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ROMA INCLUSION: A FEASIBLE EU PROJECT?

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Achieving an overall positive change requires not only a common general EU framework and a common structured approach to inclusion but also synchronised procedures and suitable efficient measures to address respective issues. In the age of globalization a structural approach to developmental challenges require more than a mutual agreement on a policy framework and targeted outcomes. Coordination of processes and measures and synchronization of efforts in the 21st century depend largely on finding a common platform of understanding, 'language' and intervention procedures and mechanisms.

An integrated approach to Roma inclusion aiming at fostering a positive societal change should ensure that subjective factors risks such as various levels of experience and expertise of national governments, knowledge gaps, and lack of capacities or political will are overcome. The elaboration of such an integrated in-depth strategy looking not only at 'what is needed' but also at 'how to achieve it' requires a critical assessment of the problems and identification of the cross-cutting measures that could be implemented through synchronised and coordinated efforts.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Dispersed all over the territory of the continent, Roma¹ constitute the largest ethnic minority in Europe, which according to the estimates consists of 10-12 million people. Present in almost every country in Europe and sharing some similar cultural features, Roma are often referred to as 'transnational'. The heterogeneity of the group even within the different national states and the lack of structural ties among the communities at national and international levels, challenges the appropriateness of any generalization of issues and large scale

approaches to addressing them. At the same time, Roma communities all over Europe share low social status and identical challenges to their integration in mainstream societies, which constitutes them as a transnational marginalised group.

Although not a new phenomenon, Roma poverty and social exclusion became explicitly visible as a common problem after the 2004 and 2007 Eastern enlargements of the EU, when low-income countries with large in number and rather marginalized Roma communities became a part of the borderless union. The increased mobility of



citizens entitled to fundamental rights² seeking employment opportunities and better life for their families had a significant impact on the EU socio-economic space and politics. Maintaining the achieved standards of life and quality of democracy (with respect to human and citizenship rights) while enabling flexibility in adequate responses to unexpected impediments demanded rethinking of approaches to development.

The positive impact of the latest global financial and economic crisis on the EU can be seen in the increased awareness that a general revision of policies and practices is needed in order that new mechanisms that would guarantee the stability of the systems in a long-term perspective are identified.

As a result, in 2010 the new strategy for **smart, sustainable and inclusive** growth Europe 2020³ was introduced. Adopting a holistic approach, the Strategy identified five key areas with respective targets for each one of them:

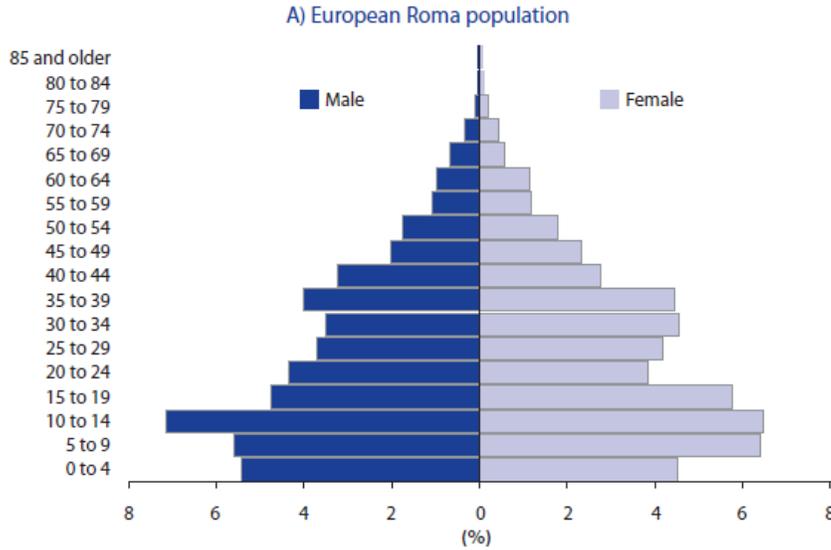
- 1. Employment:** 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed
- 2. R&D / innovation:** 3% of the EU's GDP (public and private) to be invested
- 3. Climate change/energy:** 20-20-20: greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even

30%) lower than 1990; 20% of energy from renewable; 20% increase in energy efficiency

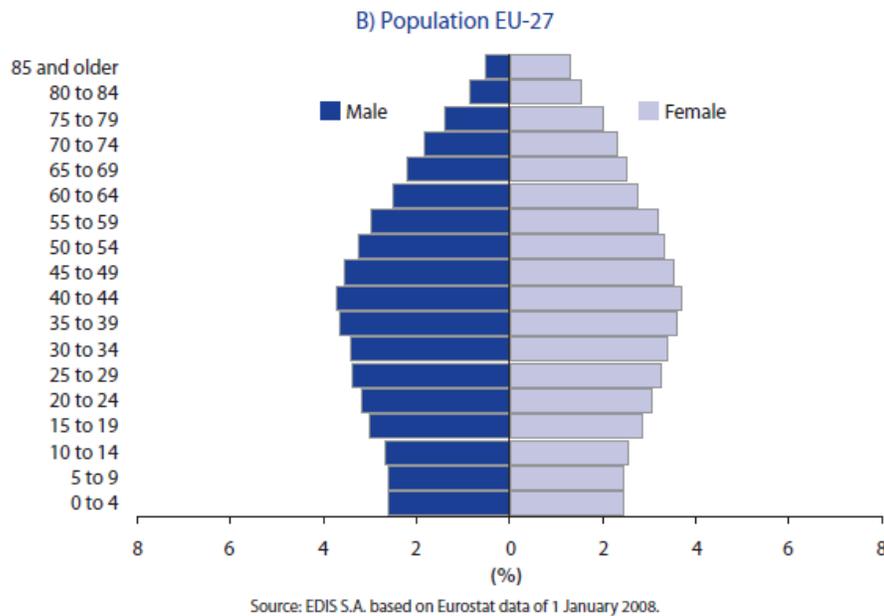
4. Education: Reducing school drop-out rates below 10%; at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education

5. Poverty/social exclusion: at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion

In the light of this new platform for development the Roma issue emerged as a significant challenge to the expected boost of productivity and economic development throughout the EU. The concern with potential human resources wasted for the economy and becoming a burden to social security systems pushed forward the idea of 'joined forces' for social cohesion throughout Europe. According to the estimates⁴ the average age of the 10-12 millions of Europe's Roma population is 25.1 years in comparison to the 40.2 years for EU-27. Comparing the demographic structure the mainstream societies and the Roma population, it appears that while Europe is aging, Roma child and youth rates are increasing constituting the largest ethnic minority in Europe as 'one of the most important and growing sources of an increasing workforce'.⁵



Source: Fundación Secretariado Gitano Health and the Roma community, analysis of the situation in Europe 2009:17



Source: Fundación Secretariado Gitano Health and the Roma community, analysis of the situation in Europe, 2009:18

The problem however is that the vast majority of working-age Roma lack education and skills to participate successfully in the labour market. According to a World Bank study⁶, EU countries are losing hundreds of millions of Euro annually

in productivity and in fiscal contributions to governments⁷. The inclusive policies, expected to bridge the educational gap and to stimulate the participation of Roma minority in the labour market, are an economically justified approach of



significant importance for the EU as a whole. As Jaroka points out⁸, if the level of employment is brought to the EU average, it would result in a 4-5 % GDP increase - more than the defence budget of any European country. Therefore ignoring this problem will in fact cost the EU much more in a longer term perspective than the presently required funds for Roma inclusion.

