

# GUIDE ON EU FUNDS FOR ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION 2021-2027

COMMISSIONED BY ROMEO FRANZ, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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# FOREWORD

Inhuman living conditions, segregation and discrimination are the sad reality for the large majority of the estimated 10-12 million Romani people living in Europe today. Antigypsyism, racist stereotypes, social exclusion and poverty build a vicious circle for many members of Europe's largest ethnic minority, from which it is difficult to escape. It is one of Europe's biggest challenges to eventually overcome this situation. The EU has the obligation to guarantee Romani people their equality rights, to protect them from racist discrimination and stigmatisation, to ensure effective and binding measures to step out of poverty and to guarantee equal access to education, employment, housing and health.

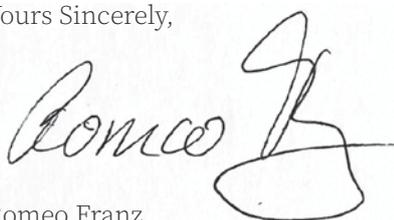
Last year, the European Commission and the EU member states have adopted a new EU Roma Strategic Framework 2021-2030 that lays out a strategy to achieve real progress for Romani people in the next 10 years. It sets out specific goals to end discrimination and reduce of the gap between Romani people and the rest of European citizens with regards to education, employment, housing and health. This framework aims to encourage Member State to invest more financial resources into achieving the goals. Likewise, the new generation of EU investment programmes get started this year and offer significant financial resources to foster equality, inclusion and participation of Romani people.

From my past experience as a local civil rights activist and manager of the Hildegard Lagrenne Foundation for education, inclusion and participation of Sinti and Romani people in Germany, I am conscious of the crucial role that organisations and activists play in achieving real change on the ground. I am convinced that it will only be possible to achieve the ambitious goals of the new EU Roma Inclusion Framework when NGOs and individuals from our minority are sufficiently involved in all stages of the implementation of the national inclusion strategies as experts, as beneficiaries and partners on an equal level.

This guide aims to help local, regional or national Romani NGOs, Romani activists and also individual members of our community to understand and benefit from the diverse funding opportunities from the EU and other main donor organisations. Despite several initiatives in the European Parliament to facilitate funding programmes for beneficiaries, Romani NGOs are still not sufficiently involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of EU funds for Romani inclusion. It must be our common interest to change this, so that we achieve better and more sustainable results and, most importantly, so that we put an end to paternalistic approaches towards Romani communities.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all organisations and individuals who contribute to improving the situation of our people in their daily work on the ground despite sometimes very difficult circumstances. It is only through joint efforts and your valuable work that change on the ground is possible. Your work gives me hope that we can actually realise equal rights for Romani people in Europe.

Yours Sincerely,



Romeo Franz





# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Guide on EU funds for Roma Equality and Inclusion 2021-2027 was developed by the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament. It is developed to give a structured overview of the most relevant EU-wide funding programmes relevant for Romani\* civil society organisations, activists and individuals. Furthermore, it depicts funding programmes available at national level for a few selected Member States in order to complement the picture.

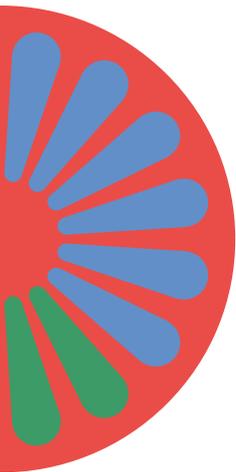
Besides the general information on the funding programmes, a specific focus is put on the question of how the programmes could work for Romani equality and inclusion with an emphasis on key priority areas of education, employment, health and housing. This is illustrated with examples of implemented projects for Romani people by civil society organisations and local authorities as a source of inspiration for further projects and programmes under the new programme period. The guide offers important tips on how to implement EU funds at national level, including who the main actors are and the process involved in implementing the 2021-2027 programme.

It further provides step by step information on how to develop a successful project on Romani equality and inclusion via EU funding, starting from the project idea to submitting the final proposal. Also, it includes the list of relevant criteria by which EU funded projects are evaluated by the European Commission and existing barriers in accessing EU funds for Romani inclusion.

Finally, the guide incorporates brief assessments of the funding situation and opportunities on Romani inclusion at national level in seven countries, including Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Romania and Slovakia with several funded project examples and priority project areas.

**\*** *The reference to ‘Romani people’ is used to refer to the wide range of different groups of Romani ethnic origin (Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, etc.) and also those groups who identify as such (Ashkali, gens du voyage, etc.).*

*“Romani People” is used without denying the specificities of the different groups and the heterogeneity, but rather to reflect their diversity. Furthermore, the publication uses the term “Roma” when referring to official policy documents that use the term Roma, e.g. EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation.*



## 2. POLICY CONTEXT ON ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Many of the estimated 10-12 million Romani people in Europe continue to face stark inequalities, socio-economic exclusion, antigypsyism and deep-rooted negative prejudice and stereotypes. The majority of Romani people are victims of hate speech online, lack quality access to education, and often have no formal, higher quality and sustainable employment, but rather work in the informal sector. Most Romani people especially in South-Eastern Europe live in overcrowded neighbourhoods with insufficient or no access to adequate sanitation and other essential services such as health care. This leads to lower life-expectancy rates of Romani people in comparison to the rest of society and an inter-generational transmission of poverty and material deprivation. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic came to widen the longstanding exclusion, poverty and discrimination against Romani people.

In the beginning of the 2000s, in the context of the increasing investment of international organisations in Central and South Eastern Europe, a number of international and regional organisations scaled-up their efforts to address the situation of Romani people in their development and human rights policies and programmes, including the Council of Europe, Open Society Institute, Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe, United Nations and the World Bank. This increasingly raised the attention of the European Union. In 2005, the Decade of Roma Inclusion became an unprecedented pan-European initiative that channelled the efforts of 12 Governments, as well as inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, to close the cycle of exclusion and discrimination against Europe's most marginalized community.

In mid-2011, the European Union decided that every EU Member State should design or update their existing National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) for improving the situation of their Romani population via specific objectives in the four main pillars: education, employment, health-care. In this regard, on 5 April 2011, the European Commission issued its first EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, calling Member States and EU Enlargement Countries to step up their efforts and ensure that national, regional and local integration policies focus on Romani in a clear and specific way with targeted actions and sufficient funding (national, EU and other) to deliver solutions to address the current barriers and ensure concrete results for Romani people. However, less than half of the EU Member States submitted their strategies on time and thus, the delays in the submissions affected subsequent implementation along with funding allocations.

Overall, the evaluation of the implementation of NRIS up to 2020 shows that progress in Romani inclusion has been limited since the adoption of the first EU Roma Framework despite efforts by Members States and EU funded programmes and activities. According to the Commission's evaluation, there has been some progress in education and health, while the employment and housing conditions recorded no progress. In education, the reported progress related to improvements in early school-leaving, early childhood education and compulsory schooling. However, the situation with respect to segregation has further deteriorated and based on the Racial Equality Directive, the Commission has initiated infringement procedures over the school segregation of Romani

children against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. Romani poverty and self-perceived health status have slightly improved, but medical coverage continues to be limited. Access to employment did not improve much and the share of Romani youth not in employment, education or training has even increased. The housing situation remains difficult. Romani women and children continue to be victims of violence, including trafficking.

The evaluation of the first EU Roma Framework also reiterated the added value of EU action and the need to continue to support previous actions by Member States, including through EU funds and Commission grants. After consultation with key stakeholders at national and EU level, including with civil society, the Commission adopted a new policy package in October 2020 under the Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2021-2030. The package also includes guidelines for planning and implementing national Roma strategic frameworks and a portfolio of indicators, aimed at providing additional assistance to Member States in adopting and implementing robust, efficient and viable national Roma inclusion strategies. In addition, the Commission also proposed a draft Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation, which was further adopted by the EU Council under the Portuguese Presidency in March 2021. This further obliges Member States to report on the progress made in the implementation of the new national Roma strategic frameworks up to 2029.

While the new EU Roma Framework maintains a soft policy character as the previous framework, it shifts its perspective to a more balanced approach between social inclusion, human rights and empowerment objectives. The new EU Roma framework includes three new horizontal objectives, linked to the main political priorities of education, employment, healthcare and housing and social services: “Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination”, “Reduce poverty and exclusion and close the socio-economic gap between Romani and the general population” and “Participation by empowerment, cooperation and trust”. A novel element is that the new Framework recognises antigypsyism as a form of institutional and structural racism against Romani, asking Member States to dismantle and prevent it both as a cross-cutting and stand-alone phenomenon. For the first time, the new Framework includes a set of common minimum commitments, baselines and targets for each of the priority areas, which allows for better ways to take stock of the progress achieved in each proposed area by Member States. Generally, the minimum commitments and targets included remain low, while many aspects, such as housing segregation, forced evictions, or ill-treatment by law enforcement are still missing from the new Framework or are not adequately addressed (the target for combating segregation of education is set at 50%).

The new framework includes a three-level commitment from Member States according to the size of the Romani population at national level. Thus, countries with significant shares of Romani population (above 1%), are expected to draft new national Roma strategic frameworks containing more ambitious targets and indicators, measures and evidence in fighting antigypsyism against Romani people and concrete allocation of funds. Additional efforts should be made by



Member States according to the specific national context, including the wider economic situation, the level of exclusion and discrimination of Romani people, and the living conditions of the communities at national level (e.g. in rural, urban, segregated area, mobile, migrant etc.).

Despite several aspects that need further improvements, overall, the new Framework is a positive and unique undertaking by the EU and Member States in addressing the discrimination, poverty and social exclusion faced by many Romani people in the European Union and the EU Enlargement Countries. The new Framework calls for more coherence between EU policy support, legal and funding instruments mobilised and aligned towards Romani equality and inclusion. Hence, Member States should mobilise EU funds for Romani equality, inclusion and participation. It aims to contribute to several relevant mainstream initiatives, namely, to implementing the EU anti-racism action plan, the European Pillar of Social Rights and to the achievement of the UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals. It also creates direct links with the new 2021-2027 funding programming period and in particular financial instruments that can be used at national level to address key challenges in social inclusion, equality and participation of Romani people, including recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic.

While supportive of the European Commission's EU Roma strategic framework, on 17 September 2020 the European Parliament published its own resolution on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies, based on an own-initiative report from its Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). The resolution urges the Commission, among other things, to propose binding EU legislation on fighting antigypsyism and improving the living conditions of Romani people. As a Rapporteur of the resolution, Romeo Franz argues that despite numerous policy initiatives launched by the European Union, the level of policy and political response and impact at national level remain inconsistent with the real challenges and racism on the ground that Romani people are facing. Addressing racism and discrimination against Romani people by punishing individual acts or by implementing general equality legislation, including the Racial Equality Directive, proved limitative and largely ineffective. Still today, many Romani children are learning in segregated classes, many communities are confined to ghettos, police are targeting Romani communities and forcibly mass-evict them, while their life expectancy is significantly lower than the general population average. Existing national Roma strategies remain largely unfunded and often a wish list of outcomes and results, while Romani participation in policy-making continues to remain superficial if not tokenistic. According to Romeo Franz, a specific Union legislative act on Romani people has the potential to reset the way politicians and policy makers tackle the inclusion and equality of Romani people in our societies across Europe, as "racism against Romani people is not an internal problem but a problem of non-Romani people."

## 3. WHAT ARE EU FUNDS AND HOW DO THEY WORK?

The general concept of "European funds" refers to the non-reimbursable financing instruments allocated to the Member States of the European Union (EU), in order to reduce the economic and social development gaps between them, including by creating more and better jobs and a socially inclusive society. European funds are managed jointly by the European Commission and each Member State.

This section aims to provide you with a list of the most relevant funding instruments and programmes for Roma equality and inclusion, how the EU invests money into projects, how much money it invests and, most importantly, in what areas.

