

Stepping up Roma inclusion policies

The European Commission has announced its intention to adopt a new EU policy framework for tackling socio-economic exclusion and discrimination against people with a Romani background by the end of the year. The European Parliament is drawing up detailed recommendations. In the meantime, a debate and Council and Commission statements are planned for the plenary session in July.

Background

Roma ([understood](#) to cover diverse groups such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Travellers, Dom and Lom and people who identify themselves as 'Gypsies') are [estimated](#) to be Europe's largest ethnic minority. In 2011, a [survey](#) by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) highlighted the marginalisation and discrimination faced by this population. In response, the European Commission adopted an [EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies for 2012-2020](#), setting goals for improving Roma inclusion in education, employment, healthcare and housing. EU Member States and enlargement countries were invited to draw up [national strategies](#) aligned with these goals, and [must](#) have a strategy in place to access EU funding for Roma integration.

The FRA has monitored overall progress and will shortly issue findings from a new [Roma and Traveller Survey](#). The [2016 survey](#) found continued high levels of hunger, poverty, poor housing, exclusion from education and employment, and discrimination. The FRA also [concluded](#) that [anti-gypsyism](#), including hate-crime and harassment, is an obstacle to efforts to improve Roma people's situation. A 2019 [Eurobarometer](#) survey suggests that discrimination against Roma is seen as widespread, while [reports](#) show that the coronavirus pandemic is worsening discrimination, exclusion and poverty.

Proposal for a new EU framework for Roma equality and inclusion

The Commission has included a [post-2020 EU framework for Roma equality and inclusion strategies](#) in its 2020 [work programme](#), scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2020. The [roadmap](#) announces a continued focus on inclusion, together with greater attention to combating anti-gypsyism, examination of the specific needs of diverse groups, involvement of Roma civil society, and a stronger monitoring mechanism.

These changes reflect findings from [consultations](#) and [evaluations](#). The Commission's final [assessments](#) concluded that the framework has improved political commitment and financial support at national level, but overall progress on Roma integration has been limited since 2011. A European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) [implementation assessment](#), summarising opinions on the framework, highlights a general consensus that the non-binding nature of the framework has been a key weakness.

European Parliament position

Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) is currently drafting an own-initiative report ([2020/2011\(INI\)](#): rapporteur, Franz Romeo, Germany, Greens/EFA), which will draw on the EPRS impact assessment to put forward concrete recommendations for the post-2020 EU policy framework.

In February 2019, Parliament had already [called](#) on the EU and the Member States to adopt a stronger, better funded, post-2020 framework, including clear and binding targets and a specific anti-discrimination goal. Parliament also wanted to see more involvement of Roma stakeholders in drawing up and monitoring the policy framework, more attention to specific groups within the Roma population, gender mainstreaming, and a child-centred approach.

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