The integration of the European Roma hence is an EU development project that aims at addressing one of the key factors determining the socio-economic deprivation and exclusion of European Roma, namely ethnicity-based discrimination, through reckoning the marginalised communities as an 'economic target audience'.⁹ The question however is whether the adopted political and policy approach would lead to real positive outcomes or it needs to be revised in the very early stage of its conceptualization and implementation in order to avoid waste of resources in deepening of the problems. The question that the current paper explores is to what extent the complex combination of ethnic and social determinants underlying the Roma issues has been taken into account in the EU 'explicit but not exclusive targeting'¹⁰ and is it really feasible to remove the ethnic/cultural elements from a development strategy?

II. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED EU APPROACH TO ROMA INCLUSION

Although efforts to advance Roma inclusion in mainstream European societies have been made at national, European and international levels over the years, inclusion of Roma became high on the European political agenda only within the past decade. Looking at the documents on Roma-related issues developed and promoted at the international level, it appears that all of the key EU policy documents have been produced after

2004 (total of 14 for the period 2004 and 2012)¹¹ and only 8 out of 32 Roma-related texts were adopted by the Council of Europe before the turn of the Millennium¹².

While in the 1990s, in the context of the ethnic violence that Europe faced after the end of the Cold War, the Roma related issues were included as a part of the EU enlargement policy and the enlargement conditionality approach was used to promote better protection of minorities in the accession states,¹³ in the beginning of the 21st century the focus was placed on fostering antidiscrimination and equality. Following the Eastern Enlargement impact, the EU Roma-agenda shifted towards prioritisation of social cohesion and development.

Although the European Council of December 2007 (Presidency Conclusions 2007) marks the beginning of the period of systematic EU policy efforts towards fostering social inclusion of Roma, a range of initiatives has enabled the prioritization of the Roma and the need for overcoming the marginalization of this European minority as a special topic of EU concern. With focus on Roma-related challenges in the context of the expanding Europe, the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005–2015 was launched as an international initiative after a high level regional conference in Budapest, Hungary in 2003. Starting as a political commitment endorsed by eight governments, currently there are twelve countries with significant Roma minorities participating in the initiative: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. By bringing together governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and Romani civil society institutions and representatives, and supported by major international organisations¹⁴, the Decade aims at accelerating the progress towards improving the socio-economic status of the minority and fostering social integration and



cohesion. Education, employment, health, and housing were identified as priority areas that need to be addressed by national governments as core factors for poverty and discrimination.

The first EU summit to address problems faced by the Roma minority took place in 2008. It was organised by the Commission, and included almost 400 people - high-level national officials, Roma leaders and human rights advocates – to discuss the paths for better and more efficient Roma integration policies and measures. The figures reported at the summit revealed that in 2000-2006 the EU spent €275m on projects specifically geared to Roma inclusion and a further €1bn - on disadvantaged groups in general, including Roma.¹⁵

Stressing the needs for exchange of good practices and experience between the Member states in the sphere of inclusion of Roma, the Conclusions of the Council of Ministers of (2914th Council Meeting, December 2008) advanced the development of an EU Roma inclusion policy. In 2009, during the Czech Presidency of the EU, the ten Common Basic Principles (CBP) of Roma Inclusion¹⁶ were adopted after several years of discussion between a variety of stakeholders and European institutions¹⁷. The Conclusions of the Council of Ministers of Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs of 8 June 2009 (2947th Council Meeting) called for close cooperation between Member states in accordance with their respective competences and the identified principles of inclusion.

Despite all the efforts at national and international level over the past decade, Roma continue to occupy the periphery of mainstream national member-states and ‘European society’, facing deep poverty, poor health, social exclusion and discrimination. The global financial and economic crises that hit Europe in 2008 emphasised the severity of these problems¹⁸ and the vulnerability of Roma. The minority communities appeared among the most affected by

the crisis especially in terms of lack of financial buffers (savings), shortage of the low-qualified jobs and a low level of *flexicurity*. The collapse of certain economic sectors in member-countries affected not only local communities but also migrant workers and their families residing in the different home EU countries.

Acknowledging the need for a new approach to development based on long-term sustainability, on economy of knowledge and higher added value, on higher levels of *flexicurity* through investments in human capital, the European Commission introduced the Strategy Europe 2020. Its targets however projected with regard to European Roma clearly indicated the economic and social disparities between mainstream society and the Roma minority as well as the regional disparities within the European Union¹⁹. The increased awareness that the social and economic exclusion of this large group of European citizens has not only imminent but also a long term negative impact on the Community as a whole because of the accumulation of negative costs (in terms of human capital and productivity) has resulted in the *decision to join efforts at the European level*.²⁰

Addressing the increased understanding of the potential economic benefits and the political commitments²¹ of EU Member States to foster Roma inclusion, and pursuing the goals set in the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion²² and the recommendations made in a range of EU policy documents,²³ in 2011 the European Commission invited all Member States to develop and present their National Roma Inclusion Strategies (NRIS) or sets of policy measures. The supportive EU Framework for Roma integration²⁴ instructed the Member States to tailor their national strategies with reference to the identified goals at EU level projected in the key policy documents but also in compliance with the specific country-related needs of Roma as marginalised and disadvantaged groups. By March



2012 all of the 27 National Roma Integration Strategies (some of which in the format of a set of policy measures) were presented to the European Commission. The subsequent review focused on the Member state approaches to four key areas: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. Based on the assessment of the NRIS, policy goals were formulated in each of the priority fields:²⁵

- **Education** - to ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school and have access to quality education
- **Employment** – to reduce the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population
- **Healthcare** – to reduce the gap in the health status between the Roma and the rest of the population
- **Housing and essential services** – to close the gap between the share of Roma with access to housing and to public utilities and that of the rest of the population

Aiming to shift from the scattered, project-based and unrelated interventions to integrated and coordinated approaches for enabling positive change and to provide further support to Member States, the European Commission assessed the submitted national strategies.²⁶ The assessment has focused on examination of the NRIS's consistency with the structural requirements specified in the EU Framework (in terms of content, covered areas, compliance with EU policies), and on the technical assurance planned (including the involvement of all important national stakeholders, the creation of a robust monitoring system, the appointment of a national contact point, ensuring the protection of fundamental rights). It also has addressed the provisioned usage of EU funding and resources

secured for ensuring the effective and sustainable implementation of the strategies, and the strategic thinking as projected in the documents.

