



Civil society monitoring report on the quality
of the national strategic framework
for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation
in Austria

Prepared by:
Romano Centro
May 2022



*Justice
and Consumers*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
Directorate D — Equality and Union Citizenship
Unit D1 Non-Discrimination and Roma Coordination

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

Civil society monitoring report on the quality
of the national strategic framework
for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation
in Austria

Manuscript completed in May 2022

LEGAL NOTICE

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

PDF	ISBN 978-92-68-00438-8	doi: 10.2838/990959	Catalogue number DS-07-23-120-EN-N
-----	------------------------	---------------------	------------------------------------

How to cite this report:

Roma Civil Monitor (2023) *Civil society monitoring report on the quality of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation in Austria*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023

© European Union, 2023

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged and the original meaning or message of the document is not distorted. The European Commission shall not be liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse. The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by Commission [Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents](#) (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).

The report was prepared by Ms Michaela Schipper-Schauer and Ms Eva Kramer from the NGO Romano Centro.

The report was prepared as part of the initiative "**Preparatory Action – Roma Civil Monitoring – Strengthening capacity and involvement of Roma and pro-Roma civil society in policy monitoring and review**" implemented by a consortium led by the Democracy Institute of Central European University (DI/CEU), including the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). The initiative was funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General Justice and Consumers (DG Just) within service contract no. JUST/2020/RPAA/PR/EQUA/0095.

The report represents the findings of the authors, and it does not necessarily reflect the views of the consortium or the European Commission who cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	9
1. PARTICIPATION	10
1.1. Roma participation in the NRSF preparation	10
1.2. Roma participation in the NRSF implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	10
1.3. System of policy consultation with civil society and stakeholders	11
1.4. Empowerment of Roma communities at the local level.....	12
1.5. Capacity-building of Roma civil society	13
2. RELEVANCE	15
2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination.....	15
2.2. Education	16
2.3. Employment	18
2.4. Healthcare.....	19
2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice	20
2.6. Social protection.....	21
2.7. Social services	21
2.8. Child protection	21
2.9. Promoting (awareness of) Roma arts, culture, and history	22
3. EXPECTED EFFECTIVENESS	23
3.1. Coherence with related domestic and European policies.....	23
3.2. Responsibility for NRSF coordination and monitoring	23
3.3. Quality of the plan	24
3.4. Funding	24
3.5. Monitoring and evaluation.....	25
3.6. Assessment of the expected effectiveness and sustainability	26
4. ALIGNMENT WITH THE EU ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	27
4.1. Reflecting diversity among Roma.....	27
4.2. Combining mainstream and targeted approaches.....	28
4.3. Usage of instruments introduced by the Council Recommendation	28
5. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS	29
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	30
REFERENCES	33
ANNEX: LIST OF PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS	35

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMS	Public Employment Service
ESF	European Social Fund
NRCP	National Roma Contact Point
NRSF	National Roma Strategic Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategy's strengths lie in its focus on education, combating antigypsyism, and the participation of civil society. For the most part, there are well-planned approaches that promise success in implementation. The high level of involvement of civil society and participation of Roma in the evaluation of the strategy is also very positive. A clear improvement since the last strategy is the focus on the participation of civil society and the inclusion of the antigypsyism issue as well as the fight against poverty. The regular implementation of the dialogue platform provides a high-level instrument, which is very positive. However, more, and above all tangible accessible consultation mechanisms are needed to reach out even more to civil society.

The three key regions that were selected as being important for the situation in Austria are Vienna, the region of Burgenland, and *Oberösterreich* (Linz). In Burgenland live most of the autochthonous Roma, while in the other areas there are mostly allochthonous Roma.¹ A differentiation must be made between autochthonous Roma and allochthonous Roma. While autochthonous Roma are often integrated into the Austrian social system from birth, allochthonous Roma are in a more difficult starting position, which must be specifically evaluated. In the strategy, no differentiation was made between autochthonous Roma and immigrant groups (which face more barriers, for example, due to the lack of language and local knowledge). Also, EU Roma, stateless Roma, Roma with disabilities, those from non-EU nations, and older Roma are not really represented in the Austrian Roma strategy. The areas of health, income support, and housing were not specifically addressed in the national strategy, or only marginally.

Participation

The more Roma work in public offices, the higher the degree of genuine participation, identification, and acceptance on the part of civil society. It would be very helpful if there were more focus on facilitating Roma's access to public offices. The national strategy and its implementation should be better communicated among civil society by public authorities. Currently, it is in the hands of the associations that offer counselling to Roma to spread knowledge about the national strategy. It would be helpful to have large media campaigns that make the topic more familiar to civil society, where projects are presented, and the importance of the strategy is emphasised. If members of civil society are informed better about the strategy, it is also easier for them to actively participate in its implementation. It should also be noted here that civil society must be sensitised to the fact that the Roma Strategy does not only exist on paper but should represent a real tool for improvement of the conditions for Roma in Austria. The Roma need to feel that their self-worth will be higher if the strategy can be implemented successfully.

Relevance

The national strategy states that basic statistical information on the situation of Roma in the areas of education, employment, health and housing in Austria is lacking. This circumstance makes a comprehensive assessment of the current situation difficult. The self-identification of the ethnic group is listed in the strategy as an obstacle to its coverage. Some Roma organisations have "pointed out the need for a comprehensive inventory analysis of the living situation of Roma in Austria in the course of the consultation on the

¹ Roma that have been residing in Austria for over a century and for several generations are called *autochthonous*. Roma who have immigrated more recently are called *allochthonous*; they are, in contrast to the autochthonous Roma, not recognised as an official minority in Austria. However, the NRCP and the national strategy include all Roma living in Austria.

draft strategy”.² There is already uncertainty about the true number of Roma living in Austria. It is completely understandable that many Roma avoid identifying themselves as Roma due to fear of discrimination. Here, trust must be built up and the prejudice of the majority society must be reduced, which the authors see as the main task of the public authorities.

Expected effectiveness

The lack of quantitative or qualitative indicators or deadlines will make it difficult to measure the success of the strategy. It is recommended that indicators are defined for the following measures, such as those that have also been defined in the ‘EU Roma Strategic Framework’. These can be used as a guide, adapted to Austrian circumstances and possibilities.

Alignment with the EU Strategic Framework

In contrast to the ‘EU Roma Strategic Framework’, the Austrian Roma strategy does not formulate any quantitative targets and is formulated in very general terms and definitely lacks detailed explanations of the respective intentions. The measures included in the ‘Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation’ were partially incorporated into the ongoing Roma strategy in Austria, but not at the level of detail outlined in the recommendations, which entails the risk that generalising measures have been formulated. Generalisation makes measuring success very difficult. Although the NRCP often notes that existing measures can also be used by Roma, it should be noted that here, too, a distinction must be made between allochthonous and autochthonous Roma. Austria has a good structure of pre-existing social services, and it is evident that measures in the Roma strategy should be linked to it, which is also happening on a small scale (e.g., ‘*Caritas Sozialberatung*’³). Roma immigrants often do not meet the requirements for social benefits, which makes it impossible for them to use them. These forms of cooperation should be organised and promoted in a more interlinking manner (e.g., more sophisticated cooperation between the residence permit departments with the social benefit authorities).

² *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 25.

³ The Caritas social counselling centres advise and support people in social and financial need.

INTRODUCTION

National Roma strategic framework

On 5 April 2011, the European Commission adopted the 'EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies' until 2020. On 7 October 2020, a new EU 'Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2020-2030' was published. This one is built on the previous one and covers four sectoral areas (education, employment, health, housing) and three additional horizontal priorities, including the fight against and reduction of poverty and exclusion, promoting equality and fighting antigypsyism, as well as promoting the participation of Roma through empowerment, cooperation and trust. Increased attention will be paid to the diversity of Roma and specific needs of different groups (especially children and women).⁴ Efforts to increase inclusion are to be continued in the new period. The 'Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation' was adopted by Austria in a written procedure on 12 March 2021. The current 'Strategy for the Continuation of Roma Inclusion in Austria' (Roma Strategy in brief) represents an update and expansion of the one from 2017. It contains partly the priorities of the 'EU Roma Strategic Framework' (the sectoral areas: education and employment and the horizontal priorities: combating antigypsyism, increased participation, targeted empowerment of Roma youth, Roma women and girls, and empowerment of Roma civil society). With the Council of Ministers' presentation of April 7, 2021, the Austrian Roma Strategy was therefore updated and submitted to the European Commission on 30 September 2021.⁵

About this report

This report has been written by Michaela Schipper-Schauer (board member) and Eva Kramer (project staff) from the Romano Centro Association. We would like to thank all the participants in the interviews who contributed to the report's ability to present a variety of perspectives on the situation in Austria.

This report was prepared based on desk research and interviews (or email exchanges) with:

- public authority with responsibility in a key area, deputies to the National Council, member of the Austrian Green Party (5 April 2022 carried out by Eva Kramer through ZOOM),
- the National Roma Contact Point (6 April 2022, carried out by Eva Kramer & Michaela Schipper-Schauer through ZOOM),
- experts from University: Sabrina Steindl-Kopf and Sanda Üllen, *Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Universität Wien* (10 April 2022 via e-mails),
- the Roma-activist and journalist Gilda-Nancy Horvath, (19 April 2022, carried out by Eva Kramer through ZOOM),
- the Roma School Mediator Jelena Jovanovic, working for Romano Centro (20 April 2022, carried out by Eva Kramer by phone),
- the Roma activist Martin Horvath, board member of the association *Hango Roma*, member of the *Volksgruppenbeirat*, (28 April 2022, carried out by Michaela Schipper-Schauer through ZOOM),
- the regional authority in the key region of Burgenland (5 May 2022, via e-mail).

⁴ Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich, p. 4.

