**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on the situation of Roma people living in settlements in the EU**

1. **Resolution tabled pursuant to Rule 136(5) of the European Parliament's Rules of procedure**
2. **Reference numbers:** 2022/2662 (RSP) / B9-0413/2022 / P9\_TA(2022)0343
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 5 October 2022
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it**

The European Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to urgently address the situation of Roma people living in settlements in a comprehensive and effective manner, with appropriate short and long-term policies supported by sufficient EU and national funding. It underlies the fact that such catastrophic conditions, as well as the negative psychological and sociological impact of segregation, not only affect the people living within the settlements, but also impact the wider community.

1. **Response to the requests in the resolution and overview of the action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

The Commission welcomes the European Parliament resolution and recognises the urgency to address it at all levels.

The Commission is concerned that a significant number of Roma people in some Member States of the European Union, particularly Roma living in segregated settlements, face social exclusion and poverty; lacking access to quality mainstream education, employment, healthcare and decent housing.

The Commission recognises that Roma are victims of hate speech, systematic discrimination and antigypsyism.

Whilst Member States are on the front line to drive real change for Roma, which requires a strengthened political commitment, the EU supports them in shaping effective approaches and developing the right tools.

**Paragraph 1**

The Commission is addressing the situation of Roma and particularly marginalised Roma (including those living in segregated settlements) by a comprehensive approach combining legal, policy and financial instruments. The reformed and strengthened **EU Roma strategic framework for equality inclusion and participation 2020-2030** (EURSF) **(**[COM/2020/620 final](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/union_of_equality_eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_en.pdf))**,** adopted by the Commission in October 2020 sets out EU-level objectives and targets in key areas for the next ten years. These key areas are equality, inclusion, participation, education, employment, health and housing. The EURSF is reinforced by the unanimously adopted **Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participatio**n ([2021/C93/01](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AJOC_2021_093_R_0001))in March 2021. Moreover, the fight against discrimination and antigypsyism is being pursued not only in the explicit context of this framework but also in the context of the **Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025** (ARAP) ([COM(2020) 565 final](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/a_union_of_equality_eu_action_plan_against_racism_2020_-2025_en.pdf)), and in the context of the existing EU legislation, such as the **Racial Equality Directive** ([2000/43/EC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0043)).

Following the EURSF’s common but differentiated approach, acknowledging the diversity of national situations and specific challenges, Member States were invited to develop, adopt and implement national Roma strategic frameworks (NRSFs) featuring minimum commitments, which should apply to all, possible additional commitments depending on the national context, and more ambitious commitments for Member States with a significant Roma populations and challenges (representing more than 1% of the total population).

Negotiations of the **2021-2027 Partnership Agreements** and programmes are ongoing. In order to ensure that the available funding effectively reaches Roma communities, the Commission will insist that country-specific challenges regarding Roma equality and inclusion are properly reflected and addressed in the partnership agreements, and that measures promoting Roma inclusion are included in the programmes.

The Multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027 promotes the inclusion of Roma and the fight against discrimination, in particular through the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).**

The EURSF and the 2021 Council Recommendation encourage the Member States, in particular those with greater challenges identified in the context of the European Semester and those with a significant Roma population and challenges, to make full use of the ESF+ specific objective to fund measures to promote the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as Roma.

Taking into account challenges facing marginalised Roma communities in terms of access to basic services, the ERDF contributes to improving their living conditions and development prospects through measures such as building/extension of mainstream non-segregated educational facilities, non-segregated social housing, accessible bussing, in complementarity with the ESF+ actions, such as for example training for teachers, individual support for pupils when they are transferred from segregated to mainstream settings.

Through its **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme** (CERV), the European Commission made available EUR 22.1 million (CERV-EQUAL 2021-2022 calls) for projects combatting racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination, including combating manifestations of antigypsyism.

