

Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on Roma and Travellers communities

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1 Specific implications of the general measures taken to stop the COVID-19 pandemic on Roma and Travellers' communities?

As has been communicated to FRA beforehand, in Sweden ethnicity is neither registered in the population register nor in our official statistics making it difficult to find hard facts on the impact of the corona virus outbreak. Thus, it is likewise difficult to find official sources answering the questions of this service request. This means that we have found the information through interviews with local officials and representatives from the Roma/traveller groups. The stakeholders contacted were:

Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*)¹, the authority which since 2012 is responsible for the coordination and review of the measures taken within the national long-term strategy for Roma inclusion.²

Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population³

Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population⁴

Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg⁵

Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg⁶

Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm⁷

Radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano (Swedish Radio's special channel that transmits radio and news in Romani)⁸

¹ Data from this actor collected through a telephone interview if not otherwise referenced, 26 May 2020

² Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2012) A coordinated and long-term strategy for Roma inclusion 2012-2032 (*En samordnad och långsiktig strategi för romsk inkludering 2012-2032*), 23 February 2012, [available here](#)

³ Data from this actor collected in writing if not otherwise referenced, 2 June 2020

⁴ Data from this actor collected through a telephone interview if not otherwise referenced, 25 May 2020

⁵ Data from this actor collected in writing if not otherwise referenced, 2 June 2020

⁶ Data from this actor collected through a telephone interview if not otherwise referenced, 19 May 2020

⁷ Data from this actor collected through a telephone interview if not otherwise referenced, 27 May 2020

⁸ Data from this actor collected through a telephone interview if not otherwise referenced, 25 May 2020

Editor in Chief at local Street magazine, which is sold by many Roma EU-citizens⁹

Head of Operations at Stockholm City Mission (*Stadsmissionen*), a Christian organisation that offers accommodation and food to socially vulnerable persons¹⁰

1.1 Type of measures

Focus on:

- lockdowns of localities
- restriction of movement
- closure of businesses

In **Sweden**, all the contacted stakeholders¹¹ state that the Roma and traveller's minority has not been especially hard hit by the general measures taken to combat covid-19. No specific measures has been taken in relation to covid-19 with the Roma minority as the target group. The development manager at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm pointed out that since there is no registration of ethnic affiliation in Sweden, it is difficult to make any statements on the specific implications the general measures may have had on the Roma population. However, the development manager argued that there may have been difficulties with accessing and processing the available information about covid-19, since the Roma minority is a group that commonly struggles to access the authorities and access information in

⁹ Data from this actor collected in writing if not otherwise referenced, 19 May 2020

¹⁰ Data from this actor collected in writing if not otherwise referenced, 25 May 2020

¹¹ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*);

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population;

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population and representative from the Roma minority in Malmö;

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg;

Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg;

Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano, Swedish Radio's special channel that transmits radio and news in Romani

Sweden, editor in chief at local Street magazine, sold by many Roma EU-citizens Sweden,

Sweden, head of operations at Stockholm City Mission (*Stadsmissionen*), a Christian organisation that offers accommodation and food to socially vulnerable persons

general, due to lack of trust and/or lacking language skills.¹² This argument was confirmed by several other stakeholders. Both Roma representatives and professionals mentioned that the Roma population to a high degree lacks the necessary information about covid-19, something which in turn has opened up for an intense dissemination of disinformation among the minority. According to a Roma representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg, many persons in the local Roma community gave each other ungrounded advice on how to stay safe from the pandemic, including eating garlic and drinking lemon water.¹³ One stakeholder described the situation as a rumour mill.¹⁴

In **Sweden**, a development manager at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population¹⁵ stated that it took a long time for both the majority society and for some Roma communities to access adequate information, and that much of the early information was funded by personal investments and work by civil society organisations, rather than the state.¹⁶ None of the stakeholders say that they know of any national or general measures specifically addressing the Roma population.