⁵ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen/roma-strategie.html>

1. PARTICIPATION

1.1. Roma participation in the NRSF preparation

This chapter focuses on the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the national strategy and the extent to which Roma are involved in it. Regarding the representation of Roma in politics and ministries, it was acknowledged by all interviewees that this is virtually non-existent (NRCP, experts, public authority with responsibility in a key area, activists, Roma School Mediator). Roma are currently underrepresented in public offices, including in democratically elected positions and civil service. Although this involves the subjective perception of the representatives of the interviewees, this statement cannot be proven or verified with statistical studies because of the lack of data. According to our interview with the NRCP, no Roma are employed at the Roma Contact Point. The NRCP stated that there are currently no measures to enable the access of Roma to decision-making positions. An activist criticised the fact that there is not a single Roma working in such an important department. The interviewed public authority with responsibility in a key area mentioned in this context systematic barriers that exist due to ethnicity, especially for Roma. We would appreciate the representation of Roma at this level as it would have a positive impact on the participation of Roma in the design phase of the national strategy. In order to open these doors, we recommend that Roma should be actively approached in relation to various topics and that funding should be made available for this (Roma School Mediator).

In Austria, there is a professional and comprehensive Roma association structure and an active civil society (experts, activists, public authority with responsibility in a key area).⁶

The focus of associations ranges from social counselling, assistance for entering the labour market, support for children/youth and women in relation to memorial work, youth work, and disseminating information in the area of antigypsyism or empowerment measures.

1.2. Roma participation in the NRSF implementation, monitoring, and evaluation

The contact point at the Federal Chancellery was established in 2011, and their work is aimed equally at autochthonous and newly immigrated Roma. The longstanding contact person left her position in April 2022 and a new contact person had not yet been appointed at the time of the drafting of this report.

Monitoring

The Contact Point regularly organises a dialogue platform (*'Dialogplattform'*), which is the body responsible for national monitoring in Austria. Both representatives of government agencies and those of civil society associations, as well as experts from academia and research, are involved in the dialogue platform.⁷ According to the NRCP, the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the strategy is carried out by the administration of the offices, and regular reports are submitted to the Commission.

Evaluation

Since the beginning of 2021, the strategy has been evaluated by the University of Vienna with the close involvement of Roma civil society. The project working group that is involved

⁶ <https://www.kv-roma.at/Oesterreich.html>; <https://www.romarchive.eu/en/roma-civil-rights-movement/roma-bewegung-osterreich-die-langen-schatten-der-v/>

⁷ For more details and assessment regarding the dialogue platform, see Chapter 1.3.

can be viewed on the website. The final workshop of the expert group from the dialogue platform about the study took place on 17 May 2022.⁸ The results are pending.

Implementation

In Austria, many Roma are active as employees in pre-existing associations. These self-organisations have emerged independently of political measures (experts, activists). For example, the project 'Dream Road',⁹ which networks associations and organisations throughout Austria, is named after an activist as an example of best practice. They also mention the recently founded university students' association 'HÖR',¹⁰ which also emerged at the initiative of its own members. The experts emphasise that the associations have enormous know-how and pre-existing relationships with the target group. Political participation is often made possible through the efforts of activists and civil society. We see this as a positive development but would like to see more support for community-led initiatives (activist).

One activist criticises the lack of exchange concerning the practical implementation of the strategy. Through the dialogue platform, participation is possible but no influence on decisions is guaranteed. The latter emphasises the positive fact that many Roma women in Austria are active at their own initiative and independently of the strategy's measures.¹¹ Of course, the government welcomes the involvement of associations and civil society, but there is no coordinated funding, for example. We evaluate this fact as a partial commitment of public institutions. This has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the non-existence of a regulatory framework on the part of the public sector allows for a wide variety of projects and cooperative ventures to develop creatively. On the other hand, it is the task of the Roma contact point to coordinate exactly this.

1.3. System of policy consultation with civil society and stakeholders

Now we will take a closer look at the system of policy-relevant consultation with Roma and pro-Roma civil society and other relevant stakeholders. The most important instrument for linking Roma civil society with politics is the dialogue platform. Meetings are held 2-3 times a year, during which ongoing measures are discussed and feedback is obtained.

Networks and communication channels have been established between associations of Roma, administrative institutions, or the persons responsible for them, which are seen as positive. The establishment of the dialogue platform has also improved the cooperation between associations of the Roma with relevant actors. The dialogue platform is seen as a useful instrument and low-threshold format and should be continued. It enables regular exchange on different topics and is therefore appreciated. By involving the interested public, knowledge is multiplied in cooperation with the target group. What is still missing, however, is the stronger and increased involvement of Roma in political decision-making processes themselves. In many cases, decisions are still made about rather than with Roma. Due to the large number of established Roma associations, cooperation at the political decision-making level would be a good idea. Such active involvement should be considered in the conception as well as execution of projects. Despite the motto of the strategy "With Roma for Roma", and the goal of promoting the active inclusion of Roma in key areas of education and the labour market, as well as the strengthening of organised Roma civil society and combating antigypsyism and participation, few long-term projects

⁸ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 25f., Sensiro – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich (univie.ac.at).

⁹ <https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/dream-road>

¹⁰ <https://www.hoer-info.at/>

¹¹ https://www.meinbezirk.at/margareten/c-lokales/ausstellung-sichtbarkeit-romnja-mitten-in-wien_a2422893

have been implemented (e.g., see examples such as the project 'Roma School Mediation' in Subchapter 2.2 and the employment project 'Thara' in Subchapter 3.6). Especially in the areas of antigypsyism and participation, long-term projects are missing (experts).

The representative of public authority also points out that civil society should be better involved; it would be a useful measure to involve the efforts of civil society more broadly, but unfortunately until now there has been no fixed budget set aside for this.

We see the dialogue platform as a great medium that enables participation. There are efforts to broadly include Roma organisations and stakeholders. We appreciate the platform as a forum for input and dialogue; it is a great measure that brings together different actors for networking. However, we think that in terms of decision-making power and transparency there is still potential for future development. In this context, an activist criticised the fact that, in their opinion, the civil society that is involved has no influence on decisions. We recommend the establishment of a more results-oriented structure for the dialogue platform. While it now resembles a small symposium at which projects are presented and networking takes place, it could be more profitable for all participants if it became more of a working meeting associated with concrete results, and the next steps could be agreed upon at the end of the day.

1.4. Empowerment of Roma communities at the local level

Now we will take a look at the extent to which participatory structures are mobilised in the national strategy. There are currently some hurdles to building the capacity of Roma civil society, mainly related to funding and a lack of knowledge of project management.

In the current Roma strategy, there is a focus on "Strengthening Roma Civil Society". Measures listed include the availability of an in-service course in "Roma Empowerment", further education in the area of training and information transfer, and the training of young Roma to hold seminars at adult education institutions.¹²

Experts criticise the current strategy for its lack of more participatory projects. Furthermore, they criticise the lack of support for associations when applying for EU-funded projects. Many associations are close to the target groups and have the necessary experience and confidence in working with Roma, but often do not have the necessary resources (time and know-how) that are required for a successful application for EU-funded projects. For example, the ESF funding track, which offers long-term funding opportunities, is considered non-transparent and very bureaucratic (even though some associations note the established communication with the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Support as positive in this context). This circumstance discourages smaller associations in particular from submitting applications for funding projects (see Chapter 3.4). Another challenge related to the lack of financial support is the increased competition between associations, which also increases the financial self-exploitation of activists through volunteer work. The activists confirm this statement, as activism is mostly non-paid work.¹³

We consider the emerging competition for financial resources as negative because it can have negative consequences for cooperation between the associations.

Increased cooperation between mainstream and Roma organisations would be beneficial, especially in the areas of youth and women. The National Strategy lists a necessary form of cooperation as the measure "Networking women's counselling institutions with Roma

¹² *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p.18ff.

¹³ Smaller amounts of funding, e.g., from the City of Vienna, naturally also involve evaluations and audits, but they are much less bureaucratic and therefore easier to implement for smaller grant recipients.

civil society”.¹⁴ However, no concrete steps have been taken to achieve this goal. Networking is also listed as a measure in the area targeted at youth.

The experts assess that the formation of new associations and networks in Austria was due in part to the implementation of the national strategy. The formation of new associations is also noticeable in Europe – for example, a dynamic, self-confident youth activist scene has formed which uses the increased awareness of Roma to draw attention to their concerns. This also includes cooperation between Roma NGOs and NGOs of majority society, such as the ‘*Initiative Minderheit*’ (Minority Initiative).¹⁵

1.5. Capacity-building of Roma civil society

The national strategy does not mention additional measures aimed at the capacity building of civil society beyond those mentioned in the previous section (Strengthening Roma Civil Society).

A practical measure in the field of capacity-building would be to train the members of civil society organisations in the field of project management (especially accounting) because these skills are crucial for sustainably operating projects. A lack of those is time consuming and costs resources.

“The decisive problem in the region of Burgenland is that the creation of an elite that articulates their needs from their own perspective has so far succeeded only to a very limited extent (with a few exceptions).” (Regional authority in the key region of Burgenland)

This quote highlights the need for measures to empower civil society even more to communicate their needs independently. Important measures can be found in the Subchapters 2.1 and 2.2.

Identity within the community must be strengthened (see Chapter 2.2 – Roma school mediation can support building a positive identity) to increase self-efficacy. A positive link with one’s own identity strengthens public commitment as a Roma. Not only do the majority society need sensitisation, but also the Roma themselves.

The higher the level of education, the greater the willingness to embrace Roma identity (one example of this is the Roma student association HÖR¹⁶). It is therefore inevitable that projects are developed that promote better educational opportunities for Roma to support the development of a positive identity.

Activism is only possible if the basic needs of the people who are involved are covered. These have to be provided before activism is possible (see health, housing, work, general discrimination etc.). Experiences of discrimination affect all areas of life and many Roma are afraid due to their insecure identity.

There is great potential in the networking and cooperation of Roma associations that has not yet been fully used.