In a set of specific summaries, the Commission provided its recommendations to the Member States outlining the identified key priorities for each of the areas in focus:²⁷

In the area of **education** Member states are expected to

- eliminate school segregation and misuse of special needs education
- enforce full compulsory education and promote vocational training
- increase enrolment in early childhood education and care
- improve teacher training and school mediation
- raise parents' awareness of the importance of education

In the area of **employment**:

- provide tailored job search assistance and employment services
- support transitional public work schemes combined with education as well as social enterprises employing Roma or providing them with specific services
- support a first work experience and on-the-job training
- eliminate the barriers, including discrimination, to (re)enter the labour market, especially for women
- provide stronger support for self-employment and entrepreneurship

In the area of **healthcare**:

- extend health and basic social security coverage and services (also via addressing registration with local authorities)
- improve the access of Roma, alongside other vulnerable groups, to basic, emergency and specialised services;
- launch awareness raising campaigns on regular medical checks, pre- and



postnatal care, family planning and immunisation;

- ensure that preventive health measures reach out to Roma, in particular women and children;
- improve living conditions with focus on segregated settlements

In the area of **housing**:

- promote desegregation;
- facilitate local integrated housing approaches with special attention to public utility and social service infrastructures;
- where applicable, improve the availability, affordability and quality of social housing and halting sites with access to affordable services as part of an integrated approach

Furthermore, the European Commission has established that the aimed integrated approach would require:

- development of monitoring systems by setting a baseline, appropriate indicators and measurable targets
- coordination between the different layers of governance, between regional and local authorities
- involvement of civil society, including Roma organisations
- ensuring that all Roma are registered with the appropriate authorities
- fighting against racism and discrimination including multiple discrimination
- building public understanding of the common benefits of Roma inclusion

III. CHALLENGES FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ROMA INCLUSION

Apart from joining forces in the specified priority areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare, a coherent EU-level strategy would require that Member States' activities are to be

implemented through coordinated and synchronised mechanisms and procedures and with respect to a mutually agreed cognitive platform. Focusing on the declared aim of developing an EU Roma integration policy and on the NRIS both as policy documents per se and in a comparative perspective, the current analysis has identified four major interrelated challenges to the EU project with regard to achieving coherence of the EU Roma policy, for balancing the guiding principles, for clear profiling of the target group and for bridging the political and empirical discourses at and among the regional, national and the EU levels.

A. Joining Forces: Coordination vs Synchronization

Pursuing the goals and objectives outlined by the EU policy agenda, the European Commission has adopted an assessment approach focused on the structural compliance of the submitted national strategies with the EU framework. Summarising the common goals under the four targeted areas of intervention, examining the planned mechanisms for allocation of financial resources, for monitoring and for cooperation with the civil society, the assessment outlines the status quo and provides policy recommendations to Member State about the areas that need further attention and improvement. Considering the emphasis on the particularly positive aspects of every NRIS and the mild criticism with regard to the identified problems or the quality of the strategies as such, the assessment can also be viewed as a type of a political appraisal for the efforts of the Member States and their responsiveness to the initiative of the European Commission. The document failed to outline any identified positive models for Roma inclusion based on the horizontal comparative analysis and evaluation.

A more critical approach to the NRIS was adopted by the European Roma Policy Coalition



(ERPC).²⁸ The ERPC assessment compares the National Roma Integration Strategies and focuses on the differences in the policies addressing discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. It questions the political will to amend national policies to enable greater participation of Roma in all collective areas of society. ERPC provides a comprehensive overview of the ‘Lessons learnt from the desk screening exercise and the stakeholders survey’ and a large section of policy recommendations. Combining a desk-screening of the NRIS and views, gathered from Roma and Travelers’ organizations and civil society, the ERPC analysis has attempted to address concrete strengths and weaknesses of the national strategies. But although the report is organized in four cross-cutting sections: 1/Highlights from the NRIS, 2/Review of Budget Allocations in NRIS, 3/Coordination Mechanisms in Implementing NRIS and 4/Indicators and Monitoring, each of these lists the individual country inputs. The comparative and analytical horizontal perspective is in fact missing.

The Open Society Foundations (OSF) has also reviewed the EU Framework for NRIS,²⁹ comprising evaluations conducted by Open Society Foundations of the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) submitted by the governments of Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, and the 2010-13 Roma Integration Concept submitted by the Czech Government in lieu of a strategy. But it is doubtful whether the comprehensive analysis of policies and measures *limited to those implemented in* Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic could become a platform for adjustment of the overall EU policy. However, the assessment of the efficient use of EU funds in the various member states (within the frameworks of the OSF ‘Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma’ (MtM) initiative) presents a good model for the possible evaluation of other key policy and practical challenges.

‘Joining forces’ of Member States and achieving an integrated EU approach to Roma inclusion requires that both strong and weak aspects of NRIS are identified and constructively addressed and that the provided support from EU institutions to national governments is not limited to reviewing of policy compliance, outlining priority targets and goals and providing general benchmarks. Certainly, defining common objectives and elaborating a common framework are key prerequisites of an overarching EU Roma policy and an integrated approach. However, to fill in the implementation gap identified at national, regional and local levels and to overcome the limited effectiveness on the ground due to the lack of political will, of coordination mechanisms and of lack of capacities and knowledge to apply particular instruments,³⁰ more than general policy recommendations are needed.

Considering however the fact that there is no single state that could be praised for any significant large scale achievements in the field of Roma inclusion, the lack of methodological guidance and of a system for coordination of approaches, policies and programmes among Member States might hamper the effectiveness of efforts and even the feasibility of the project in general. Still an overall critical evaluation of past and current programmes and measures to provide better understanding of the reasons behind their success and/or failure is missing. The challenges faced by almost all EU governments and the lack of a leading successful model call for another type of integrated approach – focusing not only on the strategic goals but also on the identification of common and joint mechanisms for addressing similar/common problems. Nevertheless, the 2013 Proposal for Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States,³¹ communicating the EU policy views on the strategic policy directions and on the overall objectives that Member States should aim at, does not offer any type of guidance on what



measures should be considered by governments in order that the expected results are achieved. Furthermore, the country specific recommendations³² developed within the frameworks of the Europe 2020 programme also pay very little attention (if at all) to the planned and implemented measures for Roma inclusion in Member States.

The selection of the current organisational set-up (i.e. Member States holding the primary responsibility for the development and implementation of the national Roma inclusion programmes with the strategic policy support of the EU institutions) has been justified by the fact of the heterogeneity of the European Roma, their dispersal all over Europe and by the specific national frameworks within which the different Roma communities are constituted. This approach however puts the project implementation under risk, first because of the lack of a system in place for coordination and especially of synchronisation of efforts among the Member States, and second, because it becomes dependent on subjective factors (threats) such as the levels of expertise and experience of national governments, changes of governments or political will, pursue of specific national agendas. A possible solution to this problem is the development and adoption of common procedures and their implementation under the methodological guidance of the EU. For this purpose the approach to assessment of NRIS needs to overcome the level of diplomatic policy communication and to shift to an operational dialogue based on objective critical evaluation of positive and negative aspects of strategies and of appropriateness of measures that aims at reaching a mutual consent with regard to policy planning and implementation methodology.

