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*Plenary sitting*

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**A9-0147/2020**

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## 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

Rapporteur: Romeo Franz

Rapporteur for opinion (\*):

Tomáš Zdechovský, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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

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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 country<sup>1</sup>. 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-Roma<sup>2</sup>.

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 months<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [European Commission website: Who are the Roma?](#)

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

<sup>3</sup> 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 services<sup>4</sup>.

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 (NRCPs), 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 measures<sup>5</sup>. 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

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

<sup>5</sup> [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 areas<sup>6</sup>.”*

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 high<sup>7</sup>.

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.<sup>8</sup>

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 2016<sup>9</sup>.

The housing disparities continue to be significant, with about 30% of Roma still living without water within their dwellings, 36% without toilet, shower, or bathroom<sup>10</sup>.

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

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

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

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

<sup>10</sup> 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 implementation<sup>11</sup>.

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"<sup>12</sup>, 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,

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p.41, European Commission, 2018.

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

<sup>12</sup> 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 healthcare<sup>13</sup>.

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 Roma<sup>14</sup>.

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”<sup>15</sup>. As examples, The Leipzig University research team concluded that the massive antigypsyism often gets out of sight: “60 percent of Germans

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

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

<sup>15</sup> 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.*"<sup>16</sup> Even more, in times of coronavirus, Roma were made the scapegoat for the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, this happened in Eastern European countries<sup>17</sup>. 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.

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

<sup>17</sup> [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 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Social Charter, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as reports and recommendations by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and other Council of Europe mechanisms, – having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and United Nations human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1367/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies<sup>4</sup>,
- 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

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 264, 25.9.2006, p. 13.

integration measures in the Member States<sup>5</sup>, 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 the European Parliament reports from 2010 on The EU Strategy on Roma inclusion and the Report on the gender aspects of the European Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies from 2013,
- 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 II<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2017 on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2019 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2017<sup>8</sup>,
- 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-Gypsyism<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 February 2018 on Fighting discrimination of EU citizens belonging to minorities in the EU Member States<sup>10</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2018 on lagging regions in the EU<sup>11</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2018 on the rise of neo-fascist violence in Europe<sup>12</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 November 2018 on minimum standards for minorities in the EU<sup>13</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 September 2019 entitled ‘Report on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies’ (COM(2019)0406)<sup>14</sup>,
- 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)<sup>15</sup>,
- having regard to the infringement proceedings titled Non-conformity with Directive

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<sup>5</sup> OJ C 378, 24.12.2013, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 328, 6.9.2016, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0032.

<sup>9</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0075.

<sup>10</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0032

<sup>11</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0067

<sup>12</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0428

<sup>13</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0447

<sup>14</sup> [European Commission, Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies – 2019.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [European Commission, Mid-term evaluation of the EU framework for NRIS.](#)

2000/43/EC on Racial Equality - Discrimination of Roma children in education (infringement numbers 20142174, 20152025 and 20152206),

- having regard to The European Pillar of Social Rights,
- having regard the European Economic and Social Committee opinion on the situation of Roma women SOC/585-EESC-2018,
- having regard to the Poznan Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process,
- having regard to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II),
- having regard to the General Policy Recommendation No. 13 of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI),
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- having regard to the World Bank Poverty Map from 2016 clearly identifying the most back logged regions of Europe,
- having regard to the relevant reports and recommendations of research institutions and Romani and pro-Romani civil society organisations, including Romani grassroots NGOs
- having regard to the European Citizens Initiatives on "Minority SafePack Initiative" and on "Cohesion policy for the equality of the regions and sustainability of the regional cultures",
- 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, the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A9-0147/2020),

A. whereas Romani people represent Europe’s largest ethnic minority,

B. whereas the current Framework highlighted diversity under the broad umbrella term of “Roma”; whereas it failed to recognise the diversity within the population of Romani people; whereas the term Roma or the double term Sinti & Roma was used in an era when decision makers decided on Roma policies without real involvement of the Romani communities and therefore those communities feel alienated by it and whereas this definition used in EU policies and discussion does not reflect the heterogeneity of Romani community and therefore often criticized by them;

C. whereas the diversity among Romani people shall be far better reflected in the post-

2020 legislative proposal for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Romani people; whereas the term ‘Romani people’ encompasses people with Roma, Kalè, Manouches, Lovara, Rissende, Boyash, Domare, Kalderash, Romanichild and Sinti background; whereas the new definition, Romani people, better includes even those stigmatised as gypsies without having a corresponding ethnic background, such as Egyptians, Ashkali, or Travellers;

- D. whereas a significant part of Romani people in Europe live in extremely precarious conditions in both rural and urban areas, and in very poor socio-economic circumstances<sup>16</sup>; whereas most Romani people are deprived of their fundamental human rights in all areas of life;
- E. whereas according to EU MIDIS II, 61 % of EU citizens believe that discrimination against the Romani people is widespread in their country; whereas deeply rooted, persistent and structural and often institutional and governmental antigypsyism continues to exist at all levels of European society and manifests itself on a daily basis acknowledged as major barrier in achieving the full potential of Romani people as EU citizens enjoying fully fundamental rights, social inclusion and equality, in all spheres of life, including housing, education, healthcare and employment;
- F. whereas Romani people continue to suffer from increased level of hate speech; notably in public, in social media and by public figures, politicians and officials; whereas they also suffer police violence, including collective punishment, racial profiling, residential and school segregation; whereas specific measures are needed in order to combat this phenomenon; whereas deficiencies in the rule of law, in the field of criminal justice lead to insufficient level of protection and access to justice for victims of police violence, and victims are often persecuted by the state authorities;
- G. whereas combating antigypsyism through the existing anti-discrimination legislation is not sufficient; whereas EU Member States should show determination to break the vicious circle of antigypsyism, in particular in Romani people’s dealings with local, regional and national administrative authorities, to safeguard equality and non-discrimination for their Romani citizens, and to grant the full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights;
- H. whereas racism against Romani people has led to violence and killing; whereas hate-motivated harassment and hate crimes remain significantly high against Romani people and the majority of hate-motivated incidents are not reported;
- I. whereas, according to EU MIDIS II in 2016, some 80% of Romani people in nine EU Member States with the largest Romani populations live below their country’s poverty threshold; whereas poverty is both an outcome and a driver of antigypsyism, exclusion in education, employment, health and housing; whereas a key target of the EU 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth was to lift 20 million people, including Romani people, out of risk of poverty; whereas the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion fell by 3.1 million between 2008 and 2017, the EU remains far from its Europe 2020 target of reducing this number by 20 million by 2020;
- J. whereas every third person with Romani background lives in housing without tap water

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<sup>16</sup> [FRA, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Roma – Selected findings, 2016.](#)

and one in 10 in housing without electricity; whereas just over half have an indoor flush toilet or shower, and 78 % of Romani live in overcrowded housing; whereas a large number of Romani people still live in informal, unhygienic and irregular settlements in miserable living conditions; whereas many do not possess identification documents and lack medical insurance<sup>17</sup>;