Our ideas for projects are to strengthen the networking of the Roma in Austria, not only of known associations but also of people who do not work for associations. We see this as an essential task of capacity building. Then there could be meetings at which Roma with specific knowledge – for example – support others, and where project ideas can be

¹⁴ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p.18.

¹⁵ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p.20.

¹⁶ HÖR is the first Roma youth association in Austria. They represent the interests of young Roma and provide a platform for them. The association was founded by Roma university students. (See: <https://www.hoer-info.at/der-grundgedanke/>)

developed together, it is also possible that the respective competences be located and, for example, groups can be formed that help with project accounting.

2. RELEVANCE

Basically, the national strategy states that basic statistical information about the situation of Roma in the areas of education, employment, health, and housing in Austria is lacking. This circumstance makes a comprehensive assessment of the current situation difficult. The self-identification of the ethnic group is listed in the strategy as an obstacle to its coverage. Some Roma organisations have “pointed out the need for a comprehensive inventory analysis of the living situation of Roma in Austria in the course of the consultation on the draft strategy.”¹⁷

University experts describe the state of scientific research on Roma and inclusion, in particular, as quite marginal. The Dialogue Platform has commissioned studies and promotes networking with representatives from the field of science, but there is a lack of institutionalisation of Roma studies in Austria. Their recommendation is to ensure the increased participation of Roma in scientific studies in order to involve them in the conception, implementation, and presentation of projects. To address the lack of statistical information about Roma, the state should put more resources into research and therefore include this as an additional measure in the national strategy (see chapter Conclusions and Recommendations). Recently, two experts approached Romano Centro with a request for cooperation – they are planning a study on Roma school meditation. The content of the study has not yet been decided, but a first meeting has taken place.

2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

Successful inclusion is strongly connected with anti-discrimination work and the reduction of prejudices. The interviewees mentioned that this point is one of the most important and should be dealt with in an interdisciplinary way. The strategy recognizes that there is hardly any well-founded knowledge about the minority, while prejudices are widespread. The fight against antigypsyism should therefore be “strengthened as a priority”. Here, too, there is a need for research (according to civil society). Among other things, the media portrayal of Roma is addressed in the measures. In addition, the “empowerment of Roma for self-representation” is seen as central to addressing the public perception of the ethnic group.¹⁸ The NRCP claims that Austria has a pioneering role because antigypsyism is a central topic, and they refer to the antigypsyism report,¹⁹ and the last Roma dialogue platform which was dedicated to the topic of discrimination-based hate crime.²⁰ There is also a network dedicated to combating hate crime.²¹ The official recording of hate crimes is as of now possible. There is a lack of awareness and training. There are already training courses in this area – e.g., for civil servants – but there is a need for more courses for different parts of the community.²²

The following measures are included in the national strategy:²³

- research measures,
- publishing reports,
- conferences, workshops, training,

¹⁷ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p.25.

¹⁸ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p.15.

¹⁹ The last antigypsyism report was published in 2017 by Romano Centro.

²⁰ <http://www.european-neighbours.net/index.php/blog2015-2/blog2022/499-29-roma-dialogplattform>

²¹ <http://hatecrimekontern.at/>

²² <https://www.bmi.gv.at/408/Projekt/start.aspx>

²³ For the detailed list, please see the national strategy (pp. 16-17).

- awareness raising, information events, media portrayal,
- exhibition, educational tools.

The marginalisation and discrimination of Roma remains a severe problem: As the antigypsy reports of the Romano Centro association show, Roma regularly face various forms of discrimination.²⁴ It is important to emphasise that a change is taking place, with especially young Roma increasingly perceiving their Roma identity as positive, and actively engaging in deconstructing stereotypical notions.

A main requirement in this field is not only tackling structural discrimination through different kinds of training, but also addressing antigypsyism as its root cause through more awareness-raising about the problem (experts). Therefore, a regularly published report about antigypsyism is seen as necessary (public authority with responsibility in a key area). The experts also see a great need for knowledge and sensitivity towards Roma, aimed at institutions as well as the public. In order to achieve long-term improvements for Roma, more effort must be put into this area.

It is crucial in the fight against antigypsyism as well as the structural and institutional discrimination of Roma not only to implement measures for Roma, but also to work with the majority of society. The inclusion of Roma will only be successful if there is awareness of and societal discussion about discriminatory structures and practices. Targeted measures against antigypsyism are necessary. An additional useful measure would be to raise awareness among media professionals. This can help to ensure that Roma are portrayed in the media in a diverse and unprejudiced manner because their portrayal in the media is often prejudiced²⁵ and this in turn influences the public image of Roma.

Raising the awareness of the public and the majority population about the concerns of the Roma is certainly one of the most important aspects for the future (regional authority in the key region of Burgenland).

In conclusion, we consider that the strategy recognises the problem and points out some useful measures.

2.2. Education

The national Roma strategy in Austria includes the following measures:²⁶

- Make early childhood education mandatory in the last year of kindergarten,
- Expand language support,
- Improve the school entry phase,
- Expand cooperation between kindergartens and elementary schools,
- Expand all-day schooling,
- Expand inclusive model regions,
- Offer learning assistance programmes,
- Use Roma school mediators,
- Offer bilingual education in Burgenland and native-language instruction,
- Expand career guidance and educational counselling,
- Provide offers in the field of adult education,
- Involve civil society Roma representatives in the work of the Forum Minority Education.

For around 500 schools in the province of Vienna, there are only two Roma school mediators, provided by the Romano Centro association. The financing of the project has

²⁴ See *Antiziganismusbericht*, Romano Centro, 2017.

²⁵ See *Antiziganismusbericht*, Romano Centro, 2017.

²⁶ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 12.

been very difficult for years – too few school mediators can be employed than would be required. The demand from schools for Roma school mediation has been very high for years.

Particularly successful projects, such as Roma school mediation, the use of native-speaker teachers, and learning assistance require long-term and secure funding, but can reach both children and parents. At the same time, mother-tongue teachers and school mediators act as positive role models and can thus lead to long-term positive self-identification. Currently, there are only four mother-tongue teachers in Romani in Austria, all of them working in Vienna.²⁷ A Roma school mediator mentioned the challenge of dealing with children's absence from school from her point of view in the field of education. It is important to look at the problem individually and in a multi-layered way and to ensure personal support. It would be helpful to build up more capacity to support children in order to be able to implement more projects with them, which, for example, also contribute to identity formation. It is known that there are many Roma children in Austrian schools, but the problem is that many of them are afraid to self-identify as Roma. Roma school mediators can intervene, function as positive role models, and help them to develop a positive identity.

There is great demand for school mediation on the part of schools, as can be seen from inquiries addressed to the Romano Centro in this regard. According to the perception of a Roma school mediator, there are Roma children and parents who need support in almost every school in Vienna. This instrument is available, but too small in extent, and there is no stable funding. Also, awareness-raising workshops for staff in the education sector should be mandatory.

Since this point is explicitly recommended in the Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation under point 7b,²⁸ greater focus must be placed on this topic in the future.

Even if there has been development, there are regional differences in Burgenland where progress is seen but not necessarily in Vienna. Roma needs are now considered in education, but discrimination in the school sector still exists. Improvements should include striving for higher educational qualifications for all Roma, awareness-raising among educators, and the dismantling of prejudices.²⁹

If we look at the school dropout rate, we should take into account the fact that a lot of Roma children are still facing this problem. There exist good practices for helping prevent school dropout and the loss of connection with schools (which was especially seen during the pandemic). Roma school mediators have reported that during the lockdown the families they support had problems with online learning because they lacked both the technical equipment and the know-how. In this area, projects that address these problems should be implemented and financially supported.

The NCRP states that in Austria there is a focus on the prevention of early dropout from education by the Ministry of Education, while there is a need for Roma-specific measures, Roma school mediation and learning support, the sensitisation of teachers and enabling dialogue, as there is a connection between socioeconomic origin and education. It is positive that this is recognised, but concrete implementation steps are still lacking.

²⁷ Interview with experts.

²⁸ Empfehlungen des Rates vom 12. März 2021 zur Gleichstellung, Inklusion und Teilhabe der Roma" (2021/C 93/01). Amtsblatt der Europäischen Union. Punkt 5-7. Brussels. (19.03.2021), <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:00a585e9-cfd4-4028-bb56-5f5a9eb9360f/empfehlung%20des%20rates%20zur%20gleichstellung%20inklusion%20teilhabe%20der%20roma.pdf>.

²⁹ Interview authority with responsibility in the key area.

The experts note that participatory and cooperative approaches have been used in scientific studies (e.g., the ROMBAS study: Kogoj and Luciak 2014)³⁰ which surveyed the educational situation of Roma in Austria. They see big potential in the promotion of education policy projects. Education is a very important factor in the inclusion of Roma and addresses both Roma and the majority society. Moreover, it is especially important that no discrimination is permitted wherever dedicated education services are offered to Roma children (like with German-language support classes).

One activist from Burgenland explained that Roma culture and language have been incorporated into the curriculum of schools. But this does not apply to the remaining provinces; the topic is only dealt selectively.

In summary, stable funding and legal anchoring is needed to support pre-existing and well-functioning approaches such as Roma school mediation and mother-tongue teachers and the specific expansion of these. Furthermore, we lack measures in the area of tertiary education in Austria such as scholarships for Roma students to support their greater participation in higher education.

2.3. Employment

The Austrian Roma Strategy formulates the following goals:³¹

- Access of Roma to the labour market is improved,
- Barriers to the employment of socioeconomically disadvantaged Roma and especially Roma women are reduced,
- The existence of Roma, and especially Roma women, with a low income is not threatened.

The national strategy recognizes the need for action in this area and the link to pre-existing educational disadvantages. It aims to implement projects in the field of training, labour market consulting, and public relations work especially oriented towards Roma.