In this light, the Open Method of Coordination³³ can be seen as a particularly promising framework for cooperation and synchronization of Member States efforts at EU level. Establishing commonly agreed objectives

and common indicators for measuring of policies and programmes in a peer review process enables the involved group of member states to exchange experience and to consider a possible transfer of good practices.³⁴ This approach could strengthen the institutional capacity to address issues of Roma social inclusion at the EU level.³⁵ Encouraging and promoting the voluntary participation of peer countries in the process might be a step forward towards with regard to the establishment of a coherent and synchronised platform for inclusion of European Roma.

B. The Guiding Principle: Equality vs Equity

Apart from the need for building a coherent EU platform for Roma inclusion and not a puzzle of simultaneous nationally-determined approaches and measures, the discourse analysis of NRIS reveals additional problematic issues that present a potential challenge to the feasibility and success of the EU project. Determining the guiding principles of Roma inclusion appears as such a problematic area. Although these issues had already been addressed in 2009 by the European Platform for Roma Inclusion and the introduction of the ‘10 Common Principles for Roma Inclusion’, there is another aspect that becomes apparent from the assessment of the NRIS – shall equality or equity be the guiding principle for the European Roma inclusion? The question whether the new EU Roma policy should ensure equity or equality for the targeted communities is in fact a question of finding the right balance between the development/socio-economic and the human/minority rights perspective.

According to the officially communicated position the “EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies provides a basis for the social and economic inclusion of Roma people while also taking into account their human rights”.³⁶ Aiming at the protection of fundamental



rights and the promotion of social inclusion, the EU Framework complements the already existing legal protection in the EU guaranteeing the rights of Roma as EU citizens (the Lisbon Treaty), non-discrimination in all areas of life (Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)) and the right of Roma who are EU citizens to free movement of without restrictions throughout the EU Member states (Directive on the right to move and reside freely (2004/38/EC)). However, it emphasises that the measures to overcome Roma inclusion should be set within the wider framework of European equality, inclusion, and growth policies.³⁷

Declaring a starting point in the human rights and referring to the fight against discrimination, the new EU Roma policy in fact concentrates on the socio-economic aspects of inclusion pushing aside the ethnic perspective to the development challenges. Pointing out that the EU Framework addresses Roma inclusion at the EU level, the European Commission emphasises that the persistent economic and social marginalisation of the Roma is directly relevant to three out of five headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy³⁸ and that measures to overcome Roma exclusion need to use and optimise the instruments available to mainstream society in order to achieve the objective of an ‘inclusive society, not a new form of ethnic segregation’.³⁹

Shifting the focus from the ethnic to the socio-economic aspects of inclusion has been promoted as a leading perspective for the development of the EU strategy on Roma inclusion:

*Since ethnicity-based discrimination is only one - although cardinal - factor determining the socio-economic deprivation of European Roma...it follows, that the exclusion can be best grasped by reckoning them **not as an ethnic group, but as an economic target audience.** In line with Principle*

*No 2 and No 4 of the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion declaring ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’ as well as ‘aiming for the mainstream’ the strategy must focus on these common economic features of socially excluded Roma instead of trying to address all the social issues that any single group of the remarkably heterogeneous European Roma population suffers from. .. the social and economic conditions and the demands of Roma communities themselves are extremely similar in all countries.*⁴⁰

The adopted approach of the ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’ legitimises the reference to Roma as a vulnerable group that experiences ‘higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population’.⁴¹ It is not surprising therefore that a socio-economic perspective to ‘equality’ is prevailing in the NRIS and that a great number of national governments state that following the principle of equality of all citizens no special provisions could be provided on the basis of the ethnic background.

Acknowledging that the societal coherence demands a particular socio-economic approach to inclusion of disadvantaged groups, and that a purely ethnic approach to Roma integration is also not enough, the current paper aims at drawing the attention to the need for finding the right balance between the development and the minority/human rights perspective, which are currently clashing. If the socio-economic perspective is leading, then the vulnerable group of Roma should be addressed y in terms of provision of socio-economic possibilities and rights and leaving to the individuals to benefit from them. No policies based on ethnic affiliation would fit the socio-economic model, especially if ‘equality’ is its guiding principle. The analysis of NRIS reveal that this approach has been adopted



by a number of Member States where no differentiation is made on the basis of the ethnic background of citizens, entitled to equal rights and freedoms (e.g. Germany, Denmark, France, Luxemburg). If the minority/human rights perspective is the leading one, then Roma need to be addressed as individuals entitled to particular collective rights but only on the basis of their declared belonging to the minority group and their participation in the public life as such. Regarding Roma issues as purely ethnic and providing the communities with the right to preserve their culture and lifestyle contradicts the general development idea of modernisation and adjusting Roma living standards and values to those of mainstream societies. In this particular case, the key policy principle would not be ‘equality’ but ‘equity’. Considering the NRIS however, it becomes apparent that even the Member states that have placed a significant attention to the protection of minority rights in their NRIS, uphold the idea of fostering development of Roma with the aim of achieving greater social coherence (e.g. Sweden, Austria).

Apparently, neither the socio-economic, nor the cultural perspectives alone could be expected to bring about the desired positive change fostering the socio-economic development of Roma communities and ensuring that the people sharing “*more or less similar cultural characteristics*”⁴² would be able to preserve their culture and lifestyles and would not be threatened with assimilation. It is clear that there is a need for an alternative path to development that would foster the integration of Roma communities by taking into consideration the specific ethnic and cultural aspects. Finding the right balance between approaches implies that new Roma policies aiming at ensuring both ‘equality’ and ‘equity’ need to focus not only on the development goals, but also on the identification of the most appropriate culturally-sensitive mechanisms for their achievement.

C. *Defining the Target Group: Civic vs Ethnic*

At the level of the individual country strategies, the described clash between the two perspectives has a direct projection on the problems of defining the addressees of the NRIS.

Developed with the vision to become the mechanism for enabling greater cooperation and increasing effectiveness in social and economic inclusion of Roma communities, the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies aims at promoting and fostering a ‘joined forces’ approach to identified problems, not only by involving the EU institutions and the Member States but also all the of relevant actors.⁴³ The new approach to fighting exclusion through structured support in the context of the heterogeneous target group dispersed in 27 out of the currently 28 EU countries⁴⁴, called for a clearer delineation of the NRIS addressees. With focus on the development goals underlying the new EU Roma policy, four major types have been identified:⁴⁵

- Roma communities living in disadvantaged, highly concentrated (sub)urban districts, possibly close to other ethnic minorities and disadvantaged members of the majority
- Roma communities living in disadvantaged parts of small cities/villages in rural regions and in segregated rural settlements isolated from majority cities/villages
- Mobile Roma communities with citizenship of the country or of another EU country
- Mobile and sedentary Roma communities who are third-country



nationals, refugees, stateless persons
or asylum seekers

Acknowledging that the term Roma is an “*an umbrella term including also other groups of people who share more or less similar cultural characteristics and a history of persistent marginalization in European societies*”,⁴⁶ the European Commission has explicitly indicated that the use of this concept is ‘*practical and justifiable within the context of a policy document which is dealing above all with issues of social exclusion and discrimination, not with specific issues of cultural identity*’.⁴⁷ In this context, the delineated four major types of disadvantaged Roma communities⁴⁸ can be viewed as a further support to national governments in the defining of the common target group.

