European Parliament
2019-2024

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2020/2011(INI)

29.6.2020

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: combating negative attitudes towards people with Romani background in Europe (2020/2011(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion (*): Tomáš Zdechovský

(*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

A. whereas pursuant to Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health;

B. whereas the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights is essential in order to reinforce the social rights of people belonging to marginalised groups, such as people from a Romani background;

C. whereas we strongly welcome the commitment of the Commission to develop a reinforced post-2020 European Strategic Framework for Roma equality, social and economic justice and combating antigypsyism;

D. whereas Roma are Europe’s largest ethnic minority of which approximately 6 million live in the EU, not only in ethnic but also in great socioeconomic diversity and facing multiple discrimination; whereas about 80 % of Roma live below their country’s at-risk-of-poverty threshold; whereas 43 % of Roma (of which 56 % are men and 29 % are women) are in some form of paid employment compared to the EU average of 70 % in 2015\(^1\); whereas 50 % of Roma between the ages of 6 and 24 do not attend school and whereas 63 % of young Roma (aged 16-24) are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to the 12 % EU average\(^2\); whereas the increasing share of Roma NEETs was an area where the situation had deteriorated in 2016 compared to 2011\(^3\);

E. whereas gender equality and the situation of Roma children and youth are two key areas when it comes to integrating and including Roma that are insufficiently addressed both at EU and Member-State level\(^4\); whereas a significant proportion of Roma women live in a precarious situation and face a specific situation of vulnerability due to intersectional discrimination; whereas equality between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including in participation in the labour market, the terms and conditions of employment, wages, qualification training, career change, prospects and progression;

F. whereas the living conditions of Roma, their level of schooling and their health status determine their socioeconomic and labour-market status; whereas Roma often face a vicious circle of poverty, exclusion, low education and low qualification, which

\(^1\) Commission report of 5 September on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies (COM(2019)0406), p.3.
\(^3\) Roma inclusion measures reported under the EU framework for NRIS, SWD(2019) 320 final, PART 1/2, p. 18.
\(^4\) Expert reports building on forward-looking aspects of the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, Considering the Diversity of the Roma population in a post-2020 EU-initiative for Roma equality and inclusion, January 2020, p.16.
prevents them from finding stable employment as they do not meet job requirements; whereas persisting socioeconomic and health inequalities and different forms of discrimination, including antigypsyism and ageism, put Roma, particularly the elderly, in a vulnerable position;

G. whereas combating the structural discrimination of Roma, including the priority areas of education, employment, access to healthcare and housing, and making significant improvement in their socioeconomic status, is contingent on increasing social and cultural capital in the environments where Roma communities are present and on long-term, multi-stakeholder approach to Roma integration with the active participation of Roma at all stages;

H. whereas equality data collection refers to all types of disaggregated data used to assess the comparative situation of specific groups at risk of discrimination, design public policies that contribute to promoting equality and assess their implementation, and is conducted on the basis of evidence and not mere assumptions; whereas the collection of such data (i.e. data revealing ethnic origin or religion) requires the exclusive consent of the subjects of data collection and can often be controversial; whereas what is clearly forbidden is racial or ethnic profiling, where people are, without their consent, identified on the basis of third-party perceptions or generalisations on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or national origin;

I. whereas individuals belonging to minority groups continue to be discriminated against when they are applying for jobs and even once they are in a job and continue to face unequal treatment; whereas lower wages, a lack of career prospects, precarious and difficult working conditions, the sticky floor and the glass ceiling, harassment, and abusive dismissal, are just some of the manifestations; whereas ethnic minorities are more likely to have less access to employment rights and protection; whereas ethnic origin also seems to matter as regards harassment in the workplace, and appears to be a major obstacle for career progression;

J. whereas the majority of Roma communities, in particular those in central and eastern Europe, live in segregated settlements, often in areas of high environmental impact, excluded from society and facing spatial segregation, substandard conditions and generational poverty; whereas according to the Commission report of 5 September on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies (COM(2019)0406), one third of Roma households do not have access to running water, just over half have an indoor flush toilet or shower, and 78 % of Roma lived in overcrowded housing in 2016; whereas one in 10 people live in housing without electricity; whereas the available data and outcome indicators from representative surveys from nine Member States suggest that the situation in housing remained largely the same between 2011 and 2016, with only some improvements in access to water and basic amenities in some Member States;