However, it is striking that immigrant Roma are not specifically addressed in the Austrian Roma strategy, nor are they differentiated by age group or women's concerns, and their needs are not treated separately. However, this is a major concern of the European Commission, which emphasises in its recommendation of 12 March 2021, in several points, how important it is, for example, that "measures [are established] with which contact is established with young Roma to inform them about the [...] employment and social services".

The representatives of the public offices see the labour market as a very important field (strongly related to education). Professionally, more (upward) opportunities should be offered to Roma. Our work also shows how important it is to promote education and how closely it is correlated with success on the labour market.

A big issue in this context is the pre-existing discrimination of Roma on the basis of their ethnicity in the labour market (experts).

Since 2015, ESF projects have focused on reducing the barriers for Roma to ease access to the labour market (however, there are few Roma associations carrying out a project; a few associations have closed since then; and the effort that is required is too high level for small associations, especially for those which are not able to pre-finance activities). The implementation of these projects demands many resources from the executors. For example, on the one hand there are ongoing checks, which is understandable due to the

³⁰ https://initiative.minderheiten.at/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/01_Rombas_Studie.pdf

³¹ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 13.

funding, and on top of these checks there are also long-term means of following up (for example, Romano Centro is still busy with these processes two years after the end of the project). This means immense administrative effort for associations and escalating costs for personnel expenses (see Chapter 3.4). Due to this fact, it is mainly large non-profit organisations in Austria that take on these kinds of projects. Large institutions have pre-existing infrastructure such as their own accounts departments, administration, IT support and much more. However, large organisations often lack field knowledge and a sustainable relationship with the target group. They then recruit Roma to obtain community access and field knowledge, but building a trustful relationship takes a long time and much effort. As already mentioned, the Roma associations have built these kinds of relationship but are lacking the capacity that the bigger organisations have. This is a structural problem. In addition, access to the target group would be much better if Roma associations carried out these projects.

There are many obstacles to entering the Austrian labour market for Roma, which must be solved upstream. Even though evaluation has taken place within projects, there was no independent evaluation of the sustainability of the results, the effectiveness of the projects, or their impact on future calls. The fact is that indicators were defined, which the organisations strove to meet, but, for example, how many Roma were successfully and sustainably integrated into the labour market from 2015 to 2019 because of the project does not emerge from the studies. Recommendations include the development of accessible counselling, Roma as counsellors, and ongoing training for counsellors.

Furthermore, the projects predictably end after 2-3 years, which means that all persons who are participating and clients are left without care from one day to the next. These frictional losses are incredibly high and avoidable. It would be better if projects led to an institutionalised form of support offered on a permanent basis.

In addition, there is still a large gap between labour market projects and pre-existing labour-market services. The 'Arbeitsmarktservice' in Austria is the first point of contact for job seekers but also for companies looking for employees. This is an interface for which there is actually high potential, also for Roma. We urgently recommend the institutionalised and targeted cooperation of Arbeitsmarktservice Austria with Roma projects that deal with the labour market. This could take the form of Roma advisors being included in the labour market service and thus being able to work in a more tangible and targeted manner for the Roma. Bias and prejudice would be reduced. Further training for the staff of the labour market service is also rudimentary.

The NRCP assesses that poverty is correlated with educational opportunities and leads to fewer job opportunities. In this area, some projects are supported by ESF - e.g. job coaching and career counselling. School mediation is also mentioned as important in this context (see Chapter 2.2).

2.4. Healthcare

The health needs of Roma are not being adequately addressed at the moment.³²

The national strategy has no focus on the area of health. According to the NRCP, no focus in this area was defined nor justified based on the online survey of the Roma community.³³ In Austria, according to the NRCP, there are good mainstreaming measures that provide a stable system for a plurality of ethnic groups. For poverty migrants, for example, there

³² Studie Soziale Inklusion von Roma durch Frühe Hilfen, https://www.fruehehilfen.at/fxdata/fruehehilfen/prod/media/downloads/Veranstaltungen/Tamas_Weigl_Fruehe-Hilfen_Roma_Fachtaugung-22092021_NZFHat.pdf

³³ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:4a031912-dcda-40c4-bacb-bc1b27364dc4/Roma%20Gesundheit.pdf>

is access (without an e-card) via 'AmberMed'.³⁴ If the evaluation reveals a need for further action in this area, then the strategy will be adapted accordingly. One of the activists is convinced that health is an important issue, and we think that it should be addressed more specifically within the strategy. According to a study about Roma health from 2015, avoidable health issues are appearing among the participants of the study.³⁵

A pre-existing problem is certainly the language barrier and a significant trust problem with doctors. Here, mediation or counselling could be helpful. The immigrated Roma have hurdles to overcome. If more Roma were hired in the health sector, that would be a great improvement. In terms of hiring in the health sector, likewise, we recommend promoting training specifically for Roma.

2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

The national strategy does not focus on this area either. According to the NRCP, housing and environment are consequently included within the areas of education and labour market, which is why these areas are probably not listed separately but are 'covered'. According to our experience with the counselling at Romano Centro, anti-gypsy motives are present and possible in this area.

When examining the housing situation of Roma in Austria, it is important to differentiate between autochthonous and non-autochthonous Roma. Immigrant Roma often have problems getting the information about housing that is needed due to their lack of language skills.

There are programs in Vienna that address housing issues with the involvement of local communities.³⁶ The employees of, e.g., 'Wohnpartner' deal with local networks, including active residents' groups, tenants' advisory councils, caretakers, and other residents. Bundling their initiatives and interests and strengthening their self-organisation is the goal of Wohnpartner. Where such networks are lacking, Wohnpartner supports their development. People are approached by the employees of Wohnpartner to create communication in the community and moreover they provide free mediation in conflict situations.³⁷

In the other provinces of Austria, such support programs do not exist or exist only in part. In Austria, in some cities there is the possibility to obtain communal apartments, but unfortunately this offer involves a threshold that is too high for most Roma families because a minimum income is required or a certain residence status. Also, large Roma families do not have the possibility to afford this housing.

Therefore, we think that this topic should be addressed more specifically within the strategy, and concrete measures for supporting Roma in terms of housing problems should be implemented. We suggest implementing awareness-raising workshops for counselling centres in this field. In addition, Roma-focused counselling centres should be established on a larger scale.

³⁴ The E-Card is an Austrian chip card that serves as an access card for insurance benefits; every person in Austria who has health insurance has this card, <https://amber-med.at/>.

³⁵ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:4a031912-dcda-40c4-bacb-bc1b27364dc4/Roma%20Gesundheit.pdf>

³⁶ <https://wohnpartner-wien.at/>

³⁷ <https://wohnpartner-wien.at/ueber-uns/was-macht-wohnpartner>

2.6. Social protection

It is especially immigrant Roma who are often threatened by poverty, and in order to counteract this, targeted measures should offer support to the latter. However, this area is not explicitly mentioned in the national strategy.

Public authorities point out the problem that consultations at the Public Employment Service (AMS) may be prejudiced, and Roma may be disadvantaged as a result.³⁸ The NRCP says that income-related aid applies equally to all, so this area is not broken down separately in the strategy.

Social benefits in Austria are linked to prerequisites such as a residence permit and language skills at a B1 level.³⁹

Many Roma do not have this due to a low level of education (at least a B1 language exam), and without meeting the requirements they are not entitled to social benefits. Because of this, the distinction between Roma from third countries and EU citizens is particularly important.

We suggest sensitisation of the employees of public agencies and the labour-market service concerning discrimination, as well as the revision of requirements of eligibility for social benefits for Roma from other countries.

2.7. Social services

According to the NRCP, this area is sufficiently covered by mainstream services and it is therefore not mentioned in greater detail. The public authority points out that it would be advantageous to create specific counselling services in metropolitan areas as well as greater linguistic orientation on the needs of the target groups; this low-threshold approach would reduce barriers to accessing authorities.

Austria has a well-developed range of counselling services in the social sector, especially in large cities like Vienna.⁴⁰ Therefore, the NRCP frequently mentions these resources, which of course Roma can also use. However, it must be noted here again that these programs apply largely but not comprehensively to all groups of Roma. Social benefits are conditional, and migrant Roma often do not have residence permits (no entitlement, see Problem 2.5).

2.8. Child protection

Child protection is not listed as a focus, but "empowering Roma youth" appears as an item in the strategy. For example, according to the NRCP an important goal is for children and young people to stand by their identity with the help of empowerment activities.

There are child and youth welfare services in Austria, and in our practical experience we can state that some Roma families have had to deal with youth welfare, but reports were made because children stayed away from school (in these cases support from school mediators was helpful cf. Ch. 2.2). We consider it advisable to hold awareness-raising

³⁸ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:8b6e954c-92ca-4748-a30a-3115d2d769f8/Antiziganismus%20in%20%C3%96sterreich.pdf>

³⁹ Reference level B1: Can understand the main points when clear standard language is used and when dealing with familiar matters from work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in the language area, with most situations encountered when travelling in the language area. Can express him/herself simply and coherently on familiar topics and personal areas of interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, and give brief reasons or explanations for plans and opinions. See <https://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/sprachniveau.php>.

⁴⁰ <https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/soziales/armut/2/Seite.1694100.html>

workshops for employees in this area as in some cases, in our experience, anti-gypsy prejudice has occurred.

2.9. Promoting (awareness of) Roma arts, culture, and history

One of the activists suggests more strongly focusing on funding cultural events – all parts of the country must be involved and should get the possibility to present themselves. This would be a useful measure for fighting discrimination.

