



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

Prepared by:
Roma Women Association of Dendrotamos
July 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 Cyprus

Manuscript completed in July 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 978-92-68-00751-8	doi: 10.2838/668914	Catalogue number DS-04-23-280-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 Cyprus*. 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. 33).

The report was prepared by the expert Dr Chryso Pelekani, at the invitation of the NGO Roma Women Association of Dendropotamos together with Georgios Tsiakalos, Advocacy/Projects Manager of the Roma Women Association of Dendropotamos, who has also translated the report into English.

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 therein.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	9
1. PARTICIPATION	11
1.1. Roma participation in the NRSF preparation	11
1.2. Roma participation in the NRSF implementation, monitoring, and evaluation	11
1.3. System of policy consultation with civil society and stakeholders	12
1.4. Empowerment of Roma communities at the local level.....	12
1.5. Capacity-building of Roma civil society	12
2. RELEVANCE	13
2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination.....	13
2.2. Education	15
2.3. Employment	18
2.4. Healthcare.....	19
2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice	20
2.6. Social protection.....	23
2.7. Social services	23
2.8. Child protection	24
2.9. Promotion (awareness) of Roma arts, culture and history	24
3. EXPECTED EFFECTIVENESS	25
3.1. Coherence with related domestic and European policies.....	25
3.2. Responsibility for NRSF coordination and monitoring	25
3.3. Quality of the plan	25
3.4. Funding	25
3.5. Monitoring and evaluation.....	25
3.6. Assessment of the expected effectiveness and sustainability	26
4. ALIGNMENT WITH THE EU ROMA STRATEGY	27
4.1. Reflecting diversity among Roma.....	27
4.2. Combining mainstream and targeted approaches.....	28
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29
REFERENCES	31
ANNEX: LIST OF PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS	33

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CEU	Central European University
CM	Communicative Methodology
CYPROM	Cyprus Roma Association
CIS	Cyprus Intelligence Services
CPI	Cyprus Pedagogical Institute
DRA.SE	School and Social Integration Actions
EAC	Cyprus Electricity Authority
EC	European Commission
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
GESY	General Health System
GMI	Guaranteed Minimum Income
KEPAKY	Centre for the Provision of Social Services
MoECSY	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
NRCP	National Roma Contact Point
NRIS	National Strategy for the Integration of Cypriot Roma 2017-2020
NRSF	National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2021-2030
NSPPHR	National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights
OEPPS	Organisation of European Programmes and Cultural Relations
PES	Public Employment Service
PMS	Property Management Service
PUBLIC	Public Services
RoC	Republic of Cyprus
SRSP	Structural Reform Support Programme
SRSS	Structural Reform Support Service
SPR	School Progress Report
SWS	Social Welfare Services
TC	Turkish Cypriot
UN	United Nations
YDEP	Welfare Benefit Management Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The '*National Strategy for the Social Inclusion for Roma 2021-2030*' (NRSF) sets horizontal and sectoral objectives in line with those proposed by the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation. Compared with the previous '*National Strategy for the Integration of Cypriot Roma 2017-2020*' (NRIS), the new NRSF is far better in its design and measures proposed, though mainly via a mainstreaming approach for all vulnerable groups living in the Republic of Cyprus (RoC).

The NRSF makes reference to a number of mainstream policies and links them to its thematic areas. Overall, the NRSF, even though it is based on a mainstream approach, has the potential to bring about positive results, especially if additional indicators and measuring mechanisms are to be introduced.

Participation

The NRSF was planned based on consultations with all relevant ministries, competent bodies and administrative services, but the participation of representatives from the Roma community was absent.

Relevance

Most of the actions and policies enshrined in the NRSF that are carried out by the various ministries, government agencies and competent services do not focus exclusively on Roma; instead, they are linked to the mainstream measures that cover all vulnerable groups including the Roma population. The absence of mapping of the situation of Roma, of disaggregated and intersectional data collection on various grounds and the involvement of the Roma community in the elaboration process of the NRSF constitute important omissions in the NRSF, which if existed, could have better enabled the implementation of the principle of explicit but not exclusive targeting in the measures proposed in the NRSF.

The NRSF limits itself to following the main objectives of the EU strategic Roma framework without questioning whether the issues identified are relevant, legitimate and evidence-based or if there were other issues of specific aspects that would require specific consideration.

Expected effectiveness

The NRSF explicitly links its implementation to the '*National Social Policy Strategy 2021-2027*', which provides for the horizontal social policy of the Republic of Cyprus. Thus, the NRSF adopts a general and generic approach to all thematic areas, without analysing the particular Roma context and the extent of the problems, and identifying targeted indicators, approaches and measures within mainstream national strategies and policies.

As such, the measures/actions mentioned in the NRSF lack specific indicators, a specific timeline or allocation of funding intended only for Roma. It is not clear if there are sufficient financial resources for the implementation of all actions/measures for Roma inclusion, at both the regional and local levels.

It is positive to note that a Committee on the Progress of the NRSF – consisting of representatives of the governmental departments or services and NGOs – has been established to monitor and assess the progress in implementation of the NRSF. Noteworthy, the new NRSF includes a possibility for review and update even before the five-year-period set, if it is necessary to accommodate any new emerging issues.

Alignment with the EU strategic Roma framework

The NRSF does not acknowledge specific groups of Roma as targets of measures and actions, except for children, who benefit from a wide focus under the strategy. The NRSF

is linked to several mainstream policies and strategies; however, Roma issues and concerns are not mainstreamed in those respective policies and strategies, a fact that renders the purpose of mainstreaming a lot less effective and meaningful. An exception is the measures in education, where a more specific approach and action is envisaged for the specific situation of Roma pupils.

According to the NRSF, the entire consultation process for drawing up Cyprus's NRSF began in June 2021, after a roadmap was developed following the Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021. However, while the NRSF follows the proposed objectives of the EU strategic Roma framework in general terms, it does not closely observe the specific measures proposed under both horizontal and sectoral objectives, which include improving the role and capacity of the National Roma Contact Point or the involvement of the equality body, cooperation with civil society or the allocation of dedicated Roma funding.

INTRODUCTION

National Roma strategic framework

The previous '*National Strategy for the Integration of Cypriot Roma 2017-2020*' (NRIS) was not a strategy *per se*, but rather a comprehensive set of policy measures in the context of the social integration policies for Cypriot Roma. The same applies to the new '*National Strategy for the Social Inclusion for Roma 2021-2030*' (NRSF),¹ although it follows in general terms the proposed objectives of the EU strategic Roma framework and contains more measures than the previous one. Due to the small size of the Roma population,² the Cypriot approach is to promote their inclusion through existing structures (e.g., general social inclusion policies and the National Reform Programme) and measures targeting vulnerable groups.³

The NRSF was prepared by the Social Welfare Services (SWS) of the recently established Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, which is the body designated as the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP). According to the NRSF, this will be updated every five years to accommodate any new issues that will emerge or even sooner if necessary. The NRSF is described as referring to the social priorities of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) for the period 2021-2030, outlining the programmes developed by the relevant authorities of the RoC and setting national goals and measures to strengthen equality, inclusion and participation of the Cypriot Roma living in the areas of Cyprus, which are under the effective control of the government of the RoC and in accordance with the special conditions of the country.

About this report

The report aims to assess the national strategic framework for the equality, inclusion and participation of Cypriot Roma and the participation of civil society in the elaboration of the strategic framework. In addition, the report proposes several recommendations for improving the national strategic framework and its implementation.

Primary and secondary data were collected and analysed. For primary data online and face-to-face interviews were conducted. Reliable and relevant evidence and information about the Cypriot Roma were used also through secondary data such as relevant reports related to Roma, studies, journals, newspapers, case studies, etc.

Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted, including:

- six face-to-face interviews (field research) with Roma representatives of one Roma association (CypRom);
- one face-to-face interview with one expert on Roma issues;
- one with representatives from the NRCP;
- one with a preprimary teacher.

¹ Available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/cyprus_roma_strategic_framework_final_10.12.2021.docx

² Their exact number is not known today. The Council of Europe estimates that the number of Roma living in the RoC is around 1,250 (i.e., 11% of the population – data from 2012), while the estimates state that there are around 650-700 Roma in the RoC-controlled areas. In addition, there are some Roma from other countries (mainly Eastern Europe) living in Cyprus, although their number is not officially known.

³ Policy Measures of Cyprus for the Social Inclusion of Roma. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu-country/cyprus_en (retrieved 8 July 2022)

The Roma participants' age ranged from 27 to 55 years old, and included four women and two men; the interviews were conducted face-to-face at their houses, within the Agios Antonios area and Polemidia settlements in Limassol. The semi-structured interviews lasted between 15 and 20 minutes each. All the participants had the opportunity to provide additional information via telephone if they considered it appropriate. One of the participants did so by providing photo documentation (area/housing problems) via the WhatsApp application. All interviews were conducted during between the end of May and mid-July 2022. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded. Before their interviews, the participants gave their consent to the collection and use of information for the purpose of this report, while anonymity was maintained throughout the elaboration of the study.

