presents a number of additional recommendations for the post - 2020 framework, including proposals issued by EPHA partners, whose views we value and endorse.

Making progress in core NRIS policy areas: health, housing, education, employment

EPHA's 2017 recommendations, mentioned above, underline the fact that addressing Roma health is not only a social but also an economic imperative: a prerequisite for achieving the EU's goals for boosting economic competitiveness, innovation and sustainability. Moreover, it allows the EU to further its commitment to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. At the same time, health is a crucial factor for achieving positive results in other strategic areas of the EU framework for Roma Inclusion such as education, employment and housing. Improved Roma health requires measures for eliminating ethnic discrimination in social, economic and environmental areas.

Roma are being pushed to live in segregated zones without access to safe drinking water and sanitation, waste removal, and decent housing conditions - an expression of the communities' exclusion. Substandard housing conditions worsen personal hygiene, nutrition; prevent employment and access to healthcare; create favourable environments for the spread of infectious diseases and multi-drug resistant bacteria and increase vulnerability to non-communicable diseases such as cancer or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). They require costly treatments, unaffordable for the large number of Roma on low incomes or facing higher rates of unemployment. A "substantial gender gap" compared to the rest of population also exists, as the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey released by the Fundamental Rights Agency reveals. Mental health and wellbeing are also affected by substandard housing conditions and ethnic segregation, unaddressed in the previous framework for Roma inclusion, need particular attention in national and EU policy in the next programming period.

EPHA's recommendations called on the EC to strengthen policy design and evaluation of the impact of policies on Roma health and wellbeing, including mental health within the next Roma Framework. We called for the development of a plan to eliminate health inequalities; comparable data collection; the development of indicators to measure progress on health and early childhood development. Additionally, the participation of relevant stakeholders, including Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations to be promoted, in all the phases of the process.

A 2019 paper released by the Open Society Foundations (OSF)⁷ maps the way forward, elaborating a vision for the four core policy areas and proposing to designate action against antigypsyism as a new stand-alone priority. On health, OSF notes the following priorities, which EPHA also supports:

- Ensure "access to preventative health measures for all Roma" through an integrated and intersectional approach
- Develop policies to "enable all Roma enjoy their right to safe drinking water and sanitation" in formal and informal settlements by recognising "the access to water and sanitation as a human right"
- Promote "accessibility and affordability of water supply and services () for socially excluded and ethnically discriminated groups" to challenge limited access to potable water through data collection, legislation and funding

It is clear that there are close links between health and poor housing conditions. From the isolated and under-developed Roma settlements in Central and Eastern Europe to the slums in Italian, French and Spanish suburbs to the post-industrial cities in the United Kingdom and Germany, many Roma inhabit spaces often in direct proximity to environmentally contaminated land, chemicals and hazardous materials, and are subject to severe noise, soil and air pollution or electro-magnetic radiation. Access to housing is an issue also faced by Roma mobile workers which deprives them from enjoying their right to intra-EU mobility (see below). In some host countries in Western Europe Roma families with children live in makeshift housing with no access to water and electricity, because of lack of administrative documents, stable employment or biased perception of Roma by society. The forced



evictions which Roma experience in several EU countries (France, Italy, Bulgaria) are another barrier preventing them from enjoying fundamental rights such as access to housing, healthcare, education and employment-pillars of Roma inclusion.⁸

