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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020**

## 1. IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF ROMA: A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE FOR THE UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES

Many of the estimated 10-12 million<sup>1</sup> Roma in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They are marginalised and live in very poor socio-economic conditions. This is not acceptable in the European Union (EU) at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The EU's Europe 2020 strategy for a new growth path – smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – leaves no room for the persistent economic and social marginalisation of what constitutes Europe's largest minority. Determined action, in active dialogue with the Roma, is needed both at national and EU level. While primary responsibility for that action rests with public authorities, it remains a challenge given that the social and economic integration of Roma is a two-way process which requires a change of mindsets of the majority of the people as well as of members of the Roma communities<sup>2</sup>.

First of all, Member States need to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against but treated like any other EU citizens with equal access to all fundamental rights as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. In addition, action is needed to break the vicious cycle of poverty moving from one generation to the next. In many Member States, Roma represent a significant and growing proportion of the school age population and therefore the future workforce. The Roma population is young: 35.7% are under 15 compared to 15.7% of the EU population overall. The average age is 25 among Roma, compared with 40 across the EU<sup>3</sup>. The vast majority of working-age Roma lack the education needed to find good jobs. It is therefore of crucial importance to invest in the education of Roma children to allow them later on to successfully enter the labour market. In Member States with significant Roma populations, this already has an economic impact. According to estimates, in Bulgaria, about 23% of new labour entrants are Roma, in Romania, about 21%<sup>4</sup>.

A significant number of Roma living in the EU are legally residing third-country nationals. They share the same severe living conditions as many Roma holding EU citizenship, whilst facing also challenges of migrants coming from outside the EU. These challenges are addressed in the context of EU policies to stimulate integration of third-country nationals, while taking into account the needs of especially vulnerable groups<sup>5</sup>.

Integrating the Roma people will not only bring social benefits, but will also economically benefit both Roma people as well as the communities they are part of. According to a recent

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Roma” is used – similarly to other political documents of the European Parliament and the European Council – as an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or not; around 80% of Roma are estimated to be sedentary (SEC(2010)400).

<sup>2</sup> COM(2010) 133, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano, *Health and the Roma community, analysis of the situation in Europe*, 2009. The study looks at Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, *Roma Inclusion: An Economic Opportunity for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia*, September 2010.

<sup>5</sup> A communication on a European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals is foreseen in 2011.

research by the World Bank<sup>6</sup>, for instance, full Roma integration in the labour market could bring economic benefits estimated to be around €0.5 billion annually for some countries. Greater participation of Roma in the labour market would improve economic productivity, reduce government payments for social assistance and increase revenue from income taxes. According to the same World Bank study, the tax benefits of Roma integration in the labour market are estimated to be around €175 million annually per country. All of these important economic and financial consequences of Roma integration could in turn foster a climate of greater openness to the Roma people with the general public and thereby contribute to their smooth integration in the communities of which they are part of.

Economic integration of the Roma will also contribute to social cohesion and improve respect for fundamental rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and help eliminating discrimination based on someone's race, colour, ethnic, social origin or membership of a minority<sup>7</sup>.

The EU has made several proposals for Member States to promote the social and economic integration of Roma, most recently in its Communication of April 2010<sup>8</sup>. Member States are already under an obligation to give Roma (like other EU citizens) non-discriminatory access to education, employment, vocational training, healthcare, social protection and housing through Directive 2000/43/EC. The rigorous monitoring of the implementation of this Directive can be a useful instrument for measuring the integration of Roma<sup>9</sup>.

In spite of some progress achieved both in the Member States and at EU level<sup>10</sup> over the past years, little has changed in the day-to-day situation of most of the Roma. According to the Commission's Roma Task Force findings<sup>11</sup>, strong and proportionate measures are still not yet in place to tackle the social and economic problems of a large part of the EU's Roma population.

To address this challenge, and since non-discrimination alone is not sufficient to combat the social exclusion of Roma, the Commission asks the EU institutions to endorse this EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. It is a means to complement and reinforce the EU's equality legislation and policies by addressing, at national, regional and local level, but also through dialogue with and participation of the Roma, the specific needs of Roma regarding equal access to employment, education, housing and healthcare.

**This EU Framework seeks to make a tangible difference to Roma people's lives. It is the EU's response to the current situation and does not replace Member States' primary responsibility in this regard. With this EU Framework, the European Commission encourages Member States, in proportion to the size of the Roma population living in**

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<sup>6</sup> World Bank, Roma Inclusion: An Economic Opportunity for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia, September 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Treaty on the European Union, Article 2 and Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 21.

<sup>8</sup> COM(2010) 133, *The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe*.

<sup>9</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (OJ L 180, 19.7.2009).

<sup>10</sup> COM(2010) 133, section 2.