The strategy recognizes the importance of having a memorial for the Austrian Roma and lists those efforts are underway to make it a reality. One measure reads, “advocate for the creation of adequate sites of remembrance of the Roma and Sinti genocide in Europe”.⁴¹ A memorial has been demanded for years by representatives of the community, and on 8 April 2022, the demand for a central memorial to Roma and Sinti murdered during the Nazi era was officially handed over in Parliament as part of a joint position paper.⁴²

The promotion of Roma culture, art and history is also mentioned in the strategy in the area of raising awareness in society:

“The successful inclusion of Roma requires the information and sensitisation of the general public to the diverse living situations of this ethnic group in Europe and especially in Austria. Various diverse images and stories circulate about the different realities of life of the Roma in Austria and are countered by common clichés [about] travelling people, beggars, horse traders and musicians, [thus] arguments against stereotyping and stigmatisation [should be stronger].”⁴³

The representative of the public authority sees that there are certainly opportunities in this area. For them, the implementation of the monument was a means of positively raising awareness among the population. It could therefore contribute to the public visibility of and awareness-raising about the Roma and their culture and history (see Chapter 2.1). Visibility can create belonging and empowerment can reduce discrimination, therefore Roma artists should be further strengthened. The NRCP gives some examples of support for Roma arts, culture and history: support for folk groups, cultural projects, Roma association work, cultural mediation, culture and customs, media support, and the Roma language.

Having a relevant cultural centre and meeting place in all larger cities would be desirable, especially in Vienna (like the ethnic group house which is planned in Oberwart in the region of Burgenland).⁴⁴ The experts count as a sign of increased visibility and public recognition of the Roma, for example, the celebrations on the occasion of the International Day of Roma, which is now regularly co-organised by Parliament, and the symbolic raising of the Roma flag (also on the occasion of the International Day of Roma), which took place in front of Vienna’s City Hall in 2019.

⁴¹ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 19.

⁴² <https://www.dw.com/de/bald-ein-denkmal-f%C3%BCr-die-roma-und-sinti-in-wien/a-61418519>

⁴³ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ https://www.meinbezirk.at/oberwart/c-lokales/17-millionen-euro-fuer-haus-der-volksgruppen-in-oberwart_a5117074

3. EXPECTED EFFECTIVENESS

3.1. Coherence with related domestic and European policies

As described in previous chapter, the national strategy follows the 'EU Roma Strategic Framework' and the Council Recommendations and includes most objectives like combatting antigypsyism and discrimination, promoting participation, employment and education., it aims at strengthening Roma empowerment, cooperation, and trust by focusing on specific groups that face additional disadvantages – women, girls, and youth; and supporting Roma civil society. On the other hand, the Austrian strategy does not address issues in the fields of fighting poverty and social exclusion, health and housing.

The NRCP explicitly points out, especially in the areas of health and housing, that there were already national measures that the Roma could also use and that there would be no need for special measures for Roma. We do not agree. As noted in Ch. 2.4 to 2.6. a lot of social measures in Austria are linked to certain requirements like language skills and residence titles, meaning a lot of Roma in Austria are not entitled to use those social measures. In order to achieve a real interlocking social landscape, where pre-existing support measures for Austrians really apply to all Roma living in Austria, it is necessary to reduce these requirements or at least to implement upstream support so that the requirements, such as the language level, can be met more easily. An example is that German courses are offered by various institutions - also free of charge - but here, too, the prerequisite is the receipt of minimum income or the 'red-white-red card'⁴⁵, which requires proof of language skills. There we see the infinite loop in which a lot of Roma are caught. The result of this is that they are sent around from place to place and end up completely rejected by public agencies.

The NRCP sees a strong connection with the European framework. In general, there is the aim of using pre-existing national measures, and linking the strategy to them. After all, Austria has its own department for ethnic group affairs. As already noted, a differentiation between allochthonous and autochthonous Roma is also indicated here. It is positive that Austria has its own department for ethnic group affairs, but this is of a strategic form. We would welcome a more operational form, where the members of the Ethnic Groups Advisory Council would be more directly and actively involved in decisions on measures affecting Roma.

3.2. Responsibility for NRSF coordination and monitoring

The NRCP is located at the highest level in the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria. The visibility of the national strategy in the public administration is assessed very differently by the interview partners. On the part of the NRCP, the visibility due to the efforts of the contact point is rated as very good, and the years of preparatory work are mentioned. In other ministries, there are specific contact persons who act as multipliers.

On the part of the public authority with responsibility in a key area, however, the visibility of the strategy in various areas is considered to be too low. In principle, in their opinion, there is a lack of awareness of responsibility in the ministries and more responsible personnel should be employed. The Roma strategy aims at many areas and Roma are the largest ethnic group in Austria, but the public authority with responsibility in a key area is lacking awareness about the existence of the strategy in the Austrian civil service and the members of the government. There is a need for a national agency to handle funding. The regional authority in the key region of Burgenland states that, in general, the Roma

⁴⁵ The red-white-red card can be applied for by third-country nationals who want to live and work in Austria. The card is needed for a stay of more than six months, and it is valid for a maximum of 24 months. (See: <https://www.migration.gv.at/de/formen-der-zuwanderung/dauerhafte-zuwanderung/>)

Contact Point is known but in daily working life they have hardly any contact. Furthermore, until now the NRCP has not reached out to the region of Burgenland actively.

A new strategy is being worked out, with potential adjustments to needs as they arise. Adaptations to changing requirements at the EU level might be necessary, or changes in indicators that make a change in content necessary. Related results and reactions are expected, and a new strategy will be developed in the course of 2023.

3.3. Quality of the plan

In general, the Austrian strategy lacks clear timetables and deadlines, as well as concrete objectives that are traceable or measurable. This makes it considerably more difficult to check whether the objectives have been achieved. This is a major discrepancy with the EU guidelines, which specify clear targets.⁴⁶ It should be noted here that in order to establish comparability, reliable statistical data would be necessary, which has been lacking in Austria in many areas to date. Potential risks are not considered in the strategy, but the NRCP mentions the difficulty of reaching the target group and the risk that the measures miss the target. Different interviewees expressed the view that the measures taken so far often do not reach the targeted groups.

The public authority with responsibility in a key area supports the existence of the strategy but criticises the fact that it is not detailed enough and that it mainly follows EU guidelines and goes too little beyond them.

In their opinion, the strategy is not only needed on paper, but they also see the risk that it will fail in implementation. They consider the measures taken so far to have been moderately successful, but that they have not been well received by the target group. According to the experts, the instruments so far created (national strategies and financial support from the EU) have led to various improvements for Roma, but in many cases these have only been selective (both in terms of time and space) – e.g., projects for employment that are temporary, and do not involve a permanent facility. Furthermore, national strategies have taken too little account of the heterogeneity of Roma communities, their diverse life realities, and thus diverging needs. To tackle this issue, we suggest expanding Roma participation on different levels, including in decision-making positions, as already mentioned in Chapter 1.1. In support of our view, we quote the Roma school mediator:

“The strategy is implementable in its form, but it doesn’t reach people. This is a big problem. In my opinion, the strategy is not publicised enough; for example, not enough information is published via (social) media. As a result, many of those affected have never heard of the strategy and associated measures and thus cannot benefit from them.”

3.4. Funding

The costs are to be covered by the budgets of the respective federal ministries. Through the activities of the contact point, anchoring in general political measures in the core areas is to take place. In addition, in the area of the labour market, money was provided through ESF and national funding during two project periods. A total of 8 million EUR was made available for labour-market inclusion measures targeted at Roma. Fifty percent of this was financed by ESF and 50% by national funding from the labour market area. There were a total of two calls (2015 and 2018) for projects; in the first period from November 2015 to June 2019, 12 labour-market projects were funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and

⁴⁶ EU Roma Strategic Framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030, p. 4f.

the second period runs from August 2018 to December 2022. A budget of 4 million EUR was available for each call and no self-financing was required.⁴⁷

NRCP judges the funds to have been allocated efficiently. The EU funds for the Roma Contact Point will be used to drive networking and to bring together stakeholders who are important for identifying activities. The latter will be brought together with civil society to also create mutual awareness. The evaluation will be paid for from its own funds. According to the public authority with responsibility in a key area, additional funding is required in individual ministries. So far, measures are mainly co-financed through the general budgets of the ministries. Austria should not only collect the money from the EU, but also provide more national support. The regional authority in the key region of Burgenland considers EU and federal funding measures to be insufficient: "The Roma ethnic group is in particular need of low-threshold financing options".

According to the experts, the funding through the national strategy has supported many projects, but the challenge is, as already described, that the projects are often short-term and the involvement of Roma in the projects is lacking. As the expert interviewees pointed out, in certain situations it takes a lot of trust and relationship-based work with the target group to enable sustainable inclusion.

A major criticism is that Austria commits to implementing the measures in the strategy but fails to point out specifically which ministries are responsible for which area. This gives rise to our wish that the parties involved clarify this responsibility internally.

As already mentioned in Chapter 1.5, the required project management activities are very extensive for the associations. This circumstance represents a structural problem, accounting takes a long time, and the associations cannot finance the interim period (also because of a lack of donations). In general, the financing structure is considered problematic because the associations have to apply for money every year. There is no continuous funding, which means planning uncertainties for the parties involved. This does not guarantee the sustainability of projects. One example that illustrates the problem: Roma school mediation has existed since 2000 and should be established in the structures, but so far a new project application has to be submitted every year.

An important aspect is that employees want or need secure jobs in order to make a living. Furthermore, continuity in the care of families, which often lasts for years, is very important, as trust and esteem are built up this way. This relationship-building is invaluable. Because of this, more long-term funding is the more sensible way to go.

3.5. Monitoring and evaluation

According to the NRCP, the evaluation of the Roma strategy was financed by the federal government itself and awarded to the University of Vienna, Institute of Sociology. Since the beginning of 2021, the strategy has been evaluated by the University of Vienna with the close involvement of Roma civil society. The project working group that was involved can be viewed on the website.⁴⁸

The NRCP states that first primary source research was conducted. The second part consisted of about 400 interviews conducted nationwide. This survey asked, on the one hand, to what extent the ongoing strategy was known in the Roma community and where there was need for action. The results are expected by summer 2022. These will be discussed and feedback obtained as part of the Roma dialogue platform.

Activists state that this is a good example of the participation of Roma in the process.