1. PARTICIPATION

1.1. Roma participation in the NRSF preparation

Although the NRSF is the result of the consultations and the contribution of the relevant ministries, agencies and experts, there was very limited to no direct participation and cooperation of representatives from the Cypriot Roma community or representatives of the [Cyprus Roma Association](#).⁴

As such, the consultation process on the elaboration of the NRSF was coordinated by the recently established Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, as the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) with the cooperation and input of various ministries,⁵ including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Interior, Education, Transport and Communications, Health, the Under-Ministry of Research Innovation and Digital Policy, the General Directorate of European Programmes and other departments of the Ministry of Labour. The formal process for the preparation of the NRSF in Cyprus started in June 2021.

The NRCP organised two internal consultations with various Ministries and services in the elaboration of the NRSF. The final NRSF draft was submitted to the Council of Ministers, and it was approved on 13 December 2021. For the time being, it is not known when the NRSF will be evaluated.

Although the NRSF underlines that “Cyprus demonstrates a strong culture of social dialogue, between the social partners, civil society and local authorities, and their participation in the dialogue is common practice prior to the adoption of any legislative or nonlegislative action”, in the case of the NRSF this well-established practice has not been demonstrated regarding Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations. Having in mind that CypRom is the only national organisation dealing with Roma issues in Cyprus, which has been closely monitoring Roma issues, it was expected that CypRom would be closely involved in the elaboration of the NRSF; however, this did not happen.

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

The NRSF includes no specific measures on the cooperation with the Roma community and civil society organisations or their capacity building for the implementation of the NRSF or other relevant policies. The NRSF makes only a general reference to the mobilisation and empowerment of the civil society regarding the provision of high-quality social services at the local level – under the responsibilities of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare to strengthen social welfare services. No known Roma are working in public administration or any paid institutional job in Cyprus or that the NRSF is making any reference to.

The NRSF indicates that a committee monitoring the implementation of the NRSF will be established, which will consist of representatives of the relevant government ministries and services and nongovernmental organisations, without any further information about the actual process or types of NGOs to be involved. Taking into account the limited consultation of the civil society on the elaboration of the NRSF, it remains to be seen how and if Roma representatives and pro-Roma civil society will be invited to sit on the monitoring committee and have a meaningful role therein.

⁴ As per the RCM guidelines, potential positive or negative conflicts of interest should be mentioned. Dr Chryso Pelekani, the co-author of this report, serves at the moment as president of the CypRom Association.

⁵ Such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Interior, Education, Transport and Communications, Health, the Under-Ministry of Research Innovation and Digital Policy, the General Directorate of European Programmes and other departments of the Ministry of Labour.

1.3. System of policy consultation with civil society and stakeholders

As it stands, there is no systematic consultation envisaged with Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations regarding the implementation of Roma-related policies, including the NRSF.

Thanks to several research studies regarding Cypriot Roma in recent years, Roma started to become more visible and more empowered, and they started to have a voice in the past recent years. In that sense, with the help of a mediator and 'Turkologist',⁶ they were invited to participate and enter into an open dialogue with the representatives of the authorities in 2016-2017 in the National Platform for Roma Inclusion. The involvement of Roma in shaping policies about themselves was a central theme on this platform. During the platform's meetings, the translator and mediator helped to convey all the information to the Roma in their mother tongue, Turkish.

Apart from that participation, since 2017 the Roma population group has not had any other platform of representation or policy dialogue and input. The RoC has yet to set up mechanisms to better involve Roma in policy discussions and efforts at national and local level, including through the rehabilitation of the national Roma Platform.

1.4. Empowerment of Roma communities at the local level

As mentioned above, the participation of Roma in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of policies at all levels, is minimal to none. Also, in recent years, due to the Covid19 pandemic, there has been an even greater lack of involvement and mobilisation of the Roma communities at the local level.

The NRSF formulates an objective to 'mobilise and empower' the civil society, but only in the context of providing high-quality social services at the local level, whose target groups are also Roma, but not to empower the Roma communities themselves. Additionally, it focuses on Roma parents, empowering them and improving their parental skills.

1.5. Capacity-building of Roma civil society

The NRSF does not include any measure aimed at capacity building of the Roma or the pro-Roma civil society.

⁶ A bilingual teacher who is employed by MoECSY working at the 18th Primary School in Limassol to facilitate the communication between the school principal, the personnel, and the Roma community.

2. RELEVANCE

2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

There are no officially recognised ethnic minorities in Cyprus. The Constitution recognises three 'religious groups' (the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins) and two 'communities' (the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots). Cypriot Roma, despite having different cultural and religious traditions, are considered members of the Turkish Cypriot community under the 1960 Constitution (Article 2.3) – possibly because of their common religion (Islam) and perceived common language. The Roma population of Cyprus is estimated to range between 650 and 1,250 people, amounting to a maximum of 11% of the population⁷ living in government-controlled areas, almost all in Limassol and Paphos. There are also Bulgarian, Romanian and other Balkan Roma living in the RoC, although their number is not officially known. Turkish Cypriots are at the same time a community and a minority in the southern part of Cyprus. The Equality Body in Cyprus has invariably extended protection under the Racial Equality Directive to all of these groups, irrespective of their official denomination.

According to the respondents of the NRCP,⁸ there is no official record of the diverse manifestations of antigypsyism. However, according to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD), Roma in Cyprus face discrimination and stigmatisation and are the object of racist stereotypes, hate speech and racist attacks.⁹ Similarly, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) noted that Roma experience persistent discrimination.¹⁰

No research has been conducted in Cyprus on the prevalence of racist incidents against Roma. It seems that there are not many racist incidents against the Roma and what exists is camouflaged, not mentioned on social networks. In recent years, however, the Cypriot Roma have self-organised and through their association are fighting for their rights. Through their self-organisation, they try to become more visible to the rest of society that does not know about their existence. Roma members of the Cypriot Roma Association said in an interview that they experience racism mainly in the field of employment.¹¹

The RoC first adopted anti-discrimination legislation in 2004 and established the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman) whose responsibilities include the examination of allegations of discrimination. Victims of racism, discrimination or xenophobia can also report to the Office for Combating Discrimination of the Cyprus Police, which is responsible for monitoring the investigation of complaints or reports and for cooperating with police investigators for better handling such incidents and

⁷ Roma Civil Monitor (2018), *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in Cyprus: Focusing on Structural and Horizontal Preconditions for Successful Implementation of the Strategy*, European Union.

⁸ Interview, 23 June 2022.

⁹ UN CERD, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth Periodic Reports of Cyprus*, CERD/C/CYP/CO/23-4, 2 June 2017, paragraphs 16, 18. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cerdccypco23-24-concluding-observations-combined-twenty-third-and>

¹⁰ UN CESCR, *Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Cyprus*, E/C.12/CYO/CO/6, 28 October 2016, paragraph 13. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/ec12cypco6-concluding-observations-sixth-periodic-report-cyprus>

¹¹ Specifically, they stated: "When employers hear that we are Turkish Cypriots Roma (Kurbet), they change their mind and do not employ us". In an interview conducted with families living in isolated areas (the case of Polemidia) in Limassol, it was stated that "Currently, in the settlement of Polemidia, there are 12 residential houses (about 70 people). Not everyone has water and electricity because they do not have a residence certificate from the Turkish Cypriot House Management Service".

for more effective enforcement of the relevant legislation. The office also maintains a registry of incidents that are of a racist nature or have a racist motive.