In **Sweden**, a radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano, Swedish Radio's special channel that transmits radio and news in Romani says that the pandemic has shown that there is a lack of authorities who specifically work with national minorities, and knows how to get in touch with them. This need has been highlighted by the pandemic but is a permanent problem. After a while, the national authorities turned to the Radio station to spread their information.¹⁷ The importance of information in minority languages during crises is highlighted by the head of content in national minority languages and other languages (*utbudsansvarig för nationella minoritetsspråk och andra språk*) at Swedish Radio. Specialist channels in minority languages in Sweden have reached all-time high listening ratings during the pandemic

¹² Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*)

¹³ Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

¹⁴ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population

¹⁵ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population

¹⁶ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

¹⁷ Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

and the editorial offices play a crucial role transmitting trustworthy and correct information during this pandemic.¹⁸

In **Sweden**, a development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population stated that the need for information that is accessible to heterogeneous populations with different needs living under different circumstances have been made very clear in relation to the handling of covid-19. The development manager said that the requests on the local department to provide support and service to persons from the Roma population have exploded. They are overwhelmed by the amount of telephone calls from persons among the Roma population who either seek information or who needs to reaffirm their own interpretation of the information.¹⁹ The two local centres that were interviewed for this Information Request both stated that they have had information about covid-19 in Romani and Swedish specifically aimed at the Roma population.²⁰ Thanks to the existence of these centres, with adequate cultural competences and the assignment to cater to the specific needs of the Roma population, the centres have been able to provide the Roma population with the necessary information in ways that are trusted and understood by the Roma population. However, the concerned stakeholders stressed that if these centres would not have been financed through the municipalities, the needs would not have been automatically identified and met.²¹ Some additional local information initiatives were mentioned, where different groups have published information in Romani which has been shared and disseminated in social media. This way of communicating has proven efficient, but the outreach is limited, since it requires access to Facebook or access to computers and smartphones.²²

¹⁸ Sweden, Dagens Nyheter (daily newspaper), 'Twice as much listening to news in Somali during the corona crisis' (*Dubbelt så mycket lyssning på nyheter på somaliska under coronakrisen*), Newspaper editorial, 29 March 2020, [available here](#)

¹⁹ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population and representative from the Roma minority in Malmö

²⁰ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population and representative from the Roma minority in Malmö;
Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg's municipal local department focusing on the Roma population

²¹ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population;
Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population

²² Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population

In **Sweden**, a representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg, claimed that the Roma population has been more or less in panic over covid-19. According to the representative, many worries about the risks covid-19 would pose to their children and their older relatives. The initial panic led to the spread of disinformation.²³ The radio journalist at Radio Romano confirmed the picture and stated that in the early stages of the pandemic, a lot of different of disinformation were circulated in the form of advice. If the authorities had been able to provide the Roma population with correct information in their own languages at an earlier stage of the pandemic this would have had a positive impact on the overall well-being of the Roma group during the crisis, according to the radio journalist.²⁴

In **Sweden**, all the stakeholders emphasised that the spread of disinformation was strengthened by the fact that the Roma population in general have little knowledge about the existence and function of national authorities, such as the Public Health Agency (*Folkhälsomyndigheten*), and the National Civil Contingencies Agency (*Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap*).²⁵ One stakeholder mentioned that the widespread mistrust against the authorities among the Roma population has not been helped by the fact that the Swedish strategy to combat the corona virus has been frequently criticised by other countries.²⁶ The criticism has strengthened the Roma population's confusion regarding which information to trust. The development manager Malmö's municipal local department focusing on the Roma population stated that in a situation where many people do not know who to trust or believe – regardless of their ethnicity – it is easy to understand what this does to a group that did not have faith in the public sector prior to the pandemic.²⁷ The most basic information and recommendations sent out by the Public Health Agency were at the time of the submission of this Information Request (15 June 2020) translated into two different varieties of Romani.²⁸ Several stakeholders pointed out that

²³ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

²⁴ Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

²⁵ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

²⁶ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population

²⁷ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population

²⁸ Sweden, Public Health Agency (*Folkhälsomyndigheten*) Arakh tut hem e javeren kotar e zarazakoro buvljaribe (Romani Arli), accessed 29 May 2020, [available here](#)
Sweden, Public Health Agency (*Folkhälsomyndigheten*) Protektulin tut thaj kaveren te na perdžon (Romani Lovari), accessed 29 May 2020, [available here](#)

the translations were issued too late.²⁹ Furthermore, the development manager at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population³⁰ mentioned that the general insecurity and lack of trust that the Roma population has in relation to the healthcare sector as a result of centuries of widespread discrimination is at risk of increasing.³¹

In **Sweden**, two stakeholders³² stated that the Roma population has overall been invisible in the reporting about corona. Since many Roma persons have lived in Sweden for centuries, and are not a visible minority, their situation in relation to covid-19 have not been noted and/or highlighted like for example the situation for persons with Somali background in Sweden.³³