<sup>11</sup> The Commission Roma Task Force was created on 7 September 2010 to streamline, assess and benchmark the use (including the effectiveness) of EU funds by all Member States for Roma integration and identify underpinning deficiencies in the use of funds.

**their territories<sup>12</sup> and taking into account their different starting points, to adopt or to develop further a comprehensive approach to Roma integration and endorse the following goals.**

## **2. A NEED FOR A TARGETED APPROACH: AN EU FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES**

To achieve significant progress towards Roma integration, it is now crucial to step up a gear and ensure that national, regional and local integration policies **focus on Roma** in a **clear and specific** way, and address the needs of Roma with **explicit measures** to prevent and compensate for disadvantages they face. A targeted approach, within the broader strategy to fight against poverty and exclusion – which does not exclude other vulnerable and deprived group from support – is compatible with the principle of non-discrimination both at EU and national level. The principle of equal treatment does not prevent Member States from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to racial or ethnic origin<sup>13</sup>. Some Member States have already successfully used positive action in favour of Roma, considering that classical social inclusion measures were not sufficient to meet Roma specific needs<sup>14</sup>.

To ensure that effective policies are in place in the Member States, the Commission proposes that **national Roma integration strategies** are designed or, where they already exist, are adapted to meet **EU Roma integration goals**, with targeted actions and sufficient funding (national, EU and other) to deliver them. It proposes solutions to address the current barriers to a more effective use of EU funds and lays the foundations of a **robust monitoring mechanism** to ensure concrete results for Roma.

## **3. EXPRESSING THE EU AMBITION: SETTING ROMA INTEGRATION GOALS**

The European Commission's Annual Growth Survey<sup>15</sup> showed that much needs to be done by Member States and the EU to implement the Europe 2020 strategy and to achieve its headline targets, supported by flagship initiatives<sup>16</sup>. For a number of Member States, addressing the situation of Roma in terms of employment, poverty and education will contribute to progress towards Europe 2020 employment, social inclusion and education targets.

**EU Roma integration** goals should cover, in proportion to the size of the Roma population, **four crucial areas: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing**. These minimum standards should be based on common, comparable and reliable indicators. The achievement of these goals is important to help Member States reaching the overall targets of the Europe 2020 strategy.

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<sup>12</sup> See the estimates of the Council of Europe at [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default_EN.asp), which are included in the Annex to this Communication.

<sup>13</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC (OJ L 180 19.7.2000).

<sup>14</sup> For example, the United Kingdom's local Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) is a tailored service to achieve equal access to education and equal educational outcomes for Traveller and Roma children. Another example is the JOBS for Roma project in Bulgaria which offers assistance for unemployed Roma and support for entrepreneurs. Other examples can be found in the Commission's report "Improving the tools for the social inclusion and non-discrimination of Roma in the EU", 2010. See also European Commission, "International perspectives on positive action measures", 2009.

<sup>15</sup> COM(2011) 11, Annual Growth Survey: advancing the EU's comprehensive response to the crisis.

<sup>16</sup> Out of seven flagship initiatives, the most relevant in this context are the *European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs* and the *Innovation Union*.

- **Access to education: *Ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school***

Educational achievement within the Roma population is much lower than the rest of the population, although the situation differs among Member States<sup>17</sup>.

While primary school attendance is compulsory in all Member States, Member States have a duty to ensure that primary education is available to all children at the compulsory ages. According to the best available evidence from the Labour Force Survey 2009<sup>18</sup>, an average of 97.5% of children completes primary education across the EU.

Surveys suggest that in some Member States, only a limited number of Roma children complete primary school<sup>19</sup>. Roma children tend to be over-represented in special education and segregated schools. There is a need to strengthen links with communities through cultural/school mediators, churches, religious associations or communities and through active participation of the parents of Roma, to improve the intercultural competences of teachers, to reduce segregation and to ensure compliance with the duty to primary school attendance. The Commission plans a joint action with the Council of Europe to train about 1000 mediators over two years. Mediators can inform and advise parents on the workings of the local education system, and help to ensure that children make the transition between each stage of their school career.

It is well known that children who miss out on, enter late into the school system, or leave too early will subsequently experience significant difficulties, ranging from illiteracy and language problems to feelings of exclusion and inadequacy. As a result, they will have a harder time getting into further education, university or a good job. Therefore, initiatives of second chance programmes for drop-out young adults are encouraged, including programmes with an explicit focus on Roma children. Support should also be given to reform teachers' training curricula and to elaborate innovative teaching methods. Attendance of multiply disadvantaged children requires a cross-sectoral cooperation and appropriate support programmes. The High Level Group on Literacy and the Literacy Campaign the Commission is launching as a contribution to the Europe 2020 flagship "New Skills and Jobs" will stress the importance of combating illiteracy among Roma children and adults.

