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# UN & CoE

15 January – European Economic and Social Committee issues opinion on the *Societal empowerment and integration of Roma citizens in Europe*

29 January – European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rules in *Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary* that placing Roma children in remedial schools for children with disabilities amounts to discrimination

## January

19 February – Council of Europe European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) issues its fourth report on Ireland

## February

20 March – Council of Europe launches the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion

## March

23 April – Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopts Resolution 1927 (2013) on Ending discrimination against Roma children

## April

30 May – ECtHR rules in *Lavida and Others v. Greece* that continuing the education of Roma children in a state school attended exclusively by Roma children without implementing effective anti-segregation measures can not be justified. Municipalities and educational authorities must reconsider informal tactics that permit segregation

## May

27 June – Eighth European Platform for Roma Inclusion takes place in Brussels

## June

9 July – ECtHR *Vona v. Hungary* sentence upholds the decision of the Hungarian Supreme Court to dissolve the Hungarian Guard Association, which had held rallies targeting Roma and using anti-Gypsy rhetoric

9 July – ECRI issues its fourth report on Finland

9 July – ECRI issues its fourth report on Portugal

## July

## August

## September

15 October – ECRI issues its fourth report on the Netherlands

17 October – ECtHR rules in *Winterstein and Others v. France* that the eviction of traveller families from a caravan site where they had been living for a long time, without providing alternative accommodation or social housing, is a violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights

## October

## November

## December

# EU

## January

## February

## March

## April

## May

26 June – European Commission issues a Communication on *Steps forward in implementing national Roma integration strategies*

26 June – European Commission issues a Proposal for a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States

## June

## July

## August

## September

## October

28–29 November – The Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions adopts an explanatory opinion on Roma integration strategies

## November

9 December – Council of the European Union adopts a *Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States*

12 December – European Parliament adopts a *Resolution on the progress made in the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies*

## December

# 7

## Roma integration



*Major European Union (EU) institutions and the Council of Europe renewed in 2013 their political resolve and launched initiatives to fight the exclusion of and discrimination against Roma, the EU's largest ethnic minority. EU Member States have pledged to improve the situation of Roma in education, employment, health and housing, developing concrete national strategies on Roma integration. There is, however, evidence of ongoing fundamental rights violations, while for many Roma social exclusion and extreme deprivation remain a daily reality. To accelerate progress, the Council of the European Union issued in December 2013 a 'Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures to Member States', which highlights the need for effective monitoring of the implementation of national integration strategies.*

### 7.1. European institutions renew political commitment to Roma inclusion and integration

In the face of incidents illustrating the discrimination and exclusion Roma<sup>1</sup> people face, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe renewed their political resolve to fully integrate and include Roma in European society. Nonetheless, in some EU Member States Roma settlements were destroyed and Roma EU citizens forcibly evicted from their homes or returned to their countries of origin. In others, political parties and extremist groups openly expressed anti-Roma feelings, while media attention on alleged child abductions stoked negative Roma stereotypes. With the Member States' action plans in place, EU institutions turned their attention to effective implementation and monitoring.

The European Commission focused in a June Communication on the structural preconditions for more effective implementation of integration strategies. It called on Member States "to adopt or further develop a comprehensive approach to Roma integration

#### Key developments

- The Council of the European Union issues a Recommendation on Roma integration, providing guidance to EU Member States on enhancing the effectiveness of their national Roma integration strategies and policies.
- The Council Regulation on Structural Funds is adopted including the ex ante conditionality concerning national Roma integration strategies. It is the first time that one specific investment priority focusing on the inclusion of Roma and other marginalised communities is included as a requirement in the Structural Funds.
- Forced evictions and segregation in education remain major concerns.
- In the run-up to the European Parliament elections, some political parties and extremist groups in a number of EU Member States express anti-Roma feelings that can endanger Roma integration efforts.
- Spikes in media attention are related to reports of alleged child abductions, reinforcing negative stereotypes of Roma.

and endorse a number of common goals", covering the areas of education, employment, health and housing.<sup>2</sup> It also concluded that more effort should be made to develop robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

This includes comparing data and impact indicators to measure progress on the ground and ensuring that necessary funds are allocated to Roma inclusion efforts.

The European Commission also issued a proposal for a Council Recommendation aimed at reinforcing the EU Framework “with a non-binding legal instrument in order to make it easier for Member States to turn their commitments into reality”.<sup>3</sup>

The Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation<sup>4</sup> that provides guidance to Member States on enhancing the implementation of their measures to achieve Roma integration. The recommendation, adopted on 9 December 2013, establishes the first EU legal instrument for Roma integration.

The European Parliament called on the European Commission and Member States to ensure sufficient funding for Roma integration. The resolution, adopted on 12 December, also focused on EU-wide monitoring of the fundamental rights of Roma, anti-Roma actions and hate crime against Roma. It called for an end to segregation in education and aimed at tackling discrimination, particularly that faced by Roma women.

The Council of Europe has also taken positive measures. Romed, which ran for two years in 22 countries, with more than 1,000 trained mediators, entered its second phase in 2013.<sup>5</sup> The Council of Europe and the European Commission’s DG Employment launched a new project in **Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Slovakia** to strengthen political will and build local authorities’ ability to draft and implement Roma inclusion plans and projects.<sup>6</sup> The initiative is supported by the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion and draws on the four thematic reports that were produced by the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) in 2013 (on education,<sup>7</sup> housing<sup>8</sup> and anti-Gypsyism<sup>9</sup> and on Roma policy implementation (latter report from 2012).

With positive political commitments in place and measures taken by the European institutions, a powerful framework has been established to encourage and support EU Member States in improving the situation of the Roma in education, employment, health and housing and in respecting human rights and non-discrimination.

## 7.2. Member States begin implementation of national Roma integration strategies

Each EU Member State developed a national Roma integration strategy or corresponding set of policy

measures within its broader social inclusion policies in response to the European Commission’s Communication for an EU Framework for national Roma Integration Strategies from May 2011. Many built upon previous or existing Roma integration policies or action plans. By 2013, nearly all Member States had developed and approved their national Roma integration strategies and national action plans; however, progress on implementation of the strategies varied. Many Member States are still working on developing institutional infrastructure and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for implementing the strategies. In most cases, the Member States implemented few actions in 2013, often hindered by budgetary cuts and limited financial resources.