The MoECSY, following a recommendation from the Anti-Discrimination Authority at the Office of the Commissioner of Administration, proceeded in June 2014 to create the anti-racist policy 'Code of Conduct Against Racism along with a Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents'.¹² In May 2015, a Cyprus-wide conference was held during which the pilot implementation of the code was presented and evaluated reflectively. The evaluation of the pilot implementation of the anti-racism policy, to which the seven pilot schools contributed, generally led to positive results concerning the level of awareness of issues such as racism and discrimination among all members of the school community.¹³ The Code of Conduct is being implemented in all primary and secondary schools, and general and secondary technical and vocational education and training institutions. No records of racist incidents against Roma in the school environment were found. Despite the positive development, there are weaknesses in terms of implementation as the enactment of the code of conduct is not mandatory for all schools in Cyprus. Schools that wish to participate in the Support Network for implementing the anti-racist policy must declare it, through their school account, in the Cypriot Pedagogical Institute (CPI) online registration platform.¹⁴ In the code of conduct, there is a specific reference to antigypsyism as a form of racism and it is described as follows:

*"A distinct type of racist ideology, which, at the same time, is linked to different types of racism. Antigypsyism is a complex social phenomenon that, in its more overt form, is expressed through violence, hatred, exploitation and discrimination against the Roma people. However, it is often expressed through deeper, more hidden and unconscious discrimination against the Roma people. For example, the way some politicians, academics or citizens speak or portray the Roma people may ultimately lead to their segregation, stigmatisation, social aggression and socioeconomic exclusion. Antigypsyism is used as a way to justify and reproduce the exclusion of Roma people, as well as a way to rationalise their supposed inferiority, based on the historical prosecution and negative stereotypes attributed to them."*¹⁵

Although there is a translated booklet in the Turkish language for parents,¹⁶ Roma women stated that "there was no information about this code in the Roma community. While there are various incidents that are never recorded. There are incidents between children (Roma and non-Roma) and between teachers and Roma children".

The actions carried out by the various ministries, government agencies and competent services concern mainstream measures that cover all vulnerable groups of the population.

¹² The Code and Guide were finalised and posted on the MoECSY website on 13 June 2014. On the same day, MoECSY held a press conference where the MoECSY and the Head of the Anti-Discrimination Authority delivered greetings, while the Code and Guide were presented by their authors.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. Available at: https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1574&Itemid=455&lang=el (retrieved 16 July 2022).

¹⁵ The definition of antigypsyism reproduced in the 'Code of Conduct against Racism Guide to Managing and Recording Racist Incidents', p. 13. Available at: <http://naos.risbo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Cyprus-antiracism-code.pdf> (retrieved 20 April 2022).

¹⁶ Information booklet for parents (2017-2018): Greek, English, Russian, Arabic, Turkish, Romanian, Bulgarian. The Turkish version of the booklet is available at:

https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/antiratsistiki/parents_leaflet_turk_28sep2017.pdf (retrieved 16 July 2022).

The implementation of the 'Code of Conduct against Racism – A Guide to the Management and Recording of Racist Incidents' does not bring drastic results in the Roma community. The lack of organised and coordinated actions across all ministries in cooperation with the Roma community does not improve the current situation of the Roma every day in all areas but on the contrary, makes it difficult.

Despite the acknowledgement of antigypsyism in the code of conduct, the NRSF does not include the fight against antigypsyism as a stand-alone nor as a horizontal objective. Instead, the NRSF includes 'safeguarding equality, inclusion and participation as a horizontal objective', under which it addresses discrimination and racism against Roma. The NRSF is interlinked with the 'National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights' (NSPPHR), which has been approved by a decision of the Council of Ministers, dated 2 June 2021. As per the NRSF, with regards to Roma, the NSPPHR includes the Roma living in Cyprus in the target groups, based on the recommendations of international bodies and seeks to combat discrimination and eliminate any obstacles they encounter in the implementation and exercise of human rights.

2.2. Education

Although the measures taken over time have brought significant results, the education for Roma in Cyprus needs to be more attractive. Many Roma children face huge challenges in school because the language of instruction (Greek) is not in their first language (Turkish and Gurbetcha). The fact that there are still Roma students who do not complete their basic education and subsequently cannot find a job rings the bell that more immediate and appropriate measures need to be taken for them. The Covid19 crisis has worsened the situation of the Cypriot Roma. The provision for Roma children with appropriate and satisfactory levels of education will give them the basic knowledge and skills that will enable them to break the vicious cycle of marginalisation and poverty. For this purpose, the continuous evaluation of such levels is required for the education that is provided, in collaboration with the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation.¹⁷

Roma children are grouped in schools with multilingual pupils and specifically with Turkish-speaking pupils. A report on discrimination against Roma from 2012 states that although "Greek language support classes are offered to non-Greek speakers, the state is unable to avoid the school segregation of Turkish-speaking pupils, most of whom are Roma". In addition, the report summarises the main complaints submitted to the equality body over the years as follows: "religious confessions, exemption from religion classes, school segregation and the content and method of education of Roma pupils".¹⁸

The UN CERD has highlighted the low school attendance and high dropout rates of Roma,¹⁹ while the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

¹⁷ The Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation, which belongs to the MoECSY, conducts a literacy survey every year, examining, essentially, the knowledge level of third and sixth graders from primary school and the results are sent to the schools, for similar handling. If the management board of a school requests support from the Ministry, based on the results of the survey, then the Ministry is taking the necessary actions for similar support. Available at: <https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EX-OFFICIO-REPORT-ROMA.pdf> (retrieved 10 June 2022).

¹⁸ Roma Civil Monitor (2018), *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in Cyprus: Focusing on Structural and Horizontal Preconditions for Successful Implementation of the Strategy*, European Union. Available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-cyprus-2017-eprint-fin-2.pdf>

¹⁹ *Ibid*, paragraph 18.

expressed its concerns over the disproportionate number of Roma girls facing difficulties in gaining access to high-quality education.²⁰

It has also been noted that the setting up of two segregated settlements has also had as a consequence the children's school segregation.²¹ 'White flight' phenomena were reported in the past by a school attended by Roma. Most of the Roma pupils attending public schools today are concentrated in one school, the 18th Primary School in Limassol. An old study from 2007 found that Greek Cypriot parents tried to move their children to other schools when there was a high number of migrant or non-Greek Cypriot pupils in their school; if they cannot succeed in moving them away, they instruct them to avoid contact with Roma children, while teachers have openly admitted that they are racist towards the Roma and that they (the teachers) do not believe that the Roma can be integrated.²² They are treated as pupils with special language requirements, in spite of the fact that Cyprus has ratified a number of international conventions on human rights as well as conventions on specific rights in the field of education.

The Cypriot Ministry of Education does not have an official policy against school segregation. The policy of enrolling children on the basis of their residential address is applied rigorously, even if this results in a concentration of large numbers of Roma pupils in the same school. The 2021 country report on non-discrimination²³ prepared by European legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination indicates that the measures adopted by the Government in relation to the pandemic had a disproportionate impact on migrant and Roma children, who were not consistently and adequately supplied with hardware and connectivity in order to be able to follow remote education classes.

As a result of housing segregation, Roma children concentrate in specific schools; however, no figures are available regarding their number in education, because the Roma are seen by the authorities as inseparable from the Turkish Cypriots and no separate data is maintained. Roma children are taught history and religion by a Turkish Cypriot teacher, the content of which is relevant to the Roma history and religion (Islam). An afternoon programme titled 'History-Language-Culture' was offered to Turkish Cypriot and Roma children by the Training Centres of the Ministry of Education in 2016-2017, which included a weekly class with an emphasis on Turkish Cypriot/Roma cultural heritage. The programme was not repeated in the years that followed due to lack of demand.

In December 2020, the Ombudsman's Office, in its capacity as NHRI, published a report following a self-initiated investigation into the situation of the Roma, relying on consultations with the CypRom Association, the competent authorities and an on-site visit to a Roma settlement at the centre of the old city of Limassol. The report identified education as an area where the Roma community encounters most of the problems. The report recorded the absence of adjustment and assistive measures to facilitate school integration, leading to pupils leaving school early. Measures to encourage school attendance that have been in place for years now, such as extra Greek language classes,

²⁰ UN CEDAW, *Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of Cyprus*, CEDAW/C/CYP/CO/8, 25 July 2018, paragraph 34(d). Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawccypco8-concluding-observations-eighth-periodic-report>

²¹ ECRI (2016), *The Fifth Report on Cyprus*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-cyprus/16808b563b>, paragraph 91. See also Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-discrimination*, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination, id., pp. 57, 59.

²² Panayiotopoulos, C. and Nicolaidou, M. (2007), *At a Crossroads of Civilizations: Multicultural Educational Provision in Cyprus Through the Lens of a Case Study*, European Journal of Intercultural Studies, Volume 18, Issue 1, March 2007, p. 69. See also: Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-discrimination*, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination, id., p. 57.

²³ <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/5529-cyprus-country-report-non-discrimination-2021-1-91-mb>

financial support for books, transport, uniforms, stationery, free breakfast and lunch, etc., have not yielded results, as school enrolment remains low and the numbers regarding dropout remain quite high. The report noted that the Roma are facing problems in communicating with the authorities who do not make any special effort to facilitate communication and service them, noting the marked absence of a comprehensive Roma inclusion strategy in all areas of life.²⁴

In the area of education, under the NRSF, the MoECSY aims at effective and equal access to education for all Roma children to be able to participate in all forms and stages of education, with the necessary measures in place that will promote their personal development, without acknowledging segregation to be among the obstacles to access quality education. The MoECSY set two goals and targets as follows: the majority of Cypriot Roma children must complete compulsory education until the age of fifteen or complete a lower secondary education cycle ('gymnasium'), whatever comes first; and, to reduce the gap in upper secondary education or vocational/ technical secondary education.