In **Sweden**, several of the interviewed stakeholders mentioned the practical difficulties the Roma families may have to follow the Public Health Agency's recommendations on social distancing.³⁴ The families are often living in overcrowded flats. Furthermore, they live in other types of family and household arrangements than the majority society. Many Roma families live together with the older generation, so there may be 7 or 8 adults in one three-room flat, according to one stakeholder.³⁵ This kind of living situations obviously affects the possibilities to keep social distance in the homes, and affects the possibilities for the Roma minority to follow the recommendations from the Public Health Agency.³⁶ A development manager at the County Administrative Board of Stockholm confirmed this statement but underlined that the possibility to keep social distance in the home and live without overcrowding is rather an effect of the persons' socio-economic status at

²⁹ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm, Roma activist and representative for the Roma minority in Gothenburg, Radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

³⁰ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population

³¹ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

³² Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm

³³ Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

³⁴ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population;

Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm;

Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg;

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population

³⁵ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population

³⁶ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

large, than whether they belong to a national minority Roma.³⁷ At the same time it is true that, many Roma persons live under socio-economically challenging conditions in Sweden.³⁸

Regarding EU citizens of Roma origin:

In **Sweden**, the majority of the contacted stakeholders stated that many of the EU citizens of Roma origin residing in Sweden at the beginning of the pandemic decided to return to their home countries to avoid being stuck in Sweden during the pandemic.³⁹ A stakeholder managing shelters for EU citizens of Roma origin in Stockholm stated that the organisation had reduced the number of beds from 50 to 36 and still manage to stay just below capacity, which indicates that many members of the group have returned to their home countries.⁴⁰ This is also confirmed by a civil society representative in a local news channel by the end of March 2020. The organisation had noticed that 18 of 25 persons staying at the local shelter had left Sweden.⁴¹ A representative from local authorities in Gothenburg saw the same development, stating that their shelters adjusted their opening hours and number of visitors. Since EU citizens are exempted from the ban on entry some of the persons in question have now returned to Sweden.⁴²

1.2 Implications of measures

Focus on:

- Employment

³⁷ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm

³⁸ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm

³⁹ Sweden, head of operations at Stockholm City Mission (*Stadsmissionen*), a Christian organisation that offers accommodation and food to socially vulnerable persons;

Sweden, editor in chief at local Street magazine, sold by many Roma EU-citizens;

Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm;

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg;

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*);

Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

⁴⁰ Sweden, head of operations at Stockholm City Mission (*Stadsmissionen*), a Christian organisation that offers accommodation and food to socially vulnerable persons

⁴¹ Sweden, Swedish Television News (*SVT Nyheter*), 'EU-migrants leaves the country due to the Corona virus' (*Coronasmittan gör att EU-migranter lämnar landet*), published 25 March 2020, [available here](#)

⁴² Sweden, editor in chief at local Street magazine sold by many Roma EU-citizens;

Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg

- Health
- Education
- Housing
- Food security
- Water and sanitation

In **Sweden**, the development manager at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population says that many persons from the Roma population have chosen to self-quarantine, which have affected them economically. Many within the Roma population do not dare to apply for available jobs and educations because they fear infectivity. Some persons who are supposed to apply for economic support are struggling since they do not want to come to the municipal offices but cannot manage the digital systems.⁴³

Regarding EU citizens of Roma origin:

In **Sweden**, many of the EU citizens either live outside the city centre in provisional camps or depend on shelters provided by civil society and local authorities. Two stakeholders specifically raised their concern over the fact that it is difficult for members of this group to comply with the general instructions on social distancing and hygiene measures.⁴⁴ Members of the group are trying to lower the number of persons in each tent and wash their hands regularly, but it is difficult due to the circumstances they live in.⁴⁵ A Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm stated that they noticed a lack of initiative and responsibility from the regional and local authorities when it comes to enabling EU citizens of Roma origin to comply with the general recommendation of social distancing and isolation, which can be serious since many people of this group belong to the identified risk groups. The activist in question has contacted managers and politicians both at regional and local level and noticed the lack of measures, Nevertheless, the activist pointed out the promising practice in Gothenburg.⁴⁶ The development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg stated that the city has

⁴³ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population

⁴⁴ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm; Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