### Main EU funding instruments and programmes

For the 2021-2027 period, the EU set forward seven shared management funds to support economic development in Member States:

- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**
- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**
- **Cohesion Fund (CF)**
- **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**
- **Just Transition Fund (JTF)**
- **Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF)**
- **Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI)**
- **Internal Security Fund (ISF)**

In addition, there are several funding programmes managed directly by the Commission which are relevant for Romani equality and inclusion:

- **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**
- **Horizon Europe**
- **InvestEU**
- **Digital Europe Programme**
- **Erasmus+**
- **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)**
- **Creative Europe**
- **EU4Health**
- **Justice Programme Citizens, equality, rights and values programme (CERV)**

### How?

There are two forms of managing EU funding: through shared management and through direct management.

**Shared management** means that the EU funds are managed jointly between the European Commission and the Member States. Approximately 80% of EU funding sources for NGOs are managed by EU countries themselves. While the supervision of the funds that are managed through shared management remains the responsibility of the European Commission through its so-called Director-Generals, the responsibility for implementation lies with the Managing Authorities in each Member State.

**Direct management** means that a fund or programme is directly managed by the European Commission or one of its agencies. The management involves the publication of call for proposal and tenders, selecting contractors, awarding grants, transferring funds, monitoring activities and others.

The European Commission also issues contracts to buy services, goods or works they need for their operations – like studies, training, conference organisation, IT equipment.

There is one **Managing Authority (MA)** for each Fund or Programme in every country, responsible for the development of an investment plan or **operational programme (OP)**, which defines the types of activities that can be financed by EU funding in the specific country or region. Each country provides detailed in-

formation about funding and application procedures on the websites of their managing authorities.

Member States are required to appoint **Monitoring Committees** that comprise regional, economic and social partners, including NGOs. A monitoring committee's key tasks include checking that operational programme (OPs) are correctly implemented.

#### Potential beneficiaries:

- Local, regional and national authorities and administrative bodies
- Social, cultural and educational institutions
- Workers' and employers' organisations, as well as organisations providing training, support for workers, labour market support
- NGOs, charities, foundations and organisations of a social character
- Public administrations and municipal institutions
- Companies and associations.
- Individuals from specific target groups like young people, pupils, apprentices, students, volunteers, women, people from marginalised groups, etc.

#### How much?

The EU defines a seven-year forecast for how much money is available for such investments. This forecast is called the **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, which defines more generally what amounts will be spent on which thematic spending priorities. The current programming period is 2021-2027.

The particularity about the current EU budgetary planning is that amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, an additional emergency 'recovery fund' called '**NextGenerationEU**' (NGEU) was agreed in parallel to the

MFF. The NGEU was designed to help address the short and medium-term effects of the pandemic until 2024. Part of it will be transferred via a new Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), set up explicitly to fund investments and reforms in the Member States, including but not limited to their health care systems.

In a context where the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the extreme exposure of excluded and marginalised Romani communities to negative health and socioeconomic impacts, the Recovery and Resilience Facility is a good opportunity to tackle the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Romani people, ensuring digital inclusion and delivering environmental justice, access to employment, access to healthcare, social and basic services and adequate housing and ending educational and housing segregation.

#### Priority areas

The MFF will cover the following main areas:

- single market, innovation and digital
- cohesion, resilience and values
- natural resources and the environment
- migration and border management
- security and defence
- neighbourhood and the world
- European public administration

NextGenerationEU will cover:

- single market, innovation and digital
- cohesion, resilience and values
- natural resources and the environment

The aspects that are mostly relevant for Romani equality and inclusion are linked to single market, innovation and digital; cohesion, resilience and values.



QUICKLINK

**Multiannual  
Financial Framework  
(MFF)**



QUICKLINK

**'NextGenerationEU'  
(NGEU)**

PIECHART ON AMOUNTS PER SECTOR OR PROGRAMME



Source: European Commission

# SUPPORTING ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION UNDER 2021-2027 PROGRAMMING PERIOD

The new programming period 2021-2027 is key in using EU Funds to address challenges related with Roma equality and inclusion in particular areas, including education, employment, healthcare, poverty and social inclusion, including housing, culture and media and equality and non-discrimination.

This section will provide an overview of the most relevant EU funding instruments and programmes for Roma inclusion and equality, including suggestions for relevant funding areas for Romani civil society organisations.



## THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS

The new *European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)* remains the EU's main financial instrument for investing in people, tackling the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting high employment levels, building social protection and developing a skilled and resilient workforce ready for the transition to a green and digital economy. The ESF+ integrates the former European Social Fund (ESF), the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the EU Health programme, with ESF being complementary to other funds (such as the Erasmus, ERDF, InvestEU).

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The majority of funding under the ESF+ will be allocated under shared management with the Member States. In addition, the Commission directly manages a smaller share of the ESF+ under the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and Health Strand. Funding is allocated in the form of grants, procurements and financial instruments.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

Under the policy objective “a more social Europe”, ESF+ supports actions in the areas of employment, education and training and social inclusion, including: supporting young people who have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis; helping children in need through targeted actions to combat child poverty, and supporting the most vulnerable in society suffering from job losses and income reductions, including providing food and basic material assistance to the most deprived; reskilling and upskilling people for the transition to a green and digital economy.

EaSI will support analytical activities, capacity building and cross-border cooperation to strengthen social protection and social inclusion, fair working conditions, equal access to the labour market, social entrepreneurship and labour mobility.



#### QUICKLINK

[European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#)

## TYPE OF PROJECTS

Studies, actions and training aimed at investing in people, creating and protecting jobs, promoting social inclusion, fighting poverty and developing the skills needed for the digital and green transitions.

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Public and private organisations, including national, regional and local authorities, educational and training institutions, non-governmental organisations and the voluntary sector, as well as social partners, for example, trade unions and professional associations, and individual companies.

## GOOD TO KNOW

ESF+ includes the investment priority “Promoting socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Romani”, and the enabling condition of a National Roma Integration Strategy, whose fulfilment criteria under ESF+ include measures to accelerate Romani integration, taking into account the gender dimension and situation of Romani youth; and preventing and eliminating segregation. In addition, ESF+ can support Romani related actions in the areas of education, employment and social inclusion through a combined approach of mainstream with explicit but not exclusive targeting.

*Further info*

## PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo source: Association GAL Tecuci website: <https://galtecuci.ro/>

***“Integrated Measures for the Development of Marginalised Communities in the Territory of the Tecuci LAG Association, Galați County”.***

The project aims to increase employability, access to the labour market and employment of Romani people at risk of poverty and social exclusion through their participation in integrated employment and training programs, professional counselling, placement on the labour market and support programs of entrepreneurship in order to be self-employed. In addition, the project aims to increase the social inclusion of Romani children at risk of poverty and social exclusion by implementing specific programmes in the field of combating discrimination and promotion of multiculturalism. (Romania)



## EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The *European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)* strengthens economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. ERDF and the Cohesion Fund (CF) are part of the EU Cohesion Policy funds.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The fund is delivered through shared management. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, procurements and financial instruments.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

In 2021-2027 it will enable investments in a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe that is closer to its citizens. It supports investment in innovation and research, the digital transition, small and medium-sized enterprises, the environment and the net-zero carbon economy. It will also address economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas, with a special focus on sustainable urban development. In addition, it supports cooperation activities between regions in different Member States.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Productive investments in enterprises, infrastructure and public policies across a range of topics, consultancy services and advice and studies.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Regional public and private entities, with special attention paid to disadvantaged regions and areas and, indirectly, EU citizens, public or private organisations and businesses.

### GOOD TO KNOW

ERDF and the Cohesion Funds contribute to the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, with particular focus on Romani people through in-

tegrated measures, connected across thematic areas, including education, employment, social housing, health and social care, antidiscrimination, etc. Under ERDF, the needs of Romani communities can also be addressed through mainstream measures under local and territorial development strategies.

### Further info

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo Source: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/rare>

The **RARE** (Roma as Human Resource) project, financed via ERDF under the Interreg Danube Transnational programme, brought together eight Danube region countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine). The project aimed to improve the social and economic inclusion of Romani people by developing multi-stakeholder strategic partnership among key actors. It included, among others, a mapping of the local challenges, meetings, conferences and local seminars as well as international campaigns against prejudice and discrimination. A set of good practices was collected to better understand the local contexts and to gather the lessons learnt. Stakeholders set up groups of local actors for the planning of local pilots with direct positive impacts on the labour market integration of Romani people.



### QUICKLINK

**European Regional  
Development Fund  
(ERDF)**



## EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

*European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)* finances the EU's contribution to rural development programmes (RDs).

most important funding instruments relevant to the social inclusion of vulnerable communities, including Romani communities, at local level.

*Further info*

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The programmes' budget is primarily implemented through shared management between the European Commission and Member States.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

EAFRD provides investments in competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, environment protection, low-carbon economy, social inclusion, research and innovation, sustainable and quality employment, educational and vocational training, information and communication technologies.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas; promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, in particular with regards to creation and development of small enterprises, as well as jobs creation.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Regional and local authorities, farmers, rural businesses, local organisations and individuals.

### GOOD TO KNOW

LEADER is a "bottom up" approach, in which farmers, rural businesses, local organisations, public authorities and individuals from different sectors come together to form local action groups (LAGs). LEADER approach has been adopted by ERDF, ESF) and the EMFF in a wider Community led local development (CLLD). The CLLD approach, implemented under the Rural Development Program, remains one of the

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



*Photo source: Project website*

*Project example on social inclusion of Romani through LEADER and CLLD: "Empowering women from vulnerable communities by expanding the network of Mother Centers in Ispereh Municipality" (2019).*

The project aims to create four Mother Centres in the town of Ispereh, Bulgaria, and the villages around it. Under the project, 8 Romani women were hired as heads of Mother Centres. The leaders of the Mother Centres will create women's groups within each centre, in order to stimulate self-organization and mutual assistance among Romani women. In addition, 80 women from vulnerable groups will be trained in key competencies. Full project implementation assessment by ERGO network is available here.



QUICKLINK

European  
Agricultural Fund for  
Rural Development



## JUST TRANSITION FUND

The *Just Transition Fund (JTF)* is a new financial instrument under Cohesion Policy, which aims to support the transition towards climate neutrality by decreasing the socioeconomic impacts of the transition in the regions most affected.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The budget is implemented through shared management. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, procurements and financial instruments.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Commission provides grants that are disbursed to the Member States in line with their territorial just transition plans. These plans identify those expected to be the most negatively impacted by the green transition.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Actions aiming at the creation of new firms, research and innovation, environmental rehabilitation, clean energy projects, up- and reskilling of workers, job-search assistance and active inclusion of jobseekers' programmes.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

National and local authorities; businesses and start-ups in the regions where the magnitude and impact of the climate transition are the greatest.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The JTF focuses on strengthening social protection for a just transition and reduction of poverty and inequality, and on protecting populations from deprivation, loss of livelihoods or income, and from social exclusion of vulnerable groups such as the Romani people. Projects on Romani people funded by JTF may include elements such as: income support; unemployment insurance or benefits; maternity protection; healthcare including sickness benefits; child, family, old-age, disability, pensions; social assistance; housing support; skills training, retraining, and upgrading; workforce redeployment; compensation for temporary income losses; job guarantees, wage guarantees; disaster risk insurance etc.