As stated in the NRSF, in order to achieve these goals, the MoECSY is considering the introduction of a basic programme starting from lower secondary education to address the problem of students at risk of dropping out of school, including Roma students. The programme is funded by the EU's Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP).²⁵

In addition, the MoECSY undertakes under the NRSF to take measures to meet the special needs of Roma students in Cyprus who are enrolled in public schools, such as the employment of a Turkish Cypriot teacher and a translator (Turkish/Greek), the provisions of free meals to children attending the voluntary all-day school, as well as the provision of IT equipment and Internet connection.

Acknowledging that investment in education starts in early childhood, the Social Welfare Services of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, in order to enhance the availability but also affordability of social care programmes for children, especially under the age of three, eight and 12, subsidise NGOs or local authorities for the running of such programmes.

Furthermore, in order to ensure an easy transition between the different levels of education, the MoECSY provides psychological help through psychological assessments and counselling interviews to Roma students enrolled in secondary education, based on the MoECSY's Action Plan to ease the transition between primary and lower-secondary education for all students including Turkish Cypriot Roma.

One of the basic policies systematically promoted by the MoECSY concerns student evaluation in the educational system, which in both pre-primary and primary school, is done through the School Progress Report (SPR)²⁶ that is completed twice a year, at the end of the first (mid-January) and towards the end of the second quarter (beginning of June). What is observed in the pre-primary education assessment is that, while Turkish-speaking children/Roma are taught Turkish, no assessment is made of their performance in Turkish. The Turkish language is not in the evaluation table. There is no other Roma-specific performance/progress assessment form. With this report we can identify areas of strength and areas where improvements may be needed to strengthen student's learning."²⁷

²⁴ NHRI (2020), *Position of the Commissioner of Administration and Human Rights as National Independent Human Rights Authority (NHRI) Regarding the Living Conditions of the Roma Community in Cyprus*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Ενιαίο Σύστημα Αξιολόγησης Μαθητή / Μαθήτριας (ΕΣΑ), Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού, Δεκέμβριος [Unified Student Evaluation System (SES), Ministry of Education and Culture, December]. Available at: <http://enimerosi.moec.gov.cy/archeia/1/ypp9241b> (retrieved 16 July 2022).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Therefore, ensuring access, continuous attendance and better school performance of Roma children in schools (pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education) is the key to their inclusion into society and ensuring, in the future, a better quality of life.

2.3. Employment

The growing proportion of young Roma out of education, employment or training is a worrying sign that the transition from education to employment and other areas is not effective,²⁸ with UN CEDAW expressing particular concern regarding the limited access of Roma women to the labour market.²⁹ Therefore, the improvement of the employment situation of the Roma in Cyprus is one of the main pillars for ensuring their socio-economic inclusion.³⁰

Improving the employment of Roma in Cyprus is planned via mainstream available services for the entire population of vulnerable groups. The NRSF includes that “all job seekers, including Cypriot Roma, can register as unemployed at the regional and local offices of the Public Employment Service (PES) where employment services are offered” and that PES officers assist them in finding work, through job search and placement services. In addition, the NRSF indicates that in the case of individuals belonging to vulnerable groups of unemployed, specialised services of individualised approach and guidance are provided through the implementation of an individual action plan.

“Many from our community are illiterate, some went until first or second-grade class of elementary school, others never went to school, which does not help the whole situation, with the issue of employment.” (Roma interviewee)

This is particularly problematic, as due to the Covid19 crisis, registration and card renewal are only done online. In such a case, Cypriot Roma people need to seek help for the online registration, and, when necessary, directly communicate with authorities.

In the NRSF, employment authorities plan to train and retrain unemployed and low-paid workers, with particular emphasis on beneficiaries of social benefits. Also, by the decision of the Council of Ministers, the current successful plans for subsidising the employment of the unemployed, people with disabilities, chronic patients and young people up to 29 years old were renewed. The Welfare Benefit Management Service implements mechanisms for activating the beneficiaries of the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) for those who are able to work. Beneficiaries are informed of their obligation to participate in special training and community service programmes and to accept any job offered to them.

What can be, however, problematic, is that Roma do not know Greek well and this may limit the outreach and effectiveness of the planned measures. It is important to have meetings with relevant officials in the presence of a Turkologist (translator) to keep them informed of these efforts. In this way, the young Roma will not depend on the GMI for their livelihood but after getting the necessary training they will be able to find a job. Also, it would be important for each ministry to have competent officials who served all vulnerable population groups, including the Roma.

²⁸ Σοφοκλέους, In: Πολιτική Ένταξη των Ρομά: Ανάγκη βελτίωσης της πρόσβασης στην εκπαίδευση και στην απασχόληση [Sophocles, In: Political Integration of Roma: Need to improve access to education and employment]. Available at: <https://www.sofokleousin.gr/entaksi-ton-roma-anagki-veltiosis-tis-prosvasis-stin-ekpaideysi-k> (retrieved 10 June 10 2022).

²⁹ *Ibid*, paragraph 36 (e).

³⁰ Cyprus National Roma Strategic Framework 2021-2030. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu-country/cyprus_en (Retrieved June 5, 2022).

2.4. Healthcare

According to the Cypriot legislation, access to state medical services and institutions is provided to everyone without exception. Free or reduced health care fees are provided to certain groups of the population, based on criteria such as family income, employment status and housing status. The health care rights of European citizens are based on EU law, while asylum seekers and recognised refugees are treated as Cypriots and are therefore entitled to health care benefits. In exceptional cases, the Minister of Health approves the provision of free medical care services to persons residing illegally in Cyprus, based on the special circumstances of each case, especially when pregnant women or children are involved.

“Many Roma do not know about the GESY [the General Health System] and are not registered in the GESY. When they need care, they go to first aid. Also, communication, mainly with doctors and nurses, is very difficult because the Roma do not know Greek very well to understand what is happening to them.” (Roma interviewee)

“Many Roma go to the occupied territories when they have something serious about their health and need treatment or surgery. A key problem is the lack of communication and secondly the lack of trust in the doctors of the public hospitals.” (Another Roma interviewee)

When it comes to the access of Roma to public health services, various issues have been identified, such as the lack of information and guidance to register in the GESY in order to enjoy the medical care that is available to the rest of Cypriot citizens. This problem is interrelated with the marginalisation of the Roma community, especially those of its members who live in remote areas and is aggravated by the absence of any specialised and targeted measures to inform them about the GESY and guide them to enrol in it. Another key obstacle in the issue of Roma accessibility to health services is their communication problem with the competent officials and medical or paramedical staff, to which they either prefer to refer to doctors and hospitals in the occupied areas or, even worse, to remain without medical attention. It has not yet been established that there has been any targeted information to the community, in a language they understand, in relation to the decrees or the precautions they must take in the context of limiting the spread of Covid19.³¹

Unfortunately, in the NRSF, there are no detailed references to certain measures targeting Roma health, well-being and living conditions issues. It is not known if there is a relevant provision for taking sanitary measures in the places where Roma live and especially in settlements that are far from the city centre, in a degraded and isolated area. It is also not known if there is a systematic cooperation of the Ministry of Health with other services and public bodies in order to systematically check the living conditions of Roma.

In addition, the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health (MoH)³² under the Department of Medical Services and Public Health Services, includes under the first objective concerning “the promotion and preservation of public health/prevention of diseases and improvement of the quality of life of citizens” four actions. One of them concerns the control and improvement of the health profile of vulnerable groups. There is

³¹ Ex Officio Report of Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights as National Independent Human Rights Authority (NHRI) Regarding the Living Conditions of the Roma Community in Cyprus, 2020.

³² Ministry of Health, Strategic Plan 2020-2022. Available at: [https://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/moh.nsf/E8765DF6DF924BDCC2257864003AC43F/\\$file/27.08.19%20Strategic%20Plan%202020-2022%20MoH%20tota%20rev%20sent.pdf](https://www.moh.gov.cy/moh/moh.nsf/E8765DF6DF924BDCC2257864003AC43F/$file/27.08.19%20Strategic%20Plan%202020-2022%20MoH%20tota%20rev%20sent.pdf) (retrieved 10 July 2022).

no separate mention of Roma, but of persons with disabilities, victims of violence and inequality, dependent persons, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, prisoners, etc.