**Poland**, for example, continued implementing its Programme for the Roma community for 2004–2013<sup>10</sup> covering education, Roma and civil society, employment, health, housing, security and hate crimes, culture and preservation of Roma ethnic identity, and knowledge about Roma. Legislation was in progress on a multi-annual programme for 2014–2020.<sup>11</sup>

In December, the **Czech Republic** approved seven measures aimed at preventing social tension and strengthening social cohesion between majority society and the Roma minority, including revised housing benefits, a network of social services in excluded areas and the reintroduction of community work. The government did not, however, introduce social measures targeting Roma specifically, because the delivery of aid based on ethnic criteria is unconstitutional.<sup>12</sup>

**Slovakia** shifted responsibility for the national strategy’s coordination and implementation to the Ministry of the Interior from the Government’s Office and the Prime Minister’s authority. NGOs criticised this move sharply, claiming that it contributed to inflexibility in implementing the strategy and left those in charge with less time to devote to the issue at hand.<sup>13</sup>

### 7.2.1. To make a difference, Member States involve local authorities

The European Commission’s 26 June Communication stressed that “most Member States need to make further efforts and involve local authorities more closely and systematically in developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing policy” and asserted that Roma integration plans and efforts to implement the national Roma implementation strategies should also be an integral part of regional and local level public agendas.<sup>14</sup>

**Bulgaria**’s national strategy for Roma integration required all municipalities to prepare and adopt municipal Roma integration annual plans. Municipal plans for 2013–2014 were approved by the end of March for 220 of 264 municipalities,<sup>15</sup> and plans for 2014–2020



will be adopted in 2014. In the **United Kingdom**, local authorities established a National Roma Network as a forum for dialogue between central government, local authorities and civil society.<sup>16</sup>

Some EU Member States also began developing regional and local action plans to implement their national strategies. **Germany's** Berlin Action Plan for the Inclusion of Foreign Roma, the country's first regional action plan, was adopted on 16 July.<sup>17</sup> **Sweden** launched several pilot programmes for Roma integration.<sup>18</sup>

#### FRA ACTIVITY

### Collecting data through local engagement

The Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) research project aims to examine and develop ways of improving the design, implementation and monitoring of Roma integration policies and actions at local level. This objective corresponds to the issues and needs identified by the European Commission's Roma Task Force, namely lack of know-how and administrative capacity at local level, ineffective monitoring tools to measure progress, and weak involvement of Roma and of civil society actors in the design and implementation of Roma-targeted interventions, particularly at the local level.

LERI aims to address those deficits through local-level pilot research that will help understand better the barriers and drivers affecting local-level implementation and how those barriers might be overcome.

The LERI project will be carried out in 2014–2016 in 22 localities in 11 Member States: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom.

*FRA (2013), FRA Multi-annual Roma Programme, primary qualitative data: Participatory action research, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2013/multi-annual-roma-programme?tab=local-engagement>*

Several Member States set up working groups or advisory councils comprising representatives of ministries, local authorities, independent experts, Roma associations and other civil society organisations. **Croatia, Finland, France, Latvia,<sup>19</sup> Romania, Slovenia<sup>20</sup> and Spain** established working groups and platforms to develop and consult on national Roma integration strategies. **Spain** developed an operational plan for the 2012–2020 national strategy to strengthen coordination between different administrative levels.<sup>21</sup> **Italy** also established discussion tables at various government levels,<sup>22</sup> including an interministerial political round table to discuss local issues. Roma associations criticised the roundtable, however, for not requiring the inclusion

of Roma community representatives.<sup>23</sup> In **Slovenia**,<sup>24</sup> Roma representatives, including those from each municipal council, will set up a working body to monitor the Roma's local situation and to report yearly to a commission set up for the protection of the Roma community.

**Belgium** uses multiple stakeholder cooperation to address Roma integration. One example is the regional integration centre Foyer in Brussels, which cooperates with social services, schools and local governments to better address Roma issues.<sup>25</sup>

At the eighth European Platform for Roma Inclusion in June, the **Netherlands** announced an initiative to create a working group on child rights issues as an extension of its programme to combat crime and the exploitation of Roma children.<sup>26</sup>

### 7.2.2. Engaging with civil society

In its June Communication, the European Commission stressed again that “civil society needs to play an active role in implementing and monitoring national strategies.”<sup>27</sup> Simple consultation is not enough. To this end, many of the EU Member State working groups set up to advise on the development and implementation of the national Roma integration strategies include civil society organisations, NGOs and representatives of Roma associations. Nonetheless, questions remained on how exactly to define civil society's role in implementing monitoring national strategies and how to consult civil society in practice.

**Austria<sup>28</sup> and Spain** consulted Roma civil society on how to implement their national strategies, and Roma civil society organisations took part in a consultative council and the National Agency for Roma in **Romania**. In **Belgium**, Roma took direct part in consultations on social services through a new project initiated in 2013.<sup>29</sup>

**Hungary** set up several consultative bodies, which involve representatives of Roma minority self-governments and representatives of civil society organisations. The civil society report, coordinated by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, criticised the Roma action plans,<sup>30</sup> saying that some new government policies undermined rather than supported Roma integration.

In **Lithuania**, civil society organisations, including Roma NGOs, criticised the government for failing to make the consultative process genuinely inclusive while preparing the 2012–2014 Roma Action Plan.<sup>31</sup>

Two NGOs prepared an external evaluation report on the national Roma integration strategy after the **Slovak** government failed to involve civil society, formally or informally, in the strategy's implementation and after the government's Office of the Plenipotentiary for

Roma Communities delayed delivery of its own monitoring report in early 2013.<sup>32</sup>

**Ireland** established a steering group including Roma representatives. In **Bulgaria**, nine Roma organisations withdrew from the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues in April, after it failed to react to ethnically motivated Roma murders.<sup>33</sup> In response, to implement the national strategy, the council formed a commission with the participation of Roma NGOs and other civil society organisations working in the field of Roma integration.

Every year in **Finland**, the Regional Advisory Boards of Romani Affairs organise consultation days for local actors to present their work and provide views on the national Roma strategy and its implementation. Similarly, **Portugal** established a consultative group in June to monitor the national strategy's implementation and Roma communities' integration.

In **France**, national consultative panels on illegal settlements and on *Gens du voyage* bring together civil society organisations and national authorities to advise on the national strategy.

### 7.2.3. Monitoring progress

The European Commission communication and the Council of the European Union recommendation highlighted the need for monitoring Roma-targeted interventions. Additionally, the European Parliament urged EU Member States:

*“to produce disaggregated data with the assistance of FRA, the UNDP and the World Bank on the socio-economic situation of Roma, the degree to which Roma experience discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, and hate crimes committed against them, while fully respecting data protection standards and the right to privacy, and to develop, in cooperation with the Commission, the baseline indicators and measurable targets that are essential for a robust monitoring system [...]”*<sup>34</sup>

The challenge remains the limited progress in monitoring. With many action plans still under development, few have been monitored or evaluated to date. Data collection on Roma is fragmented in many EU Member States, making it even more difficult to monitor the progress of implementation. Fundamental questions – such as how to statistically define the population collectively labelled as ‘Roma’ – remain open. With incomplete official data on Roma, and with some Member States prohibiting data collection by ethnicity, progress reports often rely on unofficial sources, such as the media, academic studies and NGO reports. FRA's work on Roma integration in 2014 will focus on

developing more robust and effective approaches to data collection.