Furthermore, substandard living conditions and access to water and sanitation are also obstacles to proper physical development, education and training, which impact on later earning potential in adulthood. The importance of early childhood development (ECD) is particularly relevant for Roma children as often they live in deep poverty in the Roma settlements, exposed to risks of epidemics, infections and accidents, due to poor living conditions and infrastructure. Lack of financial resources makes it impossible for parents to offer healthy nutrition, stimulating physical activity, prevent diseases and afford medicines and vaccination. Poverty then becomes a factor for the placement of Romani children in childcare institutions in several Eastern European countries. Hence the provision of integrated, quality ECD programmes must be significantly scaled up in the new EU Roma Framework, to provide wide-ranging support to families and children, ensure positive impact on health status for future generations of Roma. There is new-found momentum at the EU level on this issue, following incoming Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's commitment to maternal and children's health, while the continuing discussions in the European Parliament on establishing a Child Guarantee would tackle economic and social issues faced by children, such as the access to free healthcare, adequate nutrition and decent housing.⁹ EPHA member Eurochild is leading a European (EU and national level) campaign on ECD in partnership with other organisations covering key sectors in child development, aiming to advocate for children's rights in EU policy.

ECD is a necessary step to successful education. Again, Roma children are at a severe disadvantage, because of their spatial and school segregation, discriminatory practices such as placement of Roma children in institutions for children with mental disabilities; affordability of transportation, school clothing and equipment resulting in lower quality education and school attendance as well as frequent school dropout. Stereotypes and prejudices coming from educational authorities lead to experience of antigypsyism – of bullying and ethnic discrimination at school, whether by classmates or their teachers; refusal to enrol Romani children at

school by directors (Bulgaria) and mayors (France)¹⁰ prevent Roma from secure an education and future employment. Thus, securing employment and financial resources under such circumstances becomes a major challenge for Roma in Europe. Unemployment rates remain sky-high despite the – at time of writing - very low unemployment rates (under 5%) in a number of Central/South Eastern European countries including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. EPHA supports OSF's recommendations in this area including the introduction of targeted vocational training schemes in return for tax benefits for employers; the improvement of youth employment at national and EU level (including reforming the European Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative) and to the earmarking of funds under the new European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for Roma integration.

The valorisation of technical, communication, digital, trade and other professional skills of Roma can be a solution for challenging unemployment. From an economic perspective it can be an added value for the evolution of the EU labour market and its economic competitiveness. In its current version, it puts Roma in a disadvantaged position as often they lack formal qualifications and diplomas. Requirements to prove professional competencies practically exclude Roma from job application procedures, freelance professional activities and push them toward unregulated activities and the informal economy.

EPHA also strongly supports OSF's recommendations to improve the availability of targeted funding, and the establishment of participatory policies to achieve better quality housing and living conditions for Roma across Europe, taking into account the diversity of settings, social contexts and the countries where they are living. Improving living conditions is a necessary step for facilitating access to education for Roma and to combat unemployment. EPHA also supports OSF's recommendations¹¹ regarding education which call, *inter alia*, for the EU to stimulate the collection of data pertaining to segregation; the elaboration and implementation of desegregation strategies at regional and local level, and the introduction of national reforms to shape policies which consider the educational needs of Roma children from an early age and throughout the period of formal education period.

Additionally, EPHA is convinced that enriching the Roma Framework with a complementary strategy



promoting Roma culture (arts, language and history) as proposed by OSF and supported by many civil society partners, would validate the belonging of Roma communities to the European continent and acknowledge their contribution to Europe's cultural heritage. Valorisation of Romanes, spoken by Roma communities in its communication and linguistic aspects, would help build knowledge on Roma culture and history, ensure society's acceptance of Roma, and combat stereotypical representation of the community -thus eliminating antigypsyism.

Combating antigypsyism in all its forms

Historical persecution and genocide have proven Roma are targeted as an entire population based on a common ethnic origin, regardless of an individual's social status. Ethnic segregation in settlements, maternity wards, hospitals, schools etc. pushed by authorities for decades highlights the presence of structural discrimination which reinforces the exclusion of Roma communities-an issue that has been raised by civil society on many occasions. Recent attacks and incidents such as physical violence and racist insults against members of the community recorded in many European countries, prove that Roma are subjected to antigypsyism. Biased representation of Roma in national media, racist statements made by leading politicians create narratives that further worsen the Roma situation and feed the negative perception of this population group. As a result, Roma have limited access to rights and services, including healthcare and social welfare and are more vulnerable to social and economic disruption.