The Commission adopted a Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care<sup>20</sup> which highlighted that participation rates of Roma children are significantly lower, although their needs for support are greater. Increased access to high quality non-segregated early childhood education can play a key role in overcoming the educational disadvantage faced by Roma children, as highlighted by pilot actions on Roma integration currently underway in some Member States with contributions from the EU budget<sup>21</sup>.

**This is why Member States should ensure that all Roma children have access to quality education and are not subject to discrimination or segregation, regardless of whether they are sedentary or not. Member States should, as a minimum, ensure primary school**

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<sup>17</sup> As regards secondary education, the Roma attendance is about 10% as estimated on the basis of the Open Society Institute (OSI) Survey 2008 (data available for seven Member States).

<sup>18</sup> Labour Force Survey, 2009 - <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/lfs>

<sup>19</sup> Open Society Institute, *International Comparative Data Set on Roma Education*, 2008. Data on primary education is available for 6 Member States: Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia. 42% is the weighted average for these Member States.

<sup>20</sup> COM(2011) 66.

<sup>21</sup> Pilot project: "A Good Start: scaling-up access to quality services for young Roma children".

completion. They should also widen access to quality early childhood education and care and reduce the number of early school leavers from secondary education pursuant to the Europe 2020 strategy. Roma youngsters should be strongly encouraged to participate also in secondary and tertiary education<sup>22</sup>.

- **Access to employment:** *Cut the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population*

The Europe 2020 strategy sets a headline target of 75% of the population aged 20-64 to be employed (on average, the employment rate in the EU amounts to 68.8%<sup>23</sup>). The 2011 Annual Growth Survey outlined how Member States are setting national employment targets in national reform programmes against which progress can be measured. Empirical evidence and research on the socio-economic situation of Roma show that there is a significant gap between the employment rate for Roma and the rest of the population.

The World Bank found that Roma employment rates (especially for women) fall well behind those of the non-Roma majority<sup>24</sup>. A survey by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights in seven Member States also highlights important gaps and indicates that Roma consider themselves to be highly discriminated against in the field of employment<sup>25</sup>.

**This is why Member States should grant Roma people full access in a non-discriminatory way to vocational training, to the job market and to self-employment tools and initiatives. Access to micro-credit should be encouraged. In the public sector, due attention should be given to employment of qualified Roma civil servants. Public Employment Services can reach out to the Roma by providing personalised services and mediation. This can help attract Roma to the labour market and thus increase the employment rate.**

- **Access to healthcare:** *Reduce the gap in health status between the Roma and the rest of the population*

Life expectancy at birth in the EU is 76 for men and 82 for women<sup>26</sup>. For Roma, it is estimated to be 10 years less<sup>27</sup>. In addition, while the infant mortality rate in the EU is 4.3 per thousand live births<sup>28</sup>, there is evidence that the rate is much higher among Roma communities. A United Nations Development Programme report on five countries noted that Roma child mortality rates are 2 to 6 times higher than those for the general population,

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<sup>22</sup> In this context, the potential use of innovative approaches such as ICT-based access to learning and skill acquisition should be actively explored.

<sup>23</sup> COM(2011) 11, Annex 3, *Draft Joint Employment Report*. See also Labour Force Survey, 2009: for 2009 the employment rate was 62.5% for women, 75.8% for men - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_10](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10)

<sup>24</sup> World Bank, op.cit.

<sup>25</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency, European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Main Results Report, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product\\_details/dataset?p\\_product\\_code=TSDPH100](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/dataset?p_product_code=TSDPH100)

<sup>27</sup> COM(2009) 567, *Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU*. See also Fundación Secretariado Gitano, op cit. and Sepkowitz K, "Health of the World's Roma population", 2006, based on the situation in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

<sup>28</sup> Ratio of the number of deaths of children under one year of age during the year, to the number of live births in that year. Eurostat Data, 2009 - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo\\_minfind&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_minfind&lang=en)

depending on the country. High levels of infant mortality among the Roma community are reported in other countries<sup>29</sup>.

This disparity reflects the overall gap in health between Roma and non-Roma. This difference is linked to their poor living situations, lack of targeted information campaign, limited access to quality healthcare and exposure to higher health risks. In the Fundamental Rights Agency survey, discrimination by healthcare personnel also emerged as a particular problem for the Roma<sup>30</sup>: 17% indicated they had experienced discrimination in this area in the previous 12 months. Use of prevention services among the Roma population is low and, according to some studies, over 25% of Roma children are not fully vaccinated<sup>31</sup>.