Several EU Member States established special steering groups or committees to monitor the implementation of their national strategies, for example in **Croatia**<sup>35</sup> and **Finland**.<sup>36</sup> In **Estonia**, an informal working group was established to collect data and information on Roma and to raise public awareness of Roma culture.<sup>37</sup> **Finland's** steering group on Roma policy implementation published its first monitoring report at the end of 2013, as did that of the **Netherlands**, whose report will serve as a baseline qualitative study to be conducted every two years.<sup>38</sup> In **Hungary**, a set of indicators developed by the Department of Strategic Planning of the State Secretariat for Social Inclusion together with independent experts were piloted and were fed into the first government monitoring report on the Government Action Plan for Social Inclusion.<sup>39</sup> **France** developed a set of indicators to monitor implemented actions. **Austria** is carrying out several studies to monitor the inclusion of Roma in education, employment, housing and access to healthcare. **Bulgaria** implemented a project on the integration of marginalised communities with a focus on Roma, including two nationally representative surveys to support data collection and monitoring.<sup>40</sup>

To address the particular situation of Roma women, the **Finnish** Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published a study<sup>41</sup> on domestic violence against Roma women, which found that women under-report these crimes, often leaving such violence hidden. FRA's new study on violence against women shows, unfortunately, that Roma women share this experience of violence and related fears with many other women in the EU.

#### FRA ACTIVITY

##### Ad-hoc Working Party on Roma Integration

In 2013, FRA held the third meeting of its ad-hoc working party on 26 June in Brussels. It discussed EU Member States' progress and experiences in setting up monitoring mechanisms. Working party members saw the local level as an area of potential improvement.

FRA also introduced plans to pilot an indicator framework that will help chart progress in Roma integration across the EU.

Furthermore, data collection broken down by ethnicity may verge on illegality if data protection standards are not rigorously adhered to. In September, it was discovered that police in southern **Sweden** had kept a register with the names of thousands of Roma Swedes, including children and some deceased persons. An investigation

determined that the register had several illegal aspects, even though it was not based on ethnicity.<sup>42</sup>

### 7.2.4. EU Structural Funds and national-level funding for Roma integration

In 2010, the European Commission's Roma Task Force identified limited funding from national budgets and EU Structural Funds as a major challenge to the implementation of national strategies on Roma integration. With this in mind, the Commission revised the Regulation on Structural Funds, integrating requirements that must be complied with before funds are allocated; these are termed *ex ante* conditionalities (see also [Section 5.5 of Chapter 5](#)).<sup>43</sup> These requirements ensure that socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma is achieved through the allocation of directly managed EU funds.

The development and adoption of the national Roma integration strategies has not implied substantial changes in the use of EU structural funds,<sup>44</sup> but many governments, including local authorities, put new or planned activities on Roma integration on hold, often referring to austerity measures as the reason for funding cuts. Municipalities in **Bulgaria**, for example, were required to develop local action plans, but were expected to fund them from existing annual budgets. In **Ireland**, the government reduced spending on programmes for Travellers by 4.3 % for 2008–2013, hindering the full implementation of action plans.<sup>45</sup>

Additionally, some projects, conceived within the national action plans and strategies, requested funding but received none. This occurred in **Romania**.<sup>46</sup> In **Hungary**, municipalities are required to prepare equal opportunity programmes as of 1 July 2013 to participate in tenders financed by either the national budget or EU funds.

## 7.3. Member States target integration in four priority areas

Education, employment, housing and health are key priority areas for Roma integration. Discrimination in these areas violates fundamental rights. Roma integration efforts are not, however, limited to these areas; such challenges as political participation or gender equality are no less important.

### 7.3.1. Education

A wide gap persists between Roma and non-Roma children in education. Roma children across the EU fare

worse in terms of enrolment, participation, educational attainment and completion. On average, 89 % of Roma surveyed in a FRA Roma pilot survey had not acquired any upper secondary education, compared with 38 % of the non-Roma living nearby.<sup>47</sup> Roma girls in particular drop out from school early.<sup>48</sup>

Most individual EU Member States have concentrated their efforts on education, particularly in projects and activities to improve early childhood education and care and in promoting measures to support Roma children in completing primary education. Although such steps do not always explicitly target Roma, several Member States, including **Austria**,<sup>49</sup> **Bulgaria**, the **Czech Republic**,<sup>50</sup> **Finland**,<sup>51</sup> **Luxembourg** and **Poland**, recently introduced free compulsory pre-school or last year of kindergarten. They often also provided financial support for Roma and families belonging to disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and ensured that special places were reserved for children from such backgrounds.

Other forms of educational support for Roma were initiated to promote primary school completion. **Poland** introduced financial support for books and school materials, while **Cyprus**, **Romania** and **Slovakia** provided free school meals. The **Netherlands** allocated additional state budget funds to primary schools with Roma children, as has the Flanders region in **Belgium** since 2012.

**Croatia** supported Roma families with pre-school and kindergarten expenses, and **Romania** provided disadvantaged students, including Roma, with milk and bread, financial aid and financial grants for computers.

**Croatia**, **Hungary**,<sup>52</sup> **Italy**<sup>53</sup> and **Poland**<sup>54</sup> supported scholarship programmes for Roma students in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

**France** provided Roma children with free transport to school as part of mainstreamed free transport programmes. **Italy**, in contrast, cut public spending, which meant discontinuing similar programmes in many municipalities, including Milan and Naples.<sup>55</sup>

**Portugal** implemented awareness-raising activities on the importance of school, with successful Roma participating as ambassadors to share their experiences.<sup>56</sup> In four **Belgian** cities, neighbourhood stewards promoted awareness of the importance of schooling. In **Spain**, a nationwide campaign encourages Roma to complete high school.

In **Bulgaria**, the Ministry of Labour and Social initiated three calls for projects<sup>57</sup> to improve the integration of children from ethnic minorities in primary education and to reintegrate dropouts. **Portugal** piloted alternative schooling or vocational paths for students who had repeatedly failed the same course, aiming to encourage students to continue in secondary education.<sup>58</sup> **Greece**

also targeted Roma school attendance, with programmes including summer classes to help ease the transition to secondary school.