The analysis of the NRIS reveals that instead of achieving a common comprehensive understanding about the profile of the direct beneficiaries of the EU Roma policy and their specific needs, Member States have focused on selected perspectives (e.g. Germany, Denmark - on the Roma immigrant issues, France, the Netherlands – on inclusion of all groups, Hungary – poverty reduction, Czech Republic, Portugal – building of multi-cultural societies). Hence several integration discourses could be identified with respect to the approach to the target groups:

- NRIS focusing on the integration of national/ethnic minorities of Roma, taking the starting point from the national legislative frameworks and the particular models of recognition of collective rights (e.g. Hungary, Romania, UK, Ireland, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Sweden)
- NRIS emphasising the principle of civic equality and citizenship, that describe integration policies pursued by the governments with regard to all

disadvantaged groups with references to immigrants and sometimes to Roma immigrants in particular (e.g. Luxemburg, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark)

- NRIS building on the need for fostering of co-existence and for achieving better understanding and connections between the majority and the Roma minority communities (e.g. Portugal, Italy, Finland, Cyprus, and the Czech Republic)

Complying with the EU Framework and the promoted socio-economic aspects of inclusion rather than the cultural ones, the national governments seem to have adopted the indicated approach to defining the target group of Roma to the extent that it corresponds to their national political agendas. Countries with significant experience in Roma issues such as Romania, Spain, Italy, UK, Ireland, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Finland, Croatia, etc., have defined the target groups of their NRIS in both ethnic and civic terms with no concerns about any possible clash between the two approaches. Member states where the ethnic discourse in politics is non-existent or non-acceptable – e.g. Luxemburg, Denmark, Germany, France – have made a firm distinction between the civic citizenship perspective and the ethnic aspects, claiming that ethnic origin does not have an impact on the equality of people before the law. France has even pointed out that ‘term ‘Roma’ refers to a concept of ethnicity, which cannot be used under French law to construct public policies’ and that development of measures that target specifically a particular ethnic group cannot be allowed under the French republican tradition⁴⁹. Hence while Germany focuses on the differentiation between the groups based on their civic status (immigrants from EU or non-EU countries, refugees and the ‘fully integrated’ national minority of Sinti and



Roma) France has developed the required strategy with reference to the integration ‘to the French Republic of those, who live there.’⁵⁰

This clash between the ethnic and civic delineation of the target group appears as a serious challenge to the feasibility of the EU Roma integration project, because it would have a direct impact on the profiling of the programme beneficiaries and respectively on the planning and implementation of programme activities. Targeted efforts to the particular disadvantaged Roma population are not feasible if the ethnic component is completely disregarded. The citizenship status providing equal access for all to education, to healthcare or to the labour market, for example, would hardly ensure equity and hence the expected positive outcomes with regard to the social cohesion.

Legitimising the ethnic component on the other hand would obviously clash with national legislation and policy agendas. This obstacle is rather visible from the submitted NRIS particularly from Member States that have eliminated ethnicity from their approach to public policies. The fact that countries, which do not formally recognise Roma as a minority (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, and Spain) have found mechanisms for embedding ethnic aspects within the citizenship frameworks, indicates that possibilities for accommodating the ethnic and the civic perspective into the public policies should be further explored.

Fostering equality and non-discrimination while ensuring equity and protection of collective rights (based on cultural/ethnic identities), is a significant challenge to the development of a coherent EU strategy for Roma integration that becomes particularly visible when the scope of the target groups is questioned. The lack of a mechanism for collecting representative and valid ethnic data (acknowledged as a problem by a range of the EU institutions and international

organisations such as the CoE, OCSE, WB, and OSI) is a significant impediment to the objective assessment and measuring of developmental dynamics. Although emphasising the importance 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*’,⁵¹ the EU Framework only indicates the need that a monitoring mechanism with clear benchmarks is put in place,⁵² but does not suggest any possible solutions.

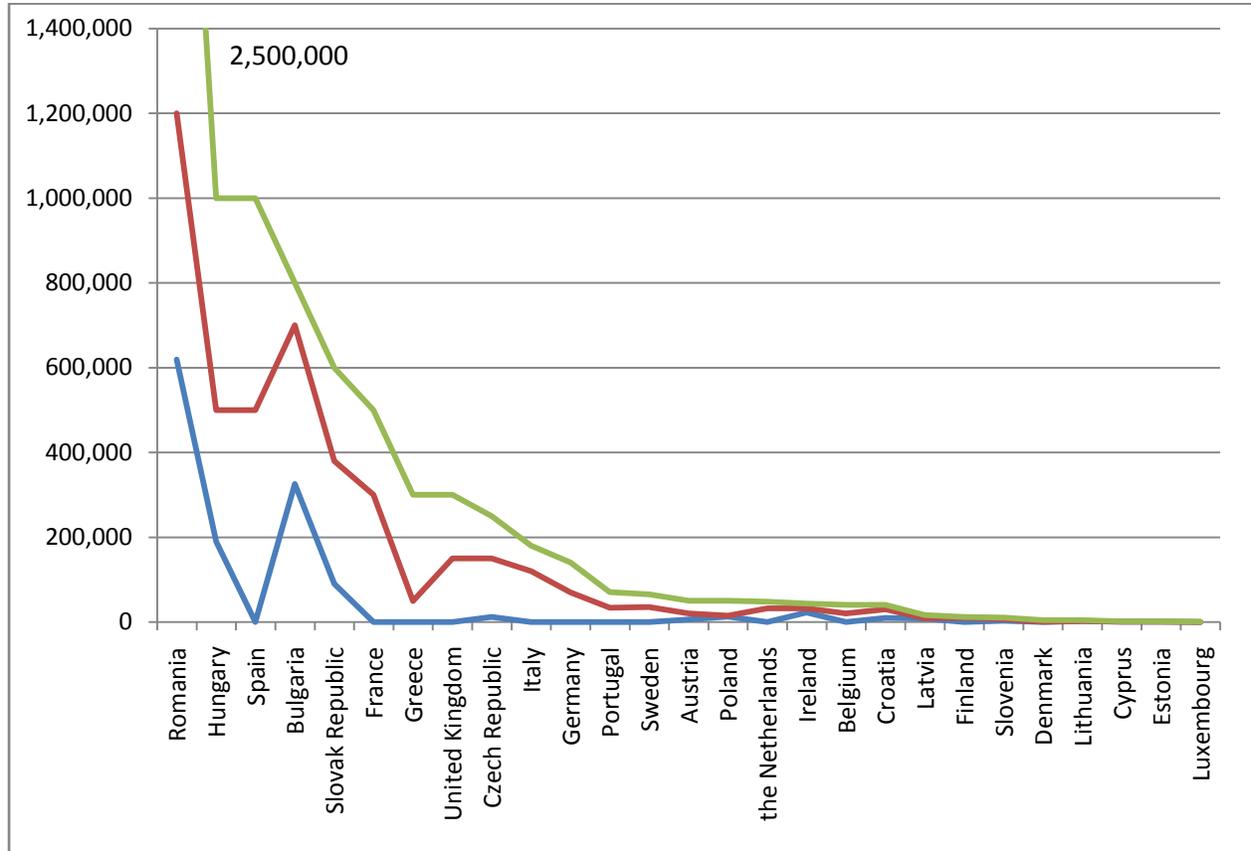
According to the Council of Europe estimates about the average Roma population in the EU 28 – believed to have reached 10 to 12 million of people in total - the size of communities ranges from couple of hundreds of Roma in Luxembourg (or even less in Malta) to 1 850 000 in Romania. As it becomes obvious from the graph below, presenting the differences between the officially collected figures, and the estimated minimum and maximum, (in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Slovakia there are mechanisms for data gathering), the official figures based on the self-declaration of ethnic origin differ significantly from the minimum and the maximum levels of estimates. The size of the large Roma communities in Spain, France, Greece, UK, the Czech Republic, Italy and Germany could be established only on the basis of estimates.

