



15th European Platform for Roma Inclusion

Prague, 20-21 September 2021

Draft event report

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1. Key messages

The 15th European Platform for Roma Inclusion (EPRI) brought together some 200 participants to discuss the state of European Roma equality and inclusion policies. It provided an important opportunity for Member States, EU institutions and key stakeholders to reiterate their commitment to Roma equality, inclusion and participation in view of the newly adopted national Roma strategic frameworks. Discussions focused on sharing good practices and experiences in implementing and monitoring the national strategic frameworks. The Platform also provided a forum to present key messages from the European Commission's assessment of the national Roma strategic frameworks.

Key messages that emerged during the discussions included:

- Member States should further strengthen their commitment, allocate more resources to Roma equality and inclusion, and make full use of available EU funding in order to meet the targets of the EU Roma Strategic Framework by 2030.
- Member States should ensure that their policies address the needs of all Roma on their territory and make full use of their national Roma strategic frameworks to address the needs of Roma refugees from Ukraine by providing them with non-discriminatory access to essential services.
- The European Commission and Member States should increase efforts to build capacity of civil society organisations both at national and local level with regard to policy, funding and budgeting processes.
- Roma equality and inclusion should be mainstreamed in other funding instruments beyond ESF+ and ERDF.
- Segregation in education and housing needs to be recognised as a as a manifestation of structural antigypsyism, and thus as a problem of the majority society and public institutions. National, regional and local authorities need to take responsibility for overcoming segregation and help promote positive public discourse about the importance of desegregation for equal and inclusive societies.

2. Background

The European Platform for Roma Inclusion (EPRI) is an annual event that aims to stimulate cooperation and exchange of experiences among all relevant stakeholders for equality, inclusion, and promote participation of Roma people in Europe. The Platform contributes to making both European and national policies more inclusive and reflecting better on the needs of Roma people.



In the context of the Czech Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission organised the 15th European Platform for Roma Inclusion meeting in Prague, on 25-26 October 2022, back-to-back with the National Roma Contact Point meeting held on 26 and 27 October 2022.

This year's platform was overshadowed by Russia's war against Ukraine. It therefore also addressed the situation of Ukrainian Roma, both within Ukraine and as refugees in the EU.

The discussions confirmed the need for maintaining a stronger political effort in order to achieve the EU Roma Strategic Framework's collective 2030 goals, and to adequately meet the needs of vulnerable Roma war refugees.

3. Opening and political panels

Already in the [opening](#) of the event, important messages were made with regards to the need for a greater commitment and resources that should be allocated by the Member States for Roma equality, inclusion and participation, in order to meet the targets of the EU Roma Strategic Framework by 2030. Such messages were passed on by the Czech Presidency, represented by Martina Štěpánková, Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Affairs and Mr. Vladimír Balaš, Minister for Education, Youth and Sports and Ms. Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament. Commissioner Dalli summarised some main highlights of the Commission's forthcoming assessment report of the Member States' national Roma strategic frameworks, to be adopted by the end of 2022.

The [first political panel](#), focused on the way forward in promoting Roma equality, inclusion and participation, especially in the context of the newly adopted national Roma strategic frameworks. Strong statements in this sense were made by Mr. Dušan Velič, State Secretary of the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation, Slovak Republic; Ms. Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Director for Social Rights and Inclusion, European Commission, Mr. Ioannis N. Dimitrakopoulos, Scientific Adviser to the Director, Acting Head of Unit for Equality, Roma and Social Rights, European Agency for Fundamental Rights; Mr. Ákos Topolánszky, EESC Member and Member of the EESC's Permanent Group on Inclusion of the Roma; and Ms. Gabriela Hrabanova, Executive Director, ERGO Network. The discussions outlined some areas of progress, such as the use of EU funds in Slovakia, as presented by Mr Velič. They also put emphasis on the conditionality under the use of ESF+ and encouraged the MS to make full use of the funding available under the 2021-2027 programming period. An important highlight of the panel was the presentation of the main findings of the [2021 FRA Roma Survey](#) by Mr Dimitrakopolous. This report presents findings from FRA's 2021 survey on Roma in Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain, as well as in North Macedonia and Serbia. By focusing specifically on Roma, the survey provides unique data and information that are not available from European general population surveys, which do not disaggregate on grounds of ethnic origin. The findings present a bleak but familiar picture of exclusion, deprivation, discrimination and racism.