⁴⁵ Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano

⁴⁶ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

reached out to EU citizens of Roma origin together with civil society actors to disseminate information on covid-19 and more specifically which symptoms to look out for and how to protect oneself and others from infection and to. The development manager also mentioned that they have ensured the possibility to isolate at shelters for the group and allow them to stay during the daytime. Nevertheless, the development manager was not aware of if there were any infected or symptomatic persons from the group of EU citizens in Gothenburg at the time of the interview.⁴⁷ The development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population pointed out that there is no regulations concerning the responsibility to reach out to this group.⁴⁸

In **Sweden**, three stakeholders affirmed that the general instructions of social distancing and hygiene measures has led to a situation where EU citizens of Roma origin are not able to ensure their livelihood through begging on the streets or selling street magazines.⁴⁹ Members of the group are at risk of being infected since they meet many persons during a day. At the same time, they are at risk of not being able to collect or earn enough money simply because there are fewer persons on the streets. According to the development manager at the municipal social services, there are only a few children who are EU citizens of Roma origin and residing in the region. However, children who remain in their home countries are affected by the lack of monetary income since their parents are no longer able to send money to them.⁵⁰

1.3 Estimates of the scale of the impact

Focus on:

- Number of communities affected by lockdowns
- Magnitude of pandemic-induced poverty
- Types of Roma and Traveller occupations affected hardest
- Difference of impact on Roma women and children

⁴⁷ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg

⁴⁸ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population

⁴⁹ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm; Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg;

Sweden, editor in chief at local Street magazine, sold by many Roma EU-citizens

⁵⁰ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg

No data available in this section – beyond the general impact of increased unemployment and the general postponing of planned healthcare interventions. No lockdowns have been enforced. There are no typical Roma and Traveller occupations in Sweden.

2 Specific measures to address the implications of the pandemic on Roma and Travellers

2.1 Measures to tackle the spread of the virus specifically among Roma and Travellers communities

Please focus on:

- Medical testing
- Physical distancing
- Quarantine
- Provision of running water and sanitation to communities without it

In **Sweden**, Roma is a national minority, and thus protected by the National Minorities Act.⁵¹ This also means that they have the right to consultation (*samråd*) with administrative authorities. A Roma activist and representative⁵² mentioned that these consultations could have been a key possibility to disseminate and receive information on the pandemic. However, all such consultations have been cancelled and no routines for skype or zoom meetings have not been initiated. The stakeholder criticised the fact that the consultations has been cancelled and stressed that consultations could have been used to communicate with the group. All consultations are cancelled until the autumn, and thus, the possibilities to affect the situation for the national minorities are also temporarily cancelled.⁵³

2.2 Measures to support Roma and Travelers communities in regards to medical and social assistance

Please focus on:

- Any related phenomena in the key thematic areas addressed in question 1
- Highlight any measures specifically targeting women and children.

One Roma activist and representative testified that the situation for Roma women and children resembles the situation in the majority society – that is the pandemic has meant an increased vulnerability to violence in the home for women and children.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Sweden, Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages (*Lag [2009:724] om nationella minoriteter och minoritetsspråk*), 11 June 2009, [available here](#)

⁵² Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

⁵³ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

⁵⁴ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

2.3 Measures addressing the needs of Roma children

Please focus on barriers to education related to schooling in `online classes format.

In **Sweden**, a Roma activist and representative stated that there is a general lack of understanding of the multiple dimensions of difficulties of the Roma population.⁵⁵ Many Roma persons live in socio-economic vulnerability at the same time as they have a cultural tradition to take care of older relatives in their homes. This in turn leads to overcrowding and the exposure of risk groups to infectivity, since every household included more persons. According to the Roma activist, many persons struggle with combining their children's schooling and following the recommendations for risk groups, like older persons. There are commonly older persons living in the same households as school children who attend the local schools. Because of the potential risk of exposing the older family members to an infection, some families have chosen to keep their children home from school. This is a problem since school attendance is compulsory in Sweden up to ninth grade. The schools are obligated to report all children who do not attend school as missing. The reports are submitted to the municipal social services as so-called notifications of concern (*orosanmälan*). The increased numbers of notifications of Roma children as a result of the current situation is also general concern among the Roma population.⁵⁶ According to the Roma activist, the majority society has not considered the fact that persons belonging to risk groups within the same household as children. Some municipalities have offered online-education to children who for different reasons cannot attend school, but this support has not been enough.⁵⁷ There is an overall feeling among the Roma population that many Roma persons are at risk and the authorities do not consider the different risks together. However, feelings of mistrust and insecurity towards the healthcare sector combined with socio-economic vulnerability, prejudices and difficulties to isolate the risk groups within the Roma households form a problematic situation for the Roma population.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