**This is why Member States should provide access to quality healthcare especially for children and women as well as preventive care and social services at a similar level and under the same conditions to the Roma as to the rest of the population. Where possible, qualified Roma should be involved in healthcare programmes targeting their communities.**

- ***Access to housing and essential services: Close the gap between the share of Roma with access to housing and to public utilities (such as water, electricity and gas) and that of the rest of the population***

Between 72% and 100% of households across the EU are connected to a public water supply<sup>32</sup>. Yet the situation for Roma is much worse. Their often poor housing conditions include an inadequate access to public utilities such as water, electricity or gas and non-sedentary Roma often have difficulty finding sites with access to water<sup>33</sup>. This has a negative impact on their health and overall integration in society.

**This is why Member States should promote non-discriminatory access to housing, including social housing. Action on housing needs to be part of an integrated approach including, in particular, education, health, social affairs, employment and security, and desegregation measures. Member States should also address the particular needs of non-sedentary Roma (e.g. provide access to suitable halting sites for non-sedentary Roma). They should actively intervene with targeted programmes involving regional and local authorities.**

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<sup>29</sup> UNDP, *The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Avoiding the Dependency Trap*, 2003. Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Inequalities Experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities: A review*, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency, *European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, Main Results Report*, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano, *op.cit.* See also University of Sheffield, *The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*, 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Eurostat data, 2002 - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_PUBLIC/8-21032006-AP/EN/8-21032006-AP-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/8-21032006-AP/EN/8-21032006-AP-EN.PDF)

<sup>33</sup> Fundamental Rights Agency, *Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the European Union, Comparative Report*, 2009.

#### 4. NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES: A CLEAR POLICY COMMITMENT FROM MEMBER STATES

Building on the experience of the Member States including those participating in the Roma Decade<sup>34</sup>, the Commission calls on Member States to align their national Roma integration strategies to the targeted approach set out above and extend their planning period up to 2020. Member States that do not have national Roma strategies in place yet are called upon to set similar goals, in proportion to the size of the Roma population living in their territories<sup>35</sup> and taking into account their different starting points as well as the specificities of such populations.

Member States' national strategies should pursue a targeted approach which will, in line with the **Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion**<sup>36</sup>, actively contribute to the social integration of Roma in mainstream society and to eliminating segregation where it exists. They should fit into and contribute to the broader framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and should therefore be **consistent with national reform programmes**.

When developing national Roma integration strategies, Member States should bear in mind the following approaches:

- Set achievable **national goals for Roma integration** to bridge the gap with the general population. These targets should address, as a minimum, the four EU Roma integration goals relating to access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.
- Identify where relevant those **disadvantaged micro-regions or segregated neighbourhoods**, where communities are most deprived, using already available socio-economic and territorial indicators (i.e. very low educational level, long-term unemployment, etc...).
- Allocate a **sufficient funding from national budgets**, which will be complemented, where appropriate, by international and EU funding.
- Include **strong monitoring methods** to evaluate the impact of Roma integration actions and a review mechanism for the adaptation of the strategy.

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<sup>34</sup> The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 is an international initiative that brings together governments, international partner organisations and civil society, to accelerate progress towards Roma inclusion and review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way. The twelve countries currently taking part in the Decade are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Spain as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia. Slovenia has observer status. The international partner organisations of the Decade are the World Bank, OSI, UNDP, Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, OSCE, ERIO, ERTF, ERRC, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, and UNICEF.

<sup>35</sup> See the estimates of the Council of Europe at [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default_EN.asp), which are included in the Annex to this Communication.

<sup>36</sup> The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion were presented at the first Platform meeting on 24 April 2009. They were annexed to the Council conclusions of 8 June 2009. They comprise: 1) constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies 2) explicit but not exclusive targeting 3) inter-cultural approach 4) aiming for the mainstream 5) awareness of the gender dimension 6) transfer of evidence-based policies 7) use of EU instruments 8) involvement of regional and local authorities 9) involvement of civil society 10) active participation of Roma.

- Be designed, implemented and monitored in **close cooperation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities**.
- Appoint a **national contact point for the national Roma integration strategy** with the authority to coordinate the development and implementation of the strategy or, where relevant, rely on suitable existing administrative structures.

**Member States are requested to prepare or revise their national Roma integration strategies and present them to the Commission by the end of December 2011. In spring 2012, ahead of the annual Roma Platform meeting, the Commission will assess these national strategies and report to the European Parliament and to the Council about progress.**

## **5. ACHIEVING CONCRETE RESULTS FOR ROMA PEOPLE**

The implementation and success of national Roma integration strategies will very much depend on an effective and sufficient allocation of national resources. EU funding alone can certainly not solve the situation of Roma, but the Commission recalls that up to **€26.5 billion of EU funding** is currently programmed to support Member States' efforts in the field of social inclusion, including to support efforts to help the Roma<sup>37</sup>.