Building a common platform for social cohesion and integration of the European Roma would require not only that the issue of data collection is addressed but also that the reasons for discrepancies between the reported and the estimated levels are analysed. The unwillingness of target group members to disclose their belonging (due to negative historical experience, fear of discrimination and acts of racism or administrative challenges) implies that those people might also be reluctant to become involved in respective integration programmes. The



successful implementation of any strategy would depend on the identification of the underlying factors (that might range from fear of

discrimination to illiteracy or administrative burdens with registering) and the development of adequate measures to address them.



Estimates and Official Numbers of Roma in Europe

Official data Minimum estimate Maximum estimate

Source: Council of Europe, Estimates on Roma population in European countries⁵³

Finding a solution to this problem would require debates at the EU level, a political will on behalf of national governments and elaboration of common (standardised) mechanisms and procedures to compensate lacking experience and discrepancies between national systems for data collection and analysis, and to ensure the validity of data. Such EU systems would need to take into account both the sedimentary and the mobility aspects of Romani life and to use instruments that would allow monitoring the dynamics of the target group at the EU level.

Developing integration strategies for an imaginary target group would hardly bring about the expected overall development both at national and EU levels. Implementation of inclusion measures on citizens who for a certain reason do not want to identify themselves as Roma certainly would not lead to positive results and might even violate the fundamental right of self-identification



of individuals. The major challenge is therefore to foster the active involvement of stakeholders who, acknowledging benefits from inclusion, become agents of change.

D. Bridging the Perspectives: Political vs Empirical

The last major challenge to the feasibility of the EU Roma, closely connected to those discussed above, refers to the missing systems of synchronisation of policy discourses and of coordination of the implementation of programmes and activities at the regional, national and EU levels.

The EU-level political discourse has been framed by the socio-economic approach to Roma inclusion and the requirement for targeted intervention in the four priority sectors: employment, education, healthcare and housing. Complying with the provisions of the EU Framework, all NRIS have addressed Roma integration through this perspective either by presenting elaborated strategic documents and/or action plans (e.g. Greece, Lithuania, Italy) or by reporting already developed programmes and implemented mechanisms (e.g. Bulgaria, UK). The challenge that can be spotted at this level relates to the ‘national ownership’ of those strategies and the capacities of national governments to develop quality policy documents and action plans that would enable efficient implementation of activities as well as achievements of expected results.

At the level of the national political discourse, a number of approaches to integration can be identified. Considering the EU emphasis on the primary responsibility of Member States and their competences to change the situation⁵⁴ this variety of perspectives is fully legitimate. A leading theme for the NRIS of Austria⁵⁵ and Sweden⁵⁶ is the concern with the rights of minorities and the protection against

discrimination. Latvia⁵⁷ develops its strategy for Roma integration in the context of an identity building project. The focus of Cyprus⁵⁸ falls on the building a multicultural society, pursuing the UNESCO principle of positive discrimination referring to the ‘unequal treatment of inequalities’. Greece⁵⁹ has structured the policy action plan with respect to the expected funds. Hungary⁶⁰ builds its strategy around the goal of poverty reduction, while Italy promotes the developed mechanisms for coordination of policy implementation at the regional and national levels.

Certainly, the different approaches can be accounted for as connected to the specific national agendas and contexts and/or resulting from the different experience of Member States in the field of Roma integration. The challenge to the coherence of the integrated EU approach is in fact hidden in the methods that the implementation of those approaches entail and that the lack of mechanisms for synchronisation of policies and coordination of efforts among the Member States poses the risk that the EU Roma policy becomes a puzzle of mismatching pieces.

Apart from the differences between the political discourses to Roma integration, the analysis of NRIS reveals that significant discrepancies can be identified between the political discourses and the empirical approaches to Roma inclusion. According to the provided information, Germany has fully integrated the national minority of German Roma and Sinti. Hence the main target groups identified by the NRIS are the EU/non-EU immigrants and former refugees, some of Roma origin. In the same light, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma⁶¹ claims that the ‘tendency to classify the existing marginalisation of... the Roma population as a characteristic applicable to the minority as a whole’⁶² re-affirms existing stereotypes and reduces the general perception about the minority to those negative aspects. Although identifying specific needs for targeted action, in the position



paper accompanying the NRIS, the Council claims that German Sinti and Roma are not a marginalised community but a long-established national minority and hence a uniformed approach to integration would not be appropriate.

Examining the third document submitted by Germany to the European Commission⁶³ – an overview of Roma-related projects implemented and planned at regional level for the period 2011-2013 – the situation appears rather different. From the reported 30 projects in the field of education, 11 focus on the integration of Roma immigrants (8 of them implemented in the region of Berlin), while 18 projects implemented throughout the country regions address German Sinti and Roma as a primary target group. Apart from the obvious conclusion that the political perspective at both government and stakeholders' level sometimes might not project precisely the actual needs in the field, the NRIS of Germany indicates that perhaps a better understanding of the situation could be achieved if strategies also account for the bottom-up perspective.

Despite that the EU Framework calls for the active involvement of civil society and a range of Member States report that consultations with Roma stakeholders have taken place during the period of preparation of strategies, only a few of the NRIS provide indications that the grass-root perspective has been acknowledged. It is, therefore, questionable to what extent the NRIS are purely political documents and to what extent they could foster a sense of ownership of developmental processes (perceived not as a treat but as a beneficial opportunity) and stimulate the active involvement of Roma as agents of change.

Although differences between the discourses are not a problem per se, the lack of mechanisms to bridge them could pose a serious threat to any large-scale development efforts with a reference to such a heterogeneous and at the same time distinct target group, such as Roma. Synchronisation of policies needs a unified

platform of shared understanding, standardised approaches, and common conceptual apparatus. A structured and coherent approach to EU Roma inclusion, integrating the variety of national agendas, practices, capacities, expertise and experience calls for an in-depth needs assessment of existing systems and the possibilities for synchronisation of procedures and methodologies. Bridging the perspectives at all levels is crucial for achieving the expected positive change in Member States and therefore at the EU level.