#### *Further info*



QUICKLINK

[Just Transition Fund](#)

## ERASMUS+

**Erasmus+** is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The programme's activities are implemented through direct management and indirect management with the support of the Erasmus+ EU national agencies. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

Promotes learning mobility for individuals and groups, along with cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation. It promotes non-formal and informal learning mobility, active participation among young people and learning mobility of sports staff.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Cooperation, capacity building, student exchanges between universities, networking and policy support for organisations, and reforms in education, training, youth and sport.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Students, researchers and academics, universities and other organisations working in the field of higher education in the EU and the partner countries.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The new Erasmus programme will include enhanced efforts to promote equity and inclusion by facilitating access to participants with fewer opportunities compared to their peers (e.g. due to educational difficulties, economic and geographical obstacles, and cultural differences). It will maintain support for

projects dealing with topics of relevance for Romani people, building on experience from the INSCHOOL project.

In addition, the Commission is launching the first comprehensive Inclusion and diversity strategy for the Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps Programmes to make the programme more inclusive to people with diverse backgrounds.

[Further info](#)

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo source: Council of Europe website

Under the Erasmus+ programme, the Commission is co-financing the ***Inclusive schools: making a difference for Romani children*** project currently implemented by the Council of Europe. This project involves support for school staff, teachers, students and parents to make up to 31 schools more inclusive, in five countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia). The project aims to: set up support mechanisms and resources for pilot inclusive schools; support teachers to practice inclusive teaching; remove concrete barriers for vulnerable groups including through changes of legislation in the targeted countries; and raise awareness of the benefits of inclusive education for the general public as well as decision makers.



QUICKLINK

ERASMUS+

## JUSTICE PROGRAMME

The *Justice programme* provides funding to support judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters such as training to judges and other legal practitioners and effective access to justice for citizens. It contributes to the rule of law, including independence and impartiality of the judiciary, mutual trust and judicial cooperation. It forms part of a new Justice, Rights and Values Fund.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The programme is managed directly by the Commission. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements. The maximum rate of co-financing of the eligible costs is 90%.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The programme funds activities that ensure the full and consistent application and enforcement of EU law and promote the efficient functioning of the EU area of justice. This includes improving mutual trust and ensuring efficient judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters; improving the knowledge of the judiciary and judicial staff of EU law, and facilitating effective and non-discriminatory access to justice for all.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Actions supporting training of justice professionals, and capacity building of key EU judicial networks; development and use of digital tools.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Public authorities, justice professionals and their representative bodies and training bodies, academia / research institutes and civil society organisations, etc.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Romani NGOs will be able to apply for specific calls for proposals particularly in the area of rights of victims of crime. Victim support organisations can

benefit from funding in protecting Romani victims from secondary victimisation, retaliation and intimidation, ensuring a safe environment for victims to report crime and facilitating victims' access to compensation. Support is particularly relevant for victims who need special protection such as child victims, victims of gender-based or domestic violence, victims of racist and xenophobic hate crime and speech, human trafficking and forced sterilisation.

### Further info

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo source: Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center website

#### *The right of minors to information, translation and interpretation in criminal proceedings: development of child-friendly justice tools* - Spain

The project aimed to contribute to more child-friendly European juvenile justice systems by promoting the effective participation of children in conflict with the law and their parents in criminal proceedings, including by assessing and analysing the needs of minors and creating information leaflets in a child friendly language and use. In addition, the project focused on improving the knowledge about children's rights of professionals working with children in the juvenile justice system and on facilitating a translation for young offenders and parents, in case they do not know the language of the country where they are being prosecuted.



QUICKLINK

**JUSTICE Programme**



## CITIZENS, EQUALITY, RIGHTS AND VALUES PROGRAMME

The *Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme* (CERV) is the Commission's main instrument to protect and promote Union rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The programme supports civil society organisations active at the local, regional, national and transnational level, including Romani NGOs and public authorities at all levels.

### **The CERV programme has four strands:**

- Union values
- Equality, rights and gender equality
- Citizens' engagement and participation
- Daphne: combating gender-based violence and violence against children

### **BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION**

The programme is managed directly by the Commission and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. Funds are disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements.

### **WHAT DOES IT DO?**

A central aim of the programme is to support actions promoting rights, equality and non-discrimination, and advance gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming, the rights of the child, data protection, EU citizenship rights and our shared European history. The programme supports civil society organisations active at local, regional, national and transnational levels.

### **TYPE OF PROJECTS**

The projects include training, capacity building and exchanges of good practices between Member States authorities and bodies, supporting grass-roots organisations and civil society, raising people's awareness of their rights and the benefits that EU policies will bring about in their daily lives, supporting the development of knowledge-based EU policies and legislation through surveys, studies, and analyses.

### **WHO CAN APPLY?**

Civil society organisations, European networks, public authorities, including equality and human rights bodies, local authorities, academia / research institutes and think tanks.

### **GOOD TO KNOW**

The CERV budget for promoting equality and to fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination under the Equality and Rights strand is EUR 9.9 million in 2021 and EUR 12.4 million in 2022. The objective of the calls for proposal under this budget strand is to support an intersectional approach and specific actions to prevent and fight against intolerance, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, in particular on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, including anti-gypsyism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, Afro-phobia and LGBTIQ phobia, offline and online.

### **Further info**

### **PROJECT EXAMPLE**



Photo source: Phiren Amencia website

*Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme – “Roma Youth Voices - Roma and non-Roma youth movement to challenge stereotypes and antigypsyism”.*



### **QUICKLINK**

**Citizens, equality, rights and values programme**

The project coordinated by Phiren Amenca, focuses on investing into a grassroots social movement of Roma and non-Roma youth by taking joint actions against stereotypes, antigypsyism, and racism in order to enhance Romani inclusion in Europe. This proposal is built on an already successful long-term process of Romani youth organizations that slowly changed the perspective to establish Romani youth

as a key agent of change. The approach of this project combines a series of activities on local, national and European level, including the exchange of practices, the capacity-building of organizations and trainings of young adults and multipliers, as well as awareness-raising campaigns to challenge stereotypes and to build alliances with mainstream organizations.



## EU4HEALTH

As the biggest *EU health programme* to date, *EU4Health* will make a significant contribution to the post-COVID-19 recovery.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

EU4Health is implemented through direct management by the Commission and the European Health and Digital Executive Agency. Funding is disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The Programme will work to prevent diseases and promote health and international health cooperation. EU4Health will make medicinal products, medical devices and crisis-relevant products more available and accessible. Finally, it will contribute to equal access to healthcare and support evidence-based decision making.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

The EU4Health programme will support a broad range of actions and initiatives under four overarching strands: crisis preparedness, disease prevention, health systems and healthcare workforce and digitalisation.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

The Programme will mainly be implemented by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency. Direct grants may be signed with international organisations active in the area of health.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The Programme includes a transversal dimension of health inequalities in all its objectives and could provide best practices to be implemented through synergies developed with the other EU Funds and Programmes. Romani people could also benefit from actions that could be taken to address the needs of vulnerable groups.

*Further info: Funding opportunities under the EU4Health Programme are published by the Health and Digital Executive Agency*



QUICKLINK

EU4Health

## HORIZON EUROPE

*Horizon Europe* is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation.

*Further info: Funding opportunities*

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The programme is implemented directly by the Commission or through funding bodies that the Commission designates responsible. The programme may provide funding in the form of grants, prizes, procurements and financial instruments.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The programme promotes excellence in research and provides essential support to top researchers and innovators to drive the systemic changes needed to ensure a green, healthy and resilient EU.

It creates jobs, fully engages the EU's talent pool, boosts economic growth, promotes competitiveness and increases the impact of investments.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Research and innovation projects addressing societal challenges with an emphasis on recovery, the green and digital transitions.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Scientists and academics, research organisations, universities, industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, students, etc.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Research and social innovation actions aiming to eliminate social and intersectional inequalities in Romani communities can be addressed under Horizon Europe. The programme sets gender equality as a crosscutting principle and requirement by default across the whole programme.

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo source: <https://www.inclusivegrowth.eu>

“WP8 Data harmonisation and integration regarding poverty and living conditions. Methodological and data infrastructure report on vulnerable groups indicators: migrants, Roma, institutionalised people and disabled persons” is a project funded under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It aims to include additional vulnerable group modules under the Integrated Poverty and Living Conditions Indicator System (IPOLIS). In its present status, IPOLIS contains children, young people and older people. The next phase should extend it to include disabled people and migrants (including people with migration background, too), and the Romani and institutionalised people in the longer run.



QUICKLINK

Horizon Europe



## CREATIVE EUROPE

*Creative Europe* is the European Commission's flagship programme to support the culture and audiovisual sectors.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The programme is managed directly by the Commission and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. Funds are disbursed in the form of grants, prizes and procurements. The Creative Europe desks contribute to the programme's implementation.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

With its 3 sub-programmes, the Culture strand, the MEDIA strand and the Cross-sectoral strand, Creative Europe aims to enhance artistic and cultural cooperation at a European level, encourage the competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability of the European audiovisual sector and promote cross-sectoral innovative and collaborative actions.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Actions promoting excellence in the field of culture; projects aiming at developing innovative audiovisual content; support to the news media sector, fostering pluralism, cross-border collaboration and promotion of media literacy. In order to increase the visibility of Europe's cultural and audiovisual sectors, the European Commission rewards achievement, highlights excellence and raises awareness of Europe's culture and heritage through different awards.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Media, artists, cultural and creative organisations within the EU and beyond, films and music industry and networks, etc.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The new programme will continue to support projects that seek to remove barriers, encourage the inclusion and cultural participation of under-represented and disadvantaged groups, such as Romani people. The programme prioritises the promotion of social resilience and inclusion through culture and cultural heritage.

#### *Further info*

### PRIZE EXAMPLE

RomArchive won the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards 2019, the Europe's most prestigious honour in the field, funded by the Creative Europe programme. RomArchive is a growing collection of art of all types, complemented by historical documents and scholarly texts, reflective of the diversity of Romani national and cultural identities.



Source: [www.romarchive.eu](http://www.romarchive.eu)



QUICKLINK

[Creative Europe](#)

## DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME

The *Digital Europe programme (DIGITAL)* is a new EU funding programme focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Funding is disbursed in the form of grants and procurements directly managed by the Commission.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

It aims to accelerate the recovery, build the EU's strategic digital capacities and facilitate the wide use of digital technologies while strengthening digital capacities for high-performance computing, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, along with advanced digital skills.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

High-performance computing, artificial intelligence; setting up cybersecurity centres; use of advanced digital technologies; offering public and private organisations support in their digital transformations, etc.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Public and private organisations, industry and small and medium-sized enterprises, scientists and academics, universities, etc.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Digital Europe may support Romani related actions in the areas of education, employment and social inclusion with a focus on children, women and youth. The actions supported by the Programme may be complementary to those supported by the ESF+, ERDF and Erasmus+.

*Further info*



QUICKLINK

Digital Europe  
programme



## INVEST EU

*InvestEU* in the new EU flagship investment programme to boost the European economy. It aims to promote recovery, green growth, employment, and well-being across Europe, by supporting investment that produces genuine benefits and makes a difference at the local level, across the EU.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The funds will be allocated under the indirect management scheme through the European Investment Bank and the other implementing partners. The programme may provide funding in the form of grants and loans.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The InvestEU fund brings together and streamlines multiple different funds and programmes of the EU budget to make European investments easier and more accessible. It will support integrated investments combining social infrastructure and services, human capital and skills development, social innovation, microfinance and social economy.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Economically viable projects, both public and private, in areas where there are market failures or investment gaps, in four policy areas – sustainable infrastructure; research, innovation and digitisation; small and medium-sized enterprises; and social investment and skills – along with higher-risk projects in specific areas.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Public and private investors and project promoters, small and medium-sized enterprises and mid-caps, service providers and recipients of microfinance.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Under its social investment and skills window, InvestEU can contribute to socio-economic inclusion of marginalised groups, including Romani people through innovative funding approaches such as social impact bonds, and results-oriented projects including through blending with EU grants and/or financial instruments from sectoral programmes or combinations of different streams of EU funding. The Commission will implement focused pilot initiatives with the aim of testing and demonstrating working approaches to concrete inclusion aspects (housing, employment, social security) through the use of innovative funding approaches, which could be taken up/expanded or replicated in larger programmes at national or EU level. Member States will be able to seek technical support to mainstream Romani equality in policy-making and reform processes through the Technical Support Instrument.