- K. whereas 43 % of Romani people are discriminated against when trying to buy or rent housing and are not sufficiently aware of their rights in terms of equality; whereas regularisation of property rights where possible, in particular in informal settings, should be reinforced; whereas abolishment of informal settings (evictions) should be accompanied by adequate accompanying measures, including offering an alternative housing; whereas no legal or political measures have been taken against Member States to end residential segregation, forced evictions and to ensure access to quality housing; whereas poor access to housing and public utilities, such as clean water and sanitation, has a negative impact on education, employment and health outcomes and adversely affects social inclusion overall;
- L. whereas the life expectancy and health status of Romani people remain significantly lower than for non-Romani in all European countries; whereas the life expectancy at birth in the EU is 76 years for men and 82 years for women, and whereas for Romani people, it is estimated to be 10 years less; whereas the infant mortality rate in the EU is 4.3 per one thousand live births, and whereas there is evidence that the rate is much higher among Roma communities;
- M. whereas many Romani people suffer of extremely high rates of illiteracy and early school leaving; whereas only one out of two Romani children attend pre-school or kindergarten, and a very small proportion continue school after compulsory education; whereas 50 % of Romani people between the ages of six and 24 are not in education; whereas only 21 % of Romani women and 25 % of Romani men aged 16–24 have completed secondary education (ISCED3) or higher; whereas in 2019, 68 % of Romani children left education early despite the 10% target of the previous Roma Framework and the EU2020 strategy; whereas only 18 % of Romani children transitioned to higher levels of education and the absenteeism and early-school-leaving rates among the Romani pupils were significantly higher than for other categories of pupils; whereas the discriminatory misdiagnosis of many Romani children as having special educational needs is leading to a disproportionate number of Romani children attending schools for children with disabilities, separating them from the mainstream school system and often receiving lower quality education; whereas direct and indirect segregation of Romani children is a phenomenon still practiced by Member States;
- N. whereas Romani people face discrimination in accessing employment initiatives such as the Youth Guarantee, whereas Public Employment Services often lack capacity to reach them, or apply indirect discrimination practices; whereas paid work rates for Romani people aged 20-64 years with 43 % was well below the EU average of 70 % in 2015, whereas the situation of young people is substantially worse with 63 % of Romani aged 16-24 not in employment, education or training (NEET), compared with the 12 % EU average, whereas the results show a considerable gender gap, with 72 % of young women of Romani background not in employment, education or training, compared

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<sup>17</sup> FRA, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Roma – Selected findings, 2016

with 55 % of young Romani men; whereas 43 % of Romani men and 22% Romani women are in some form of paid work; whereas the adoption of the European Pillar of Social Rights has brought to the fore the fundamental right of everyone to engage in work and the reinforcement of social rights leading to a positive impact on the lives of people belonging to marginalised groups, such as the Romani people; whereas many Romani people living at the limits of extreme poverty are forced by this situation to accept jobs with salary way beyond the minimum wage, others are forced to survive from informal activities such as collecting metal scrap or plastic bottles, which massively increases the chances of exploitation of these people;

- O. whereas expert reports and the European Commission's 2019 report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies recognise that success factors encompass intersectional, cross-sectoral and integrated approaches to tackle discrimination and multi-dimensional exclusion and that Romani women, Romani LGBT, Romani people with disabilities face intersectional discrimination; whereas the reports mention amongst the priorities the need to support the access of Romani people to justice with a focus on victims of intersectional discrimination, and reinforcing the capacity of equality bodies to deal with discrimination against Romani people;
- P. whereas Romani women are particularly affected as regards women's rights and often face exacerbated forms of verbal, physical, psychological, racial harassment and ethnic segregation in maternal health care facilities; whereas Romani women are placed in segregated rooms with segregated bathrooms and eating facilities; whereas in some Member States, Romani women have been subjected to systematic practices of forced and coercive sterilization and have been unable to obtain adequate reparations, including compensation, for the resulting violations of their human rights;
- Q. whereas environmental injustices are regularly related to health risks and negative consequences for Romani people and whereas they are disproportionately affected by environmental burdens, have less access to environmental resources and services, and are discriminated against in their right to information, to participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters;
- R. whereas the creation of the first European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies put the necessity to improve the situation of Romani people on the European policy agenda, created vital institutional structures and networks and put pressure on Member States to develop National Strategies to address their shortcomings; whereas while building on the results of the evaluation of the current EU Framework it is essential that the National Inclusion Strategies for Romani people, guided by a post 2020 proposal, are continued and improved, asking for a strengthened compliance of the Member States, promoting the use of more binding targets to increase the commitment and accountability; whereas better implementation of national strategies, requires that such strategies are mainstreamed into national, regional and local sectoral policies, as well as a more efficient use of EU financing, especially for long-term integration projects;
- S. whereas a legislative proposal for the Equality, Inclusion, Participation of Romani people and Combating Antigypsyism, is needed and should be developed on the basis of more realistic quantitative and qualitative disaggregated data collected with the support of Romani Civil Society Organisations (AM 87), including those from local level;



- T. whereas Romani culture is part of Europe's culture and values and Romani have contributed to the cultural richness, diversity, economy and common history of the EU (AM 89); whereas the protection and strengthening of cultural heritage related to national minorities in the Member States plays a crucial role in social cohesion;
- U. whereas Member States are responsible for the development and effective implementation of the National Inclusion Romani Strategies in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity; whereas adequate funding should 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 and complemented by EU Funding; whereas efficient and strengthened monitoring oversight and sanctioning mechanisms should be developed; whereas the EU and the Member States must ensure that the funds are allocated for objectives and projects that have the biggest potential long-term impact on the situation of Romani people properly spent and not misused;
- V. whereas approximately half of the Romani people in Europe live outside the European Union; whereas their situation remains particularly problematic in most of the candidate, potential candidate and neighbourhood countries; whereas the European Union can have a strong impact on their situation through the accession negotiations as well as through the provision of financial assistance;
- W. whereas the equal participation and empowerment of Romani people in policymaking, from all levels, should be better ensured: local, regional, national and European stakeholders (NGOs, activists, experts, community members, etc.) should be significantly involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies towards people with Romani background, in the post-2020 context;
- X. whereas most of the disadvantaged communities of Romani people are often left behind and excluded from the benefits of the national inclusion programs due to limits in mapping methodologies used when identifying the communities most in need; whereas when designing programme intervention, the analyses should target the exact geographic area and the number of families, persons who face socio-economic exclusion;
- Y. whereas Romani inclusion objectives should be aligned with the horizontal objectives of the European Union, and particularly with the Recovery Plan, the new Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027, the European Green Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Semester, the UN2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the new Common Agricultural Policy, the Just Transition Fund, the New Skills Agenda for Europe, the European Digital Strategy, the SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe; whereas political support, is a key point for the inclusion of Romani people; whereas major mobilisation of key stakeholders at all levels, including in the Council, is needed to ensure political commitment and accountability of Member States,
- Z. whereas antigypsyism exists in our societies since centuries and it took its most cruel form during the Holocaust, in which an estimated number of 500 000 Romani people were exterminated; whereas antigypsyism took the form of almost 500 years of slavery for Romani people on the territory of present Romania; whereas due to centuries of discrimination and social exclusion, Romani people could not efficiently and

significantly benefit from the continuous socio-economic development of our societies; whereas they were left behind and consequently the disparities between Romani people and the general population have increased;

- AA. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has seen that the situation of marginalised communities of Romani people in overcrowded compounds and settlements has worsened, that racism, discriminations, exclusion, police violence against Romani people and antigypsyist attitudes targeting Romani people as spreading the virus have been exacerbated and that because having limited access to adequate healthcare, drinking water, sanitation and food, Romani people are more at risk of contracting COVID-19; whereas the COVID-19 crisis situation has therefore highlighted, more than clear, the urgent need for the EU and its Members States to address the inclusion of Romani people; whereas the Member States should deliver emergency support and medical care in order to limit the spread of the virus whereas the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis threaten to affect the Romani population the hardest and deepen the existing inequalities in all priority areas of Romani inclusion;

***EU legislative proposal for Equality, Inclusion Participation of Romani people and Combating Antigypsyism; post-2020 EU strategic proposal, priorities and adequate funding***

1. Notes that Romani people are subject to persistent antigypsyism - a specific form of racism - leading to the highest rates of poverty and social exclusion; notes with regret that despite continuous socio-economic development in the EU and efforts to ensure Romani inclusion both at EU and national level, the overall situation of the Romani people in the EU did not improve; often due to persistent antigypsyism and to the lack of political will; therefore calls on the Commission to lead by example and introduce a “Romani mainstreaming policy” in order to integrate the perspective of the Romani people at all stages and levels of mainstream policies, programmes and projects, but without excluding the targeted approach, and to prevent discrimination in the EU policy in general and facilitate affirmative action and active outreach to Romani people; calls on the Member States also to follow this path and create policies which help the active inclusion of Romani people into our societies;
2. Calls on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal for the Equality, Inclusion, Participation of Romani people and Combating Antigypsyism, on the basis of a thorough impact assessment and in systemic consultations with Romani people, (pro-) Romani experts and NGOs from national, regional and especially from grassroots level as well as other interested stakeholders such as the Council of Europe and FRA; considers that this proposal could be based on Article 19 (2) of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union as appropriate action to combat discrimination based on ethnic origin of Romani people; calls on the Commission to take into account the internal heterogeneity of the community in the priority domains of the post 2020 proposal, ensuring that nobody is left behind, and strongly encourages to use the designation ‘ Romani people’ when referring to Romani groups in post 2020 EU policies and discussions; notes that equal participation in all domains of public life, political participation, and the language, arts, culture and history of Romani people should be explicitly mentioned in the post-2020 EU proposal for Romani people, as



additional measures to the four main priority areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare;

