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## Roma: Commission calls on Member States to step up efforts on integration



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The European Commission has called on Member States to deliver on their commitments to ensure equality and to do more to improve the economic and social integration of Europe's 10 to 12 million Roma. The call follows the Commission's **progress report** released today which shows that Member States need to do better in implementing their national Roma integration strategies submitted under the [EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies](#). The new report is accompanied by a proposal for a **Recommendation** addressed to EU countries which proposes to Member States on the one hand specific measures, including positive action, and on the other hand, horizontal policy measures, including local actions to improve the situation of Roma people. Member States would have two years to put concrete measures into practice to make a difference for Roma people on the ground

*"If Member States are serious about their national strategies, they need to move up a gear on Roma integration. The EU Framework for national Roma integration has been in place for over two years. It's time that strategies are followed by concrete actions,"* said Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. *"Although some progress has been made, it remains only limited. That's why we are now giving specific guidance to help Member States strengthen and accelerate their efforts: action to help Roma needs to go local, different countries need to work together, and urgent intervention is needed to address the situation of young Roma."*

*"Roma inclusion measures must be implemented and monitored with the full involvement of civil society, including representatives of Roma communities themselves. They – together with National Roma Contact Points – must also be involved in the current planning of the use of EU funds for 2014-2020", said László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. "Member States – especially those with large Roma communities – must urgently and forcefully promote effective equal access for Roma to education and the labour market. The Commission has also proposed Country Specific Recommendations to the Member States most concerned. Providing equal opportunities to Roma will contribute to meeting the Europe 2020 targets in the fields of education, employment and poverty reduction."*

## **Progress report**

Today's Roma progress report finds that while many Member States have set up mechanisms to better coordinate their Roma integration efforts and bolster dialogue with local and regional authorities, there is room for improvement in involving civil society organisations and putting in place sound monitoring and evaluation methods to measure results. The report also finds that a majority of Member States have not allocated sufficient resources from their national budgets to implement the strategies. In addition, public authorities should do more to fight discrimination and explain the social and economic benefits of Roma integration.

Despite criticism, the report also draws attention to a series of examples of good practice from Member States, such as the regional action plan for Roma inclusion developed by the State of **Berlin**, cooperation between the national authorities and local actors in **France**, and work done in **Bulgaria** to better mobilise EU funds. **Hungary** has designed a robust system to monitor implementation of its national strategy, **Spain** has trained 158 police forces to deal with ethnic discrimination, and **Romania** has earmarked 15,000 places for Roma students in schools, universities and vocational training.

## **Recommendation**

The Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation is the first EU legal instrument for Roma inclusion. The proposal would recommend Member States to take positive action to bridge the gaps between the Roma and the rest of the population. It reinforces the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies agreed by all Member States in 2011 by setting the conditions for an effective inclusion of Roma people in the Member States. Based on previous Communications, the proposed Recommendation focuses on the **four areas** where EU leaders signed up to common goals for Roma integration under the EU Framework: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. For putting in place the targeted actions, it asks Member States to allocate not only EU but also national, private and third sector funds to Roma inclusion – a key factor identified by the Commission in its evaluation of Member States' national strategies last year ([IP/12/499](#)). In addition, it offers guidance in helping Member States transform horizontal issues into actions for Roma integration, such as ensuring that the strategies go local, enforcing anti-discrimination rules, following a social investment approach, protecting Roma children and women and addressing poverty.

## Funding

The proposed Recommendation suggests Member States allocate sufficient funding to their national and local strategies and action plans for Roma inclusion from any available sources. This should be facilitated by allocating an adequate share of EU cohesion policy resources to investment into people through the European Social Fund, and allocating at least 20% of this amount in each Member State on social inclusion. The proposed Recommendation also suggests that Roma integration is included in the Partnership Agreements of the Member States concerned. In order to ensure effective implementation, the capacities of local authorities and civil society organisations should be strengthened.

## Next Steps

To enter into force, the proposal for a Council Recommendation will first need to be unanimously adopted by Member States in the Council and receive consent from the European Parliament. This will reinforce the existing political commitments of Member States. EU countries have two years time to put into practice the necessary measures to comply with the Recommendation. They will need to inform the Commission on an annual basis on how they have applied it. The Commission for its part will continue to assess progress in its own annual Roma progress reports each spring.

