

European Commission calls on Member States to set national strategies for Roma integration

Europe's 10-12 million Roma continue to face discrimination, exclusion and the denial of their rights, while governments lose out on increased revenue and productivity because potential talent could go wasted. Better economic and social integration is an imperative – but to be effective, concerted action is needed at all levels to address the multiple causes of exclusion. The European Commission is therefore today putting forward a European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. This EU Framework will help guide national Roma policies and mobilise funds available at EU level to support inclusion efforts. The Framework focuses on four pillars: access to education, jobs, healthcare and housing. Member States should set individual national Roma integration goals in proportion to the population on their territory and depending on their starting point.

"Despite some good intentions from national politicians, too little has changed in the lives of most Roma over the last few years," said Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. "Member States have a joint responsibility to put an end to Roma exclusion – from schools, jobs, healthcare and housing. This is a serious challenge. That is why we are setting goals for Roma integration and why we now need a clear commitment from all capitals, regions and cities in Europe to put them into practice. Now is the time to move beyond good intentions and to take concrete actions. Most important to me is that Member States help ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school."

Roma people in Europe live in considerably worse socio-economic conditions than the population at large. A survey in six EU countries¹ found that only 42% of Roma children complete primary school, compared to an EU average of 97.5%. For secondary education, Roma attendance is estimated at only 10%. In the job market, they face lower employment rates and higher rates of discrimination. In housing, they often lack access to essential services such as running water or electricity. They also face a health gap: life expectancy for Roma is 10 years less than the EU average of 76 for men and 82 for women.

EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, declared: *"The persistent exclusion of Roma people is unacceptable in 21st Europe built on principles of equality, democracy and the rule of law. The living conditions of the majority of Roma and their relations with mainstream society have just worsened in recent years."*

He further underlined: "For some countries it will be simply impossible to achieve the Europe 2020 targets without a breakthrough in Roma integration."

¹ Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia

Roma integration could mean considerable economic benefits. Roma represent a growing share of the working age population, with an average age of 25 compared to the EU average of 40. They make up one in five new labour market entrants in Bulgaria and Romania. Research by the World Bank suggests full Roma integration could be worth around €0.5 billion a year to the economies of some countries by improving productivity, cutting welfare bills and boosting tax receipts.

In the past, the EU has repeatedly stressed the need for better integration of Roma, most recently with a report in April 2010 ([IP/10/407](#)). EU legislation (the Race Equality Directive) already obliges Member States to give equal access to ethnic minorities, such as the Roma, to education, housing, health and employment. In December 2010, the Commission's Roma Task Force found that strong and proportionate measures are still not in place to tackle the social and economic problems of a large part of the EU's Roma population ([MEMO/10/701](#)). It is now crucial to step up a gear and ensure that national, regional and local integration policies focus on Roma in a clear and specific way.

Building on these findings, the EU Framework develops a targeted approach for Roma inclusion by setting **goals** in:

- **Education:** ensuring that all Roma children complete at least primary school;
- **Employment:** cutting the employment gap between Roma and other citizens;
- **Health:** reducing the health gap, for example by cutting child mortality among Roma;
- **Housing:** closing the gap in access to housing and public utilities such as water and electricity.

Member States will have to submit **national Roma strategies** by the end of 2011 specifying how they will contribute to the achievement of these goals. The Framework is in line with the EU's broader Europe 2020 targets for employment, social inclusion and education. The achievement of these goals is important to help Member States reach the overall targets of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Commission is also proposing solutions to make sure that **EU funds** that can support Roma integration are more effectively used. Member States are invited to amend their operational programmes co-financed by Structural Funds and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to better support Roma targeted projects.

Finally, to make sure the EU Framework for national strategies makes a tangible difference to Roma on the ground, the Commission wants to put a robust **monitoring mechanism** in place to measure results. [The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency](#) has a key role to play, by collecting data on the social and economic situation of Roma, in cooperation with other organisations. Member States are asked to appoint national contact points to manage, monitor and report the implementation of their national Roma integration strategy. The European Commission will report back annually on the progress made in the Member States.

Background

The Roma – Europe's largest ethnic minority – have been part of Europe for centuries, but frequently face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and exclusion.

Many of the areas for improving Roma integration – such as education, employment, health and housing – are primarily national or regional responsibilities. However, the EU has an important role in coordinating action by Member States and helping with financial tools.

In summer 2010, the European Commission publicly took the position that Roma are EU citizens and should fully benefit from their rights and fully comply with their obligations under EU law ([SPEECH/10/428](#) and [MEMO/10/502](#)).

Further information

DG Justice Newsroom:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/news/intro/news_intro_en.htm

The EU and Roma:

<http://ec.europa.eu/roma>

Homepage of Vice-President Viviane Reding, EU Justice Commissioner:

<http://ec.europa.eu/reding>

Homepage of László Andor: EU Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Commissioner:

