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<td>27 January – Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopts Resolution 2153 (2017) on promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>28 February – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) publishes fifth monitoring report on Luxembourg and conclusions on the implementation of a number of priority recommendations made in its country reports on Germany and Belgium, released in 2014</td>
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| March | 8 March – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issues report following a country visit to Portugal in March 2017  
29 March – Congress for Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopts Declaration of Mayors and Elected Local and Regional Representatives of Council of Europe Member States against anti-Gypsyism  
29 March – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issues report following a country visit to Ireland in November 2016 |
| April | |
| May | 12 May – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights releases statement urging the Czech Republic to create the necessary conditions to build a monument on the former Nazi concentration camp for Roma in Lety u Pisku  
16 May – ECRI publishes fifth monitoring report on Denmark and conclusions on the implementation of a number of priority recommendations made in its country reports on Bulgaria, Romania and the Slovak Republic, released in 2014 |
| June | 8 June – Launch of European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture in Berlin  
22 June – ECRI publishes its annual report on 2016 |
| July | 11 July – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issues report regarding the protection of vulnerable people, following a visit to Slovenia in March 2017 |
| August | 2 August – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issues statement calling for CoE member states to enhance their efforts towards fully acknowledging the Roma genocide and other past atrocities committed against the Roma |
| September | 12 September – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights publishes a position paper on fighting school segregation in Europe through inclusive education  
19 September – ECRI publishes conclusions on the implementation of a number of priority recommendations made in its country reports on Slovenia, Germany and Belgium, released in 2014 |
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>European Parliament adopts a resolution on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism (2017/2038(INI))</td>
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**EU**

**January**

**February**

**March**

**April**

26 April – European Commission presents the European Pillar of Social Rights

**May**

22 May – European Commission publishes Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) for 2017, as part of the European Semester process, four Member States receive CSRs related to Roma (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia)

**June**

**July**

**August**

30 August – European Commission issues a Communication on the midterm review of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies

30 August – European Commission issues an accompanying Staff Working Document presenting a scoreboard that assesses the changes in Roma integration indicators between 2011 and 2016

**September**

**October**


**November**

**December**
The EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies has not yet resulted in significant and ‘tangible progress’, despite the continued implementation of measures to improve Roma inclusion in the Member States. Roma participation in education has increased, but early school leaving and segregation in education remain problems. The situation of Roma in employment, housing and health shows little improvement, while persisting anti-Gypsyism, which manifests itself in discrimination, harassment and hate crime, remains an important barrier to Roma inclusion. The need to tackle anti-Gypsyism became a higher political priority in 2017, reflected in the European Parliament Resolution on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU. Enhanced efforts to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of integration measures are necessary, while special attention should be paid to marginalised and socially excluded young Roma and Roma women.

5.1. Taking stock of progress on Roma integration

The situation of Roma in the EU in 2017 did not change significantly from the previous years. The overwhelming majority of Roma remain at risk of poverty (80 % in 2016). Early childhood education enrolment increased to 53 % on average, but dropping out early from education remains a problem, particularly among Roma girls. The situation for young Roma, and particularly young Roma women, worsened; the proportion of young Roma not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased from 56 % to 63 %, on average.

Limited progress and persisting challenges to social inclusion indicate that the political tools in place to foster Roma inclusion have not yet achieved the desired results. In the EU, with some of the world’s richest economies, Roma continue to live in conditions similar to those in the world’s poorest countries. Promoting Roma inclusion is therefore also important in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 1, to end poverty in all its forms; Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; and Goal 10, to reduce inequality within and among countries.

Who are the Roma?

The Council of Europe uses ‘Roma and Travellers’ as umbrella terms to refer to Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari, Balkan Egyptians, Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal) and groups such as Travellers, Yenish and the populations designated under the administrative term Gens du voyage, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

See the Council of Europe’s webpage dedicated to Roma and Travellers.

In 2017, the European Commission launched an evaluation of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies, which will build on the mid-term review published in 2017, engaging Roma civil society at grassroots, national and EU levels. The Council of Europe through its JUSTROM, ROMACT and ROMED joint programmes with the European Commission, and FRA through its Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) research project, which published relevant findings in 2017, have increasingly promoted a participatory approach to Roma inclusion.
The European Commission issued a Communication in August, highlighting the results of the mid-term review and taking stock of the progress in Roma integration since 2011.\textsuperscript{4} It took into account data and indicators from FRA\textsuperscript{5} surveys, reports of national Roma contact points, and consultations with civil society, international organisations and other partners. The review “confirms the added value of the framework, the relevance of EU Roma integration goals and the continued need for a combination of targeted and mainstream approaches”\textsuperscript{6}.