In April 2010, the Commission<sup>38</sup> called on the Member States to ensure that existing EU financial instruments, and especially the Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, were accessible to Roma. This approach was endorsed by the Council in June 2010<sup>39</sup>. However, most Member States currently do not make yet sufficient use of available EU funds to address the needs of the Roma.

### ***Making progress under the present programming period (2007-2013)...***

- In order to overcome the weaknesses in the development of appropriate strategies and effective measures to implement them where they exist, Member States are invited to amend their operational programmes co-financed by Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development in order to better support Roma targeted projects, and to align them with their national Roma integration strategies.
- The Commission will examine with Member States changes to their operational programmes in order to address new needs, simplify delivery and speed up the implementation of priorities, including the use of the housing-related integrated approach foreseen in the European Regional Development Fund modified Regulation<sup>40</sup>. The Commission will swiftly examine requests for programme modifications that are in relation to the national Roma integration strategies.

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<sup>37</sup> For the European Social Fund, €9.6 billion have been allocated in the period 2007-2013 for measures targeting socio-economic inclusion of disadvantaged people – among them marginalised Roma – and €172 million have been explicitly allocated for actions aiming at integrating the Roma. In the case of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), more than €16.8 billion are planned for social infrastructure.

<sup>38</sup> COM(2010) 133.

<sup>39</sup> Council Conclusions of 7 June 2010, 10058/10+COR 1.

<sup>40</sup> European Parliament and Council Regulation No 437/2010 (OJ L 132, 29.5.2010). On 9 February 2011, the Commission issued a guidance note on the implementation of integrated housing interventions in

- There are significant amounts of EU technical assistance at Member States' disposal (4% of all Structural Funds), out of which Member States on average had only used 31% of their planned allocations until late 2009. These amounts would be lost if not used. When designing their national Roma integration strategies, Member States should therefore make a greater use of EU technical assistance<sup>41</sup> to improve their management, monitoring and evaluation capacities also with regard to Roma-targeted projects. This instrument could also potentially be used by Member States to obtain the expertise of regional, national and international organisations in preparing, implementing and monitoring interventions.
- To surmount capacity issues, such as lack of know-how and administrative capacity of managing authorities and the difficulties of combining funds to support integrated projects, the Commission invites Member States to consider entrusting the management and implementation of some parts of their programmes to intermediary bodies such as international organisations, regional development bodies, churches and religious organisations or communities as well as non-governmental organisations with proven experience in Roma integration and knowledge of actors on the ground<sup>42</sup>. In this respect, the network of the European Economic and Social Committee could be a useful tool<sup>43</sup>.
- Member States should also consider using the European Progress Microfinance Facility,<sup>44</sup> for which a total of €100 million of EU funding is available for the period 2010-2013. The Commission estimates that this amount can be leveraged to more than €500 million in microcredit over the coming eight years. Roma communities are one of the target groups of the instrument<sup>45</sup>. Giving Roma communities the opportunity to start autonomous productive activities could motivate people to actively participate in regular work, reduce benefit dependency and inspire future generations.
- When designing and implementing their national Roma integration strategies, Member States are encouraged to use the European Initiative on Social Innovation, which the Commission intends to launch in 2011 as set out in the Flagship Initiative "European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion". This innovation-based approach can contribute to improving the effectiveness of social inclusion policies.

### *...and beyond 2013*

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favour of marginalised communities under the ERDF, approved by the Committee of Coordination of the Funds.

<sup>41</sup> COM(2010) 110, *Cohesion policy: Strategic Report 2010 on the implementation of the programme 2007-2013* and SEC(2010) 360, reported that Member States used on average only 31% of their allocations in support of preparation, implementation and monitoring of cohesion policy.

<sup>42</sup> In accordance with Council Regulation No 1083/2006, Articles 42 and 43 relating to global grants (OJ L 210, 31.7.2006).

<sup>43</sup> The European Economic and Social Committee has a network of national contact points in the organised civil society through national Economic and Social committees and similar organisations.

<sup>44</sup> European Parliament and Council Decision No 283/2010/EU of 25 March 2010.

<sup>45</sup> The Commission already supports, for example, the Kiútprogram, a small scale pilot project targeting the Roma community in Hungary, which provides relatively small microloans.

As the national Roma integration strategies should cover the period 2011-2020, making best use of the funding that will be made available under the new Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) is important. The MFF will set out the way in which the future EU budget will support the objectives of Europe 2020.

From its inception, Europe 2020 strategy takes into account the situation of the Roma population<sup>46</sup>. Actions to support the integration of the Roma will be part of the relevant EU financial instruments, in particular cohesion policy funds. When preparing its proposals for the future cohesion policy regulatory framework, based on the orientations put forward in the Budget Review<sup>47</sup> and in the conclusions of the fifth Cohesion Report, the Commission will strive to address the current potential barriers to an effective use of cohesion policy funds to support Roma integration.

