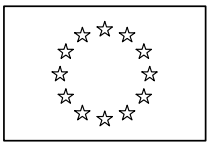

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 21.5.2012
COM(2012) 226 final

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

{SWD(2012) 133 final}

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

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the situation of Roma[1] has increasingly become the centre of political attention for Europe. Roma – Europe's largest minority of about 10 to 12 million people – are very often the victims of racism, discrimination and social exclusion and live in deep poverty lacking access to healthcare and decent housing. Many Roma women and children are victims of violence, exploitation and trafficking in human beings[2], including within their own communities. Many Roma children are on the streets instead of going to school. Lagging education levels and discrimination in labour markets have led to high unemployment and inactivity rates or low quality, low skill and low paid jobs for Roma. This causes a loss of potential which renders the endeavour to secure growth even more difficult[3]. Better integration of Roma is therefore both a moral and an economic imperative, which moreover will require a change of mindsets of the majority of the people as well as of members of the Roma communities.

The Member States have the primary responsibility and the competences to change the situation of marginalised populations, so action to support Roma lies first and foremost in their hands. To support them in addressing this situation, the EU has made available a wide range of legal, policy and financial instruments. Although specific national circumstances, needs and required solutions vary greatly across Europe, the shared values of freedom of movement and fundamental rights and the common objectives of political stability, economic prosperity, social cohesion and solidarity between Member States call for a European role in policies for Roma integration. Moreover, the persisting challenges regarding the full integration of Roma who are EU citizens into their societies has a direct impact on wider EU relations with third countries, for instance with regard to the visa requirements applied by some of these to the nationals of certain Member States[4].

---

1 The term "Roma" is used here, as well as by a number of international organisations and representatives of Roma groups in Europe, to refer to a number of different groups (such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom) and also includes Travellers, without denying the specificities and varieties of lifestyles and situations of these groups.

2 Europol Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2011, p. 26.

3 *Economic costs of Roma exclusion*, the World Bank, April 2010 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic_Costs_Roma_Exclusion_Note_Final.pdf

4 See, for instance, the concerns expressed by Canada following an increasing number of asylum applications lodged by the nationals of certain Member States.

This is why the European Commission on 5 April 2011 adopted an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020[5], calling on Member States to prepare or revise National Roma Integration Strategies[6] in order to address more effectively the challenges of Roma inclusion to tangibly improve the situation by the end of the current decade. The endorsement of the Framework by EU Heads of States and Governments[7] indicated that Roma inclusion is becoming an important priority for the all Member States, despite the economic and financial crisis.

The aim of the EU Framework is to help Member States to make a tangible difference to Roma people's lives by bringing about a change in the approach to their inclusion. Discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin in education, employment, health and housing as well as other areas is already prohibited by EU law, but legislation alone is not enough: Member States need to develop and implement an integrated and sustainable approach that combines efforts across different areas, including education, employment, health and housing.

The EU Framework addresses Roma inclusion for the first time at EU level and clearly links it with the Europe 2020 strategy[8]. The persistent economic and social marginalisation of the Roma is directly relevant to the strategy. Three out of five Europe 2020 headline targets are directly linked to the EU Framework targets for Roma inclusion: the fight against poverty and social exclusion, raising employment levels, and reducing school drop-out while increasing attendance in tertiary education. For Member States with a larger Roma population making sufficient progress towards the Europe 2020 employment, social inclusion and education targets will require addressing explicitly and swiftly the situation of the Roma.

EU funds (in particular the Structural Funds) could be a powerful tool to improve the socio-economic situation of disadvantaged groups, such as Roma, but too little of the €26.5 billion allocated to support Member States' efforts in the field of social inclusion for the 2007-2013 period benefits disadvantaged Roma communities**.**

The European Commission has undertaken to assess the National Roma Integration Strategies and to report to the European Parliament and the Council, which is the purpose of the present Communication. In its assessment, the Commission also considers the wide range of contributions received from civil society and other stakeholders and the contributions made at the extraordinary meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion held in Brussels on 22 March 2012.