The mid-term review acknowledges some progress in education, noting the growing participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care, but specifies that early-school leaving and risk of poverty remain serious concerns. It also notes that “the growing proportion of young Roma who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is an alarming signal that translating results in education into employment and other areas requires a more effective fight against discrimination”\textsuperscript{7}. It also links the still-limited impact of the EU Framework in improving the situation of Roma with persisting anti-Gypsyism, a lack of local capacity to implement integration measures and access funding, and declining levels of political commitment. The mid-term review concludes by identifying priority areas for strengthening the implementation of the EU Framework, such as strengthening the focus on anti-Gypsyism; promoting the participation and empowerment of Roma women and young people; reinforcing structural areas such as coordination structures, cooperation with civil society, transparent reporting and monitoring; and promoting more effective use of and better access to EU funds.\textsuperscript{8}

The European Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, monitors Member States’ compliance with anti-discrimination legislation. In this context, it initiated infringement proceedings against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia for failure to correctly implement the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC), due to different situations of systemic discrimination and segregation of Roma children in schools. In response, Hungary in 2017 amended the legislative provisions criticised in the infringement procedures, with the new provisions coming into effect in July.\textsuperscript{9} During 2017, FRA supported these ongoing proceedings through country visits and data collection.\textsuperscript{10} For more information on the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive, see Chapter \ref{chapter4} on Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The European Semester provides a policy framework for monitoring and guiding economic and social reforms by EU Member States to reach the Europe 2020 targets. Country-specific recommendations, which the Council of the EU has adopted, reflect challenges and proposed solutions specific to each EU Member State. Regarding Roma inclusion, since 2012 the European Commission has issued country-specific recommendations for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. In 2017, these recommendations—along with the exception of the Czech Republic, which did not receive a recommendation on Roma—focused on the need to promote Roma participation in inclusive, mainstream education.\textsuperscript{11}

The European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed in 2017, makes reference to education, training and lifelong learning to help manage successful transitions into the labour market, as well as gender equality, equal opportunities and active support to employment, particularly for young and unemployed people. It does not explicitly mention Roma, but they would benefit from the majority of measures.

With these EU policy frameworks, legal and funding instruments in place,\textsuperscript{12} and a number of targeted and mainstream measures implemented in the Member States, the focus in 2017 was on the intermediate progress achieved in terms of changes in the situation of Roma on the ground.

5.2. Overview of the fundamental rights situation of Roma

5.2.1. Combating anti-Gypsyism

Anti-Gypsyism remained a challenge to Roma inclusion in 2017 despite the existing EU legal frameworks, which envisage the adoption of measures to eliminate race-motivated crime and harassment. During 2017, tensions escalated and resulted in prolonged clashes...
between Roma and non-Roma residents – for example, in the Menidi district of Athens in Greece; and in Bulgaria, where an increase in racist mob attacks on Roma communities and settlements was recorded. Anti-Gypsyism manifests itself in discrimination, harassment and hate crime, and is a barrier to Roma inclusion. For more information on discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin and hate crime affecting Roma, see Chapter 3 on Equality and non-discrimination and Chapter 4 on Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibits discrimination based on any ground, explicitly including membership of a national minority. Article 2 (3) of the Racial Equality Directive prohibits all acts of harassment and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity or race, and the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia (2008/913/JHA) requires Member States to impose criminal penalties to combat racism.

There was a greater focus on anti-Gypsyism at EU level in 2017. A large proportion of Roma continue to feel discriminated against in key areas of daily life, according to FRA data. While experiences of discrimination when looking for work decreased by 10 percentage points between 2011 and 2016, there was no significant change regarding discrimination in housing and in education. European Parliament Resolution 2017/2038(INI) marked an important development in recognising the urgency of the challenge, and independent research on “Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism” provided examples of promising practices and experiences from five Member States. Several Member States enhanced their efforts to collect information on the topic. In Germany, Amaro Foro e.V. published a report of all recorded incidents of anti-Gypsyism in Berlin. In Austria, the Roma organisation Romano Centro published its third incident report, covering the period 2015-2017. In Italy the “Don’t say Roma” programme continued to research the language used in the media and its impact on racial stereotypes targeting Roma.

Anti-Gypsyism manifests itself in various aspects of daily life, as some national court rulings from 2017 show. For example, in Ireland, a court ruled that a property owner neglected their contractual responsibilities to perform maintenance work because of the tenant’s Roma background. Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic, the Ombudsman tested discrimination by sending housing applications under a fictitious, typically Roma, name to a real estate agency. In response, the Regional Court in Ostrava ruled that it was neither discriminatory nor humiliating for the agency to ask the applicant if they were Roma. In Spain, the Supreme Court upheld a decision to deny a Roma widow recognition of her late husband’s pension, holding that their traditional Roma marriage was not recognised by Spanish civil authorities.

At policy level, the renewed National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy in Ireland and the National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia highlight the fight against discrimination as a key priority. Portugal launched a national campaign against Roma discrimination, with particular emphasis on Roma children. Similarly, the United Kingdom announced a Legal Support Project aiming to increase access to justice for victims of identity-based bullying and discrimination in schools. The project is a mainstream measure, but may benefit Roma and Traveller students in particular.

There are promising practices in certain Member States regarding raising awareness of Roma culture. UNICEF Bulgaria launched a programme in March in which young people identify examples of negative attitudes and hate speech towards Roma children, and initiate discussions on how to change such attitudes. Similarly, Latvia promoted Roma arts to counter stereotyping and promote mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue. Finally, the Flemish Ministry of Culture in Belgium recognised caravan culture as part of Flanders’ cultural heritage, and Ireland recognised Travellers as an ethnic group.

