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DRAFT REPORT

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

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT - SUMMARY OF FACTS AND FINDINGS

Procedure

In November 2019, the rapporteur was entrusted with the task of preparing a report on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies – combating negative attitudes towards people with Romani background in Europe.

Since his appointment, the rapporteur has collected information and has relied on the following sources, among others:

- an Impact Assessment of the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies done by the European Parliament Research Service;
- reports and studies done by the European Commission, the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, other relevant institutions and civil society organizations;
- exchange of information with the relevant institutional stakeholders and civil society.

Summary of facts and findings

The Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority. Out of an estimated 10-12 million in total in Europe, some 6 million live in the EU, and most of them hold the citizenship of an EU country¹. A significant part of the Roma in Europe lives under marginal conditions in both rural and urban areas as well as in very poor socio-economic conditions. The discrimination, social exclusion and segregation that Roma face are mutually reinforcing. They are confronted with limited access to quality education, difficulties in integration into the labour market, Roma people face greater exposure to unemployment and employment precariousness decreasing the opportunities for poverty reduction and social inclusion through the labour market, this corresponding to low-income levels, and limited access to quality healthcare and poor health and living conditions.. These circumstances in turn result in higher mortality rates and lower life expectancy, as well as greater risks of premature deaths caused by chronic and non-communicable diseases, including cancer, compared with non-Roma².

According to the Second European Union Minorities Survey, published by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency in 2016, *“some 80% of Roma in nine EU Member States with the largest Roma populations live below their country's poverty threshold; every third Roma lives in housing without running water; every third Roma child lives in a household where someone went to bed hungry at least once in the previous month; and 50% of Roma between the ages of six and 24 was not in education.”* This trend is confirmed in the EU Fundamental Rights Agency Roma and Travellers Survey 2019, which shows *“dramatic high rates of persons and children going to bed hungry at least once in the last month”*, and notes that *“almost half of Roma and Travellers (45%) in the six EU-Member States felt discriminated against in at least one area of life”* covered in the survey in the past 12 months³.

¹ [European Commission website: Who are the Roma?](#)

² “Roma Education in Europe, Practices, policies and politics”, Maja Miskovic (editor), 2013.

³ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Roma and Travellers Survey 2019, selected key findings from six EU Member States, including the UK (draft, publication expected in July 2020).

Against this background, one can only conclude that Roma face discrimination and unequal access to public services⁴.

In 2011, the European Commission called for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS). In order to ensure that effective policies are in place in the Member States, the Commission proposed that National Roma Integration Strategies were designed or, where they already existed, were adapted to meet EU Roma integration goals, with targeted actions and sufficient funding (national, EU and other) to deliver them. It proposed solutions to address the existing barriers to a more effective use of EU funds and laid the foundations of a monitoring mechanism.

The EU Framework for NRISs encouraged Member States (and enlargement countries) to adopt a comprehensive approach to Roma integration, to mainstream Roma inclusion, using policy, legal and funding instruments, to adopt National Roma Integration Strategies and to set up coordination, consultation, and monitoring mechanisms. The overall objective of the current EU Framework for NRIS, which will end in 2020, was to promote the equal treatment of Roma and their social and economic integration in the European societies. It also established specific Roma integration goals regarding access of Roma to education, employment, healthcare and housing, which Member States were invited to endorse. More specifically, Member States were called upon to:

- ensure that all Roma children complete primary school;
- close the gaps between Roma and non-Roma in respect to employment;
- close the gaps between Roma and non-Roma in respect to health status;
- close the gaps between Roma and non-Roma in respect to housing and public utilities (water, electricity).

At the EU level, the European Commission set up coordination and consultation structures and mechanisms, mobilised funding, and undertook activities to monitor the implementation of the objectives of the EU Framework. The Commission enhanced its dialogue with the Member States on Roma integration, in particular by establishing in October 2012 the network of National Contact Points for Roma integration (NRCs), in order to discuss solutions to the challenges identified.

In 2013, the EU Roma Framework was strengthened by a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures⁵. With this Recommendation came a stronger focus on two horizontal areas, namely anti-discrimination and poverty reduction. It also introduced, as of 2016, an annual reporting obligation for Member States, contributing to the development of a European system of monitoring. The December 2016 Council conclusions on accelerating the process of Roma integration confirmed the Member States' commitment.

Evaluation results of the current EU Roma Framework and their way forward to a post 2020

⁴ [EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma – Selected findings, 2016.](#)

⁵ [Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States.](#)

EU Directive for the Equality and Inclusion of people with Romani background.

The current EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 is a framework in evolution. The fact that it was established is considered as an achievement by itself and represented a turning point for Roma communities in Europe. It put the social integration of people with a Romani background high on the European policy agenda and put pressure on Member States to develop national strategies.