The second action concerns the Promotion of Health and Improvement of the Population's Accessibility to Health Services. Health promotion for children and adolescents, especially of school age, is done through the School Medicine Service. The goal of the School Medicine Service,³³ which includes health visitors and doctors (paediatricians, general practitioners) and covers all public schools (331 primary, 16 special, 14 technical and 114 secondary), is to improve the level of health (physical, spiritual, mental and social), to prevent and promote a healthy way of life for school-aged children. Roma children attending the public schools of the Republic of Cyprus also benefit from these actions.

No consistent prevention programmes are developed, nor have special health systems been organised, such as the regular operation of mobile health and mental health units to provide health services, where the Roma live. The health system of the region is not prepared for cross-cultural health service provision, as required for the Roma, and is not staffed with the necessary health mediators. Positive results are observed in the vaccination of children. As mentioned above, health visitors also provide important help. Roma health issues need to be addressed as they concern a vulnerable group of the population with systematic prevention programmes, stable over time, with an emphasis on care in the perinatal period, infant health, childhood, mental health problems and on women. There was a dearth of data when it comes to assessing mortality and life expectancy among the Roma, the prevalence of major infectious and chronic diseases, healthy lifestyles and related behaviours.

A positive acknowledgement of the NRSF is that further arrangements should be made so that Roma are better informed about how to access medical care and how to register in the GESY.

2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

In Cyprus, Roma live either in properties belonging originally to Turkish Cypriots who were forcibly moved to the northern areas of Cyprus (controlled by Turkey since the Turkish invasion in 1974) and now administered by the RoC Government or in prefabricated houses or container-like units in specially designated areas in remote Roma segregated settlements of extraordinary filth and poverty (in Paphos and in Limassol). Over the last two decades, a large number of Roma living in the northern areas of the country (especially in Morphou and Famagusta) returned to their initial local neighbourhoods but were not positively accepted by the local majority, who treated them with hostility because they did not wish to live near Roma. In 2003, to satisfy the local non-Roma inhabitants, the authorities then relocated the Roma to isolated areas, in two settlements of prefabricated houses,³⁴ where they live in very poor conditions.³⁵ The ECRI opposed the policy of constructing prefabricated housing units for Cypriot Roma in isolated areas outside Limassol and Paphos and regrets that these two housing units have not yet been demolished. According to the ECRI, this relocation amounted to segregation and called upon the authorities to close down the settlements and relocate Cypriot Roma to areas

³³ School Medical Service. Available at:

[https://www.moh.gov.cy/Moh/MOH.nsf/All/9C00CE29ACE114EDC225786C006E1722/\\$file/%CE%A3%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%20%CE%A5%CF%80%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%B1.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.moh.gov.cy/Moh/MOH.nsf/All/9C00CE29ACE114EDC225786C006E1722/$file/%CE%A3%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%20%CE%A5%CF%80%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%B1.pdf?OpenElement) (Retrieved July 20, 2022).

³⁴ Roma Civil Monitor (2019), *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in Cyprus: Assessing the Progress in Four Key Policy Areas of the Strategy*, European Union. Available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rmc-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-cyprus-2018-eprint-fin.pdf> (retrieved 10 July 2022).

³⁵ Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-Discrimination*, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination, pp 62-63.

where they can mix and integrate with the rest of society.³⁶ Similar concerns were raised by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Cyprus in its 2003 report.³⁷ In its 2013 factsheet on Roma in Cyprus, the European Commission noted that these two settlements with prefabricated houses were located in remote areas and there was a risk they would promote segregation.³⁸

The residents who live in the formerly Turkish-Cypriot houses, maintained by the state-run Turkish-Cypriot property management service, pay a very small amount of rent every month to the Government and will do so until their initial owners, currently living in the Turkish-occupied areas of the country, return to reclaim the properties. Their rent was increased in 2017 as part of a plan by the Interior Minister to amend outdated procedures and introduce fairer distribution of Turkish-Cypriot assets to the beneficiaries.³⁹

A telling example stems from an interview with a Roma woman who mentioned that some houses still lack basic necessities (especially in the Polemidia area), such as electricity and water supply as well as basic hygiene. Most Roma houses in the Agios Antonios area are damaged. According to her, she and others have contacted the relevant agency, but due to the long delay, they were forced to repair their homes many times by themselves to avoid any accidents and injuries. Over the past few years, there have been efforts to regenerate the old Turkish-Cypriot quarter of Limassol and some of the old houses were repaired but the pace of repairs is slow, and the condition of the houses remains substandard and often unfit for human habitation.⁴⁰

According to the position of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights⁴¹ as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) regarding the living conditions of the Roma community in Cyprus, it was stated that the Turkish Cypriot Property Management Service (PMS) has the authority to deal with the needs of refugees, displaced or other beneficiaries, such as the Roma, with their temporary disposition, while at the same time ensuring that the rights of TC (Turkish Cypriot) owners are not violated.⁴² The PMS examines Roma applications for housing, as part of the wider Turkish-Cypriot housing policy. Their responsibility is limited to the 'management' of the Turkish Cypriots and does not cover the housing of all Roma.⁴³

The main problem identified by the PMS is that, often, many Roma leave their homes on "personal contracts" or transfer them to other families, without the involvement or information of the PMS. Once or twice a year, the PMS checks and records who lives in the housing provided to the Roma or a specific place of housing, and, after it is assessed that the conditions are met, then an agreement is concluded and a relevant certificate of use

³⁶ ECRI (2016), *The Fifth Report on Cyprus*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-cyprus/16808b563b> (retrieved 19 July 2022).

³⁷ Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-discrimination*, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination, p. 63

³⁸ On file with the author. The 2017 factsheet merely states that the implementation of these housing initiatives should be closely monitored. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/factsheet_2.pdf

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-discrimination*, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination.

⁴¹ Placement of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights as the National Independent Human Rights Authority (NHRI) regarding the living conditions of the Roma community in Cyprus. Available at: <https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EX-OFFICIO-REPORT-ROMA.pdf> (retrieved 10 June 2022).

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ According to the Management Service's data, about 66 Roma families live in the Limassol District, ten of them live in the settlement of prefabricated housing units in Polemidia. The Service manages approximately 2,000 Turkish-Cypriot properties, some of which have been ceded to Roma families.

of the property is handed to the family. It was stressed, however, that the PMS cannot proceed with repairs if there are no contracts (for the use of the property).⁴⁴ It is also stated that the PMS does not have direct contact with the Social Welfare Services (SWS) in case of various housing problems of the Roma.

The previous NRSI mentions two measures aiming to close the gap between Roma and the rest of the society: a) Repairs/improvements to 20 Turkish-Cypriot houses inhabited by Cypriot Roma in the Limassol district and to 25 Turkish-Cypriot houses in the Paphos district; b) Creation of two housing projects for Cypriot Roma, one in Limassol and the other in Paphos, consisting of 16 and 24 prefabricated housing units respectively, equipped with all basic amenities such as water (drinking water incl.) and electricity supply, solar water heaters, sewage system, etc.

Despite the two plans made specifically for the Cypriot Roma, the second option was not the most appropriate. On one hand, the separation of Roma families from each other and on the other hand 'moving' them into a settlement in a remote area, in containers, has a negative impact on their inclusion into the wider society. It has a negative impact mainly on women and children who are isolated and do not have frequent contact with other Roma and non-Roma. Cypriot Roma feel isolated, without access to basic services and transportation. Also, the condition of the houses and the poor state of repair bring various health problems to the Roma residents. All Roma living at Polemdia settlement are exposed to environmental health threats.

Another key issue is the issue of forced evictions⁴⁵ that never stopped. Forced evictions are frequently carried out by governments without meeting any of the requirements. Several times, competent officials from the Turkish Cypriot Properties Management Service in Limassol visited Roma families at their houses, and 'threatened'/warned them that they would be kicked out of the house. Terrified Roma are asking for help from relatives, schools, and the CypRom Association. The last case (mentioned by a Roma woman, 30 years old) happened in early July 2022, during the drafting of this report, when a competent official visited a Roma house and with harsh and racist words informed the family that the MoI will evict them from the house soon. It is worth mentioning that the Roma children attend the summer school, and their mother is six months pregnant. Women and children suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced evictions.

The new NRSF, regarding the improvement of the housing conditions of the Roma population in Cyprus, does not deal with any issues such as segregation, forced evictions and poor living conditions of Roma; it only talks about the possibility of social housing under the GMI, provided to those in need, including Cypriot Roma. The NRSF does not provide any description of the current Roma situation or solutions to the problems reported by the ECRI or the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights of Cyprus (Ombudsman).⁴⁶ In addition, the new NRSF reveals a lack of awareness and/or no intention on the part of the RoC to tackle any of the critical housing issues. Also, Section 3.4 in the NRSF is not so relevant to housing issues but to social support (mostly related to the GMI scheme etc.).