Promising practice

Working with professionals to tackle anti-Gypsyism

The federal programme “Live Democracy!” of the German Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth funds a number of pilot projects and NGOs that address the issue of anti-Gypsyism – amongst other phenomena of group-focused enmity.

Within this framework, Lower Saxony continued its programme of educating and sensitising professional groups on anti-Gypsyism, focusing on public institutions, municipal authorities, police and prisons. The Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation provides the educational project “Competence against discrimination against Sinti and Roma” in cooperation with Sinti and Roma organisations and experts. It offers educational seminars to different professional groups each year, with the objective of promoting critical reflection over one’s own behaviour and raising awareness of structural barriers and institutional discrimination. Examples of both historical and current forms of anti-Gypsyism with practice-oriented exercises are incorporated into the training.

For more information, see Germany, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (2017) “Live Democracy”; Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation (Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten) (2017), Project “Competence against anti-Gypsyism” (Projekt „Kompetent gegen Antiziganismus“).
5.2.2. Education

Significant challenges remain in achieving full inclusion of Roma in education, despite some progress recorded in a number of EU Member States in recent years. The EU Framework sets a target for all Roma children to complete at least primary school, and calls on Member States to “ensure that all Roma children have access to quality education and are not subject to discrimination or segregation.” Although participation in education has improved in many Member States, segregation in education increased. National measures in 2017 focused on funding support for schools, scholarships, tutoring programmes, and measures to foster diversity in schools such as teacher training. It is still too early to assess how effective these measures are.

Article 14 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights stipulates that free, compulsory education is a fundamental right for all, while Article 21 prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin. Furthermore, Article 24 of the Charter and Article 3 (3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) outline the importance of combating social exclusion and discrimination and protecting the rights of the child, including the right to education. Article 9 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) also stresses the need of promoting advanced education and training.

Enrolment in education increased slightly, an analysis of FRA survey data shows. On average, 9 out of 10 Roma of compulsory schooling age are enrolled in education, converging towards the general population’s enrolment rate. However, enrolment rates remain low in Greece and Romania, with nearly 7 and 8 out of 10 Roma enrolled in education, respectively.

Early childhood education enrolment rates for Roma also increased on average, from 47 % in 2011 to 53 % in 2016, according to FRA’s analysis. This marks an improvement in most Member States, and reflects an increased number of investments and measures by governments to support early education. However, the gap between the general population and Roma remains significant, especially in the Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal and Romania (see Figure 5.1).

Early childhood education enrolment was similar for Roma and the general population. 

Figure 5.1: Children, aged between 4 years and the (country-specific) starting age of compulsory primary education, who attend early childhood education (%)

Notes: Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total or based on cells with fewer than 20 unweighted observations are noted in parentheses. Results based on fewer than 20 unweighted observations in a group total are not published.

Sources: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016, Roma; FRA, Roma Pilot Survey 2011; UNDP, World Bank and EC 2011 (for Croatia); Eurostat 2016, General population; Eurostat 2011, General population.
and non-Roma children only in Hungary, where early childhood education has been compulsory from the age of 3 since 2015, and in Spain. Worryingly, despite a drop in the rate of young Roma early school leavers, approximately 7 out of 10 Roma aged 18–24 years still left school early in 2016. Furthermore, in Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia, more Roma girls than boys left education early.

Troublingly, segregation in education – Roma children attending classes where all classmates are Roma – on average increased in the Member States FRA surveyed, from 10% in 2011 to 15% in 2016.

To address this situation and promote the participation of Roma in education, some Member States introduced legislative measures in 2017. For example, the Amendment to the Education Act in the Czech Republic came into effect in September 2017, ensuring that compulsory early childhood education starts at the age of five. Slovakia introduced a subsidy to increase access to pre-school education. Moreover, Slovakia revised the criteria for determining if a child is socially disadvantaged to increase schools’ access to funds earmarked for teaching support of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Legislative changes in Bulgaria allow funds to be distributed directly to schools for additional Bulgarian language classes. Several Member States also made legislative amendments in primary school legislation through education and equal treatment acts, to address concerns raised by the European Commission under the infringement proceedings. Hungary published a modification of its equal treatment act and its public education act in 2017.


Furthermore, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain implemented measures to provide learning support or financial support for young Roma in the form of scholarships, grants and apprenticeships. Additional policies adopted include the provision of professional orientation in schools in Bulgaria, while Hungary expanded its vocational training and study halls programmes. Greece introduced legislation for the appointment of psychologists and social workers to support children in vulnerable situations, including in schools situated in areas with high concentrations of Roma.

Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia continued, expanded or introduced programmes using Roma mediators and teaching assistants. In some cases, Member States introduced sanctions in cases where children are left out of compulsory education (Bulgaria and the Netherlands); in other cases, they provided material assistance in the form of stationary and school equipment (Cyprus) or vouchers for pre-schools (Greece) or by providing public transport to schools (Lithuania).

Member States also introduced measures to foster diversity and the inclusion of minorities, such as Roma. For example, Lithuania introduced legislative changes to improve the integration of national minorities in education through educational material and guidelines for cultural diversity. Austria approved a major reform of the school system in June 2017. It plans to create regional advisory boards of the Department of Education, which can include representatives of national minorities, such as Roma. The Ministry of Education in Spain committed itself to including Roma history and culture in the national curriculum. Some Member States developed policies aimed at sensitising and training teachers about ethnic or cultural minorities – for example, in Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia.