It will be important to ensure that the investment priorities of the various funds that can be used in the area of social inclusion and fight against poverty underpin the implementation of the national reform programmes and the national Roma integration strategies. They should also set out the necessary pre-conditions for an effective and result-oriented support, including through better evaluation. In addition, the possibility to use positive incentives to redress inequalities will be explored. At the same time, simplifying procedures for the benefit of the programme users will be one of the main elements the Commission will take into account when preparing the future proposals. This is of particular importance for projects addressing Roma needs.

## **6. PROMOTING ROMA INTEGRATION BEYOND THE EU: THE PARTICULAR SITUATION OF ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES**

The Commission's Enlargement Strategy<sup>48</sup> highlighted the precarious situation of many Roma in the Western Balkans and in Turkey. Their number is estimated at 3.8 million by the Council of Europe.

Roma in enlargement countries face similar or even more serious problems than in many EU Member States: social exclusion, segregation and marginalisation leading to lack of education, chronic unemployment, limited access to healthcare, housing and essential services as well as widespread poverty. In addition, due to the wars in the Balkan region, many Roma families had to move as displaced persons to other countries in the region or to Western Europe. In Turkey, Roma groups are diverse, but a large proportion suffers from multi-dimensional social exclusion.

Lessons learned from past accessions suggest that promoting Roma integration requires an enhanced political commitment to Roma inclusion, the allocation of appropriate resources under the national budgets, better coordination with all relevant donors and a systematic evaluation and reinforced monitoring. The EU Roma integration goals are equally relevant to these countries. Their national Roma integration strategies and Action Plans (developed in

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<sup>46</sup> The Integrated Guidelines for economic and employment policies (no 10) contain an explicit reference to Roma. Furthermore, the "Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion" flagship initiative outlines how to address the integration of Roma within the overall policy to fight poverty and social exclusion. Other Guidelines for the employment policies promote employability in a way which helps the socio-economic integration of Roma people.

<sup>47</sup> COM(2010) 700, *The EU Budget Review*.

<sup>48</sup> COM(2010) 660, *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011*.

most cases in the framework of the 2005-2015 Decade of Roma Inclusion) should be reviewed in line with these goals. Turkey has yet to adopt a national framework to address Roma inclusion.

The Commission is committed to help, at regional and national level, the efforts of these countries to improve the social and economic inclusion of Roma through:

- improving the delivery of support under the Instrument on Pre-Accession Assistance towards a strategic and results oriented national and multi-beneficiary programming with a focus on a sector-wide approach for social development. The Commission is currently implementing or planning projects with a total value of more than €50 million which could also exclusively or partly benefit the Roma communities.
- strengthening the involvement of civil society by encouraging institutionalised dialogues with Roma representatives to become involved and take responsibility for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring on regional, national and local level.
- close monitoring of the progress made by each country regarding the economic and social situation of Roma and annual presentation of its conclusions in the enlargement Progress Reports.

## **7. EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY: A STRONGER ROLE FOR THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR ROMA INCLUSION**

The European Platform for Roma Inclusion<sup>49</sup> is a useful forum for debate and concerted actions of all relevant stakeholders: EU institutions, national governments, international organisations, academia and Roma civil society representatives. The Platform has significantly contributed to making both European and national policies more sensitive to Roma needs.

The Commission is committed to playing a stronger role in the Platform and to reinforcing the Platform's role, building on past experience and by linking its work with the four priority areas of national Roma integration strategies.

Through the Platform, concerned stakeholders, especially representatives of the Roma communities, should have the possibility to play a role in the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The strengthened Platform can support Member States to find the relevant policy responses through the exchange of good practices and the discussion of approaches from international organisations with experience in promoting Roma inclusion. It will also provide the Commission with feedback on the results of national efforts on the ground through the voice of Roma civil society.

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<sup>49</sup> The first meeting of the Platform took place in 2009, following the General Affairs Council conclusions of 8 December 2008, which called upon the Commission to organise an exchange of good practices and experiences between Member States in the sphere of inclusion of the Roma, provide analytical support and stimulate cooperation between all parties concerned by Roma issues, including the organisations representing Roma, in the context of an integrated European platform. General Affairs Council Conclusions 15976/1/08 REV 1.

## 8. MEASURING PROGRESS: PUTTING IN PLACE A ROBUST MONITORING SYSTEM

At present, it is difficult to obtain accurate, detailed and complete data on the situation of Roma in the Member States and to identify concrete measures put in place to tackle Roma exclusion and discrimination. It is not possible to assess whether such measures have given the expected results. It is therefore important to collect reliable data.