**Regulation** **(EU) 2021/241** **establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** requires Member States to explain how the measures in their respective plans are expected to contribute to gender equality and equal opportunities for all and the mainstreaming of those objectives, in line with principles 2 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. So far, the national recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) of 26 Member States have been endorsed by the Commission and the Council. On average, Member States have dedicated around 28% of their RRF funds to supporting social objectives (employment and skills, education and childcare, health and long-term care, and social policies).[[1]](#footnote-2) Member States are also invited to make good use of this funding for Roma equality, inclusion and participation. Several national plans explicitly include Roma as beneficiaries of measures, for instance through the promotion of childcare services and access to and inclusion in quality mainstream education of socially disadvantaged students, including Roma, especially in communities with a significant Roma population, as well as dedicated investments e.g. providing medical services to such communities. The Recovery and Resilience Facility is a performance-based instrument, which means that disbursements are linked to the satisfactory fulfilment of agreed milestones and targets and made after the submission of a payment request duly justifying their fulfilment. This constitutes an important moment for assessing the implementation of the measures contained in the RRPs. In addition, the Commission together with the Member States continuously monitors the implementation of the plans via different channels, including most notably regular exchanges between the Commission and the respective Member States.

The Commission implements the **ROMACT Programme**, financed under Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme, to support capacity building at local level and contribute to a better inclusion of Roma populations within their local communities in Bulgaria and Romania.

**Paragraph 4**

The proposal for a Council recommendation on the revision of the Barcelona targets ([COM/2022/442 final](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:442:FIN)) emphasises the relevance of participation in high quality, affordable and accessible early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children in vulnerable situations or from disadvantaged backgrounds including Roma children. In order to facilitate children’s participation, the Commission calls on the Member States to use existing EU funding to ensure equal access to inclusive and quality early childhood education and care services. High quality ECEC can also be an effective tool for educational equity.

**Paragraph 8**

The Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 establishing a European Child Guarantee clearly indicates that specific disadvantages experienced by “children with a migrant background or minority ethnic origin, particularly Roma” should be taken into account by the Member States when designing their national integrated measures. By 20 October 2022 only fifteen Member States have submitted their national action plans for implementation of child guarantee. Among those, policy measures targeted specifically at Roma children are included in plans submitted by Croatia, France, Greece, Poland and Spain, while the remaining ten action plan assert that Roma children have equal access to the general welfare systems. The Member States with largest groups of Roma population – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia – have not submitted their action plans yet. The Commission will assist the Member States in implementation of the action plans, and monitor progress in line with the Council recommendation.

The Commission intends to monitor progress in implementing the European Child Guarantee, including its outcomes and the impact on children in need, as part of the Social Scoreboard in the context of the European Semester.

**Paragraph 9**

The Commission has been supporting health mediation programmes including health awareness and healthy living conditions in deprived communities through ESF+, for instance in SK such programme is supported by 55 million in the new programming period.

In June 2022, the Commission published a guiding document the “Healthier Together: EU Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Initiative”. This Initiative places the reduction of health inequalities by addressing social determinants, health literacy and digital literacy as a priority for transversal action through all key areas, and calls for the identification of specific actions to better reach population sub-groups that were so far less likely to participate for instance in screening programmes or have limited health literacy or other needs. Some actions aiming to increase awareness, knowledge sharing and capacity building in the area of mental health (e.g. project STEP IN that will start in November 2022) target Roma population among other vulnerable groups and are supported by the EU4Health Programme.

**Paragraph 10**

The Commission encourages Member States to make use of cohesion policy funds to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion. This also includes addressing inequalities faced by marginalised groups, such as Roma, when it comes to equal access to mainstream services providing clean, affordable and secure energy, water waste management etc. The cohesion policy regulatory framework includes specific objectives that cover these thematic areas and it is thus expected that the needs of Roma communities are also addressed under the corresponding investments, accompanied by targeted measures to foster their access to the mainstream actions.

Member States can especially draw on the significant support provided under cohesion policy programmes to invest in energy efficiency in buildings and tackle energy poverty, including for Roma communities as relevant. Such financial help for building renovation was available under the 2014-2020 programmes of cohesion policy and will also be again part of the 2021-27 programmes dealing with building renovation and access to clean and affordable energy in many Member States.