### Promising practice

#### Fostering local-level participation to improve education

FRA’s Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) research project published a number of case studies in 2017 that illustrate how local-level approaches to education can provide promising examples for replication and scaling up.

For example, in Aghia Varvara, Greece, Roma and non-Roma students took photos of their everyday lives, then discussed these in groups to gain insights into inter-ethnic relations in school. This so-called photovoice technique allowed students to openly address existing tensions, as well as to engage with local authorities in presenting students’ ideas for how to improve the community.

Other promising practices in education emerged through the LERI research. In Sokolov, Czech Republic, and in Medway, United Kingdom, early school leaving and other educational needs were addressed through participatory community-level actions and family learning models that engaged with Roma parents through educational workshops, continuing education, leisure activities and parents’ groups.

For more information, see FRA’s webpage on the LERI project.
5.23. Employment

Improved educational attainment is expected to result in greater employment and labour market participation rates. For Roma, this has not been the case, as the midterm review in 2017 noted. The European Roma Platform in November 2017 discussed the barriers facing young Roma in their transition from education to employment, as well as the effectiveness of measures taken by Member States to support youth employment.27

The EU Framework sets a target to reduce the gap between the employment rates of Roma and of the majority population, and to provide “full access in a non-discriminatory way to vocational training, to the job market and to self-employment tools and initiatives”,28 fulfilling the fundamental right to engage in work, which Article 15 (1) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights enshrines. This is also relevant to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

Overall, key employment indicators have not improved, a comparison of FRA survey results from 2011 and 2016 shows.29 The proportion of Roma in paid work remains at only 25 %, and the average percentage of Roma women in paid work is nearly half that of Roma men. Linked to the limited improvements in employment, the overwhelming majority of Roma remain at risk of poverty despite small improvements (80 % in 2016, compared with 86 % in 2011). Country differences are important: whereas the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania saw improvements in the rate of Roma at risk of poverty, this rate increased in Greece and in Spain.86 The severity of the situation becomes even more striking when compared with the national at-risk-of-poverty rates for the general population, which remained between 10 % and 25 % across Member States from 2011 to 2016. The situation of Roma is alarming, including in light of SDG 1 on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Some Member States adopted legislation in 2017 to support Roma in employment. For example, Greece passed a law to make it easier for Roma street vendors to obtain permits for selling in street markets and for organising markets through unions and associations.86 Slovakia relaxed the qualification criteria for community workers who provide crisis interventions in marginalised Roma communities, to allow more Roma to apply for these positions.82 In the Czech Republic, a legislative proposal on social entrepreneurship would give businesses the status of “integrated social businesses”, which provide employers with additional benefits, if at least 30 % of employees are from groups that are disadvantaged in the job market and if they are also provided with psycho-social support.83

In Greece, the Union of Roma Mediators and Partners was established, and cooperates with the Special Secretariat for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Ministry of Labour to explore how Roma mediators can be recognised as a profession.84 Croatia took measures to employ Roma in local government to enhance cooperation between local authorities and Roma communities.86 Croatia also put in place active employment measures to allow persons to continue receiving social benefits while employed under the ‘public works’ measure.86

Additional measures to support Roma in employment include qualification courses and counselling for the long-term unemployed – for example, in Bulgaria85 through qualification courses and subsidised employment; in Hungary86 through training for the low skilled, long-term unemployed and public workers as well as by providing employment and labour market services; and in Romania through counselling, mediation and training courses.89 Ireland’s updated national Traveller and Roma inclusion strategy also plans similar measures to ensure that those who register as job seekers receive good-quality offers of employment, continued education and apprenticeships.90

Local-level actions to improve labour market inclusion continue. For example, the Acceder and Aprender Trabajando programmes continued in Spain.91 In Sweden, the National Employment Office continued informational campaigns for job seekers from the Roma community in pilot municipalities, increasing the number of Roma using these services and the number of employed Roma.92 FRA’s LERI research also focused on community-level solutions to employment. Case studies from Greece, France and Hungary published in 2017 show that training and other participatory support activities to support integration into the labour market can help micro-enterprises and support Roma entrepreneurs.93

Another key focus of employment has been on supporting young Roma into the labour market, as the proportion of Roma NEET aged 16-24 years remains far higher than that of the general population (see Figure 5.2). Between 2011 and 2016, the situation among young Roma actually worsened: the proportion increased from 56 % to 63 % on average, with the biggest increases in Slovakia, followed by Hungary and the Czech Republic.86 The increase in young Roma NEET was larger for Roma women than men, further widening the gender gap to 17 percentage points.
Member States continued to put, or put additional, measures in place to address the situation of young people in the labour market in 2017, sometimes through general measures that also have an impact on young Roma. For example, Hungary continued its Youth Guarantee Programme to support NEETs gain certificates from vocational schools and place them in jobs. While the programme does not target Roma exclusively, many young Roma have benefited. By the end of 2017, more than 50,000 participants were employed within the programme, more than 27,000 participated in training and almost 11,000 obtained certificates.