IV. CONCLUSION

Despite the awareness at the EU level about the importance of advancing social inclusion of minorities⁶⁴ there has been a lack of relevant actions in practice.⁶⁵ In this context, the new EU Roma policy aiming at involving actively all Member States and providing a common framework for integrated efforts is a positive step forward.

In line with the revised Lisbon Strategy and the EU developmental strategy Europe 2020, and following the recommendations that the Roma issue requires more than a purely ethnic approach,⁶⁶ the new EU Roma policy framework has put a priority on the socio-economic aspects of inclusion. But although the fact that Roma communities are highly marginalized in a number of European countries and that their exclusion has a significant negative impact on economies and social security systems justifies the adopted policy direction, a purely socio-economic approach might not be suitable for addressing the complex and challenging problem of Roma inclusion either.

A range of official documents presenting the new EU Roma policy⁶⁷ implies that the heterogeneity of the group and its dispersal throughout the EU are factors that impede the elaboration of a single common strategy, and therefore differentiated approaches that take account of geographical, economic, social, cultural



and legal contexts⁶⁸ should be sought within the coordinated structure. And indeed, Roma is an umbrella concept for minority communities dispersed all over Europe, with no common language and religion, but sharing distinct cultural features, values, attitudes, and behaviour norms.⁶⁹ But although the situation of the Roma population differs from one country to another (and even between the regions within a Member State), members of this heterogeneous but distinct ethnic group face rather similar challenges throughout Europe such as lower levels of education, limited employment opportunities (lower income rates, high levels of unemployment), low living standards (poor living conditions and quality of life), poverty and poor health.

Understanding the role of culture as a factor behind socio-economic tendencies, predispositions, and actions is crucial for the development of strategies that aim at fostering changes in a non-mainstream community. If addressed properly, cultural capital can be strategically used as resources in social action⁷⁰ and could possibly foster cohesion between the mainstream societies and the Roma minority⁷¹ within a borderless European Union space.

Achieving an overall positive change requires not only a common general EU

framework and a common structured approach to inclusion but also synchronised procedures and suitable efficient measures to address respective issues. In the age of globalization a structural approach to developmental challenges require more than a mutual agreement on a policy framework and targeted outcomes. Coordination of processes and measures and synchronization of efforts in the 21st century depend largely on finding a common platform of understanding, ‘language’ and intervention procedures and mechanisms.

An integrated approach to Roma inclusion aiming at fostering a positive societal change should ensure that subjective factors risks such as various levels of experience and expertise of national governments, knowledge gaps, and lack of capacities or political will are overcome. The elaboration of such an integrated in-depth strategy looking not only at ‘what is needed’ but also at ‘how to achieve it’ requires a critical assessment of the problems and identification of the cross-cutting measures that could be implemented through synchronised and coordinated efforts.

Notes

¹ The current paper adopts the European Parliament / European Council approach to the term ‘Roma’ as an ‘umbrella term’ including also other groups of people who share more or less similar cultural characteristics and a history of persistent



marginalisation in European societies, such as the Sinti, Travellers, Kalé etc. The European Commission is aware that the extension of the term "Roma" to all these groups is contentious, and it has no intention to "assimilate" the members of these other groups to the Roma themselves in cultural terms. Nonetheless, it considers the use of "Roma" as an umbrella term practical and justifiable within the context of a policy document which is dealing above all with issues of social exclusion and discrimination, not with specific issues of cultural identity' - European Commission, COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, Roma in Europe: The Implementation of European Union Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion – Progress Report 2008-2010, Brussels, 7.4.2010, SEC(2010) 400 final; note 6

² European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 7 December 2000, OJ L C 364/01

³ European Commission, EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Communication From The Commission, Brussels, 3.3.2010, COM(2010) 2020

⁴ Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Health and the Roma Community, analysis of the situation in Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain; Report arising from the project HEALTH AND THE ROMA COMMUNITY: ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN EUROPE, funded by the European Union Public Health Programme, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2009, Madrid, p.19, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_health_en.pdf

⁵ Livia Jaroka, interview, "Inclusion of the Roma: an ethnic and social issue", Article date: 2011, March 8 modified date: 2011, <http://www.eu2011.hu/news/roma-integration-no-discrimination-just-beginning#sthash.0u4begJD.dpuf>

⁶ World Bank, Europe and Central Asia: Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion, Knowledge brief, 2010, Available at <http://go.worldbank.org/G1EL5HZ8S0>

⁷ Ibidem. According to the World Bank estimates, the lower bound of annual productivity losses ranges from 231 million Euro (Serbia) to 887 million Euro (Romania); the lower bound annual fiscal losses are between 58 million Euro (Serbia) to 370 million Euros (Bulgaria).

⁸ Livia Jaroka, see note 5

⁹ Livia Jaroka, Report on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion (2010/2276(INI)), Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Explanatory Statement To The Report (item 8) Rapporteur: Livia Járóka, Available at Livia Járóka - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2011-0043+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

¹⁰ European Commission, Vademecum: The Ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Publications Office of the European Commission, 2009

¹¹ European Commission, DG Justice, Tackling Discrimination: 'Documents' - section, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/document/index_en.htm#h2-6

¹² Council of Europe, CoE Hub: Roma-related text adopted by the Council of Europe, http://hub.coe.int/web/coe-portal/roma_reference-texts

¹³ Eva Sobotka & Peter Vermeersch, *Governing Human Rights and Roma - Inclusion: Can the EU be a Catalyst for Local Social Change?*, in *Human Rights Quarterly* 34 (2012) p.800–822, The Johns Hopkins University Press

¹⁴ The international partner organizations of the Roma Decade include the World Bank, the Open Society Foundations, the United Nations Development Program, the Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Roma Information Office, the European Roma and Traveller Forum, the European Roma Rights Centre, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) also became a partner in the Decade.

¹⁵ European Commission, 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*, COM (2011) 173/4, Brussels, p.9, note 37 - 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. 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; see also European Commission, European Roma Summit - MEMO/08/559, 12 September 2008, Brussels; Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=105&furtherEvents=yes>

¹⁶ The Common Basic Principles, which advocate an integrated approach, were developed on the basis of several reports and recommendations by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well as the relevant European Parliament resolutions, but also by advocacy groups and Roma civil society organizations

¹⁷ Eva Sobotka & Peter Vermeersch, see note 13

¹⁸ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: *The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion*, SEC(2010) 1564 final, Brussels, 16.12.2010, Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0758:FIN:EN:PDF>



¹⁹ A significant proportion of the Roma community live in regions which are among the least economically and socially advanced in the Union, Livia Jaroka, Report on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion (2010/2276(INI)), Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Rapporteur: Livia Járóka, Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2011-0043+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

²⁰ Ibidem

²¹ Spanish Presidency of the European Union 2010II European Roma Summit: Promoting Policies in Favour of the Roma Population, Held in Córdoba on 8 & 9 April 2010, Report - Commitment to advancing the mainstreaming of Roma issues in European and national policies on fundamental rights and protection against racism, poverty and social exclusion; improving the design of the roadmap of the Integrated Platform on Roma Inclusion and prioritizing key objectives and results; to ensuring that existing financial instruments of the European Union, in particular the Structural Funds, are made available to the Roma