<http://ec.europa.eu/andor>

ANNEX : Roma Population Estimates

Figures taken from a document prepared by the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division							
European countries (EU Member States)	Total country population (July 2009)	Official number (last census)	Minimum estimate	Maximum estimate	Average estimate	% of total population	Updated
<i>Austria</i>	8 205 533	No data available	20 000	30 000	25 000	0,30%	14/09/2010
<i>Belgium</i>	10 414 336	No data available	20 000	40 000	30 000	0,29%	14/09/2010
<i>Bulgaria</i>	7 262 675	370 908 (2001)	700 000	800 000	750 000	10,33%	14/09/2010
<i>Cyprus</i>	792 604	560 (1960)	1 000	1 500	1 250	0,16%	03/08/2009
<i>Czech Republic</i>	10 220 911	11 718 (2001)	150 000	250 000	200 000	1,96%	14/09/2010
<i>Denmark</i>	5 484 723	No data available	1 000	10 000	5 500	0,10%	03/08/2009
<i>Estonia</i>	1 307 605	584 (2009)	1 000	1 500	1 250	0,10%	03/08/2009
<i>Finland</i>	5 244 749	No data available	10 000	12 000	11 000	0,21%	03/08/2009
<i>France</i>	64 057 790	No data available	300 000	500 000	400 000	0,62%	14/09/2010
<i>Germany</i>	82 400 996	No data available	70 000	140 000	105 000	0,13%	14/09/2010
<i>Greece</i>	10 722 816	No data available	180 000	350 000	265 000	2,47%	14/09/2010
<i>Hungary</i>	9 930 915	190 046 (2001)	400 000	1 000 000	700 000	7,05%	14/09/2010
<i>Ireland</i>	4 156 119	22 435 (2006)	32 000	43 000	37 500	0,90%	14/09/2010
<i>Italy</i>	59 619 290	No data available	110 000	170 000	140 000	0,23%	14/09/2010
<i>Latvia</i>	2 245 423	8 205 (2000)	13 000	16 000	14 500	0,65%	03/08/2009
<i>Lithuania</i>	3 565 205	2 571 (2001)	2 000	4 000	3 000	0,08%	03/08/2009
<i>Luxembourg</i>	486 006	No data available	100	500	300	0,06%	03/08/2009
<i>Malta</i>	403 532	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	03/08/2009
<i>the Netherlands</i>	16 645 313	No data available	32 000	48 000	40 000	0,24%	14/09/2010
<i>Poland</i>	38 500 696	12 731(2002)	15 000	60 000	37 500	0,10%	14/09/2010
<i>Portugal</i>	10 676 910	No data available	40 000	70 000	55 000	0,52%	14/09/2010
<i>Romania</i>	22 246 862	535 140 (2002)	1 200 000	2 500 000	1 850 000	8,32%	14/09/2010
<i>Slovak Republic</i>	5 455 407	89 920 (2001)	400 000	600 000	500 000	9,17%	14/09/2010
<i>Slovenia</i>	2 007 711	3 246 (2002)	7 000	10 000	8 500	0,42%	03/08/2009
<i>Spain</i>	46 157 822	No data available	650 000	800 000	725 000	1,57%	14/09/2010
<i>Sweden</i>	9 276 509	No data available	35 000	50 000	42 500	0,46%	14/09/2010
<i>United Kingdom</i>	60 943 912	No data available	150 000	300 000	225 000	0,37%	14/09/2010
Total in the EU					6 172 800	1,73%	
(Non-EU Member States)							
<i>Albania</i>	3 619 778	1261 (2001)	80 000	150 000	115 000	3,18%	14/09/2010
<i>Andorra</i>	72 413	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	03/08/2009
<i>Armenia</i>	2 968 586	No data available	2 000	2 000	2 000	0,07%	03/08/2009
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	8 177 717	No data available	2 000	2 000	2 000	0,02%	03/08/2009
<i>Belarus</i>	9 685 768	No data available	10 000	70 000	40 000	0,41%	14/09/2010
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	4 590 310	8 864 (1991)	40 000	60 000	50 000	1,09%	14/09/2010
<i>Croatia</i>	4 491 543	9 463 (2001)	30 000	40 000	35 000	0,78%	14/09/2010
<i>Georgia</i>	4 630 841	1 744 (1989)	2 000	2 500	2 250	0,05%	03/08/2009
<i>Iceland</i>	304 367	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	03/08/2009
<i>Kosovo*</i>	2 542 711	45 745 (1991)	25 000	50 000	37 500	1,47%	14/09/2010
<i>Liechtenstein</i>	34 498	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	03/08/2009
<i>"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"</i>	2 061 315	53 879 (2002)	135 500	260 000	197 750	9,59%	14/09/2010
<i>Moldova</i>	4 324 450	12 280 (2004)	15 000	200 000	107 500	2,49%	14/09/2010
<i>Monaco</i>	32 796	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	03/08/2009
<i>Montenegro</i>	678 177	2 826 (2003)	15 000	25 000	20 000	2,95%	14/09/2010
<i>Norway</i>	4 644 457	No data available	4 500	15 700	10 100	0,22%	03/08/2009
<i>Russian Federation</i>	140 702 094	182 617 (2002)	450 000	1 200 000	825 000	0,59%	14/09/2010
<i>San Marino</i>	29 973	No data available	0	0	0	0,00%	03/08/2009
<i>Serbia (excl. Kosovo)</i>	7 334 935	108 193 (2002)	400 000	800 000	600 000	8,18%	14/09/2010
<i>Switzerland</i>	7 581 520	No data available	25 000	35 000	30 000	0,40%	14/09/2010
<i>Turkey</i>	71 892 807	4 656 (1945)	500 000	5 000 000	2 275 000	3,83%	14/09/2010
<i>Ukraine</i>	45 994 287	47 917 (2001)	120 000	400 000	260 000	0,57%	14/09/2010
Total Non-EU					5 084 100	1,63%	
Total in Europe					11 256 900		