K. whereas spatial segregation remains one of the key challenges in the area of housing; whereas 43 % of Roma are discriminated against when trying to buy or rent housing and are not sufficiently aware of their rights in terms of equality\(^5\); whereas missing property and personal documents such as birth certificates and identity cards are a barrier to

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gaining access to housing, public services or essential state aid services;

L. whereas difficulties for Roma have been increased by the COVID-19 crisis, since the economic and social consequences of the crisis have affected the Roma population, women in particular, and deepen the existing inequalities in all priority areas of Roma inclusion; whereas Roma are at extreme risk of suffering the negative consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, and will have limited access to healthcare, education, social benefits –including unemployment benefits – or any other measure intended to mitigate the impact of coronavirus;

M. whereas poor transport infrastructure, a dearth of public administrative bodies and services, in particular of high-quality educational institutions and health provision aggravate regional disparities and ghettoisation;

1. Highlights the fact that Roma are one of the largest minority groups in Europe that face the highest rates of poverty, structural discrimination and social exclusion and that their fundamental rights, particularly economic and social rights, are not being respected; notes with regret that despite economic prosperity in the EU, and despite the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) and the cohesion fund, measures introduced in the last decade regarding the social inclusion of Roma, the overall situation of Roma in the EU has stagnated and progress in the areas of housing, employment, education and healthcare has been limited; calls on local authorities and governments to implement NRIS effectively; calls on the Commission to lead by example and introduce a Roma mainstreaming policy at all levels of its policies, programmes and projects in order to prevent discrimination and to help activate the inclusion of Roma into our societies; calls on the Commission to uphold an intersectional and multi-stakeholder approach to NRIS and to promote the active participation of Roma, from their preparation to implementation;

2. Calls on the Commission to set out binding objectives, measures and targets for the Member States, a clear timeline and clear and binding progress requirements, as well as success indicators and adequate funding for the implementation of the next EU Framework for NRIS; calls on local authorities and governments to single out as a priority the implementation of NRIS;

3. Recalls its resolution of 12 February 2019 on the need for a strengthened post-2020 Strategic EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies and stepping up the fight against antigypsyism⁶; urges the Commission and the Member States to propose and commit to an ambitious, comprehensive and binding EU Strategic Framework for Roma equality, social and economic justice and combating antigypsyism for the post-2020 with concrete common objectives at EU level and minimum standards that the Member States can translate into national targets, and where country specificities are relevant insofar as they aim to achieve more than the minimum standards, and to ensure that multiple and intersectional discrimination, gender mainstreaming and a child-sensitive approach are properly addressed;

4. Highlights the need to break the vicious circle of poverty of those Roma concerned by taking effective targeted actions from the earliest possible age, because targeted measures at all level of education can be effective tools in fighting poverty, stresses the

need to enhance transitions to higher levels of education and to support these measures with the use of social investments;

5. Calls for more attention to be paid to those Member States that have a sizable Roma population and history of rather ineffective measures; stresses that the Commission should monitor and better support these Member States and their policies and measures;

6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to safeguard inclusive equality for Roma people – with particular attention to women and girls, and persons with disabilities being victims of intersectional discrimination – in all areas of life;

7. Calls on the Member States to adopt Council Directive of 2 July 2008 on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM/2008/0426);

8. Urges the Commission and the Member States to include poverty, with particular focus on child poverty, social exclusion and antigypsyism and non-discrimination as cross-sectional dimensions through the four key areas of the EU Roma Strategy and NRIS, thereby ensuring that equality, sustainable employment opportunities, inclusive education, quality housing, and adequate healthcare contribute to the overall improvement of Roma wellbeing, and that multiple and intersectional discrimination, gender mainstreaming and a child-sensitive approach are properly addressed both in the post-2020 EU Strategic Framework for NRIS and in the NRIS; calls on local and regional authorities and governments to prioritise the adoption, revision and implementation of the NRIS in line with the post-2020 Strategic EU Framework, and to guarantee that those strategies are closely linked to mainstream policies;