#### *Further info*



QUICKLINK

[InvestEU](#)



## RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY

The *Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)* is a new temporary recovery instrument that allows the Commission to raise funds to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. The Facility is also closely aligned with the Commission's priorities in ensuring a sustainable and inclusive recovery that promotes the green and digital transitions.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The Recovery and Resilience Facility is implemented by the Commission through direct management. Funding is allocated in the form of non-repayable financial support and loans.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

It will help Member States, through the design of national and resilience action plans, to address the economic and social challenges they are facing in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis in various areas such as social, employment, skills, education, research and innovation, health issues, but also issues related to the business environment, including public administration and the financial sector. Investing in green and digital technologies and processes will help create jobs and sustainable growth and allow the Union to make progress in the global race to recovery, more resilience and less dependence.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Reforms and public investment projects that build a green, digital and inclusive future. The measures supported will result in, among other benefits, faster internet, cleaner energy and transport, restoring nature, renovating buildings, modern and digital public administrations, education and training, reskilling and upskilling, digital connectivity and new technologies for the benefit of all Europeans.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Public and private institutions businesses and enterprises and civil society organisations.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The Facility Regulation includes two Romani related codes for types of intervention areas, such as: "Measures to improve access of marginalised groups such as the Roma to education, employment and to promote their social inclusion" and "Support to the civil society working with marginalised communities such as the Roma." Under the national recovery and resilience plans, projects on Romani inclusion can be expected in the area of inclusive and digital education and training, including desegregation in education; health inequalities, social protection and poverty reduction, including through employment and reskilling programmes, CLLD approach, access to infrastructure and basic utilities and adequate housing.

### Further info



QUICKLINK

[Recovery and Resilience Facility](#)



## EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

The *European Solidarity Corps (ESC)* is an EU funding programme for young people wishing to engage in solidarity activities in a variety of areas, from providing humanitarian aid, to contributing to health and environmental action across the EU and beyond.

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Activities are rolled out through direct management by the Commission, as well as through indirect management with the support of a network of EU national agencies. Funding is disbursed mostly in the form of grants.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

The programme finances projects to engage young people in solidarity activities addressing societal challenges through volunteering or by setting up their own solidarity projects. The programme aims to be inclusive, greener and more digital.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

Volunteering (including humanitarian aid) and solidarity projects.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Individuals aged 18 to 30 (35 for humanitarian aid) and organisations in the EU and the partner countries.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The programme covers issues such as working with people with disabilities, fighting discrimination and intolerance, working with minority groups like Romani people, and intercultural, inter-religious and intergenerational issues.

*Further info*

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



**Caption: Natalia Tomenko, Volunteer ERIAC.**

*Photo source: LinkedIn*

“European Youth for European Roma Culture”. The project will engage young Romani interested in volunteering in the fields of European culture and arts, with the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture – ERIAC in Berlin. The general objective of the project is to engage three European young people: Roma and/or non-Roma, in the diverse work of ERIAC in Berlin, through which they can learn about Romani culture, identities, artists and their vast representations in Europe. Taking an active role in the organisation of the various ERIAC events – exhibitions, performances, seminars, workshops and trainings – will engage the young volunteers in achieving positive societal change, namely: youth participation and active citizenship, challenging exclusion, discrimination and antigypsyism through the means of spreading awareness of the rich European Romani culture and arts.



**QUICKLINK**

**European  
Solidarity Corps**

# TARGETING PRIORITY AREAS ON ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION USING EU FUNDS

EU funds and programmes can be used through both targeted action and inclusive mainstream reforms and investments to address Romani equality and inclusion.

This section aims to provide further guidance to civil society organisations in identifying funding opportunities under specific priority areas on Romani equality and in line with relevant EU funding priorities under the 2021-2027 programming period and objectives of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2021-2030.





# 1. EDUCATION

*Various EU funds and programmes can be used to tackle specific concerns of Romani communities in the area of equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education, such as:*

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS

Relevant project proposals on Romani inclusion under ESF+ can focus on measures concerning equal access to and completion of quality and inclusive education and training, from early childhood education and care to tertiary level, as well as adult education and learning. In addition, ESF+ can also support targeted long-term and integrated measures to prevent and reduce school failure and early-school leaving among Romani girls and boys as well as measures to prevent and reduce school segregation, school mediators for distance learning, IT skills for Romani children and parents.

## EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

ERDF supports access to inclusive (non-segregated) early childhood education and care and primary education, training and life-long learning, including distance and on-line education and training. Support for capacity-building among civil society organisations, including those representing Romani communities, remains a priority under the shared management projects. In addition, the ERDF can support important measures addressing critical needs of Romani communities, such as distance or online education and training.

## ERASMUS+

Romani civil society organisations wanting to participate in Erasmus+ may engage in a number of development and networking project activities, including improvement of the professional skills of their staff, organisational capacity building, and creating transnational cooperative partnerships with organisations from other countries in order to exchange best

practices. In addition, organisations can focus on facilitating learning opportunities for students, education staff, trainees, apprentices, volunteers, youth workers and young people.

## HORIZON EUROPE

While Romani civil society organisations are not directly eligible under Horizon Europe, the programme offers a great potential for partnership on Romani targeted action with academics, research organisations, schools and small and medium-sized enterprises regarding the access to education, particularly in addressing low-achievement in basic skills as well as in digital skills and in preventing school dropouts among Romani children. Funded actions can also target the quality of learning outcomes for primary and secondary Romani school pupils.

## DIGITAL EUROPE

Romani civil society organisation could draw support from the Digital Europe programme in order to improve the digital capacity of schools, in terms of equipment and connectivity, especially in local and remote areas, as well as to improve access to remote learning for Romani students and their digital skills and competences.

## RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY

Under the Recovery and Resilience Facility and closely linked to national recovery and resilience plans, projects could address access to inclusive and equitable education, including in remote and disadvantaged areas; access to digital education, early childhood education and care; second chance education; vocational training and tackling segregation in education.

**INVESTEU**

InvestEU can support action in the area of inclusive education of Romani children and training, including early childhood education and care, educational facilities, student housing and digital equipment.

**EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS**

The programme funds Romani volunteers and solidarity initiatives, including projects on combating early school leaving, increasing basic competences such as maths or IT skills, or teaching foreign languages.

**2. EMPLOYMENT**

*Civil society organisations can use various EU funds and programmes to support activities in the area of effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment of Romani people, including Romani youth and women.*

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS**

NGOs can use ESF+ to develop projects focusing on improving access to employment and activation measures, in particular for Romani youth, women and long-term unemployed. Specific action may include:

- Targeted long-term and integrated measures to promote labour inclusion, entrepreneurship, social economy or self-employment among Romani people.
- Training and sensitisation of public services personnel, including employment offices, on the specific needs/problems faced by Romani people.
- Targeted long-term and integrated measures to address unemployment caused by COVID-19 among Romani people. Measures to increase registration with employment services of non-registered unemployed and inactive persons, including young people.

**EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INNOVATION (EASI)**

The EaSI strand of the ESF+ continues to be very relevant in promoting Romani employment and combating poverty and social exclusion. Projects could support analytical activities (surveys, studies, statistical data, methodologies, indicators, support to European-level observatories and benchmarks) to

promote evidence-based policy making in the areas of employment and social policy and networking and capacity-building activities. Action can also be envisaged in the area of mutual learning through exchange of practices, innovative approaches, peer reviews, and benchmarking, but also event guides, reports, informative material and media coverage.

**EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

ERDF funded projects can focus on active labour market measures and support for business start-up using the CLLD approach, or capacity building for employment institutions.

**JUST TRANSITION FUND**

Under the Just Transition Fund (JTF), Romani communities will be able to benefit from funds by focusing on facilitating employment opportunities in new sectors and those in transition; offering re-skilling opportunities; improving energy-efficient housing; investing to fight poverty and facilitating access to clean, affordable and secure energy.

**HORIZON EUROPE**

Under Horizon Europe, initiatives can be developed that facilitate the reduction of employment gaps between mainstream groups and people of different ethnic or racial backgrounds, such as Romani people.

**INVESTEU**

InvestEU can support investments to support the integration of Romani people, including through active employment measures, jobs creation, microfinance, social enterprise finance and social economy.

**DIGITAL EUROPE**

Romani women and youth under-represented in the digital sector in Europe can be prioritised under the Digital Europe programme.

**RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY**

Funded actions may target fighting poverty and tackling (long-term) unemployment of Romani people leading to the creation of more stable jobs, particularly for Romani women and youth; self-employment and business start-ups; pathways to integration and re-entry into employment or specific actions to increase participation of third-country nationals in employment.

**EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS**

In the area of Employment and entrepreneurship, the programme could fund projects which tackle issues around unemployment, and also help people to become more enterprising.

**3. HEALTHCARE**

*Actions focusing on improving Romani health and increasing their effective equal access to quality healthcare and social services can be supported by the following funding programmes:*

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS**

Actions funded under ESF+ can focus on improving to equal and quality access to healthcare and access to social protection for Romani people. Improving sanitary standards in Romani communities and ensuring their access to public health services are critical for the integration of Romani people. Romani children can be targeted specifically under ESF+. In addition, ESF+ can fund access to preventive healthcare, health education, mediators, awareness raising and non-discrimination services.

**EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

Under ERDF, actions can address ensuring equal access to health care in segregated Romani communities or building capacities of healthcare institutions

**EU4HEALTH**

The new EU4Health includes a transversal dimension of health inequalities in all its objectives and could provide best practices to be implemented through synergies developed with the other EU Funds and Programmes. Romani people could also benefit from actions that could be taken to address the needs of vulnerable groups, including regarding vaccination against the Covid-19.

**HORIZON EUROPE**

Under Horizon Europe, action can target the poor health status of Romani people, as well as environmental and social health determinants and poverty-related and neglected diseases that poor Romani communities may be affected by.

**RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY**

Under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, actions linked to the health of Romani people can focus on facilitating equal access to Romani communities, including in remote and segregated areas and through mobile care units, nutrition, active and healthy aging, health mediators etc.

**INVESTEU**

InvestEU can support measures on health community-based care, including innovative health solutions and new care models adapted to Romani communities.



## 4. POVERTY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, INCLUDING HOUSING

*Increasing the socioeconomic integration of Romani people through integrated measures including housing and social services are addressed through several EU funds.*

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS**

ESF+ supports a number of actions in the area of social inclusion and combating poverty of Romani people, youth and children. Specific targeted actions that can be envisaged under ESF+ include:

- Long-term and integrated measures to reduce or prevent poverty and the exclusion of families, with special attention to child poverty.
- Targeted long-term and integrated measures to address the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 among Romani people.
- Innovative actions and experimentation aimed at promoting Romani equality and inclusion, with special attention to those most at risk of poverty.
- Accompanying measures to improve access to housing.

**EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

ERDF supports actions which aim at increasing the socioeconomic integration of Romani people,

through integrated measures including housing and social services. Joint targeted actions on Romani people that can be envisaged under ESF+ and ERDF (complementarity), in the area of housing and social service, may include:

- Regeneration of deprived urban and rural areas.
- Education and housing segregation
- Integration of people with a migrant background.
- Building family and community-based services for people with disabilities, children deprived of parental care, elderly.
- Bus transport for remote and marginalised communities.
- Innovative actions with special attention to those most at risk of poverty.

**EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (EAFRD)**

The EAFRD provides funding opportunities to Romani civil society to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas, where many Romani people live. It is also the basis for the bottom-up LEADER programme to implement local development action plans in rural areas; these may also include measures aimed at Romani inclusion or realised with Romani people's involvement.

**INVESTEU**

The InvestEU could support social infrastructure, including innovative social solutions and schemes for marginalised and segregated Roma communities. This entails improving access to utilities and adequate housing and connecting segregated communities with wider services.

**RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY**

In line with ensuring social justice and a fair distribution of wealth, the Facility can support action on improving Romani people's access to opportunities and social protection. Specific projects could be envisaged in the area of access to social services including, among others, energy-efficient social housing.

**5. CULTURE AND MEDIA**

*Civil society projects in the area of Romani media and culture could be financed through the following funding programmes:*

**Creative Europe programme 2021-2027** Under the new Creative Europe programme, Romani NGOs could continue to apply for actions promoting Romani identity and cultural heritage, music and performing arts under the Culture strand. In addition, they can support Romani youth with developing new digital tools to promote Romani identity and language as well as develop and promote Romani artists and film, both under the Media and Cross-sectoral strands.

**HORIZON EUROPE**

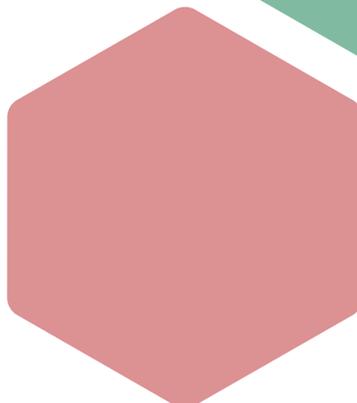
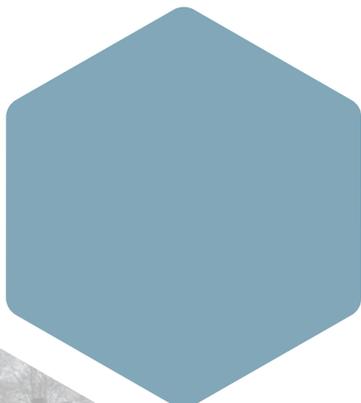
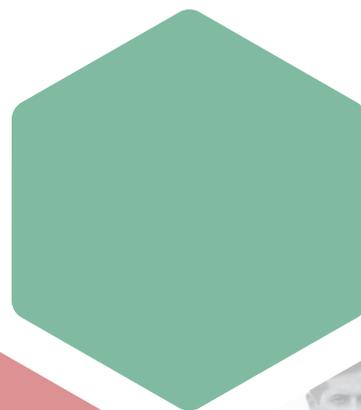
Under the work programme 2021-2022, projects could focus on safeguarding and promoting Romani language.

**INVESTEU**

The InvestEU Programme contributes to the support of European culture and creativity. Projects focusing on cultural activities with a social goal could be funded under the InvestEU.

**EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS**

The programme can include cross-border volunteering opportunities in the sector of arts and culture, integrating young Romani people as participants or Romani cultural institutions as receiving institutions.





## 6. EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

*Discrimination and antigypsyism against Romani people can be addressed through projects under the following funds and programmes:*

### EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PLUS

Targeted long-term measures to promote equal treatment and non-discrimination of Romani people, with special attention to fighting antigypsyism, including among employers and staff, can be financed under ESF+. In addition, ESF+ can finance measures aimed at preventing and providing assistance to victims of discrimination on the ground of racial and ethnic origin; promoting transnational cooperation for searching for common solutions related to Roma equality, inclusion and non-discrimination between Member States, including programmes to address the particular challenges of EU mobile Roma.

### EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Actions under ERDF can focus on awareness raising and capacity building of mainstream institutions (employment and social services, healthcare professionals, public servants etc.) in the area of diversity, discrimination and antigypsyism against Roma.

### JUSTICE PROGRAMME (JUST)

Under the Justice Programme, Romani NGOs can focus in particular on the effective access to justice of Romani victims of crime, particularly Romani children, women or LGBTIQ persons, victims of sexual abuse, domestic violence, trafficking, hate speech or hate crimes, forced marriage or forced sterilization.

### CITIZENS, EQUALITY, RIGHTS AND VALUES PROGRAMME (CERV)

Under the new “citizens, equality, rights and values” programme, the Commission will directly finance initiatives promoting Romani equality through dedicated thematic priorities, such as: fighting antigypsyism; raising awareness of Romani history and culture and promoting recognition and reconciliation; fighting discrimination in access to quality services; policy-relevant data collection and research on mobility; and community-building between Romani and non-Romani communities.

### HORIZON EUROPE

The programme aims to enhance anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies and practices by evaluating existing policy responses to employment, education, living conditions of marginalised communities such as Romani. In addition, it can finance research and social innovation actions aiming to eliminate social, racial and intersecting inequalities and unconscious bias, and AI-based solutions for enhancing digital equality and social inclusion of Romani people.

## 4. OTHER RELEVANT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING PROGRAMMES FOR ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION



### EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

The EEA and Norway Grants put a special focus on countries with larger Romani populations, namely – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. They support countries to achieve their targets on Romani inclusion and implement their national Romani integration strategies by financing a wide variety of activities in 4 main areas: in the areas of education, employment, housing, healthcare, and in combating discrimination.

#### BUDGET

Total of 2.8 billion euro (1.5 billion euro from EEA Grants and 1.3 billion euro from Norway Grants)

#### WHAT DO THEY DO?

EEA/Norway Grants support activities on:

- Implementation of national, regional and local strategies for Romani inclusion
- Innovative approaches to improving the inclusiveness of public institutions and policies
- Empowering Romani people, including women and young Romani leaders
- Combating discrimination, including stereotyping of Romani People

#### TYPE OF PROJECTS

EEA and Norway Grants fund projects on research, innovation, education and competitiveness, social inclusion, youth, employment and poverty reduction, justice and home affairs, environment and climate change, regional cooperation, youth employment, culture, civil society, good governance and fundamental rights and freedoms.

#### WHO CAN APPLY?

Depending on each call for proposals, target groups can include public and local authorities and institutions, universities, municipalities, hospitals, theatre companies, non-governmental entities and businesses.

#### ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

In addition to specifically targeted programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants, Romani inclusion and empowerment are supported through the Active Citizens Fund and several other areas, including justice and home affairs, health, research, and education.

#### GOOD TO KNOW?

[Further info](#)

#### PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo source: Project website



QUICKLINK

[EEA and Norway Grants](#)

The project “New solutions to old problems – exchange of new type of approaches in the field of Roma integration”, funded by the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation, employs a bottom-up and peer-to-peer approach to Romani inclusion and combating antigypsyism. Involving partners from 11 countries in the EU and Western Balkans, the project aims to support Romani communities in adapting and implementing inclusion and empowerment projects that have already been tested successfully by other partners and create a more favourable

environment for bottom-up approaches to Romani integration. The project is accompanied by capacity building and peer learning tools as well as Romani community organizing. It also uses advocacy towards national governments, international institutions and donors in order to create a more favourable fundraising environment, such as the “Project Market”, where they share their best practices of Romani inclusion and empowerment projects and “bid” on each other’s projects to implement similar initiatives in their own communities.

## OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS (OSF)

Open Society Foundations’ Roma Initiatives Office provides grants, fellowships, and training to stimulate Romani community participation and active citizenship, empower Romani women and youth, and combat anti-Romani discrimination.

### BUDGET

The budget and timelines depend on the specific nature and of the funding programme.

### TYPE OF PROJECTS

OSF supports projects in all areas of Romani equality, inclusion and empowerment of Romani people, including Romani identity, history and culture.

### TYPE OF RECIPIENTS

Romani NGOs, academics, women and youth.

### GOOD TO KNOW

OSF may provide ad-hoc financial support to Romani related initiatives, based on ad-hoc requests.

[Further info](#)

### PROJECT EXAMPLE

The Roma Education Initiative (REI) project was funded and implemented by the Open Society

Institute in partnership with Soros foundations and Romani and non-Romani NGOs, between 2002 and 2005. REI focused on supporting early access and retention in education by providing quality education services in schools, which included Romani community involvement in 7 countries. Each national project offered a continuum of services—in school and out of school, educational and other sectors—in response to an array of needs and across age groups. REI’s reached over 20,000 students, 5,000 of whom were Romani. In addition, 1,000 teachers including 120 Romani teacher assistants in 7 countries and approximately 75 schools, including preschools, also participated.



QUICKLINK

[Open Society  
Foundations \(OSF\)](#)

## ROMA EDUCATION FUND (REF)

The Roma Education Fund is an international foundation dedicated to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Romani and non-Romani people.

### WHAT DOES IT DO?

It offers academic scholarships for Romani students pursuing Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate degrees at state-accredited universities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo\*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The Grant Program focuses on decreasing the gap in educational outcomes between Romani and non-Romani people. REF offers its technical advice as well as opportunities for smaller NGOs to build their capacity, knowledge and management skills. REF issues specific calls reflecting the priorities of the Grant Program.

### BUDGET

The budget depends on particular funded initiatives and programmes.

### TYPE OF ACTIVITIES

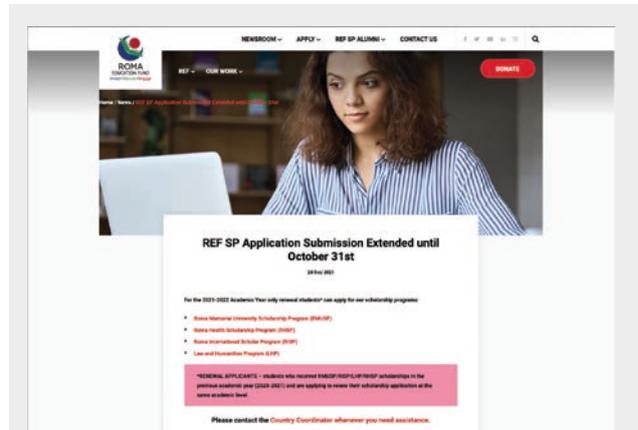
REF primarily funds education and academic related activities.

### WHO CAN APPLY?

Universities and schools, public authorities, Romani academics and students, NGOs and other relevant entities.

*Further info*

### PROJECT EXAMPLE



*Photo source: Roma Education Fund website*

### REF Scholarship Programs 2021-2022

In August 2021, REF launched the enrolment procedure for the REF scholarship programs. Starting with 2021-2022 academic year, the scholarships programs will include a special package of activities and opportunities designed to allow us to grow together and to contribute to the emergence of a critical mass of Romani Youth that is able to impact the society in which we live. The program will include financial support, voluntary services and community engagement, internships, mentoring and counselling, workshops and skills development, mobility schemes, small-scale projects and summer camps.



QUICKLINK

*Roma Education Fund  
(REF)*

## 5. NATIONAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ON ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

*It is not always easy to clearly identify the exact amounts of EU investments allocated to Romani inclusion projects and measures to combat poverty, social exclusion and antigypsyism against Romani people, because actions are not always exclusively addressing members of the ethnic minority, but rather a larger group of marginalised communities.*

### WHY IS THE COUNTRY SPECIFIC PERSPECTIVE RELEVANT FOR NGOS?

EU invests a large share of its money through programmes that fall under shared management, hence they are implemented at national level by governmental bodies. In general, countries combine different approaches to address Romani inclusion, mainly related to the reference made to Romani people/Romani communities within the Operational Programmes:

- Explicit mention, largely used in certain ESF investment priorities, under socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Romani and to a lesser extent under ERDF.
- Explicit but not exclusive mention: general lines of intervention focusing explicitly on Romani/Roma communities but as part of a larger group (e.g. disadvantaged group) or geographical area (e.g. disadvantaged area).
- No explicit mention of Romani people/Romani communities but considered as part of a larger group /geographical area.
- The territorial approach, which can be applied in any of the previous three cases. This approach aims at covering specifically the needs of geographical areas, sometimes micro-territories, in many cases at greatest risk of poverty and, in consequence, tackle the needs of groups at risk of exclusion and discrimination living in these areas, as it is the case of the Romani.