**Paragraph 16**

The Commission aims to improve the collection of equality data disaggregated by ethnicity and racial origin with full respect for privacy and fundamental rights standards. It therefore encourages the Member States, in a number of the Commission’s initiatives including EURSF and the Anti-racism Action Plan, to improve the collection of reliable and comparable data at European and national level. The relevance of collection equality data was acknowledged by the EU High Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity, which set up the Subgroup on Equality Data to help Member States improve the collection and use of equality data. As a result, the Guidelines on how to improve the collection and use of equality data (2018) and Guidance Note on the collection and use of equality data based on racial or ethnic origin (2021) were published. Other relevant documents on equality data collection are European Handbook on Equality Data (2016 Revision), and Legal framework and practices in the EU Member States (2017). Despite all these actions, there is still a need to improve the collection of comparable and accurate data on equality and non-discrimination. The lack of regular collection of equality data limits effective monitoring of the application of these legal and policy instruments. Acknowledging the scarcity of equality data gathered by Member States, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is regularly collecting equality data on Roma. The most recent data were released in October 2022 and demonstrate the lack of equality for Roma**.**

The indicators of the Social Scoreboard (i.e. risk of poverty and social exclusion, employment rate, early school leaving, etc.), which is part of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, are very relevant to monitor the condition of people in most vulnerable situations, including those to which Roma people are confronted with. Employment targets have been set at the general level and are not included in the scoreboard.

**Paragraph 17**

The Commission promotes the role of social partners and social dialogue at EU level in line with the provisions of Treaties. The specific functioning of the collective bargaining including the collective representation of specific groups of workers, is however a national competence. At the same time, the right of association does not fall under EU competence.

The Commission is currently preparing a social dialogue initiative that will consist of a Communication on strengthening social dialogue in Europe and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the role of social dialogue at national level in general. The proposal for a Council Recommendation will support Member States in implementing Principle 8 of the European Pillar of Social Rights by providing guidance on how to best promote social dialogue and strengthen collective bargaining in general. Enhancing social dialogue will benefit all workers including Roma by contributing to better working conditions and anti-discrimination practices.

**Paragraph 18**

In line with Article 7(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 establishing the European Social Fund Plus, Member States should allocate an appropriate amount of their resources of the ESF+ strand under shared management for the implementation of the Child Guarantee through targeted actions and structural reforms to tackle child poverty. Member States that had an average rate above the Union average of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion for the period between 2017 and 2019, should allocate at least 5 % of their resources of the ESF+ strand under shared management to support targeted actions and structural reforms to tackle child poverty. This 5% requirement has been surpassed by most Member States, including those with lower child poverty incidence.

**Paragraph 20**

Reply to this request is included in paragraphs 1, 8 and 32.

**Paragraph 22**

In the context of the cohesion policy programmes, Member States are asked, where relevant, to include targets (qualitative and quantitative) and indicators that demonstrate the inclusion of Roma and access to non-segregated mainstream services in education, employment, housing, health, social and childcare, as well as to set up a mechanism that monitors the impact of cohesion policy. In the context of shared management, the national or regional authorities are responsible for the performance framework in the programmes. The Commission services participate in monitoring committees in an observer capacity in line with Cohesion policy regulatory framework.

**Paragraph 23**

The Commission participates in Monitoring Committee meetings in the Member States, during which the programmes’ implementation is discussed. In the context of visits to the Member States, the Commission also performs project visits organised by the Member States. These may also cover projects aimed at Roma inclusion.

**Paragraph 24**

Pursuant to Article (9)1 of the Common Provisions Regulation (‘CPR’), the respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the implementation of the Funds is one of the horizontal principles of the CPR and needs to be taken into account throughout the programming period. In particular, it follows from Article 73(1) CPR that for the selection of operations, the managing authority needs to take account of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Moreover, the CPR introduced a precondition for funding, which calls for arrangements to ensure the effective compliance of the CPR programmes with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Commission is assessing the fulfilment of this so-called horizontal enabling condition, in light of the applicable fulfilment criteria. The horizontal enabling condition must then remain fulfilled throughout the programming period. This will be monitored via the monitoring committees (Article 40(1)(h) CPR) and the annual performance review meetings (Article 41(3) CPR).