3. Is of the opinion that the proposal shall give priority to achieving a significant positive impact; it should combine the socio-economic aspects with a rights-based approach, including a plan to eliminate, housing, health, employment and education inequalities; it should include specific, comparable, achievable, binding and time-bound objectives to protect and improve the inclusion of Romani people, including those belonging to groups facing multiple discrimination, such as youth, women and girls, LGBTI persons and people with disabilities, to promote inclusive education, early childhood development and to combat discrimination and segregation; it should give priority to a justice approach, given the collective and the structural nature of discrimination against Romani people; stresses that the European Commission's post-2020 proposal should focus on fighting against poverty and antigypsyism, improving living and health conditions and combining targeted and mainstream approach;
4. Notes that to make the future EU Romani inclusion process successful and credible, a fundamental change in approach is needed, moving from the paternalistic approach to the non-paternalistic one when developing policies towards Romani people.; emphasises that national efforts towards Romani inclusion should be accelerated in all EU Member States; stresses however that the emphasis should be placed on those with a large Romani population where an ineffective process of Romani inclusion poses macroeconomic challenges, deepens regional disparities and thus hampers EU social cohesion; underlines that the EU support to those countries should be measured up to the challenges, and greater attention should be devoted to the effectiveness of policies and measures in these countries, is of the opinion that the post-2020 proposal should also include an external component concerning accession candidate and potential candidate countries as well as neighbourhood countries, through which the EU could support these countries in developing comprehensive long-term strategies for Romani inclusion and to offer financial support in the areas such as education, health, housing and employment;
5. Calls on the Commission to strengthen the link between EU mainstream financial and policy instruments and objectives related to the socio-economic development and inclusion of Romani people set out by the Commission's legally binding proposal; calls on the Commission to mobilise funding for Romani equality, inclusion and participation under the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and EU Recovery Plan; insists in this respect that entities that engage in discriminatory practices against Romani people, or take decisions or implement measures to this effect, should not be eligible for funding from the Union's budget; calls upon the Commission, Member States and enlargement countries to adjust the existing mainstream financial mechanisms and make them flexible for blended use of funds in Romani communities by enabling access to information, outreach, capacity building, delivery of technical assistance and guarantees during the funding application process; is of the opinion that funds are often most effectively spent at local level by local governments and NGOs, therefore calls on the Commission to increase the funds distributed directly to them, and involve local Romani representatives in the implementation; takes the view that in order to support Romani and pro-Romani civil society organisations, more flexible co-financing requirements should be taken into account, as many NGOs, especially from local level cannot afford own financial contributions, this being a barrier in accessing EU funds for

the grassroots NGOs; calls on the Commission to effectively respond to the concern about the increasingly shrinking space for independent civil society in some Member States; is concerned that the coronavirus outbreak might lead to cuts in relation to the Rights and Values programmes for the MFF 2021-2027, negatively affecting CSOs advocating for Romani communities and thus affecting outreach to Romani communities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to effectively address this risk;

6. Calls on the Member States to complement the EU financial support in order to improve the situation of Romani people; calls on the Member States to indicate what level of funding would be needed to carry out the proposed measures for inclusion of Romani people and to state the amount of money available for such measures from the national and from the EU budgets;
7. Calls on the Member States to integrate better mapping methodologies for marginalized Romani communities and strengthened funding mechanisms into their regional and local development structures that allow more targeted investments in marginalized Romani communities and a better inclusion of Romani communities into the implementation of funds to ensure that the funds allocated reach Romani people and are properly spent and not misused;

### ***Collection of disaggregated data***

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8. Highlights the need for systematic collection of robust ethnic and gender disaggregated data to inform needs and context analysis, help in setting targets and impact indicators in order to ensure the best outcome in terms of matching needs with planning and budgeting, both at national and EU level; emphasises the importance of counterfactual impact evaluation methods in order to reduce the gap between policy frameworks and implementation on the ground; reminds that a critical limitation for some interventions is the gap between the ambition and the capacity of the structure in place to achieve results, due to the lack of data based planning, insufficient budgeting, and emergence of new unforeseen needs;
9. Recalls that the ECA has concluded in 2016 that the monitoring and assessing the progress of the NRIS was a significant challenge for all visited Member States; calls on the Commission to build innovative, impact-oriented and data-based approaches as direct input to the next generation of programmes;
10. Calls on the Commission to work with the Member States on a common methodology to collect and publish equality data disaggregated by ethnic origin as defined by the EU Racial Equality Directive that is voluntary, anonymous and ensures the protection of personal data, self-identification and consultation with relevant communities, in order to obtain reliable, comparable data in accordance with the relevant national legal frameworks and EU data protection legislation to support evidence based policies, to improve the effectiveness of strategies and measures taken and to identify structural problems ;
11. Calls on the Member States to use all available data to establish benchmarks and guide policy programme development; emphasises that it is vital to develop a more accurate

profile of the Romani population and their needs, including in the candidate countries; underlines that the Fundamental Rights Agency's guidelines would be key in this regard;

### ***Equal participation of Romani people in decision-making processes, National inclusion Strategies***

12. Calls on the Commission to establish an inclusive mechanism to ensure the equal participation of Romani and pro-Romani civil society organisations, experts and community members from all levels, moving from a paternalistic approach to a non-paternalistic approach, including those active at local and regional level, taking into account a gender perspective in the policy debate and decision-making; calls on the Member States to promote Romani voter education and turnout;
13. Calls on the Commission to develop a Romani Task Force at EU level to facilitate Romani inclusion into different policy fields and Empowering Romani people by supporting the capacity-building of all actors involved in the management and implementation of the EU and national Romani policies, in a substantive, dignified, impartial, inclusive, and transparent manner; calls on the Member States to do the same when creating their own post-2020 National Inclusion Strategies for Romani people; stresses that local and regional stakeholders, including NGOs, activists, local experts, regional experts, community members, the people affected by antigypsyism must be significantly involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of the National Inclusion Strategies and other public policies towards Romani people, making Romani participation a binding common quality standard for the future framework and National Inclusion Strategies;
14. Calls on the Member States to develop post-2020 National Strategies for the Inclusion of Romani people, accompanied by a comprehensive joint assessment framework and with an adequate pre-defined budget, incorporated into the national, regional and local budgets subject to a periodic review and evaluation and which reflects the scale of the social inclusion needs of Romani people; emphasises that when local, regional, and national budgets are developed, the inclusion of Romani people must be among the priorities; calls on the Member States to include the fight against antigypsyism in a horizontal approach in their National Inclusion Strategies, in all domains of public life; calls on the Commission to include in the Country Specific recommendations an assessment of the progress in achieving the objectives from the National Inclusion Strategies;

### ***Antigypsyism and intersectional discrimination***

15. Reiterates its position and recommendations put forward in its resolution of 25 October 2017 on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting antigypsyism; since limited action has been taken so far, calls on the Commission to integrate those recommendations into its post-2020 EU proposal for the Equality, Inclusion Participation of Romani people and Combating Antigypsyism, particularly the recommendations relating to antigypsyism and truth and reconciliation as these are the cornerstone of building a strong and inclusive society; strongly rejects the political narrative and populism to build government policy on inciting antigypsyism, exercising scapegoating of Romani people and promoting discrimination or segregation both

directly and indirectly; is of the opinion that such political actions are against not only the national constitutions but the fundamental rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties; therefore calls on the Commission to take immediate action by opening infringement procedures when there is a risk of breach of EU law;