---

5 Communication "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", COM(2011)173 of 5 April 2011. The Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Societal empowerment and integration of Roma citizens in Europe", CESE 998/2011 of 16 June 2011 and the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", CdR 247/2011 of 14 December 2011 give both strong support to the EU Framework.

6 In this communication, the term 'strategy' should be understood as covering both integrated sets of policy measures and strategies.

7 European Council conclusions, EUCO 23/11 of 23 and 24 June 2011, following the EPSCO Council Conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, 106665/11 of 19 May 2011.

8 http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

The adoption of National Roma Integration Strategies will contribute to making a real difference in the lives of the Roma population. In the next phase, efforts must focus on implementation based on action plans with specific measures commensurate with Roma inclusion targets, supported by a clear timetable and appropriate funding.

2. ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

By March 2012, all Member States had presented a National Roma Integration Strategy or a corresponding set of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies. Some of them have chosen to revise their existing strategies in the light of the EU Framework, while others have developed their first national strategies. The national strategies vary according to the size of the Roma population and the challenges Member States need to address[9].

The Commission's assessment focuses on evaluating the Member States' approaches to the four key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing, and on how structural requirements (cooperation with civil society, with regional and local authorities, monitoring, antidiscrimination and establishment of a national contact point) as well as funding are addressed. In each section, a summary table indicates the Member States that propose to put in place specific measures required by the EU Framework[10]. Member States that are not listed have not indicated such measures and need to address these specific issues, if relevant for their Roma population.

Based on the assessment, a set of policy recommendations in each section points to priorities that Member States should further address, depending on their national circumstances, in order to meet their responsibilities. These policy recommendations should be integrated in the overall framework to fight poverty and exclusion.

2.1. The Four Key Areas

(a) Education

The EU's goal is to ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school and have access to quality education[11].

All Member States recognise the importance of education, and most have set goals that generally go beyond the minimum standard of primary school completion set forth in the EU Framework, covering a broader spectrum of education from pre-school[12] to secondary and even tertiary education.

---

9 Malta did not adopt a National Roma Integration Strategy as there is no significant Roma population on its territory.

10 The summary tables in the four policy areas consistently address two sets of issues: **goals**, i.e. whether the strategies endorse the general EU goal in the given field set by the EU Framework and whether they set concrete, specific and quantifiable goals; and **measures** (both mainstream and specific for Roma).

11 EU Roma integration goals were set out in the Communication "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", COM(2011)173 of 5 April 2011.

12 *Preventing Social Exclusion through the Europe 2020 strategy - Early Childhood Development and the Inclusion of Roma Families* – official report of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion under the Belgian Presidency, developed from UNICEF and the European Social Observatory in collaboration

In accordance with national laws, all school-aged children in the EU must attend school. However, at least 10% of Roma children aged 7 to 15 in a number of Member States were identified in a recent survey undertaken by the Fundamental Rights Agency as not attending school[13]. As it is a first step in acquiring basic skills, Member States should seek to increase attendance rates. In particular, in order to increase primary school attainment, Member States should enhance enrolment in early childhood education and care, the training of teachers and mediators, and the inclusion of Roma pupils in mainstream schools.

Measures aimed at reducing school-leaving in secondary education are planned in several Member States, while some Member States envisage increasing the participation of Roma students in tertiary education.

Measures to increase the educational attainment of children

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them[14]
Endorsement of the general goal	BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, UK
Concrete goals to reduce education gap	BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, IT, CY, LU, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, UK
Widening access to quality early childhood education and care	CZ, EL, ES, IT, CY, LV, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI
Measures to ensure that Roma children complete at least primary school	BE, BG, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, LV, LU, HU, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK
Reducing secondary school leaving	BG, CZ, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SK, FI, UK
Increasing tertiary education	CZ, ES, IT, HU, PT, FI
Measures aimed at preventing segregation	CZ, EL, ES, HU, PL, RO, SK
Support measures	BE, CZ, EE, IE, ES, IT, CY, LV, LT, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK

Several Member States provide additional support measures, such as teaching and learning programmes in the Romani language, learning support programmes such as after-school learning support or second-chance classes, parental education, including mediation, and raising awareness of the importance of education.