Romania provided personalised assistance to young people at risk of marginalisation, in particular Roma, through solidarity contracts and other services under the national employment programme for 2017.

Few Member States focused specific employment measures on Roma women; however, some projects and practices were identified. For example, Hungary developed several schemes to improve the social acceptance and employment of unemployed Roma women in particular, reaching out to nearly 1,000 women and providing training and jobs in the public sector. In Sweden, awareness-raising efforts by the national employment office reached out to Roma women.

**Promising practice**

**Municipalities find new ways to generate employment**

The Municipality of Ulič in Slovakia has developed a model to address long-term unemployment and create employment opportunities for low-skilled and disadvantaged job seekers, such as Roma. It ran an employment workshop and set up a municipal waste management firm to provide services in neighbouring villages and heating for municipal buildings in Ulič. As the firm developed into a self-sustaining company, it used revenues to pay wages, invest in new technologies and fund a local municipal community centre that provides joint activities for Roma and non-Roma.

The firm and the centre have slowly improved interethnic relations and increased the chances of its employees in the open labour market. The initiative dates back to 2006 and was financed by a combination of EU Structural Funds and national and municipal budgets.

Several other municipalities in Slovakia have developed similar approaches – for example, Spišský Hrhov and Raslavice.

*For more information, see the Ulič municipality’s website.*

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**Figure 5.2: Percentage of persons aged 16-24 years with current main activity not in employment, education or training (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Roma 2011</th>
<th>Roma 2016</th>
<th>General population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>PT</td>
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<td>RO</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SK</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016, Roma; FRA, Roma Pilot Survey 2015; UNDP, World Bank and EC 2011 (for Croatia); Eurostat NEET rate 2016; Eurostat NEET rate 2011
5.2.4. Housing

One of the EU Framework’s objectives is to increase access to housing and public utilities for Roma. Despite some positive legislative developments and measures, housing remained an area of concern in many Member States in 2017. The proportion of Roma living in severely deprived housing conditions remained constant, while evictions continued to take place.

Housing assistance is recognised as a fundamental right under Article 34 (3) of the Charter, to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources. Moreover, Article 31 of the revised European Social Charter declares that “everyone has the right to housing”.

While some positive trends concerning access to basic amenities are evident, Roma continue to live in overcrowded households and face conditions of severe housing deprivation, FRA analysis in 2017 shows (see Figure 5.3). Some improvements, however, are noticeable in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia. Despite measures to promote non-discriminatory access to social housing, rates of perceived discrimination when looking for housing because of being Roma increased in many countries, including the Czech Republic, Portugal and Spain. Only Slovakia saw an improvement, with the rate of perceived discrimination in access to housing decreasing from 44 % to 30 %.

In 2017, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) published a report based on field research in 93 Roma neighbourhoods and settlements across three EU Member States (France, Hungary and Slovakia) and four non-EU countries (Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, and Montenegro), highlighting the large disparities between Roma and non-Roma in access to water and sanitation services.

Several relevant legislative developments in the area of housing took place in 2017. Greece introduced a new law with a special procedure concerning social housing policy and a mechanism for relocating Roma from rough/irregular accommodation. Dependent on the approval of the population to be relocated, the law permits social groups living in makeshift or illegally built accommodation to be temporarily relocated to appropriate social housing complexes, in addition to receiving social support services. A new law on equality and citizenship in France grants those residing in shanty towns the same rights as the tenants of squats regarding evictions. It will impose a ban on evictions during winter, apply a two-month deadline following an order to leave the premises, and allow judges to grant deadlines from three months to three years before an eviction.

Figure 5.3: Percentage of people living in households that have no toilet, shower or bathroom inside the dwelling (household members)

Sources: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016, Roma; FRA, Roma Pilot Survey 2011; UNDP, World Bank and EC 2011 (Croatia 2011); Eurostat, EU-SILC 2015; Eurostat, EU-SILC 2011, General population
In contrast, some legislative developments may negatively affect Roma. For example, the Czech Republic amended the Act on Material Needs Benefits, allowing municipalities to deny the provision of supplementary housing benefits in regions with a high prevalence of social inclusion challenges. According to the Inter-ministerial Commission for Roma Community Affairs, this will probably hinder the ability of poor Roma to secure housing.

At policy level, several Member States made efforts to map Roma housing needs in 2017. For example, Finland adopted the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights for 2017–2019, which envisages a study of homelessness among Roma and their access to housing. In Ireland, the newly adopted National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017–2021 requires reviews of the barriers that Travellers face in access to social housing. The Ombudsman in the Netherlands published a report concluding that local governments have to take account of the specific housing needs of Travellers, Roma and Sinti, and have to ensure enough locations and pitches based on actual local needs. In Portugal, a study conducted by the Institute of Housing and Urban Rehabilitation – a public institute under the Ministry of the Environment – found that the housing situation of Roma has not improved. In Spain, a study of Roma housing showed that a considerable number of Spanish Roma still live in substandard housing.

Member States continued to focus attention on social housing and expanding access to housing and infrastructure for marginalised groups in 2017. Several implemented relevant measures, including Bulgaria and Croatia. Scotland, United Kingdom, published a reviewed social housing charter, including minimum site standards. A guide for local authorities addresses how to manage unauthorised camp sites following basic principles of minimising disruption for all and respecting common standards of behaviour.