16. Calls on the Member States to officially recognise antigypsyism as a specific form of racism against Romani people;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle antigypsyism across the key areas of the post-2020 proposal towards Romani people and demands effective European and national legislative and policy measures to tackle this phenomenon both in Member States and enlargement countries; considers that the fight against antigypsyism is a horizontal issue and that it should be taken into account in all areas of Union policy, including the new technologies; calls on the Member States to ensure that new technologies designed and used by law enforcement authorities do not create risks of discrimination for racial and ethnic minorities; calls on the Commission to further integrate the work of National Equality Bodies (NEBs) into the development and implementation of the future policy framework; further asks the Commission to develop stronger synergies between the National Equality Bodies NEBs and national Romani Contact Points (NRCP) to fight against antigypsyism; calls on the Member States to guarantee the effective independence, the mandate and the necessary resources of the equality bodies for enabling them to carry out their tasks in the promotion and protection of fundamental rights also of Romani people; is of the opinion that equality bodies are the right institutions to collect data and draw trends on antigypsyism and to channel it to the European level;
18. Calls on the Member States to secure equal access to justice and equality before the law for Romani people; calls on the Member States to protect Romani people from threats by far-right groups, investigate incidents of police abuse and ensure Romani participation in law enforcement and security forces;
19. Encourages the Member States to adopt Guidelines and develop trainings to the police forces against disproportionate criminalisation of Romani people, ethnic profiling, excessive stop-and-search procedures, uncalled-for raids on Romani settlements, arbitrary seizure and destruction of property, excessive use of force during arrests, assaults, threats, humiliating treatment, physical abuse, and the denial of rights during police interrogation and custody and in under-policing of crimes committed against Romani people, providing little or no assistance, protection (such as in cases of trafficking and for victims of domestic violence) or investigation in cases of crimes reported by Romani people (hate crimes in particular); calls on the Member States to ensure that full investigation of such cases is undertaken by the competent authorities; calls on the Member States to provide appropriate remedies;
20. Welcomes the Council of Europe statements that the phenomenon of online hate speech requires further analysis and action with a view to regulating and finding new ways of combating rhetoric of this kind such as alternative narrative and fact checking technologies;
21. Calls on the Member States to ensure the effective practical implementation and enforcement of the Racial Equality Directive and to ensure effective enforcement of the

Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia to combat persisting antigypsyism; reiterates its call on the Council to unblock negotiations on the horizontal anti-discrimination directive as it is a prerequisite to achieve equality in the EU;

22. Further calls on the Member States to reinforce their efforts to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes within national and EU anti-discrimination legislation, particularly with regard to monitoring the situation of affected Romani victims and providing judicial assistance;
23. Recalls Member States' obligation under the Racial Equality Directive to designate a specialised body for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin;
24. Takes the view that EU and Member States should take action regarding the situation and the rights of individuals at the intersections of discrimination grounds in the EU, in particular women, LGBTI people, people with disabilities;
25. Recalls the critical role of media in decreasing antigypsyist attitudes through non-discriminatory coverage of minorities;

### ***Health***

26. Calls on the Member States to develop measures to improve access to good quality and affordable preventive and curative healthcare for Romani people, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, and in particular for women, children, older people and persons with disabilities; reiterates that a key element in that regard is improving access to health services – both physical access and removing the intangible barriers of prejudice and racism;
27. Calls on the Member States to allocate sufficient funding for improving the general health condition of Romani communities through health and sex-education, through mobile health screening activities in segregated areas, through health educational campaigns on prevention, and through training of health and social workers on diversity, which contributes to adapting EU health systems to diversity;
28. Strongly condemns Romani women ethnic segregation in maternal health care facilities; calls on Member States to immediately prohibit all forms of ethnic segregation in health facilities, including maternal health care settings;
29. Calls on Member States to ensure effective and timely remedies to all survivors of forced and coercive sterilization, including through the establishment of effective compensation schemes;

### ***Equal and equitable access to education, Romani arts, language and culture***

30. Calls on the Commission to design new funding tools or sub-programmes that should be complementary to the measures of the Member States for targeted and tailored support in quality education for Romani pupils from 3 years on, who are contending with extreme poverty and do not have access to existing and future EU educational and social inclusion funding initiatives, such as Erasmus Plus, the Child Guarantee or the European Social Fund Plus;;

31. Notes that in some Member States only limited progress has been achieved over previous years in the education of socially disadvantaged Romani children due, in particular, to the lack of political will and antigypsyism, which cause the gap between Romani and non-Romani pupils and students in terms of educational outcomes to remain high; recalls that providing Romani children with an equal start in life is essential to break the cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty; urges Member States to adopt a holistic approach across all policy areas and to place the education of Romani children high on governments' agendas;
32. Recommends that the education of vulnerable Romani pupils should start as early as possible, taking into account the specific conditions in each Member State, by including them into equal, affordable, accessible and inclusive early childhood and childcare services; urges Member States to develop and implement strategies and programmes aimed at facilitating the access of Romani to childcare facilities, schools and universities, which is a precondition for personal and career development, and recalls that extra-curricular activities, such as sports or artistic activities, are excellent means of inclusion;
33. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure adequate funding to NGOs which provide such activities as these activities are crucial to create an environment and conditions where children from all backgrounds have equal opportunities; considers that the exchange of good practices between Member States is also crucial in this field;
34. Is particularly concerned by the high level of segregation of Romani children in schools and the discriminatory practice of placing Romani children in schools for children with mental disabilities, which persist in some Member States; urges the Member States concerned to put an end to such practices in accordance with applicable anti-discrimination legislation; calls on the Member States to prioritise measures to eliminate any form of school or class segregation of Romani pupils in line with the 2013 Council Recommendation, by implementing a wide range of measures actively involving local stakeholders, particularly Romani parents and children, as well as community organisations and by developing awareness raising actions;
35. Calls on the Member States to ensure that all schools and inspectorates actually fulfil their legal obligation to desegregate school and also to commit to annually collect and publish the situation of school segregation at all levels, including by sanctioning those who fail to comply; Calls on the Member States to exchange good practices such as establishing, capacitating and resourcing a desegregation ministerial commission in order to support schools who want to desegregate and sanction those who do not comply (AM 251); reminds that the Commission opened 3 infringement procedures on segregation of Romani children ; is of the opinion that the last years have shown no improvement despite the Commission's efforts; therefore calls on the Commission to take further steps and refer these cases to the European Court of Justice if necessary;
36. Recalls the pressing need to involve Romani parents in each stage of their children's schooling; urges Member States to develop programmes aimed at the inclusion of Romani parents in the process of their children's schooling and educational and personal development; stresses that the ability of Member States to ensure the involvement of Romani parents is highly dependent on multiple factors, both societal and economic, and asks for special support – in terms of health integrity, school food



and clothing supply – for Romani families facing economic, social, medical or housing difficulties; believes that for children who have abandoned school and/or are illiterate and lack basic skills, new opportunities should be designed to continue their education; calls on Member States to make full use of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in this regard;

37. Calls on EU Member States to ensure equal access of Romani children to high quality education including through community service learning and life-long learning opportunities; calls on the Member States to structurally address respect for diversity, intercultural understanding and human rights in regular school curricula and media; and to include human rights, leadership and democratic citizenship training as well as Romani history in their school curricula and to disseminate and expand Romani university programs at European level;
38. Calls on the Member States to design laws and policy measures aiming to ensure remedies for all Romani children misdiagnosed and placed in special schools or Romani-only classes and schools based on ethnic origins and consequently having been denied fundamental rights and opportunities for quality education and good jobs;
39. Is of the opinion that COVID-19 made necessary the active use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and methods; stresses however that the pandemic revealed insufficient preparedness in digital transformation as many families with Romani background and their schools are not equipped with adequate ICT tools and skills and are often unable to afford electricity and digital connectedness, considers that the possession of an ICT device is the turnkey point into digital education, therefore urges the Commission to create a pool of ICT tools and distribute it among the most vulnerable families and children to provide them with the basic tools for distant learning and prepare them for the digital age; considers that access to internet and ICT skills are a cornerstone of the forthcoming digital age for every citizen and as such it is essential for the empowerment of Romani people as well; therefore calls on the Commission to introduce the provisions related to internet access into the post-2020 proposal; calls on the Member States to add ICT skills into their curriculum from an early age and to invest in digital literacy programmes that can support Romani children;
40. Calls on the Member States to promote Romani language, culture and history, in school curricula, museums and other forms of cultural and historical expression, and recognize the contribution of Romani culture as part of the European Heritage; calls on the Member States to develop coherent and consistent measures, with appropriate budgets to stimulate, support and promote the Romani arts and culture, to research and conserve the material and intangible heritage of the traditional Romani culture and to revive and promote Romani traditional crafts;