However, as a soft policy tool, it provides a skeleton for policy coordination, consultation and monitoring and targeted policy recommendations for National Roma Integration Strategies. It is at the discretion of national, regional and local governments if and how they translate the recommendations into administrative capacities and concrete policy actions.

As a consequence, in the Commission report on the evaluation of the EU Roma Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, it is shown that *“effectiveness in progress towards Roma integration goals is assessed as overall limited with significant differences across areas and countries. Education is found as the area with most progress (improvements in early school-leaving, early childhood education and compulsory schooling, but deterioration in segregation). The self-perceived health status of Roma has improved but medical coverage continues to be limited. No improvement has been observed in access to employment, and the share of young Roma not in employment, education or training (NEET) has even increased. The housing situation remains difficult. Some progress has been observed in respect to the general objective of fighting poverty. Antigypsyism and hate crime continue to be a matter of high concern, despite evidence of some reduction in discrimination experiences of Roma when accessing services in some areas⁶.”*

The number of Roma pupils who left education between 2011 and 2016 at the level of secondary school on average decreased from 87% in 2011 to 68% in 2016. The proportion of Roma early school leavers compared to early school leavers in the general population across all countries surveyed remains very high⁷.

In 2019, there were still 68% of Roma who leave education early. In addition, only 18% of Roma children transit to higher levels of education and the absenteeism and early-school leaving rates of Roma are significantly higher than for other categories of pupils.⁸

With respect to employment, the gap between Roma and non-Roma is significant, including the gap in youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). The employment rates of Roma are about 40% in most Member States, while Roma NEET on average increased from 56% to 63% between 2011 and 2016⁹.

The housing disparities continue to be significant, with about 30% of Roma still living without water within their dwellings, 36% without toilet, shower, or bathroom¹⁰.

⁶ [European Commission: Report on the evaluation of EU Roma Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.](#)

⁷ A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion, p.28, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018.

⁸ [Report on National Roma Integration Strategies: Key Conclusions, European Commission, September 2019.](#)

⁹ Report on the National Roma integration strategies: key conclusions”, p.3, European Commission, 2019.

¹⁰ Mid-term evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, final report”,

There was little progress in the share/number of Roma covered by health insurance between 2011 and 2016. The share of Roma covered by national health insurance is 76%, which is significantly lower than under non-Roma. The share of Roma assessing their health status as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ is 68%. More than a quarter of Roma feel they are limited in their activities due to their health and 22% have long standing illness or health problems. The Framework for NRIS mentions that the life expectancy at birth in the EU is 76 for men and 82 for women. For Roma, it is estimated to be 10 years less. In addition, while the infant mortality rate in the EU is 4.3 per thousand live births, there is evidence that the rate is much higher among Roma communities.

Therefore, it is considered that the main weakness of the current framework is its non-binding character. It is a soft policy, which relies, mainly, on the political will of all levels of government in Member States for putting national strategies into effect, including the administrative capacity and budgets. Unfortunately, most of the Member States developed national strategies without allocating adequate budgets for the implementation¹¹.

To correct this, we suggest a post 2020 EU Directive for the Equality and Inclusion of people with Romani background, a legislative act with a binding character for the Member States in terms of Romani inclusion goals to be reached. Political support when racism against different minority groups is rising sharply, is a key point for the inclusion of Romani people. Major mobilisation of key stakeholders, exploring the opportunities around the upcoming EU presidencies is needed to ensure political commitment for a post 2020 potential Directive. Following this approach, adequate funding will be allocated and it could lead to a more successful implementation of the national strategies or action plans, especially at regional and local level. The EU must link its political and financial priorities to the Directive. When local and national budgets are developed the inclusion of people with Romani background will be among the priorities. More efficient and strengthened monitoring and oversight mechanisms must be developed and EU Commission and Member States will ensure that the funds allocated are properly spent and not misused, if a directive will be delivered.

Another point of criticism is the use of the common denominator “Roma”. While the Framework highlighted diversity under the broad umbrella term of “Roma”¹², it failed to recognise the diversity within the population of people with Romani background. The term Roma or the double term Sinti & Roma, which is used in EU policies and discussions does not reflect the heterogeneity of the minority, so people with Romani background such as Kalè, Manouches, Lovara, Rissende, Boyash, Domare, Caldaras, Romanichild and Sinti feel excluded or not addressed. Roma is one of the groups of people with Romani background in Europe. The denomination of one group used to describe the other groups in EU policies and discussions, is often criticised among community members.

Based on this ground, the post 2020 policy for the Equality and Inclusion of people with Romani background should take into account the internal heterogeneity of the community in the priority domains, ensuring that nobody is left behind, including those without an ethnical background such as Ashkali, Egyptians or Travellers, but stigmatised as gypsies. Moreover,

p.41, European Commission, 2018.