Evictions continued and the legalisation of irregular housing remains controversial. In France, civil society organisations repeatedly raised concerns. The number of forced evictions by French authorities increased in the second half of 2017, according to a report published by the ECHR. Many cases were not supported by a legal decision and did not include an offer of adequate alternative accommodation, it said. Similarly, civil society organisations raised concerns regarding the increasing number of forced evictions in Italy. In response, the municipality of Rome earmarked € 1.5 million to provide Roma with alternative housing options to encampments.

Several court cases addressed informal encampments. For example, in Italy, a court upheld a complaint that the mayor of Milan issued, requesting the closing of an informal encampment. The court found that health and safety reasons prevailed over the right to “maintain Roma identity”.

Other court decisions were more positive. For example, in Slovenia, an administrative court ruled that Roma should enjoy special protection in housing even when living in illegally constructed buildings, as enshrined in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This judgment was also approved by the Constitutional Court. In the Netherlands, the Dutch Human Rights Institute ruled that the so-called “extinction policy” and “reduction policy” – which allow municipalities to reduce the number of caravan sites – are discriminatory towards Travellers because they reduce the number of camps, which are essential to the Travellers’ way of life.

Some Member States took measures to address evictions and legalise irregular housing. For example, in Vidin, Bulgaria, the NGO Organisation Drom continued to implement a pilot model through its project Equal Access to Housing for Roma in Vidin, to legalise informal settlements in a preventive effort to avoid evictions. The organisation also cooperated with the municipality to organise round-table discussions, training and a housing-rights campaign. In Slovakia, the Ministry of Interior approved a national project that aims to legalise the use of land in marginalised Roma communities across 150 municipalities.

Local-level approaches to housing challenges have had promising results. In the context of FRA’s LERI research, local communities tested participatory approaches to housing exclusion and risk of evictions, particularly in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, where mapping evicted families helped the local authorities to find appropriate solutions, while at the same time raising awareness among Roma households of legal options to rebuild their homes. In Aiud and in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, the project developed local action groups on housing inclusion to address the housing insecurity of families in informal settlements, looking for ways to give houses official legal status, submit social housing applications, and propose changes to criteria for social housing allocation that are less likely to exclude socially marginalised groups.
Promising practice

Providing guidance materials and training for property owners

National authorities in Sweden have taken an initiative to combat discrimination against Roma in the housing market in recent years. Activities include guidance materials aimed at property owners and landlords, as well as the establishment of a network consisting of Roma representatives, property owners and landlords. The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning uses the materials for awareness-raising activities, including training programmes. Roma representatives also received free training about their rights in the housing market.

For more information, see Sweden, National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) (2017), New education on equal treatment of Roma persons in the housing market (Ny utbildning för likabehandling av romer på bostadsmarknaden), 5 September 2017.

5.2.5. Health

The EU Framework calls on Member States to provide access to quality healthcare for Roma, under the same conditions as the rest of the population. However, in 2017, healthcare did not appear to be a priority on the legislative agenda in comparison with education, employment and housing. Member State efforts concentrated on specific health challenges and measures to address discriminatory treatment in the healthcare system.

The picture is mixed, an analysis of FRA survey data in 2017 indicates. The proportion of those who say that they are covered by medical insurance fell by more than 10 percentage points in the Czech Republic and Hungary, while Greece achieved a considerable increase (Figure 5.4). On average, the number of Roma respondents who self-assessed their health in positive terms (“very good” or “good”) increased from 55 % in 2011 to 68 % in 2016. However, a small gender gap in self-reported health conditions remains, with Roma men on average reporting slightly better health than Roma women in most countries. Overall, roughly 1 in 10 Roma still reported that they had felt discriminated against while accessing healthcare services.

In terms of legislative developments, Greece introduced Law 4486/2017, which grants free healthcare coverage to vulnerable social groups, including Roma. In addition, legislative changes in Romania included the adoption of Emergency Ordinance No. 6/2017, which increased investments in medical units, among other public infrastructure. While not directly affecting Roma, the distribution of additional funds has the potential to benefit marginalised populations.

Member States also adopted policy initiatives and measures to combat the exclusion of Roma from the national healthcare systems. In its new National Programme of Measures for Roma, Slovenia plans to...

Figure 5.4: Roma respondents, aged 16 years and over, with medical insurance coverage (%)

Sources: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016, Roma; FRA, Roma Pilot Survey 2011; UNDP, World Bank and EC 2011 (for Croatia)
carry out research and evaluation on any potential structural, institutional or individual barriers to accessing healthcare.\textsuperscript{92} The Foundation for the Roma Secretariat in Spain continued to assist Roma families in marginalised communities to access health and social services.\textsuperscript{93} In Italy, the municipality of Naples created a reception centre for Roma, which provides access to healthcare services.\textsuperscript{94} Meanwhile, the integrated case management approach adopted in Romania envisages measures to facilitate access to healthcare through community nurses and Roma health mediators.\textsuperscript{95} The use of Roma mediators, who act as community representatives and liaise with local authorities and health services, was common practice in a number of Member States, such as Bulgaria, which continued to fund the work of 215 health mediators (€800,000 in 2017).\textsuperscript{96}

Member States also took action to address specific health challenges affecting Roma. For example, Bulgaria concentrated efforts on preventing, screening and treating tuberculosis,\textsuperscript{97} while Roma doctors and health mediators played a central role in managing a measles epidemic that affected Roma children.\textsuperscript{98} Similarly, Greece targeted Roma in the pan-European measles vaccination,\textsuperscript{99} while Hungary\textsuperscript{100} and Ireland\textsuperscript{101} developed measures to prevent and combat drug addiction within Roma communities.