EU institutions need to look closer at antigypsyism in all its forms. It is one of the main reasons for the particular vulnerability of this population and it should be tackled in parallel with the social and economic aspects of the next Roma inclusion framework.

Racist incidents and discriminatory practices continue to take place, despite a body of legislation, adopted by the EU and Member States, guaranteeing the human rights of EU citizens. The Treaty of the European Union (TFEU), Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC aiming to counter discrimination in a number of areas including housing, education and employment and the Framework decision on combating certain forms of racism and xenophobia by the means of criminal law provide further guar-

antees against discrimination. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU prohibits discrimination based on a number of grounds including ethnic, racial and social origin. Antigypsyism as a specific expression of racism was addressed in 2013 by the acknowledgment of the Council of the need to combat antigypsyism to achieve effective Roma integration; in 2017 the European Parliament adopted a resolution highlighting the fundamental rights aspects of Roma integration and antigypsyism by calling for the establishment of a truth commission. Nevertheless, the EU's legal framework does have its limits as Roma continue to experience different forms of discrimination. In its recent paper, OSF highlights the limitation of the current legal provisions against discrimination:

“Combating antigypsyism through the existing anti-discrimination legislation is not enough. The four key areas of NRIS – education, employment, housing and healthcare, accompanied by other relevant areas (...) – should include a clear reference to antigypsyism. Concrete measures to combat all the dimensions and manifestations of antigypsyism must be developed, including measures to prevent and combat hate crime and hate speech, especially online”.

In May 2019, the Alliance against Antigypsyism released a paper¹² containing twelve recommendations, almost all directed at EU institutions and national governments alike. They not only press them to improve institutional and policy frameworks, data collection and state response to antigypsyist incidents, but also call on them to: enable access to justice and legal protection for victims of hate crimes and to eliminate structural discrimination, such as restricting the right to free movement within the EU, which present an obstacle to developing Roma agency and self-realisation.

EPHA strongly supports these views given that, ultimately, antigypsyism can be a determining factor of poor early childhood development, preventing access to the education, healthcare and social services which are essential as supporting instruments for disadvantaged communities in particular to make progress. Similarly, in the context of the NRIS, a 2017 EPHA-CRIS paper on the Romanian situation noted that “different forms of manifestation of antigypsyism, including institutional racism, must be tackled across the four key areas (...) of the strategy by introducing specific reactive and preventive measures.”¹³



Recognising diversity and intersectionality

Intersectionality has been described as “where different grounds interact in a manner that makes them inseparable”¹⁴, e.g. ethnicity and gender discrimination working together in a way which creates even stronger stereotypes, and concomitant disadvantages, for specific (sub-) groups. This is particularly relevant for Roma as they are often subjected to multiple forms of discrimination combining factors such as religion, social status, gender, sexual orientation, age etc. making access to justice much more difficult for them. Biased perception of Roma as a homogeneous and compact community by society, public authorities, policymakers and public servants make it impossible to pay attention to an individual’s needs. Taking an intersectional lens thus places emphasis on mechanisms of power and exclusion in modern-day society, especially in the absence of legislation to protect individuals from such forms of overlapping discrimination. This approach highlights the particular needs of such people within anti-discrimination and equality policies and legislation. While the EC and a number of MS are increasingly paying attention to intersectionality and multiple discrimination, whether through studies or policy work, it is still an emerging field when it comes to Roma. However, in the context of the Roma Inclusion Framework and its failure to achieve progress in key policy areas, it is very likely that discrimination occurs simultaneously on the basis of different grounds, thereby posing a particularly challenging obstacle to Roma integration.