---

with the Belgian Federal Planning Service for Social Integration, 2011; http://www.ecdgroup.com/pdfs/Preventing-Social-Exclusion.pdf.

[13] At least 10% of Roma children aged 7 to 15 in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and France were identified in the survey as not attending school: they were either still in preschool, not yet in education, skipped the year, stopped school completely or were already working. This proportion is highest in Greece, with more than 35% of Roma children not attending school (*The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States; Survey results at a glance.* Fundamental Rights Agency, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, 2012).

[14] Member States are included if their respective strategies refer to the type of measures listed in the table.

Examples of actions promoting Roma inclusion in education

While involving Roma assistants and mediators, **Slovenia** seeks to include Romani children as early as possible in educational processes (pre-schools). With better training quality of education providers and more support networks for learning, the completion rate for Romani children in general education will be significantly improved (in Ljubljana, 54.3% on average in secondary education against 18.7% for Roma). Moreover, attention is paid to the promotion of Roma culture and heritage.

Spain is setting up new mediation programmes to help reduce early school leaving and absenteeism (in primary education, the objective is to reduce it from 22.5% today to 15% by 2015 and to 10% by 2020).

The Kauhajoki model in **Finland** is based on three instructors with Roma background. A pre-school teacher provides support for the children and families participating in early childhood education; a special needs assistant provides support for comprehensive school pupils; and a case manager supports young adults in further studies and finding employment.

In addition, support for the Roma culture and history in mainstream curricula is mentioned in a large number of documents. In general, most strategies underline that a better understanding of culture is necessary to fight stereotypes.

As part of an integrated approach, Member States should, as a matter of priority in the area of education:

- **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.**

(b) *Employment*

The EU goal is to reduce the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population[15]**.**

All Member States acknowledge the need to reduce the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma. To do so, an integrated approach needs to be encouraged in all Member States, particularly in those with a larger Roma population or where this gap is more significant. In addition, active inclusion policies[16] should also reach out to the Roma. Moreover, in order to achieve tangible results, Member States need to describe their objectives in terms of quantifiable targets supported by clear baseline data, so that progress can be monitored.

Notably in those Member States with a higher percentage of Roma, this population is largely located in rural areas. The strategy of these Member States should take this geographical distribution into consideration, identifying appropriate activities (both

[15] In most Member States, the number of Roma saying they were unemployed was at least double than the number of non-Roma. In Italy, the Czech Republic and Slovakia up to 4 or even 5 times more Roma than non-Roma said they were unemployed (*The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States; Survey results at a glance.* Fundamental Rights Agency, World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, 2012).

[16] Commission Recommendation 2008/867/EC on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market (OJ L 307/11 of 18/11/2008).

in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors) in which Roma can participate, thus ensuring real opportunities for Roma employment.

Measures to increase labour market participation

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Endorsement of the general goal	All Member States
Concrete goals to reduce the employment gap	BG, CZ, EL, ES, FR, HU, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI
General measures under the principle of equal treatment to reduce the employment gap	DK, DE, EE, IE, FR, CY, LV, LU, NL, AT, PL, SE
Additional or specific measures for Roma[17]	BG, CZ, IE, ES, HU, AT, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE
Access to micro-credit Civil servants in the public sector Personalised services	IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, HU, PT, RO, SK, FI IE IE, IT, HU, PT, RO, FI, SE
Integrated approach	BG, CZ, ES, HU, SI, SK, FI, UK

Measures suggested in the EU Framework, such as providing access to micro-credit, employing qualified civil servants in the public sector and providing personalised services and mediation were addressed by only some Member States. Several Member States envisage other specific measures to ensure non-discriminatory access for Roma to the labour market, including for example vocational and on-the-job training, or, facilitating access to childcare. Several Member States also plan measures in addition to those proposed in the EU Framework.

Examples of actions promoting Roma inclusion in employment

Spain aims to increase the employment rate amongst the Roma population from 44% (in 2011) to 50% in 2015 and 60% in 2020**,** setting a specific objective for the employment of Roma women. The programmes will promote necessary skills and simultaneously facilitate access to ordinary training programmes for obtaining employment.