**Croatia, Finland,<sup>59</sup> France and Luxembourg** provide language support to help non-native speakers integrate and achieve. **Austrian** primary schools may provide special language support for children who do not have German as a mother tongue.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, some **Danish** municipalities launched 'phasing-in' classes for students whose first language was not Danish, to help them transition into regular classes. In **Cyprus,**<sup>61</sup> bilingual teachers helped to facilitate communication among students, teachers and parents.

**Finland** introduced Romani language courses in upper secondary schools and at the University of Helsinki.<sup>62</sup> **Latvia** offered support classes on Latvian, sciences and foreign languages, and Roma teachers and assistants were hired in various municipalities.<sup>63</sup> A new **Swedish** initiative enables students from five national minorities – including Roma – to study their minority language as a native language.<sup>64</sup> It is also developing new material on Roma language, culture and traditions to improve staff and student awareness.<sup>65</sup>

Several EU Member States continued to deploy Roma school mediators and assistants. **Greece** and **Portugal,**<sup>66</sup> for example, use such mediators; **Germany** has a project<sup>67</sup> that uses mediators and social education assistants to help Roma children in primary and secondary school with homework. They also intervene in cases of conflict and advise parents. In some **Austrian** schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils, Roma school assistants provided learning support, helped teachers and motivated children in class.<sup>68</sup> In **France,** a project on school mediators was launched to encourage school participation of children from illegal settlements. In **Luxembourg,** teachers received specific training on instructing Roma students, with mediation offered in several languages. The **Netherlands** has mediators and counsellors for Sinti, Roma and Travellers. **Poland** provides Roma assistants and tutors to help Roma children,<sup>69</sup> and there are assistants for the entire Roma community. Teachers and students attend courses on Roma culture, and teachers learn how to prevent discrimination.<sup>70</sup> In **Romania,** school principals were instructed on the rights of the child,<sup>71</sup> and some teachers received education in the Romani language and Roma history. In **Slovakia,** 110 Roma teaching assistants were involved in the national programme of school inclusion at pre-school level, which targets marginalised Roma communities.<sup>72</sup>

A **Slovenian** project focuses on facilitating the inclusion of Roma children in pre-school; it provided training courses for teachers and awareness-raising campaigns for parents.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, a website in **Finland**<sup>74</sup> was set up to provide information on Finnish Roma history and culture, including teaching materials for schools.

To increase the proportion of Roma students in universities, **Romania** allocated a quota of places for them, benefiting some 3,000 secondary school students.<sup>75</sup>

## Discrimination in education

EU Member States took measures to combat discrimination in education. The Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration also explicitly called on Member States to eliminate any school segregation and to put an end to "any inappropriate placement of Roma pupils in special needs schools."

Despite Member States' commitments to non-discrimination, the segregation of Roma children in education remains a widespread problem in Member States including the **Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania** and **Slovakia.** Small steps forward were made, but challenges remain. **Latvia,** for example, closed ethnic classes following a request by the Ombudsman.<sup>76</sup> In nearly a quarter of its schools, **Hungary** has established an integrated pedagogical system designed to bridge the gap between educationally disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children.

Research studies and reports confirm evidence of segregation in education, highlighting the severity of the issue and underlining the findings of surveys conducted by FRA, the UNDP and the World Bank. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) expressed concern about racist acts in **Finnish** schools against Roma children, especially in primary schools, the most serious problem being racist insults.<sup>77</sup>

The United Nations' Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance<sup>78</sup> also highlighted, after his visit to **Spain** in January, that Roma pupils continue to suffer from school discrimination and segregation, high dropout rates in secondary education and limited access to university.

In the **Czech Republic,** the School Inspectorate launched in September an investigation of Romani school children at schools for children with mild intellectual disabilities. The research was in response to a judgment by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), which found that 18 Romani children had been unjustifiably reassigned to such special schools. The research found that 28 % of pupils attending 'practical schools' are of Roma origin.<sup>79</sup>

According to a 2013 survey on segregation in **Hungary** published by the Roma Education Fund,<sup>80</sup> "educational policy is more segregationist when the Romani population is concentrated in segregated areas of town." The survey compared the impacts of the three factors leading to school segregation: segregationist local policies, residential segregation and the high number of Roma.



Some legal developments highlighted the continued wrongful discrimination and segregation of Roma children in schooling. The **Hungarian** Equal Treatment Authority (*Egyenlő Bánásmód Hatóság*) imposed a sanction on a teacher for making an offensive statement towards a child of Roma ethnicity during a study hall session.<sup>81</sup>

Two significant ECtHR judgments in the field of Roma and education in 2013 considered it discriminatory that Roma pupils attended schools in which there were no non-Roma students. In the *Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary* case, which became final on 29 April, the ECtHR considered discriminatory the placing of two young Roma men in schools for people with intellectual disabilities, and raised the question of whether this might have compromised their integration.<sup>82</sup> The ECtHR found that the Hungarian government had failed to prove that the difference in treatment had not had disproportionately prejudicial effects on the applicants. Therefore, the treatment violated the European Convention on Human Rights' right to education (Article 2 of Protocol No. 1) in conjunction with the prohibition on discrimination (Article 14).

The importance of this case lies in the long history of school segregation of Roma: placing Roma children in special remedial schools for children with intellectual disabilities, in segregated all-Roma schools or in all-Roma classes in nominally 'integrated' mainstream schools. This is a long-standing practice in the **Czech Republic**,<sup>83</sup> **Latvia**,<sup>84</sup> **Romania**<sup>85</sup> and **Slovakia**.<sup>86</sup> In this regard, the Czech Committee of Ministers on Human Rights, on its supervision of the *D. H. and Others v. Czech Republic* case, pointed out that a decreasing number of Roma children were educated in 'special schools', although their overall percentage remains disproportionately high. According to the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), little has changed since the judgment. Such Roma-dominated schools continue to provide an inferior education "without qualifications for any job beyond the most menial and with no hope for the future."<sup>87</sup>

The *Lavida and Others v. Greece* case,<sup>88</sup> final since 30 August, addressed a similar problem to 2012's *Sampani and Others v. Greece*,<sup>89</sup> which became final on 29 April 2013, of placing Roma children in schools with no non-Roma students. The Greek authorities' failure to take antisegregation measures was considered discriminatory and a violation of the right to education. This practice, like that of placing Roma in schools for persons with mental disabilities, was common in other countries such as **France** and **Romania**.

### 7.3.2. Employment

Roma face a disproportionate risk of unemployment. When employed, they occupy mostly low-skilled, insecure and low-paid jobs. Data from the FRA survey reveal

that on average only 28 % of Roma aged 16 years and older indicated 'paid work' as a main activity, compared with 45 % for non-Roma living nearby. Of those employed, 23 % held ad hoc irregular jobs, often informally, 21 % were self-employed and 9 % had part-time work.<sup>90</sup> These findings are also reflected in other studies and research.<sup>91</sup>

The Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration, from December, recommended that EU Member States "take effective measures to ensure equal treatment of Roma in access to the labour market and to employment opportunities."<sup>92</sup> The majority of 2013 initiatives focused on improving workplace integration and supporting Roma employment services. Many Member States set up or continued projects supporting Roma job seekers, assisting with such skills as training for active job seeking, language courses, guidance in writing CVs and developing individual employment plans. **Belgium, Croatia, France, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal** and **Slovenia**, for example, carried out such initiatives.

An **Austrian** project offered job and career counselling to Roma job seekers.<sup>93</sup> **Germany** implemented vocational guidance programmes for young Roma.<sup>94</sup>

In **Belgium**, intercultural mediators began providing individualised support to facilitate dialogue between local Roma communities and public institutions, and to support integration into the workforce for vulnerable groups, funded under the ESF.<sup>95</sup> **Portugal** organised labour mediators to encourage unemployed Roma to sign up at the labour office, and **Bulgaria**<sup>96</sup> established an NGO network of Roma labour mediators in June.

**Cyprus**, whose Roma job seekers often cannot speak English or Greek, introduced national and local language programmes,<sup>97</sup> but Roma participation was minimal. Job centres in **Denmark** also provided language courses.

**Portugal** offered basic skills adult training programmes for adults, to enable Roma, among others, to gain entry to other training leading to qualifications.<sup>98</sup> **Hungary** also offered adult vocational education and training courses, providing special support for training courses connected to public work. At least 15 % of individuals benefiting from labour market programmes must be of Roma origin.

Childcare services and facilities can support integration in employment. The **Czech Republic** and **Germany**,<sup>99</sup> therefore, took measures to increase their availability.

Some EU Member States have taken measures to address Roma women's employment challenges. In a pilot project, **Slovenia** trained 23 Roma as cooks and waiters, and then set up a restaurant employing four of them. The project promotes Roma inclusion and

the preservation of their traditional cuisine.<sup>100</sup> **Belgium** launched projects to support pathways to employment for Roma women, and **Hungary** developed such a project for 1,000 Roma women.<sup>101</sup> **Lithuania** initiated a project to foster Roma women's entrepreneurship through traditional crafts such as sewing and embroidery. The participants managed all project activities themselves. The products are all available for sale, with the proceeds reinvested in new empowerment projects for Roma women. A new **Swedish** programme intends to further the education of marginalised Roma women to increase their opportunities to find employment.

#### Promising practice

#### Promoting Roma women's education and employment

The Türr István Training and Research Institute and the National Roma Self-Government of Hungary implemented a project to enhance the education and employability of Roma women. The programme, *Women Are the Opportunity!*, provides Roma women with theoretical and practical vocational training. Participants are then provided with employment in social and child welfare services, including as social workers or nurses. The programme combines skills and mentoring.

The programme is targeted at women job hunters disadvantaged by a lack of education. Participants must have completed primary education.

For more information, see [www.tkki.hu/page.php?mid=122](http://www.tkki.hu/page.php?mid=122)

### Discrimination in employment

Despite measures to improve access to the labour market and professional qualifications, Roma continue to face discrimination both in access to employment and in the workplace. The data from surveys conducted by FRA, the UNDP and the World Bank reflect this reality: a significant part of the gap in employment between Roma and non-Roma cannot be explained by education or qualification level.<sup>102</sup>

A research study in **Hungary** by the Equal Treatment Authority, on employee selection practices, revealed that Roma job seekers, or those who were perceived to be Roma, faced 10 times as high as those for non-Roma.<sup>103</sup> A study published in 2013 confirmed such discrimination, showing similar results for those participating in public employment schemes.<sup>104</sup> The **Finnish** Ombudsman for Minorities<sup>105</sup> also confirmed discrimination against Roma in employment and housing.

Only a few EU Member States took action to eliminate discrimination in employment. **Greece** developed a project to combat discrimination in entrepreneurship, with a focus on women and

young Roma and Muslim migrants.<sup>106</sup> The **Czech Republic** finished training employment office staff on antidiscrimination measures.<sup>107</sup>

Several legal developments also reflected the extent of discrimination against Roma in employment. The **Croatian** County Court of Varaždin upheld a 2012 Municipal Court verdict, which considered a shop owner's rejection of Roma applications on account of their ethnicity as discriminatory.<sup>108</sup>

The **Hungarian** EBH determined that a difference in the sanctions applied to two public employees for the same petty offence was due to the Roma ethnicity of one of them, and was therefore discriminatory.<sup>109</sup>

### 7.3.3. Housing

The European Commission, in its first assessment of national strategies in 2012, called on EU Member States to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma in access to housing and to public utilities, including the promotion of non-discriminatory access to housing.<sup>110</sup> The December Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration further recommended that Member States take effective measures to ensure equal treatment of Roma in access to housing through "eliminating any spatial segregation and promoting desegregation, promoting non-discriminatory access to social housing"<sup>111</sup> and ensuring access to public utilities and infrastructure. However, few Member States took action in the housing area in 2013. Housing segregation and forced evictions remained a serious concern and a huge challenge to their successful integration in many Member States.

The availability and affordability of social housing and promoting non-discrimination in access to housing are particularly important. Criteria designed for social housing for vulnerable groups often exclude Roma families.<sup>112</sup>

In **Portugal**, the Institute of Housing and Urban Renewal (*Instituto da Habitação e Reabilitação Urbana*) collected data on Roma community housing conditions and on municipal projects, whether finished, under way or planned. The survey findings identified 54 municipal projects, 11 of which related to housing management.

**Cyprus** implemented projects to repair houses and build prefabricated houses with basic amenities.<sup>113</sup> **Poland**, **Portugal** and **Romania** also renovated housing or improved social housing conditions. **Slovakia** is building new houses in three marginalised Roma municipalities.<sup>114</sup> **Greece** and **Slovenia** also undertook infrastructural improvements, building access roads and providing electricity and sewerage to Roma settlements.

The **United Kingdom** is allocating GBP 60 million up to the end of 2015 to build over 600 new, and refurbish



400 existing, pitches for Travellers.<sup>115</sup> **French** law requires cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants to have reception areas for *Gens du voyage*, and it allocates funding to support housing and integration projects in illegal settlements.

### Promising practice

#### Building hope

ETP Slovakia – Centre for Sustainable Development continued to provide housing-deprived Roma in Slovakia with the opportunity to secure simple, decent and affordable homes.

'Building Hope' enables clients to build their own houses. The project uses a light construction system with less expensive recycled and ecological materials. The programme provides professional supervision, assistance with administrative requirements, and microloans to finance construction.

The basic 25 m<sup>2</sup> model includes a bathroom with toilet, washbasin and bathtub, a kitchen sink, a room for daily use and a sleeping area on an elevated floor. It is possible to enlarge the house to 37.5 m<sup>2</sup> by enclosing the porch, gaining an additional room to serve as a bedroom.

Construction takes about 12 months. Loans of up to €6,000 are to be repaid in 10 years. Participating families must take part in ETP educational and financial savings programmes, demonstrating a strong commitment to changing their lives.

The project tackles generational poverty and the social exclusion of marginalised Roma. It also allows unemployed Roma to earn wages while learning vocational, life and personal skills.

*For more information, see [www.etp.sk/en/category/budujeme-nadej/](http://www.etp.sk/en/category/budujeme-nadej/)*

**Croatia, Portugal** and **Denmark** prioritised the allocation of 25 % of social housing to those with special concerns. In **Luxembourg**, home ownership is subsidised for residents and social housing is accessible for all by priority. **Slovakia** provided a state housing allowance, although it was not specific to Roma. Three municipalities in **Bulgaria**<sup>116</sup> prepared a pilot scheme on modern social housing.

**Czech** law requires equal access to all types of housing, including social housing, but a civil society monitoring report pointed to a lack of social housing as a severe problem.<sup>117</sup>

Some EU Member States, including **Croatia**, provide legal support for housing, concretely financial support to enable Roma to obtain the documentation needed to legalise housing. The **Czech Republic** distributes grants to NGOs that provide housing advice.

Roma civil society has also launched housing initiatives. In the **Netherlands**, the Association of Dutch Sinti, Roma and Caravan Dwellers advocates for a continued caravan lifestyle. It also wants to serve as a partner for dialogue with public authorities in the field of housing.

#### Discrimination in housing

Despite efforts to improve the Roma housing situation, negative developments also took place. In **Hungary**, a programme to reduce segregated neighbourhoods faced funding-related delays.<sup>118</sup> Many forced evictions were reported in **Italy**, and housing loan repayment problems continued to dog Roma in **Greece**.<sup>119</sup>

More than half the Roma population in **Slovakia** lived in 804 marginalised concentrations. Of those Roma, 12.9 % lived in urban concentrations or ghettos within municipalities, 23.8 % lived on the outskirts of municipalities and 17 % lived in segregated areas.<sup>120</sup>

ECRI noted in its report on **Portugal**<sup>121</sup> that housing is the single greatest problem facing the Roma population. Many Roma continue to live in precarious conditions, often in shanties or tents. Many Roma rehousing programmes result in spatial and social segregation and discriminatory practices, it noted.

The **Swedish** Equality Ombudsman noted that, among Swedish national minorities, only Roma report cases of discrimination. The reports mostly concern housing, social services and the provision of goods and services.<sup>122</sup>

Forced evictions remain a deep-seated problem, with cases reported in 2013 in **France, Greece, Ireland, Italy** and **Romania**.

According to figures gathered by the Human Rights League (LDH) and the ERRC, more than 21,537 Roma were forcibly evicted from a total of 187 sites in **France** in 2013, more than double the 2012 figure. Law enforcement officers carried out 165 evictions affecting almost 19,380 people, and another 22 evictions due to fire, floods or attack, affecting 2,157 Roma.<sup>123</sup>

In response to repeated reports of forced evictions in **Italy** and the segregation of Roma and Sinti in various cities, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights wrote to the Mayor of Rome in December, saying that "the situation of Roma and refugees in Italy is a long-standing concern. Local authorities, including in Rome, have an important role to play in improving the living conditions of these people."

After several notifications since 2011 and a final six-day notice period, a municipality in Eforie Sud, **Romania**, removed those occupying the area providing alternative housing in a former boarding school to 68 persons, of

whom nine declared themselves as Roma and the rest as of Turkish origin.<sup>124</sup>

The Public Defender of Rights<sup>125</sup> was asked to review the implementation and procedures used in 20 cases of forced eviction, mostly involving Roma EU citizens of Romanian or Bulgarian origin, in **France**.

The ERRC lodged a complaint against **Ireland** before the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR). The complaint, lodged on 19 April 2013, alleged that the government had violated a number of rights in the Revised European Social Charter through evictions and sub-standard housing conditions for Travellers.<sup>126</sup> The complaint named the right of the family to social, legal and economic protection (Article 16), the right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection (Article 17) and the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion (Article 30).

In its judgment in *Winterstein and Others v. France*, not yet final, the ECtHR held that the eviction of Roma families violated the ECHR's right to respect for private and family life and home (Article 8).<sup>127</sup> The court noted that the claimants had been living on the same site for a long time, other housing was not provided to all of them, and the domestic authorities failed to assess the measure's proportionality. The ECtHR linked *Winterstein* to its 2012 ruling in the *Yordanova* case,<sup>128</sup> in which it found **Bulgaria** in violation of Article 8,<sup>129</sup> and reaffirmed that Roma as a minority, and one in a vulnerable situation, require states to pay special attention to their needs.

In a related case, the Administrative Tribunal of Lyon, dealing with social housing for an evicted Roma family, also determined that the municipality should provide them with emergency accommodation. A court in Aix-in-Provence also ruled that the municipality did not have the right to evict families from private property.<sup>130</sup> The **Greek** Ombudsman also intervened in a case relating to the eviction of Roma from a camp in Halandri, noting that the state should ensure appropriate alternative accommodation before demolishing a camp.<sup>131</sup> In **Romania**, the Cluj-Napoca County Court determined that the eviction of more than 300 Roma from the Pata-Rât settlement in 2010 was illegal.<sup>132</sup> A similar case is under way at the Regional Court of Wrocław, **Poland**, where the municipality requested the eviction of 20 persons from an illegal camp in March.

The **Slovenian** Advocate of the Principle of Equality asked Novo Mesto municipality to reconsider social housing criteria to ensure that such housing is equally accessible to the most disadvantaged groups, including Roma.<sup>133</sup> In the **United Kingdom**, the High Court of Justice of England and Wales ruled, in a case concerning housing benefit for two Roma Gypsies who had moved from a public to a private caravan site, that the benefit

calculation should not consider the fact they were Roma.<sup>134</sup> In **Sweden**, compensation was awarded to a Roma woman whose landlord had cancelled her contract, arguing that neighbours would not want to live in the same building as a "gypsy".<sup>135</sup>

### 7.3.4. Health

Poor living standards and housing conditions, exacerbated by limited access to healthcare services, mean poor health for many Roma. Data from FRA, UNDP and World Bank surveys show that a significant proportion of Roma do not have, or are not aware that they have, health insurance; in practice, this deprives them of medical services.

The Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration acknowledged the need to ensure equal treatment of Roma in access to healthcare services. It recommended that EU Member States remove barriers to accessing healthcare. It called specifically for improved access to regular preventative medical check-ups and other medical services generally provided by national healthcare services, such as free vaccination programmes, especially for children and Roma in remote areas. Still, few such measures were initiated in 2013.

Several Member States worked to improve Roma access to public health services. **Austria** launched a project to promote Roma access to the public health service, beginning interviews with health service providers and Roma community representatives in 2013.

Health mediators continued their work in **Bulgaria**,<sup>136</sup> **France**, **Italy**, **Romania**, **Slovakia** and **Sweden**.<sup>137</sup> In **Slovakia**, for example, health mediators provided information on basic hygiene, early child care, reproductive and sexual health and food and environmental safety. They also ensure access to health insurance cards and vaccinations.<sup>138</sup>

Several Member States deployed medical social assistants or counsellors. The **Czech Republic** uses them but, to date, only a handful have been trained.<sup>139</sup> **Cyprus** and **Hungary** have health guard assistants, based on a health service model launched in July for disadvantaged micro-regions. **Ireland**<sup>140</sup> and **Portugal** make mobile health units available, while Roma in some **Bulgarian** could use the mobile units for free gynaecological and paediatric exams and lab analyses. **Croatia**, **Ireland**, **Italy** and **Greece**<sup>141</sup> carried out free vaccination campaigns for Roma, particularly for Roma children.

Some Member States implemented outreach programmes and workshops on medical topics. **Finland** established such programmes on hygiene and health and the importance of regular health screening for



Roma. **Bulgaria**<sup>142</sup> provided HIV prevention workshops and **Hungary** delivered healthcare communication campaigns. Hungary also launched a professional educational programme in 2013, under which low-skilled persons in the most disadvantaged regions received an education on basic health-related issues. Following the training, they can pass on basic preventative information and advocate healthier lifestyles in their local communities. **Lithuanian** services ran children's courses on healthy lifestyle, hygiene and sanitation. **Poland** provided first-aid courses and continued a prevention project.

Other initiatives, involving financial support, aimed to boost the numbers of Roma health professionals. **Romania** introduced a Roma health scholarship programme in 2008 and **Bulgaria** added a programme in 2009 for Roma students to attend medical university, both of which continued implementation in 2013.

### Promising practice

#### Providing Roma health scholarships

The Open Society Institute in Sofia and the Amalipe Centre run the Roma Health Scholarship Project, which supports Roma students who study medicine, to increase the number of Roma health professionals in the healthcare system.

The programme includes preparatory courses. In addition, every student has a university professor as a mentor. For students enrolled over the summer, Amalipe organises an advocacy camp. The camp teaches students about Roma history and specific Roma community health problems as well as soft skills, including conflict resolution and leadership and advocacy skills.

The programme started as an Open Society Institute and Amalipe NGO initiative, but the Bulgarian Ministry of Health, having recognised it as one of the three leading practices for Roma health integration, will manage it from 2014.

For more information, see <http://amalipe.com/index.php?nav=projects&id=38&lang=2>

**Greek** efforts to improve healthcare access, an important development for Roma, encountered financial difficulties in 2013. The socio-medical centres, which were operating in municipalities with a high Roma population, ran out of financing because of the country's economic crisis.

**Slovakia** introduced consent forms in minority languages, including in Romani, after several ECtHR sentences condemned forced sterilisations. However, several NGOs have reported that these forms have had only limited effect, because most Roma women are illiterate and understand only the spoken language.<sup>143</sup>

**Slovenia** amended its legislation to provide non-compulsory health insurance to socially disadvantaged groups, including Roma.<sup>144</sup> **Sweden** is developing a hotline for Roma girls on sexual and reproductive health.<sup>145</sup>

A paper on Roma and health mediation in **Romania**, published in late 2013,<sup>146</sup> promotes health equity with a particular focus on Roma.

The **Finnish** National Institute for Health and Welfare began a research project on the health situation of Roma.<sup>147</sup> The institute conducted a pilot study on a sample of 30 individuals at the end of 2013 and will carry out the main research from 2014 to 2016.

A **Bulgarian** programme trained teachers, doctors and social workers to cooperate with the Roma community and raised awareness on racism and anti-Roma attitudes.<sup>148</sup> The **Czech Republic** and **Romania** also have compulsory educational components on ethics, non-discrimination and communication in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy.<sup>149</sup> In **Italy**, a health mediation project was initiated in 2013 in Rome.<sup>150</sup>

### Discrimination in access to health

Few EU Member States made progress in implementing measures to reduce discrimination in healthcare. Most of those efforts focused on training and awareness raising among healthcare professionals regarding Roma.

In addition to the few targeted measures developed in some Member States, other legal developments also highlighted the issue of Roma and health. The Chamber of the ECtHR requested observations on the case *Z. K. v. Slovakia*<sup>151</sup> from the government in 2013. The applicant is a woman of Roma origin who was sterilised, allegedly without informed consent, during the delivery of her second child, when she was still underage. The case is similar to others in which Slovakia was found responsible for forcibly sterilising women of Roma origin without their consent: *V. C. v. Slovakia*,<sup>152</sup> *N. B. v. Slovakia*<sup>153</sup> and *I. G. and Others v. Slovakia*,<sup>154</sup> the last becoming final on 29 April. However, the ECtHR did not find a violation of the prohibition of discrimination (Article 14 of the ECHR) on account of their ethnicity in any of the cases.

## 7.4. Anti-Gypsyism, hate speech and hate crime against Roma

A number of reports by European and international bodies such as ECRI and CAHRM, and studies carried out by NGOs, have documented the prevalence of anti-Gypsyism. In July, ECRI published a report on **Portugal**<sup>155</sup> revealing that, according to NGO reports,

“more than half of Roma people have felt discriminated against or badly treated by the police” and criticising the national strategy for failing to address anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism. In late 2013, CAHROM endorsed a thematic report on combating anti-Gypsyism, hate speech and hate crime against Roma.<sup>156</sup>

The Research Centre for Culture, Education and anti-Gypsyism in Mannheim, RomnoKher, commissioned a report in July on anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Sinti and Roma, which found widespread racism in all areas of **German** social life, including in access to education, employment and housing and when dealing with public authorities.<sup>157</sup> Right-wing political parties’ use of anti-Gypsy speech in the 2013 federal election campaign further reflected racial tensions.<sup>158</sup>

A study in **Luxembourg**<sup>159</sup> also found negative attitudes towards Roma and anti-Gypsyism, with 26 % of residents not wanting a Roma neighbour. In the **Czech Republic**, a survey carried out in November 2012 found that 71 % of respondents had a negative attitude towards Roma, 10 % said that they were disgusted by Roma and 43 % were afraid of Roma.<sup>160</sup>

Various incidents across Europe provide further evidence of racism against Roma. In January, supporters of the extremist party Golden Dawn allegedly attacked the Roma settlement in Aitoliko, **Greece**, burning down six unoccupied makeshift homes and destroying four vehicles.<sup>161</sup> At the end of May, posters bearing the words “Gypsies out of the town forever”<sup>162</sup> appeared in the town. Other incidents included Golden Dawn members’ verbal attacks against Roma outside the Kalamata Messina hospital,<sup>163</sup> and incidents in the Ari Messina village.<sup>164</sup>

In the **Czech Republic**, the Municipal Court of Prague recognised secondary victimisation in the existence of damages beyond material ones, in the case of Roma who suffered an attack by right-wing extremists. It overruled the sentence of the Court of First Instance. In **Hungary**, the equality body punished an entertainment establishment for refusing entrance to six Roma people on account of their ethnicity.<sup>165</sup>

The Vilnius Regional Court in **Lithuania** sentenced three people for a physical attack on a Roma community member, as well as two verbal attacks, including threats.<sup>166</sup> An ongoing case in Łódź, **Poland**, deals with an attack and threats to a Roma family in October.<sup>167</sup>

In **Hungary**, the Budapest Court of Justice convicted three men of premeditated homicide, with the aggravating circumstance of cruelty, for the murders of six members of the Roma community and the injury of others in a series of nine attacks committed in 2008 and 2009. A fourth man was convicted of being an accessory to multiple homicide. The court recognised a racial motivation behind the crimes.<sup>168</sup>

A **Hungarian** parliamentary inquiry into this case established that the National Security Office repeatedly failed to prioritise the six murders and to pass relevant information to police investigators. The Chair of the Parliament’s National Security Committee announced in August that the Committee would initiate an inquiry into the investigation of the 2008–2009 Roma murders.<sup>169</sup>

Roma have also been subject to police abuse. In **Slovakia**, a Roma man with an intellectual disability was wrongly left in police custody for over two months following an incident in Moldava nad Bodvou.<sup>170</sup>

Similarly, the ECRI noted that in **Finland** “Roma are victims of racial profiling and that there are cases of police violence when members of this community are arrested, but that not much information is available on the subject.”<sup>171</sup>

Several incidents of racist hate speech directed at Roma were reported in 2013. In **Hungary**, a founding member of the ruling Fidesz party wrote an opinion column for a newspaper in January which used highly offensive language,<sup>172</sup> comparing Roma to animals.<sup>173</sup> Some NGOs asked companies to pull their advertising from the newspaper, the *Magyar Hírlap*, until it stopped publishing racist, antisemitic or homophobic articles.

In **France**, in an interview published on 15 March in the French daily paper *Le Figaro*, the Interior Minister said that Roma migrants from Bulgaria and Romania living in camps in France had no interest in integrating into French society, “for cultural reasons or because they are in the hands of begging or prostitution networks”.<sup>174</sup>

In **Slovakia**, the Supreme Court acquitted a politician (who was later elected regional governor of Banská Bystrica) of promoting racial hatred. The court considered there was no intention to promote hatred towards Roma. A **Slovenian** court sentenced a person for inciting hatred, violence and intolerance in a comment under a Roma-related article in a news portal. In **Spain**, a local Barcelona court acquitted the mayor of Badalona of inciting discrimination, hatred and violence for distributing flyers linking Romanian Roma to criminality.

In **Romania**, the National Council for Combating Discrimination investigated three cases regarding alleged hate speech. The Mayor of Târgu Mureş was fined for offensive remarks regarding Roma. A councillor of Alba Iulia was fined for inciting racial hatred for a statement made on a Facebook page, where he supported the sterilisation of Roma women and made derogatory remarks towards Roma. In the third case, however, the national council considered the Prime Minister’s statements on a BBC show, linking criminality and Roma, acceptable under freedom of expression.



In **Italy**, the Civil Court of Pescara declared that posters and public statements by the *Popolo della Libertà* (PDL) and the *Lega Nord* in Abruzzo linking Roma to criminals were discriminatory.<sup>175</sup>

In **Poland**, an ongoing case is examining the possible discriminatory nature of a Facebook page on which there was incitement to use force against Roma in Andrychów.<sup>176</sup>

In **Italy**, the Civil Court of Rome ordered the Ministry of the Interior to destroy sensitive information on Italian Roma. Police obtained these data, including fingerprints, in accordance with nomad emergency legislation adopted in 2008, which the Council of State declared unlawful in November 2011. The Supreme Court of Cassation upheld the Council of State's decision on 26 June. In **Slovenia**, it was reported that police officers, judges and other public servants with frequent contact with Roma received training to overcome prejudices towards Roma population.<sup>177</sup>

## Outlook

EU institutions and the Council of Europe will continue to support Member States' efforts to improve the socio-economic situation of Roma and to protect them from fundamental rights violations. This will be particularly important in view of the ongoing economic crisis, which affects social solidarity and adds 'austerity' arguments to anti-Gypsy rhetoric.

Evidence has shown that the successful implementation and sustainability of Roma integration actions depend

on the political will and commitment of local and regional authorities, because they are responsible for translating national strategies into specific actions. Learning from past experience, these authorities are expected to rely less on one-off projects and rather target Roma explicitly in their mainstream activities against poverty and social exclusion, one of the seven flagship initiatives of Europe's 2020 strategy. They should also focus on gaining the trust of Roma communities through systematic efforts to ensure that they can participate actively in an equitable and meaningful way in actions that concern them. Successes on the ground would, in turn, help win over greater public support for Roma integration.

The social and economic integration of Roma, who for centuries have been socially excluded and marginalised, will be a gradual process. It is, nevertheless, important to show positive achievements and gradual progress over time. In this regard, it is expected that EU institutions and Member States will focus on developing and implementing more effective monitoring and evaluation processes.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of individual interventions and of the broader national Roma integration strategies is needed. To this end, FRA will support the Member States through its working party on Roma integration developing and testing appropriate tools and methods, and a common indicator framework to measure progress in guaranteeing the fundamental rights of Roma.

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## Endnotes

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- 1 The use of the term 'Roma' in this FRA Annual report follows the approach of the Council of Europe, which uses the term to refer to "Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies." Council of Europe (2012), *Descriptive glossary of terms relating to Roma issues*, version dated 12 May 2012, Strasbourg, [http://hub.coe.int/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=83de8f0d-ee32-40c9-b92e-e77edec46388&groupId=10227](http://hub.coe.int/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=83de8f0d-ee32-40c9-b92e-e77edec46388&groupId=10227).
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