⁴⁴ Ex-officio Report of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights as the National Independent Human Rights Authority (NHRI) regarding the living conditions of the Roma community in Cyprus. Available at: <https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EX-OFFICIO-REPORT-ROMA.pdf> (retrieved 10 June 2022).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53 and the Ombudsman 2020 Ex Officio Report Regarding the Living Conditions of the Roma Community in Cyprus. Available at: https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Cyprus_RomaCommunity_Summary.pdf

2.6. Social protection

According to the new NRSF, the RoC is taking measures both for the social protection of vulnerable groups including Roma and for the fight against poverty. Consequently, the NRSF invests a lot in the GMI. Specifically, Cyprus pledged to introduce and implement specific programmes for Roma. In 2014, it introduced the GMI,⁴⁷ which provides benefits such as housing, care and emergency and disability needs. Roma benefit as well from the GMI scheme.

However, not all Roma living in RoC benefited from the GMI. Due to low literacy levels and language barriers for Roma, applicants may not have all the documentation needed to prove habitual residency and may face difficulties responding to authorities. They also may not have proof of residence if they are living with their extended family. Roma often do not trust authorities, sometimes due to information having been used against them in the past.

As stated in the NRSF, there is no fixed duration for the GMI provision. Perhaps a key issue delaying the examination of the application is the understaffing of the SWS by competent officials. During the time after you apply, those who apply, including the Roma, can be helped by applying for the emergency allowance.⁴⁸

“There is no safety net for Roma people waiting on a decision with regard to the GMI. People awaiting a decision on GMI cannot access easily the Supplementary Welfare Allowance. Sometimes they can get help but the next month they tell you that they do not have any more money to help you and there are families who wait for this help.” (Roma respondent, woman)

The coverage of the social welfare needs of the Roma population is limited to the benefit policy implemented by the state. The degree of responsiveness of these benefits to the needs of the Roma remains unknown.

2.7. Social services

First of all, it should be mentioned that in the NRSF, both the issue of social protection, social services, and child protection are classified in the fourth chapter titled ‘Sectoral objectives’, in Section 4.4, under the title ‘Social Support’ without however, fully distinguishing these issues. Also, as we see, their policies and actions do not exclusively concern the Roma community, but all RoC citizens. An important measure implemented by the RoC is the provision of support to the Bicomunal Multipurpose Centre of the Municipality of Limassol. The Centre mainly provides social and support services to both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, including the Roma of Cyprus, living in Limassol. The centre receives funding for its operating expenses through the Grants programme in Aid of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

In addition, structures have been developed to deal with poverty and social exclusion and social solidarity, such as metropolises, social grocery stores of the municipalities, and nongovernmental organisations such as KEPAKY and CYPROM, Rotary Club, etc. These structures are addressed not only to Roma but also to other vulnerable population groups in Cyprus, who need food aid or face other urgent needs (medicines, baby milk, etc.).

⁴⁷ GMI requires five years of residence in the public-controlled part of Cyprus prior to any application.

⁴⁸ Offsite news, *‘Εκτακτο επίδομα/Ακρίβεια: Δείτε ποιοι το δικαιούνται - Τα ποσά* [Extraordinary allowance/Accuracy: See who is entitled to it - The amounts]. Available at: <https://www.offsite.com.cy/eidiseis/oikonomia/ektakto-epidomaakribia-deite-poioidikaioyntai-ta-posita> (retrieved 20 July 2022)

As per the NRCP respondents,⁴⁹ the NRSF is closely linked with the National Plan for Child Guarantee. A project 'Baby Dowry'⁵⁰ has been in implementation from 1 January 2018 (with retroactive effect starting September 2017) and will run until the end of 2023. The project has been included in the proposed projects to be funded from the new EU programming period 2021–2027. The beneficiaries of this project are families receiving GMI or public assistance, as well as families facing serious financial problems. The package includes basic consumer goods such as equipment, linen, baby diapers, personal hygiene and baby care items.⁵¹

2.8. Child protection

There are no specific provisions and actions related to Roma children protection in Cyprus and nothing further is introduced in the NRSF. All the actions taken by the SWS are related to all citizens living in the RoC. The NRSF gives explicit information regarding this issue, however, the legislation is not targeting Roma.

There is a lack of data on reported cases of sexual abuse, trafficking, early marriages, and juvenile justice regarding Roma children. What is observed in Roma settlements and during the interviews with Roma representatives is that mainly girls do not complete their compulsory education (until 15 years old) either because they become pregnant, because some Roma parents are very protective, or they keep their Roma tradition – the practice of keeping a girl out of school in order to preserve her virginity. According to Roma women representatives, "there are cases of early marriages". Early marriages expose girls to the dangers of early pregnancy and childbirth, as well as a high risk of domestic violence. Some other Roma families keep the girl at home to help with housework, or because they may face discrimination, harassment and/or bullying from their colleagues at school.

Cyprus has made significant efforts to combat human being trafficking. The national action plan against trafficking set a framework for combatting trafficking and strengthening identification, prevention and training. An office for combatting trafficking had been established.

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

The new NRSF does not include a separate section on Roma arts, culture and history. However, it acknowledges that, regarding measures to promote awareness about Roma cultures, language and history that include the memory of the Roma Holocaust and reconciliation processes in society, the MoECSY is pursuing awareness raising campaigns for students concerning the Roma Holocaust through the history curriculum as well as through organising activities in Cyprus to celebrate the International Roma Day. It also acknowledges that the MoECSY promotes the organisation of a course titled 'History-Language-Culture', specially designed for Roma children.

⁴⁹ Interview held on 23 June 2022.

⁵⁰ The 'Baby Dowry' Project, which has a budget of 36 million EUR, is co-financed by Cyprus and the EU through the European Aid Fund for the Poor, in the framework of the Cyprus Operational Programme for 'Food or/and Basic Material and Subscription', for the period 2014-2020.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

3. EXPECTED EFFECTIVENESS

3.1. Coherence with related domestic and European policies

The NRSF explicitly links its implementation with the Social Policy Strategy 2021-2027, which provides for the horizontal social policy of the RoC. Moreover, it is closely linked to the National Plan for Child Guarantee.⁵²

3.2. Responsibility for NRSF coordination and monitoring

The SWS of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, as the NRCP, is responsible for NRSF coordination and monitoring. The new NRSF does not talk about specific resources, capacity or extended functions of the NRCP, suggested by the Council Recommendation.

3.3. Quality of the plan

The NRSF will be updated every five years to accommodate any new issues that will emerge or sooner if necessary. The NRSF leaves open the possibility of reviewing and updating the strategy even before the five-year period they have set when and if it will be a necessity to accommodate any new issues that will emerge.

The objectives and measures of the NRSF are relevant but not very realistic. In order to be realistic and more effective, specific approach(es) to each thematic objective should be taken into account while also consulting with the Roma. The active participation of Roma is almost absent in the policy measures designed for their inclusion.

In NRSF, under each thematic area, there is a reference to their aims and objectives. However, in the field of health and housing, objectives and measures are not mentioned explicitly. As regards a human-rights approach, some anti-discrimination and antigypsyism measures in relation to particular themes (e.g education) are set in the NRSF, but these are insufficient and much more work is still needed.

Also, there is no concrete information about the actions and who are the responsible and contributing bodies. Another important issue is that there is no transparency from other stakeholders and Roma civil society regarding the drafting process of the NRSF. In addition, the NRCP does not list the budgets needed for each action nor the financial responsibility for executing the actions.

The NRCP does not include any milestones by which the individual measures or partial steps required to implement measures are to be carried out. It is yet to be seen if specific targets will be set by the Technical Committee that has been established.

3.4. Funding

There is no clear funding allocation as of yet, whereas the main source of funding is the national budget and the co-funding from EU sources.⁵³

It is not clear if there are sufficient financial resources for the implementation of all actions/measures for Roma inclusion and a clear budget to ensure the implementation of each action, including at the regional and local levels.

3.5. Monitoring and evaluation

The NRSF foresees the establishment of a special committee for "better monitoring and governance of the objectives contained in the Cyprus National Roma Strategic

⁵² Interview held on 23 June 2022.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Framework". It should include representatives of the relevant ministries or services and NGOs. The NRCP has confirmed to the authors of this report that the committee has been established.⁵⁴ However no additional information on this new body is publicly available.

It is worth noting that the NRSF does not make any reference to the evaluation framework. At the moment, specific indicators and targets have not yet been set but should be established in the future.⁵⁵

3.6. Assessment of the expected effectiveness and sustainability

The new NRSF is a rather descriptive document and provides little vision of the desired improvement and the specific steps towards this improvement. It describes the policies/actions/interventions that are made mainly for the general population, in which the Roma are included, and in some cases (mainly in the field of education) the most targeted actions concern the social integration of the Roma. An integrated institutional and regulatory framework capable of ensuring the effective integration of Roma in all areas of life is not presented.