¹¹ [Eurodiaconia: Towards a post 2020 EU Roma Inclusion Strategy, p.4.](#)

¹² The term Roma encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Sinti and Boyash. Roma is the term commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions.

the denomination referring to all the groups, should be people with Romani background.

The current framework lacks coherence among priorities. Thematic areas of activity such as political participation, Romani arts and culture, Romani language and history should be explicitly mentioned in the post 2020 policy, as additional measures to the four main priority areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare¹³.

To achieve this in an effective way, the European Commission and the Member States must move from the paternalistic (top to bottom) approach mainly used for the development of the current framework, to the non-paternalistic one. A bottom-up approach would allow people with Romani background to participate more effectively in policy-making at all levels: local and regional stakeholders (NGOs, activists, experts, community members, etc.) must be involved too, in the development, implementation and monitoring of the public policies towards people with Romani background, post 2020. Considering the non-paternalistic approach, the post 2020 EU Directive for the Equality and inclusion of people with Romani background will be developed based on more reliable quantitative and qualitative data: the future strategies will be based on the latest available information, since the access to a larger number of communities and considerable sources of solutions for the improvement of Romani situation, will be broader than in 2011. These data must be the basis of detailed and realistic action plans with a realistic and adequate predefined budget, included into the national, regional and local budgets, according to the magnitude of the social inclusion needs of people with Romani background.

A good practice in this context is the state Treaty signed by the Land of Baden-Württemberg with the German Regional Association of Sinti and Roma. A joint Council was established in 2014. The members of the Council are the representatives of the German Sinti and Roma in Baden-Württemberg, but also representatives of the state government, the state parliament and the municipal state associations. The focus of their work will be primarily on promoting education and culture of Sinti and Roma¹⁴.

As regards the targeting of the post 2020 EU Directive and NRISs, the focus should not be mainly on marginalised Romani people. Instead, it is recommended to increase investment in, and empowerment of, Romani youth, women and children (especially those in primary school who face difficulties in going to school because of their families' financial and social precarious situation), and paying more attention to the intra-EU mobility of Romani people.

The initial absence of a response to antigypsyism in the current Framework resulted in a reluctance to include explicit measures targeting anti-discrimination and specifically antigypsyism in national strategies.

In its 2019 Roma and Travelers Survey, the Fundamental Rights Agency found that “almost half of Roma and Travellers respondents (44%) experienced hate-motivated harassment in the 12 months preceding the survey”¹⁵. As examples, The Leipzig University research team concluded that the massive antigypsyism often gets out of sight: “60 percent of Germans

¹³ Revisiting the EU Roma Framework: Assessing the European Dimension for the Post-2020 Future, Open Society Institute, Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, March 2017, p.5.

¹⁴ [Studie zur aktuellen Bildungssituation deutscher Sinti und Roma 2011.](#)

¹⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Roma and Travellers Survey 2019, selected key findings from six EU Member States, including the UK (draft, publication expected in July 2020).

agree with the statement that Sinti and Roma tend to crime and 49.2 percent want to ban them from the inner cities."¹⁶ Even more, in times of coronavirus, Roma were made the scapegoat for the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, this happened in Eastern European countries¹⁷. Therefore, combating antigypsyism, the specific form of racism towards people with Romani background must be tackled across the key areas of the next post 2020 EU policy. Preventive and reactive measures should be developed and included in the post 2020 Romani policies. Member States must officially recognise antigypsyism as a specific form of racism against people with Romani background and they must implement specific measures against it at any level where it takes place.

¹⁶ [Leipzig Authoritarianism Study 2018: Nearly one in three Germans support xenophobic views.](#)

¹⁷ [Coronavirus: NGOs warn against Roma exclusion from EU crisis response.](#)

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 April 2011 entitled ‘An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020’ (COM(2011)0173) and to the subsequent implementation and evaluation reports,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States¹, and to the Council conclusions of 8 December 2016 on accelerating the process of Roma integration and of 13 October 2016 on the European Court of Auditors Special Report No 14/2016,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 April 2015 on the occasion of International Roma Day – anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II²,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2017 on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism³,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2019 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2017⁴,
- having regard to 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 anti-Gypsyism⁵,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 September 2019 entitled ‘Report on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies’ (COM(2019)0406)⁶,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 December 2018 entitled ‘Report on the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020’ (COM(2018)0785)⁷,
- having regard to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Second

¹ OJ C 378, 24.12.2013, p. 1.

² OJ C 328, 6.9.2016, p. 4.

³ OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 171.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0032.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0075.