9. Calls on the Commission to ensure the equal participation of Roma civil society organisations, experts and community members, particularly those active at local and regional level policy debates and in decision-making;

10. Acknowledges that, in order to guarantee the social and economic rights of Roma people, a more comprehensive approach should be considered, which includes strengthening the institutional recognition of the Roma minority as a social actor and the effective and organised participation of the representative organisations of Roma civil society, thus enabling their meaningful participation in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the economic and social policies; calls on the Commission to consider Roma participation as a binding common quality standard for future Strategic EU Framework and the national strategies and that financial and structural mechanisms ensure equal and quality participation;

11. Highlights the fact that employment paves the way towards social inclusion and that ethnic minorities must therefore have the possibility to fully participate in the labour market and that the ‘equal status and equal pay for equal work’ principle must apply to all workers;

12. Calls on the Commission to present a communication on guidelines and standards for discrimination-free recruitment policies for Member States and employers, including recommendations for the adoption of equality plans at company level and in sectoral collective agreements and the implementation of diversity taskforces in the workplace, including tackling stereotypes, prejudice and negative attitudes, preventing
discrimination in recruitment, promotion, pay and access to training; highlights the fact that these equality action plans should be also used to promote ethnic and cultural diversity at the workplace, to develop internal regulations against racism and racism-related discrimination and harassment in the workplace, to monitor and review recruitment, progression and retention of workforce by equality strand in order to identify direct or indirect discriminatory practices and to adopt corrective measures to reduce inequality in each of these areas and, to this effect, collect equality data in respect of privacy and fundamental rights standards;

13. Calls on the Commission to adopt a common EU framework for the collection and analysis of reliable and comparable disaggregated equality data for the purpose of combating discrimination, including in employment; adds that this should comprise labour market indicators to measure equality, including the employment position of migrants and minority groups, in full respect of privacy and fundamental rights standards;

14. Highlights that the most critical points to address in the area of Roma employment are the effective transition from education to the open labour market, given the high rate of non-attendance, absenteeism and school drop-out affecting Roma children and youth; stresses the importance of tackling negative stereotypes that are often the biggest obstacles to acquiring employment; highlights the importance of tackling diverse forms of undeclared employment, discrimination by employers, of matching labour demand with labour supply and tackling the growing rates of Roma youth not in education;

15. Calls on the Commission to fulfil its commitment to adopting an action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and to incorporate Roma inclusion as an indicator in the social scoreboard; urges the Commission and the Member States to give special attention to the Roma population so as to reflect their specific situation and to ensure their quality employment, access to decent jobs, fair wages and working conditions and to guarantee that social protection systems and social services are adequate, accessible and used by all potential beneficiaries, and include universal health coverage without discrimination, as well as minimum income schemes and pension rights;

16. Recalls that the Member States have taken several measures to improve the school attendance of Roma children, such as providing free meal and free textbooks in schools as well as extending the obligation of attendance in kindergarten/pre-school education from an earlier age for all children; stresses that these good practices should be continued;

17. Calls on the Member States to ensure that when people from a Romani background exercise their mobility rights, they can access all necessary health care in the Member State where they reside; stresses that neither poverty nor the residence status of any person should constitute a barrier to accessing health and social services;

18. Calls on the Member States to invest in labour monitoring and complaint mechanisms that are backed up by resources, accessible and effective for all workers, regardless of their nationality or residence status, so as to protect workers from employer retaliation and harmful consequences and to support civil society organisations when it comes to providing information to workers about their rights and how to exercise them;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the recovery plan and the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 is firmly linked to the EU Roma Strategic Framework For Equality, Inclusion and Participation, to its binding targets and to their execution by National Roma Integration Strategies; highlights, to that end, the need for the systematic collection of robust data disaggregated by gender and age to inform needs and context analysis, and to set guidance when it comes to setting targets and impact indicators in order to ensure the best outcome in terms of matching needs with planning and budgeting, at both national and EU level;