⁴⁷ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 22ff.

⁴⁸ *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, p. 25f., *Sensiro – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich* (univie.ac.at).

3.6. Assessment of the expected effectiveness and sustainability

At first glance, there are active efforts by the public authorities to implement the strategy sustainably and effectively and to implement it, a well-thought-out evaluation process, and also monitoring. However, it appears to be a constant challenge to stay on top of the issue, to ask questions, and to demand results or reports on results. The constant pressure that has to be exerted shows that the Roma strategy has visibly gained a place in social policy, but that its implementation is strongly dependent on the commitment of the individual acting persons or project executing agencies.

The representative of public authority criticises the fact that too little effort is evident in the area of implementation and that the publication of the strategy as a measure is not enough. They see the risk that the strategy has not been widely thought through and that there is insufficient coordination among the ministries that are involved. In order to contain this risk, more pressure should be exerted in the form of monitoring and follow-up.

The experts also observe that there are many projects on paper, but less concrete implementation. They criticise the fact that the planned projects are not sustainable enough.

“Funding from the EU and the Republic of Austria is only temporary, a circumstance that makes it difficult to build long-term structures and measures for Roma.” (Dr. Sabrina Steindl-Kopf)

In addition, there has been no willingness so far to institutionalise pre-existing successful measures (e.g., Roma school mediation) and thus secure them in the long term. One another best practice example is the employment project ‘Thara’ which has existed since 2005. Thara provides counselling related to educational and employment issues as well as, for example, debt counselling and housing counselling.⁴⁹ We suggest that the responsible ministries, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, embed these services in their existing offerings and finance them in the long term. Gains are measurable if one can consistently evaluate how many children or young people have been saved from dropping out of school with the help of school mediation, and furthermore, can be integrated into the labour market. Moreover, it is also possible to measure how many clients Thara serves and helps solve problems for upstream of the labour market (in relation to integrating them into the labour market). Additionally, it is also possible to measure how many individuals have been supported through the employment component of the program, providing better insight into the successful integration of clients into the labour market. This would be a perfect example of increasing the coherence of existing measures with Roma-specific measures.

⁴⁹ https://www.volkshilfe.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Media_Library/PDFs/THARA/10_Jahre_THARA.pdf

4. ALIGNMENT WITH THE EU ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

4.1. Reflecting diversity among Roma

The Roma Strategy recognizes that the Roma are a “heterogeneous group with different history, origin, language and religious affiliation”.⁵⁰ There is also a focus on specific groups (Roma women and youth) in terms of content. It should be emphasised that this focus was due to the initiative of Roma civil society through feedback on the first draft of the national strategy. The experts criticise the fact that although there is more knowledge about Roma, political measures deal with Roma still as a homogeneous group. Internal differences are disregarded. EU Roma, stateless Roma, Roma with disabilities, non-EU nationals, and older Roma are not really represented in the current national strategy. For example, the needs of young Roma, Roma women, and LGBT+ persons are not handled separately in the areas of labour market, etc.; respectively, no measures are specifically defined for these groups within the focal areas.

More sensitivity to the heterogeneity of the group would be desirable; this would also increase the success of the measures. In addition to taking into account the heterogeneity of the groups, gender-specific and generation-specific aspects should be considered when implementing measures. Young Roma women activists are particularly characterised by their higher education, and see the recognition and inclusion of their history (especially the persecution of Roma and Sinti during the Nazi era) as essential challenges. The public authority with responsibility in a key area criticises the lack of public awareness in society, which means that such diversity is not sufficiently considered.

Specific Roma group	Represented in country and facing specific problems	Included in the NRSF	Specific targets and measures aimed at group included in NRSF
Children	yes	yes, little mentioned	no
Women	yes	yes	yes
Roma youth	yes	yes	yes
Older Roma	no	no	no
Roma with disabilities	no	no	no
EU-mobile citizens	yes	yes	yes
Non-EU nationals	yes	no	no
Stateless Roma	yes	no	no
Roma LGBT+	yes	no	no

Differentiation between autochthonous and allochthonous Roma regarding women’s issues is very important to the activists.

⁵⁰ Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich, p 12.

4.2. Combining mainstream and targeted approaches

The strategy lists pre-existing mainstream national measures at various points (e.g., *Bildungsberatung*⁵¹). However, the strategy does not explicitly address the need to remove obstacles to the target group's use of these services. In our opinion, this problem should be addressed more explicitly within the strategy. However, it is planned to involve representatives from the Roma community in the development and implementation of all measures. In the interviews, NRCP mentioned the goal of generally using pre-existing measures through the strategy, recognizing them, and creating a link to them.

4.3. Usage of instruments introduced by the Council Recommendation

In order to involve Roma professionals, e.g., as mediators, the strategy plans to use Roma school mediators in the area of education. A very important move would be the institutionalisation of Roma school mediation in schools. In the area of employment, it is also mentioned that the school mediators should offer vocational and educational counselling – i.e., provide career and educational counselling through Roma school mediators with the involvement of parents.⁵²

Roma school mediators have already been successfully deployed for several years; the expansion of this measure is not explicitly mentioned in the strategy. No mentoring programs are mentioned in other areas. The representative of the public authority sees mentoring programs as a very useful measure for opening doors to offices, universities, the labour market, the civil service, etc. We suggest including more mentoring programs in the different areas that are mentioned in the strategy as this is a great measure for building trust and reducing obstacles.

⁵¹ <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/eb/bb.html>

⁵² *Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich*, pp. 11 and 13.

5. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

There is one very successful project in the employment field, funded by ESF, called Thara. It has existed since 2005 and has the aim of providing mentoring and advice to Roma in respect of educational and employment issues. It is a perfect example of 'best practice', contributing to the implementation of the strategy in Austria. It would be useful to find out why Thara is performing well and reaching the target group to learn from this for future projects.

In addition to the project '*Schulmediation*' from Romano Centro, which is also successfully reaching Roma and having a real impact on Roma children, it would be desirable to find other examples of best practice which would help to implement the strategy in a suitable manner for Roma.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Austrian Roma strategy has not formulated any quantitative targets, but only qualitative ones. This leaves very broad scope for interpretation. For example, one goal is that “access to the labour market is improved” – but how is the effectiveness measured, by what, and when is access defined as improved?

The Austrian Roma strategy is formulated in very general terms and lacks detailed explanations of the respective intentions. The European Commission has formulated recommendations that are backed up with examples, but they do not appear in the Austrian Roma strategy. How will an evaluation succeed if no clear, comprehensible indicators have been defined?

EU Roma, stateless Roma, Roma with disabilities, Roma from non-EU nations, and older Roma are not really represented in the Austrian Roma strategy. For example, the needs of young Roma, Roma women, and LGBT+ persons are not included separately in the areas of labour market, education, or social services, and no measures are specifically defined for these groups. Also, no differentiation was made between autochthonous Roma and immigrant groups (who encounter more barriers, for example, due to the lack of language and local knowledge).

The areas of health, income support, and housing were not specifically addressed in the Austrian strategy, or only marginally.

A clear improvement since the last strategy is the focus on the participation of civil society and the inclusion of the issue of antigypsyism as well as the fight against poverty.

Recommendations to national authorities

1. The lack of quantitative or qualitative indicators or deadlines will make it difficult to measure the success of the strategy. It is recommended that indicators are defined in the following measures, such as those that have been defined in the EU framework. These can be used as a guide.
2. The representative of the public authority recommends enlarging a staff unit that is dedicated to the implementation of the strategy and networking among the affected ministries (labour, social) with a coordinating function. This should be located at the Federal Chancellery.
3. Awareness of the national strategy and its implementation should be increased in civil society. Currently, it is in the hands of the associations that offer counselling to Roma to spread this knowledge. It would be helpful to have large media campaigns that bring the topic closer to civil society, to present the projects, and emphasise the importance of the strategy.
4. More mentoring programs should be created in various areas to open doors for Roma into offices, universities, the labour market, the civil service sector, etc. Those measures would break down barriers and create positive role models for the community, thus enabling opportunities for advancement.
5. The institutionalisation and thus long-term safeguarding of pre-existing and proven projects (such as school mediation) would help to improve the effectiveness of the strategy.
6. Serious action against antigypsyism needs measures from all areas of society (such as media, educational institutions, etc) to achieve the goal of the inclusion of Roma in Europe. Measures for initiating a social discussion about antigypsyism will be important in the future.

7. More strongly promote community-led initiatives (especially in the field of media, women, and youth).
8. The last report on antigypsyism was from 2017 – a new antigypsyism report should be prepared to obtain insight into current conditions.
9. Special attention should be paid to distinguishing between allochthonous and autochthonous Roma, as their needs are completely different.
10. There should be special projects for women, older Roma, LGBT+ Roma, EU-mobile Roma citizens, and non-EU Roma citizens.
11. To address the lack of statistical information about Roma, the state should dedicate more resources to research and include this goal as an additional measure in the national strategy.
12. We recommend institutionalising well-functioning, proven projects (like Roma school mediators and labour-market projects), and financing them sustainably in order to be able to offer them permanently. The responsible ministries should be the sponsors.
13. We recommend developing the dialogue platform in a way that it is not only seen as a place for networking and exchange but is organised in a results-oriented way and project ideas can be developed based on these goals. Strong focus should also be placed on the increased involvement of civil society.
14. We suggest supporting projects that address problems regarding technical equipment and know-how for Roma families with school children (in preparation for situations like pandemic-related lockdowns).
15. Measures should be implemented by the government in the area of tertiary education such as scholarships for Roma students to support higher education among the Roma.
16. We recommend linking the implemented labour-market projects with structural support systems like the 'Arbeitsmarktservice' to guarantee a more sustainable outcome.
17. To address avoidable health issues among Roma, we suggest implementing training for Roma to promote their employment in the health sector, to implement mediators, build language support, and health literacy.

