

## Country fiche: POLAND

### Position of civil society involved in the Roma Civil Monitor

#### SUBSTANTIVE POLICY AREAS

##### STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

##### WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

#### EDUCATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education is a priority in the 2014-2020 Roma Programme. About 65% of total funds have been devoted to education (i.e. day-care centres, preschool subsidies, scholarships).</li> <li>• From 2017, the pre-school education became obligatory and free of charge for children aged 6. In areas without available facilities, the preschool education is provided by various types of community centres.</li> <li>• In the last years, the number of Roma children in special education has been reduced.</li> <li>• Scholarship schemes for Roma primary school, high school and university students aim to foster their enrolment and graduation rates.</li> <li>• The institutionalisation of the Roma school assistant and supporting teachers positions with the aim to increase school attendance and educational outcomes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma has negative impact on Roma children's education. For example, a principal of a primary school in Warsaw surrender to non-Roma parents' pressure and denied Roma children enrolment into the mainstream school.</li> </ul> |
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#### EMPLOYMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry launched ESF-funded projects to finance activities aiming at raising Roma employment in the open labour market, implemented by NGOs or local governments.</li> <li>• Legal provisions against discrimination in access to employment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The measures developed through the Roma Programme did not manage to address the high level of unemployment; initiatives have often low impact sustainability in terms of participants' placement in jobs in the open labour market.</li> <li>• The public employment services do not play an active role in implementing Roma projects and have no activities to reduce employer discrimination.</li> <li>• Social benefits may act as a disincentive to formal employment.</li> <li>• Provisions against employer discrimination are rarely enforced.</li> </ul> |
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#### HEALTHCARE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma-targeted measures have been supported from public funds in regions with the most deprived communities; including prevention, examination or check-ups and immunization. The measures have been implemented by ten local governments and 11 NGOs, including eight Roma NGOs.</li> <li>• Roma health mediators with a medical or social welfare professional background ("environmental nurses") monitor Roma families' health, provide advice and help, including on hygiene and basic medical supplies, and guide them to outpatient departments for specific examinations and visits.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The share of funds for healthcare allocated under the current Roma Programme is inadequate (3%) and should be raised.</li> <li>• Local Roma NGOs should be involved in tasks aimed at improving health in cooperation with doctors and nurses; moreover, Roma should be better involved in decision-making on funding of projects within the Roma Programme.</li> <li>• There are no significant initiatives in preventing and combating the use and spreading of drugs despite the fact that drug problems in marginalised Roma communities are often signalled by Roma activists.</li> </ul> |
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## HOUSING

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24% of the Roma Programme's budget is spent on improving housing conditions.</li> <li>• Many local authorities effectively used the Roma Programme for housing (for purchase and construction of residential premises, reparation and construction of illumination, sewage and waste-water treatment plants, construction of playgrounds, etc.)</li> <li>• A local initiative in Wroclaw targeting Romanian Roma applied a comprehensive approach to work for integration in all domains.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The social status has not improved and the ethnic stigma has not changed with improvement of the housing conditions.</li> <li>• Poorly planned housing interventions can generate or reinforce existing interethnic conflicts as well as intra-ethnic tensions and some municipalities use the funds rather to relocate than to integrate Roma families.</li> <li>• Roma NGOs cannot make use of the Roma Programme's resources due to the funding design, and they are seldom included in the local project design process.</li> </ul> |
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## HORIZONTAL MEASURES

### STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

### WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ombudsman and the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment has intervened to tackle the increasing numbers of hate crimes, including anti-Roma incidents.</li> <li>• The Ombudsman's intervention after a racist attack on Romanian Roma families in Gdansk resulted in disciplinary action against police officers for failure to protect the victims.</li> <li>• In cooperation with Council of Europe anti-discrimination trainings with a focus on Roma have been conducted for police officers. Roma groups report good relations with law enforcement.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been blatant cases of forced evictions of EU-mobile Roma from Romania living in Poland since 1990s.</li> </ul> |
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#### FIGHTING ANTIGYPSYISM

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polish Parliament, as the first one in Europe, officially declared the 2nd of August a Roma and Sinti Genocide Remembrance Day. This day is being commemorated in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp.</li> <li>• The Roma Programme makes the fight against the discrimination and racism one of its tasks.</li> <li>• Relevant public authorities are obliged to collect data on and react in cases of racism against Roma.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Antigypsyism is not officially recognised by the state, nor does the term antigypsyism appear in Polish laws and regulations.</li> <li>• There are few initiatives aimed to combat stereotypes and prejudices about Roma and even less to target other manifestations of antigypsyism.</li> </ul> |
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#### ADDRESSING SPECIFIC NEEDS OF MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS AMONG ROMA

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of obligatory preschool education is expected to improve the educational opportunities of Roma children.</li> <li>• Reintegration services are provided for Roma children who have returned from migration (e.g. from the U.K.) in day-care centres; aimed at, among others, to improve their skills in the state language.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NRIS for 2014-2020 does not address the specific situation of Roma women (it contains only a statement that Roma women's participation should be ensured in initiatives that affect them).</li> <li>• No measures have been adopted to address (explicitly) Roma LGBT+ issues.</li> </ul> |
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## STRUCTURAL MEASURES

### STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

### WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

#### STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliamentary Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities deals with problems and issues reported by Roma organisations.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Interior and Administration is responsible for the issues of national and ethnic minorities, including</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Roma Programme targets only Polish Roma (as recognised ethnic minority); in consequence, EU-mobile Roma (and Roma from third countries) cannot benefit from its measures.</li> </ul> |
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integration and Roma inclusion. Under its authority, the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) is located.