Austria promotes the access of young Roma from Austrian and immigrant communities to the labour market by the enhanced Thara project which includes community work, coaching and training. The previous Thara project (2011-2012) focused on access of national and immigrant Roma to employment, reaching out to 107 Roma and 56 participants from public administration and civil society. Building on its findings the current project aims more specifically at labour market integration including support for self-employment.

Bulgaria aims to raise the level of Roma in employment by 2015, primarily with ESF support, by organising training courses for more than 28 000 unemployed and employed Roma in order to raise their employability and qualifications and by training 1 500 people in management and entrepreneurship.

Increasing Roma participation in the labour market in the Member States with large Roma populations will bring clear economic benefits, in particular in times of economic hardship.

[17] Specific measures aim to ensure non-discriminatory access for Roma to the labour market, including for example vocational and on-the-job training, mediation, facilitating access to childcare, etc.

As part of an integrated approach, Member States should, as a matter of priority, 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.**

(c) Healthcare

The EU goal is to reduce the gap in the health status between the Roma and the rest of the population.

Although access to healthcare is universal in all Member States, in reality not all Roma can access these services to the same extent as the rest of the population. Most Member States are aiming to improve healthcare access for Roma through outreach and other methods. Some Member States included measures to reduce health inequalities between the Roma and non-Roma population involving a range of preventive actions which go beyond those highlighted in the EU Framework. However, only few Member States defined a comprehensive approach to improve the health of Roma.

Several Member States have already put in place or are considering programmes involving qualified Roma as mediators for improving access to healthcare. These are very welcome initiatives. However, such measures need to be supplemented by other actions to have a significant impact on the health gap between Roma and the rest of the population.

The need for a systematic, integrated approach to health has been identified as a key challenge. It requires coordination between the healthcare sector and other sectors – particularly education, housing, employment and anti-discrimination.

Measures to improve healthcare

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Endorsement of the general goal	BG, CZ, IE,, EL, ES, FR, IT, HU, RO, SI, SK, SE
Concrete goals to reduce the health gap	BG, CZ, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, HU, RO, SI, SK
General measures relying on existing structures to reduce the health gap	DK, DE, EE, FR, CY, LV, LU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SE
Access to quality healthcare especially for children and women	EE, EL, ES, FR, IT, HU, PL, SK, SE

Additional measures[18]	BE, BG, CZ, EE, ES, HU, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK

Several Member States highlight the need to focus on children's and women's health[19]. Some Member States mention the importance of training health professionals to work with people of different socio-cultural backgrounds.

Examples of actions promoting Roma inclusion in healthcare

Hungary aims to train 2 000 Roma women with the help of the European Social Fund and ease the acquisition of practical experience in social, child welfare and child protection services, and also as family support social workers, community developers, employment facilitators and healthcare mediators.

Ireland has made available a wide range of Travellers-dedicated health services, such as the Traveller Health Units and the Primary Health Care Projects (including health mediators and public health nurses for Travellers). Since 1994, some Traveller women have been trained as community health mediators to develop primary healthcare based on Traveller communities' values.

In **Romania**, in order to increase the access of Roma people to public health services, the government employed approximately 450 health mediators by 2011. Their role is to facilitate the dialogue between the Roma and medical institutions and staff. They actively support Roma people in the process of obtaining identification documents, health insurances, registering on the lists of family doctors and make mothers aware of various health issues. Since this has represented a positive practice, one Roma inclusion goal is to increase the number of health mediators by 25% by 2020.

However, these commitments need to be bolstered by clear timelines for their implementation and by setting measurable targets so that progress can be followed. In addition, many Member States need to allocate clearer financial means to reduce health inequalities.

As part of an integrated approach, Member States should, as a matter of priority 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.**

(d) Housing and essential services

[18] These measures target preventive care, such as improving vaccination rates and campaigns on healthy lifestyles among Roma, but also reproductive health (e.g. prevention of youth pregnancies). Measures preventing prejudiced behaviour of health professionals are also mentioned by several Member States.

[19] With priority on reproductive health and preventive care including improved immunisation.