Some Member States developed policies to make healthcare systems more inclusive. Such measures target both the general population and Roma, and seek to promote the active engagement of Roma as both healthcare providers and receivers. For example, Hungary,\textsuperscript{102} Ireland,\textsuperscript{103} Slovenia\textsuperscript{104} and Sweden\textsuperscript{105} developed policies to provide diversity training for health-service providers, and Bulgaria developed programmes to train Roma medical professionals.\textsuperscript{106}

### 5.3. Implementing monitoring frameworks

The EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies envisages “strong monitoring methods to evaluate the impact of Roma integration actions”, including consultation with Roma civil society and local authorities.\textsuperscript{107} Several Member States further developed monitoring mechanisms in 2017, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative indicators. However, a number of Member States still do not have effective monitoring mechanisms in place.

Quantitative indicators – such as enrolment rates in education, employment rates or the number of beneficiaries receiving certain services – are a useful tool to measure progress towards targets and objectives. They also help to assess the efficiency and quality of projects. Such information could improve the use of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), which would enhance the impact and success rate of projects combating Roma exclusion.

In 2017, Member States adopted various approaches to incorporating quantitative indicators in their monitoring. For example, in Bulgaria, an annual monitoring report on the implementation of the national Roma integration strategy collects information regarding the projects conducted under ESIF funding, using quantitative indicators when possible.\textsuperscript{108} Similarly, Lithuania’s annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Roma Integration for 2015-2020 is based on yearly outputs, including indicators such as the number of Roma children in general schools, the number of Roma women involved in social activities and the number of illegal buildings in Roma ghettos.\textsuperscript{109} Poland assesses expenditures within the 2014-2020 Roma integration programme and collects information on indicators such as the number of Roma who have undergone preventative medical treatment, whose accommodation has been renovated or who have received new accommodation.\textsuperscript{110} The Supreme Audit Chamber conducted further monitoring at municipal level.\textsuperscript{111}

Hungary considers quantitative targets, outputs, results and impact indicators in its annual monitoring report of its national strategy. Notably, all stages of monitoring include gender and age, and it also measures the situation of children where applicable.\textsuperscript{112} A mid-term monitoring report of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy was also developed in 2017, focusing on results and recommendations for the upcoming three-year period.\textsuperscript{113} Slovakia applies a holistic approach using quantitative indicators for all thematic areas, including financial inclusion and non-discrimination.\textsuperscript{114}

Following governmental decisions adopted in late 2016, an annual evaluation cycle in the Czech Republic will use quantitative indicators to assess the fulfilment of major targets outlined by the National Roma Integration Strategy in any given year.\textsuperscript{115} In Greece, the Special Secretariat for the Social Integration of Roma is tasked with developing quantitative targets for assessing progress on Roma integration in education, employment, housing and health.\textsuperscript{116} However, official data disaggregated by Roma origin are still not available.

Several Member States opted to develop, monitor and evaluate qualitative indicators. In Austria, the Federal Chancellery commissioned qualitative studies on an ad hoc basis, in preparation of an update of the national Roma strategy. In addition, the Roma Dialogue Platform regularly meets to discuss issues related to Roma, including such studies.\textsuperscript{117} Examples of indicators include the experiences of Roma students and teachers,
barriers to education and the level of family support.153 Similarly, in Slovenia, a network of coordinators has the task of evaluating the implementation of measures in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for 2017–2021.154 Croatia will provide base-line qualitative – and quantitative – data for measuring the efficiency of implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.156

Sweden upheld gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting principle that all projects financed by the European Social Fund should use, including during their implementation and monitoring phases.156 As a result, qualitative impact indicators consider women and children as especially prioritised groups.157

A number of Member States do not use qualitative or quantitative indicators, partly because of challenges in data collection on ethnicity or race. In these Member States, a lack of statistical data disaggregated by ethnicity can prevent the population of robust indicators that track progress in the implementation of measures to promote Roma inclusion. However, some Member States have attempted to work around these constraints to monitor their Roma integration efforts. For example, the Advisory Group for the Integration of Roma Communities in Portugal holds regulation meetings every four months and carried out an operational evaluation in March 2017, although it considered no impact assessments or indicators beyond recording the number of actions and activities implemented in each thematic area.158

Finland appointed a new National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs for 2017–2019, which along with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health carried out an evaluation of the outcomes of the first Roma political programme (ROMPO1). In addition, the National Institute for Health and Welfare carried out a national Roma research project tasked with developing indicators for measuring progress in health and welfare related issues.159 In Ireland, the Department of Justice and Equality established a steering group with the mandate of producing annual and mid-term reports about the implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. In both countries, the precise nature of the indicators and monitoring agreements has yet to be confirmed.160