### ***Quality and affordable housing, environmental justice***

41. Stresses that housing is not a commodity, but a necessity, without which people cannot fully participate in society and access fundamental rights; calls on the Commission and the Member States to integrate in their policies the recommendations of the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Report, "ECSR The Right to affordable housing, Europe's neglected duty", with particular reference to ensuring that all Member States promptly accept to be bound by Article 31 of the revised European Social Charter

dealing with the right to housing, and step up investing in social and affordable housing to eradicate the housing cost overburden, particularly among marginalised groups;

42. Strongly encourages the Member States to ensure that Romani people are duly registered with ID papers and birth certificates, and that their properties (land and house) are equally registered and to ensure more flexible legal and administrative procedures for the future;
43. Calls on the Member States to minimise the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in overcrowded and inhuman housing conditions lived in by Romani people, legalising their informal settlements, by investing in infrastructure and housing improvement for newly legalised informal settlements;
44. Calls on the Member States to adopt a comprehensive mechanism to ensure that discrimination and abuse against Romani people in the field of housing is prevented and sanctioned, to address the issue of homelessness and to provide sufficient and appropriate halting sites for non-sedentary Romani people; calls on the Member States to prevent further forced evictions of Romani people by ensuring that such practices always take place in full compliance with International, European and national law calls on the Members States to ensure that the persons concerned are provided with reasonable notice and adequate information and 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; calls on the Member States to promote spatial desegregation points out that geographical isolation and housing segregation keeps members of ethnic minorities 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 Romani housing should be integrated into broader national activities and legislative initiatives that focus on social housing or assistance programmes;
45. Recalls that the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak are being felt mostly by the most deprived, including the Romani communities, across the EU and deplores that Romani communities are being further discriminated and marginalised due to the coronavirus pandemic; 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 Romani communities; calls on the Member States to fully include Romani 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;
46. Calls for the EU-wide implementation of the Aarhus Convention that links environmental rights and human rights; recommends that environmental injustices are integrated in the post 2020 proposal and call on the Commission to address the different forms of environmental discrimination;

### ***Romani women and girls***



47. Stresses the need to give priority to a gender perspective and gender-sensitive policies and fight violence (including human trafficking); urges all Member States who have not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention to do so urgently; notes that future policies shall acknowledge these differences and address them by providing Romani women with specific interventions and particular forms of support; stresses that being often subjected to multiple discrimination, specific measures for the empowerment of Romani women and girls should be envisaged;
48. Calls on Member State governments, local authorities and, where relevant, EU institutions to involve Romani women, through women's organisations, and relevant stakeholders, in the preparation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the NRIS and to create links between gender equality bodies, women's rights organisations and social inclusion strategies so as to build trust with communities and ensure sensitivity to local contexts;
49. Calls on the Member States to ensure that a specific chapter on women's rights and gender equality is included in their National Inclusion Strategies, and that gender mainstreaming measures aimed at promoting women's rights and the gender equality perspective are applied in each section thereof, in particular in the allocation of funds, in line with the Council conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies which stresses that a gender perspective needs to be applied in all policies and actions for advancing Romani inclusion'; calls on the Commission and the Member States to assess whether policies are achieving the desired improvements for Romani women and girls, and to take action if there is a lack of progress;
50. Calls on the Member States to design measures to support Romani women to fully fulfil their potential and possibilities of acting as independent, self-confident and emancipated active citizens; calls on the Member States to expand the Romani health and school mediation systems, mandatory, to all Romani communities, to ensure a mediator for each 500 people and to properly finance and support the systems, giving the mediators a more pivotal role in the inclusion process;
51. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include Romani girls and women more explicitly with active labour market policies, including the Youth Guarantee;
52. Calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that the fundamental rights of Romani women and children are respected, and that – also by means of awareness-raising campaigns – Romani women and girls are aware of their rights under existing national legislation on gender equality and discrimination, and to further combat patriarchal and sexist traditions ;

### ***Quality employment services***

53. Calls on the Member States to ensure quality employment services for Romani youth, including those not in employment, education and training and who are contending with extreme poverty;
54. 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;

55. Highlights that the most critical points to address in the area of Romani employment are the effective transition from education to the open labour market; highlights the importance of tackling diverse forms of undeclared employment, discrimination by employers, of matching labour demand with labour supply;
56. Calls on the Commission to fulfil its commitment to adopting an action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and to incorporate Romani inclusion as an indicator in the social scoreboard; urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure, access to decent jobs, fair wages and working conditions for Romani people 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;

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57. 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.

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<sup>1</sup>; whereas 50 % of Roma between the ages of 6 and 24 do not attend school and

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<sup>1</sup> Commission report of 5 September on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies (COM(2019)0406), p.3.

whereas 63 % of young Roma (aged 16-24) are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to the 12 % EU average<sup>2</sup>; whereas the increasing share of Roma NEETs was an area where the situation had deteriorated in 2016 compared to 2011<sup>3</sup>;

- 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<sup>4</sup>; 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 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

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<sup>2</sup> COM(2019)0406, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Roma inclusion measures reported under the EU framework for NRIS, SWD(2019) 320 final, PART 1/2, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup>; whereas missing property and personal documents such as birth certificates and identity cards are a barrier to 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;

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<sup>5</sup> COM(2019)0406.

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 antigypsyism<sup>6</sup>; 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

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<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0075.



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+)<sup>7</sup>, which in its Article 4(1)(viii) 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

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<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0350.



- 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, 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<sup>8</sup>;
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

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<sup>8</sup> Fresno JM, Lajčáková J, Szira J, Mačáková S, Karoly M, Rossi M, 'A meta-evaluation of interventions for Roma inclusion', Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019.

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;
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 Directive<sup>9</sup> provides protection and guarantees

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<sup>9</sup> Article 3(1)(h) of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment

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 settlements<sup>10</sup>;
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 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, sewerage 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;

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between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> A Meta-Evaluation of Interventions for Roma Inclusion, Joint Research Center, 2019, Publications Office of the European Union

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<sup>11</sup>;

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<sup>12</sup> 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<sup>13</sup>, 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<sup>14</sup>;
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

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<sup>11</sup> OJ L 167, 4.7.2018, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Annex XI on ex ante conditionalities, Part I: Thematic ex ante conditionalities, Investment Priority 9.2 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

<sup>13</sup> Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Anna, *Revisiting the EU Roma Framework: Assessing the European Dimension for the Post-2020 Future*, Open Society Institute, June 2017, p.17.

<sup>14</sup> 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.