The findings will also feed into the [European Semester process](#) for economic policy coordination. In the May 2013 exercise, the Commission proposed [country-specific recommendations \(CSRs\)](#) for **five Member States** under the European Semester **on issues related to Roma** (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia). This annual cycle makes sure that Roma integration remains firmly and continuously on the European agenda.

The Country-Specific Recommendations focus on the most important structural impediments affecting progress towards the Europe 2020 targets to reduce poverty and social exclusion and to boost education in each Member State. Therefore, they also indicate funding priorities for the period 2014-2020. The on-going negotiations with Member States on the use of EU funds should ensure an appropriate allocation of funds for turning commitments into concrete actions.

## Background

Roma integration is in the interest of Member States, especially for those with a large Roma minority. Roma represent a significant and growing proportion of the school age population and the future workforce. In countries like Bulgaria and Romania, one in every four to five new labour market entrants are Roma. Efficient labour activation policies and individualised and accessible support services for Roma job seekers are crucial to allow Roma people live up to their potential and actively and equally participate in society.

In its 2012 report, the European Commission called on EU Member States to implement their national strategies to improve the economic and social integration of Roma in Europe. Member States developed these plans in response to the Commission's EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies, adopted on 5 April 2011 (see [IP/11/400](#), [MEMO/11/216](#)) which was endorsed by EU leaders in June 2011 ([IP/11/789](#)).

EU Structural Funds – the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – as well as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) have been mobilised to boost national efforts and are an important financial lever in ensuring the translation of national Roma integration strategies into real socio-economic inclusion of Roma communities, alongside national budgets. But although, the three funds total €50 billion per year, not enough benefits disadvantaged people, including Roma.

On 15 May 2013, Vice-President Reding and Commissioner Andor met key players from Roma civil society to discuss Roma integration in Europe and prepare today's Recommendation proposal ([MEMO/13/437](#)).

On 27 June 2013, the Commission's report and proposal for a Council Recommendation will be presented at the meeting of the European Platform for Roma inclusion, which, this year, will focus on the urgent need to improve the situation of Roma children and youth.

## **For more information**

[MEMO/13/610](#)

Press pack:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/discrimination/news/130626\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/discrimination/news/130626_en.htm)

European Commission – Roma:

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

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

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

Follow the Vice-President on Twitter: [@VivianeRedingEU](#)

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

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/andor/](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/)

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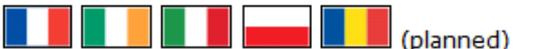
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## ANNEX

### Overview of efforts for a successful implementation of the national Roma strategies:

#### 1. Involving local and regional authorities: further efforts are needed

Involving local and regional authorities	Member States that have taken such measures
Structured dialogue set up	 AT BE BG CZ DK EE EL  ES FI FR HU IE IT LV  NL RO SE SI SK UK
Promotion of exchange of experience and cooperation among local authorities	 BE BG CZ DK FI FR HU  IT SE ES SI UK
Allocation of resources for Roma integration to local and regional authorities	 AT BE CZ DE DK EL FI  FR IE IT PL RO (planned)  SE SI SK

**2. Working closely with civil society: civil society involvement not yet sufficient**

Working closely with civil society	Member States that have taken such measures
Structured dialogue with civil society set up at national level	 <p>BE BG EE ES DK FI FR HU LV LT SE SI UK</p>
Encouraging the active involvement of civil society and Roma representatives at local level	 <p>BE (regional level) BG CZ ES FI HU LV PT SE SI</p>
Financial support for developing the capacity of civil society	 <p>EE ES FR EE SE SI</p>

### 3. Allocating proportionate financial resources

Weaknesses in allocating financial resources matching the policy commitments made in the strategies remain a major obstacle to implementation.

Allocating proportionate financial resources	Member States that have taken such measures
Integrated approach to allocating financial resources	 EL ES FI HU IT EE SI  SK
Territorial approach to allocating financial resources	 CZ EL ES HU IT PL SE  SK
Involvement of local and regional authorities and civil society in planning the use of EU funds	 BE BG CZ ES FI IT RO  (initial steps) SI SK

### 4. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring transformation and enabling policy adjustment	Member States that have taken such measures
<p>Mapping of the situation of Roma ('baseline') undertaken or under way</p>	 <p>CZ EE EL ES FI FR HU LT LV NL PT RO SI SK</p>
<p>A monitoring system to measure the results and impacts of the national strategy</p>	<p>Initial steps:  BG</p> <p>Under development:  BE ES FI HU</p>  IT SE
<p>Identification of areas with extremely poor Roma communities</p>	 <p>CZ EE EL FR HU PL RO SK</p>
<p>Involvement of all major stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process</p>	 (planned) <p>AT CZ FI HU</p>