Any complaint/ concern on misuse of EU funds should be brought to the attention of the Commission following the official channels. The Commission has various tools at its disposal to ensure that EU funding is spent in compliance with EU law. The Commission may interrupt payment deadlines and/or suspend payments of financial support to the Member States if it considers that EU funding is used in breach of EU law. It will also carry out financial corrections to claw financial support back from the Member States if the Member States do not comply with EU law and do not protect the financial interests of the Union when implementing the Union budget.

To make it easier to report irregularities, a dedicated electronic system, the Irregularity Management System (IMS), has been developed and put at the disposal of the Member States and beneficiary countries. It facilitates the reporting of irregularities and fraud detected by national authorities in the area of shared management and pre-accession in compliance with sectoral regulations and financing agreements. Moreover, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) has a web-based tool, the Fraud Notification System (FNS), allowing citizens to report, even anonymously, any information that may be relevant in the fight against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activity affecting the financial and other interests of the EU. This tool has been in place since 2010.

**Paragraph 25**

EURSF encourages Member States to provide targets and measures for specific groups including Roma women, young people, older Roma or those with disabilities, EU mobile citizens, non-EU nationals, stateless Roma to reflect diversity among Roma including gender-responsive and child/ age-sensitive measures. The Commission is also encouraging National Roma Contact Points to ensure national consultation and dialogue empowering Roma in particular young people and women. The Commission has been supporting projects under the Citizenship Equality and Rights initiative facilitating NGOs (non-governmental organisations) work including projects focused on empowering Roma women and youth. The Council of Europe and the European Commission’s Joint Programme on “Roma and Traveller Women’s Access to Justice - JUSTROM” that run until 2021 aimed to enhance Roma and Traveller women’s access to justice in Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Romania. Following up on its commitment to promote positive narratives and Roma role models, and to combat negative antigypsyism, stereotyping, anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech, the Commission will continue its cooperation and joint work with the Council of Europe through the forthcoming project EQUIROM.

**Paragraph 26**

Combating hate speech and hate crime is a key tool to ensure the respect of the right to non-discrimination, and to foster tolerance and uphold EU values. The Commission already launched 13 infringement procedures for an incorrect transposition of the EU legislation criminalising racist and xenophobic hate speech and hate crime and will continue to monitor that this EU legislation is correctly transposed into national law and correctly applied.

Fighting against and preventing antigypsyism and discrimination is one of the objectives and targets of the EURSF. All NRSFs should provide measures to tackle antigypsyism and discrimination (e.g. through national anti-racism action plans). Member States with significant Roma population in their NRSFs should include more ambitious commitments in this regard such as presenting a plan or set of measures for preventing and fighting against antigypsyism and discrimination, segregation in education and housing, and anti-Roma prejudices and stereotypes (including online). Demonstrating a strong commitment to Roma inclusion, the Western Balkans leaders, within the Poznań process, agreed to bring their NRSFs/ Action Plans in line with the EURSF by 2022 including the objective of fighting against antigypsyism.

In the EU action plan against racism 2020-2025, the Commission encourages Member States to adopt their respective national action plans against racism (including antigypsyism) by the end of 2022. The situation so far is that 17 countries including Norway either have a stand-alone action plan against racism and racial discrimination or have integrated measures on combating racism and racial discrimination as an integral part of more general national human rights action plans or other relevant instruments and strategies.

**Paragraph 27**

To promote Roma equality by tackling antigypsyism the Commission will support activities promoting positive narratives and Roma role models, combatting negative stereotypes, raising awareness on Roma history and culture, and promoting truth and reconciliation under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

The Commission will continue to support the private sector through the EU Platform of Diversity Charters and explore ways of engaging with the media to build positive narratives and promote equality and diversity in all spheres.

The Commission’s communication activities promote the benefits of equality and diversity. The Commission will organise a series of awareness-raising events focusing on Member States with large Roma communities, to fight stereotypes, promote cultural diversity, empower and highlight Roma children, young people and women as role models in diverse communities, and bring communities together.