⁵⁶ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

⁵⁷ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

⁵⁸ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

In **Sweden**, a Roma activist and representative from the minority confirmed this view and stated that many Roma persons have not let their children attend school, since they want to avoid spreading covid-19 to the older persons in the household. Consequently, the children fall behind in school.⁵⁹ It is the individual principals and municipalities that have to adjust and offer online schooling for pupils who needs extra support. However, the increasing number of notifications of concern to the social services will negatively affect the relationship between the Roma population and the public sector in the long run.⁶⁰

This specific question is a clear clash between the rights of the different persons in the household – the children’s right to education on the one hand and the right to life and health of persons in a risk group.⁶¹ Many persons in the Roma community have other chronic diseases, such as diabetes.⁶² There are no options for families who must keep their children from school because there are persons in risk groups in the home. This is true both for the Roma children, as well as other children.⁶³ This view was confirmed by the development manager at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm who underlined that while there are definitely Roma persons who do not let their children go to school due to the widespread fear of the infectivity risk, there are no indications that show that it the problem is predominantly a problem for the Roma minority. Different persons may choose to do so, for various reasons.⁶⁴ One development manager at Gothenburg city’s local department focusing on the Roma population mentioned cases where Roma children have not been able to follow the online education provided in upper secondary school since they have not been able to access internet or computers. As a consequence, the pupils may have incomplete grades and/or the families have received notifications of concern reported to the social services.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm

⁶⁰ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

⁶¹ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

⁶² Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

⁶³ Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg

⁶⁴ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm

⁶⁵ Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city’s local department focusing on the Roma population

3 Any negative public reactions targeting Roma and Travellers or positive change in attitudes towards them

3.1 Negative public reactions

Please focus on:

- Negative reactions in statements by politicians and public figures
- Hate speech in online and traditional media
- Any manifestations of antigypsyism or hate crime against Roma and Travellers

All the stakeholders agreed that the pandemic has not manifested in negative nor positive public reactions specifically targeting the Roma population.⁶⁶ The Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population and a representative from the Roma minority could not mention any specific negative public reaction, but they were concerned over the fact that the hate and contempt the Roma minority faces is increasing all over Europe and especially affecting the Roma groups that have explicit cultural codes.

Regarding EU-member citizens of Roma origin:

In **Sweden**, no cases of hate speech or increases of violent threats targeting the group EU citizens of Roma origin has been noticed by the interviewed stakeholders. The media has not reported any such incidents. The majority of the interviewed stakeholders pointed out that it is difficult to assess whether the group has experienced more racism or rejections as a result of the pandemic, since the whole subject of the so-called "beggars" is a political and sensitive matter and is seen as a group of people who are dirty, poor

⁶⁶ Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the County Administrative Board in Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*),
 Development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Gothenburg city's local department focusing on the Roma population;
 Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population and representative from the Roma minority in Malmö;
 Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at the municipal social services office in Gothenburg;
 Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg;
 Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm;
 Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano, Swedish Radio's special channel that transmits radio and news in Romani;
 Sweden, editor in chief at local Street magazine, sold by many Roma EU-citizens;
 Sweden, head of operations at Stockholm City Mission (*Stadsmissionen*), a Christian organisation that offers accommodation and food to socially vulnerable persons

and spreading diseases also before the pandemic.⁶⁷ A Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation was worried that the alarming situation for this vulnerable group in Western Europe will spread to Sweden and that they will be targets of such crimes in the near future.⁶⁸

3.2 Positive change in attitudes

Please focus on

- Examples of changing narrative regarding these communities in public statements, media coverage
- Manifestations of social solidarity with Roma and Travellers
- Examples of and local initiatives transcending ethnic boundaries.

No such positive changes in attitudes have been noticed.

⁶⁷ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm;
Sweden, Roma activist and representative from the Roma minority in Gothenburg,
Sweden, development manager (*utvecklingsledare*) at Malmö city's local department focusing on the Roma population and representative from the Roma minority in Malmö,
Sweden, radio journalist and editor at Radio Romano,
Sweden, editor in chief at local Street magazine, sold by many Roma EU-citizens

⁶⁸ Sweden, Roma activist and representative for a Roma organisation in Stockholm