²² European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion (COM/2010/0758 final), Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0758:EN:NOT>

²³ Livia Jaroka, see note 19

²⁴ COM(2011) 173, see note 15

²⁵ European Commission, National Roma Integration Strategies a First Step in the Implementation of the EU Framework - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2012) 226/2012, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nat_integration_strat_en.pdf

²⁶ Ibidem

²⁷ Accompanying Commission Staff Working Document (COM (2012) 226 final) to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: National Roma Integration Strategies: a First Step in the Implementation of the EU Framework (COM (2012) 226/2012)

²⁸ European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC), Analysis of the National Roma Integration Strategies, 2012, Available at: www.ergonet.org/media/userfiles/media/Final%20ERPC%20Analysis%2021%2003%2012_FINAL.pdf

²⁹ Open Society Foundations Review of EU Framework National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) submitted by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, 2012, Available at <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/roma-integration-strategies-20120221.pdf>

³⁰ European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document: Roma in Europe: The Implementation of European Union Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion – Progress Report 2008-2010, SEC(2010) 400 final, Brussels, 7.4.2010, p.3

³¹ European Commission, Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Effective Roma Integration Measures in the Member States, COM(2013) 460 final, 2013/0229 (NLE), Brussels, 26.6.2013, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_2013_460_en.pdf

³² European Commission, Europe 2020, Country specific recommendations, Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

³³ The OMC method is set out in ‘Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Working together, working better: A new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies in the European Union, Brussels, 22.12. 2005, COM (2005) 706 Final, Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52005dc0706:EN:NOT>

³⁴ Examples of such Peer Reviews in Social Protection and Social Inclusion Reports on Roma issues under the OMC are the “Integrated Programme of Social inclusion Roma” in Greece (2009), “Social inclusion of children in a disadvantaged rural environment” in Hungary (2010), “Municipal programmes of shanty town eradication in Aviles (Asturias)” in Spain (2012)

³⁵ European Parliament, Directorate General DES For Internal Policies Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Civil Liberties, Justice And Home Affairs, *Measures to promote the situation of Roma EU citizens in the European Union*, Study, 2011, p.191, Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/businessAndConsultancy/LSEConsulting/pdf/Roma.pdf>

³⁶ European Commission, Working together for Roma inclusion: The EU Framework explained. European Commission, 2011, p.4, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/working_together_for_roma_inclusion_en.pdf

³⁷ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe, Brussels, 7.4.2010, COM(2010)133 final, Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0133:FIN:EN:PDF>

³⁸ The three targets being: fight against poverty and social exclusion, raising employment levels, and reducing school drop-out while increasing attendance in tertiary education; COM(2012) 226, p.3, see note 25

³⁹ COM (2010) 133, see note 37

⁴⁰ Livia Jaroka, see note 9

⁴¹ The definition of ‘vulnerable group’ follows the EU term as presented in the Social protection and Social inclusion Glossary. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/vulnerable_groups_en.htm

⁴² SEC(2010) 400 final, see note 30, reference to note 6 of the cited document



⁴³ European Commission, see note 36, p.2

⁴⁴ The only EU Member state that has not submitted NRIS due to the lack of identified Roma community over its territory is Malta

⁴⁵ COM (2010) 133 final, see note 37, p.9

⁴⁶ SEC(2010) 400 final, see note 42

⁴⁷ Ibidem

⁴⁸ COM (2010) 133 final see note 37, p.9

⁴⁹ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – France: An equal place in French society: French government strategy for Roma integration within the framework of the Communication from the Commission of 5 April 2011 and the Council conclusions of 19 May 2011, p.1, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_france_strategy_en.pdf

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ COM (2012) 226, see note 25, p.13

⁵² There are a number of reasons for this lack of reliable statistical data. As the ERPC assessment of NRIS reveals, when official data collection through national census does not provide data regarding Roma, some Member states (e.g. Bulgaria, Finland) obtain information through civil society organisations, which in many cases apply different methodologies so the data is open to dispute. In other cases (Denmark, Germany) the restrictions to gathering ethnic-related information are posed by law. To develop its National Strategy, Slovakia has drawn upon data and findings from 2011 UNDP/World Bank Roma household survey. In fact only a few Member States (e.g. Hungary) have provisioned measures for collecting data in the future, including ethnically disaggregated data.

⁵³ Council of Europe, Estimates on Roma population in European countries, Data available at http://hub.coe.int/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3f6c4a82-0ca7-4b80-93c1-fef14f56fdf8&groupId=10227

⁵⁴ COM (2012) 226, see note 25

⁵⁵ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Austria: An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 - Political and Legal Measures; Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_austria_strategy_en.pdf

⁵⁶ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Sweden: Government communication (2011/12:56) A coordinated long-term strategy for Roma inclusion 2012–2032, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_sweden_strategy_en.pdf

⁵⁷ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Latvia: Information on Roma integration policy measures in Latvia, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_latvia_strategy_en.pdf

⁵⁸ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Cyprus: Policy Measures of Cyprus for the Social Inclusion of Roma, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_cyprus_strategy_en.pdf

⁵⁹ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Greece: National Strategic Framework for Roma, December 2011, Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_greece_strategy_en.pdf

⁶⁰ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Hungary
Available at

⁶¹ Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti and Roma, Equal Participation for Sinti and Roma in Germany, Position paper on the European Union framework to improve the situation of Roma in Europe, 2012

⁶² Ibid, p.1

⁶³ European Commission, DG Justice, National Strategies – Germany / Annex 2: Integration in school (examples of projects), Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

⁶⁴ Roberta Woods, Lynn Dobbs, Christopher Gordon, Craig Moore and Glen Simpson, “Report of a Thematic Study Using Transnational Comparisons to Analyse and Identify Cultural policies and Programmes that Contribute to Preventing and Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion”, The Centre for Public Policy, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2004 Woods 2004; also EC 2005 European Commission, “Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion, 2002-2006: Evaluation of the Impact of Inclusion Policies under the Open Method of Co-ordination”, Call for Proposals – VP/2005/009

⁶⁵ ECMI Report 60/2006: The Aspect of Culture in the Social Inclusion of Ethnic Minorities: Evaluation of the impact of inclusion policies under the Open Method of Co-ordination: Assessing the Cultural Policies of Six Member States of the European Union (authors Tove Malloy & Michele Gazzola), p.13, Available at http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/media/Report_60_OMC_Evaluation.pdf

⁶⁶ Livia Jaroča, see note 9

⁶⁷ European Commission, see note 36, p.2

⁶⁸ COM (2010) 133 final see note 37, p.9

⁶⁹ Recent comparative studies also suggest that education is still not an ‘interest’ to a large percentage of the minority members: Bulgaria 20.5%, Italy 27.5%, Spain 43.5%, Roma migrants to Italy 17.6% (Pamorov, Kabakchieva 2012).

⁷⁰ Will Kymlicka, Liberalism, Community and Culture, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p.166



⁷¹ As referred to by the Minority Rights Group International Report 1995/4: Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority (Authors Jean-Pierre Liegeois & Nicolae Gheorghe), Available at: <http://www.minorityrights.org/1010/reports/romagypsies-a-european-minority.html>

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