⁶ [European Commission, Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies – 2019.](#)

⁷ [European Commission, Mid-term evaluation of the EU framework for NRIS.](#)

European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II),

- having regard to the relevant reports and recommendations of civil society organisations representing people with Romani background, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research institutions,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Culture and Education,
 - having regard to the position in the form of amendments of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A9-0000/2020),
- A. whereas a significant proportion of people with Romani background in Europe live in marginal conditions in both rural and urban areas, and in very poor socio-economic circumstances⁸;
- B. whereas persistent and structural antygypsyism continues to exist at all levels of European society and manifests itself on a daily basis;
- C. whereas a Directive for the Equality and Inclusion of People with Romani Background, developed on the basis of more realistic quantitative and qualitative data, a legislative act with a binding character on the European Union and its Member States, is needed and must be proposed by the Commission;
- D. whereas adequate funding must be allocated for the implementation of post-2020 National Inclusion Strategies for People with Romani Background from the local, regional and national budgets of the Member States; whereas the EU and the Member States must ensure that the funds allocated are properly spent and not misused;
- E. whereas the correct designation referring to all Romani groups, including those stigmatised as gypsies but who do not have the corresponding ethnic background, such as Egyptians, Ashkali, or Travellers, should be ‘people with Romani background’;
- F. whereas the equal participation of local and regional stakeholders (NGOs, activists, experts, community members, etc.) must be significantly involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies towards people with Romani background, in the post-2020 context;G. whereas under COVID-19 lockdowns, the situation of marginalised communities of people of Romani background in overcrowded compounds and settlements is very difficult; whereas people of Romani background do not have access to adequate healthcare, sanitation and food, and are particularly at risk; whereas the Member States must deliver emergency support and medical care in order to limit the spread of the virus; whereas racism, exclusion and

⁸ [FRA, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Roma – Selected findings, 2016.](#)

discrimination against people of Romani background should be urgently addressed by the Union and its Member States;

Main conclusion

1. Considers that the Commission must develop a proposal for a post-2020 directive for equality and inclusion of people with Romani background in Europe putting the fight against poverty and antigypsyism at the forefront; stresses that the new proposal must include clear and 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 its implementation; emphasises the need for a robust monitoring and oversight mechanism to ensure effective implementation and appropriate use of funds; notes that equal participation in all domains of public life, political participation, and the language, arts, culture, history and environment of people with Romani background should be explicitly mentioned in the proposal for post-2020 EU public policy for people with Romani background, as additional measures to the four main priority areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare;

Recommendations to the Commission

2. Calls on the Commission to develop a proposal for a post-2020 EU directive for the equality and inclusion of people with Romani background, giving priority to (i) achieving a positive impact; (ii) a rights-based approach, including a plan to eliminate social and economic inequalities; (iii) developing a vision for the future proposal, including specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound objectives to protect and improve the inclusion of people with Romani background; and (iv) eliminating inequalities, especially for children from their earliest years;
3. Calls on the Commission to ensure the equal participation of Romani and pro-Romani civil society organisations, experts and community members, including those active at local and regional level, taking into account a gender perspective in both the policy debate and in decision-making;
4. Calls on the Commission to tackle antigypsyism across the key areas of the proposal for the post-2020 directive;
5. Calls on the Commission to take into account the internal heterogeneity of the community in the priority domains of the post-2020 EU directive proposal, ensuring that nobody is left behind, and to use the designation 'people with Romani background' when referring to Romani groups in post-2020 EU policies and discussions;
6. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the link between EU mainstream financial and policy instruments, particularly the European Structural and Investment Funds, and inclusion priorities for people with Romani background, as part of the next multiannual financial framework;
7. Calls on the Commission to consider a new funding tool or sub-programme that should be linked to an existing EU educational and social funding programme, such as Erasmus Plus or the European Social Fund, for targeted and tailored support in quality education

for pupils with Romani background between the ages of 3 and 18 who are contending with extreme poverty and do not have access to existing EU educational and social inclusion funding instruments;

Recommendations to the Member States

8. Calls on the Member States to develop post-2020 National Strategies for the Inclusion of People with Romani Background based on realistic quantitative and qualitative data with an adequate pre-defined budget, incorporated into the national, regional and local budgets and which reflects the scale of the social inclusion needs of people with Romani background;
 9. Calls on the Member States to officially recognise antigypsyism as a specific form of racism against people with Romani background, and to develop and implement specific and effective preventive and corrective measures against it on all levels where it occurs;
 10. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the participation of people with Romani background in policy-making, moving from a paternalistic to a non-paternalistic approach;
 11. Calls on the Member States to indicate what level of funding would be needed to carry out the proposed measures for inclusion of people with Romani background and to state the amount of money available for such measures from the national and from the EU budgets;
 12. Calls on the Member States to develop more efficient and strengthened monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the funds allocated are properly spent and not misused;
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13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and candidate countries, the subnational parliaments and councils of the Member States and candidate countries, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.