A basic condition for the progress of the strategy will be the substantial participation of the Cypriot Roma, through representatives, mediators and experts, at all stages, i.e., planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of measures, actions and policies related to dealing with their needs. Responders from the NRCP have already indicated that the Roma will also be invited to their next meetings.

In order to achieve the goals and objectives set up in the NRSF, each individual action should include clear a) sectoral objectives, b) responsibilities, c) implementation schedule and d) provision of sufficient resources. Critical to the effective implementation of the objectives is the utilisation of the portfolio of indicators presented by the FRA, which will help measure and monitor progress.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ The evaluation should be based on the portfolio of indicators that has been developed by the EU's Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the national contact points in the framework of the EU Roma Working Party. The overall aim of this portfolio of indicators is to monitor progress against the objectives of the EU Roma Strategic framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH THE EU ROMA STRATEGY

4.1. Reflecting diversity among Roma

The NRSF emphasises that the data the 2021 census is expected to produce will further contribute to the understanding of the situation of Cypriot Roma and as such respond more effectively to any issues and challenges that may arise regarding the Cyprus Roma population. But the NRSF does not especially consider the situation and needs of diverse vulnerable groups among Roma, such as women, the elderly, youth or others. The NRSF does not mention gender equality, but only discusses children in relation to childcare and child support. As regards investing in children, the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare undertook the preparation of the National Child Guarantee Action Plan, which should be submitted to the EU by March 2022.

Regarding gender equality in the Roma community, no specific studies and research have been done. Nevertheless, interviews with Roma and non-Roma revealed that men in the Roma community have a leading role and that women are still marginalised and limited by traditional gender roles and position. The shared view is that a women's place is at home, taking care of her children and husband. Therefore, Roma women are usually housewives and are not employed.

"Unlike Cypriot Roma women, we see that other Roma women (immigrants mainly from Bulgaria and Romania) are working in various places such as bakeries, supermarkets, etc." (CypRom representative)

Some Roma youth drop out of school because of language barriers, discrimination or because they are forced by their parents to stay home to help them at home/work. In such cases, many young Roma resort to criminal activities such as theft, burglary, and drug dealing to make a living, since they cannot find a job. Few young Roma manages to finish school and get a job. As stated in a report on discrimination in Cyprus:

"There are no special conditions set by law for older and/or younger workers to promote their vocational integration. Law no. 58(I)/2004 transposing the Employment Equality Directive provides that differential treatment – in the form of special conditions for access to employment and vocational training, employment and occupation, including dismissal and remuneration conditions, for young and old persons to promote their vocational integration or ensure their protection – shall not constitute discrimination. However, no measures or special conditions are actually provided by this law or by any other law or regulation."⁵⁶

There is a lack of information regarding the situation and needs of older Roma people in Cyprus. Based on the authors' observations and interviews with Roma, most Roma older people are recipients of the GMI.

There is a lack of information regarding Roma LGTBI. Due to the deeply embedded cultural and religious traditions governing sexuality still observed among the various, different Romani communities, the position of people of minority sexual orientation(s) is particularly challenging and fragile.⁵⁷ In some traditional Romani communities, sexuality and sexual

⁵⁶ Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-discrimination*, European Network of Legal Experts in Gender Equality and Non-discrimination.

⁵⁷ José-Manuel Fresno, J., Kolev, D. & Stefan Meyer (2020), *Considering the Diversity of the Roma Population in a Post-2020 EU-initiative for Roma Equality and Inclusion*, European Union. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/post2020_eu_roma_in_diversity.pdf

orientation are still taboos. As a result, some Romani LGBTI people resort to suppressing this aspect of their identity and personality.⁵⁸

There are no studies on Roma people with disabilities. What is observed is that no separate measures are taken for Roma people with disabilities.

The issue of diversity is very crucial and thus Roma inclusion policy initiatives need to take account of the needs and circumstances of all Roma (women, men, young, children). It is very important to combat all forms of discrimination and fight violence (and domestic violence) against women and children, trafficking in human beings, underage and forced marriages, and begging involving children.

4.2. Combining mainstream and targeted approaches

The new NRSF refers to mainstream policy measures beneficial to the Cypriot Roma, as well as targeted goals specifically designed for Cypriot Roma, addressing the socio-economic status and their living conditions. Through its goals and objectives, the NRSF aims to ensure a comprehensive approach founded on the interaction of measures and interventions in different areas. Such an approach requires appropriate coordination across various bodies and authorities. This goal is promoted by the SWS's acting in their role as the NRCP.

Overall, the strategy, even though it is based on a mainstream policy, brings positive results to a certain extent (mainly in the field of education), and implements many actions (some targeting only the Roma) for Roma. In no case do the policies, actions and interventions deprive the Roma of their rights to equality.

It should be noted however, that if targeted measures had been implemented up to now, and targeted actions are being taken in all sectors by using EU funds specifically for the Roma, there would have been better results. Also, more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives implemented for the Roma in all sectors would contribute to better effectiveness.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Compared to the previous NRIS, the new NRSF seems to be much better elaborated and more explicitly articulating measures for Roma and other vulnerable groups living in the RoC. However, many weaknesses remain, including the lack of systematic monitoring of the situation and needs of Roma, missed opportunities to systematically use the available EU funds for the benefit of the Roma communities and to establish a dialogue with Roma representatives and involve them in the policymaking of various ministries.

If we look at the social exclusion of all vulnerable groups and in particular of Roma communities, it is clear that these are not individual but systemic failures, and therefore the central Government and local authorities must approach the problem in terms of changing structural frameworks and not to focus and blame individual people. A holistic approach should be followed in dealing with the issues concerning the Roma, for the establishment of communication channels and cooperation between all competent services and targeted populations to involve them in the making and implementation of measures aimed at their social inclusion.

Recommendations to national authorities

1. It would also be particularly useful to map the situation of Roma, their specific needs and challenges and their access to goods and services. Such information is necessary for the adoption of targeted and more effective measures aimed at improving the situation in housing, education, social support and other fields.
2. Public policies aimed at Roma equality and inclusion should be a matter of open public consultation.
3. Participation mechanisms for regular meetings of Roma representatives with state officials and the NRCP. Initiation of constructive dialogue (with the presence of a translator) to find solutions. These meetings need to be documented and minutes published on official websites, capturing the commitments of state authorities.
4. The National Platform for Roma⁵⁹ should be restored as it would provide an opportunity for the central Government, local authorities, stakeholders, NGOs and experts to come into contact and have a constructive dialogue with Roma in order to find solutions to their problems with them and for them.
5. The problem of residential segregation should be tackled, as this is a cause of many other problems, such as education, poverty, lack of access to available services and others. Taking into account the small number of people living in segregated settlements, their relocation is a realistic solution.
6. Actions and campaigns to prevent and combat racism, hate speech and discrimination against the Roma are needed
7. Promoting the participation of the Roma community and strengthening their position in local political systems and social events is essential. Fostering the participation of young Roma (women and men) is necessary for their voices to be heard. Cypriot Roma should work to strengthen their presence in the participatory

⁵⁹ The Social Welfare Services secured co-financing in May 2016 through the European Programme 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship' 2014-2020 of the European Union for the implementation of a project concerning the establishment and operation of the 'Cyprus National Platform for Roma'. The co-financing provided covers a period of 12 months and amounts to 95% of the total cost of the project, which is 26,526 EUR and the remaining 5% of the cost is covered by national resources. More information can be found at: <http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/All/C1AFABBCD79188BEC2257FEF003BC41D?OpenDocument> (retrieved 17 June 2022).

actions that take place in spaces of active citizenship, exchange experiences and contribute to building a more cohesive, just society.

Recommendations to local authorities

8. Active participation of the municipalities is necessary, as the decisions affecting the Roma and their integration into non-Roma societies are taken also at the local level. Effective communication with the Roma, so that they participate in any initiatives that concern them and are not just passive recipients, will bring better results for their inclusion.
9. Municipalities (mainly in Limassol and in Paphos) could explore alternative ways of communication and information to get closer to the Roma community. A good step is the most frequent communication with the Roma organisation CYPROM and constructive dialogues aimed at finding solutions to their various problems.

Recommendations to European institutions

10. The FRA should support Cyprus in the collection of equality data for Roma and the set-up of "S-P-O" (structural-process-outcome) indicators for Roma under the NRSF.

REFERENCES

List of interviews

Online interview with two officials from the NRCP, 23-24 June 2022.

Face-to-face interview with six Roma (four women and two men), 2-15 July 2022.

Face-to-face interview with a teacher working at the 18th Kindergarten of Saint Anthonios in Limassol, 15 July 2022.

