

The social and employment situation of Roma communities in Slovakia

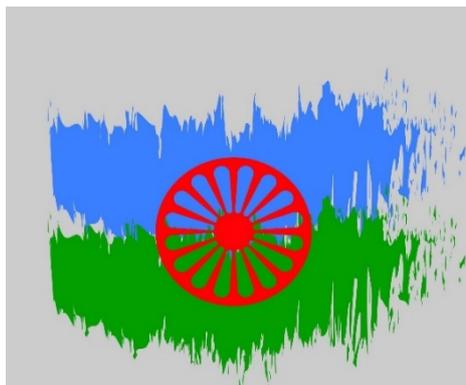
Originally commissioned for a committee delegation which had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus measures, the [full study](#)¹ has now been published to mark **International Roma Day on 8 April 2020**. It attempts to provide an overview of the situation of Roma communities in Slovakia, by first presenting key indicators on their employment and poverty levels, reviewing existing social and employment policies. Second, it discusses the situation of Roma children in education. Third, the paper presents achievements and lessons learned from the use of EU funds for marginalized communities and, finally, it reviews the work of other organisations (EFRA, Council of Europe, ERRC, and European Court of Auditors) in assessing the situation of Roma people in Slovakia.

Check out the [original full study](#) by scanning this QR code!



Background

Originally commissioned for a delegation which had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus measures, this analysis prepared by the Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) is being published to mark International Roma Day on 8 April 2020.



Slovakia has one of the largest Roma communities in Europe, but there is a severe lack of systemic data on Roma population, including on their economic integration. UNDP data from 2014 estimated the number of Roma people at 402,840 (about 7.4% of total population), compared to about 100,000 self-reported Roma from the 2005 Census. Most recent estimates place the share of Roma population in Slovakia at 9%, or close to half a million people.

The available data paint a grim picture however: Most Roma families live in poverty and face social exclusion, with almost half of Roma households declaring themselves unemployed, and only one in five individuals aged 16 years and older describing their main activity as employed or self-employed. Slovakia's Roma national strategy warns about the multiple

disadvantages the Roma population faces: poverty related to demographic trends, poverty caused by unemployment and poverty related to low-qualified or low-paid jobs, compounded by the lack of formal education.

Key findings

- The Roma population suffers from a high risk of poverty and social exclusion: The at-risk-of-poverty rate of Roma people in Slovakia reached 87% compared to 13% in the general population.
- Almost half of the unemployed Roma participate in public works schemes, which often provide the only available income for Roma; however, these programs do not improve relevant skills for the participants, who are unable to escape the unemployment trap and find a job in the open labour market.
- The proportion of young Roma not in work, education or further training (NEET) is 65%, compared to a national average of 14%. The worst situation is observed for young Roma women in Slovakia, of which 77% count as NEETs, compared to 52% of young Roma men.



- Social partners in Slovakia do not pay adequate attention to the labour market integration of Roma population; the Roma population lacks collective representation in the labour market.
- 54% of Roma in Slovakia felt discriminated against because of their Roma origin in last five years and the most common discrimination is perceived when they look for work.
- Housing is mostly segregated, with half of Roma settlements located in the outskirts and one in five situated outside of a municipality or remotely located.
- Early school leaving is particularly common among the Roma and socially disadvantaged youth. Drivers of early school leaving are associated with limited access to inclusive education at primary and secondary school level, inadequate educational and career guidance services, ill-functioning second chance education programs and lacking supportive measures such as mentoring.
- Introduction of compulsory pre-primary education for 5-year old children (to be in force in 2021) aims at increasing the number of Roma children in preschool, which currently stands at only one child in three.
- Implementation of activities to improve the lives of people from marginalized Roma communities (MRCs) in the long-term is one of the main areas of EU funds support in Slovakia. During the 2007-2013 programming period, it was recognized as horizontal priority for all operational programmes and a "comprehensive approach to integration of MRCs" was adopted.
- For 2014-2020, assistance of ESIF explicitly addressing integration of MRCs is concentrated in two separate priority axes of the OP Human Resources, with a total amount of EUR 153 954 885 (ESF) and EUR 228 707 577 (ERDF).
- Despite the advanced stage of the programming period, the spending rate remains low (23.78% for ESF and 13.95% for ERDF as of end-2019). Among the reasons are a high level of mistrust towards the ESIF implementation in Slovakia, the significant administrative burden in ESIF implementation, but also the resistance from the level of local municipalities.
- Assistance of FEAD allocated to Slovakia for the 2014-2020 programming period is EUR 55 112 543. As of end-2019, the spending rate here reached some 45%.
- Despite the difficult situation, there are several municipalities, which are successful in integration of MRC. The common denominator of their success is the determination of the mayor, the support of the municipal council, and options for property ownership settlement.



¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/648778/IPOL_STU\(2020\)648778_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/648778/IPOL_STU(2020)648778_EN.pdf)

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