20. Urges the Commission and the Council to address the unequal situation that Roma face across the EU in the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+); recalls its resolution of 4 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)7, which in its Article 4(1)(viiia) includes the specific objective of ‘fighting discrimination against and promoting the socioeconomic integration of marginalised communities such as Roma’;

21. Calls on the Commission to carefully evaluate the impact indicators of Roma integration for the 2014-2020 period and to identify best practices and shortcomings; recalls that the monitoring of the Roma integration was to be improved on the basis of the ESF Investment Priority 9 (ii), the relevant specific objectives set out in the ESF and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) operational programmes, and by using ESF common output indicator for participants, programme specific indicators and targets;

22. Recommends that the Commission facilitate the exchange of best practices between Member States and monitor the situation in order to provide regular assessment;

23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include representatives from Roma communities, including youth, in the consultation and decision making processes both at EU and national level;

24. Recalls that the role of local and national governments, strong partnerships and commitment of local stakeholders, such as local municipalities and school inspectorates, are key in order to achieve sustainable Roma integration;

25. Underlines the need for an urgent and thorough commitment from the relevant state authorities to the desegregation of Roma pupils in schools, increasing their participation in the whole education lifecycle and securing the same quality and inclusive mainstream learning for everyone; notes with regret the fact that the misdiagnosis of Roma children as having special educational needs is still a common discriminatory practice, which leads to a disproportionate number of Roma children attending ‘special’ schools, thereby separating them from the mainstream school system and often receiving inferior education; recalls the decisions by the European Court of Human Rights and the infringement proceedings relating to Roma school discrimination against three Member States: Czechia (2014), Slovakia (2015) and Hungary (2016); is of the opinion that the last years have shown no or little improvement despite the Commission’s efforts; calls on the Commission to evaluate the respective corrective measures and their impact on Roma children and, if these are deemed as insufficient and not adequately effective,

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refer these cases to the Court of Justice of the European Union;

26. Recalls the importance of the role of Roma educators and their presence in educational bodies when it comes to helping the process of desegregation and encouraging Roma to attend lifelong learning programmes and adult education; recommends the continued training and employment of Roma as youth mentors and educational mediators to support transitions in education and to the labour market; highlights the need to target Roma more explicitly with active labour market policies, including the Youth Guarantee and to systematically monitor and fight discrimination with regard to labour market access and at the work place; calls for the training of public employment services on how to reach out and deal with marginalised groups;

27. Calls for a redesigned common agricultural policy (CAP), which would enable and promote innovative forms of agricultural work, including social cooperatives for Roma communities, and could also play an important role in creating a fair, healthy and environment-friendly food system; stresses that such action would contribute to the realisation of the objectives of the European Green Deal; calls for the promotion and exchange of best practices in this domain among the Member States;

28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop coordinated approaches for the integration of Roma children in society; calls, therefore, for the urgent adoption of the European Child Guarantee in the ESF+ with dedicated resources to support lifting a generation out of poverty;

29. Underlines that barriers to health care services and a lack of basic health awareness add to the widespread segregation of Roma students at school; stresses that, in addition to the widespread antigypsyism in the societies Roma live in, the structural disadvantages they face in terms of pre-school enrolment and social exclusion constitute the root causes of segregated schools and discrimination against Roma children, leading to a vicious cycle of unemployment and poverty; stresses that addressing these root causes while also raising awareness is of paramount importance;

30. Welcomes the efforts of some Member States who have adopted legislative tools with a view to ensuring compliance between quality and equality of education, while introducing inclusive education; notes that the aim of such measures is to integrate Roma children, as well as all other disadvantaged groups, as much as possible into the education system from early-childhood education to upper-secondary education, which is a prerequisite for a child’s personal development and career;