	 (planned)  (planned) IT LT  (partially)   (planned) SE SI SK
Cooperation established with National Statistical Offices	       BG CZ EL ES FI HU IT     LV RO SK UK
Planned regular reporting and evaluation	       BE BG CZ EL FI HU LT      PL RO SE SI SK

### 5. Fighting discrimination convincingly

Measures to fight discrimination	Member States that have taken such measures
Enforcing anti-discrimination legislation at local level	 AT    DK    SE
Raising awareness (including in public administrations)	 AT    BG    CZ    DK    EE    ES FI    FR    HU    IE    IT    LV LT    PT    RO    SI
Increasing awareness among Roma of their rights	 AT    FI    LV    SE    SI
Tackling multiple forms of discrimination against Roma women	 (initial steps) RO
Fighting against human trafficking and the labour exploitation of children	 CZ    DK    HU    NL

## II. Roma population figures - Council of Europe estimates

Country	Total population (World Bank 2010)	Official number (self-declared)	Census year	Minimum estimate	Maximum estimate	Average estimate (CoE used figure)	Average estimate as a % of total population
<i>Romania</i>	21,442,012	619,007	2011	1,200,000	2,500,000	1,850,000	8.63%
<i>Bulgaria</i>	7,543,325	325,343	2011	700,000	800,000	750,000	9.94%
<i>Hungary</i>	10,008,703	190,046	2001	500,000	1,000,000	750,000	7.49%
<i>Spain</i>	46,081,574	No data available		500,000	1,000,000	750,000	1.63%
<i>Slovak Republic</i>	5,433,456	89,920	2001	380,000	600,000	490,000	9.02%
<i>France</i>	64,876,618	No data available		300,000	500,000	400,000	0.62%
<i>United Kingdom</i>	62,218,761	No data available		150,000	300,000	225,000	0.36%
<i>Czech Republic</i>	10,525,090	11,718	2001	150,000	250,000	200,000	1.90%
<i>Greece</i>	11,319,048	No data available		50,000	300,000	175,000	1.55%
<i>Italy</i>	60,483,521	No data available		120,000	180,000	150,000	0.25%
<i>Germany</i>	81,702,329	No data available		70,000	140,000	105,000	0.13%
<i>Portugal</i>	10,642,841	No data available		34,000	70,000	52,000	0.49%
<i>Sweden</i>	9,379,116	No data available		35,000	65,000	50,000	0.53%
<i>the Netherlands</i>	16,612,213	No data available		32,000	48,000	40,000	0.24%
<i>Ireland</i>	4,481,430	22,435	2006	32,000	43,000	37,500	0.84%
<i>Austria</i>	8,384,745	6,273	2001	20,000	50,000	35,000	0.42%
<i>Poland</i>	38,187,488	12,731	2002	15,000	50,000	32,500	0.09%
<i>Belgium</i>	10,879,159	No data available		20,000	40,000	30,000	0.28%
<i>Latvia</i>	2,242,916	8,517	2011	9,000	16,000	12,500	0.56%
<i>Finland</i>	5,363,624	No data available		10,000	12,000	11,000	0.21%
<i>Slovenia</i>	2,052,821	3,246	2002	7,000	10,000	8,500	0.41%
<i>Lithuania</i>	3,320,656	2,571	2001	2,000	4,000	3,000	0.09%
<i>Denmark</i>	5,544,139	No data available		1,000	4,000	2,500	0.05%
<i>Cyprus</i>	1,103,647	502	1960	1,000	1,500	1,250	0.11%
<i>Estonia</i>	1,339,646	584	2009	600	1,500	1,050	0.08%
<i>Luxembourg</i>	505,831	No data available		100	500	300	0.06%
<i>Malta</i>	412,961	No data available		0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total in Europe</b>	<b>502,087,670</b>	<b>1,292,893</b>		<b>4,338,700</b>	<b>7,985,500</b>	<b>6,162,100</b>	<b>1.36%</b>
<b>European Union (27)</b>	<b>502,087,670</b>	<b>1,292,893</b>		<b>4,338,700</b>	<b>7,985,500</b>	<b>6,162,100</b>	<b>1.18%</b>

Document prepared by the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Roma Issues.

Updated on 2 July 2012. Most estimates include both local Roma, Roma-related groups (Sinti, Travellers, etc.) and Roma migrants.