**Paragraph 28**

Tackling multigenerational poverty and exclusion is crucial to improving the situation of marginalised Roma. The EURSF invites Member States to implement measures to ensure the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised Roma, in particular in the areas of education, employment, health and housing. Moreover, one of the objectives of the EURSF is to reduce poverty and social exclusion and to close the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population. In this regard, the target set out in the EURSF and to be achieved by 2030 is to cut the poverty gap between Roma and the general population by at least half as well as to cut the poverty gap between Roma children and other children by at least half. The EURSF is also aiming to increase effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services. The EURSF targets in this regard are to reduce the gap in housing deprivation by at least one-third, cut the gap in overcrowding by at least half and ensure that at least 95% of Roma have access to tap water. Having another EU action plan prepared by the Commission to eradicate Roma settlements on top of the existing EURSF may not bring additional value as the main responsibility for implementing actions for Roma equality, inclusion and participation lies within the Member States. Whilst the Commission provides strengthened EU policy, legal and funding tools, it is the Member States that should effectively implement relevant measures on the ground to achieve a real change for Roma. The Commission would welcome additional and new commitment from the Member States for desegregated housing and the eradication of settlements. This could complement the commitments taken in the 2021 Council Recommendation.

**Paragraph 29**

Since 2010, the Commission has a Roma coordination team, currently consisting of 5 people based in DG Justice and Consumers, Non-discrimination and Roma coordination unit.

The Roma coordination team is coordinating the work concerning EURSF. It is closely working with the national Roma contact points that are facilitating the implementation of NRSFs. The team is monitoring progress and providing recommendations for the implementation of the national Roma strategic framework on a regular basis. It is working on mainstreaming Roma equality and inclusion in EU policies, organising the annual EU Platform for Roma inclusion, regularly consulting Roma and pro-Roma civil society, implementing the Preparatory Action Roma Civil Monitoring initiative involving more than 100 NGOs, supporting the work on the infringements for discrimination of Roma children in education, collaborating with FRA on Roma surveys, participating in missions, etc. The Commission believes that an additional Coordinator for Roma inclusion is not needed.

**Paragraph 32**

The Commission will continue to work at the EU level to ensure the necessary political support to ensure Roma equality, inclusion and participation. A Communication on the assessment of NRSFs is planned to be published by the end of 2022. The Commission will invite Member States to reflect on and integrate the Commission’s assessment, findings and guidance for improvement, and to report on the progress by June 2023, in accordance with the 2021 Council Recommendation. The next Communication of the Commission, in autumn 2024, will assess the first reports of Member States on the implementation of their NRSFs and the extent of their progress towards the 2030 targets set out in the EURSF.

Thematic National Roma Contact Points meetings will discuss the first reporting of implementation by Member States, also in relation to main findings of the Communication, and highlight the necessity for Member States to provide relevant and sufficient detail in the forthcoming biennial reporting. The Commission will involve FRA, including via facilitating bilateral meetings with Member States, to discuss monitoring and reporting and further development of useful indicators, and further build their monitoring and reporting capacity.

FRA is committed to conduct a new Roma Survey in 2024. Its findings, together with the biennial reporting of Member States will enhance their capacity, as well as the European Commission’s, to measure progress towards the EURSF 2030 targets.

The findings of this assessment will also be discussed with Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in the Commission’s CSO Consultation Group, also as part of the 2021-2025 Roma Civil Monitoring, to identify the best course of action to address shortcomings and ways to overcome them, and replicate and expand promising practices.

The Commission will organise annual EU Platforms for Roma inclusion, which is an important forum gathering different stakeholders, Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations; national and local authorities of the EU Member States and enlargement countries; European institutions, international organisations, trade unions and academia. The 15th European Roma Platform took place in Prague on 25-26 October.

The Commission services responsible for implementing inclusion and equality policy frameworks, and investments for cohesion will cooperate internally to ensure that issues affecting Roma are mainstreamed and monitored under the European Semester process, and in the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

1. Social categories are defined and applied based on the methodology adopted by the Commission in consultation with the European Parliament and the Member States in the [Delegated Regulation 2021/2105](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2021.429.01.0079.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2021%3A429%3ATOC). By 03/11/2022, 26 recovery and resilience plans have been endorsed by the Commission and the Council. Data is available for 26 Member States and will be updated as more plans are endorsed. <https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/index.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)