Multiple forms of discrimination can be observed when accessing healthcare and prevention services. This is more challenging for disadvantaged groups within Roma communities: for instance, Roma mothers are more likely to be subjected to segregation in maternity wards; elderly and disabled Roma face more barriers in receiving basic healthcare, especially for those who live in isolated areas with poor infrastructure, making them inaccessible by emergency services. Addressing health issues faced by such groups is a path to health equity that can positively influence the future of Europe and provide a response to the demographic change which require new thinking about inclusion and diversity in the context of increasingly multicultural societies.

EPHA therefore recommends that diversity and intersectionality must become integral features

of the post-2020 Roma framework. This requires the collection of much more comprehensive data about individuals’ lived experience and the protection of their rights through legislation that explicitly references multiple discrimination and intersectionality.

Integrating a health inequalities perspective into all policies

EPHA believes that more horizontal discussions must take place to ensure that the needs of Roma and other disadvantaged groups are better analysed and commonly addressed by policymakers working in different “policy silos”. This would require setting up effective mechanisms to include a specific health inequalities perspective on other policies rather than focusing on the consequences once the impact is apparent. Infusing the EU Roma framework with a health inequalities perspective would also allow more in-depth knowledge about how intersectionality works in practice to be gathered and to enable solutions which meet both the needs of wider communities and individuals.

EPHA therefore strongly supports the OSF conclusion that only a mix of mainstream and targeted policy measures – both at EU and national level - will be effective and comprehensive enough to gradually improve the situation.

At EU level, the European Semester and its Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) have already included Roma issues as a formal reminder and stimulus for MS to take action in the key areas discussed above. In the future, a stronger focus should be placed on Roma inclusion, with more concrete objectives, targets and measurable indicators which can effectively resolve the challenges experienced by different sub-groups of Roma, e.g. women, LGBT, children, mobile workers (see also below). Moreover, improving Roma health and social inclusion should be discussed as part of the EU’s commitment to the implementation the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to which the European Pillar of Social Rights is now linked.

Protecting the rights and health of mobile Roma workers

In the current socio-economic context, intra-EU mobility is a response to demographic change and economic growth. However, mobile workers from Roma communities are often negatively perceived,



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ignoring the potential and capacity of Roma people, especially youth. The NRIS were designed to integrate Roma in their country of origin without taking into account the context of economic mobility, which practically prevent Roma mobile workers from benefiting from support within the NRIS. At the same time, mobile Roma workers continue to face social exclusion in their host country due to limited capacity to fulfil the reigning settlement criteria in other EU MS, namely to secure employment after three months of residence. While some EU migrants have successfully defended their rights as mobile EU citizens despite being deemed “economically inactive”, Roma continue to be targets of expulsions and collective evictions in many MS, including France, Italy and the UK. Even as EU citizens, they are subjected to removal procedures by state authorities to deny them re-entry in the longer term. Potential expulsions due to exceeding the legal residence period push many Roma to avoid undertaking administrative procedures requiring contact with public authorities. As a result, they are plunged into unregulated activities which often represent severe forms of labour exploitation linked to a black market, performing the most precarious and physically demanding task; while many women, often victims of trafficking, are forced to become sex workers. Children are particularly vulnerable to such practices; often targeted and exploited by criminal networks to perform illegal activities endangering their health, physical and mental development. Many mobile Roma workers – especially those lacking formal education and experience - are in dangerous, poorly paid forms of employment which in turn condemn them to living in sub-standard conditions (rent exploitation also being common). Crucially, these forms of informal employment limit their access to rights, important benefits and services, including child benefit or healthcare insurance, in many MS. From a health perspective, living irregularly in their host countries may have physical, mental health and social effects on them and their families, in turn leading to increased domestic violence, drug addiction or severe diseases.

Without stable employment and decent housing, many Roma effectively become undocumented migrants, especially should the validity of their ID cards or passports also expire. As a last resort, they are forced into begging, prostitution, petty crime and other ad hoc survival mechanisms, for which they may pay dearly if criminal and immigration offences combine. Given the institutionalised nature

of antigypsyism, Roma are believed to be overrepresented in prisons in a number of EU countries, not least because they lack proper legal representation, and may not be able to read or understand legal language and procedures.

