



Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion

(LERI) Project

Community Summary

Madrid, Spain

This community summary forms part of FRA's **Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion** (LERI) project. LERI is a qualitative action research project under [FRA's multi-annual Roma Programme](#). It was developed in response to the [European Commission's](#) Communication on an [EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020](#). LERI brings together local authorities and residents, in particular Roma, to investigate how they can best be involved in Roma integration actions, and identify which aspects of these actions work, which do not, and why. The aim of the project is to facilitate the engagement of all local stakeholders, including Roma, in joint efforts to enable Roma inclusion. The experience gained and the lessons learned during the process will help improve the design, implementation and monitoring of Roma integration policies and actions at the local level.

LERI is the first FRA project to test participatory action research methodology. By identifying the key factors that lead to the success or failure of local integration activities, the project is helping to improve the planning of effective integration programmes for the future. At the same time, facilitating engagement at local level empowers all those involved, building their capacity to participate as equal partners with local administrations and civil society, and enabling a shared understanding of which measures need to be taken and how their implementation can be monitored. The project is being carried out in 21 localities across 11 EU Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom).

LOCALITIES

Pavlikeni,	Bulgaria
Stara Zagora,	Bulgaria
Brno,	Czech Republic
Sokolov,	Czech Republic
Helsinki,	Finland
Jyväskylä,	Finland
Lille Metropole,	France
Strasbourg,	France
Aghia Varvara,	Greece
Megara,	Greece
Besence,	Hungary
Mátraverebély,	Hungary
Mantova,	Italy
Bologna,	Italy
Aiud,	Romania
Cluj-Napoca,	Romania
Hrabušice,	Slovakia
Rakytník,	Slovakia
Cordoba,	Spain
Madrid,	Spain
Medway,	UK

Madrid, Spain

Overview of the country context

There is no exact data available on the size of the Roma population in Spain.¹ According to the 2007-2008 and 2009-2010 FOGESA surveys for the years, estimates of approximately 2.1 % and 1.7 %, of the Spanish population may be Roma, which would add up to a total between 800,000 and 970,000 people.

The European Council has acknowledged an estimation of 725,000 Roma in Spain, which would make it the fifth largest Roma community in Europe.

With regard to Roma, Spain is both a contradictory and yet important case. The vast majority of the Spanish Roma community have lived in Spain for centuries, and have deep roots in the country. The Roma minority has experienced an ambivalent process of integration and exclusion since their arrival in Spain during the 15th century. The constitution of 1978² granted equal rights to all citizens, opening a period of change for the entire country. This included the establishment of a democratic and highly decentralised state as well as the consolidation of social welfare structures, which were previously weak and not universal. Since 1985, a series of projects and programmes aimed at the further inclusion of Roma have been implemented alongside sectoral policies in

health, education, housing, employment, social services and other fields.

The specific social policies, such as the Roma Development Programme (*Programa de Desarrollo Gitano*),³ and the plans of several autonomous regions, are implemented by a variety of actors, which are mostly local authorities and non-profit organisations.

Over the past twenty years, various general and specific policies have been implemented at various levels of government (local, regional and national), with the aim of improving the situation of Roma in Spain, from the creation of the Roma Development Programme in 1989 (*Programa de Desarrollo Gitano de 1989*),⁴ to the National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain in 2012-2020 (*Estrategia nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España 2012-2020*).⁵

Although progress has been made, problems persist for Spanish Roma in terms of unemployment, substandard housing, high rates of school failure and dropouts, and a lower life expectancy compared to the rest of the population.⁶

Moreover, there is an underlying layer of discrimination noticeable in the portrayal of Roma in the media, which contributes to the social prejudices against the Roma population.⁷

¹ Spain, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (*Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad*) (2011), *Diagnóstico social de la comunidad gitana en España- Un análisis contrastado de la Encuesta del CIS a Hogares de Población Gitana 2007*, Madrid, Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, available at: www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/diagnosticosocial_autores.pdf (All hyperlinks were accessed on 23 October 2015).