31. Recalls that the general opinion on the Roma mediators and health support programmes is positive, for instance when it comes to facilitating the Roma community’s access to health services, improving their access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, and addressing the specific health needs of Roma women; underlines that the Roma health mediators programme in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia were scaled up by their respective governments, and their evaluations show positive changes (i.e. less discriminatory behaviour demonstrated by health providers and other obstacles that prevent access to health in addition to educational activities targeting communities); underlines, however, that the evaluation of such programmes shows the need to move towards new and more effective approaches, moving from Roma mediators to
institutional reform that tackles institutional discrimination in a system\(^8\);

32. Highlights the importance of supporting parents’ involvement in school and educational activities and of raising their awareness about the importance of pre-school education, children’s enrolment and school attendance; notes with regret that Roma children in some Member States still encounter limited access to pre-primary education and care; notes with regret that the EU and the Member States are far from reaching the goals set out in the EU Roma inclusion framework;

33. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the competent regional and local authorities, together with civil society and economic stakeholders, implement Roma-focused employment and social policies and monitor their results, while not excluding other societal groups in similar situations; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to adopt preventive and corrective measures to overcome stereotypes and antigypsyism in the labour market, to make the empowerment of Roma job seekers a priority for public employment services and employers, and to provide parallel job placement support through professional learning, internships with IT and language training and the promotion of entrepreneurship skills; stresses the key role of public employment services in promoting Roma employment in the civil service and reaching out to disadvantaged Roma job seekers;

34. Stresses the importance of promoting access to education, higher education, apprenticeship and vocational education and training (VET) for Roma in order to promote their economic and social inclusion; is of the opinion that VET is still insufficiently recognised as a priority and a solution that offers a means of mobilising and providing opportunities for Roma; encourages the Member States to ensure that vocational training schemes targeting Roma reflect their specific situation, as well as the increased demands of the labour market: recalls that ageing Europe faces shortages of skilled labour and young Roma population should therefore not be perceived as a burden but as an opportunity and potential future workforce; calls on the Member States to encourage stronger engagement from businesses, particularly at local level, and consider supporting the development of social enterprises to create sustainable workplaces for Roma, with a focus on Roma women;

35. Highlights that Roma often work under precarious employment conditions or in atypical employment situations; is strongly of the opinion that the new instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) should be targeting the most vulnerable in the Member States;

36. Calls on the Commission to bring EU law in line with the UN legal framework regarding the human right to water and to expand the applicability of water-related directives to include problems with the accessibility and affordability of water supply and services; calls on the Commission to develop indicators and monitoring mechanisms on social equity in access to water and sanitation in the Member States, to task the EU Fundamental Rights Agency with conducting annual data collection, and to earmark funds to tackle limited access to water and sanitation supply services for socially excluded and ethnically-discriminated groups;

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37. Calls on the Member States to make a concerted effort to raise awareness and inform the public about Roma inclusion;

38. Calls on the Member States to minimise the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in overcrowded and inhuman housing conditions lived in by Roma by legalising their informal settlements, by investing in infrastructure and housing improvement for newly legalised informal settlements and by providing sufficient and appropriate halting sites for non-sedentary Roma; calls on the Member States to provide, as an alternative, permanent, decent, affordable, environment-safe, desegregated housing for Roma currently living in informal settlements;

39. Calls on the Member States to adopt under the COVID-19 crisis urgent measures to address the lack of water, adequate sanitation, electricity and needed infrastructure in poor Roma communities; calls on the Member States to fully include Roma settlements in disinfection measures, to prohibit the cancellation of basic utility services during the pandemic, to consider subsidizing consumption costs for the most vulnerable and those who have lost incomes, or freezing payments until the end of the recovery plan period, to provide financial support for lone parents/single mothers for childcare, rent payments and other household expenses to alleviate the financial hardship, especially in light of the job losses;

40. Calls on Member States to ensure that no Roma is left behind as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, by supporting vulnerable Roma workers, particularly women and single parents; and by including specific provisions and indicators on Roma when implementing European instruments for temporary support (e.g. SURE and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD));