EPHA therefore recommends that special consideration should be given to Roma when it comes to the right to freely move and reside in another EU MS. The vast majority of Roma do migrate to access legal employment offers and support their families living in the country of origin. Easier access to long-term residence permits and forms of employment that match with their skills, including non-formal competences would allow more mobile workers to come out of the shadows and enter the job market, pay taxes and take advantage of education, health and social welfare services. Existing apprenticeship programmes and other youth employment initiatives, but also re-training and conversion programmes, could specifically target Roma in host countries.

Conclusion and recommendations

Roma communities face a number of issues in different areas of political, social and economic life making the entire process of social inclusion long and complex, requiring special attention from policymakers in all political levels. On one hand, this means that key policies within the EU framework for Roma inclusion should be developed in such a way that they meet the needs of increasingly diverse communities across Europe. On the other, policymakers and professionals need to be aware that, under certain circumstances and for various reasons including the lingering effects of antigypsyism, extra efforts are required to ensure that Roma can benefit from mainstream policies in the same way as other citizens. The post-2020 EU Roma Framework needs to become more binding and better enforced, and evidence-based policies need to be shaped that are bold enough to tackle the problem head-on.

In summary, EPHA advances the following key recommendations for the next EU Roma Framework – although by no means exhaustive and sufficient on their own – to embed the next Roma Framework with a stronger public health focus:

General recommendations: policy, funding,



governance

- The EU and Member States should ensure that Roma health inequalities are addressed both as part of mainstream policies (health, education, employment, housing, anti-discrimination) and, where necessary/appropriate and based on evidence, through targeted actions from which Roma could benefit.
- The EU should encourage Member States to collect desegregated data on ethnicity, gender and age criteria, whilst guaranteeing confidentiality and data protection, to assess the needs of the targeted groups and improve policy design and implementation.
- The EU and Member States should set binding and realistic objectives and targets, combined with measurable indicators and thorough monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- The role of civil society and Roma communities in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NRIS should be enhanced in the next EU Roma Inclusion Framework. Roma communities should be empowered to prevent a culture of dependence and enhance self-reliance.
- The post-2020 Roma Framework needs to include policies and resources to end to institutionalised forms of discrimination and antigypsyism, promoting the social inclusion of Roma. All NRIS policy areas should include a clear reference to anti-gypsyism. Concrete measures must be developed, including the prevention and elimination of hate crime and hate speech on-and offline.
- Antigypsyism should be a stand-alone, overarching priority in the new Roma Framework and Member States should be encouraged to recognise it in national law.
- The European Semester should be used to encourage action at national level, using the CSRs and EPSR as levers to ensure meaningful pursuit of NRIS goals.
- The next Roma Framework should pay particular attention to intersectionality and all forms of multiple discrimination in parallel with the current pillars of NRIS. Diversity within Roma populations should be taken into account in political, social, economic and environmental policies.
- The EU should fight against corruption and misuse of EU funds allocated to Roma inclusion by establishing monitoring and reporting mechanisms at European and national levels.
- The next Roma Framework should support the role of local and regional authorities and their capacity to develop strategies geared towards supporting the local Roma communities.

Health

In addition to EPHA's 2017 recommendations¹⁵

- The Roma inclusion framework should encourage Member States to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all.¹⁶
- Roma health should be enhanced by access to healthcare, affordable medicines, free vaccination and medical prevention. Member States should explore the feasibility of universal health coverage available to all disadvantaged groups, including mobile Roma workers.
- Mental health and well-being of Roma and disadvantaged groups should become a specific priority for EU and Member States addressing the psychological dimension of socio-economic exclusion and antigypsyism.
- Encourage Member States to adopt policy, legal framework and programmes to address substandard living conditions, poor infrastructure and health hazards in current Roma settlements; combat spatial segregation by promoting access to decent housing in desegregated neighbourhoods.
- The next EU Framework should provide better protection of Roma women and girls' health by promoting their access to health services, sexual and reproductive rights and affordable contraception. Women and girls' mental health must be addressed through preventive strategies against domestic violence, including education of men and boys.
- EU should promote access to affordable dental healthcare for people without permanent residence and medical insurance, including Roma mobile workers, by en-



couraging Member States to eliminate administrative barriers and provide preventive services free of charge for such groups.