The EU goal is 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.

Although all Member States agree with the need to improve the housing conditions of many Roma, few propose concrete measures as part of an integrated approach to tackle the situation. Independent measures that are not part of a comprehensive housing approach including other accompanying measures in the fields of education, employment and healthcare may not achieve lasting results. Member States are therefore encouraged to consider broadening the scope of housing interventions, urban planning and rural development and making them part of such comprehensive plans. Some Member States, especially those with a relatively small Roma population, address the housing challenges of Roma within existing structures. Several Member States address access to housing, including social housing.

Measures to improve the housing situation

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Endorsement of the general goal	All Member States (except LT)
Concrete goals to reduce gap in access to housing and public utilities	All Member States (except LT)
General measures relying on existing structures	DK, DE, EE, LV, LU, NL, AT, SE
Access to housing, including social housing	BG, CZ, DK,DE, IE, ES, IT, CY, HU, AT, PT, SI, SK, SE,
Addressing the needs of the non-sedentary population	BE, IE, FR, AT,UK
Integrated approach	CZ, ES, FR, HU, PT, RO, FI,

Only a few Member States plan specific measures promoting non-discriminatory access to housing. Most Member States with Travellers include specific measures for non-sedentary populations. The involvement of regional and local authorities as well as local Roma and non-Roma communities is essential for Member States in order to find sustainable solutions.

Examples of actions promoting Roma inclusion in housing

In the **UK**, Welsh regional authorities have put in place specific measures to improve accommodation and access to services for Roma and Travellers. The funding made available to local authorities by the Welsh government to allow refurbishment and the creation of new sites has been increased from 75% to 100%.

In **Hungary**, to promote the social inclusion of those living in segregated environments, integrated programmes aimed at improving social, community, educational, healthcare, employment and housing conditions will be implemented using both ESF and ERDF resources. Alongside the establishment of community centres to provide hygienic and other services for the inhabitants, their housing needs will be targeted as well, including social housing.

In **France**, several local authorities have developed "insertion villages" in order to meet the needs of disadvantaged people, including Roma, who live in illegal settlements. Such projects will be replicated by other local authorities with the support of the European Regional Development Fund.

Considering the importance of the local level for housing issues, Member States are invited to promote community-led local development and integrated territorial investments supported by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund[20].

As part of an integrated approach, Member States should, as a matter of priority 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.**

2.2. Assessment of the Structural Requirements

The EU Framework calls on Member States to pursue a targeted approach in line with the Common Basic Principles for Roma inclusion, and ensure consistency of their National Roma Integration Strategies with National Reform Programmes in the Europe 2020 framework.

(a) Mobilising the regional/local level and civil society

The EU Framework highlighted the need for a continuous dialogue with regional and local authorities, as well as with Roma civil society in the design, implementation and monitoring of national strategies.

While most Member States highlight local projects or initiatives taken by local or regional authorities in order to promote Roma inclusion, only a few explicitly envisage the mobilisation of these authorities in implementing and monitoring of the strategies. Moreover, there is little indication of the involvement or consultation of these local public actors in the drafting of the strategies. In very few cases, Member States do not indentify clear measures at national level, but concrete programmes are implemented at regional and local level.

As regards civil society, several Member States have conducted broad consultations with Roma representatives and civil society organisations in the design of their policy documents, although contributions received do not always seem to have been taken on board.

Mobilisation of regional and local authorities and civil society

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Consultation of local and regional authorities or Roma/civil society representatives when	BE, BG, DK, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, IT, LV, HU, NL, AT,, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK

[20] *Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020*, Staff Working Document (2012) 61 final, 14 March 2012.

drafting the strategy	
Planned involvement of regional and local authorities in implementation	BE, BG, CZ, DE, IE, EL, ES, FR, CY, LV, LT, AT, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK
Planned involvement of Roma/civil society representatives in implementation	BE, BG, DE, IE, EL, ES, FR, LV, HU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK

However, most Member States failed to explain how they see cooperation with regional and local authorities on the one hand, and civil society as well as Roma communities on the other, in the implementation and monitoring of their policies. Member States need to make more efforts to meaningfully involve both the regional and local authorities and civil society at all stages of the national strategies.