While the new generation of EU funding programmes for 2021-2027 will continue to be a major source of funding option for civil society organisations, including Romani NGOs, relevant funding programmes from other public and private donor organisations are available at national level. Local, regional and national funding sources are often less burdensome in their administration, pre-conditions for participation are lower and the competition amongst potential beneficiaries is lower than in EU-wide programmes. Therefore, a country perspective is important for national and local NGO in identifying relevant sources for financial support on Romani equality and inclusion.

This section looks more in depth at seven countries in the European Union, selected based on the density of the Romani population and relevance. It provides a short overview of EU and other existing funds at national level supporting Romani inclusion and the fight against antigypsyism. It aims to give a basic orientation on funding programmes, priorities and target groups with a view to assist Romani NGOs in their fundraising and projects development efforts.

*Please note that at the time of the drafting of this guide, the national Roma strategic frameworks were not yet published on the website of the European Commission. The deadline for final submission of the strategic frameworks was 30 September 2021. Equally the EU funds country allocations are in a few cases still being finalized, therefore the information provided is based on available information at the moment of publication.*

## BULGARIA

### BACKGROUND

The Council of Europe estimates that there are 750,000 Romani people living in Bulgaria (10.33% of the population). In the 2011 national census, Romani people remain the third largest ethnic group in Bulgaria with 4.9% of the Bulgarian citizens identified as Romani. According to the authorities, the large discrepancy between this figure and the census results is due to many Romani identifying themselves as Bulgarians, Turks and to a lesser extent as Romanians.

Romani people continue to face high levels of discrimination and antigypsyism in Bulgaria, living in poverty, with high levels of unemployment and limited and segregated education combined with social stigmatization. The concentration of Romani people in segregated neighbourhoods has increased during the last two decades both in the urban and rural areas. The living conditions are generally characterised by overcrowding, lack of water and sewer systems, electricity and garbage collection. Ill-treatment and excessive use of force against Romani people by law enforcement officials is a particular problem in Bulgaria.

The official policy for the integration of Romani people in Bulgaria began on 22 April 1999, when the "Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian society" was adopted by a decision of the Council of Ministers, followed by the National Strategy for Roma integration 2012 – 2020. The coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the strategy are carried out by the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues (NCCEII). The mechanisms of coordination with the civil society structures beyond the NCCEII include the Roma Integration Commission within the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and other advisory structures and mechanisms with the participation of the civil society to be set up by the line ministries, regional governors and local governments.

### EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

The main source of funding for Romani inclusion remains the Operational Programmes financed by the European Social Fund. The use of EU funds for Roma inclusion has increased significantly during the last programming period with a total of €1.2 billion (€233 million under ERDF, €401 million under ESF and €565 million EAFRD) allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, and targeting action towards the socially disadvantaged (including, but not limited to Romani). Under this amount Bulgaria also selected a new Romani-specific investment priority (explicitly targeting Romani) with a total allocation of €143 million.



During the 2014-2020 programming period, Romani integration and social inclusion of vulnerable groups were mainly included within the programme 'Human resources development (OPHDR)' and 'Science and education for smart growth (OPSESG)'. It was followed by ERDF funds, while the engagement of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) remained problematic during the previous programming period, though the latter has supported the Community-led local development (CLLD) approach.

## EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027

The total amount of funds that was agreed to be provided for Bulgaria under the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Next Generation EU Package is nearly 29 billion euro. Under the Next Generation EU Package, Bulgaria will be able to count on over 7.7 billion euro in grants. The bulk of these funds, amounting to more than €6 billion, are under the Reconstruction and Sustainability Mechanism, which will finance public investment and reforms to recover from the crisis and achieve a sustainable, climate-neutral, digitalised and low-carbon economy. In addition to the funds for Cohesion Policy from the MFF, it was agreed that Bulgaria will receive over 650 million euro under the REACT-EU Instrument, which is part of the Next Generation EU Package. They are envisaged to overcome the socio-economic consequences of the crisis. In addition to the funds provided for the country under the MFF Fair Transition Fund, the Next Generation EU Package also includes over 600 million euros for Bulgaria.

## 2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS ON ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Based on the assessment of the implementation of the 2011-2020 Roma strategy, the new 2021-2030 strategic framework should support measures and programmes in the areas of desegregation, early school leaving and providing effective access to quality education for Romani children. The inclusion of Romani in the labour market is still weak and health insurance remains an issue. Key priorities to be further addressed are related to housing, access to basic utilities and services, improving living conditions and legalisation of housing in segregated Romani neighbourhoods, the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, the provision of quality inclusive education, local level actors' capacity building and better coordination of all stakeholders and funding opportunities.

## OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

The EEA and Norway Grants put a special focus on the situation of Romani people in Bulgaria.

**Budget:** 210.1 million euro

### TARGET GROUPS

Public authorities and institutions, Romani communities, Romani youth and children, civil society organisations etc.

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

They help support Bulgaria achieve its targets on Roma inclusion and implement the national Roma integration strategy.

### AREAS OF SUPPORT

Education, employment, housing, healthcare, and in combating discrimination, fighting poverty and promoting local development and improving living conditions for the Romani population.

*Further info*

## ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

Romani inclusion and empowerment are supported through the Active Citizens Fund and several other areas, including justice and home affairs, health, research, and education.

**Budget:** €15.5 million entirely funded through the EEA Grants.

### TARGET GROUPS

CSOs serving vulnerable and under-served communities

### AREAS OF SUPPORT

Capacity building of NGOs, including mentorship and coaching of scholarship recipients; capacity development of Romani and pro-Romani CSOs; and leadership skills among young CSO managers.

*Further info*

## ROMA EDUCATION FUND

The Scholarship Program (REF SP) contributes to the emergence of a critical mass of Romani people, higher education graduates, confident and proud of their Romani identity, academically and socially adept, equipped with skills and competences that enable them to become professionals in their fields, as well as remain solidly connected to the Romani community and support its further advancement and inclusion in wider society.

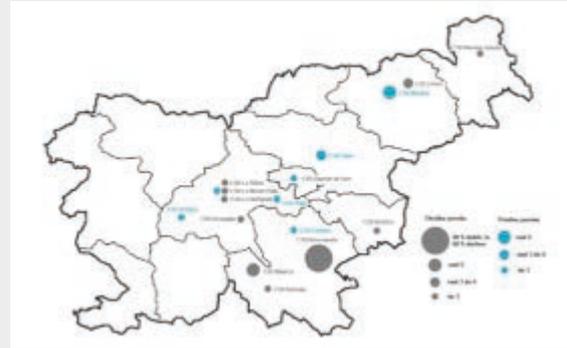
**Budget:** Contact the program directly at: <https://www.romaeducationfund.org/>

### TARGET GROUPS

Romani students

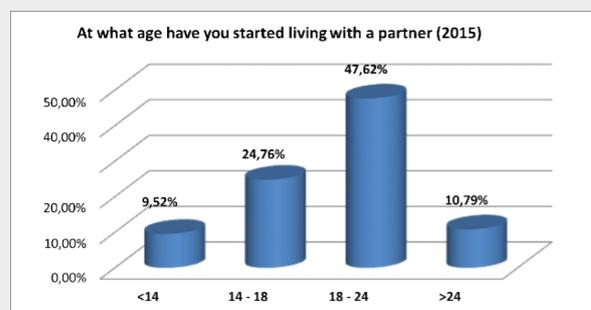
## PROJECT EXAMPLE

“Early marriage: culture or abuse?”  
(Transnational: Slovenia, Bulgaria and Italy)



*Photo Source: Forced Marriages of Roma Girls. Final report. 2014. Ljubljana: Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia.*

The project ran from October 1st, 2014 to September 30th, 2016 in Bulgaria, Slovenia and Italy and focused on identifying the understanding and practice of early marriages among Romani and raising awareness on how to act as a mediator at the onset of early/forced marriage. The project was supported by the Commission under the Daphne programme. Project activities included training of interdisciplinary groups of professionals already working with Romani families as mediators. Topics included early marriages, interpersonal relations, children's rights and reproductive health. The added value of the project was the training and employment of mediators with Romani background who visit Romani families in settlements and helped to overcome problems related to early and arranged marriages, generational conflicts, or violations of children's rights.



*Source: Center Amalipe project report, 2015.*

# FRANCE

## BACKGROUND

The Council of Europe estimates that there are approximately 400,000 Romani people living in France (0.21% of the population).

Romani people living in France have long experienced "high levels of discrimination, stereotyping and racism that result in serious violations of their human rights", while suffering from multiple expulsions and forced evictions from France.

France's national Romani integration strategy is not a strategy as such, but rather an integrated set of policy measures within France's social inclusion policy. The French approach aims to eliminate poverty and social exclusion among marginalised Romani and Traveller communities, in particular through addressing education, employment, health and housing.

## EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

There are no specific funds or budget for civil society allocated to Romani or Traveller NGOs and almost no funds are available for inclusion policies and programmes for Romani people. In addition, the situation of "gens du voyage", is generally not documented by public institutions, and therefore they are not integrated in programmes. Most of funding for civil society is provided through outsourcing of social services in slums by public authorities. Because of lack of financial and resource capacities, Romani NGOs are not able to tender for the provision of social services (these are only reimbursed).

The adoption of the EU Framework made it possible to use of EU Funds to target issues concerning "gens du voyage" and "EU-mobile Roma". However, these funds were not used enough, both because of a lack of political will and because of the difficulty and complexity of accessing and managing them.

During the 2014-20 period a total of €3.2 billion was allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, targeting action towards the socially disadvantaged (including, but not limited to Romani people). Under this amount, France also selected a new Roma-specific investment priority (explicitly targeting Romani people) with a total allocation of €8 million. Apart from social inclusion, investments under employment and education would also contribute to NRIS-implementation. Romani people were targeted within mainstream measures for the unemployed. Projects were financed by the National Roma Contact Points (NRCP) in the context of the multiannual plan for combating poverty and local integration schemes (709 people, out of a little more than 4000 involved in 46 projects, were employed.). However, no mechanism was put in place to measure the impact of EU funds in supporting Romani integration specifically.

## EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027

France is expected to receive some €22.5 billion from the European Structural Funds for the period 2021-2027. Because of delays in negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council (the states) on the budget and regulations, the first regional operational programs will probably have to wait until autumn 2021. Therefore, the budget envelopes remain only estimates for the time being. In particular, France is expected to receive some €9 billion from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to be spent on the revitalisation of town centres, the enhancement of the architectural, cultural, natural, and landscape heritage, the develop-

ment of local shops, "smart" cities, the equipment of rural areas, etc. Each region negotiates with its urban authorities, including on targeted social measures in deprived neighbourhoods. Similarly, some regions will choose to implement this dimension through delegations to local authorities - what the European regulation refers to as "local development led by local actors" or "integrated territorial investment" (ITI) - charged with defining the strategy and the selection of the operations to be financed. In addition, many regions also plan to organize territorial development actions in rural areas, which will then be articulated with the strategies financed under the EAFRD (rural development). The envelope of 22.5 billion euro that France will benefit from provides about 1 billion euro under a new "Fair Transition Fund", designed to support the areas most affected by the necessary energy and climate transition. Each region concerned (Hauts-de-France, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Grand Est, Normandy, Pays de la Loire, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes) will work with local actors to define "fair transition plans" which will have to be endorsed by Brussels. To finance its €100 billion recovery plan over two years, France is relying in part on the European recovery plan (REACT-EU). As such, it is expected to receive around €40 billion through a new "Recovery and Resilience Facility". Here again, everything has to be finalized since the European institutions did not agree on this instrument until the middle of December. The credits will have to be committed by the end of 2023. Unlike the Structural Funds, stimulus funds do not call for national co-financing.