Recommendations to European institutions

18. The European Commission is already doing much to support the implementation of national strategies, and to evaluate and monitor them. However, it would help to shorten the roll-out intervals between reports.
19. In general, there would be greater impact from Roma strategies if outcomes were specified in a more measurable way. We would like to see more precise target specifications demanded from Member States.

Recommendations to civil society

20. As noted in this report, a large segment of civil society is unaware of the existence or details of the Roma strategy. Therefore, specific activities should focus on increasing the awareness of Roma NGOs about the strategy and related documents, as well as on enhancing their capacity to enable meaningful participation in the implementation and evaluation of the strategy.

21. Capacity-building activities should also target the engagement of Roma NGOs and activists in project development and management, particularly accounting and reporting.

Recommendations to other stakeholders

22. It would be helpful if related organisations such as human rights and women's associations would network more with Roma civil society and, especially in the field of combating discrimination, act together and stand up for improvements.

REFERENCES

List of interviews

- public authority with responsibility in a key area, deputies to the National Council, member of the Austrian Green Party (5 April 2022 carried out by Eva Kramer through ZOOM),
- National Roma Contact Point (6 April 2022, carried out by Eva Kramer & Michaela Schipper-Schauer through ZOOM),
- experts from University: Sabrina Steindl-Kopf and Sanda Üllen, *Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Universität Wien* (10 April 2022 via e-mails),
- Roma-activist and journalist Gilda-Nancy Horvath, (19 April 2022, carried out by Eva Kramer through ZOOM),
- Roma School Mediator Jelena Jovanovic, working for Romano Centro (20 April 2022, carried out by Eva Kramer by phone),
- Roma activist Martin Horvath, board member of the association *Hango Roma*, member of the *Volksgruppenbeirat*, (28 April 2022, carried out by Michaela Schipper-Schauer through ZOOM),
- regional authority in the key region of Burgenland (5 May 2022, via e-mail).

Key policy documents and reports

"Amber Med", available at: <https://amber-med.at/>

Bundeskanzleramt. Bundesministerium für Frauen, Familie, Jugend und Integration. "Vortrag an den Ministerrat. Fortschreibung der österreichischen `Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich`" 54/11. Geschäftszahl: BKA: 2021-0.020.654, available at: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:c7d9cfd6-437f-4581-8878-7a5a4919e51b/mrv_inklusion_roma_042021.pdf

Bundeskanzleramt Österreich. "Strategischer Rahmen der EU zur Gleichstellung, Inklusion und Teilhabe der Roma bis 2030. Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich" (2021), available at: <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:b556a06c-cd86-4b3d-a492-815c8a1bfb84/Strategie%20Roma%20Inklusion.pdf>

Bundeskanzleramt. "Roma-Strategie", available at: <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen/roma-strategie.html>

Bundesministerium für Inneres. "Hate Crime – Vorurteilsbedingte Straftaten", available at: <https://www.bmi.gv.at/408/Projekt/start.aspx>

Bundespressedienst. "Staatssekretärin Duzdar: Roma-Strategie 2020 wird um Schwerpunkte Frauen und Jugend erweitert" (06.04.2017), available at: https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20170406_OT50192/staatssekretaerin-duzdar-roma-strategie-2020-wird-um-schwerpunkte-frauen-und-jugend-erweitert

Deutsche Welle. "Internationaler Roma Tag. Bald ein Denkmal für die Roma und Sinti in Wien?", available at: <https://www.dw.com/de/bald-ein-denkmal-f%C3%BCr-die-roma-und-sinti-in-wien/a-61418519>

"Empfehlungen des Rates vom 12. März 2021 zur Gleichstellung, Inklusion und Teilhabe der Roma" (2021/C 93/01). Amtsblatt der Europäischen Union. Punkt 5-7. Brussels. (19.03.2021), available at: <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:00a585e9-cfd4-4028-bb56-5f5a9eb9360f/empfehlung%20des%20rates%20zur%20gleichstellung%20inklusion%20teilhabe%20der%20roma.pdf>

European Commission. "COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on Roma equality, inclusion and participation." Interinstitutional File: 2020/0288 (NLE), 5-7. Brussels. (07.10.2020), available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/commission_proposal_for_a_draft_council_recommendation_for_roma_equality_inclusion_and_participation_en.pdf

European Neighbours. "29. Roma Dialogplattform", available at: <http://www.european-neighbours.net/index.php/blog2015-2/blog2022/499-29-roma-dialogplattform>

EU-Parlament, "24. Internationaler Roma-Tag - Antiziganismus in Europa und Anerkennung des Völkermords an den Roma im Zweiten Weltkrieg durch Begehen des Gedenktags in der EU" Verfahren 2015/2615(RSP). (15.4.2015), available at:

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2015-0095_DE.html?redirect

Initiative Minderheiten. "Rombas Studienbericht", (2014.) Mikael Luciak (Hrsg.), available at: https://initiative.minderheiten.at/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/01_Rombas_Studie.pdf

Marion Weigl, Melinda Tamás. (22.9.2021.) "Soziale Inklusion von Roma durch Frühe Hilfen", available at:

https://www.fruehehilfen.at/fxddata/fruehehilfen/prod/media/downloads/Veranstaltungen/Tamas_Weigl_Fruehe-Hilfen_Roma_Fachtagung-22092021_NZFHat.pdf

Mein Bezirk. 100 Jahre Burgenland- 17 Millionen Euro für "Haus der Volksgruppen" in Oberwart. (21.01.2022), available at: https://www.meinbezirk.at/oberwart/c-lokales/17-millionen-euro-fuer-haus-der-volksgruppen-in-oberwart_a5117074

Stadtmenschen Wien, available at: <https://www.stadtmenschen.wien/>

United Nations. Human Rights. Office of the High Commissioner. "Main features of OHCHR conceptual and methodological framework. Human rights indicators", available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms/human-rights-indicators/main-features-ohchr-conceptual-and-methodological-framework>

Universität Wien. "Sensiro – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich", available at: <https://sensiro.univie.ac.at/>

Wohnservice Wien. "Wohnpartner", available at: <https://wohnpartner-wien.at/>

ZARA – Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit. "Hate Crime Kontern", available at: <http://hatecrimekontern.at/>

ANNEX: LIST OF PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS

2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Antigypsyism not recognised as a specific problem in national policy frameworks	significant problems	understood with limitations	adequate but with room for improvement generalised measures, no defined indicators, allochthonous Roma are marginally mentioned in one measure: "organising information events for migrants" ¹	adequate but with room for improvement, no defined indicators, generalised targets (nice to have)
Prejudice against Roma	critical problems	understood with limitations	indirect measures	indirect targets
Hate crimes against Roma	critical problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Hate speech towards and against Roma (online and offline)	critical problems	understood with limitations	specific plans for prevention of hate speech against Roma	no defined targets
Weak effectiveness of protection from discrimination	critical problems ²	understood with limitations media agitation is at a high level	specific plans for prevention of hate speech against Roma	no defined targets
Segregation in education, housing, or provision of public	critical problems	understood with limitations	specific plans for prevention of hate speech	no defined targets

¹ Strategischer Rahmen der EU zur Gleichstellung, Inklusion und Teilhabe der Roma bis 2030 Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich, p. 17 f
<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:b556a06c-cd86-4b3d-a492-815c8a1bfb84/Strategie%20Roma%20Inklusion.pdf>

² https://www.meinbezirk.at/st-poelten/c-lokales/grenzen-dicht-roma-in-st-poelten-gestrandet_a4006008
<https://noe.orf.at/stories/3040141/>
<https://www.noen.at/st-poelten/alternative-in-st-poelten-neuer-platz-fuer-das-fahrende-volk-st-poelten-roma-sinti-skn-st-poelten-ratzersdorfer-see-150540460>
<https://www.krone.at/2187923>

Forced evictions and demolitions leading to homelessness, inadequate housing, and social exclusion	critical problems	understood with limitations	specific plans for prevention of hate speech against Roma	no defined targets
Statelessness, missing ID documents	critical problems	understood with limitations	specific plans for prevention of hate speech against Roma	no defined targets
Misconduct and discriminatory behaviour by police (under-policing/under-policing)	critical problems	understood with limitations	specific plans for prevention of hate speech against Roma	no defined targets
Barriers to <i>de facto</i> exercise of EU right to free movement	critical problems	understood with limitations	specific plans for prevention of hate speech against Roma	no defined targets

2.2. Education

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Lack of available and accessible pre-school education and ECEC services for Roma	allochthonous Roma minor problem autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved	allochthonous Roma irrelevant autochthonous Roma identified and analysed sufficiently	allochthonous Roma: present but insufficient e.g., the "Schulmediation" is not financed in a way that it can be offered in every school autochthonous Roma adequate but with room for improvement, as the measures are mostly mainstream measures of the ministries which apply to every migrant family - Roma need custom-fit measures	adequate but with room for improvement: the targets defined are very generalised and would apply to migrants in general.
Lower quality of pre-school education and ECEC services for Roma	allochthonous Roma irrelevant autochthonous Roma significant problem which was	allochthonous Roma irrelevant autochthonous Roma identified and analysed	allochthonous Roma: present but insufficient e.g., the "Schulmediation" is not financed in a way	adequate but with room for improvement: the targets defined are very generalised and would apply to

	already addressed and partly successfully solved	sufficiently	that it can be offered in every school autochthonous Roma adequate but with room for improvement, as the measures are mostly mainstream measures of the ministries which apply to every migrant family - Roma need custom-fit measures	migrants in general.
High drop-out rate before completion of primary education	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Early leaving from secondary education	critical problem as a pre-stage to problems in employment ⁵³ problematic (above the age of 15) - This shows that a significant improvement could be achieved through the nationwide use of school mediators.	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently (Would apply for all migrants)	implicit measures for preventing drop out present but insufficient	adequate but with room for improvement (lack of quantitative indicators)
Secondary education/vocational training disconnected from labour market needs	significant problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently (Would apply for all migrants)	adequate but with room for improvement; Schulmediation is mentioned (again) in the strategy but without appropriate funding (plans)	1 target too open to interpretation - "level of education increased" no quantitative indicators
Misplacement of Roma pupils into special education	critical problem	irrelevant	absent	absent
Education segregation of Roma pupils	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent

⁵³ Consolidated and not differentiated from high dropout rate before completion of primary education.