As part of an integrated approach, Member States should, as a matter of priority:

- **closely involve, in accordance with their specific competences, regional and local authorities in the review, implementation and monitoring of the strategies;**
- **involve civil society, including Roma organisations, in the implementation and monitoring of the strategies;**
- **ensure coordination between the different layers of governance involved in the implementation of the strategies;**
- **mainstream Roma inclusion into the regional and local agenda;**
- **make use of the European Social Fund to strengthen the capacity of Roma organisations.**

(b) Effective monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation

The EU Framework calls on Member States to include in their strategies strong monitoring methods to evaluate the impact of Roma inclusion actions and a review mechanism for adapting strategies.

Several Member States recognise the need for a strong monitoring system and some are striving to put in place or at least are planning to develop such a system. Some Member States have successfully tested a territorial approach for monitoring the evolution of the situation, particularly in those areas where deprivation is more severe. However, substantial efforts are needed to meet the expectations set out in the EU Framework and to ensure appropriate reporting on Roma socio-economic inclusion in the framework of the Europe 2020 process, where appropriate.

Monitoring and implementation

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Strong monitoring to evaluate impact	IE, LV, PT, SK
Review mechanism for adapting the strategy	BG, IE, EL, ES, LV, SK, FI, SE

As part of an integrated approach Member States should:

- **develop or make use of existing robust monitoring systems by setting a baseline, appropriate indicators and measureable targets in collaboration, where possible, with the National Statistical Offices;**
- **ensure that each programme makes provision for the assessment of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impacts.**

(c) Anti-discrimination and the protection of fundamental rights

The EU Framework calls on Member States to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against but treated like all other persons with equal access to all fundamental rights as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

All Member States paid attention to promoting anti-discrimination and to the protection of fundamental rights in their strategies. In most strategies, a specific section or chapter is dedicated to raising awareness of fundamental rights and fighting against discrimination or the violation of human rights (including addressing trafficking in human beings).

Measures to promote human rights and non-discrimination

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Efforts in the field of human rights and non-discrimination	BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK

Addressing the lack of registration of Roma in the national population registers and the lack of identity papers, where applicable, is an absolute pre-condition for ensuring equal access to public services. This should be urgently and properly addressed by those Member States where this is a challenge.

Stepping up the fight against discrimination and racism, including those forms affecting Roma people, must be part of a strong approach in each Member State. This should be based on full compliance with EU[21] and national laws by all and on raising awareness of the societal interest of Roma integration. Opportunities for intercultural encounters may support such awareness and facilitate de-stigmatisation.

Roma children are a particularly vulnerable group when it comes to access to fundamental rights, which is only rarely addressed outside the fields of education and health. Several strategies devote specific attention to the situation of Roma women, even though additional efforts are needed to enable them to exercise their rights.

A significant number of the Roma living in the Member States are legally residing third-country nationals, who face the same challenges as migrants coming from

[21] 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 of 19/7/2000); Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law (OJ L 328 of 6/12/2008).

outside the EU. They should not be discriminated against, but enjoy the same rights as those granted to non-EU migrants.

As part of an integrated approach, Member States should, as a matter of priority:

- **ensure that all Roma are registered with the appropriate authorities;**
- **step up the fight against racism and discrimination including multiple discrimination;**
- **build public understanding of the common benefits of Roma inclusion;**
- **fight child labour and address trafficking in human beings more effectively, including by international cooperation.**

(d) National contact points

The EU Framework asked Member States to appoint a national contact point for the National Roma Integration Strategy with the authority to coordinate the development and implementation of the strategy. All have followed this request and now have national contact points, most of them at a high level[22]. The clear identification of the coordinating authorities in all 27 Member States is an improvement compared to the past and a strong indicator of the political will to tackle the challenges of Roma integration[23]. At the same time close cooperation between national contact points and the authorities in charge of funding and responsible for the implementation must be ensured.

National contact points

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
Appoint a national contact point	All Member States

All measures should be put in place so that the national contact point is able to coordinate Roma inclusion policies effectively.