41. Recalls the fact that the Racial Equality Directive9 provides protection and guarantees for equal treatment with regard to access to and supply of goods and services, including housing, which is primarily within the remit of national and regional governments; highlights that violating the housing rights of Roma, and giving them poor access to housing and public utilities has a negative impact on education, employment and health outcomes and adversely affects social inclusion overall; stresses the need to ensure proper and effective transposition and the appropriate implementation of the Directive;

42. Stresses that, in the area of targeted housing interventions, it is important to establish a participatory process engaging the Roma from the beginning; suggests that the housing policies should be based on the notion of cost sharing or beneficiary contributions for housing and utilities, where Roma beneficiaries could organise themselves deploy their own initiatives and participate in the planning of their own settlements10;

43. Calls on the Member States to promote spatial desegregation and engage Roma beneficiaries in the design and implementation of housing projects, in order to reduce and prevent forced evictions, to address the issue of homelessness and to provide sufficient and appropriate halting sites for non-sedentary Roma; points out that geographical isolation and housing segregation keeps members of ethnic minorities

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away from decent jobs, regardless of their level of qualification; notes that finding solutions to evictions by engaging with different institutions is key, while actions addressing Roma housing should be integrated into broader national activities and legislative initiatives that focus on social housing or assistance programmes; points out that no evictions should take place without the provision of substitute standard, affordable and quality housing in a desegregated setting, which has access to public services; emphasises the urgent need for public investments in order to overcome segregation;

44. Calls on the Member States to refer to geographical inequalities, residential segregation, and the comprehensive and multiple trait of disadvantages in the planning, targeting, implementation and monitoring of Roma inclusion measures, as a territorial approach can be relevant in the planning and implementation of measures on social inclusion; recommends that the Member States increase their efforts when it comes to providing access to safe drinking water, sanitation, sewage systems and implementing the right to an adequate standard of living, as well as the right to a healthy and safe environment; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure the integration of policies to combat antigypsyism in all its forms and to recognise environmental discrimination as a specific notion of antigypsyism; recommends that the environment be integrated into the post 2020 framework and calls on the Commission to address the different forms of environmental discrimination;

45. Calls for the European Union and the Member States to make further efforts in the alignment of the European Semester, the ESF+ and all EU funds in the 2021-2027 period with the NRIS and the European Pillar of Social Rights, and urges the Member States to publicly declare the share of their national budgets that is allocated to this end, and to publish a list of funded projects;

46. Condemns any form of discrimination faced when renting a house or applying for a job; recalls, therefore, the Member States’ obligation under the Racial Equality Directive to designate a specialised body for the promotion of all persons, without being subject to discrimination on grounds of race and ethnic origin; calls on the Member States to strengthen the independence, resources, mandate and powers of their national equality bodies to step up the fight against discrimination, including institutional discrimination, against Roma by implementing the Commission Recommendation on standards for equality bodies\footnote{OJ L 167, 4.7.2018, p. 28.};

47. Calls on the Member States to address the issues of housing and homelessness through measures such as developing the social housing stock, promoting non-discriminatory access to social housing or by supporting successful projects such as microloans for Roma families; highlights the promising approach of ‘housing first’ initiatives to prevent and combat homelessness; recommends that the Member States consider shifting from a staircase model of service provision to housing-led services, which complement the provision of housing with accompanying support that encompasses elements of employment, education, health and community development; calls on the Member States to target policies that support people who are facing poverty, including Roma, so that they can have access to ordinary decent jobs; calls on the Member States to target the youth in particular, so that they complete secondary schooling;
48. Acknowledges that specific funding priority for Roma was introduced in the Common Provisions Regulation\textsuperscript{12} and that country-specific recommendations related to Roma inclusion became a requirement for granting funds for its promotion; calls on the Member States and the Commission to guarantee that these changes will result in specific projects for the benefit of Roma on the ground\textsuperscript{13}, irrespective of the category of region; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the strategies at regular meetings with the Member States and publish reports on the distribution of funds in this direction; calls on the Commission to look into causes of low absorption rates in some Member States, in line with recommendations issued by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) to the Member States and to the Commission in its special report\textsuperscript{14};