### CIVIL PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- Since establishment of the Parliamentary Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities in 1989, Roma gained the possibility to express and advocate for their interests by participating in the Commission's meetings and to directly access MPs.
- Within the Joint Commission of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities, a Panel for Roma issues was created including representatives of 20 Roma NGOs.
- Over the past ten years, an increase of newly established Roma organizations has been observed; currently, there are over 120 declared Roma or pro-Roma NGOs, covering all regions.
- No Roma candidate has been elected to the Parliament or local councils.
- In last years, only two meetings of the Roma Panel were organised (both in 2016) and it is difficult to assess the work of the Panel and its practical significance for the Roma community.
- In practice, only 50-70% Roma NGOs are operating actively and systematically.

### MAINSTREAMING OF ROMA INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- In each of 16 regions with broad administrative responsibility, there is a Plenipotentiary for National and Ethnic Minorities. They are responsible for coordinating governmental policies for national and ethnic minorities, and coordination and supervision of the Roma Programme's implementation in the region.
- In some municipalities, assistants to the regional plenipotentiaries were established.
- Since the regional Plenipotentiaries were established, only two people from the Roma Community served at this position.
- Regional plenipotentiaries have failed to connect the Roma Programme's implementation with wider social inclusion policies or engage in tackling social problems in their territories in cooperation with specialised agencies.
- Implementation of the Roma Programme depends on the political will of local authorities.

### DATA COLLECTION

- Poland has a relatively good socio-economic survey data on Roma.
- Collection of data on national and ethnic minorities is done through cooperation of the Central Statistical Office and national and ethnic minorities – a set of questions (answers are not obligatory) relating to those groups was included in the Censuses in 2002 and 2011.
- Every year data is collected from the Educational Information System, indicating the number of Roma students obtaining additional educational support.
- n/a

### FUNDING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

- An average of 2.5 million EUR annually is allocated for the implementation of the Roma Programme; NGOs actively participate in the programme's implementation and have access to the dedicated funding.
- The Roma Programme is financed from 'special reserve' of the Prime Minister and by that the funding is guaranteed by law.
- Funding from structural funds came as the additional support of the Roma Programme: in the period 2007-2013, it was 20 million EUR. They are to be consistent with the implemented tasks of the Roma Programme for this period.
- The guidelines for fund distribution changed (decentralised to regions), resulting, in the opinion of Roma, in the decrease of the Roma Programme's importance.
- Roma organisations point out difficulties in securing the implementation of annual and cyclical tasks (activities of day care centres, pre-school education, associations' activity) especially at the beginning of the year, due to interrupted flow of resources.
- ESF funding is sometimes conditioned by unrealistic targets (e.g. success rates in employment programmes), making it very risky for NGOs.

### EXAMPLE OF PROMISING PRACTICE



- The governmental “Roma Programmes” that is aimed at implementing the NRIS, can be considered as good practice, as they do not rely on external funding (e.g. ESIF), but are mainly financed from the state budget (with only complementary funding from ESIF). The programmes are aligned with the EU policies concerning Roma inclusion.
- Since 2004 scholarship schemes are operational for Roma students of primary, secondary and higher education. These schemes are financed from the state budget and are the best long-term investment, to date, of the Roma Programmes.
- In area of combating unemployment: projects realized in some municipalities in which employment possibilities were tied with reducing various debts (‘work for debts’).

#### **MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED**

- Governance of the next Roma Programme should be improved: the personnel responsible for its implementation should be strengthened, programme’s implementation coordinated with all stakeholders including Roma NGOs, role of Roma NGOs reinforced, and more attention given to monitoring the results and impacts of implemented projects (not only spending).
- Future Roma Programme should explicitly address the problem of antigypsyism (with a special attention to racist and discriminatory barriers that prevent young qualified Roma from entering the job market).
- Supporting in larger numbers the emergence of Roma teaching staff capable and qualified to teach in all kinds of schools.
- Expanding scholarship schemes to vocational schools and prioritize transition to employment (e.g. professional internships).
- Strengthening cooperation with scientific community (academia and experts) to assess results of realised projects and reformulate next priorities and to analyse more broadly the directions and results of social change that Roma are undergoing as a result of various state and EU driven initiatives.