2.3. Assessment of the Funding of Measures

The EU Framework asked Member States to allocate sufficient funding from national budgets, to be complemented, where appropriate, by EU and international funding, to Roma inclusion measures. The assessment of the national strategies shows that most Member States have failed to allocate sufficient budgetary resources for Roma inclusion. Just a few Member States have identified budgetary resources and concrete amounts for Roma inclusion policy measures.

To ensure the implementation of Roma inclusion policies, several Member States plan to rely mostly on EU funding, especially on the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. Although possibilities exist to support

[22] See the national contact points at : http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm.

[23] In Greece, appointment of the national contact point is foreseen for the second half of 2012.

vulnerable groups, such as Roma, within the scope of the rural development policy, most strategies do not make any reference to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Budgetary allocations for National Roma Integration Strategies should follow a territorial approach addressing the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or target groups at highest risk of discrimination or exclusion, with special regard to marginalised communities such as the Roma[24].

Allocation of funding

Measures required by the EU Framework	Member States that have addressed them
No indication of funding	IE, FR, CY, LU, NL, AT, FI, UK
No budget allocations	BE, DK, DE, EE, ES
Indication of allocation of funding from national budgets	BG, EL, LV, LT, HU, PL, RO, SI, SK, SE
Indication of allocation of international/EU funding	CZ, EL, LV, LT, HU, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK

Member States should make more and better use of EU Funds for Roma inclusion as part of their efforts to improve their absorption rate.

In order to ensure the sustainable implementation of their Roma inclusion strategies, Member States should show a clear commitment to securing their financing up to 2020, thereby reflecting their political will to address Roma exclusion.

3. THE CHALLENGES OF ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES

The EU Framework underlines that the EU Roma integration goals are equally relevant to enlargement countries. The National Roma Integration Strategies of these countries need to be reviewed in line with these goals and reflect the comprehensive approach required by the EU Framework. This is clearly highlighted in the Commission Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012[25].

The Commission is closely following developments in its annual progress reports. In addition to focusing on the four key areas of the EU Framework, countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey need to pay particular attention to facilitating access to

[24] The European Commission is collaborating with the World Bank to develop a mapping methodology, as well as maps of poverty and exclusion for most of the Member States which joined the EU in or since 2004. In 2011, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network called for proposals aimed at developing maps of poverty and exclusion for a number of Member States that joined the EU before 2004. At the end of 2011, the European Commission proposed that in the next programming period, Member States present the contribution of their Partnership Contracts and operational programmes to combating poverty by focussing their efforts to specific geographical areas or target groups.

[25] COM (2011) 666.

personal documents and registration with the local authorities[26]. The national authorities of enlargement countries need to remain committed to taking concrete steps in all related areas[27].

A number of measures are already funded in candidate countries under the human resources development component of the Instrument on Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Beneficiary countries have a section dedicated to vulnerable groups and Roma in their Operational Programme, which promotes social inclusion, including training, career guidance and activities to improve participation in the job market.

In order to further assist the enlargement countries in their efforts to promote Roma inclusion, the Commission has taken steps to improve the use of IPA in order to address Roma inclusion at national and regional level in a more strategic and result-oriented way[28].

Better integration of Roma is a matter of social justice and of ensuring more inclusive societies in the enlargement countries. This forms part of the EU's shared values that enlargement countries are encouraged to embrace as part of the path to accession. However, the current situation of Roma living in poor conditions in enlargement countries has had consequences in terms of the increased number of Roma temporarily migrating to EU Member States under visa-free regime and even applying for asylum[29]. This can have a negative impact on the visa liberalisation, which is one of the greatest achievements towards the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU. Enlargement countries must step up efforts to further integrate their Roma citizens. This should also include sustainable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, many of whom are Roma[30].

4. THE WAY FORWARD

The Commission's assessment of the National Roma Integration Strategies shows that Member States are making efforts to develop a comprehensive approach towards Roma integration. However, much more needs to be done at national level. Socio-economic inclusion of Roma remains first and foremost the responsibility of the Member States and they will need stronger efforts to live up to their responsibilities, by adopting more concrete measures, explicit targets for measurable deliverables, clearly earmarked funding at national level and a sound national monitoring and evaluation system.