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;
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

<b>Date adopted</b>	23.6.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 46 -: 5 0: 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Marc Angel, Gabriele 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 Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Nicolaus Fest, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Heléne Fritzon, Helmut Geuking, Alicia Homs Ginel, France Jamet, Agnes Jongerius, Radan Kanev, Ádám Kósa, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Katrin Langensiepen, Miriam Lexmann, Elena Luzzi, Radka Maxová, Sandra Pereira, Dragoş Pîslaru, Manuel Pizarro, Dennis Radtke, Elżbieta Rafalska, Guido Reil, Daniela Rondinelli, Mounir Satouri, Monica Semedo, Beata Szydło, Eugen Tomac, Romana Tomc, Yana Toom, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Nikolaj Villumsen, Marianne Vind, Maria Walsh, Stefania Zambelli, Tatjana Ždanoka, Tomáš Zdechovský
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Anna Júlia Donáth, José Gusmão, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Kim Van Sparrentak

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

46	+
EPP	David Casa, Jarosław Duda, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Radan Kanev, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Miriam Lexmann, Dennis Radtke, Eugen Tomac, Romana Tomc, Maria Walsh, Tomáš Zdechovský
S&D	Marc Angel, Gabriele Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Milan Brglez, Klára Dobrev, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Helène Fritzon, Alicia Homs Ginel, Agnes Jongerius, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Manuel Pizarro, Marianne Vind
RENEW	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Sylvie Brunet, Anna Júlia Donáth, Dragoş Pîslaru, Monica Semedo, Yana Toom, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
VERTS/ALE	Katrin Langensiepen, Mounir Satouri, Kim Van Sparrentak, Tatjana Ždanoka
ECR	Helmut Geuking, Elzbieta Rafalska, Beata Szydło, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová
GUE/NGL	Leila Chaibi, José Gusmão, Sandra Pereira, Nikolaj Villumsen
NI	Daniela Rondinelli

5	-
ID	Nicolaus Fest, France Jamet, Elena Lizzi, Guido Reil, Stefania Zambelli

3	0
EPP	Andrea Bocskor, Ádám Kósa
RENEW	Radka Maxová

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention



## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

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

Rapporteur: Peter Pollák

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Culture and Education 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:

1. Notes that in some Member States only limited progress has been achieved over previous years in the education of socially disadvantaged Roma children due, in particular, to the lack of political will and antigypsyism, which cause the gap between Roma and non-Roma pupils and students in terms of educational outcomes to remain high; recalls that providing Roma children with an equal start in life is essential to break the cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty; urges Member States to adopt a holistic approach across all policy areas and to place the education of Roma children high on governments' agendas, in order to fight effectively against the poverty, social exclusion and antigypsyism that they experience;
2. Recalls that Roma pupils are EU citizens, and that as such they have the same rights and obligations, should be provided with equal opportunities and should be educated in mainstream high quality and inclusive education settings at all levels; recalls that despite existing anti-discrimination legislation and policies, the practice of segregating Roma pupils in special schools or classes, even within the mainstream education settings, remains widespread in some Member States; insists that effective desegregation strategies, based on desegregation benchmarks and the exchange of best practices regarding inclusive and intercultural education, should be put in place, especially by EU Member States with a sizeable Roma population; recalls that the role of Roma educators in desegregating education is essential, and stresses the need for awareness-raising and anti-discrimination training for educational staff in order to effectively eliminate antigypsyism in the educational sector;
3. Recommends that, given the importance of high quality early childhood education, which is known to correlate with better learning outcomes and to lay the foundations for later social inclusion, the education of vulnerable Roma pupils should start as early as possible, preferably at the age of three, taking into account the specific conditions in each Member State, by including them in affordable, accessible and inclusive early childhood and childcare services; urges Member States to develop and implement

strategies and programmes aimed at facilitating the access of Roma to childcare facilities, schools and universities, which is a precondition for personal and career development, and recalls that extra-curricular activities, such as sports or artistic activities, are excellent means of inclusion;

4. Insists that Roma children should stay in education until at least the completion of upper secondary education; to this end, urges Member States to ensure sufficient financing so that mainstream education policies reinforce schools' and teachers' capacities to respond appropriately to Roma pupils' learning needs; calls on the Commission to enhance its strategy to try to further reduce the number of Roma children dropping out of the educational system and to avoid grade repetition, notably by analysing those measures with the highest success rate, facilitating the exchange of best practices between Member States and promoting Roma people success stories in Erasmus+; stresses the need to provide family support and appropriate teacher training, as well as early, regular and timely support for Roma pupils and students, including after-school learning;
5. Urges Member States to facilitate the transition between various educational pathways, including up to tertiary education, by providing adequate educational and career guidance and support programmes, and offering empowerment coaching for the transition from school to working life, as well as financial assistance such as scholarships, grants and loans, in order to allow Roma youth to obtain the qualifications – including digital and entrepreneurial skills – they need for effective social and labour market integration;
6. Recalls the pressing need to involve Roma parents in each stage of their children's schooling; urges Member States to develop programmes aimed at the inclusion of Roma parents in the process of their children's schooling and educational and personal development; stresses that the ability of Member States to ensure the involvement of Roma parents is highly dependent on multiple factors, both societal and economic, and asks for special support – in terms of health integrity, school food and clothing supply – for Roma families facing economic, social, medical or housing difficulties;
7. Stresses that Roma pupils are disproportionately affected by measures taken in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, due to the fact that the vast majority of them live in poor, marginalised neighbourhoods and lack any means of access to remote learning or home schooling; urges Member States to avoid a situation of total educational breakdown for these Roma children and to ensure that they benefit from the same quality education as other pupils;
8. Urges the Member States to promote the Roma language, culture and history in school curricula as a strategy to combat discrimination, reduce negative attitudes towards people with Romani background and enhance their socio-cultural inclusion.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	22.6.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 25 -: 3 0: 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Asim Ademov, Isabella Adinolfi, Christine Anderson, Andrea Bocskor, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ilana Cicurel, Gilbert Collard, Gianantonio Da Re, Laurence Farreng, Tomasz Frankowski, Romeo Franz, Irena Joveva, Petra Kammerevert, Niyazi Kizilyürek, Predrag Fred Matic, Dace Melbārde, Victor Negrescu, Niklas Nienaaß, Peter Pollák, Marcos Ros Sempere, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Andrey Slabakov, Massimiliano Smeriglio, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Salima Yenbou, Milan Zver
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Pernando Barrena Arza, Loucas Furlas, Ibán García Del Blanco

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

25	+
PPE	Asim Ademov, Andrea Bocskor, Loucas Furlas, Tomasz Frankowski, Peter Pollák, Michaela Šojdrová, Sabine Verheyen, Milan Zver
S&D	Ibán García del Blanco, Petra Kammerevert, Predrag Fred Matić, Victor Negrescu, Marcos Ros Sempere, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Massimiliano Smeriglio
RENEW	Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ilana Cicurel, Laurence Farreng, Irena Joveva
VERTS/ALE	Romeo Franz, Niklas Nienaß, Salima Yenbou
GUE/NGL	Pernando Barrena Arza, Niyazi Kizilyürek
NI	Isabella Adinolfi
3	-
ID	Christine Anderson, Gilbert Collard, Gianantonio Da Re
2	0
ECR	Dace Melbārde, Andrey Slabakov

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

9.7.2020

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

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

Rapporteur for opinion: Lívía Járóka

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality 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 Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority with approximately 6 million people with Romani background living in the EU, the majority of whom hold the citizenship of a Member State; whereas the term 'Roma' encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Sinti and Boyash; whereas every person in the EU has an equal right and duty to become a full, active and integrated member of society, while statistics show that Roma are still being deprived of their human rights in Europe and around 80 % of people with Romani background live below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold; whereas Roma are part of Europe's culture and values and they have contributed to the cultural richness, diversity, economy and common history of the EU; whereas the protection and strengthening of cultural heritage related to national minorities in the Member States play a crucial role in social cohesion; whereas people with Romani background must be able to participate fully and have a real say in the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of measures to improve their situation;
- B. whereas women and girls with Romani background are often subjected to intersectional discrimination related to anti-gypsyism and sexism and to harmful stereotypes, both by society at large and within their own communities; whereas they constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups in the Member States, live in inadequate settlements with unequal access and specific barriers to education, work, health services, tap water and sanitation, and are among the groups most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- C. whereas the Roma community is a minority at a risk of social exclusion, due to unequal

access to or low levels of education, resulting in lack of qualifications required in the labour market and, consequently, a worse living and health situation; whereas the share of absenteeism, early school leaving and the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) among Roma is much higher than the average, with 68 % of Roma leaving education early in contrast to the Europe 2020 early school leavers target of 10 %; whereas only 18 % of children with Romani background continue on to higher education; whereas there is need for better educational support, career-planning and change in attitudes among professionals in education towards Roma students to support their job skills and access to labour;