This is why it is necessary to put in place a **robust monitoring mechanism** with clear benchmarks which will ensure that tangible results are measured, that money directed to Roma integration has reached its final beneficiaries, that there is progress towards the achievement of the EU Roma integration goals and that national Roma integration strategies have been implemented.

The Commission will **report annually to the European Parliament and to the Council** on progress on the integration of the Roma population in Member States and on the achievement of the goals.

The Commission will do so by building on the Roma household survey pilot project carried out by the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation particularly with the World Bank and the Fundamental Rights Agency<sup>50</sup>. The Commission requests the Fundamental Rights Agency to expand this survey on Roma to all Member States and to run it regularly to measure progress on the ground. The Fundamental Rights Agency, working together with other relevant bodies, such as the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, will collect data on the situation of Roma with respect to access to employment, education, healthcare and housing. Data collection will also be drawn from specific research funded by Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities Programme of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. Throughout this process, the Commission, the Fundamental Rights Agency and other Union bodies will, in line with Article 4(2)TEU, respect the national identities of the Member States, inherent to their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive to their regional and self-government.

The Commission will also take into account ongoing work within the Open Method of Coordination in the field of social policies and other Member States contributions based on their own monitoring systems of Roma integration. The in-depth monitoring by Member States and stakeholders of the implementation of national Roma integration strategies is a sound method for enhancing transparency and accountability in order to ensure the most effective impacts of Roma integration.

National reform programmes together with the monitoring and peer review process of the Europe 2020 strategy should be an additional source of information for assessing progress and giving guidance to Member States.

In order to get useful data in the long term, the Commission will also foster cooperation between national statistical offices and Eurostat so as to be able to identify methods to map the EU's least developed micro-regions, where the most marginalised groups live, and in particular Roma, as a first step. This territorial approach to data collection has a direct relevance to tackling Roma poverty and exclusion. In addition, the Fundamental Rights

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<sup>50</sup> UNDP Survey, co-financed by DG REGIO and developed in cooperation with DG REGIO, the FRA, the World Bank and OSI (Spring 2011-Results in the Autumn): 11 Member States covered (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal).

Agency should work with Member States to develop monitoring methods which can provide a comparative analysis of the situation of Roma across Europe.

## **9. CONCLUSION: 10 YEARS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

This EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies provides the opportunity for joining forces at all levels (EU, national, regional) and with all stakeholders, including the Roma, to address one of the most serious social challenges in Europe: putting an end to the exclusion of Roma. It is complementary to the existing EU legislation and policies in the areas of non-discrimination, fundamental rights, the free movement of persons, and the rights of the child<sup>51</sup>. The framework spells out EU level goals for Roma integration to be achieved at national, regional and local level. Those ambitious goals will only be reached if there is a clear commitment from Member States and national, regional and local authorities coupled with involvement of Roma civil society organisations.

The Commission invites the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the European Social and Economic Committee to endorse the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. For over a decade, the EU institutions have been regularly calling on Member States and candidate countries to improve the social and economic integration of Roma. Now is the time to change good intentions into more concrete actions.

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<sup>51</sup> COM(2011) 60, *An EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child*.

Annex — Table elaborated on the basis of Council of Europe's data ([http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default_en.asp))

Figures taken from a document prepared by the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division							
European countries (EU Member States)	Total country population (July 2009)	Official number (last census)	Minimum estimate	Maximum estimate	Average estimate	% of total population (from averages)	Updated
<i>Austria</i>	8.205.533	No data available	20.000	30.000	25.000	0,30%	14/09/2010
<i>Belgium</i>	10.414.336	No data available	20.000	40.000	30.000	0,29%	14/09/2010
<i>Bulgaria</i>	7.262.675	370 908 (2001)	700.000	800.000	750.000	10,33%	14/09/2010
<i>Cyprus</i>	792.604	560 (1960)	1.000	1.500	1.250	0,16%	3/08/2009
<i>Czech Republic</i>	10.220.911	11 718 (2001)	150.000	250.000	200.000	1,96%	14/09/2010
<i>Denmark</i>	5.484.723	No data available	1.000	10.000	5.500	0,10%	3/08/2009
<i>Estonia</i>	1.307.605	584 (2009)	1.000	1.500	1.250	0,10%	3/08/2009
<i>Finland</i>	5.244.749	No data available	10.000	12.000	11.000	0,21%	3/08/2009
<i>France</i>	64.057.790	No data available	300.000	500.000	400.000	0,62%	14/09/2010
<i>Germany</i>	82.400.996	No data available	70.000	140.000	105.000	0,13%	14/09/2010
<i>Greece</i>	10.722.816	No data available	180.000	350.000	265.000	2,47%	14/09/2010
<i>Hungary</i>	9.930.915	190 046 (2001)	400.000	1.000.000	700.000	7,05%	14/09/2010
<i>Ireland</i>	4.156.119	22 435 (2006)	32.000	43.000	37.500	0,90%	14/09/2010
<i>Italy</i>	59.619.290	No data available	110.000	170.000	140.000	0,23%	14/09/2010

