



Situation of the Roma in the EU: recent developments

Whereas the EU institutions have promoted further integration of the EU's largest minority, recent months have seen numerous incidents involving violence against Roma, as well as the adoption of state measures, which allegedly discriminate against them.

Adopting the EU framework

On 5 April 2011, the Commission adopted a communication on an [EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020](#). The text, [endorsed](#) by the Council in May 2011, established a common set of principles and targets to be met at both national and EU level. Member States (MS) are to align their national Roma strategies to the Framework's objectives and present them to the Commission by the end of 2011. The strategies will then be assessed by the Commission, which will report back to the Council and the Parliament in spring 2012. This progress review will be repeated annually.

Common integration goals

Whereas the Commission recognises Member States' primary role in integrating Roma citizens, the communication proposes a common targeted approach to the problem.

Four crucial areas in which state action is most needed have been identified: education, employment, healthcare and housing. MS are to set national Roma integration goals covering at least those four areas. Disadvantaged micro-regions and segregated neighbourhoods should be identified, and sufficient funding from national budgets should be guaranteed, coupled with EU funds of up to €26.5 billion already programmed to support MS. Dialogue with Roma representatives should be further enhanced and the strategies adapted on the basis of sound monitoring methods.

... and the aftermath

In the months since the adoption of the Framework there have been very few examples of positive changes to the situation of European Roma. Only a fraction of

available EU funds has been used by MS for Roma inclusion projects. Moreover, some MS have been fiercely criticised by human rights activists for their alleged failure to react to growing tensions between Roma and local populations. This was allegedly illustrated by violent protests in Northern Bohemia (Czech Republic), in September.

Expulsions of Roma from France

According to a recent [report](#) by Human Rights Watch (HRW), last year's criticism by the Commission of French handling of the removal of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma from France had no effect whatsoever. Not only have expulsions continued, but have even intensified. 4 714 Roma were reportedly expelled during the first quarter of 2011, as opposed to 9 500 in 2010.

HRW considers the new French immigration law to be discriminatory, designed to facilitate the removal of Roma and incorrectly transposing the 2004 [Free Movement Directive](#). It also claims that French authorities have continued to specifically target Roma for evictions and expulsion.

France denies these allegations, while the Commission has refrained from further criticism, stating that the new immigration law has correctly transposed the directive.

Controversial Hungarian plan

A plan approved by the Hungarian Parliament in July 2011 requires anyone receiving social allowances to work for public benefit, in some cases under degrading conditions, for pay lower than the legal minimum. Some commentators have criticised this measure as ethnically motivated.

Situation of Roma in several EU MS (2006)

Country	Population	Unemployment	Illiteracy
Bulgaria	4.68%	60%	19%
Czech Rep.	0.11%	11.7%	5%
Hungary	1.90%	45.5%	9%
Romania	2.50%	44%	31%
Slovakia	1.67%	-	-

Source: [World Bank](#)