- EU funds should be directed to scaling up the deployment of Roma health mediators and Roma health professionals in and from local communities, who should themselves benefit from secure employment and career development.
- A specific focus should be young Roma girls and boys given the need to stimulate healthy behaviours at an early age (nutrition, physical activity, good mental health, etc.). Mechanisms to prevent drug addiction and human trafficking should be easily accessible for Roma youth.

Education

- The EU and Member States should significantly boost their investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and develop policies to ensure the best possible, healthy start in life for Roma children and provide appropriate support to Roma mothers (pre-and postnatal care) and families.
- Desegregation must be prioritised and EU funds allocated for the development and implementation of such strategies in all education settings. National governments should be encouraged to implement mechanisms providing financial support to disadvantaged families to send their children to desegregated schools (transport, clothes, school materials) and raise awareness among non-Roma parents to ensure the inclusion of Roma children in such schools.
- National education policies and reforms must ensure that the diverse needs of Roma children and students can be met and institutions and teachers are well prepared and trained to provide quality education for all.
- Encourage Member States to create mechanisms to prevent discrimination in school and provide pedagogical and psychological support to Roma children placed in desegregated schools.

Employment

- The EU and Member States should act to make vocational training and apprenticeship schemes available to young Roma to allow them to apply their existing skills and gain formal qualifications. Such schemes should also take into account the gender dimension of employment.
- Encourage Member States to create mechanisms to promote the employment of Roma in public administration and institutions by providing subsidies for employing disadvantaged groups, including Roma.
- Member States must establish reporting and awareness-raising mechanisms for Roma and other disadvantaged groups to prevent labour exploitation, discrimination in access to employment and career development, whilst guaranteeing data protection and confidentiality.
- The EU and Member States should establish special employment services for intra-EU mobile Roma who may not be able to secure employment by themselves due to language, qualification and administrative barriers.

Housing

- The EU and Member States should ensure that the next Roma Framework brings concrete improvements to Roma living conditions, including adequate shelter and sanitation, infrastructure, access to clean water, safe environments, public transportation easily connecting Roma settlements to hospitals and other public services.
- Member States should be encouraged to undertake policies to tackle spatial segregation by providing sustainable solutions for Roma, such as access to proper housing in desegregated areas.
- Member States should be encouraged to adopt national plans and mechanisms against poverty to address substandard housing conditions faced by Roma in formal and informal settlements such as slums and squats, by making accessible social housing and shelter regardless of employment status, especially in cases of slum clearance and forced evictions.
- Member States should consider the conse-



quences of forced evictions for Roma families and for social cohesion, public health and exposure to health risks; relocation should always result in improved housing and living standards.

Tackling discrimination / antigypsyism

- Relevant EU legislation and policy tools should be used in the fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia.
- Member States must recognise their historical responsibility towards the Roma population and ensure that Roma history, language, art and culture are fostered so their place in the development of European heritage is recognised.
- Roma mobile workers should not be subjected to repeated evictions and expulsions from another Member State on grounds of economic inactivity; Roma migrants from non-EU countries should enjoy their right to apply for asylum and their cases should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- The EU should foster gender equality as a key objective by including the gender dimension and applying an intersectional lens in antidiscrimination policy and antigypsyism.
- Civil servants, police officers, educators, health care professionals and social workers in contact with the Roma community should receive appropriate training and support.
- Specific training must be provided to journalists to address biased representation of Roma and change prejudiced narratives in national and local media.



Notes

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