<i>Latvia</i>	2.245.423	8 205 (2000)	13.000	16.000	<b>14.500</b>	<b>0,65%</b>	<b>3/08/2009</b>
<i>Lithuania</i>	3.565.205	2 571 (2001)	2.000	4.000	<b>3.000</b>	<b>0,08%</b>	<b>3/08/2009</b>
<i>Luxembourg</i>	486.006	No data available	100	500	<b>300</b>	<b>0,06%</b>	<b>3/08/2009</b>
<i>Malta</i>	403.532	No data available	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>3/08/2009</b>
<i>the Netherlands</i>	16.645.313	No data available	32.000	48.000	<b>40.000</b>	<b>0,24%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Poland</i>	38.500.696	12 731(2002)	15.000	60.000	<b>37.500</b>	<b>0,10%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Portugal</i>	10.676.910	No data available	40.000	70.000	<b>55.000</b>	<b>0,52%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Romania</i>	22.246.862	535 140 (2002)	1.200.000	2.500.000	<b>1.850.000</b>	<b>8,32%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Slovak Republic</i>	5.455.407	89 920 (2001)	400.000	600.000	<b>500.000</b>	<b>9,17%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Slovenia</i>	2.007.711	3 246 (2002)	7.000	10.000	<b>8.500</b>	<b>0,42%</b>	<b>3/08/2009</b>
<i>Spain</i>	46.157.822	No data available	650.000	800.000	<b>725.000</b>	<b>1,57%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Sweden</i>	9.276.509	No data available	35.000	50.000	<b>42.500</b>	<b>0,46%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	60.943.912	No data available	150.000	300.000	<b>225.000</b>	<b>0,37%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<b>Total in the EU</b>					<b>6.172.800</b>	<b>1,73%</b>	
<b>(Non-EU Member States)</b>							
<i>Albania</i>	3.619.778	1261 (2001)	80.000	150.000	<b>115.000</b>	<b>3,18%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>

<i>Andorra</i>	72.413	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	3/08/2009
<i>Armenia</i>	2.968.586	No data available	2.000	2.000	2.000	0,07%	3/08/2009
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	8.177.717	No data available	2.000	2.000	2.000	0,02%	3/08/2009
<i>Belarus</i>	9.685.768	No data available	10.000	70.000	40.000	0,41%	14/09/2010
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	4.590.310	8 864 (1991)	40.000	60.000	50.000	1,09%	14/09/2010
<i>Croatia</i>	4.491.543	9 463 (2001)	30.000	40.000	35.000	0,78%	14/09/2010
<i>Georgia</i>	4.630.841	1 744 (1989)	2.000	2.500	2.250	0,05%	3/08/2009
<i>Iceland</i>	304.367	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	3/08/2009
<i>Kosovo*</i>	2.542.711	45 745 (1991)	25.000	50.000	37.500	1,47%	14/09/2010
<i>Liechtenstein</i>	34.498	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	3/08/2009
<i>“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”</i>	2.061.315	53 879 (2002)	135.500	260.000	197.750	9,59%	14/09/2010
<i>Moldova</i>	4.324.450	12 280 (2004)	15.000	200.000	107.500	2,49%	14/09/2010
<i>Monaco</i>	32.796	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	3/08/2009
<i>Montenegro</i>	678.177	2 826 (2003)	15.000	25.000	20.000	2,95%	14/09/2010
<i>Norway</i>	4.644.457	No data available	4.500	15.700	10.100	0,22%	3/08/2009
<i>Russian Federation</i>	140.702.094	182 617 (2002)	450.000	1.200.000	825.000	0,59%	14/09/2010
<i>San Marino</i>	29.973	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	3/08/2009

<i>Serbia (excl. Kosovo)</i>	7.334.935	108 193 (2002)	400.000	800.000	<b>600.000</b>	<b>8,18%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Switzerland</i>	7.581.520	No data available	25.000	35.000	<b>30.000</b>	<b>0,40%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Turkey</i>	71.892.807	4 656 (1945)	500.000	5.000.000	<b>2.750.000</b>	<b>3,83%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<i>Ukraine</i>	45.994.287	47 917 (2001)	120.000	400.000	<b>260.000</b>	<b>0,57%</b>	<b>14/09/2010</b>
<b><i>Total Non-EU</i></b>					<b>5.084.100</b>	<b>1,63%</b>	
<b><i>Total in Europe</i></b>					<b>11.256.900</b>		

\*under UNSCR 1244/99