Key policy documents and reports

Cyprus National Reform Programme 2021. Available at:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/cyprus_nrp_2021_en.pdf

Cyprus National Roma Strategic Framework 2021-2030. Available at:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu-country/cyprus_en

Demetriou, C. (2021), *Cyprus Country Report Non-Discrimination*, European Union. Available at: <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/5529-cyprus-country-report-non-discrimination-2021-1-91-mb>

ECRI (2019), *Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Cyprus Subject to Interim Follow-up*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/interim-follow-up-conclusions-on-cyprus-5th-monitoring-cycle-/168094ce05>

ECRI (2016), *Report on Cyprus (Fifth Monitoring Cycle)*. Available at:
<https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-cyprus/16808b563b>

ECRI (2011), *Report on Cyprus (Fourth Monitoring Cycle)*. Available at:
<https://www.refworld.org/docid/513dc5492.html>

Ex Officio Report of Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights as National Independent Human Rights Authority (NHRI) regarding the Living Conditions of the Roma Community in Cyprus, 2020.

OSCE (2009), *Human Rights of Roma Population in Republic of Cyprus Controlled Areas*. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/f/4/39442.pdf>

Roma Civil Monitor (2018), *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in Cyprus: Focusing on Structural and Horizontal Preconditions for Successful Implementation of the Strategy*, European Union. Available at:

<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-cyprus-2017-eprint-fin-2.pdf>

Roma Civil Monitor (2019), *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in Cyprus: Assessing the Progress in Four Key Policy Areas of the Strategy*, European Union. Available at:

<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-cyprus-2018-eprint-fin.pdf>

Roma Civil Monitor (2020), *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Cyprus: Identifying Blind Spots in Roma Inclusion Policy*, European Union. Available at:

<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-3-cyprus-2019-eprint-fin.pdf>

UN CEDAW, *Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of Cyprus*, CEDAW/C/CYP/CO/8, 25 July 2018. Available at:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawccypco8-concluding-observations-eighth-periodic-report>

UN CERD, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth Periodic Reports of Cyprus*, CERD/C/CYP/CO/23-4, 2 June 2017. Available at:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cerdccypco23-24-concluding-observations-combined-twenty-third-and>

UN CESCR, *Concluding Observations on the Sixth Periodic Report of Cyprus*, E/C.12/CYO/CO/6, 28 October 2016. Available at:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/ec12cypco6-concluding-observations-sixth-periodic-report-cyprus>

ANNEX: LIST OF PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS

Note: The NRSF does not set out any targets. Nevertheless, in the interview with the NRCP on 23 June 2022 it was reported that targets might be developed and adopted in the future.

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	Minor problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Prejudice against Roma	Minor problems	Irrelevant	Present by insufficient	Absent
Hate crimes against Roma	Minor problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Hate speech towards and against Roma (online and offline)	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Weak effectiveness of protection from discrimination	Minor problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Segregation in education, housing, or provision of public services	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Forced evictions and demolitions leading to homelessness, inadequate housing, and social exclusion	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Statelessness, missing ID documents	Minor problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Misconduct and discriminatory behaviour by police (under-policing/under-policing)	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent

Barriers to <i>de facto</i> exercise of EU right to free movement	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
---	------------	------------	--------	--------

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	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Absent
Lower quality of pre-school education and ECEC services for Roma	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
High drop-out rate before completion of primary education	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Absent
Early leaving from secondary education	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Absent
Secondary education/vocational training disconnected from labour market needs	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Misplacement of Roma pupils into special education	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Education segregation of Roma pupils	Significant problems	N/a	Absent	Absent
Increased selectivity of the educational system resulting in concentration of Roma or other disadvantaged pupils in educational facilities of lower quality	Minor problems	N/a	Absent	Absent
Limited access to second-chance education, adult education, and lifelong learning	Significant problems	N/a	Present but insufficient	Absent

Limited access to and support for online and distance learning if education and training institutions close, as occurred during the coronavirus pandemic	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Low level of digital skills and competences and limited opportunities for their development among pupils	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Low level of digital skills and competences and limited opportunities for their development among adults	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent

Employment

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Poor access to or low effectiveness of public employment services	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Poor access to (re-) training, lifelong learning and skills development	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Discrimination on the labour market by employers	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Risk for Roma women and girls from disadvantaged areas of being subjected to trafficking and forced prostitution	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Primary labour market opportunities	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent

substituted by public work				
Barriers and disincentives to employment (such as indebtedness, low income from work compared to social income)	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Lack of activation measures, employment support	Minor problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent

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)	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Poor supply/availability of healthcare services (including lack of means to cover out-of-pocket health costs)	Minor problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Limited access to emergency care	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Limited access to primary care	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Limited access to prenatal and postnatal care	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Limited access to health-related information	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent

Poor access to preventive care (vaccination, check-ups, screenings, awareness-raising about healthy lifestyles)	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Poor access to sexual/reproductive healthcare and family planning services	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Specific barriers to better healthcare of vulnerable groups such as elderly Roma people, Roma with disabilities, LGBTI and others	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Discrimination/ antigypsyism in healthcare (e.g., segregated services, forced sterilisation)	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient,	Absent
Unrecognised historical injustices, such as forced sterilisation	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Inequalities in measures for combating and preventing potential outbreaks of diseases in marginalised or remote localities	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent

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	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Lack of access to drinking water	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent

Lack of access to sanitation	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed	Present but insufficient	Absent
Lack of access to electricity	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed	Present but insufficient	Absent
Limited or absent public waste collection	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed	Present but insufficient	Absent
Restricted heating capability (families unable to heat all rooms/all times when necessary) or solid waste used for heating	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed	Present but insufficient	Absent
Lack of security of tenure (legal titles are not clear and secure)	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Lacking or limited access to social housing	N/a	N/a	Absent	Absent
Overcrowding (available space/room for families)	Significant problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed	Present but insufficient	Absent
Housing-related indebtedness at levels which may cause eviction	Irrelevant	N/a	Absent	Absent
Housing in segregated settlements/ neighbourhoods	Critical problems	Not mentioned	Absent	Absent
Housing in informal or illegal settlements/ neighbourhoods	Minor problems	Not mentioned	Absent	Absent
Exposure to hazardous factors (living in areas prone to natural disasters or environmentally hazardous areas)	Irrelevant	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed	Present but insufficient	Absent
Limited or lacking access to public transport	Irrelevant	Not mentioned	Absent	Absent

Limited or lacking internet access (e.g., public internet access points in deprived areas, areas not covered by broadband internet)	Irrelevant	Not mentioned	Absent	Absent
Limited or lacking access to green spaces	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Roma excluded from environmental democracy	Significant problems	Not mentioned	Absent	Absent

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	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Income support programmes fail to guarantee an acceptable level of minimum income for every household	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Absent
Limited access to income support schemes (low awareness, barrier of administrative burdens, stigma attached)	Minor problems	Understood with limitations	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	Minor problems	Understood with limitations	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

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	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Limited access to social services: low awareness of them, low accessibility, (e.g., due to travel costs) or limited availability	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Services providers do not actively reach out to those in need	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Limited ability of social services to effectively work together with other agencies (e.g., public employment service) to help clients	Minor problems	Mentioned (alluded) but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Discrimination by social service providers	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Lack of adequacy of programmes for addressing indebtedness (providing counselling and financial support)	Minor problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent

Child protection

Problems and conditions	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:
Child protection not considered in the NRSF	Minor problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate but with room for improvement	Adequate but with room for improvement
Specific vulnerability of Romani children as victims of violence not considered	Significant problems (issues of violence only in school setting)	Irrelevant	Present but insufficient	Absent
Segregated or discriminatory child-protection services provided to Roma	Minor problems	Irrelevant (not mentioned)	Absent	Absent
Activities aimed at strengthening parental responsibility and skills not available or not reaching out to Roma parents	Significant problems	Irrelevant (not mentioned)	Absent	Absent
Illegal practices of child labour	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Large-scale and discriminatory placement of Romani children in early childhood care institutions	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Persistence of large-scale institutions rather than family-type arrangements	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Early marriages	Significant problems	Irrelevant (not mentioned)	Absent	Absent
Barriers to children's registration; statelessness	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
Biased treatment of Roma youth by security and law enforcement	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent

Inadequate child/ adolescent participation	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent
---	------------	------------	--------	--------

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	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Exclusion of Roma communities from national cultural narratives	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
Romani history and culture not included in school curricula and textbooks for both Roma and non-Roma students	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent
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 but insufficient	Absent
Lack of memorialization of Roma history through establishing monuments, commemorative activities, and institutionalizing dates relevant to Roma history	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Absent

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