- D. whereas 72 % of young women with Romani background aged 16 to 24 years are NEETs, compared with 55 % of young men with Romani background; whereas 28 % of all women with Romani background surveyed in the EU-MIDIS II survey indicate 'domestic work' as their main activity, compared with 6 % of all men; whereas this ratio is high for women with Romani background in comparison to women of the general population<sup>49</sup>; whereas gender stereotypes, traditions and patriarchal structures harm women and men, hinder women's rights and the achievement of gender equality and can never be used as an excuse for violence or oppression: whereas education tools for gender sensitive education in order to tackle stereotypes are crucial from an early age;
- E. whereas a large part of the Roma population becomes independent and starts a family at a very young age; whereas young Roma women with families and that live in inadequate settlements are at a high risk of exclusion and marginalisation; whereas this phenomenon needs to be understood and tackled through gender-sensitive measures together with Roma; whereas there is a need for targeted and gender-sensitive investments specifically in young women and men with Romani background who marry, leave school and go to work at an early age, which leads them to obtaining low-skilled jobs with little opportunity for personal development; whereas counselling, the role of the family, and knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights when it comes to supporting young families with Romani background are therefore crucial and requires culturally sensitive work based on basic knowledge of cultural differences and traditions between Roma culture and mainstream culture;
- F. whereas women with Romani background are particularly at risk of poverty, social exclusion and severe deprivation; whereas they lack access to housing and education, experience significantly lower employment both in comparison to Roma men and the general population and continue to have their health rights violated; whereas the specific needs of LGBTI+ Roma, Roma women with disabilities and elderly Roma continue to be severely underserved;
- G. whereas women with Romani background report much lower employment rates (16 %) than men with Romani background (34 %); whereas, in comparison, the gender gap in the general population is still substantial, but it is not as large as it is among people with Romani background – 71 % of men are employed, compared to 57 % of women<sup>50</sup>;
- H. whereas access to health services is of particular importance for women, especially the safe, timely and full access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), since it

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<sup>49</sup> Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, FRA (2016).

<sup>50</sup> Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, FRA (2016).



is a basis towards achieving gender equality;

- I. whereas there is a significant number of people with Romani background residing in the Western Balkans, who have a worse life expectancy, health, education, employment, situation compared to people living in the European Union;
- J. whereas women with Romani background face consistent exclusion from meaningful participation in society and democracy, and lack representation in both the European and national parliaments and at regional and local level; whereas it is essential to support the promotion of gender equality and equality for minorities in the Roma population; whereas the principle of gender mainstreaming must be applied in the planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of improving the situation of Roma;
- K. whereas the principle of non-discrimination and equality are fundamental values enshrined in the Treaty on the European Union and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; whereas people with Romani background are facing particular hurdles in accessing public services in the areas of employment, housing, and education from early childhood; whereas such discrimination has an even bigger impact on women as they often have to assume a major part of the domestic tasks; whereas the specific needs of victims of discrimination due to sexual orientation continue to be severely underserved;
- L. whereas the Roma community has been significantly affected by the economic and social fall-out impact of the COVID-19 crisis; whereas many have lost their sources of daily income and face reduced access to social benefits, which have often been made more difficult by quarantine measures; whereas the number of hate crimes and instances of discrimination of Roma citizens have increased in certain areas during the pandemic and pose a disproportionate risk to women and girls;
  - 1. Notes with regret the serious lack of progress made with regard to the empowerment and inclusion of Roma women since the adoption of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) up to 2020;
  - 2. Urges the Commission to ensure that women and girls with Romani background are included in the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and in all stages of policy design in all EU policy areas, including the EU Recovery Plan and the reinforced 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF), in line with the Strategy's cross-cutting principle of intersectionality; calls on the Commission to guarantee the gender perspective in an ambitious post-2020 EU Framework for NRIS; calls on the Commission and the Member States to include and mainstream a gender and child-sensitive approach based on analysis of the needs of women and children with Romani background and targeted interventions focusing on the rights of women with Romani background, empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the next NRIS;
  - 3. Urges the Member States to achieve effective results in the implementation of local measures to support NRIS in four key areas: access to education, employment, healthcare, and housing; calls, therefore, on Member State governments, local authorities and, where relevant, EU institutions to involve Roma women, through women's organisations, Roma NGOs and relevant stakeholders, in the preparation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the NRIS and to create links between

gender equality bodies, women's rights organisations and social inclusion strategies so as to build trust with communities and ensure sensitivity to local contexts; further calls on the Commission to address gender equality in a consistent manner when implementing the EU 2020 Strategy and national reform programmes; calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle anti-gypsyism as a form of racism that can lead to structural discrimination;

4. Calls on the Commission to present a 'flowchart' of the EU Roma inclusion process that covers achievements, objectives, the specific measures used to attain these objectives, the state of play as regards implementation measures and the next steps;
5. Stresses the need to respect the SRHR of women and girls from Romani background, which includes working on improving their access to comprehensive sexual education, medical check-ups, prenatal and postnatal care and family planning – including safe and legal abortion; strongly condemns the ethnic segregation of women with Romani background in maternal health care facilities; calls on the Member States to immediately prohibit all forms of ethnic segregation in health facilities, including maternal healthcare settings; calls on the Member States to ensure effective and timely remedies to all survivors of forced and coercive sterilisation, including through the establishment of effective compensation schemes;
6. Calls on the Member States to include access to desegregated education programmes, particularly early childhood, adult and life-long learning in their NRIS programmes and targeted actions to address absenteeism and early school-leaving so as to include Roma women in education and consequently the labour market; calls on the Member States to include the empowerment of Roma women and girls as a horizontal objective in all NRIS priority areas, and to actively encourage their participation in society and public life; urges the Member States to address gender-based violence against women and girls with Romani background, including early and forced marriages, lack of access to SRHR, forced sterilisation, police brutality, or various other forms of exploitation;
7. Urges, therefore, all Member States who have not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention to do so urgently;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to include girls and women with Romani background more explicitly in labour-market policies, including the Youth Guarantee;
9. Highlights the need to secure the jobs and life of people with Romani background in order to avoid them falling into even more poverty and vulnerability after this period; calls, therefore, for the implementation of International Labour Organization Conventions 190 and 189, in order to strengthen the rights of workers, especially women, with a view to ending the informal economy;
10. Calls on the Member States to implement the provisions set out in the Council recommendation of 9 December 2013<sup>51</sup>, which promote employment opportunities in the civil service for persons with minority ethnic origin, such as people with Romani background and women in particular;

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<sup>51</sup> OJ C 378, 24.12.2013, p.1.

11. Stresses that the gender gap in labour market participation among people with Romani background could be explained by the higher engagement of women in domestic work as their main activity; calls on the Member States to combat ethnic and gender-based stereotypes affecting women with Romani background;
12. Calls on the Member States to encourage the stronger engagement of businesses, particularly at local level, and consider supporting the development of social enterprises to create sustainable workplaces for people with Romani background, with a focus on women;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States for a real funding plan to get women, and notably the most vulnerable ones, out of macho and sexual violence and to enable them to obtain emergency material and moral assistance with access to housing, psychological and financial monitoring and support towards financial independence;
14. Highlights the need for special assistance to be put in place for the most vulnerable women, victims of trafficking and prostitution, to enable them to obtain the needed care and security to get them out of sexual exploitation;
15. Anticipates the upcoming EU strategy on the eradication of trafficking in human beings, since women and girls with Romani background particularly vulnerable; underlines the need for a clear gender focus and for a perspective focused on victims' rights, including measures and strategies to reduce demand; further calls on the Council to unblock negotiations on the horizontal anti-discrimination directive, as it is a prerequisite to achieving equality in the EU;
16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop public policies to create an environment in which people with Romani background can confidently report incidents of discriminatory treatment, including discriminatory ethnic profiling, and know that their complaints are taken seriously and dealt with by the competent authorities;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support access to justice for Romani people, with a focus on victims of multiple discrimination such as women, LGBTI+ and non-citizen Roma and to reinforce the capacity of equality bodies to deal with discrimination against people with Romani background;
18. Calls on the Member States to combat the spatial segregation, forced evictions and homelessness faced by men and women with Romani background; notes with concern that, according to the Commission's 2019 implementation report<sup>52</sup>, housing is the policy with the fewest examples of promising approaches common to several countries; calls, therefore, on the Member States to take measures to dramatically improve housing conditions with transparent policies, and to move towards desegregation as a long-term priority instead of improving quality in segregated settings; stresses the need to engage beneficiaries with Romani background in the design and implementation of the community and individual housing options;
19. Calls on the Member States to ensure that austerity measures do not disproportionately affect Roma and Traveller women and that budget decisions are underpinned by human rights principles; encourages the Member States to set up programmes targeted and