The [second political panel](#) focused specifically on the situation of Ukrainian Roma, both within Ukraine and as refugees in the EU. In line with the focus of the EU Roma Strategic Framework on diversity among Roma, Member States were asked to ensure that their national Roma strategic



frameworks address the needs of all Roma on their territory. They should make full use of their national Roma strategic frameworks to address the needs of Roma refugees from Ukraine by providing them with non-discriminatory access to essential services. In this context, the Platform provided a forum for Member States to discuss how to best address the specific challenges faced by Roma from Ukraine. In their interventions, DG NEAR presented the tools made available to address the situation of displaced Roma people within Ukraine, as well as challenges they face and support available to them. DG HOME focused on the situation of Roma refugees within the EU, including tools available to support them.

4. Workshops

The second day of the Platform, on 26 October included two interactive workshops:

The first workshop addressed desegregation in education and housing. It examined experiences, barriers and promising practices in tackling school and spatial segregation and ensuring effective equal access to quality and non-segregated education and housing.

The second workshop focused on the use of EU funding supporting Roma equality, inclusion and participation. Participants discussed good practices in using EU funding instruments and funds to foster Roma inclusion. The discussions also addressed the role of the national Roma contact points (NRCPs) and their cooperation with civil society in the design, monitoring and implementation of NRSFs and relevant programmes in order to strengthen and optimise their design, monitoring and evaluation.

The workshops aimed to generate concrete conclusions and recommendations that can help improve the implementation of national and EU policies, both with regard to Roma-targeted policies as well as mainstream policies of direct relevance for Roma inclusion.

Some of the main conclusions included:

Use of EU funding supporting Roma equality, inclusion and participation:

- The European Commission and Member States should increase efforts to capacitate CSOs on policy and funding. They should maximize the mainstreaming of Roma issues across sectoral policies throughout different budgetary levels and design user-friendly information campaigns on the use of EU funding.
- Co-funding conditions for CSOs (5-20%) should be simplified further. Calls without co-financing requirements should be scaled up.
- Roma equality should be mainstreamed across funding instruments beyond e.g. ESF+. For example, digital and climate funds, as well as EU investments in innovation and research could be used also for Roma communities.

Desegregation in housing and education

- The workshop addressed the segregation of Roma in housing and education as one of the most serious problems faced by Member States, which violates the core values and policies on fundamental rights of the EU. This is the reason why, since 2014, the European



Commission has initiated infringement procedures based on the Racial Equality Directive over the school segregation of Roma children against three Member States (Hungary, Slovakia, and Czech Republic). Participants underlined that spatial segregation is severe also in Bulgaria, Italy, and Slovakia.

- A major conclusion of the workshop was the need to recognize segregation in education and housing as a manifestation of structural antigypsyism, and thus as a problem of the majority society and public institutions. Therefore, governments, as well as local and regional authorities need to show full responsibility and accountability. Tackling segregation also requires major efforts to create a positive public discourse and understanding in our societies as a whole about the importance of desegregation for equality and inclusive societies.
- A second conclusion underlined the importance of data collection and monitoring on the issue of segregation, which can help strengthen the accountability of all relevant stakeholders. Continuous monitoring should be a major dimension of a structured dialogue on desegregation that should take place not only at national level, but should be facilitated by the European Commission with the involvement of Member States, relevant stakeholders, and with civil society. Roma participation at all levels is a fundamental safeguard for the successful implementation of any desegregation measures.

5. Conclusions and next steps

In [closing](#) the 15th European Platform for Roma Inclusion, Vice-President Jourova underlined some important messages addressed to Member States, necessary in order to meet the ambition that goes beyond the 2030 minimum targets set by the EU Roma Strategic Framework. Vice-President Jourova encouraged Member States to make full use of available EU funding, strengthen the involvement of all relevant civil society actors in the monitoring and implementation of the National Roma Strategic Frameworks, and strengthen the resources and mandate of the National Roma Contact Points in order to efficiently coordinate the Roma inclusion processes in the Member States.

Key messages emerging from the discussions during the Platform were passed to the meeting of National Roma Contact Points that took place on the following day. They will help inform the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new national Roma strategic frameworks and future EU Roma policies, in order to help increase the effectiveness and impact of relevant policies and measures.

The European Commission will adopt its assessment report of the national Roma strategic frameworks by the end of 2022, in order to take stock of the measures developed by Member States and provide concrete guidance on any improvements needed.