² Spain, General Courts (*Cortes Generales*) (1978), Spanish Constitution (*Constitución Española*), 29 December 1978, available at: http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admn/constitucion.t1.html.

³ Spain, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (*Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad*), 'Roma Population'

(*Población Gitana*), available at: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/eu/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/home.htm>

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Spain, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (*Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad*) (2012), 'Estrategia nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España 2012 -2020', 2 March 2012, available at:

www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/estrategiaNacional.htm

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) (2015), *Discriminación y comunidad gitana 2014*, Madrid, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, available at: www.gitanos.org/centro_documentacion/publicaciones/fichas/109822.html.es.

Locality background information

Madrid has a total population of 6,454,440 million according to the 2014 Census. It is estimated that around 60,000 Roma live in the city of Madrid, of which approximately 1 % have arrived from abroad. This figure is an estimate based on data from NGOs and different projects. Information has been collected on approximately 2,700 families, who have been provided with social housing. These families are concentrated in the neighborhoods with the highest percentage of Roma population: Vallecas, Puente de Vallecas, Villaverde, Carabanchel, La Latina, Hortaleza and San Blas.⁸



Map of Madrid

Regarding the number of Romanian citizens of Roma origin residing in Madrid there are no reliable statistics. The Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), together with the General Directorate of Immigration, works with Romanian Roma

living in the Canada neighbourhood. The Barró Association also has an agreement with the City Council to work with the Romanian Roma population in Gallinero in the areas of education and women (about 70 families with a population of around 340 people). This particular group faces the highest levels of social exclusion.

According to the CIS survey on the Roma population⁹, almost half of Roma feel discriminated against in sport centres, shops and nightclubs among other locations, and one third believe that their ethnicity is an obstacle when trying to rent accommodation. Roma still perceive racism and discrimination as two of their main problems: 23 % gave this response, even though unemployment is the most mentioned concern, with 38 % of respondents.

In Madrid, there are a number of schools where Roma children are highly over-represented, reaching 97-98 % of the student population. Overall, Roma have no issues regarding access to public services; 97.5 % of Roma children up to the age of 12 are enrolled in school, although the level of drop-out in secondary education is very high (over 80 %).¹⁰ Only a very small number of Roma have post-secondary level education. The vast majority of the Spanish Roma population is covered by health insurance. Roma perceive their health as being good, although their life expectancy is lower than the general population.

In the Madrid area, there are no serious racist incidents against Roma, as in other countries, or as is frequently reported in the Spanish province of Jaen.

⁸ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) (2007), Map on Housing and the Roma Community in Spain (*Mapa Sobre Vivienda y Comunidad Gitana in España*), available at: www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/mapavivienda/

⁹ Spain, Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (*Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad*) (2007), *Diagnóstico social de la comunidad gitana en España- Un análisis contrastado de la Encuesta del CIS a Hogares de Población Gitana 2007*, Madrid,

Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, available at: www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/diagnosticosocial_autores.pdf

¹⁰ Federación de Asociaciones de Mujeres Kamira, Fundación Mario Maya (2012) *Segregación escolar del alumnado gitano en España*, available at: <http://federacionkamira.org.es/descargas/Informe%20de%20Segregacio%CC%81n.pdf>.

Nevertheless, indirect and underlying discrimination continues to occur, such as parents refusing to enrol their children into schools with significant numbers of Roma pupils, the general sense of distrust towards the Roma population, special vigilance over Roma when entering stores, difficulties in finding employment, and refusal of entry into nightclubs. All these attitudes and actions limit and make life difficult for the Roma population in Madrid.

Objectives and thematic focus of the LERI project

During the meetings held with local authorities of Madrid in 2014 and March 2015, several possible approaches for the LERI project were discussed. The decision was made to focus on the design of a local action plan for Roma women in Madrid, which takes advantage of an already existing Equality Board composed of Roma organizations mainly of women, non-Roma and staff of the Madrid City Hall.