Finally, a report published in May 2017 monitored Roma-related institutional, training-related and education-related initiatives, their access to justice and the nature of media and political discourses, and compared the situation in selected Member States.161
Anti-Gypsyism remains an important barrier to Roma inclusion, findings of FRA surveys on Roma show. Roma continue to face discrimination because of their ethnicity in access to education, employment, housing and healthcare. Discrimination and anti-Gypsyism violate the right to non-discrimination as recognised under Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and other European and international human rights instruments. Furthermore, the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures recommends that Member States take necessary measures to ensure the effective practical enforcement of the Racial Equality Directive. The need to tackle discrimination against Roma by implementing the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, with a particular focus on gender aspects, was highlighted in previous FRA reports, including the EU-MIDIS II report on Roma – Selected findings and the Fundamental Rights Report 2017.

**FRA opinion 5.1**

*EU Member States should ensure that combating anti-Gypsyism is mainstreamed into policy measures and combined with active inclusion policies that address ethnic inequality and poverty, in line with the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia. They should also include awareness-raising measures on the benefits of Roma integration, targeted towards the general population, service providers, public educational staff and the police. Such measures could include surveys or qualitative research conducted at national or local level to understand the social impact of anti-Gypsyism.*

Early-childhood education enrolment rates for Roma have increased, reflecting investments and measures by governments to support early education. Despite a drop in the rate of young Roma early school leavers, about 7 out of 10 Roma aged 18–24 years still leave school early. Furthermore, segregation in education has increased in several EU Member States and discrimination in education has not significantly improved. Article 3 (3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) outlines the importance of combating social exclusion and discrimination, and of protecting the rights of the child, which include the right to education. Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity or race. The 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures calls for the elimination of any school segregation and to ensure the sustainability and long-term impact for eliminating segregation. The Racial Equality Directive also applies to the area of education. Infringement procedures brought against three Member States concerning segregation in education in the context of violations of the Racial Equality Directive reflect the severity of this issue.

**FRA opinion 5.2**

*National educational authorities should provide necessary support and resources to schools with Roma student populations to address all aspects of educational inclusion: to increase participation in education and to reduce dropout rates. EU Member States should implement further efforts to address segregation in education that focus on longer-term sustainability and in parallel address discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. Desegregation measures should be accompanied by awareness-raising efforts and diversity promotion in schools addressed to teachers, students and parents.*

Improved educational participation of Roma has not always resulted in higher employment rates or labour market participation. Long-term unemployment remains a challenge, while integration in the labour market is even more difficult for young Roma and Roma women. While some specific projects and policy measures have targeted the needs of young Roma and Roma women in employment, little systematic attention has been paid to these particular groups. The 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures asks EU Member States to take effective measures to ensure equal treatment of Roma in access to the labour market – for example, through measures to support first work experience and vocational training, self-employment and entrepreneurship, access to mainstream public employment services and eliminating barriers such as discrimination. The European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed in 2017, makes reference to education, training and lifelong learning to help manage successful transitions into the labour market, as well as gender equality, equal opportunities and active support to employment, particularly for young people and the unemployed.
FRA opinion 5.3

EU Member States should strengthen measures to support access to the labour market for Roma. Employment policies, national employment offices and businesses, particularly at local level, should provide support to enable self-employment and entrepreneurship activities. They should also implement outreach efforts to Roma to support their full integration into the labour market, with a focus also on Roma women and young people.

For Roma integration measures to succeed, the meaningful participation of Roma in projects and in the design and implementation of local policies and strategies is essential. National-level participation by Roma is important for the design and monitoring of national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of policy measures and should be supported through national-level dialogue and participation platforms. Particularly at the local level, mechanisms for cooperation with local authorities and civil society organisations can facilitate the involvement of local people, including Roma. The 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures calls for active involvement and participation of Roma, and appropriate local approaches to integration. FRA’s experience through its Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) research shows how local communities can become empowered to participate in projects and strategy development.

The 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures calls on EU Member States to appropriately monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their national strategies and social inclusion policies. Such monitoring mechanisms need to include relevant qualitative and quantitative data where possible, ensuring that the data collection is in line with applicable national and Union law, particularly regarding the protection of personal data. While several Member States have included quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure progress in Roma integration, some still do not have any monitoring mechanisms in place. Few monitoring mechanisms include information on effective use of EU funds.

FRA opinion 5.4

EU Member States should review their national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of policy measures to advance efforts to promote participatory approaches to policymaking and in integration projects, paying particular attention to the local level and supporting community-led efforts. European Structural and Investment Funds and other funding sources should be used to facilitate participation of Roma and community-led integration projects.

FRA opinion 5.5

Member States should improve or establish monitoring mechanisms on Roma integration, in line with the 2013 Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States. Monitoring mechanisms should include further collection of anonymised data disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, in line with EU data protection legislation, and include relevant questions in large-scale surveys such as the Labour Force Survey and the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions. Monitoring mechanisms should involve civil society and local Roma communities. Independent assessments, involving Roma, should also review the use and effectiveness of EU funds, and should feed directly into improving policy measures.
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