49. Notes with regret the weak link between available funding tools and strategic plans and objectives related to the socio-economic development and inclusion of Roma; calls on the Member States to put in place efficient monitoring and oversight mechanisms to ensure that mainstream programmes, including those covered by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), are properly spent and not misused; emphasises that monitoring is especially important in order to plan for and mitigate any potential risks to the successful implementation of any intervention, and would further support evidence-based policy initiatives and more effective target setting and resource allocation; recalls that the ECA concluded in 2016 that the ESIF were allocated among the Member States according to indicators with no specific relevance to the Roma population, and expressed the opinion that these indicators are not the most appropriate way of determining how much EU funding for Roma integration should be allocated to each Member State; emphasises the importance of counterfactual impact evaluation methods in order to reduce the gap between policy framework and implementation on the ground;

50. Is of the opinion that mainstreaming is still relevant, as targeted measures on their own will not be sufficiently effective; stresses, therefore, the need for further mainstreaming of the aspects of Roma integration in EU and national policy measures;

51. Acknowledges that the transferral of interventions from one country to another is not a mechanic process; while the objectives, working methods and tools may be transferable, strategies and processes need to be adapted to the local setting and these conditions may relate to institutional capacity, the support of the different actors, or the local context; calls, therefore, on the Member States and the Commission to properly use the counterfactual impact evaluation methods and to compare and explain the different outcomes in the Member States;


\textsuperscript{13} Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Anna, Revisiting the EU Roma Framework: Assessing the European Dimension for the Post-2020 Future, Open Society Institute, June 2017, p.17.

\textsuperscript{14} European Court of Auditors, Special report no 14/2016 entitled ‘EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade, but additional efforts needed on the ground’, 2016.
52. Calls on the European Union and the Member States to strengthen data and research in order to better identify and understand intersecting discrimination; encourages the Commission to keep track of the multifaceted aspects of poverty and social exclusion in Roma communities using the combined at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) indicator in Eurostat;

53. Encourages the Commission to build innovative, impact-oriented and data-based approaches to be used as direct input in the next generation of programmes (2021-27 Invest EU programme and ESF+ programming) and strategies (notably the post-2020 EU Strategy for Roma Equality and Inclusion);

54. Underlines that the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are being felt mostly by the most deprived, including Roma communities across Europe; emphasises that the EU needs to focus on the immediate needs of its citizens, giving quick and adequate answers to existing problems in order to strengthen cohesion, increase trust in EU institutions and to practise EU values – in particular, that of solidarity; calls on the Commission and the Member States to evaluate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the situation of Roma communities and to consider effective measures; welcomes the proposed strengthening of the Fund for European Aid to the most deprived in order to support those mostly in need; notes with regret that the COVID-19 pandemic might lead to cuts in the next MFF 2021-2027, which will have a negative impact on the civil society organisations that advocate for Roma communities and will consequently affect their outreach work.
INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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**Members present for the final vote**  
Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Marc Angel, Gabrielle Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Andrea Bocskor, Milan Brglez, Sylvie Brunet, David Casa, Leila Chaibi, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Klára Dobrev, Jarosław Duda, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Lucia Đuriš Nicholsonová, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Nicolaus Fest, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Heléne Fritzson, Helmut Geuking, Alicia Homs Ginel, France Jamet, Agnes Jongerius, Radan Kanev, Adám Kósa, Stelios Kyproupoulos, Katrin Langensiepen, Miriam Lexmann, Elena Lizzi, Radka Maxová, Sandra Pereira, Dragoș Pîslaru, Manuel Pizarro, Dennis Radtke, Elżbieta Rafalska, Guido Reil, Daniela Rondinelli, Mounir Satouri, Monica Semedo, Beata Szydło, Eugen Tomac, Romana Tomec, Yana Toom, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Nikolaj Villumsen, Marianne Vind, Maria Walsh, Stefania Zambelli, Tatjana Ždanoka, Tomáš Zdechovský

**Substitutes present for the final vote**  
Anna Júlia Donáth, José Gusmão, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Kim Van Sparrentak
## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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<td>Radka Maxová</td>
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Key to symbols:
+ : in favour
- : against
0 : abstention