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<sup>52</sup> SWD(2019)0320 final

tailored to provide support for women with Romani background that will increase their participation through education (including cultural, historical and civic), professional activity, health protection and better housing and address any areas of potential discrimination; calls on the Commission to consider a new funding tool or sub-programme that is linked to an existing EU educational and social funding programme, and is intended for targeted and tailored support in the provision of quality education to pupils with Romani background, and to girls in particular;

20. Highlights the importance of encouraging young people with Romani background to complete higher education in order to improve their job perspectives and their participation in society;
21. Calls on the Member States to place greater emphasis on the territorial aspects of social inclusion in their NRIS, and to target the most deprived micro-regions by means of complex and integrated development programmes;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to conduct gender impact assessments when designing the specific measures of their NRIS;
23. Calls on the Member States to ensure equal access to quality and affordable childcare and early childhood education, childhood development services and parent partnership education for children with Romani background, to reintroduce the Barcelona targets for childcare, and to develop accessible, affordable and high-quality care services for the whole life cycle;
24. Calls on the Member States to take all necessary measures to prevent the dismissal of employees during pregnancy or motherhood, and to consider recognising the raising of children as a period counting towards pension entitlements;
25. Calls on the Member States to promote networks of students with Romani background, to encourage solidarity between them, so as to increase the visibility of successful cases and to overcome the isolation of students with Romani background;
26. Calls on the Member States to encourage the participation of families with Romani background in schools, to assess the schools in which children and young people with Romani background study, and to make all necessary changes to ensure the educational integration and achievement of all; points out that specific measures should target girls with Romani background, on the basis of successful cases that have been validated by the academic community;
27. Points out that best practices from the Member States should be exchanged and promoted throughout Europe, including the Balkan region, regarding, inter alia, the structure of housing and mobility support, access to health services including SRHR and health insurance coverage, tax policies and the promotion of early childhood facilities; notes that tax policies should be optimised to strengthen incentives for labour market participation among women with Romani background;
28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the fundamental rights of women and children with Romani background are respected, using various means that include awareness-raising campaigns, to ensure that women and girls with Romani background are aware of their rights under existing national legislation on gender

equality and discrimination, and to further combat patriarchal and sexist traditions;

29. Calls on the Member States to implement current and upcoming country-specific recommendations under the European Semester, including measures for women with Romani background in partnership agreements; further stresses the need for the systematic collection of robust disaggregated data and impact indicators to inform policy developments and to ensure that progress is measured and monitored; recalls the importance of capacity building in both regards;
30. Stresses that NRIS must focus on empowering women with Romani background to take control of their own lives by becoming visible agents of change within their communities and by using their voices to influence policies and programmes that affect them; stresses that NRIS must reinforce the socio-economic resilience of women with Romani background (i.e. their ability to adapt to the rapidly changing economic environment), through effectuating savings and preventing assets from being run down.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	3.7.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 27 -: 7 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Christine Anderson, Simona Baldassarre, Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Annika Bruna, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Frances Fitzgerald, Cindy Franssen, Helène Fritzon, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Lívia Járóka, Arba Kokalari, Alice Kuhnke, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Andželika Anna Możdżanowska, Maria Noichl, Pina Picierno, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Samira Rafaela, Evelyn Regner, Diana Riba i Giner, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Christine Schneider, Isabella Tovaglieri, Ernest Urtasun, Hilde Vautmans, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Abir Al-Sahlani, Elena Kountoura, Terry Reintke, Jadwiga Wiśniewska



## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

27	+
GUE/NGL	Elena Kountoura, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
PPE	Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Frances Fitzgerald, Cindy Franssen, Lívia Járóka, Arba Kokalari, Elżbieta Katarzyna Lukacijewska, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Christine Schneider, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi
Renew	Abir Al-Sahlani, Samira Rafaela, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Hilde Vautmans, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou
S&D	Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Helène Fritzon, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Maria Noichl, Pina Picierno, Evelyn Regner
Verts/ALE	Alice Kuhnke, Terry Reintke, Diana Riba i Giner, Ernest Urtasun

7	-
ECR	Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Andželika Anna Moźdzanowska, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
ID	Christine Anderson, Simona Baldassarre, Annika Bruna, Isabella Tovaglieri

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	3.9.2020
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 52 -: 9 0: 5
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Magdalena Adamowicz, Malik Azmani, Katarina Barley, Fernando Barrena Arza, Pietro Bartolo, Nicolas Bay, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Patrick Breyer, Saskia Bricmont, Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Damien Carême, Caterina Chinnici, Clare Daly, Anna Júlia Donáth, Lena Düpont, Cornelia Ernst, Laura Ferrara, Nicolaus Fest, Jean-Paul Garraud, Sylvie Guillaume, Andrzej Halicki, Balázs Hidvéghi, Evin Incir, Sophia in 't Veld, Patryk Jaki, Livia Járóka, Marina Kaljurand, Assita Kanko, Fabienne Keller, Peter Kofod, Moritz Körner, Alice Kuhnke, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Lukas Mandl, Nuno Melo, Roberta Metsola, Nadine Morano, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Nicola Procaccini, Paulo Rangel, Terry Reintke, Diana Riba i Giner, Ralf Seekatz, Birgit Sippel, Sylwia Spurek, Tineke Strik, Ramona Strugariu, Annalisa Tardino, Tomas Tobé, Dragoș Tudorache, Milan Uhrík, Tom Vandendriessche, Bettina Vollath, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Elena Yoncheva, Javier Zarzalejos
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Malin Björk, Klára Dobrev, Nathalie Loiseau, Kostas Papadakis, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Loránt Vincze

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

52	+
PPE	Magdalena ADAMOWICZ, Vladimír BILČÍK, Vasile BLAGA, Ioan-Rareş BOGDAN, Lena DÜPONT, Andrzej HALICKI, Balázs HIDVÉGHY, Livia JÁRÓKA, Lukas MANDL, Nuno MELO, Roberta METSOLA, Nadine MORANO, Paulo RANGEL, Ralf SEEKATZ, Tomas TOBÉ, Loránt VINCZE, Javier ZARZALEJOS
S&D	Katarina BARLEY, Pietro BARTOLO, Caterina CHINNICI, Klára DOBREV, Sylvie GUILLAUME, Evin INCIR, Marina KALJURAND, Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR, Javier MORENO SÁNCHEZ, Domènec RUIZ DEVESA, Birgit SIPPEL, Sylwia SPUREK, Bettina VOLLATH, Elena YONCHEVA
RENEW	Malik AZMANI, Anna Júlia DONÁTH, Sophia in 't VELD, Fabienne KELLER, Moritz KÖRNER, Nathalie LOISEAU, Maite PAGAZAURTUNDÚA, Ramona STRUGARIU, Dragoş TUDORACHE
GREENS/EFA	Patrick BREYER, Saskia BRICMONT, Damien CARÊME, Alice KUHNKE, Terry REINTKE, Diana RIBA I GINER, Tineke STRIK
EUL/NGL	Fernando BARRENA ARZA, Malin BJÖRK, Clare DALY, Cornelia ERNST
NI	Laura FERRARA

9	-
ID	Nicolas BAY, Nicolaus FEST, Jean-Paul GARRAUD, Peter KOFOOD, Annalisa TARDINO, Tom VANDENDRIESSCHE
ECR	Jorge BUXADÉ VILLALBA, Nicola PROCACCINI
NI	Milan UHRÍK

5	0
ECR	Joachim Stanisław BRUDZIŃSKI, Patryk JAKI, Assita KANKO, Jadwiga WIŚNIEWSKA
NI	Kostas PAPADAKIS

### Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention