

EQUALITY



Discrimination against and living conditions of Roma women in 11 EU Member States

Roma survey – Data in focus



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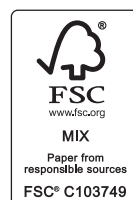
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Foreword

Roma, Europe's largest minority, have been an integral part of European society for centuries. Despite efforts at national, European and international level to improve the protection of their fundamental rights and advance their social integration, many Roma still face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They are marginalised, and many experience deep poverty and extremely poor socio-economic conditions. This affects their chances of accessing and participating equally in quality education, which in turn affects future perspectives and employment, income levels, housing conditions and health status, and also reduces their capabilities and limits their opportunities. This undermines social cohesion and sustainable human development, hinders competitiveness and generates costs for society as a whole. Moreover, such discrimination is incompatible with the values upon which the European Union (EU) is founded.

Women throughout the EU still face inequalities in many respects. In the case of Roma women, extreme poverty and exclusion reinforce these disadvantages and therefore put an additional burden on them. Across the 11 EU Member States surveyed, the average situation of Roma women in core areas of social life, such as education, employment and health, is worse than that of Roma men. We should not forget that women in general continue to shoulder a disproportionate part of the responsibilities involved in running a family. In the case of Roma women, early marriages and births, the number of children and severely deprived housing conditions make them particularly vulnerable. They must sometimes run a household which may lack electricity, running water, a washing machine or other facilities that are taken for granted across Europe. Such difficult conditions, coupled with the often confined household space and a lack of financial resources and employment opportunities, can increase the likelihood of domestic violence and conflict. Fighting absolute poverty and ensuring adequate housing conditions and basic infrastructure therefore seem crucial to empowering Roma women to access the labour market and become economically independent.

Achieving a tangible improvement in Roma people's lives and providing their children with equal opportunities requires political will: the courage and determination to act. However, political will alone is not sufficient. It must be complemented by knowledge of what works and what does not, and by reliable monitoring tools capable of assessing measures taken and capturing the results achieved. Furthermore, renewed efforts for Roma integration can only bring sustainable results if authorities engage with the local communities, Roma and non-Roma, building trust, developing social cohesion, and combating prejudice and discrimination.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) continues its efforts to contribute to Roma inclusion by gathering and analysing robust and comparable data, assisting in the design of indicators that show progress over time and testing approaches engaging with Roma communities at the local level. The current publication is one element of this comprehensive endeavour.

Morten Kjaerum

Director

Country codes

Country code	EU Member State
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IT	Italy
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SK	Slovakia

Contents

FOREWORD.....	3
INTRODUCTION	7
KEY FINDINGS	9
1 EDUCATION.....	11
1.1. Literacy	11
1.2. School attendance	13
1.3. School attendance patterns by country.....	15
2 EMPLOYMENT.....	17
2.1. Self-declared main activity status	17
2.2. Employment patterns of paid work.....	20
2.3. Unemployment	21
2.4. Experience of discrimination when looking for a job	22
3 HEALTHCARE.....	25
3.1. Health status.....	25
3.2. Limitations in daily activities	27
3.3. Eligibility for and access to health services.....	28
4 HOUSING	31
4.1. Housing deprivation	31
5 FINANCIAL SITUATION.....	33
5.1. At risk of poverty.....	33
5.2. Entitlement to pension benefits.....	35
6 PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND RIGHTS AWARENESS	37
6.1. Awareness of anti-discrimination employment laws	37
6.2. Knowledge of support organisations for victims of discrimination	39
7 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND MARITAL STATUS OF ROMA WOMEN	41
7.1. Voting	41
7.2. Early marriage	41
CONCLUSIONS.....	45
ANNEXES	47
The survey in a nutshell	47
Key terms and concepts	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51

Introduction

On 27 June 2013, the President of the European Parliament asked FRA, in accordance with its founding Regulation, to analyse the data collected through its Roma survey, broken down by gender in the areas of employment, education, housing and health and any other gender-sensitive policy areas.¹

The aim of the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade – Europe 2020 – is for Europe to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The Roma have been identified as a group at particular risk that need to be targeted if inclusive growth and social cohesion are to be achieved.² To help reach Europe 2020 targets with regard to employment, education and poverty, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 was set up.³

At the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), it was confirmed that the so-called gender approach should be applied in all services, programmes and policies, to ensure inclusion and full realisation. The gender-based approach entails the following activities: collecting disaggregated gender-based data; identifying factors leading to discrimination against women, or, alternatively, of inequalities; analysing these disparities; formulating specific objectives to overcome them; defining indicators to measure their reduction; identifying necessary resources; developing specific strategies; and updating the strategies in force.⁴

Equality is one of the five values on which the EU is founded. The EU is bound to strive for equality between women and men in all its activities. The Charter of Fundamental Rights provides for such equality and prohibits sex discrimination (Article 23). The EU strategy for equality between women and men has confirmed that any inequalities between women and men violate fundamental rights, and renewed the EU's commitment to gender equality and to strengthening the gender perspective in all its policies:

“In order to achieve the objectives of Europe 2020, namely smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the potential and the talent pool of women need to be used more extensively and more efficiently. Gender roles continue to influence crucial individual decisions: on education, on career paths, on working arrangements, on family and on fertility.”⁵

On 16 October 2013, the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (the FEMM Committee) adopted the *Report on gender aspects of*

the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The analysis presented in the current report should contribute to setting the benchmark for monitoring progress called for by the FEMM Committee.

Finally, in December 2013, the EU's Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council issued a recommendation⁶ on effective Roma integration measures in Member States. It urges Member States, with regard to the protection of Roma children and women, to:

“Combat all forms of discrimination, including multiple discrimination, faced by Roma children and women, and fight violence, including domestic violence, against women and girls, trafficking in human beings, underage and forced marriages, and begging involving children, in particular through the enforcement of legislation. To this end, Member States should ensure the involvement in this exercise of all relevant actors including public authorities, civil society and Roma communities. In this context, cooperation between Member States is encouraged in situations with a cross-border dimension.”

Roma pilot survey

In 2011, FRA – in cooperation with the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank – conducted a pilot survey of Roma populations and non-Roma populations living near them. The study collected data in 11 EU Member States on their situation with regard to employment, education, housing and health, as well as on issues of equal treatment and rights awareness.⁷

In total, 16,319 Roma and non-Roma households were surveyed in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. For each household, one respondent aged 16 years or over was selected for an interview. The information given partly refers to the household as a whole, therefore, in total, the data describe the living conditions of 61,271 persons. The current analysis on discrimination against and the living conditions of Roma women used information on a total of 14,104 Roma women and 13,521 Roma men aged 16 and older, and on 9,161 girls and 9,594 boys under the age of 16 who live in a Roma household.

The sample reflects the situation in all regions in the 11 Member States with an above average proportion of Roma. The survey spotlights living conditions in areas

1 The analysis contributes to European Parliament (2013).

2 European Commission (2010a).

3 European Commission (2011).

4 United Nations (1995).

5 European Commission (2010b).

6 Council of the European Union, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (2013).

7 FRA (2012).

where Roma identity is more visible than elsewhere. Roma ethnicity was determined solely through self-identification. This implies explicit awareness and a certain feeling of belonging to the Roma minority.

The non-Roma population was sampled in the same areas and was found to be distinct from the Roma population with respect to income, employment and housing. In addition, there is also an observable economic gap between on the one hand these two groups and on the other the 'majority population', a term used here to describe the general population of a country, reflecting that country's average standard of living.

A summary of key findings was published jointly with the UNDP and the European Commission in 2012.

Detailed analyses on employment and education have been published as *Data in focus* reports⁸ and an online data explorer allows detailed country comparison for core results of the survey.⁹

The current report is based on the analysis which was conducted for the European Parliament's *Report on gender aspects of the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, and focuses on the situation of Roma women in comparison with that of Roma men in the areas of employment, education, housing and health, as well as any other gender-sensitive policy areas.¹⁰

8 FRA (2014a); FRA (2014b).

9 FRA (2014c).

10 European Parliament, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) (2013).

Key findings

Across the 11 EU Member States surveyed (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain), the average situation of Roma women in core areas of social life, such as education, employment and health, is worse than that of Roma men. The results also show important differences between Member States that need to be taken into account when developing and implementing Roma inclusion policies and actions.

Education

Education is a key area for progress in the social inclusion of Roma. There still exists a significant ethnic gap between Roma and non-Roma with regard to self-reported literacy; and for Roma women the gap is even bigger. More Roma men (85 %) than women (77 %) say that they can read and write and more Roma women (19 %) than men (14 %) say that they have never been to school. The situation is better for Roma aged 16 to 24, and especially for Roma women within that age group, who achieve, on average the same literacy levels as Roma men in the same group. In Greece, literacy levels are the lowest among the EU Member States surveyed, even for Roma men and women aged 16 to 24. On average, across all Member States surveyed, fewer Roma women (37 %) than men (50 %) aged 16 to 24 are reported as remaining in education after the age of 16.

The gender gap in education may be increased by early marriages. Across all Member States surveyed, around 2 % of Roma girls aged 10 to 15 are reported as 'traditionally married' or cohabitating with a partner and around 16 % of Roma (men and women) aged 16 to 17 are reported as legally or traditionally married or cohabitating. Only 6 % of Roma women aged 16 to 17 who are married or cohabitating are in education, compared with an average of 36 % for all Roma women in this age group.

Employment and financial situation

Employment is another area with a pronounced gender gap. On average across the Member States surveyed, 21 % of Roma women are in paid work, compared to 35 % of Roma men. The situation differs between the countries surveyed. In former socialist countries, there is a long tradition of women and men sharing labour participation equally, which seems to be true also for Roma in these countries. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, the proportion of Roma women doing paid work is equal to or even higher than that of Roma men.

The proportion of Roma women working as full-time homemakers is higher in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain. The higher percentage of self-declared full-time homemakers among women may in part reflect the perpetuation of traditional gender roles, but may also be an indication of resignation and withdrawal from the labour market. On average, Roma men are more frequently reported as self-employed (25 %) or in ad hoc jobs (28 %) than Roma women (13 % and 15 %, respectively).

The data do not provide sufficient information on the gender gap in incomes. At household level, however, the financial situation of women is reflected in the at-risk-of-poverty household indicator. Of Roma households in the survey, 87 % have an income below the national at-risk-of-poverty level, compared to 46 % of non-Roma households surveyed and 17 % of the EU population in general. Roma families with four or more children have the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate across the surveyed EU Member States; in many Member States, 90 % or more of these families have an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

Health and housing situation

Health and housing situation are mutually related, particularly in the case of Roma women who bear most of the burden of household work. When looking at **health**, there are relatively few differences between Roma women and men are registered. When comparing Roma women to non-Roma women (aged 16 and above), however, we find that more Roma women say that their health is 'bad' or 'very bad', a difference which is even more pronounced for women over 50. In Italy, the health of Roma women aged 50 and above living in encampments is much worse than that of non-Roma women living nearby. When asked about their medical insurance coverage, on average, 18 % of Roma women respondents say that they are not covered, compared to 8 % of non-Roma women living nearby.

With regard to **housing**, the survey results show that 42 % of the Roma surveyed live in conditions of severe deprivation, which is to say that they have no running water and/or connection to the sewage system or a sewage tank and/or electricity, compared to 12 % of non-Roma living nearby. Roma households with four or more children face an even higher likelihood of severe housing deprivation. This situation disproportionately affects Roma women.

Perception of discrimination

There are relatively small gender differences with regard to perceived **discrimination and rights awareness**: overall 22 % of Roma women and 27 % of Roma men respondents say that they have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity when looking for work in the preceding 12 months – although there are important differences between EU Member States. Roma women are, on average, less aware of anti-discrimination legislation than Roma men.

Gender differences in relation to **voting** in national and local elections are small, with the lowest participation rates, for both men and women, in France, the Czech Republic, Italy and Portugal (see the Annex on Who was interviewed and how).



1

Education



The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies identifies as a target within the Europe 2020 inclusion process ensuring that all Roma children complete at least primary school.¹¹ On average, 97.5 % of children complete primary education across the EU, which serves as the benchmark. The FRA *Data in focus* report on the education of Roma shows that, in the countries surveyed, between 20 % and 40 % of Roma aged 16 to 24 have not finished primary education.¹²

Education has an impact on future life chances. Not only is it crucial to finding stable and decently paid employment, but it also has an intrinsic value. This is why it is worrying that girls have been proved to be particularly vulnerable to being excluded from education. The results show that Roma women still lag behind men with regard to all educational parameters observed in the survey: self-perceived literacy, school attendance rate and highest level of education reached. The gaps close, however, when looking at younger age groups, indicating that there have been improvements over time, especially in some EU Member States. For Roma under 16, there is no difference observed between girls and boys with regard to compulsory school and pre-school attendance. In comparison with the majority population, however, Roma children still face multiple disadvantages, particularly with regard to early childhood education and care and final educational outcome.

1.1. Literacy

The survey finds that 80 % of Roma respondents aged 16 and above declare that they can read and write. This already hints at a significant ethnic gap: the proportion of non-Roma who identified themselves as literate is 99 %. The gender gap is also pronounced. Overall, Roma women report lower literacy levels (77 %) than Roma men (85 %) (Figure 1). The gender difference is greatest in Portugal, where only 55 % of Roma women aged 16 and above declare that they can read and write, compared to 77 % of Roma men. The gap in literacy levels between Roma women and men is also notable in Romania (64 % against 76 %) and Greece (43 % against 55 %).

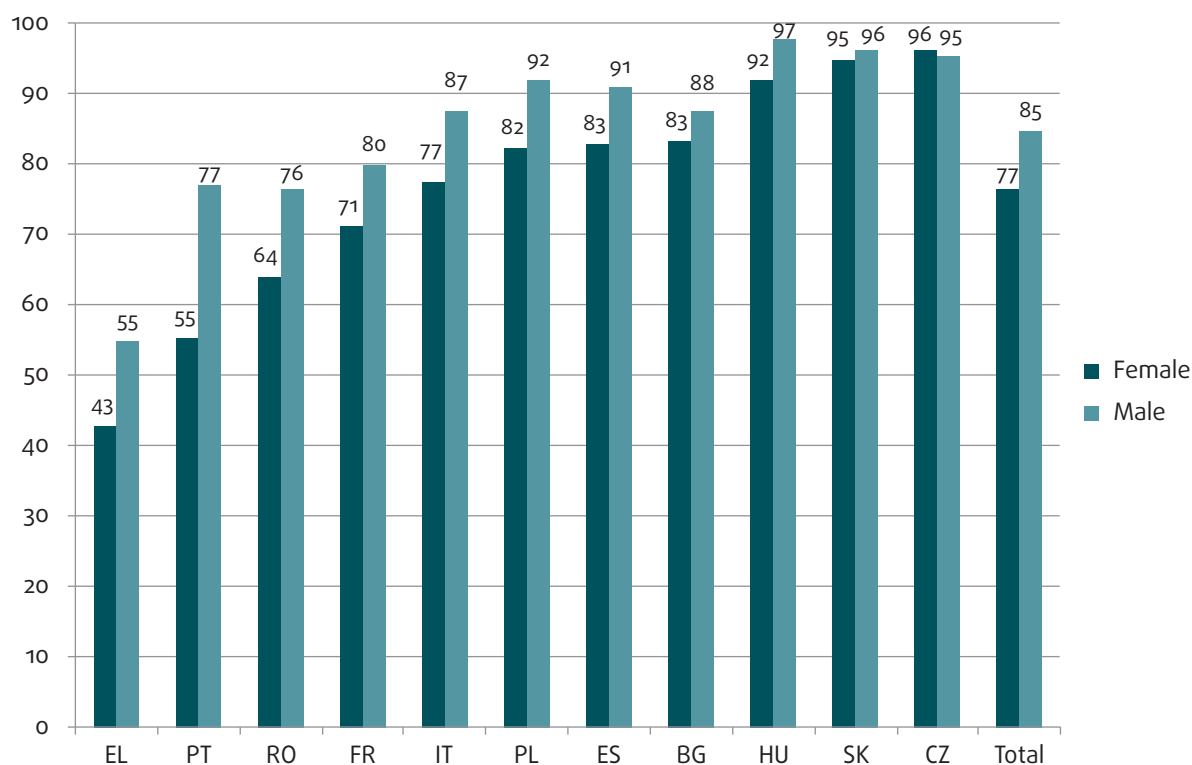
At the same time, the situation has improved for younger Roma¹³, and in particular for younger women: Roma women aged 16 to 24 have reached the same literacy level (89 %) as Roma men in the same age group (Figure 2). In Portugal, the ability to read and write for Roma aged 16 to 24 has increased the most, and the gap between young Roma women and men has nearly closed (88 % literacy among women versus 93 % among men). Self-declared literacy is lowest in Greece both as regards general levels as well as for young Roma: only 65 % of Roma women and men aged 16 to 24 are literate.

¹¹ European Commission (2011).

¹² FRA (2014a).

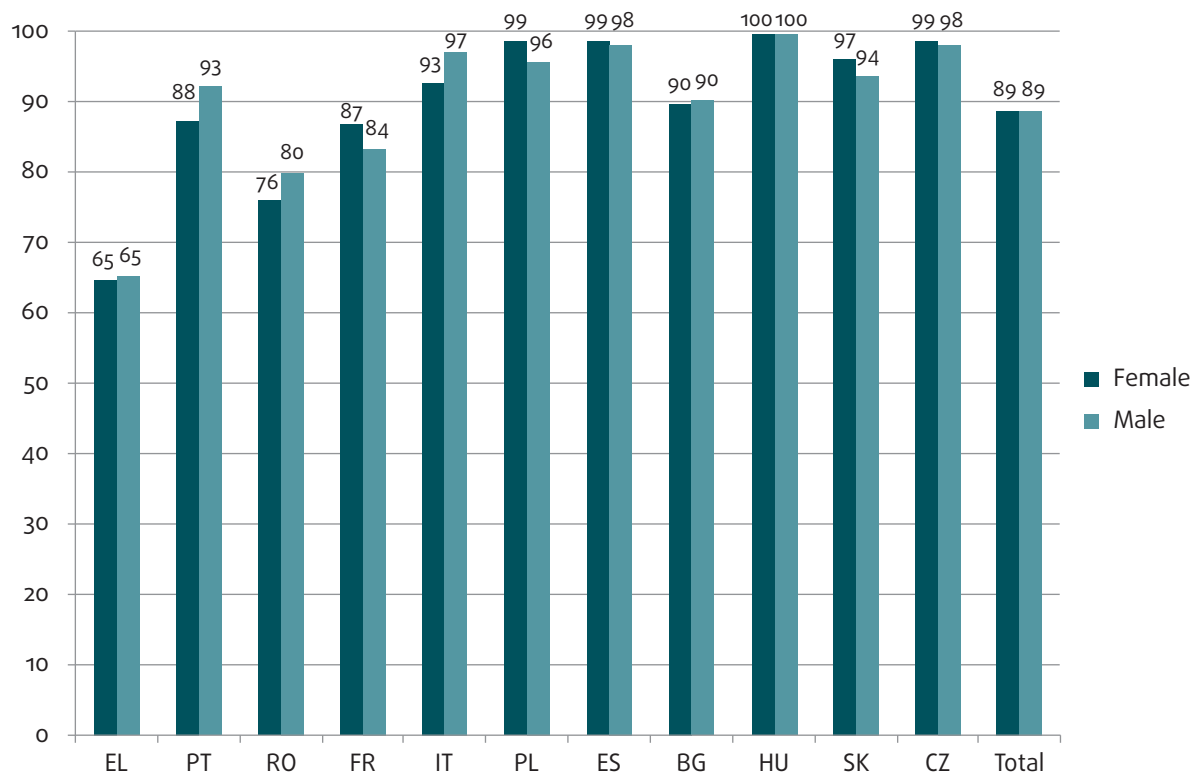
¹³ See more detailed analysis in FRA (2014a).

Figure 1: Self-declared literacy of Roma women and men aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared ability to read and write, Roma respondents aged 16 and above

Figure 2: Self-declared literacy of Roma women and men aged 16 to 24 (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared ability to read and write, Roma respondents aged 16 to 24



1.2. School attendance

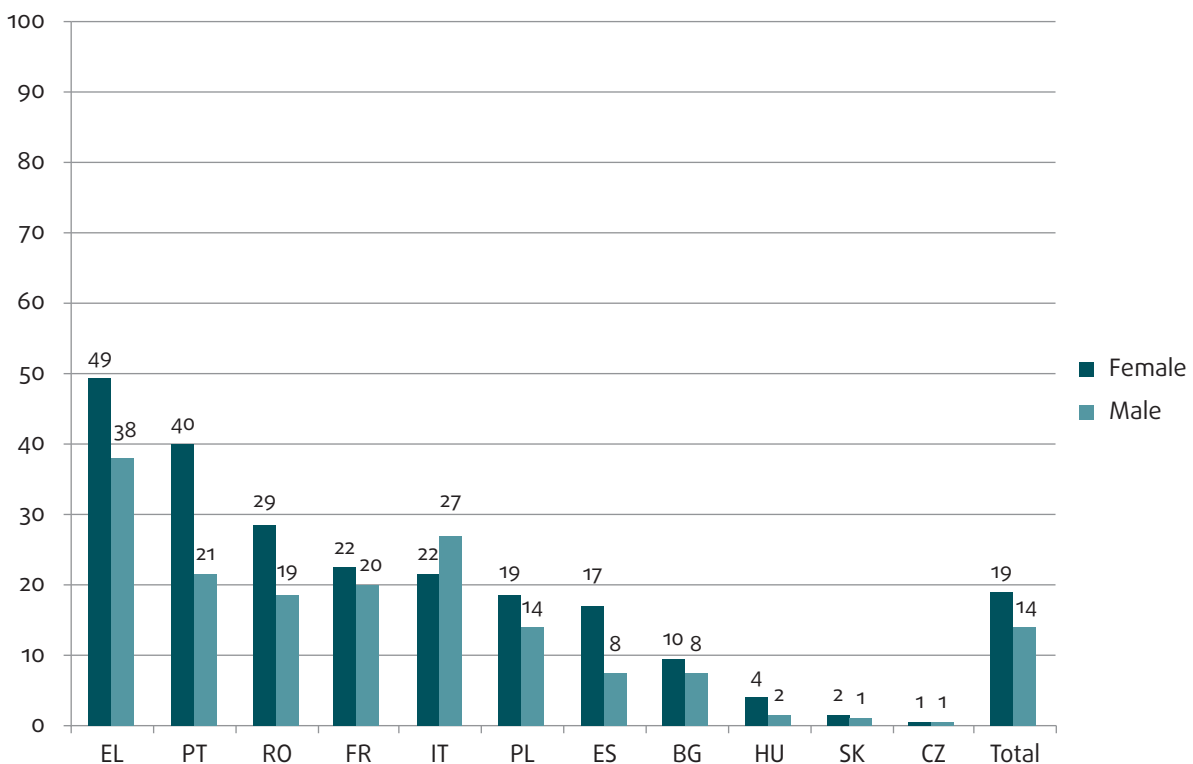
A significant proportion of the Roma population has never attended school: on average, 19 % of Roma women and 14 % of Roma men aged 16 and above. In all the countries surveyed except France and Slovakia, the percentage of women who have never attended school is higher than the percentage of men who have not (Figure 3). Of those who did attend school, more than half of both Roma women (58 %) and men (54%) aged 16 and above dropped out of school before the age of 16 (Figure 4). The difference in the proportions of those remaining in school after the age of 16 is bigger: 32 % of Roma men and only 23 % of Roma women do so.

The situation is different in individual countries, however, in terms of both the rate of non-attendance and the size of the gender gap. The figures for non-attendance are highest in Greece, where half of Roma

women surveyed (49 %) never attended school, compared to 38 % of Roma men. The situation in Portugal is slightly better as regards non-attendance (40 % and 21 % for women and men, respectively), but the gender gap there is highest (19 percentage points). In Romania, the figures for non-attendance for women and men are, respectively, 29 % and 19 %.

The situation has, nevertheless, improved for Roma aged 16 to 24: only 8 % have never attended school 50 % dropped out of school before the age of 16 and 42 % continued their education after the age of 16 (Figure 5). However, high percentages of these young Roma have never attended school in Greece (28 %), Romania (15 %) and France (12 %).¹⁴ In addition, the improvement has not been equally pronounced for boys and girls. Half of Roma men aged 16 to 24 and only 37 % of Roma women in the same age group remained in school after the age of 16 (Figure 5).

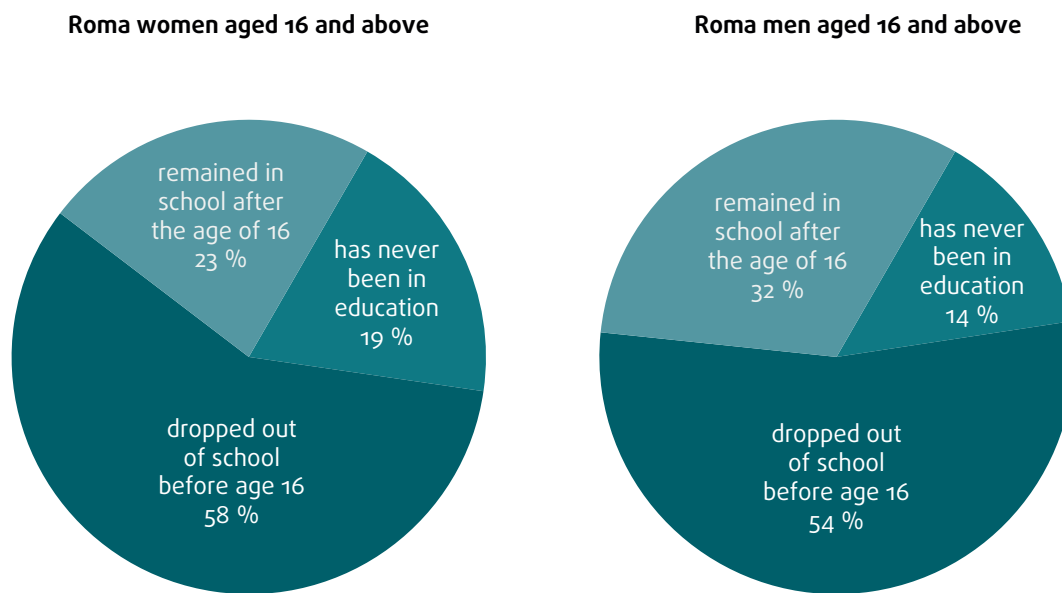
Figure 3: Roma aged 16 and above who never went to school (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Response category 'Has never been in education' for the question 'At what age did you finish or leave school?', Roma respondents aged 16 and above

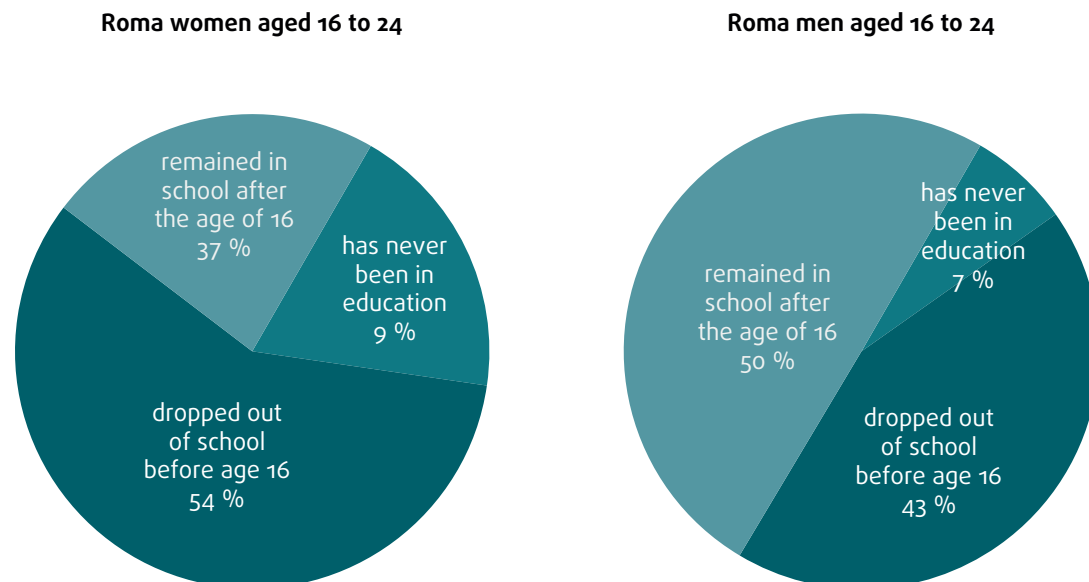
¹⁴ FRA (2014a).

Figure 4: School attendance patterns of Roma aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Question: 'At what age did you finish or leave school?', or main activity indicated as 'in school/student'. Roma respondents aged 16 and above, survey total

Figure 5: School attendance patterns of Roma aged 16 to 24 (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Question: 'At what age did you finish or leave school?', or main activity indicated as 'in school/student'. Roma respondents aged 16 to 24, survey total



No gender differences were observed for Roma girls and boys who were younger than 16 at the time of the survey: 39 % were not yet in school or kindergarten or had left school already, 11 % attended a kindergarten or pre-school and half of the children attended school or were engaged in training (Figure 6).

1.3. School attendance patterns by country

With regard to the distribution of school attendance patterns¹⁵ among countries, half of Roma aged 16 to 24 who have never been in education were surveyed in Greece followed by Romania, Portugal and France.

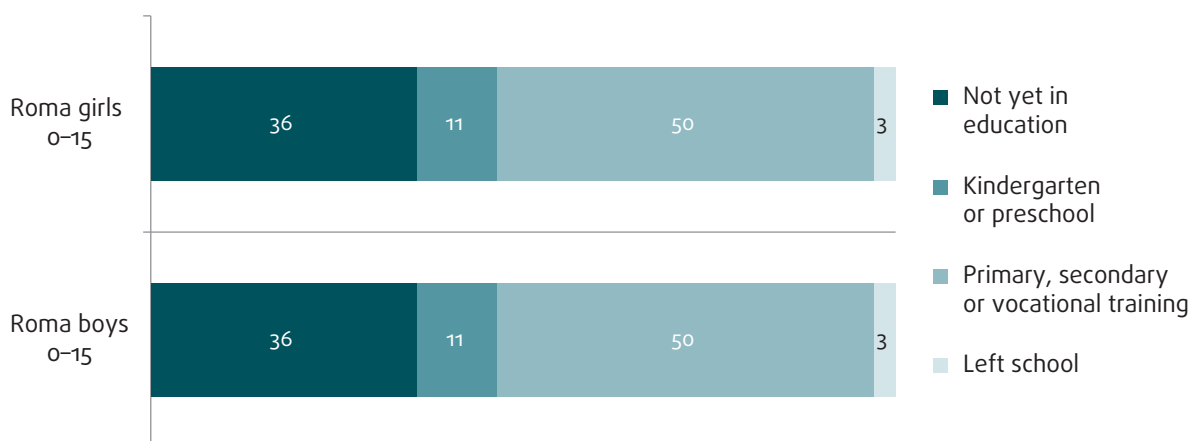
Greece has the lowest proportion of both Roma women and men surveyed who say that they continued their education after the age of 16. The gender differences

there are also pronounced: only 6 % of Roma women aged 16 to 24 continued their education after the age of 16, compared with 17 % of Roma men in the same age group.

Among the EU Member States surveyed, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland have the highest proportion of 16- to 24-year-old Roma women and men who continued their education after the age of 16. Again though, with the exception of the Czech Republic, fewer Roma women than Roma men continued their education after the age of 16.

Gender differences persist in the younger age group in Romania (19 % of women have never been in education versus 10 % of men) and Greece (30 % versus 25 %). In France, also in this 16- to 24-year-old age group, more men (16 %) than women (9 %) say that they have never attended school.

Figure 6: Educational participation of Roma children aged 0 to 15 (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Current educational situation of girls and boys in Roma households aged 0 to 15, survey total

¹⁵ See detailed analysis on educational patterns in FRA (2014a).

2

Employment



The UNDP study of Roma in central and southern Europe shows a decline in employment rates among Roma between 2004 and 2011 that is higher than that among non-Roma. Although there were significant improvements in educational attainment, these were not translated into gains in employment.¹⁶

The type and quality of employment in Roma communities are also quite distinct from those available to the majority of the population. In-depth analysis has shown that employment rates of Roma are clearly lower in segregated areas and that those who are employed mostly remain below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, indicating that jobs are often irregular and low paid.¹⁷ These patterns also have a gender dimension.

The employment of women is crucial to their attainment of economic independence, which is in turn a sustainable basis for alleviating poverty and reducing within-household inequalities and domestic violence. Roma women often face multiple barriers to employment: traditional gender roles, low qualifications and few options for childcare except within the household. Living in segregated areas and facing discrimination make access to the labour market even more difficult.

These general constraints have different outcomes depending on the country context. As a result, the employment situation of Roma women differs among the countries surveyed. In the former socialist societies, there is a long tradition, which continues today, of women and men sharing labour participation equally.¹⁸

The types of residential areas where Roma live and where they were interviewed differ considerably

between the 11 EU Member States covered in the FRA survey; therefore, possible differences between Member States surveyed in terms of the distribution of respondents between urban and rural dwellers need to be taken into account when interpreting the results.

2.1. Self-declared main activity status

The data suggest that on average in the 11 EU Member States surveyed, a lower proportion of Roma women than Roma men aged 16 and above are in paid work (21 % against 35 %, Figure 7). At the same time, a lower proportion of women are unemployed (33 %, compared to 39 % of Roma men). On average, 24 % of Roma women state that their main activity is taking care of the home (against 1 % of Roma men).

The share of those declaring 'household work' as their main activity is unequally distributed across countries (Figure 8). It is lower in the former socialist countries, namely Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia (only Romania is an exception, with 35 % of women declaring 'household work' as their main occupation). Women in these countries tend to report more often that they are either in paid employment or unemployed, suggesting that they consider household work less meaningful than participation in the labour market.

The situation is quite different in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain, where the data reveal more explicitly the traditional divide between women and men in terms of their main activity status: Roma women are more likely to be full-time housekeepers, whereas the labour participation of men is clearly higher. Except in France, these more traditional gender roles are also evident among the non-Roma living nearby.

¹⁶ O'Higgins, N. (2012).

¹⁷ FRA (2014b).

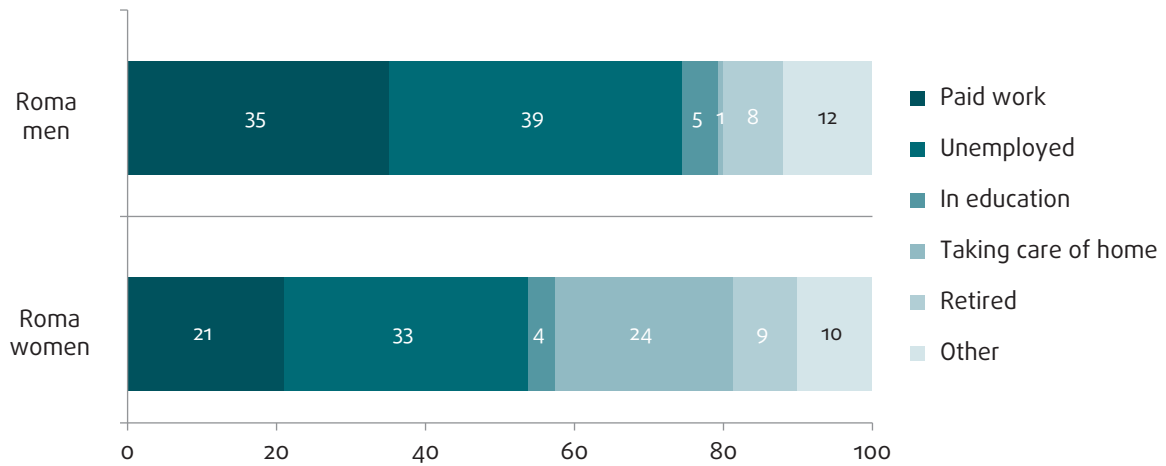
¹⁸ *Ibid.*

In the central European countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia), Roma women tend to have an equal or even higher labour market participation rate than Roma men, in terms of paid work. In the Czech Republic, 36 % of Roma women and 33 % of men indicate some form of paid work as their main activity. In Hungary, 32 % of Roma women aged 16 and above are in paid work, compared to 26 % of Roma men. In Slovakia, 24 % of Roma women and 18 % of Roma men are in paid work. In these countries, Roma women and men have equal rates of unemployment.

There are only minimal differences between Roma women and men in relation to retirement, but there are more substantial ones in this respect between the

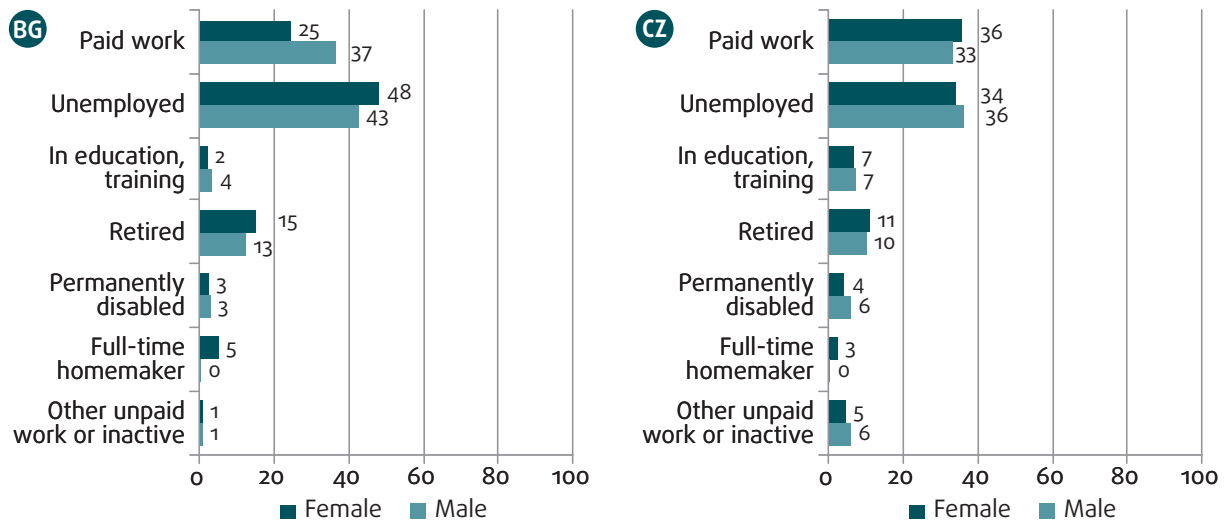
Roma and non-Roma women surveyed. While 27 % of non-Roma women surveyed say they are retired, only 9 % of Roma women do so. The ethnic gap with regard to retirement is similar for men (23 % of non-Roma men say they are retired, compared to 8 % of Roma men). To a large extent, these results reflect differences in the demographic characteristics of the two groups, but the lower proportion of retired people among Roma is also related to higher incidences of informal employment and ineligibility for a pension. This hypothesis is proved by the distribution in the age group aged 50 years and above. The proportion of respondents stating 'retirement' as their main activity is 39 % among Roma women and 36 % among Roma men, compared to 52 % of non-Roma women and 58 % of non-Roma men.

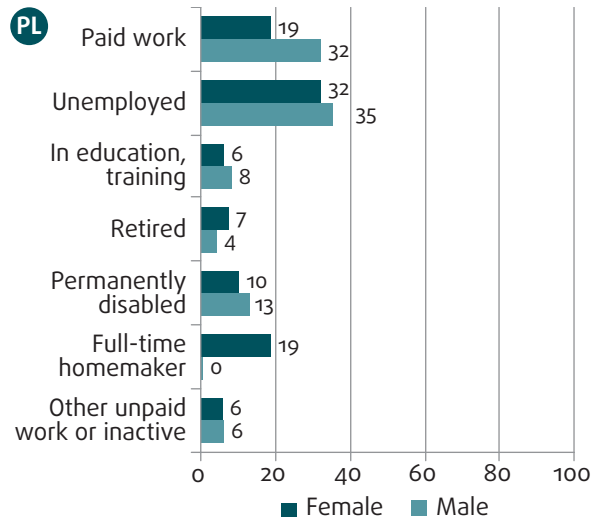
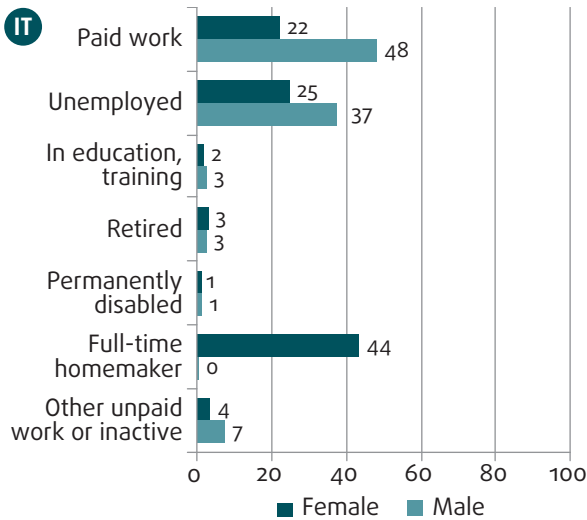
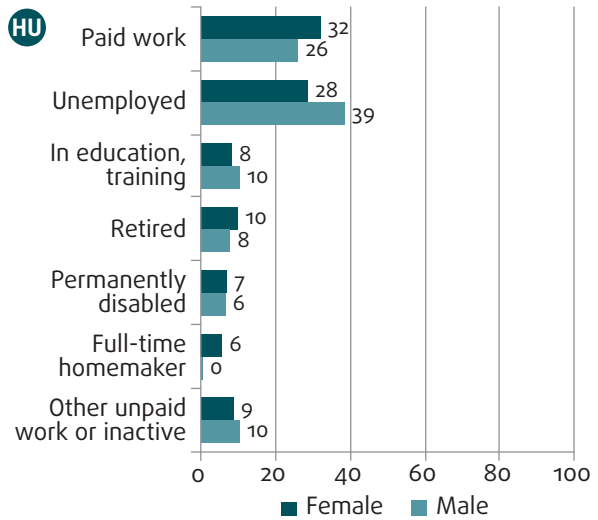
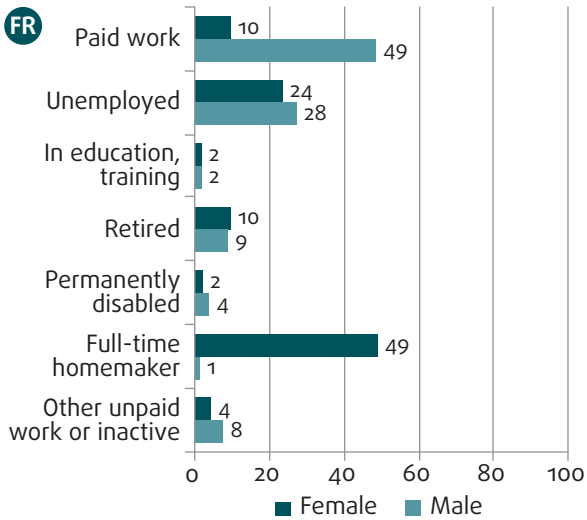
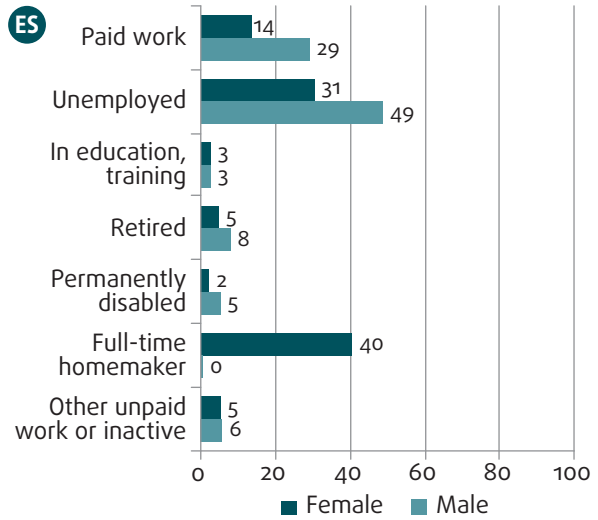
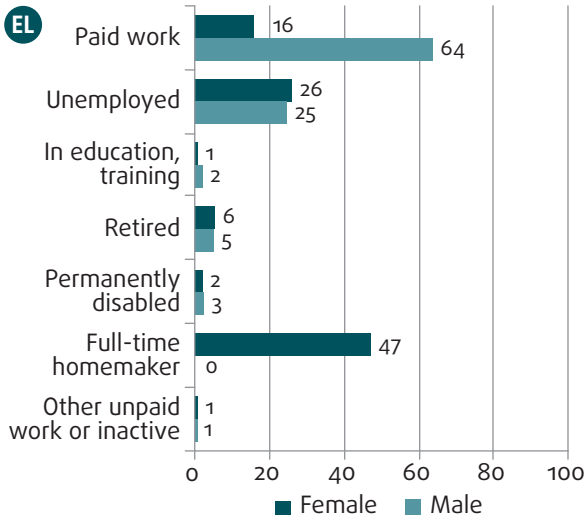
Figure 7: Self-declared main activity of Roma women and men aged 16 and above (%)

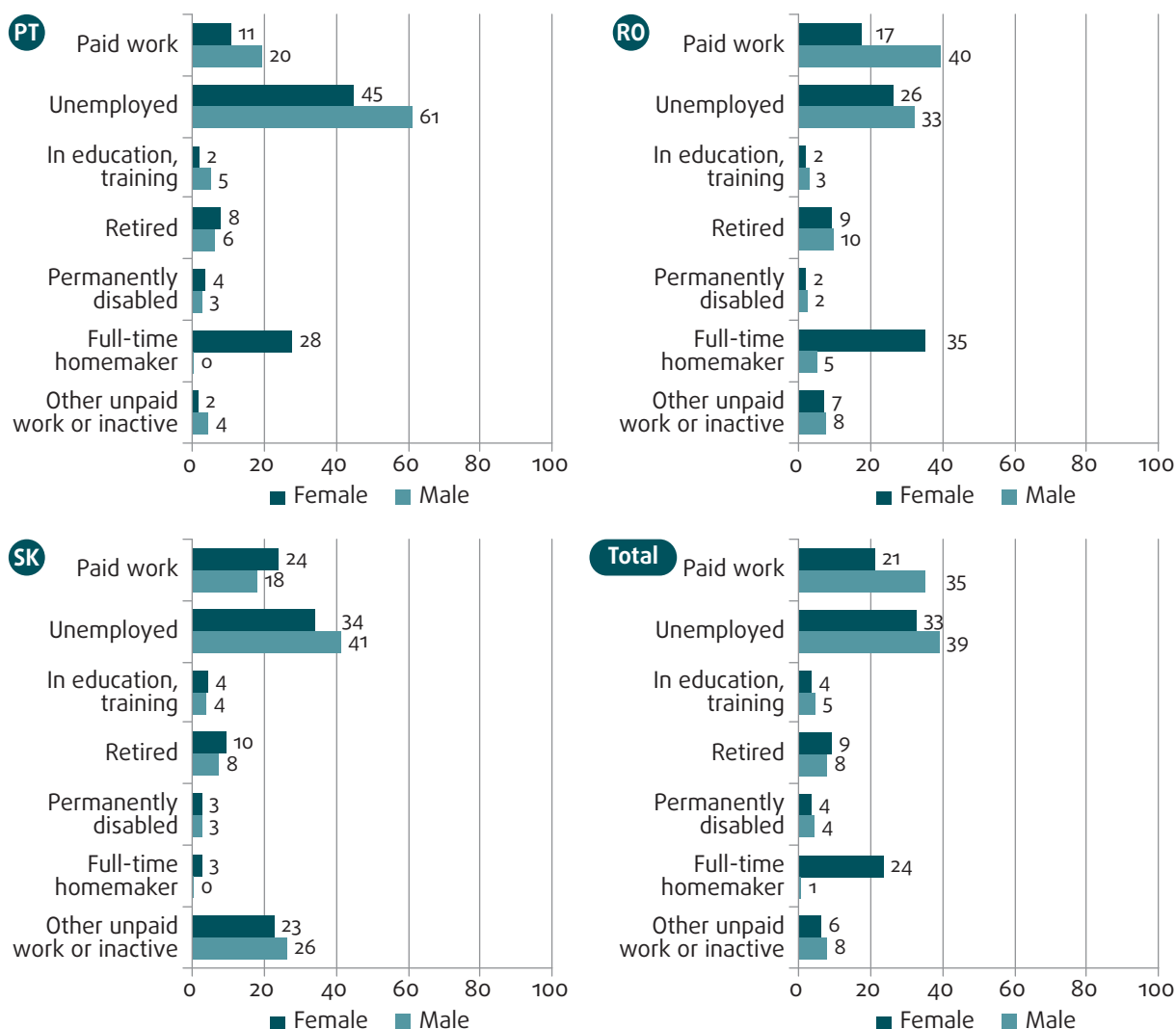


Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared main activity, persons in Roma households aged 16 and above

Figure 8: Self-declared main activity of Roma women and men aged 16 and above, by EU Member State (%)







Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared main activity, persons in Roma households aged 16 and above.

2.2. Employment patterns of paid work

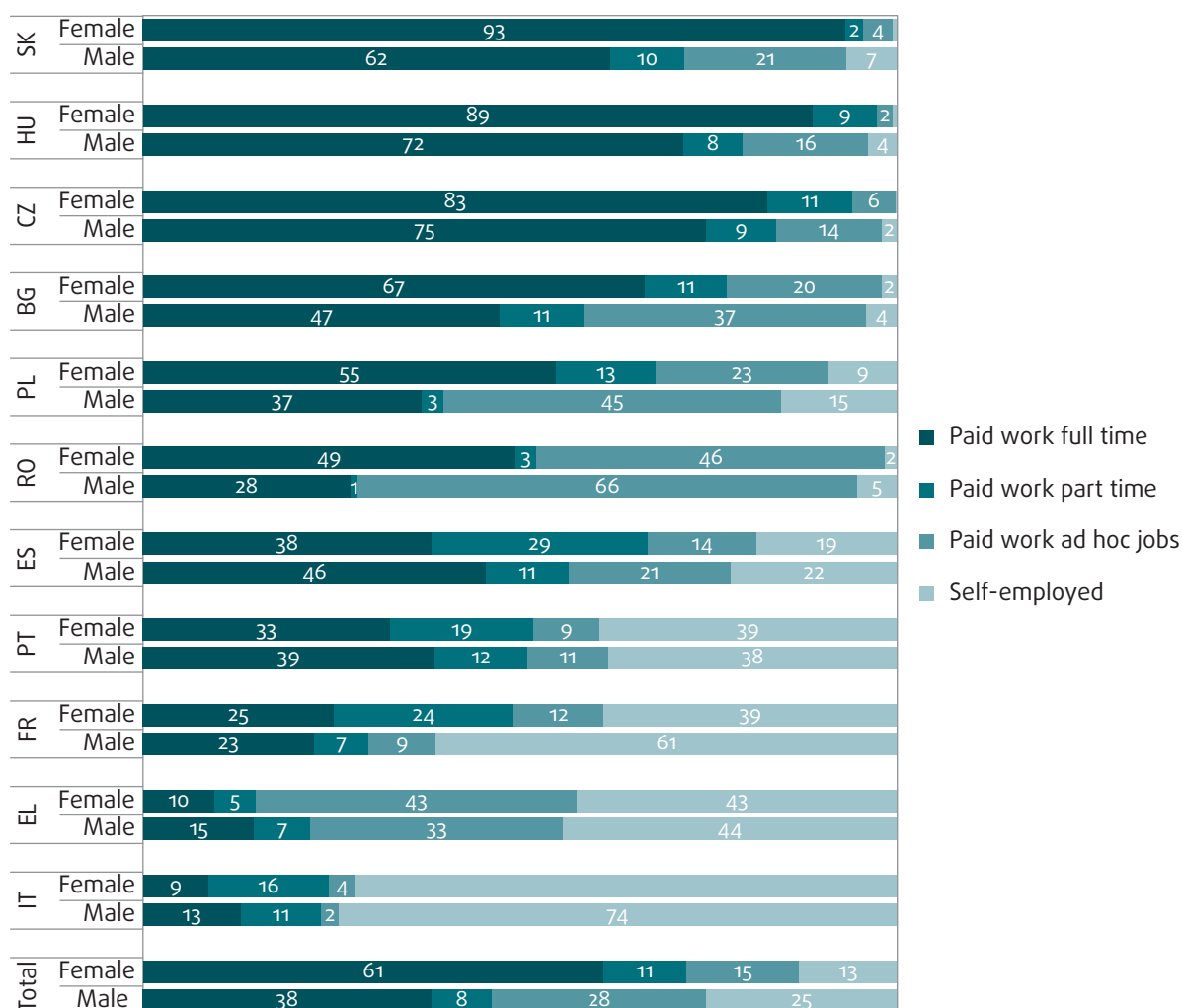
On average across the 11 EU Member States surveyed, Roma women aged 20 to 64 in paid work are more frequently in full-time employment (61 %) than men (38 %) (Figure 9).

This difference may reflect traditional patterns of household work distribution. Women tend to bear a heavier burden in the household and men tend more often to be the ‘bread-winner’. It means that the opportunity cost of a women getting into employment is higher than for a man (more household responsibilities need to be taken over in the first case than in the second). Thus, when a Roma woman considers moving into paid employment, it is more probable that she will take that step for a full-time job than for an insecure part-time one. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact

that Roma men are more frequently self-employed (25 %) or in ad hoc jobs (28 %) than Roma women (13 % and 15 %, respectively).

In this case too, however, there are very important differences between the Member States. The prevalence of full-time jobs is higher in the former socialist countries, which may still reflect pre-transitional patterns of full-time employment. The proportion of women in full-time paid work is highest in Slovakia (93 % of those in paid work considering themselves ‘full-time employed’). The Slovakian rate is followed by 89 % in Hungary and 83 % in the Czech Republic. It is lowest in Italy and Greece, with 9 % and 10 %, respectively, of Roma women in paid work considering themselves ‘full-time working’. Among the Member States surveyed, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia show the highest proportions of labour market participation of Roma women.

Figure 9: Employment patterns of 20- to 64-year-old Roma women and men in paid work (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared main activity: paid work full-time (including paid parental leave), paid work part-time, ad hoc jobs or self-employed, persons in Roma households aged 20 to 64 and who are in paid work

Whereas patterns of employment suggest a better labour market integration of working-age Roma women than Roma men, women still have very limited access to the labour market. The overall rate of paid work of the Roma surveyed is markedly below the national average, and for Roma women it is even lower.¹⁹ Only 24 % of Roma women aged 20 to 64 are in paid work, compared to 40 % of Roma men (Figure 10).

The gender gap in paid work is lowest in small towns and rural areas (six percentage points). The gap narrows not because the proportion of Roma women in paid work in small towns is higher, but because that of Roma men is lower (it is at its lowest in this category). The gap is largest among those living in encampments and,

to a lesser extent, those living at the outskirts of big cities.²⁰

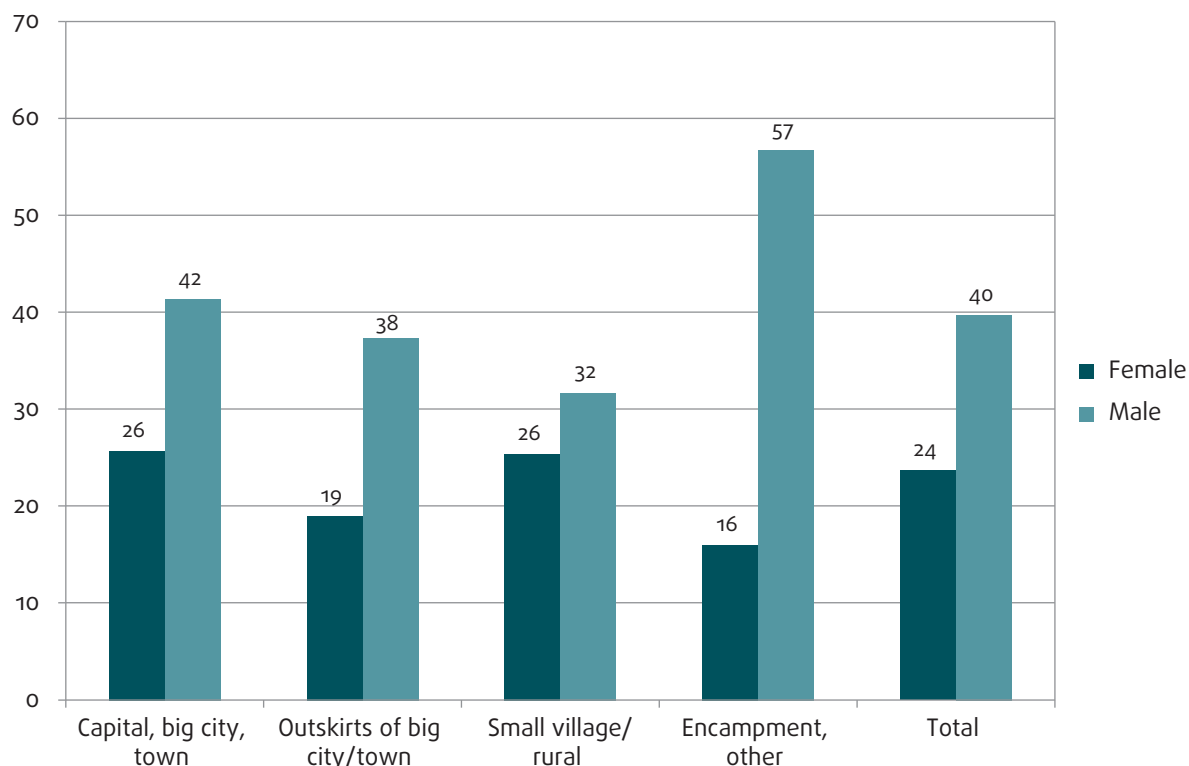
2.3. Unemployment

The survey asked respondents to define their current job situation. Respondents could choose between 17 different response categories, including paid and unpaid work, inability to work due to illness, retirement, training and housekeeping. In this context, ‘unemployed’ is defined by self-classification and is therefore clearly distinct from registered forms of unemployment. It also includes informal activities.

19 FRA (2014b).

20 Roma living in encampments were surveyed in France, Greece and Italy.

Figure 10: Roma aged 20 to 64 in paid work, by type of residential area and gender (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared main activity: paid work full-time, paid work part-time, ad hoc jobs, self-employed or paid parental leave, by residential area (interviewer's assessment of the type of area), persons in Roma households aged 20 to 64 in paid work

Unemployment rates for Roma are three times higher than for the majority population. In addition to the ethnic gap, there is also a significant gender gap (Figure 7).

When asked if they are actively seeking work, about 5 % of Roma surveyed state that they are not looking for a job as they believe that they will be rejected because of their ethnicity. However, most unemployed Roma surveyed say that they are actively seeking a job (74 %), despite facing discrimination when looking for a job, which, as just mentioned, could include informal activities.²¹

2.4. Experience of discrimination when looking for a job

The perceived experience of discrimination does not differ substantively between Roma men and women.

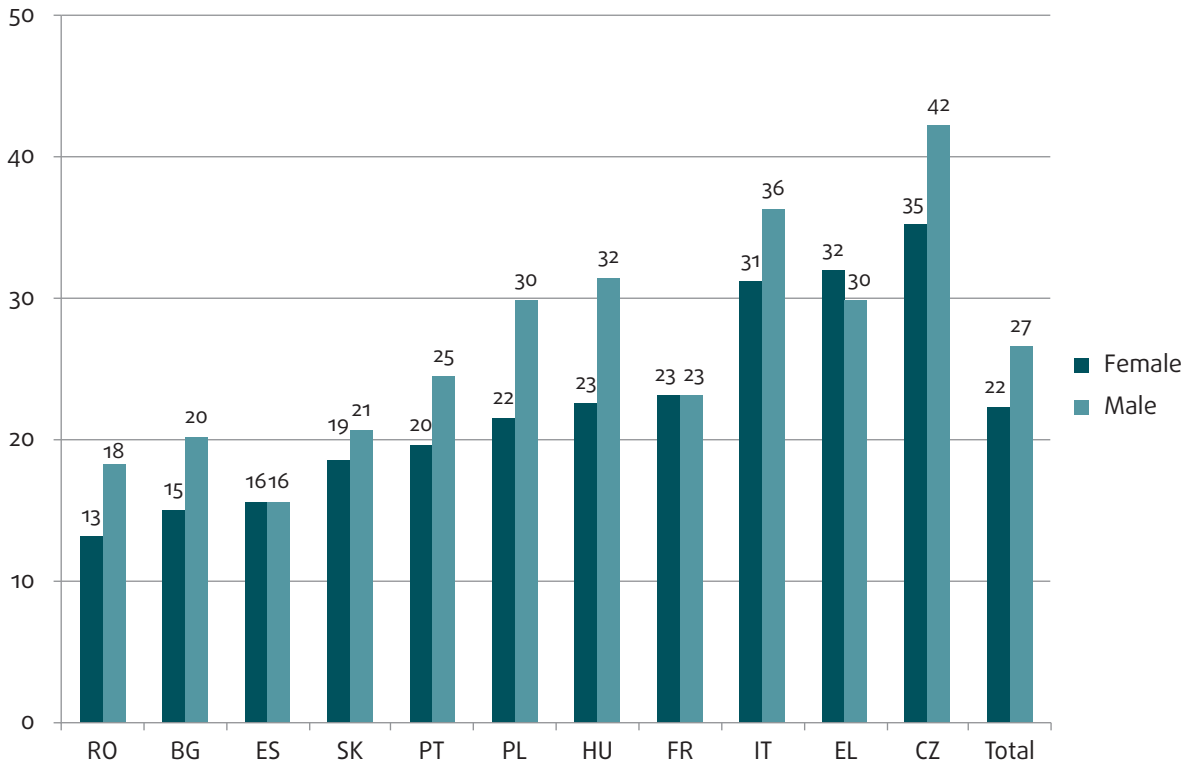
Overall, 22 % of Roma women and 27 % of Roma men respondents who have looked for work in the previous five years say that they have felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity when looking for work in the previous 12 months (Figure 11). The survey data do not allow for an assessment of the extent to which other factors (such as quality of education or qualifications) are perceived as contributing to 'discrimination'. A UNDP analysis of the 2011 Roma dataset suggests, however, that, even when factors like education and qualification are controlled for, a significant share of the factors contributing to unemployment remain unexplained. These factors may largely be attributed to prejudice and discrimination.²²

There are important differences in the perceived experience of discrimination between EU Member States: 13 % of Roma women in Romania said that they had felt discriminated against when looking for work; this figure rises to 35 % in the Czech Republic, 32 % in Greece and 31 % in Italy.

²¹ FRA (2014b).

²² O'Higgins, N. (2012), p. 33 ff.

Figure 11: Roma respondents aged 16 and above who had looked for work during the last five years and felt discriminated against because of their ethnicity when looking for a job in the last 12 months (%)



Source: FRA Roma survey 2011: Response categories 'Yes' and 'In the last 12 months' for the question 'Over the last five years have you ever been discriminated against when looking for a job?'; Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have been looking for a job in the last five years

3

Healthcare



Respondents were asked to assess their own health. The subjective appraisal of one's health situation is related to a number of factors, including current and past socio-economic situation, awareness of health issues and incidence of disease or disability in the household or the community. The survey was not able to generate detailed data on all these aspects but did do so on education and employment status. These attributes are correlated with health awareness and can be used as proxies for the analysis.

Health-related surveys have shown that women generally tend to report a worse self-perceived health status than men – even when socio-economic differences are taken into account – and that they use health-care facilities more frequently. However, the fact that women and men face different, gender-specific, health issues makes gender differences in self-perceived health status difficult to interpret.

To better describe the health situation of Roma women, their responses to questions about health problems which limit their daily activities were compared with the responses of non-Roma women living close by. The survey respondents were also asked about access to healthcare facilities in case of need, and about their health insurance coverage.

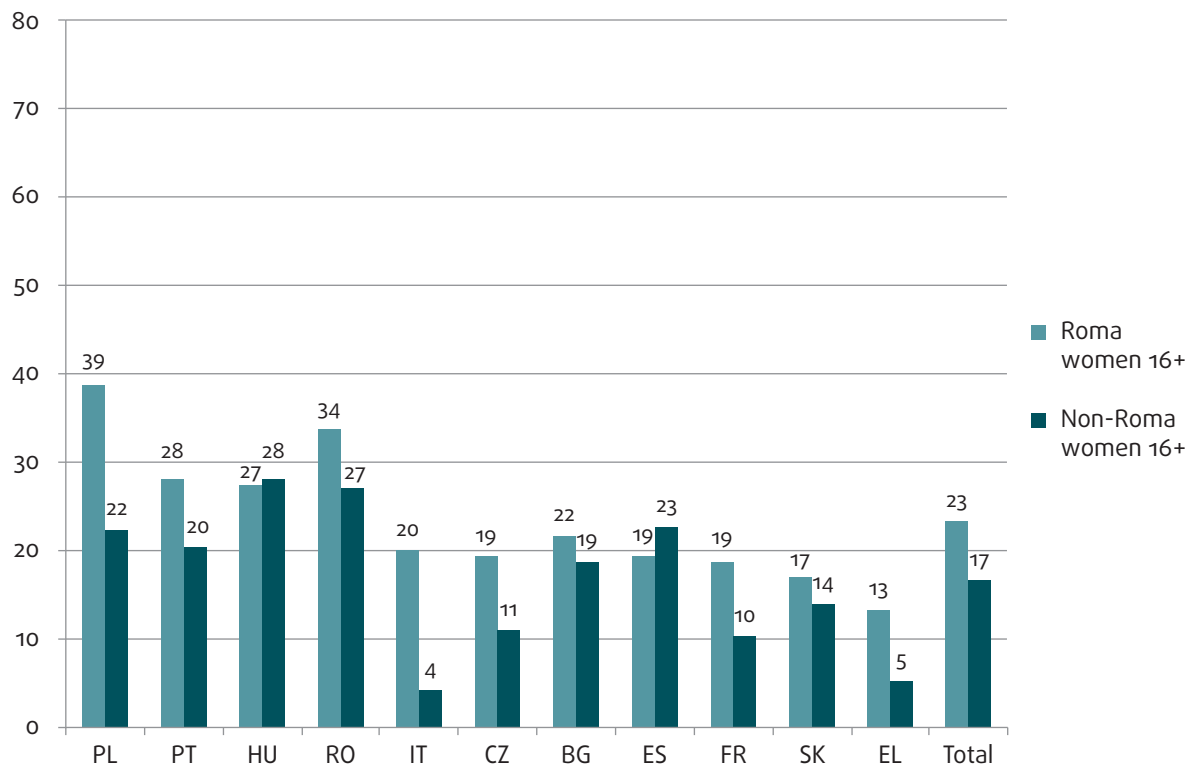
3.1. Health status

Overall, Roma women aged 16 and above assessed their health as 'bad' or 'very bad' more frequently than non-Roma women. As Figure 12 shows, in most countries Roma women report worse health than non-Roma women. Only in Spain and Hungary do Roma women perceive themselves to be healthier, and the difference is just four and one percentage points, respectively.

The real difference in perceived health status is probably bigger than that visualised in Figure 12. As health problems generally increase with age, the survey analysis needs to take into account the fact that the Roma population surveyed was on average significantly younger (mean age = 26 years) than the non-Roma population interviewed in the same neighbourhoods (mean age = 40 years).

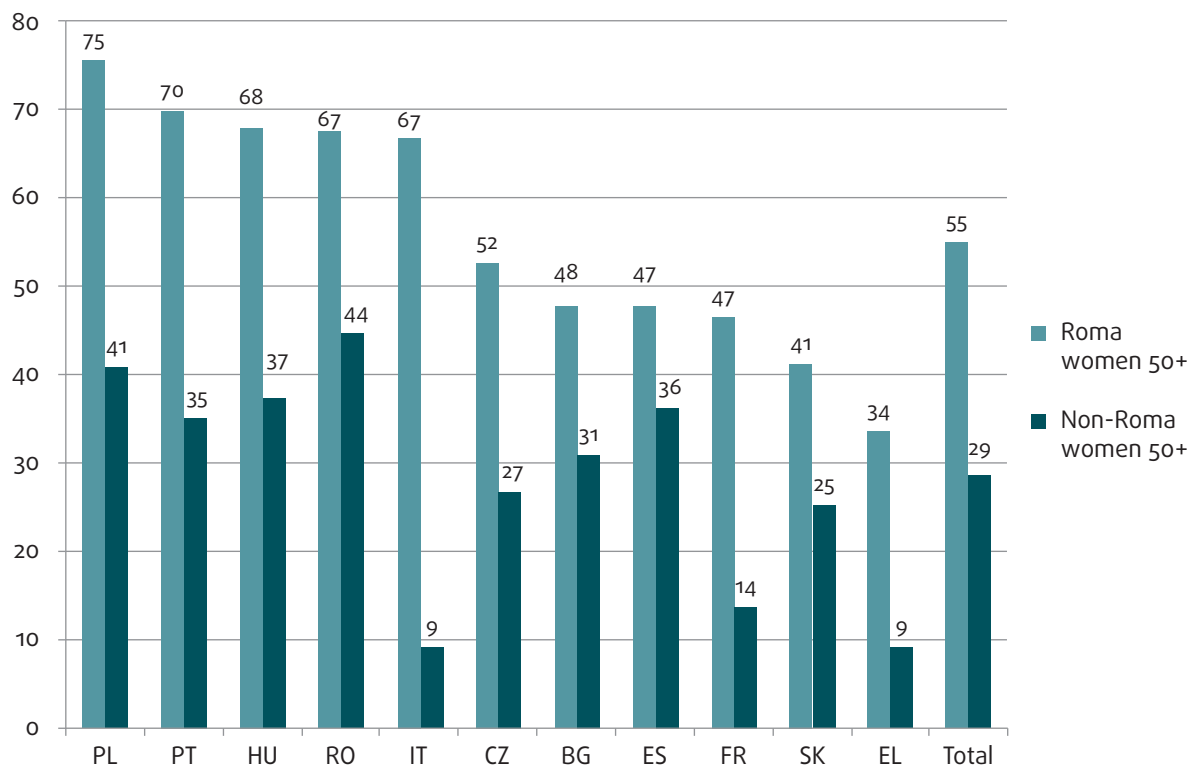
The age-adjusted picture of perceived health status is explicit (Figure 13). Almost twice as many Roma women (55 %) as non-Roma women (29 %) aged 50 and above say that their health is 'bad' or 'very bad'. In Poland, Portugal, Hungary, Romania and Italy, more than two thirds of Roma women aged 50 and above say that their health is, at best, 'bad'. The lowest proportion of Roma women in this age group reporting bad or very bad health was surveyed in Greece (34 %). The smallest difference in subjective perceived health status between Roma and non-Roma women aged 50 and above is in Spain (11 percentage points).

Figure 12: Bad and very bad health status, Roma women and non-Roma women aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared general health status, response categories 'In bad health' and 'In very bad health', women respondents aged 16 and above

Figure 13: Bad and very bad health status, Roma women and non-Roma women aged 50 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared general health status, response categories 'In bad health' and 'In very bad health', women respondents aged 50 and above

3.2. Limitations in daily activities

Health conditions can severely hamper daily life and are often related to deprivation and social exclusion. Respondents were asked if they have any complaints, injuries or diseases that limit their everyday activities, keeping them from doing things such as working, shopping, managing their life or keeping in contact with other people.

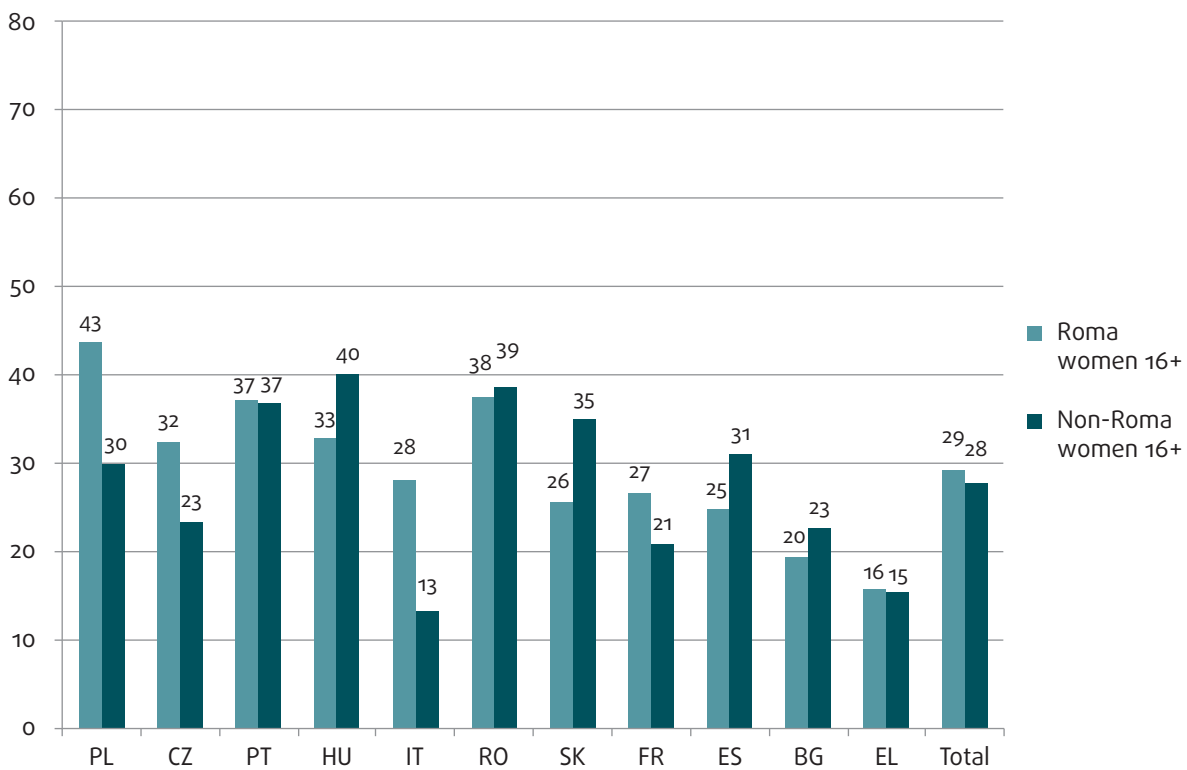
Overall, 29 % of Roma women and 28 % of non-Roma women aged 16 and above say that health problems limit their daily activities (Figure 14). An ethnic gap becomes visible for women aged 50 and above, with the majority of Roma women (61 %) reporting that they are limited in their daily activities because of health problems, compared to 45 % of non-Roma women in the same age group (Figure 15).

The rates of Roma women aged 50 and above who report that they are hampered in their daily life because

of injuries, diseases and other health problems varies across the EU Member States surveyed. The highest proportions were recorded in Poland (79 %), the Czech Republic (77 %), Portugal (75 %) and Hungary (74 %). In comparison, far fewer non-Roma women in the same age group living nearby report health limitations: 48 % in Poland, 53 % in the Czech Republic, 58 % in Portugal and 53 % in Hungary. The lowest proportions of Roma women reporting that they are hampered in their daily life because of health problems were recorded in Greece and Bulgaria.

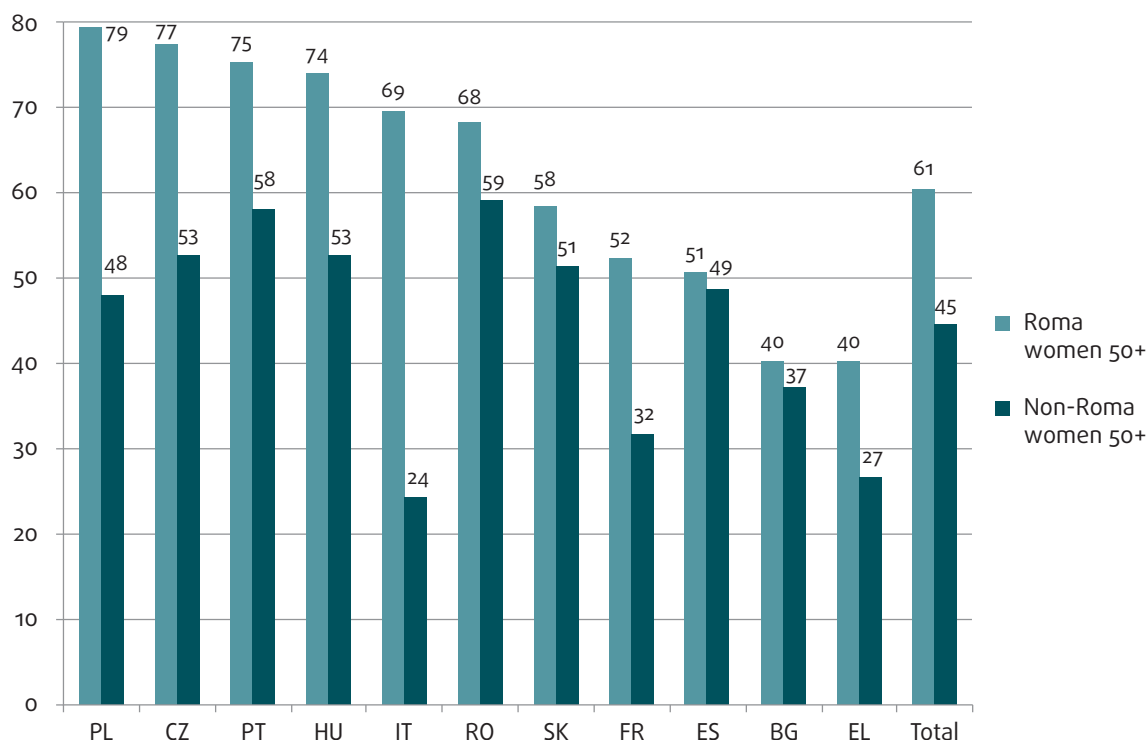
The case of Italy is a special one. About half of the Roma surveyed (40 % of them non-nationals) live in encampments. This could explain the big disparity between their health and that of the non-Roma living nearby. The health of Roma women aged 50 and above living in encampments is much worse than that of non-Roma women living nearby: 67 % of Roma women surveyed say that they are in bad health, compared to 9 % of non-Roma women, and 69 % of Roma women say that their health limits their daily activities, compared to only 24 % of non-Roma women.

Figure 14: Limitation in daily activities because of health problems, Roma and non-Roma women aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared: any complaints, injuries or diseases that limit everyday activities, response categories 'Severely limited' and 'Moderately limited', women respondents aged 16 and above

Figure 15: Limitation in daily activities because of health problems, Roma and non-Roma women aged 50 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared: any complaints, injuries or diseases that limit everyday activities, response categories 'Severely limited' and 'Moderately limited', women respondents aged 50 and above

3.3. Eligibility for and access to health services

Enrolment in the health insurance system determines eligibility and is a major precondition for access to most health services (with the exception of basic life-saving services package). To capture access to health services, respondents aged 18 and above were asked if they have any form of medical insurance in their country (with the main national insurance scheme name suggested by the interviewer). Answers to this question reflect both access to medical insurance and awareness of having such access.

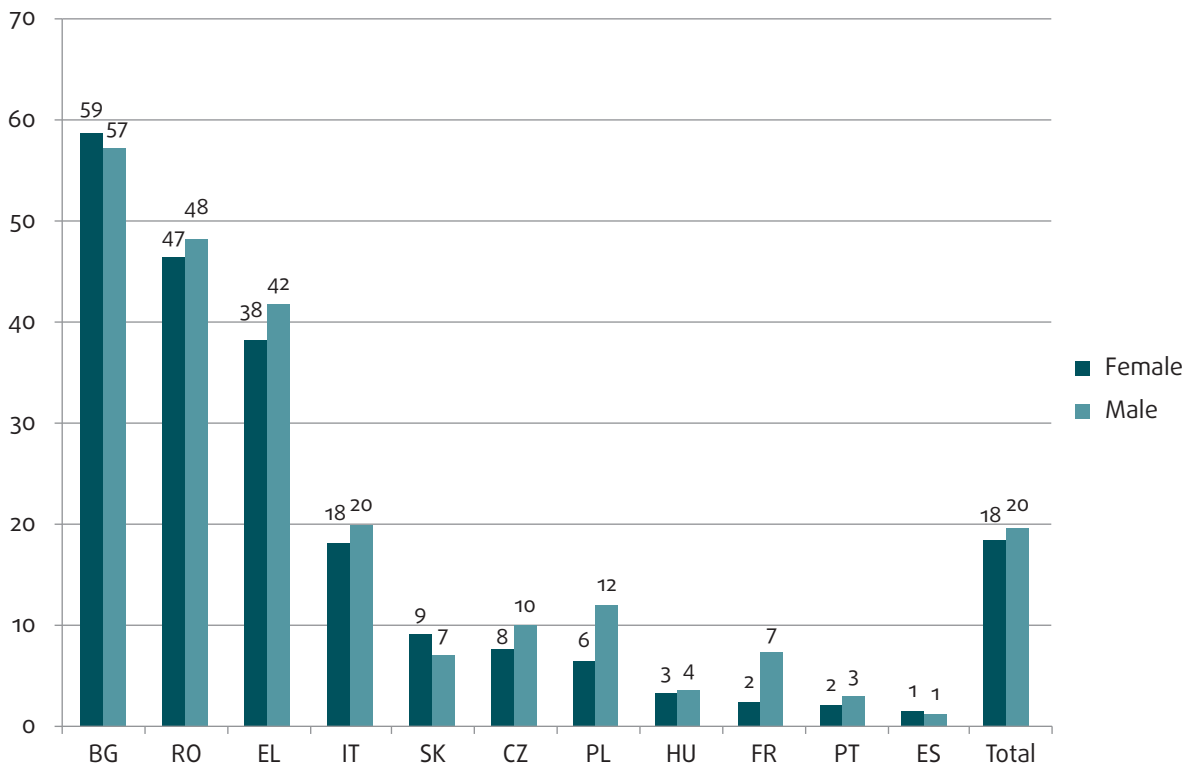
On average, 18 % of Roma women state that they are not covered by any medical insurance. There are, however, no gender differences in access to health insurance between Roma men and Roma women (Figure 16). Health insurance is mostly based on formal employment and related benefits in unemployment and retirement, and generally covers family members in the same household. If employment is either informal or does not create eligibility (self-employed, part-time with low income, ad hoc jobs), non-coverage can occur. However, even where a person has a full-time employment contract, employers do not always meet their obligations to transfer social security contributions. As a consequence, employees and family members may not be insured and may find out only when need occurs. Almost every fifth Roma in paid

work states that they are not covered by health insurance.²³ Retirement and unemployment registration often provide for medical insurance only if the person is eligible for benefits. The answers are also based on the respondents' awareness of having medical insurance cover. Such awareness is important because people who think that they are not insured may not take advantage of the medical services to which they are entitled, such as preventative healthcare and pre-screening examinations.

The comparison with non-Roma women living nearby reveals a significant ethnic gap. The rate of Roma women saying that they do not have medical insurance is more than double that of non-Roma women (18 % compared to 8 %) (Figure 17). However, differences among countries are so big that the sample average can serve only as a reference. The highest proportions of Roma women without health insurance are registered in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. Respectively 59 %, 47 % and 38 % of Roma women aged 16 and above in those countries say that they have no medical insurance, compared to 22 % of non-Roma women in Bulgaria and in Romania and 7 % of non-Roma women in Greece. At the other end of the spectrum are France, Portugal and Spain, where almost full medical insurance coverage is reported (with 2 % or less non-coverage among Roma women).

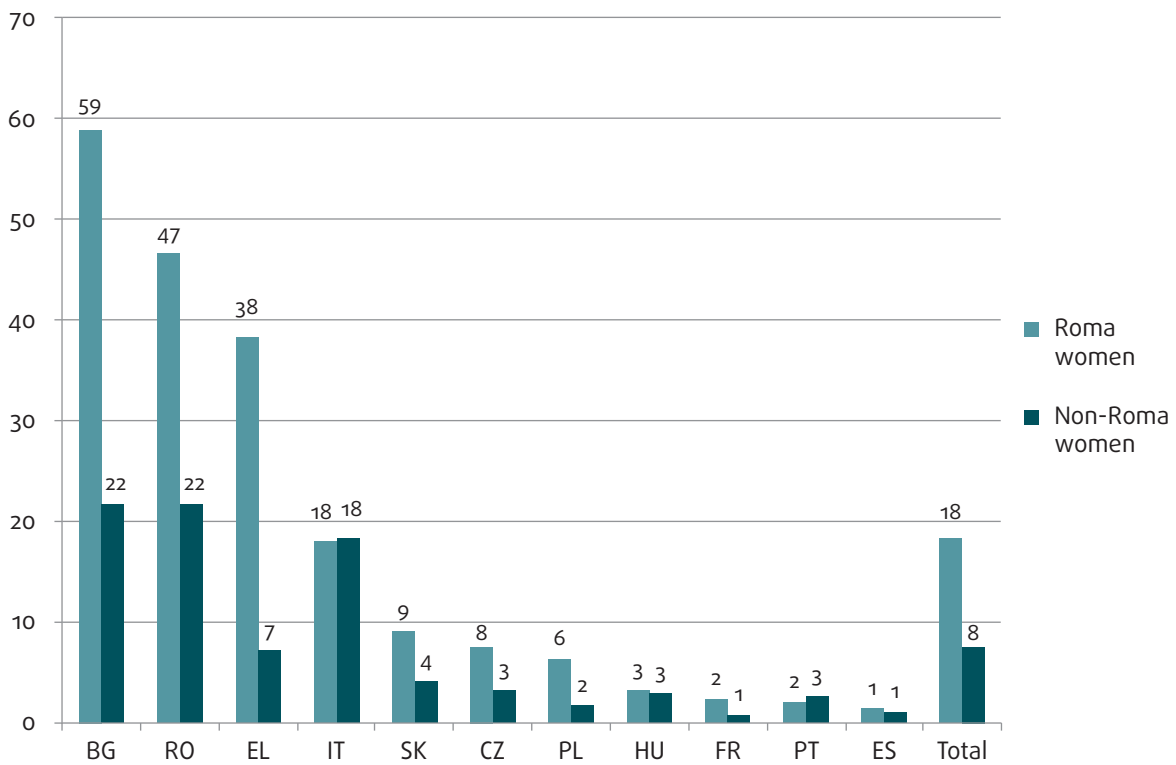
²³ FRA (2014b).

Figure 16: No medical insurance, Roma women and men aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared having no medical insurance, Roma respondents aged 16 and above

Figure 17: No medical insurance, Roma and non-Roma women aged 16 and above (%)

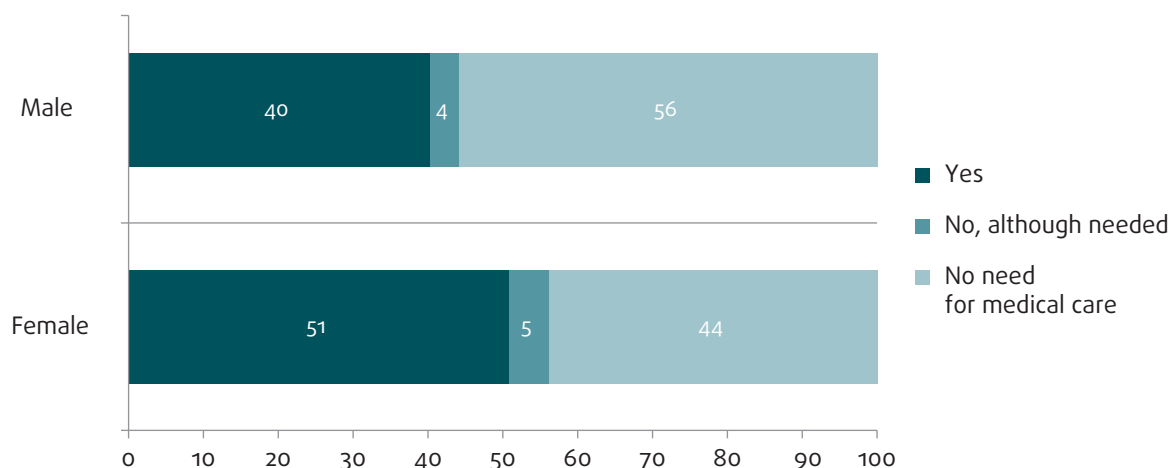


Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Self-declared having no medical insurance, female respondents aged 16 and above

Most Roma respondents do not face problems in accessing medical care when needed. Only 5 % of Roma women and 4 % of Roma men say that, although they had an urgent need for medical care in the previous 12 months, they did not see a doctor (Figure 18). This is

almost twice as many as non-Roma people living nearby but markedly below the 7 % Eurostat indicator for 'self-reported unmet needs for medical examination' for the general population in EU-28.²⁴

Figure 18: Received medical assistance when needed in the previous 12 months, Roma women and men aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Question: 'Was there any time during the last 12 months when you personally really needed a medical examination or treatment for a health problem? If yes, did you get the medical assistance that you needed?' Roma respondents aged 16 and above

²⁴ Eurostat database, accessed on 3 October 2014, 'Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination' (hlth_silc_03).



4

Housing



Access to housing and essential services is one of the four crucial areas covered by the Roma integration goals within the Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. Adequate housing in non-segregated areas with access to public utilities and infrastructure is key to the integration of the Roma.²⁵ Substandard housing has a negative impact on health and a disproportionately bad effect on Roma women.²⁶ Inadequate housing conditions are associated with disadvantages in education and employment and with poor health. Research has shown that the worst educational status is found among the inhabitants of segregated settlements.²⁷

Although men and women share deprived housing conditions equally, the consequences are particularly severe for women, and perpetuate their exclusion from education and employment. Women are the primary users and maintainers of housing, hence segregation and poor sanitary facilities pose a particular health risk to them.²⁸ Having no running water or electricity excludes women from using such basic household amenities as a washing machine or a dishwasher. They face the burden of fetching water in buckets and collecting firewood for stoves. Cooking over an open fire creates indoor pollution, which particularly affects women.

All this may prevent women and their children from joining the regular labour market or the higher education system, as their capacities may be fully exhausted by the heavy domestic labour that ensues from severely deprived housing conditions. This burdensome life can result in long-term negative effects on the health of women and children.

Overall, the survey results show that many Roma households still face severe housing deprivation. Roma women, children and men living in these households are excluded from the fundamental right to have access to adequate housing with running water, a sewage connection and electricity.

4.1. Housing deprivation

Housing conditions are considered to be deprived if the household does not have running water and/or does not have a connection to the sewage system or a sewage tank and/or does not have electricity. Of the Roma surveyed, 42 % say that they have either no running water or no sewage connection or no electricity in their home. In comparison, only 12 % of the non-Roma living nearby report such deprivation (Figure 19).

84 % of the Roma population surveyed in Romania and 72 % of those surveyed in France – women, men and children alike – live in deprived housing conditions. In some of the EU Member States surveyed, however, many in the non-Roma population living nearby also report severely deprived housing conditions: for example, 52 % in Romania and 29 % in Hungary report a lack of basic infrastructure.

The largest gaps in housing conditions between Roma and non-Roma can be found in France (70 %), Slovakia (43 %), Italy (35 %), Bulgaria and Greece (both 34 %), Romania (32 %) and Hungary (27 %).

When we look at the relationship between household size and housing conditions, we find that the rates of deprived housing conditions are on average relatively similar for Roma households without children (37 %) as for those with one, two or three children (40 %)

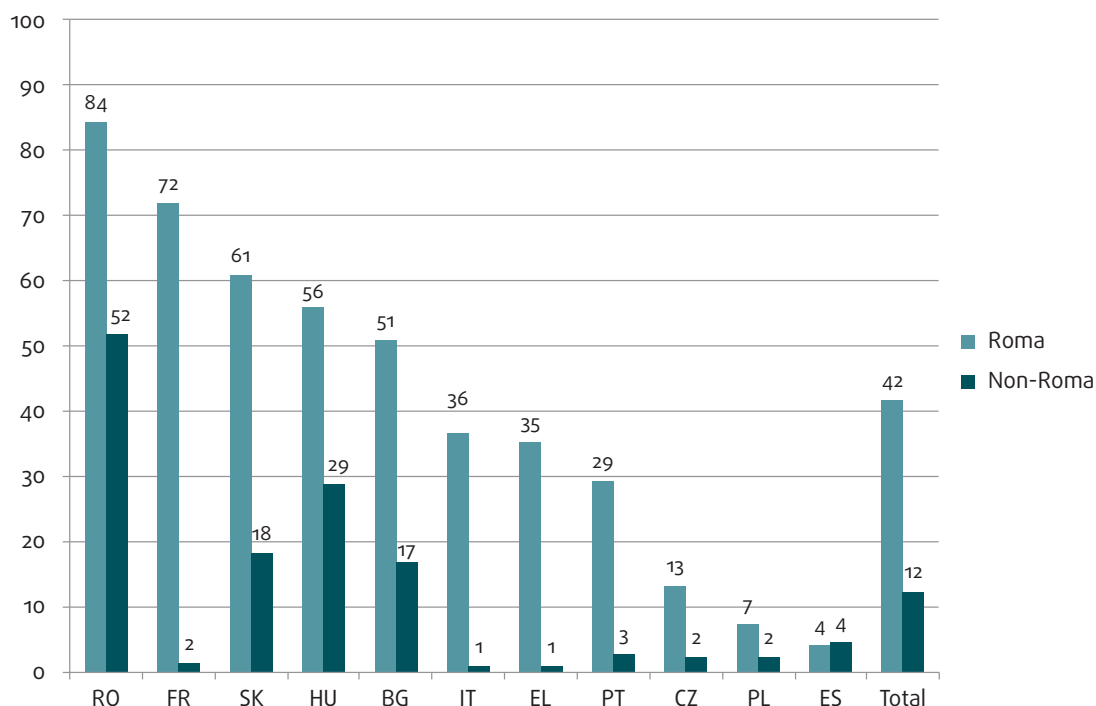
²⁵ European Commission (2011).

²⁶ FRA (2009).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2003).

Figure 19: Deprived housing conditions, Roma and non-Roma households (%)

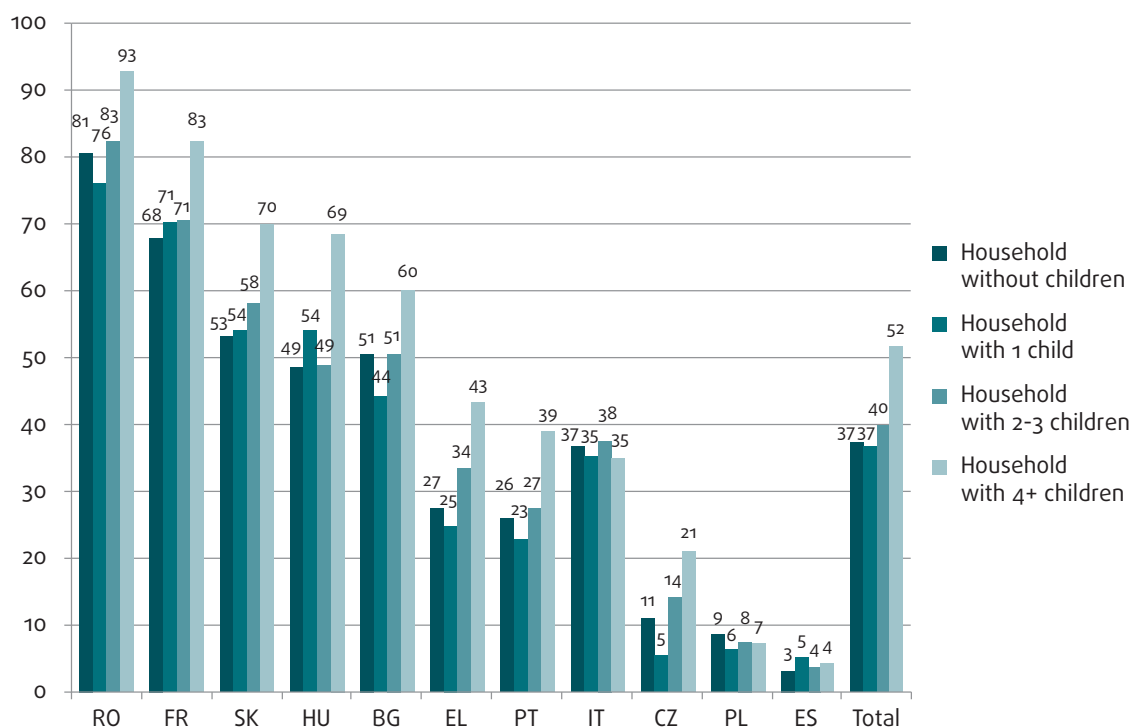


Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: No running water or no sewage connection or no electricity in the household, persons in households

(Figure 20). Only Roma households with four or more children face on average a higher rate of severe housing deprivation (52 %). In Romania for example, 93 % of

Roma households surveyed with four or more children face severe housing deprivation.

Figure 20: Deprived housing conditions, Roma households with and without children (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: No running water or no sewage connection or no electricity in the household, 'children' defined as aged 0 to 17, persons in Roma households

5

Financial situation



The survey collected information on the income and living conditions of each household. This information can be used to calculate the proportion of persons living at risk of poverty. The underlying concept assumes that the standard of living is shared within a household and therefore gender differences can usually be detected only for one-person and single-parent households. Analysis for these household types is limited by the small number of cases in the FRA survey. The following analysis explores possible differences between the financial situations of Roma men and women, and the impact of women's employment on the living standards of Roma households.

5.1. At risk of poverty

The EU's at-risk-of-poverty benchmark reflects the percentage of persons with a disposable income below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. The at-risk-of-poverty threshold for each Member State is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income.²⁹

The overwhelming majority of Roma households in the survey (87 %) have an income below the national at-risk-of-poverty level, compared to 46 % of non-Roma households. Even this latter figure, however represents a poverty risk well above the EU and national averages: in 2011, 17 % of the EU's population was at-risk-of-poverty.³⁰

²⁹ At-risk-of-poverty rate in the FRA survey is based on a single question about the monthly household income. Eurostat household income is measured through detailed questions on different income sources and on total annual income. The survey may therefore underestimate income, as respondents may forget small or irregular sources of income.

³⁰ Eurostat (2012).

The underlying concept of at risk of poverty assumes an equally distributed living standard within a household. If the total household income is below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, each person in the household is identified as at risk of poverty. Since one-person and single-parent households are rare among the Roma surveyed on average Roma women and men are faced with an equally high risk of poverty (87 %).

Variation between types of Roma household remains relatively small. On average in the 11 EU Member States surveyed, 72 % of Roma one-person households and 80 % of Roma multiperson households without children face the risk of poverty (Table 1). As with housing deprivation, a higher poverty risk can be observed in Roma households with a high number of children. Roma families with four or more children have the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate across the surveyed EU Member States: often 90 % or more of these families have an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

Although among the general population one-parent households are usually more affected by risk of poverty (predominantly reflecting the dire financial situation of single mothers), it is interesting to note that Roma one-parent households have a similar likelihood of being at risk of poverty as other Roma households. Only in Hungary, Poland and Romania do one-parent Roma households have a distinctly higher at-risk-of-poverty rate than other types of Roma households.

The employment of women is often seen as an important factor for alleviating poverty. The results of the survey, however, show that the additional income is not enough to prevent poverty – the risk is significantly reduced only for households without children (Table 2). For households with four or more children, the at-risk-of-poverty rate reaches almost 100 % and the employment of one or more working-age women in the household is not

sufficient to overcome this situation. The analysis shows that most Roma in paid work are still at risk of poverty.³¹ There is therefore little financial incentive for

Roma women and men to take up work if such work cannot even guarantee them and their families a living.

Table 1: At-risk-of-poverty rates for different types of Roma households (%)

	At-risk-of-poverty rate for Roma adults and children living in a:					
	One-person household	One-parent household	Multiperson household without children	Multiperson household with 1 child	Multiperson household with 2-3 children	Multiperson household with 4 + children
BG	91	74	83	86	87	93
CZ	60	70	71	76	81	95
EL	78	89	83	83	89	91
ES	76	83	88	90	89	96
FR	81	98	94	98	99	98
HU	59	89	66	77	80	91
IT	85	91	96	96	99	97
PL	68	91	67	76	84	87
PT	85	99	94	92	99	99
RO	62	87	60	68	81	91
SK	74	92	82	83	93	96
Total	72	87	80	83	89	94

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: 'children' defined as aged 0 to 17, persons in Roma households

Table 2: At-risk-of-poverty rates for different types of Roma household and women's work participation (%)

	Multiperson household without children		Multiperson household with 1 child		Multiperson household with 2-3 children		Multiperson household with 4 + children	
	No woman in paid work	One woman or more in paid work	No woman in paid work	One woman or more in paid work	No woman in paid work	One woman or more in paid work	No woman in paid work	One woman or more in paid work
BG	90	65	91	79	90	82	94	91
CZ	77	63	77	74	82	80	97	93
EL	87	70	86	75	88	88	92	92
ES	91	76	92	80	91	78	95	100
FR	97	71	97	100	99	100	97	100
HU	72	40	83	72	86	75	96	89
IT	99	91	100	89	99	100	98	91
PL	75	40	74	81	84	81	85	89
PT	94	88	94	74	99	96	98	100
RO	64	49	74	54	84	75	93	83
SK	87	51	91	72	97	87	97	94

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: children defined as aged 0 to 17, only persons in Roma multiperson households with at least one woman of working age, persons in the household

³¹ FRA (2014b).

5.2. Entitlement to pension benefits

Pensions and other social transfers make an important contribution to income security in socially disadvantaged households. This report explores whether this is the case for Roma, and most importantly whether there is a gender or an ethnic gap (or both) in relation to pensions.

Respondents were asked if they expect to receive a private or state pension once they reach pensionable age, or, for respondents of pensionable age, if they receive any private or state pension. Gender differences with regard to pension entitlements are low for Roma aged 45 and above: 69 % of Roma men and 64 % of Roma women in this age group expect to receive or receive a private or state pension (a gap of five percentage points) (Figure 21).

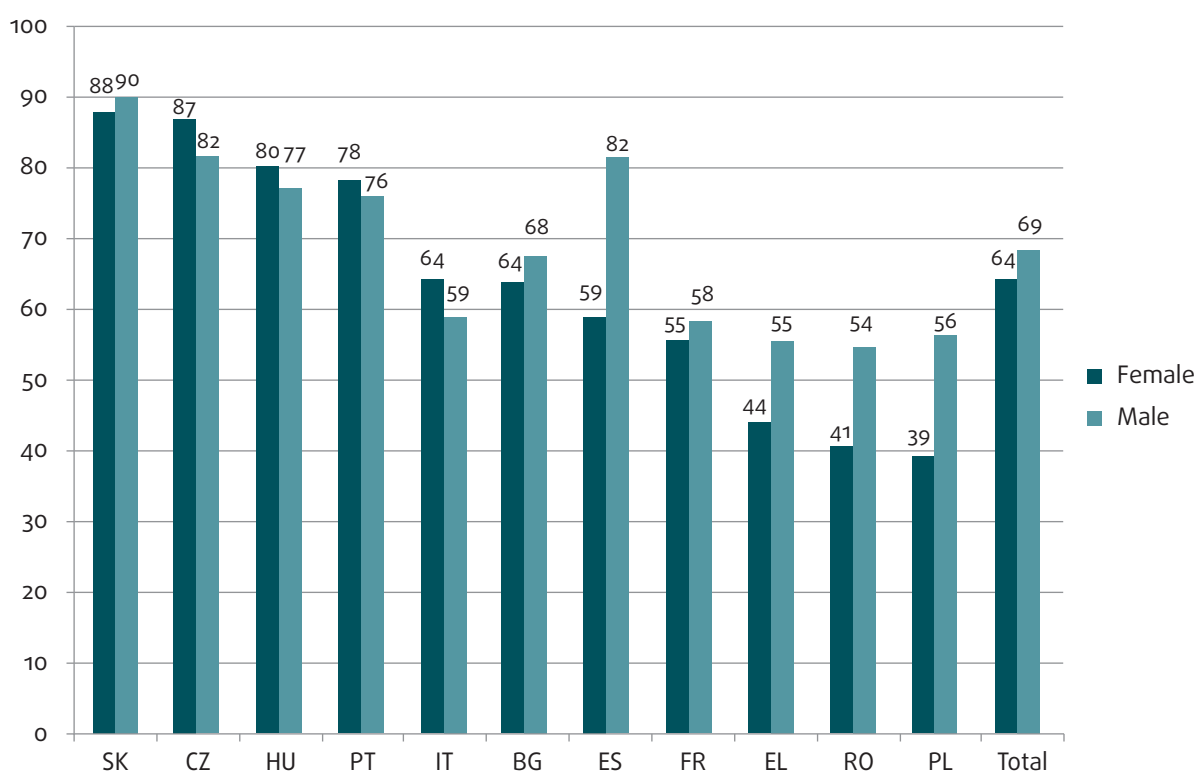
The non-Roma population of the same age (45 and above) living nearby have on average a higher rate of expectation (or receipt) of a pension (Figure 22). The gender gap among non-Roma is, however, similar to that among Roma: 76 % of non-Roma women compared to 82 % of non-Roma men expect a pension once

they are retired, or already receive one (a gap of six percentage points). This means that the pension disadvantage that Roma face is related to ethnicity rather than gender.

Again, differences between countries are notable and most probably related to both the different overall status of Roma and differences in pension systems. In Poland, only 39 % of Roma women, compared to 56 % of Roma men, have or expect pension entitlements. Together with Spain, Poland thus shows the largest gender gap. However, whereas in Poland non-Roma living nearby have a significantly higher rate of expectation or receipt of pension benefits than Roma, in Spain 82 % of Roma men and 59 % of Roma women are entitled to these benefits, rates similar to those for the non-Roma living nearby (85 % of non-Roma men and 62 % of non-Roma women).

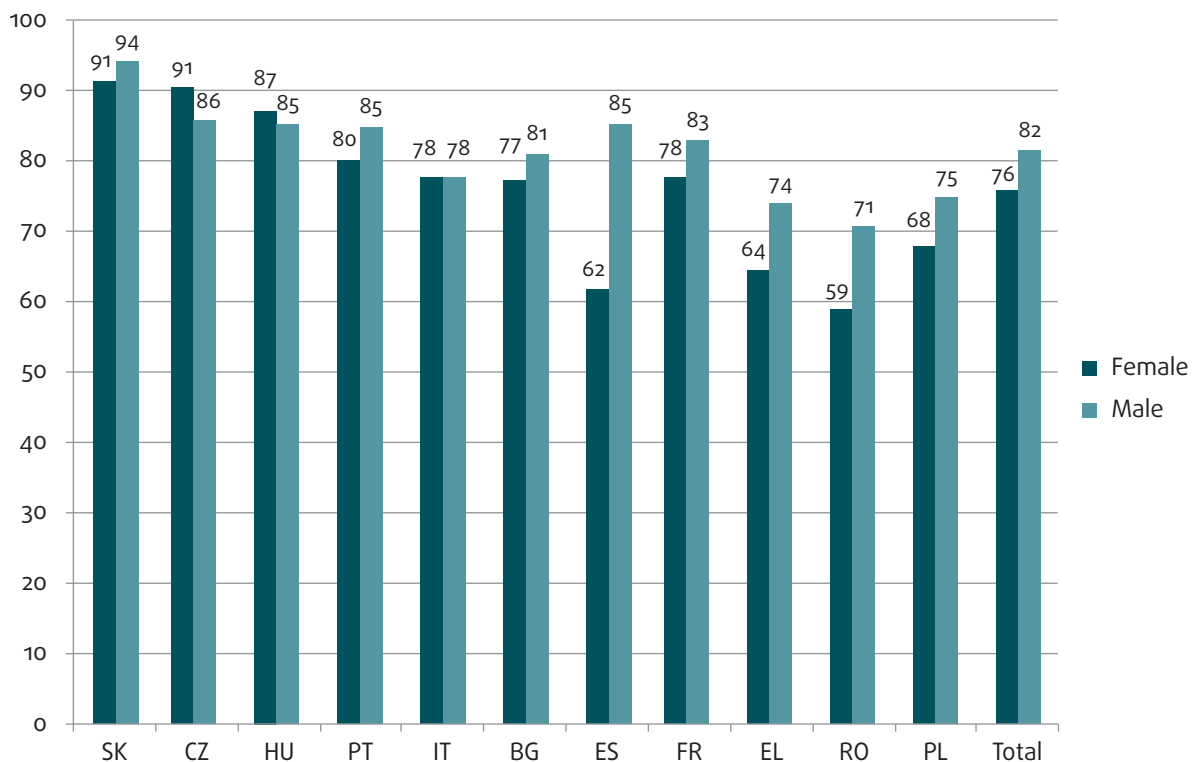
In Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Portugal, the levels of pension entitlements reported by respondents are the highest (between 76 % and 90 %) and there is no, or a relatively small, gender gap. For these EU Member States, the survey findings also show the smallest differences between Roma and non-Roma in this regard.

Figure 21: Entitlement to pension benefits, Roma aged 45 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma survey 2011: Response category 'Yes' for the question 'When you reach pensionable age, will you be entitled to money from a private or state pension to live off?', Roma respondents aged 45 and above

Figure 22: Entitlement to pension benefits, non-Roma aged 45 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma survey 2011: Response category 'Yes' for the question 'When you reach pensionable age, will you be entitled to money from a private or state pension to live off?', non-Roma respondents aged 45 and above



6

Perception of discrimination and rights awareness



Perception of discrimination and rights awareness are important and mutually complementary aspects of fundamental rights monitoring. If people are not aware of their rights, they may perceive prejudice or discriminatory behaviour as 'normal'. On the other hand, perceptions are often subjective and need to be complemented by reports of real experiences. The survey addressed both aspects, asking the respondents about their perceived experiences of discriminatory treatment on different grounds, in particular on the ground of ethnicity and gender, during the previous 12 months. Roma respondents were also asked if they were aware of a law that forbids discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job and if they were aware of any support organisations for victims of discrimination.

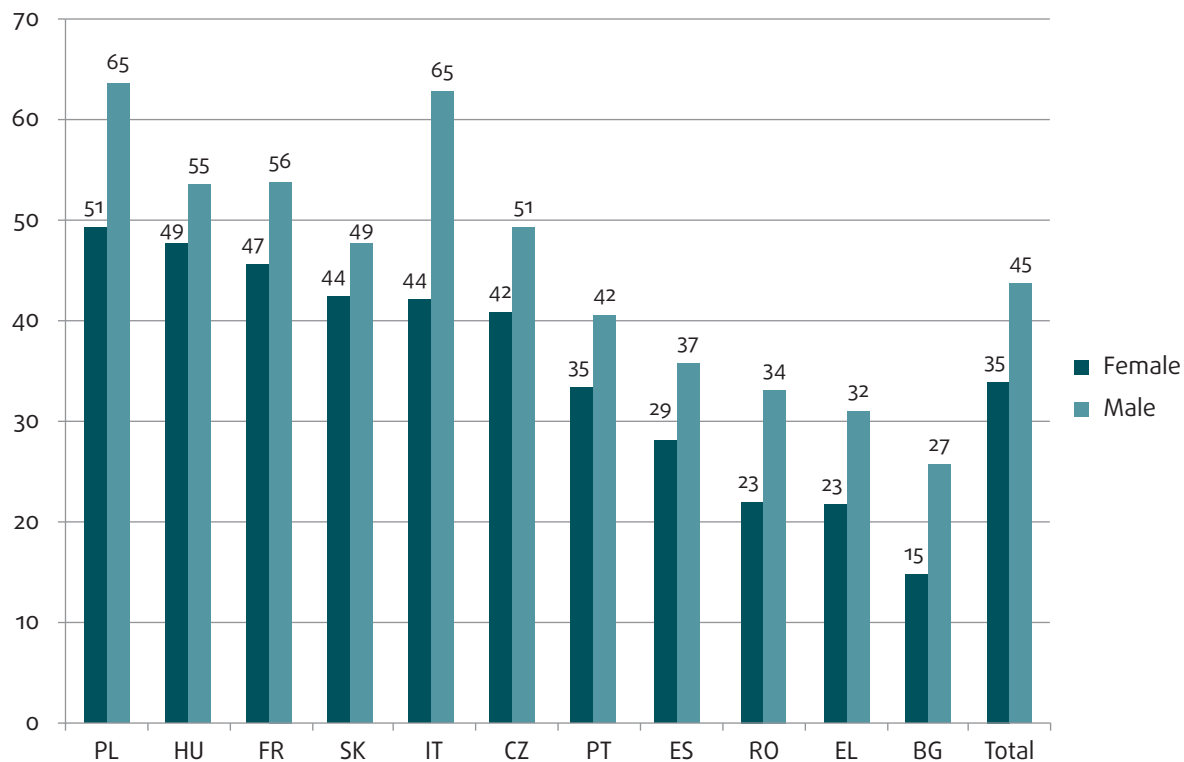
6.1. Awareness of anti-discrimination employment laws

On average, Roma women are less aware of anti-discrimination legislation than Roma men: 35 % of Roma women, compared to 45 % of Roma men, know that there is a law that forbids discrimination against ethnic minorities when applying for a job (Figure 23). The analysis, however, shows notable differences between EU Member States.

Awareness of laws against discrimination is lowest among women (15 %) and men (27 %) in Bulgaria; yet almost twice as many men as women are aware of such laws. Similarly, the results show a low degree of awareness among women in Greece and Romania (both 23 %), although in these countries there is less difference between the awareness of women and men than in Bulgaria. It is worth noting that the countries with the lowest levels of awareness of anti-discrimination legislation are those with the lowest levels of perceived discrimination. Similarly, where awareness of legal protection is high, there is a greater incidence of perceived discrimination. The highest rates of awareness are in Poland and Hungary, where about half of the Roma women surveyed are aware of the existence of anti-discrimination laws. In Hungary, the difference in the levels of awareness of Roma women and men is relatively small (6 percentage points).

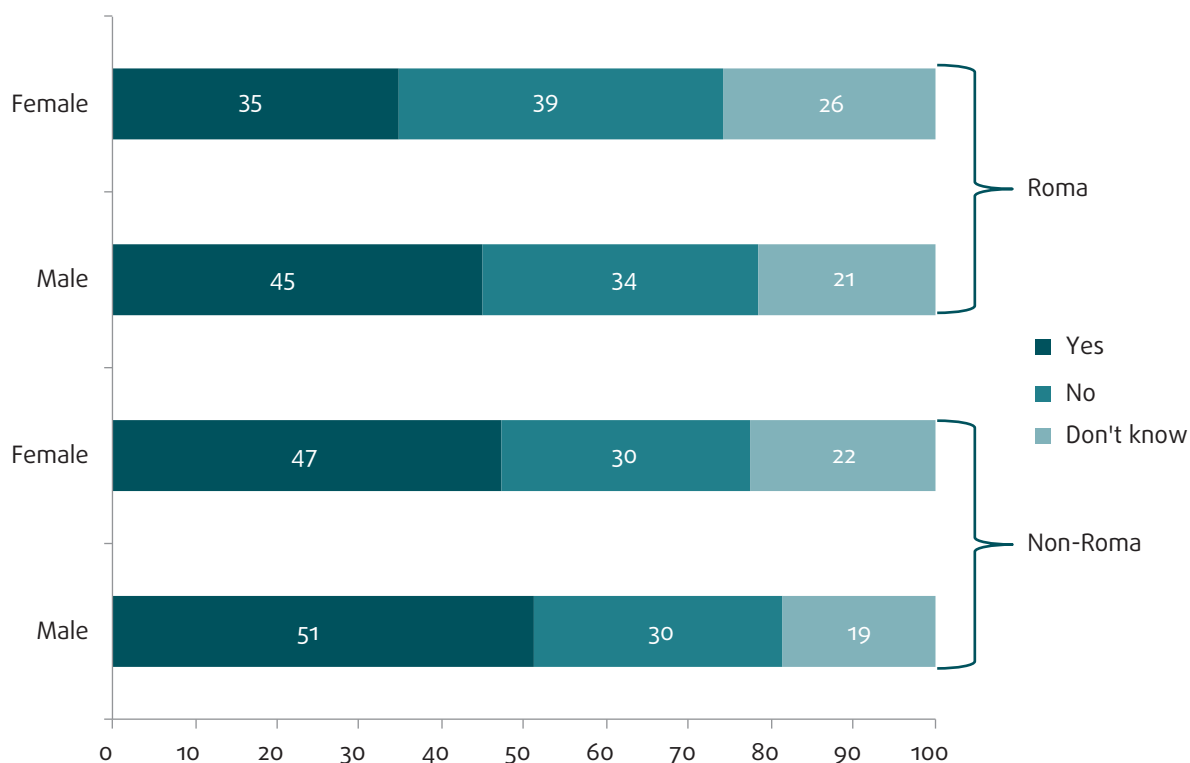
Awareness among the non-Roma population of the existence of legislation protecting ethnic minorities from discrimination is only a few percentage points higher, whereas the knowledge gap between non-Roma women and men is slightly smaller than that between Roma women and men: in the survey, on average only 47 % of non-Roma women and 51 % of non-Roma men are aware of laws against employment discrimination (Figure 24).

Figure 23: Awareness of laws against discrimination protecting those applying for a job, Roma aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Response category 'Yes' for the question 'What do you think, is there a law in [country] that forbids discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job?', Roma respondents aged 16 and above

Figure 24: Awareness of laws against discrimination protecting those applying for a job, Roma and non-Roma aged 16 and above (%)



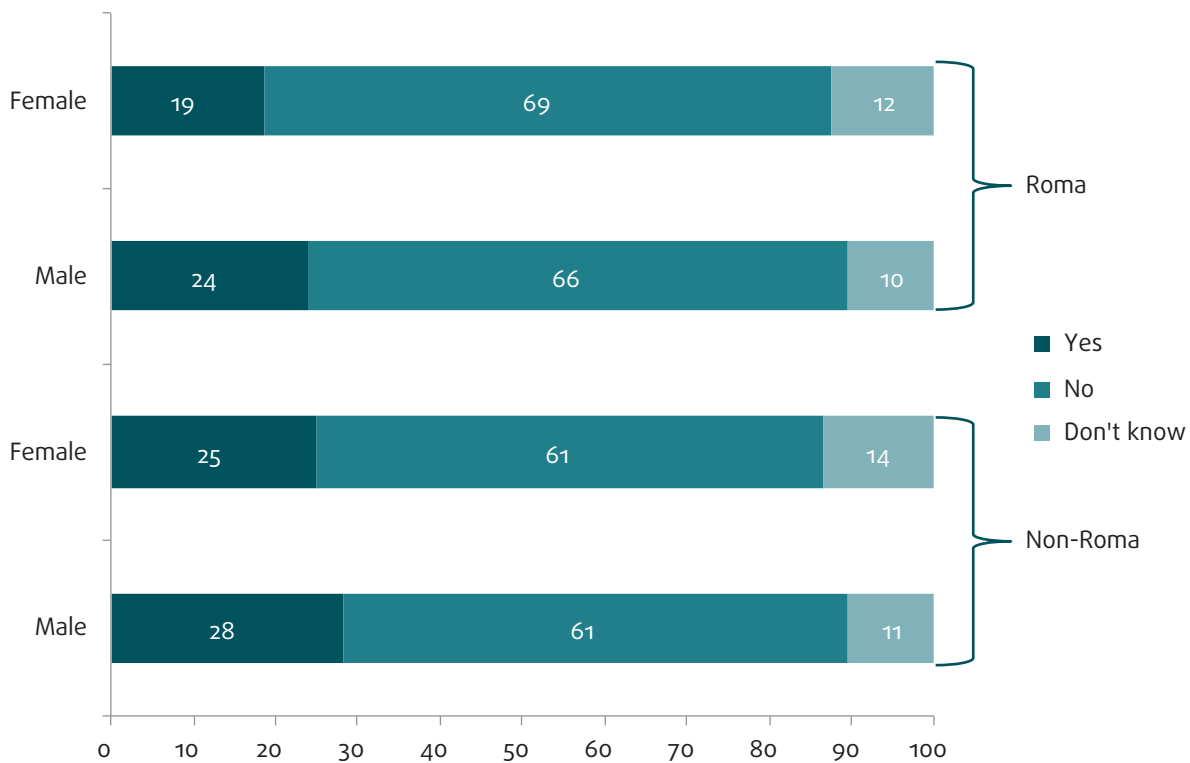
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Response categories 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't know' for the question 'What do you think, is there a law in [country] that forbids discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job?', respondents aged 16 and above

6.2. Knowledge of support organisations for victims of discrimination

The highest percentages of Roma surveyed who know of organisations supporting victims of discrimination are in Italy – 53 % of Roma men and 35 % of Roma women – and France – 38 % of Roma men and 33 % of Roma women.

However, overall the results show limited knowledge about organisations that offer support or advice to people who have been discriminated against, both among Roma and among non-Roma who live nearby. Knowledge of such support organisations is lower among Roma women (19 %) than among Roma men (24 %) across all Member States surveyed (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Knowledge of organisations offering support/advice to people who have been discriminated against, Roma and non-Roma aged 16 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Response categories 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't know' for the question 'Do you know of any organisation in [country] that can offer support or advice to people who have been discriminated against?', respondents aged 16 and above

7

Active citizenship and marital status of Roma women



7.1. Voting

The survey asked questions about voting in local and national elections, a key element of active citizenship and a fundamental political right. Differences between EU Member States need to be interpreted with caution, as the date of the most recent election and regional and country-specific voting patterns differ substantially.³²

In most Member States, gender differences among the Roma surveyed in relation to voting participation in national elections are relatively small. The largest differences can be found in Poland (55 % for men versus 41 % for women), Portugal (37 % for men versus 28 % for women) and Spain (57 % for men versus 48 % for women) (Figure 26). The lowest overall participation rates, on average for both men and women, were in France, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Italy. The largest differences in voting participation between Roma and non-Roma surveyed are in France and Italy (Figure 27).

Data on Roma and non-Roma voting activity suggest the existence of two groups of countries. The first is comprised of Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovakia and Hungary, where both Roma and non-Roma show high electoral activity and there is only a small gender gap in voting in the case of Roma. In the second group, which contains Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal, the Czech Republic and France, however, the ethnic gap in electoral activity is large (fewer Roma than non-Roma vote). Moreover, the data suggest that active citizenship (voting at least) of Roma women is associated with the overall political engagement of Roma. In other words, improving the opportunities for all Roma to have their voices heard and

³² In addition, research has shown that surveys usually yield rates of voting in elections that are higher than official turnout figures, a phenomenon often attributed to intentional misrepresentation by respondents who did not vote but are embarrassed to admit it (Holbrook, A. and Krosnick, J. (2009)).

participate actively in the political process will also impact positively on gender equality in political activity.

7.2. Early marriage

Marriage before the legal age of consent raises serious fundamental rights concerns.³³ Resolution 1468 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe defines child marriage as “the union of two persons at least one of whom is under 18 years of age” and, inter alia, urges national parliaments to “fix at or raise to 18 years the minimum statutory age of marriage for women and men and to make it compulsory for every marriage to be declared and entered by the competent authority in an official register”.³⁴

The issue of early marriage in Roma communities has been the subject of qualitative research³⁵ as well as media interest, and has sparked debates on women’s (and children’s) fundamental rights in traditional cultural contexts.

The survey results show that across all Member States around 2 % of Roma girls aged 10 to 15 are reported as ‘traditionally married’ or ‘cohabitating’ with a partner.³⁶ With regard to the 16- and 17-year-old age group, the results show that on average around 24 % of Roma men and women are legally or traditionally married or

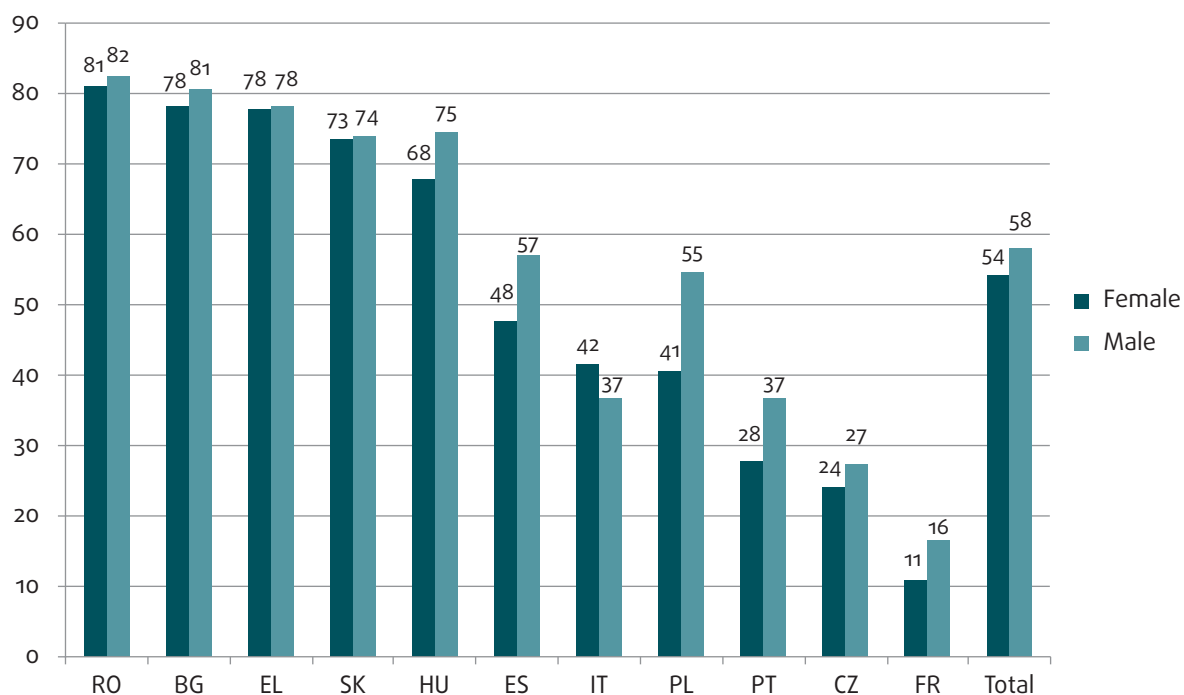
³³ Various international treaties, conventions and action programmes address the issue of early marriage, for example United Nations (1962); United Nations (1979); United Nations (1989); United Nations (1995).

³⁴ Council of Europe (2005).

³⁵ For example UNICEF Romania (2010); Amalipe Center (2011).

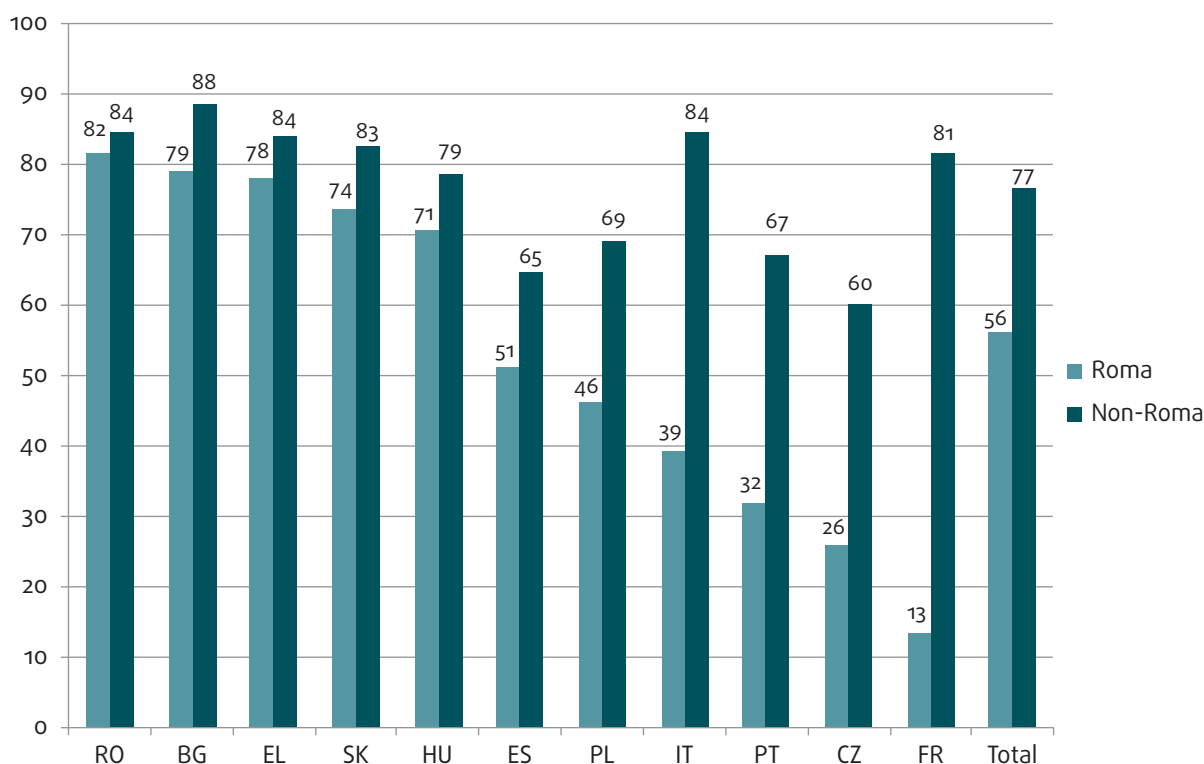
³⁶ Information on the marital status of all household members over the age of 10 was collected from the household respondent. The categories used were: ‘Married (legal)’, ‘Married (traditional)’, ‘Divorced, separated, widowed or partner died’, ‘Cohabiting with partner’ and ‘Single’.

Figure 26: Voting in the most recent national election, Roma women and men aged 18 and above (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Response category 'Yes' for the question 'Did you vote in the last national elections in this country?', Roma respondents aged 18 and above

Figure 27: Voting in the most recent national election, Roma and non-Roma aged 18 and above (%)



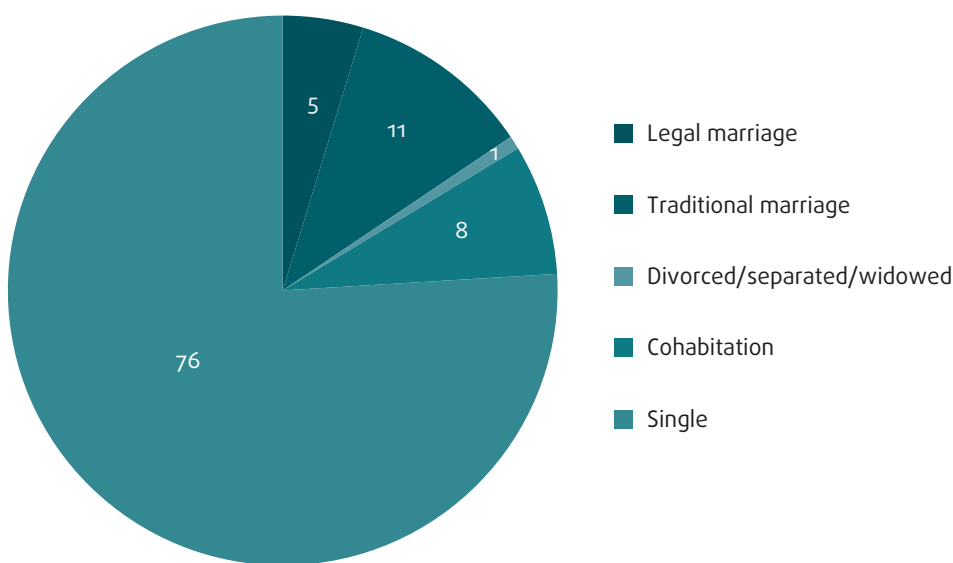
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Response category 'Yes' for the question 'Did you vote in the last national elections in this country?', respondents aged 18 and above

cohabiting (Figure 28). Looking at gender differences in this age group, we find that it is mostly young women rather than young men who are married or live with a partner at this age and that, among the Member States surveyed, this is reported more frequently by women in Greece, Portugal, Romania and Bulgaria.

Marriage before the age of 18 is clearly linked to girls' participation in education. Only 6 % of Roma girls aged 16 to 17 who are married or cohabiting with a partner are in education, compared to 45 % of those in this age

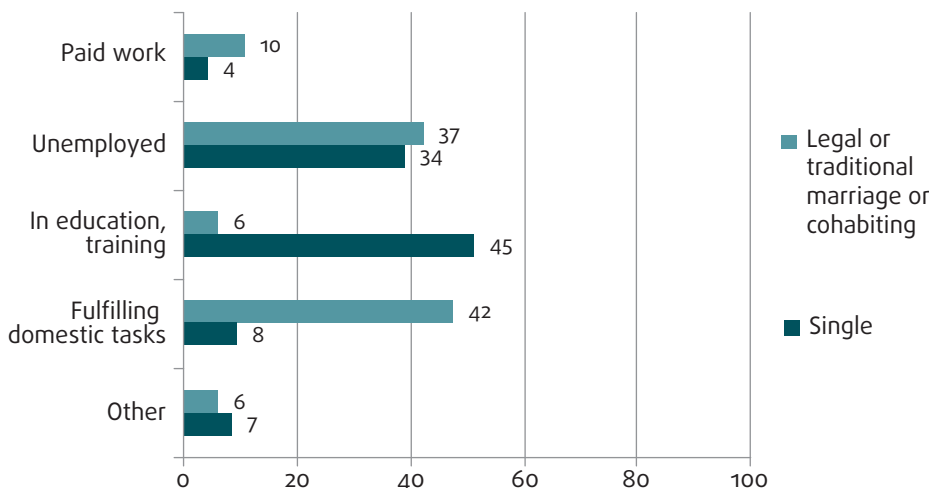
group who are still single (Figure 29). Unsurprisingly, the proportion of Roma women aged 16 to 17 who are full-time homemakers is more than five times higher among those who are married or cohabitating than among those who are single (42 % and 8 % respectively). This distribution mirrors that for the category 'in education or training', which suggests an inverse relationship between early marriage and education (and therefore between early marriage and opportunities for meaningful employment in the future).

Figure 28: Marital status, Roma women aged 16 to 17 (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Marital status question, Roma children in the household aged 16 to 17

Figure 29: Employment status, Roma women aged 16 to 17, by marital status (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011: Marital status and activity status question, Roma children in the household aged 16 to 17

Conclusions

Across the 11 EU Member States surveyed (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain), the average situation of Roma women in core areas of social life, such as education, employment and health, is worse than that of Roma men. The results also show important differences between Member States that need to be taken into account when developing and implementing Roma inclusion policies and actions.

Education is a key determinant of future life opportunities and a key area for progress in the social inclusion of Roma. There still exists a significant ethnic gap between Roma and non-Roma with regard to educational attainment, but for Roma women the gap is even bigger. Of Roma women, 23 % declare that they cannot read or write and 19 % say that they have never been to school.

Member States should ensure that Roma girls have equal access to educational institutions as non-Roma girls, irrespective of their settlement type or geographical region. Special attention should be paid to the existence of institutional or structural factors embedded in national educational systems, the extent to which current barriers disproportionately affect marginalised areas where many Roma reside and gender-specific factors, as well as the effects of geographical internal mobility and the exercise of free movement to other EU Member States.

The gender gap in education may be increased by early marriages. Across all Member States surveyed, around 2 % of Roma girls aged 10 to 15 are reported as 'traditionally married' or cohabitating with a partner, and around 16 % of young Roma men and women aged 16 to 17 are reported as legally or traditionally married or cohabitating. The survey data show that there is a clear link between early marriage or cohabitation and educational attainment before the age of 18. Member States should ensure the application of force the Council of Europe resolution setting the minimum statutory age of marriage for women and men at 18, making it compulsory for every marriage to be declared and entered by the competent authority in an official register.³⁷

Expanding employment opportunities for Roma women is important because it can enhance their financial

independence and the support they provide to their family. It contributes to improving living standards and gives young Roma women future prospects, which can positively affect the importance they attach to educational targets. Member States should therefore consider strategies specifically to promote the employment of Roma women as a crucial element in the broader process of Roma women's empowerment and social inclusion. Member States and the European Commission have an obligation to ensure that legislation on equal treatment in employment, occupation and training is implemented and monitored effectively. Equality bodies should ensure that people, in particular those most at risk of discrimination, such as Roma, are aware of relevant legal provisions and that they can use them effectively.

Member States should address gender inequalities in access to healthcare and health insurance, taking into account gender-specific needs. Improvements in the situation of the household as a whole have direct gender implications. Unequal access to health facilities and health insurance emerges as a relevant issue for Roma women.

Severe housing deprivation, such as that shown by the survey to exist among Roma, residential segregation and poverty impose a particular burden on and pose a particular health risk to Roma women and children. This may prevent them from joining the regular labour market and participating in education.

Member States should consider taking action to ensure that the right to housing (European Social Charter, Article 31) is respected by making adequate housing accessible to those without adequate resources. In accordance with the Council Regulations on the European Regional Development Fund (EC No. 1080/2006) and the European Social Fund (EC No. 1081/2006), Member States should make use of EU Structural Funds to develop and improve public utilities infrastructure in disadvantaged areas and to improve equal access to employment and public services. Local integration strategies should consider and mainstream women's and children's needs and focus on gender-specific burdens and barriers that prevent equal participation and inclusion.

37 Council of Europe (2005).

Annexes

The survey in a nutshell

In 2011, FRA – in cooperation with the European Commission, the UNDP and the World Bank – conducted a pilot survey of Roma and non-Roma populations living in close proximity to one another. The study collected data in 11 Member States on their socio-economic condition, experiences of discrimination and rights awareness to examine the socio-economic situation in employment, education, housing and health, as well as issues of equal treatment and rights awareness.³⁸

In total, 16,319 households in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain were included in the survey.³⁹ For each household, one respondent aged 16 years or older was selected for interview. In part, the information given refers to the household as a whole, so, in total, the data describe the living conditions of 61,271 persons in these households. Around 1,000 Roma households and 500 non-Roma households in close proximity were sampled randomly in each country. The sample included only regions which were known to have a sizeable Roma population.

The sample reflects the situation in all regions in the 11 Member States with an above average proportion of Roma. Consequently, the survey is representative neither of the total Roma population of a country nor of its general population. Rather, the survey highlights living conditions in those areas where Roma identity has been visible to a larger extent than elsewhere. The population of non-Roma has been sampled within the same area and, although clearly distinct from the Roma population in respect to income, employment and housing, there is also an observable economic gap between this group and the majority population, as they often share the marginalisation and lack of infrastructure found in segregated living areas. The term ‘majority population’ is used here to describe the general population in a country, reflecting that country’s average standard of living.

It must be emphasised that Roma ethnicity was determined solely through self-identification. This implies explicit awareness and a certain feeling of belonging to the Roma minority.⁴⁰

³⁸ FRA (2012).

³⁹ An additional sample of Roma migrants in France was interviewed but the results were not included in this analysis. The results on this sample group were used in Cherkezova, S. and Tomova, I. (2013).

⁴⁰ The technical report gives detailed information on the survey and its design: FRA (2013).

Which EU Member States were surveyed?

The survey was conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

Who was interviewed and how?

- In each Member State, about 1,000 Roma households and 500 non-Roma households were sampled randomly in areas that were known to have a proportion of Roma residents above the national average. The survey therefore reflects the situation in those areas in the 11 EU Member States that have an above average proportion of Roma.
- A household was categorised as ‘Roma’ if at least one person in the household identified himself or herself as belonging to Roma or a related group and was willing to participate in the survey. In France, the Roma surveyed, who self-identified as *gens du voyage*, were living in halting sites (*aire d’accueil*). In Italy and Greece, about half and one third of Roma respondents, 47 % and 30 %, respectively, live in encampments.
- Across all countries, the survey interviewed 10,811 Roma and 5,508 non-Roma households, providing information on about 61,271 household members.
- Data on 14,104 Roma women and 13,521 Roma men aged 16 and above, and on 9,161 girls and 9,594 boys under the age of 16 living in a Roma household, were collected.
- ‘Non-Roma’ refers to the general population living in the same area or in the closest neighbourhood to the Roma interviewed.
- Information on the household and its members was collected through face-to-face interviews in interviewees’ homes with one randomly selected respondent aged at least 16 from within the household
- The majority of Roma interviewed in the survey were citizens of their country of residence, with the exception of Italy, where about 40 % of respondents were non-citizens.

What did the survey ask?

The questionnaire consisted of two parts – a ‘household grid’ and an ‘individual part’, or the ‘core questionnaire’. The household grid yielded information on the basic characteristics of all members of the household as reported by the randomly selected respondent. It included questions about the basic socio-demographic characteristics of all household members, their country of origin, ethnic background, marital status, their situation in employment and education. The first part of the core questionnaire, on household status, yielded information on the housing conditions and household income shared by all members of the household, the neighbourhood and its infrastructure. The second part of the core questionnaire went into greater depth, with questions about the respondent’s employment, education, health status, integration, experience and perception of discrimination, rights awareness and citizenship issues, and mobility and migration experiences and intentions.

How representative are the results?

- The results are representative for those Roma women and men living in areas where the Roma population is denser than the national average.
- The results for non-Roma are not representative of the general population in each Member State, but serve as a benchmark for the Roma, since the non-Roma interviewed often have the same environment, labour market and social infrastructure.
- The survey ‘total’ mentioned in many graphs and tables is an unweighted average of all Roma included in the survey and should only be used as a reference point for individual country values. The unweighted average does not correct for different population sizes in different countries – in other words, it does not reflect the situation of the total Roma population in the 11 EU Member States surveyed.

Key terms and concepts

At risk of poverty: This EU social inclusion indicator reflects the percentage of people with an equivalised disposable income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is set for each Member State at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income. The present analysis uses the 2010 national thresholds provided by Eurostat, divided by 12 for a monthly threshold.

Employment age: 20 to 64 years old

Equivalised income: In order to reflect the differences in household size and composition, income figures are given per equivalent adult. This means the monthly disposable household income is divided by its equivalent size using the so-called EU equivalence scale. This scale gives a weight of 1.0 to the first adult, 0.5 to any other household member aged 14 and above and 0.3 to each child under the age of 14.

Housing deprivation: Persons in households with either no running water inside the house and/or not connected to the sewerage system and having no wastewater tank and/or with no connection to an electricity supply.

Household types

Multiperson household: Household with at least two adults aged 18 or above

Household with children: Household with at least one child under 18 years of age

One-parent household: Household with maximum one adult and at least one child under 18 years of age.

Household income: To collect information on disposable household income, the following question was asked in the survey: ‘Thinking about the last six months, roughly how much money has your household to live on each month?’ If the respondent was reluctant to provide the exact amount, categories were offered. Missing values on both questions were excluded from the analysis.

Literacy: Based on self-assessment, asking the respondent, ‘Are you able to read and write?’

Main activity: The ‘main activity status’ is the respondent’s self-assessment regarding his or her current work situation and the work situation of the other household members.

Marital status: Information on the marital status of all household members over the age of 10 was collected from the household respondent. The categories used were: ‘Married (legal)’, ‘Married (traditional)’, ‘Divorced, separated, widowed or partner died’, ‘Cohabiting with partner’ and ‘Single’.

Paid work: Includes the following response categories for the main activity question: ‘Paid work, full time’, ‘Paid work, part time’, ‘Paid work, ad hoc jobs’, ‘Self-employed’ and ‘Paid parental leave’.

Roma: The use of the term ‘Roma’ in official European Union documents follows the approach of the Council of Europe,⁴¹ which uses the term to refer to “Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers

⁴¹ Council of Europe (2011).



and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and [cover] the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as ‘Gypsies’”. The Roma as identified in the survey are not representative of the Roma population of a Member State, but of the sampled areas with a higher density of Roma residents. The

areas were identified depending on the information available in each country - mostly, information from national censuses and other statistical or administrative sources was used. In some Member States, Roma organisations were approached to help with information for the sampling frame.

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HELPING TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS A REALITY FOR EVERYONE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Equality is one of the five values on which the European Union (EU) is founded; yet women here face inequalities in many respects. Extreme poverty, exclusion and discrimination burden Roma women even further. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) researched the situation of Roma women in 11 EU Member States. It found that while the ethnic gap between Roma and non-Roma yawns wide in key areas of life – education, employment, health and experiences of discrimination – the situation for Roma women is worse. In educational attainment, for example, 23 % of the Roma women surveyed say they cannot read or write and 19 % never went to school.

The EU's growth strategy for the coming decade – Europe 2020 – aims to create a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The Roma have been identified as a group at particular risk, one which needs to be targeted if inclusive growth and social cohesion are to be achieved. To reach these ambitious goals, it is imperative to empower, enhance the social inclusion and expand the opportunities of Roma women.

Improving Roma women's educational attainment, enhancing their access and employment prospects, ensuring access to health facilities and tackling discrimination are a key test of the EU's ability to create a more inclusive environment for all extremely marginalised groups. To support these efforts, FRA will continue its work testing novel community-level approaches and generating evidence of the changes taking place on the ground.



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