---

26 Zagreb Declaration of 27 October 2011, approved at the Conference on the Provision of Civil Status Documentation and Registration in South Eastern Europe.

27 This commitment includes: establishing or reviewing relevant general and specific action plans and programmes in the four key areas, facilitating access to personal documents and registration; fostering early childhood education and reducing Roma early school leaving; stimulating employment of Roma in the public and private sector; preventing discrimination in social and health care, and improving the housing conditions of Roma, particularly those living in informal settlements.

28 Implementation is monitored through the mechanism of the Stabilisation and Association (SAA) process and the annual progress reports; the operational conclusions will be followed-up in 2012 in SAA committee meetings.

29 SEC(2011) 695 and SEC(2011) 1570.

30 The Sarajevo process (Belgrade Declaration of 7 November 2011) includes a €584 million Joint Regional Programme on this issue.

To meet the challenges identified and to bring about the effective integration of Roma minorities, Member States, especially those with a sizeable Roma population, need in particular to:

- *Continue regular bilateral dialogue with the Commission and relevant stakeholders in order to*

  – ensure that National Strategies and action plans are coherent with EU laws and policies and with the specific national situation, including mainstream policies and public sector reforms, and take into account the impacts of the economic crisis;

  – ensure effective use of both national and European funds;

  – promote and monitor concrete implementation of the strategies.

- *Involve regional and local authorities*

  Member States need to ensure that the implementation of the strategies is coherent with regional and local plans. Regional and local authorities are indispensable for delivering change and need to be fully on board when the strategies are reviewed and implemented. In addition, the Commission will further promote exchanges of experience and networking among regional and local authorities.

- *Work closely with civil society*

  Civil society, and in particular Roma organisations, should not be considered as passive recipients of change, but should be called upon to play an active role in generating it. They must play a crucial role in bringing Roma people on board and in building trust between majorities and minorities. Member States must take the necessary measures to secure the participation of civil society in the review, implementation and monitoring of their national strategies.

- *Allocate proportionate financial resources*

  Member States need to allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies, as this reflects Member States' ambitions. In addition to national funding, actions included in these strategies will also form part of the Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development negotiations for the 2014-2020 programming period. The Cohesion Policy Framework proposed by the Commission includes a minimum allocation for social inclusion and poverty, improved access to funds and their better coordination and integration, and an investment priority dedicated to the integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma and ex-ante conditionality requirements making Structural Funds investments conditional upon the existence of a National Roma Integration Strategy in line with the EU Framework.

- *Monitor transformation and enable policy adjustment*

National Reform Programmes within the European semester will be scrutinised for coherence with National Roma Integration Strategies and, where appropriate, references to Roma integration will be made in the Country-Specific Recommendations, in order to guide the relevant Member States towards further progress. In future years, in proportion to their Roma populations, Member States are asked to systematically address the issue of Roma inclusion in their National Reform Programmes.

Furthermore, the accompanying Staff Working Document to this communication includes the summary of key points which help the Member States to bridge the gaps between Roma people and the majority population. The detailed assessment will be shared with the Member States in the context of dialogue with them.

Member States are also invited to share with the Commission the findings of their monitoring of the implementation of their respective strategies.

The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency will continue its surveys across the EU and work closely with the Member States to support them in developing robust national monitoring systems.

The Commission will continue to support mobilising capacity within Member States. To this end, a network of the national contact points of all EU Member States will be set up to share the results of their measures addressing Roma inclusion, exchange best practices and peer-review the implementation of their strategies. The European Platform for Roma Inclusion will continue to provide a forum for stakeholders to exchange views.

The Commission will review annually the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, reporting to the European Parliament and the Council, as well as under the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

- *Fight discrimination convincingly*

Member States need to ensure that anti-discrimination legislation is effectively enforced in their territories. When reporting in 2013 on the application of the EU's Race Equality Directive[31], the Commission will address legal issues with a particular emphasis on those aspects relevant to Roma integration.

[31] 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 of 19/7/2000).