This option managed to attract different local stakeholders to support it, and was regarded as the best option to address the needs of Roma women in Madrid, who are in a situation of great inequality compared to the rest of the population. It is essential to work with these women since they are also the driving force for change within the community. There is currently no specific programmatic document for Roma women in Madrid.

One of the main goals in Madrid will be to also set up a mechanism for coordination, collaboration and monitoring of the activities in the city devoted to Roma women, which will promote wider participation and inclusion of Roma women in the actions to be developed.

LERI will monitor the establishment of these participatory mechanisms, such as the Equality Board, which is envisaged to continue implementing its functions, hold periodic meetings coordinate and monitor the tasks assigned to the board.

Activities implemented and actors involved in the needs assessment phase

The Roma community will be involved in drafting the 'Local Plan for Roma Women'. The mobilization of the participation of a number of stakeholders will guarantee the relevance and originality of the proposal and the measures to be implemented.

The aim is to test another kind of methodology to work with Roma problems and resources, creating a way that will change the relationship between the city administration and Roma organizations and citizens.

This participatory process is conceived in three phases:

- participatory needs assessment;
- elaboration of the local plan;
- implementation of one measure or action of the plan with the participation of Roma women.



Meeting with Roma women associations

In order to assess the needs, the team will carry out a workshop based on the European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW). EASW is a methodology where a large amount of stakeholders meet for one or two days to discuss and to make decisions on a public problem or a common issue within a very organized and democratic framework. As a result, a document of conclusions is drafted.

The EASW conclusions document will be the foundation of the development of a Local Plan for Roma Women. A driving group will be working with the administration to write a formal plan with a strategy, objectives, measures, times, resources and success indicators. The group will also include the administration responsible for the Roma policy in the city, as well as civil society actors and organizations that are essential to the design, and implementation and follow-up of this policy.

Once designed, the plan will be sent out to all the relevant local stakeholders: the Roma organizations, the equality board, and the bodies involved in the Roma promotion to allow them to comment, make changes and improve the plan with their feedback. The city will then obtain a document with a high degree of agreement and participation.

Finally, one or two actions will be carried out from the plan with a participatory methodology.

The LERI team organised several informal contacts and preparatory meetings with the various associations¹¹. During these preparatory meetings with women associations, some priority areas which the LERI project should focus on were identified: education, employment, discrimination, gender violence, health and housing and ways to improve women's self-esteem. These areas will be further defined during the implementation phase. Roma women associations also provided the LERI team with audio-visual material, which will be used during the project implementation.

Expected outcomes of the participatory action research

Participatory action research will result in the assessment of the needs of Roma women, the drafting of the Local Plan for Roma Women and the implementation of certain action from this plan. The

implementation of LERI with participatory techniques and the consensus of all stakeholders will aim to improve coordination and will facilitate setting up actions with a wider scope.

In addition, it is crucial to achieve mutual understanding between stakeholders involved in the project, especially during meetings organized with local institutions to present the project, in order to convey the same message and consensus positions, which should be previously defined. This is crucial for achieving the project's aims together.

Once the participation of stakeholders is achieved, the LERI project should carefully consider Roma individuals' personal involvement and the consequences on their lives. High awareness of minorities' rights and strong motivation in the work to be done will have to be the driving forces.

¹¹ Meetings were held with Roma women that are part of the following NGOs: Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Asociación Romí Sersení,

Asociación el Fanal, Asociación Barró, Gitanas Feministas por la Diversidad, including also mediators.

FRA – EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Schwarzenbergplatz 11 – 1040 Vienna – Austria
Tel: +43 158030-0 – Fax: +43 158030-699
fra.europa.eu – info@fra.europa.eu
[facebook.com/fundamentalrights](https://www.facebook.com/fundamentalrights)
[linkedin.com/company/eu-fundamental-rights-agency](https://www.linkedin.com/company/eu-fundamental-rights-agency)
twitter.com/EURightsAgency