Increased selectivity of the educational system resulting in concentration of Roma or other disadvantaged pupils in educational facilities of lower quality	significant problem the lower the school-leaving qualification, the more difficult it is to find a skilled job position	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited access to second-chance education, adult education, and lifelong learning	minor problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited access to and support for online and distance learning if education and training institutions close, as occurred during the coronavirus pandemic	critical problem (educationally disadvantaged families had great problems, no equipment, no knowledge, no access) Digital education is assumed, illiterate families had no chance this became visible during the corona pandemic	irrelevant	absent	absent
Low level of digital skills and competences and limited opportunities for their development among pupils	critical problem (related to lack of capacity, knowledge and equipment from parents, internet access is required by schools) Children have partially received laptops/tablets/internet sticks this became visible during the corona pandemic	irrelevant	absent	absent
Low level of digital skills and competences and limited opportunities for their development among adults	critical problem no special courses available	irrelevant	absent	absent
Other country-specific issues (extend the table as needed)	<i>Deutschförderklassen</i> in schools (German support classes)	Irrelevant	Absent	absent

	Children who do not know German are grouped together in separate classes - segregation			
--	--	--	--	--

2.3. Employment

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Poor access to or low effectiveness of public employment services	allochthonous Roma critical problem autochthonous Roma are included in mainstream access	irrelevant	absent	absent
Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	critical problem	understood with limitations	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement implicit measures (too many generalised targets: e.g.: "Job- and career coaching carried out by Roma school mediators in cooperation with parents" unter Einbeziehung der Eltern anbieten
Poor access to (re-) training, lifelong learning and skills development	minor problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Discrimination on the labour market by employers	significant problem ⁵⁴	irrelevant	absent	absent
Risk for Roma women and girls from disadvantaged areas of being subjected to trafficking and forced	significant problem	irrelevant	absent	absent

⁵⁴ See Antiziganismus Report 2013-2015, p. 25 ff., https://www.erinnern.at/media/55de1e3092a54fa700856de975d34252/Antiziganismus%202015_web.pdf

prostitution				
Primary labour market opportunities substituted by public work	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Barriers and disincentives to employment (such as indebtedness, low income from work compared to social income)	significant problem	irrelevant	absent	absent
Lack of activation measures, employment support	significant problem	understood with limitations	absent	absent
Other country-specific issues (extend the table as needed)				

2.4. Healthcare

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Exclusion from public health insurance coverage (including those who are stateless, third country nationals, or EU-mobile)	allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria ⁵⁵ autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently - mentioned in context with other issues and goals e.g. "consideration of Roma issues" ⁵⁶	present but insufficient not well-defined measures but generalised measures which would fit for mainstream society	present but insufficient not well-defined targets but generalised goals which would fit for mainstream society

⁵⁶ See Austrian "Strategischer Rahmen der EU zur Gleichstellung, Inklusion und Teilhabe der Roma bis 2030", p.9. Accessed 15 April 2022, <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:b556a06c-cd86-4b3d-a492-815c8a1bfb84/Strategie%20Roma%20Inklusion.pdf>

Poor supply/availability of healthcare services (including lack of means to cover out-of-pocket health costs)	allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited access to emergency care	allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited access to primary care	allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited access to prenatal and postnatal care	allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria autochthonous Roma significant problem which was	irrelevant	absent	absent

	<p>already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system</p>			
<p>Limited access to health-related information</p>	<p>allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria a lot of work for consultations do Roma led NGOs</p> <p>autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system</p>	<p>irrelevant</p>	<p>absent</p>	<p>absent</p>
<p>Poor access to preventive care (vaccination, check-ups, screenings, awareness-raising about healthy lifestyles)</p>	<p>allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria a lot of work for consultations do Roma led NGOs</p> <p>autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system</p>	<p>irrelevant</p>	<p>absent</p>	<p>absent</p>
<p>Poor access to sexual/reproductive healthcare and family planning services</p>	<p>allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who consult ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria a</p>	<p>irrelevant</p>	<p>absent</p>	<p>absent</p>

	<p>lot of work for consultations do Roma led NGOs</p> <p>autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in Austrian healthcare system</p>			
Specific barriers to better healthcare of vulnerable groups such as elderly Roma people, Roma with disabilities, LGBT+ and others	<p>allochthonous Roma critical problem, there are a few organisations in Vienna who treat ppl without insurance, but not enough supply all over Austria</p> <p>autochthonous Roma significant problem which was already addressed and partly successfully solved - they are included in austrian healthcare system</p>	irrelevant	absent	absent
Discrimination/ antigypsyism in healthcare (e.g., segregated services, forced sterilisation)	minor problems			
Unrecognised historical injustices, such as forced sterilisation	irrelevant			
Inequalities in measures for combating and preventing potential outbreaks of diseases in marginalised or remote localities	irrelevant			

2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Poor physical security of housing (ruined or slum housing)	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Lack of access to drinking water	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Lack of access to sanitation	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Lack of access to electricity	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited or absent public waste collection	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Restricted heating capability (families unable to heat all rooms/all times when necessary) or solid waste used for heating	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Lack of security of tenure (legal titles are not clear and secure)	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Lacking or limited access to social housing	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Overcrowding (available space/room for families)	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Housing-related indebtedness at levels which may cause eviction	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Housing in segregated settlements/ neighbourhoods	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Housing in informal or illegal settlements/ neighbourhoods	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent

Exposure to hazardous factors (living in areas prone to natural disasters or environmentally hazardous areas)	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited or lacking access to public transport	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited or lacking internet access (e.g., public internet access points in deprived areas, areas not covered by broadband internet)	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited or lacking access to green spaces	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Roma excluded from environmental democracy	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Other country-specific issues not listed above (please extend the table with new rows)				

2.6. Social protection

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
High at-risk-of-poverty rate and material and social deprivation	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Income support programmes fail to guarantee an acceptable level of minimum income for every household	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Limited access to income support schemes (low awareness, barrier of administrative burdens, stigma attached)	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent

Ineffective eligibility rules (well-designed means-testing ensures that those who need support can get it; job-search conditions ensure the motivation for returning to work)	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Low flexibility of income support programmes for addressing changing conditions of the household	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Discrimination by agencies managing income-support programmes	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Risk of municipalities misusing income support to buy votes	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent
Other country-specific issues not listed above (please extend the table with new rows)	irrelevant	irrelevant	absent	absent

2.7. Social services

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Limited quality, capacity and comprehensiveness of help provided by social services	critical problems, use of available mainstream social services	understood with limitations, no special focus on Roma needs	absent	absent
Limited access to social services: low awareness of them, low accessibility, (e.g., due to travel costs) or limited availability	critical problems, use of available mainstream social services	understood with limitations, no special focus on Roma needs	absent	absent
Services providers do not actively reach out to those in need	critical problems, hidden discrimination ⁵⁷	understood with limitations, no	absent	absent

⁵⁷ See Antiziganismus Report 2013-2015, p. 25 ff., https://www.erinnern.at/media/55de1e3092a54fa700856de975d34252/Antiziganismus%202015_web.pdf

		special focus on Roma needs		
Limited ability of social services to effectively work together with other agencies (e.g., public employment service) to help clients	critical problem, Roma often do not trust official social services or agencies as they fear discrimination and accusation of child neglect with consequences.	irrelevant	absent	absent
Discrimination by social service providers	critical problem, Roma often do not trust official social services or agencies as they fear discrimination and accusation of child neglect with consequences. ⁵⁸			
Lack of adequacy of programmes for addressing indebtedness (providing counselling and financial support)				

2.8. Child protection

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Child protection not considered in the NRSF	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Specific vulnerability of Romani children as victims of violence not considered	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Segregated or discriminatory child-protection services provided to Roma	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Activities aimed at strengthening parental responsibility and skills	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent

⁵⁸ vgl. Antiziganismusbericht, p. 6ff, https://www.erinnern.at/media/7fc602cf68d551213fb81669646237a4/AZB_2013.pdf/@download/file/AZB_2013.pdf

not available or not reaching out to Roma parents				
Illegal practices of child labour	irrelevant except for begging	irrelevant	absent	absent
Large-scale and discriminatory placement of Romani children in early childhood care institutions	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Persistence of large-scale institutions rather than family-type arrangements	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Early marriages	minor problem	irrelevant	absent	absent
Barriers to children's registration; statelessness	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Biased treatment of Roma youth by security and law enforcement	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Inadequate child/adolescent participation	critical problem	irrelevant	absent	absent

2.9. Promoting (awareness of) Roma arts, culture, and history

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Poor or lacking awareness of the general population of the contribution of Roma art and culture to national and European heritage	critical problem	irrelevant	absent	absent
Exclusion of Roma communities from national cultural narratives	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent
Romani history and culture not included in school curricula and	critical problems	mentioned but	present (to include Roma exhibition in	absent

textbooks for both Roma and non-Roma students		not analysed sufficiently	schools) but too less	
Lack of inclusion of Romani language in schools, and development of necessary educational materials and resources for Romani language preservation and teaching	significant problems	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present (Roma school mediation) but not specific enough and no financial plan	absent
Lack of memorialisation of Roma history through establishing monuments, commemorative activities, and institutionalising dates relevant to Roma history	significant problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	generalised targets

HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:

- one copy:
via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:
from the European Union's representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm);
from the delegations in non-EU countries
(http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)
or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(*). The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>).



Publications Office
of the European Union