## 2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS ON ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Considering that Romani people in France continue to face poor and segregated education and unhealthy living conditions in settlements as well as evictions, more targeted projects on Romani people should be developed addressing in particular:

- education and desegregation of Romani children
- the situation of people living in shanty towns via the new plan for combating poverty and locally implemented projects
- forced evictions, especially during the school period.
- the participation of Romani civil society organisations in development of projects aimed at their inclusion.

## PROJECT EXAMPLE: INTEGRATED PROGRAMME FOR ROMANI INCLUSION AT LOCAL LEVEL

The city of Grenoble put in place an integrated approach to the inclusion of Romani people and migrants. An experimental project was first implemented in 2012. It became an official programme at the end of 2013. People living in precarious conditions, most of whom are Romani people, receive support with housing, healthcare, education and job insertion. For example, families are provided with temporary housing along with support to get work and to obtain their own, non-temporary accommodation. Since 2012, 29 families (132 people) have been integrated through this project, 83% of them gaining access

to their own flat after 20 months. In 2016, a job insertion project, funded through the European Social Fund, was added to the programme, focusing on job integration for groups living in precarious conditions; while not focused on Romani people, they make up for a big part of the beneficiaries. As a first step the project focused on offering language learning sessions, and secondly, on getting participants familiarised with the labour market. Short internships were also available, which gave opportunities to get familiarised with a work environment and even practice for future interviews.

# GERMANY

## BACKGROUND

Today there are an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 German citizens who belong to the national minority of Sinti and Roma. Furthermore, there is a large community of immigrated Romani people, mostly Romani from the countries of former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia.

Romani people and Sinti continue to be the victims of antigypsyism, including violent racist attacks and harassment. Discrimination in the housing market remains a significant problem for Romani people in Germany, particularly for the foreign EU nationals of Romani ethnicity. At present, many continue to be segregated from mainstream German society.

The German federal authorities have made efforts to combat manifestations of antigypsyism as part of its preventive measures against extremism. One milestone in this sphere was the adoption of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 by Germany. The strategy established an inter-departmental Steering Group in which representatives from Romani communities were involved. Working groups on specific issues were formed and developed proposals for measures to improve the situation of Romani people. However, anti-Romani sentiment in Germany remains widespread.

## EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Romani inclusion has been supported by national and ESIF funds under various types of mainstream measures. In the 2014-2020 period of total of €5.2 billion (€596 million ERDF, €2.5 billion ESF, €2.1 billion EAFRD) was allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, targeting action towards the socially disadvantaged people (including, but not limited to Romani people). The Investment Priority of the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, such as Romani people, was not selected. In addition, 'no special policies for specific groups' are implemented so in principle, projects are open to all types of targets. The lack of more targeted funding instruments makes it more difficult for Romani self-organisations to benefit from these programmes.

Almost no Romani organisation applies to ESF funds. Often, they do not have the required capacities, or they do not know that they could apply for ESF.

The largest federal and regional associations of the German national minority of Sinti and Roma receive regular funding from the federal government and from the regional governments. In some regional entities – German Länder – the regional governments have concluded binding contractual agreements between the state entity and the regional representations of the German Sinti and Roma. These state contracts establish a structure of cooperation for the minority and the regional government that ensures the participation of representatives of the minorities in politics related the matters of the minority. Furthermore, the state contracts promote the implementation of the obligations resulting from the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The federal programme Demokratie Leben (EN transl.: Live Democracy!), the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ), the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and regional governments are funding projects aiming to promote equality rights of the national minority of Sinti and Roma and immigrated Romani people. German institutions also finance specific initiatives such as the RomArchive – the Digital Archive of the Romani people (funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation) or European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Several German cities, including for instance Dortmund, Berlin, Munich, Mannheim or Freiburg have developed comprehensive local approaches to the inclusion of German Sinti and Roma or immigrated Romani people that mostly refrain from explicitly mentioning Romani people as a specific target group in order to avoid ethnicisation and additional stigmatisation of the immigrants. In other cities, immigration from South-eastern Europe is still treated first and foremost as a policing issue and no significant initiatives for the social inclusion and the fight against antigypsyism have been developed. The city of Dortmund is unique regarding relatively comprehensive policies for the labour market inclusion of immigrants from South-eastern Europe, by acquiring support of the FEAD programme and ESF funds, and interlinking the services created through them.

## EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027

A total of around EUR 2.3 billion is expected be available for the ESF Plus funding of the federal government. A more specific amount targeted exclusively towards Romani people cannot be given, due to the aforementioned lack of explicitness.

## 2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS ON ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Key areas of support that need continuous investment for Romani equality and inclusion include the fight against antigypsyism, discrimination in the area of employment and social protection as well as participation and empowerment of Romani.

## EXAMPLES OF ROMANI RELATED PROJECTS



Source of the photo: State Association of Sinti in Hamburg <http://www.landesverein-hamburg.de/selbstaendigkeit.html>

Regional Association of Sinti in Hamburg – ESF funded project "Qualification and career entry for Sinti and Roma". The project consists of a sewing workshop where Sinti and Romani women can learn an occupation and produce articles to sell at the same time. This project also aims to foster self-empowerment among Sinti and Romani women. According to official information, 1,700 Romani people were reached in the first funding

period (2008-2010) and 1,300 in the second funding period (2010–2014) by the end of 2012. For this programme, 87.9 million EUR were invested.

In Berlin, “Nostels” have been set up to provide a first shelter for homeless Romani families with children. This is intended as a short-term solution for up to 28 days but the stay can be extended if necessary. The families are placed in an adequately-sized and fully equipped flat where their basic needs are met. During their stay the families receive support to apply for social benefits and to access social services in an effort to find a long-term solution for their situation. The initiative is funded by the Berlin Senate (local funding) and the project is run by an NGO together with a communal housing organisation. Since 2014, 18 families have found new homes on the housing market in Berlin.

# HUNGARY

## BACKGROUND

The population of Romani origin living in Hungary is estimated to represent 7.5% of the overall population, i.e.: 750,000 persons (Council of Europe, 2015). Romani people in Hungary face discrimination in all fields of life, including education, housing, employment, and health care. Existing reports state that unemployment rates for Romani people are 3-5 times higher than for non-Romani people. In its 2015 report on Hungary, ECRI mentions that 60% of Romani people live in rural areas, mostly in segregated residential zones, in poor conditions and that Romani people often face discrimination in accessing social housing. Segregation of Romani people in schools continues to be widespread. As for health, the Romani population also faces difficulties and discrimination in access to care.

Hungary's Romani inclusion strategy is not aimed specifically at Romani people but at everyone who is permanently deprived and excluded. The Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy – Extreme Poverty, Child Poverty, the Roma, 2011–2020 (hereinafter, HNSIS) tackles the social exclusion of Romani people in the context of a broader national social inclusion strategy dealing with extreme poverty, child poverty and specific living conditions along with the four priority areas of the European Roma Framework Strategy i.e. education, employment, healthcare and housing. To tackle poverty, the HNSIS applies a comprehensive approach, which in addition to addressing housing poverty, also initiates employment programmes to prevent persistent poverty and launches educational-training programmes allowing for quality employment.

## EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

In the 2014-20 period a total of €2.4 billion (€863 million ERDF, €1.1 billion ESF and €402 million EAFRD) was allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, and targeting action towards the socially disadvantaged (including, but not limited to Romani people). Under this amount, in three Operational Programmes Hungary also selected a new Roma-specific investment priority (explicitly targeting Romani people) with a total allocation of €470 million. Apart from social inclusion, investments under employment and education can also contribute to NRIS-implementation.

ESIF are the most relevant funding sources for Romani people in Hungary and civil society actors working on extreme poverty alleviation and for equal opportunities of Romani people are mostly eligible to apply for HRD OP sources. In addition to EU funds, the EEA/Norway Grants and the Swiss Contribution distribute resources for social development. These schemes support some large-scale investments, but it is possible to apply for the so-called civil funds. These make it possible to realize small-scale, local projects as well. The proportion of other non-state donors is increasing. Most support comes from large corporations, and it is part of the CSR strategy of multinational companies (E.g. Vodafone, T-Mobile, Velux, TEVA, Erste Bank, MOL, OTP Bank, Szerencsjáték Zrt.).

## EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027

According to initial proposals, Hungary can expect about 17-20 billion euro (about 7 thousand billion HUF) of development aid from the European Structural and Investment Funds between 2021 and 2027.

## 2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS FOR ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Key priorities to be further addressed through funding could include better enforcement of antidiscrimination legislation, systemic desegregation measures, fighting and monitoring discrimination, antigypsyism, hate speech and hate crime through specific actions targeting key stakeholders and society as a whole; bringing Romani people closer to the labour market by coordinating actions with possible employers or promoting good practices in the field; specifically targeting low-status residential urban zones and segregated rural areas with substandard dwellings by major long-term integrated programmes for renewal, upgrading and moving people out from urban and rural ghettos; and increasing coverage of housing affordability programmes which would address extreme forms of housing poverty and prevention of evictions.

### EXAMPLES OF PROMISING PRACTICES

The **Utcáról lakásba Egyesület** (From Streets to Homes Association) introduced the “Housing First” principle and methodology in Hungary. The Association facilitates housing to homeless people and those living in housing poverty from multiple sides and through numerous innovative means. In 2015, it established a housing agency (Housing Now) and then also launched a mobile home investment programme. As part of the initiative, people in need have the opportunity to lease low-rent and low-maintenance-cost homes. The Association’s “Adj Munkát” (Give Work!) programme helps clients already living in homes or still homeless obtain jobs in the primary labour market. As part of their programmes, they managed to ensure housing for approximately 30 people to date, but their various services are used by more people.



*Photo source*

**Scholarship programme “Bari Shej”** (Big Girl) aims to prevent Romani girls’ early school leaving and improve chances of further education. The programme was launched in October 2015. The target group included primarily Romani girls age 10 to 18, who attend primary or secondary school and are at risk of dropping out. Bari Shej continued

in 2016 with financing from the national budget, and after its closure a years-long programme was started from EU funds, which in 2017 reached out to as many as 1800 students. The mentored girls took part in classes about how to pursue their studies and future careers and obtained various qualifications and training certificates.

### OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMMES

#### EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

EEA and Norway Grants included Hungary among its beneficiary countries. On 21 December 2020, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway signed new cooperation agreements with Hungary on several new programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. However, the Donor States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, did not reach an agreement with Hungary on the appointment of a Fund Operator to manage the funding for civil society. As a consequence, and as foreseen in the cooperation agreements, no programmes will be implemented in Hungary under the EEA and Norway Grants during the 2014-2021 funding period.

**Budget:** €214.06 million

# ITALY

## BACKGROUND

The Romani population in Italy (including Romani people, Sinti and Camminanti) is estimated to number between 120,000 and 180,000; about half of them are Italian nationals belonging to groups which have lived in Italy for centuries, while the other half is made up of foreign nationals, even if many of them have been permanent residents in Italy for decades.

ECRI reports that 80% of the Romani people live in settlements, out of which more than 30% are illegal. In that context, access to education and employment as well as health are prominent issues, even more so for those who are legally “invisible” due to the absence of identity documents (15,000 children would be concerned).

UNAR is the National Roma Contact Point for the elaboration and implementation of the Italian Roma Strategy. The NRCP contributes to the implementation and monitoring of NRIS.

## EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

In the 2014-20 period a total of €4 billion was allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination, targeting action to the socially disadvantaged (including, but not limited to Romani people). Under this amount, Italy also selected a new Roma-specific investment priority (explicitly targeting Romani people) with a total allocation of €71 million, of which 15 million euro were allocated for UNAR. Special attention was devoted to the theme of the integration of national and community funds with specific actions (tested for the first time) of joint intervention between metropolitan cities and UNAR, including housing and access to the labour market, through the transfer of the Spanish ACCEDER programme to Italy, supported by ESIF. Failure to overcome the camps-system remains one of the biggest challenges alongside existing challenges in the areas of education, employment and health.

During the last programming period, ESF funding has improved effectiveness and ERDF made it possible to fund communities in extreme marginalization. However, the use of EU, national and local funds for Romani people needs to be optimised through a truly integrated approach, fully using the resources envisaged under objective dedicated to Romani Inclusion. The representation of Romani NGOs in the Monitoring Committees of ESI Funds and at the level of the Partnership Agreement for Italy should be improved.

## EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027

With the green light given for the Partnership Agreement on the new cycle of structural funds (2021-2027), Italy - between European resources and national co-financing - will have another 83 billion euro, of which about 56 for the South, to invest in growth and in the recovery of territorial gaps. Planning and implementation of the interventions will start in autumn, once the final approval of the European Commission has been obtained.

## 2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS FOR ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Under the new funding period, more action would be required to overcome the Romani camps, offering their inhabitants a long-term and sustainable alternative, prevent forced evictions and ensure that inhabitants of both authorised and informal camps are provided with essential public services such as access to drinking water or waste collection.



## PROMISING PRACTICE

The region of Emilia Romagna can be considered as a promising practice by implementing a social housing project at the regional level with direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders – regional authorities, municipalities and Romani communities. Region Emilia Romagna (and a few isolated municipalities in Tuscany) has been the only one region that has addressed Romani inclusion in housing by providing families from camps with regular social housing.

## PROJECT EXAMPLE



*Photo source: Project logo*

### **Fighting discrimination in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Romania:**

The transnational *NET-KARD Project* ran in 2013-14. It was financed under the EU Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme and was coordinated by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano. Its overall objective was to prevent anti-Romani discrimination and improve assistance to victims by promoting cooperation among key actors and improving and transferring existing methodological experience. The project's main result is a series of practical guides on fighting anti-Romani discrimination for lawyers and jurists, police services, Romani associations and media professionals.

# ROMANIA

## BACKGROUND

Romani people constitute one of Romania's largest national ethnic minorities. According to the 2011 census, their number was 621,000 people or 3.3% of the total population, being the second-largest ethnic minority in Romania after Hungarians. There are different estimates about the size of the total Romani population, varying from 4.6 per cent to over 10 per cent of the population, because many people of Romani descent do not declare themselves Romani people. For example, the Council of Europe estimates that approximately 1.85 million Romani people live in Romania, a figure equivalent to 8.32% of the population.

Many Romani people in Romania continue to live in deep poverty and inadequate living conditions. Unemployment remains high, police abuses against Romani people are a persistent problem and many Romani children face de facto segregation at school. Forced evictions of Romani settlements also continue to impact many Romani people who often struggle to access basic services, employment and others needs as a result.

In 2001 the government of Romania adopted a Strategy for the Improvement of the Situation of the Romani Population, which was revised in 2012. The Government drafted a new Romani strategy under the new EU Roma Framework which is yet to be adopted by the Parliament.

## EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

In the 2014-20 period a total of €3.4 billion (€572 million ERDF, €1, 1 billion ESF, and €1.7 billion EAFRD) was allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, and targeting action towards the socially disadvantaged (including, but not limited to Romani people). Under this allocation Romania also selected a new Romani-specific investment priority (explicitly targeting Romani people) with a total amount of €372 million.

## EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027

Romania will have a budget of reimbursable and non-reimbursable external funds estimated at €79.9 billion, out of which €30.4 billion are dedicated to the financial instrument Recovery and Resilience Facility (loans and grants) to mitigate the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

A budget of €28.2 billion has been agreed for cohesion policy, which includes funds allocated through the REACT-EU instrument, regional development and human resources development, while €19.16 billion are allocated for agricultural and fisheries policy.

Romania's recovery and resilience plan - amounting to €29.2 billion- encompasses six pillars and 15 priority areas for Romania's development, including digitalisation, healthcare and reforms in the social sector. €78 million euro will be spent on strategic projects for online schools and €500 million against school drop-outs.

## 2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS FOR ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

The high poverty rate among Romani people and especially among Romani children remains a major concern and needs to be addressed seriously via affirmative action in public sector employment of Romani people, including intervention to support employment, e.g. through on-the job training, apprenticeships and tutoring. Romani participation in the labour market as well as access to health services in disadvantaged regions

remain weak. Enforcing the anti-discrimination legislation and the legislation criminalising hate speech and hate crime, in particular at the local level, should be considered; improvement of housing conditions of the Romani people, in particular legalisation of informal settlements and protection against forced evictions; combating school and residential segregation of Romani people and comprehensively addressing the quality inclusive education.

## OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMMES:

### GOVERNMENT

Government funding is also available to civil society, though much more limited through subsidies to associations by the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly and non-reimbursable financing from public through City Halls.

### EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

The EEA and Norway Grants put a special focus on the situation of Roma in Bulgaria.

**Budget:** 502.5 million euro from EEA Grants and 275.2 million from Norway Grants.

### TARGET GROUPS

Public authorities and institutions, Romani communities, Romani youth and children, civil society organisations etc.

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

They help support Romania achieve its targets on Roma inclusion and implement the national Roma integration strategy.

### AREAS OF SUPPORT

Education, employment, housing, healthcare, combating discrimination, fighting poverty and promoting local development and improving living conditions for the Romani population.

*Further info*

### ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

Romani inclusion and empowerment are supported through the Active Citizens Fund and several other areas, including justice and home affairs, health, research, and education.

**Budget:** 46 million euro

### TARGET GROUPS

CSO serving vulnerable and under-served communities

### AREAS OF SUPPORT

Capacity building of NGOs, including mentorship and coaching of scholarship recipients; capacity development of Romani and pro-Romani CSOs.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Roma inclusion and empowerment are key priorities to which a minimum of 10% of the programme's re-granting funds is earmarked. The programme will support coalitions and networks across the thematic areas of support, both in Romania and at a regional level, to promote the sharing of best practice, improve advocacy, and foster dialogue with national and European policymakers.

*Further info*

## PROJECT EXAMPLE



Photo

**“Mapping of research on Roma children in the European Union (2014-2017)”**. Funded directly by the European Commission, Justice and Consumers grants, the project involved mapping research related to Romani children across 17 European countries with the aim to address the lack of quality, disaggregated, child focused data on Romani children which is widely seen to impede the development of positive policies and programmes promoting full realisation of their rights. The project involved the mapping of relevant Romani child related research across 17 European countries and identifying research gaps; and recommend child rights-based research to be replicated and implemented.

## SLOVAKIA

### BACKGROUND

The population of Romani origin living in Slovak Republic is estimated at 500,000 (Council of Europe, 2015) and represents 10% of the population of the country.

FRA report on the situation of Romani people in 11 EU Member States indicates that 80% of surveyed Romani households in Slovakia experience "severe material deprivation". The report also states that Romani people are faced with discrimination in numerous areas, including: the provision of government services, political participation, loan practices, and access to employment, education, health and housing.

The Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Roma integration of up to 2020 was implemented by the Office of Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities, and line ministries responsible for key agendas. In the previous ESIF programming period, the Plenipotentiary Office was not substantially involved in the planning and management of all EU funding for Romani people; instead, it implemented several large-scale ESIF funded projects.

### EU FUNDING PROGRAMMES

In the 2014-2020 a total of €1.4 billion (€837 million ERDF, €434 million ESF and €137 million EAFRD) was allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, targeting action to the socially disadvantaged. Under this amount, the Slovak Republic earmarked €382.6 million (ERDF&ESF) for targeted Romani integration measures, of which €99 million are earmarked for the new Romani-specific investment priority.

The effective use of ESIF funds remains an enormous challenge for Slovakia, despite efforts to scale up successful local municipal or NGO-run projects using ESIF funds. The design of the main operational programme Human Resources (OPHR), with almost 400 million EUR earmarked for Romani inclusion under the previous programming period, remained problematic in practice, causing major delays in drawing funds.

Slovakia has traditionally adopted a territorial approach to using ESIF for Roma inclusion, i.e., targeting municipalities with significant marginalized Romani communities. Over the last decade, several municipalities have become one of the main drivers and a model of Roma inclusion policies, followed by other local governments, or scaled-up into national policies. However, using ESIF presents a significant administrative and financial burden for small municipalities, which were progressively simplified in some centrally planned ESIF funded interventions (national projects).

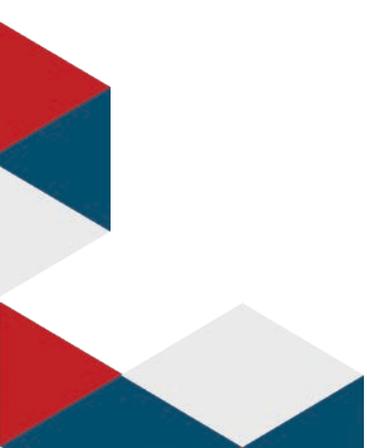
While Slovakia made important steps in addressing the serious challenges of the process of Roma integration, in particular in the areas of education, health and in mobilising the ESIF funding, there has been partial progress in developing the cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders as well as in monitoring. The employment mainstream measures have not proved to have a tangible impact on increasing the participation of Romani people in the labour market. The situation in housing has deteriorated. Slovakia's use of funds from European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) on housing, including social gradual housing or residential segregation, was significantly delayed under the 2014-2020 period.

## **EU BUDGET ALLOCATION 2021-2027**

Slovakia will participate with a total of almost €13 billion of ESIF-funding for the period 2021 to 2027. This is almost an increase of 30% compared to the previous funding period.

## **2021-2027 KEY PROJECT AREAS FOR ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**

Key policy and funding priority areas remain curbing segregation in education from kindergartens to secondary schools; access to pre-school education and scaling of early childhood services for Romani children; employment of women and Romani youth and curbing residential segregation and new housing development.



## OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMMES

### GOVERNMENT

The Ministry of Justice administers the only permanent state scheme supporting human rights projects, with a yearly allocation of around 763,500 EUR. Moreover, NGOs working in the area of Romani cultures can also apply for funding through the newly established fund for the support of cultures of national minorities, which replaces the previous funding scheme incorporating aspects of increased self-governance. Generally, however, smaller and grassroots Romani NGOs noted difficulties in accessing these funds especially due to administrative requirements associated both with application and implementation. More recently, the state authorities have started to put effort into reducing this administrative load to ensure that relevant bodies access these certificates through electronic internal state systems instead.

### EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Slovakia is one of the country beneficiaries of EEA and Norway Grants.

**Budget:** 113,1 Million euro

#### TARGET GROUPS

Public authorities and institutions, Romani communities, youth and children, civil society organisations etc.

#### MAIN OBJECTIVES

They help support Slovakia achieve its targets on Romani inclusion and implement the national Romani integration strategy.

#### AREAS OF SUPPORT

Education, employment, housing, healthcare, and in combating discrimination, fighting poverty and promoting local development and improving living conditions for the Romani population.

*Further info*

### ACTIVE CITIZENS FUND

Romani inclusion and empowerment are supported through the Active Citizens Fund and several other areas, including justice and home affairs, health, research, and education.

**Budget:** 9,75 million euro

#### TARGET GROUPS

CSO serving vulnerable and under-served communities

#### AREAS OF SUPPORT

Capacity building of NGOs, including mentorship and coaching of scholarship recipients; capacity development of Romani and pro-Romani CSOs.

### OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Some funding, especially for Romani NGOs, is also available from the OSF, especially the Roma Initiative Office programme.

## PROGRAMME EXAMPLE



*Photo source: European Public Health Alliance website*

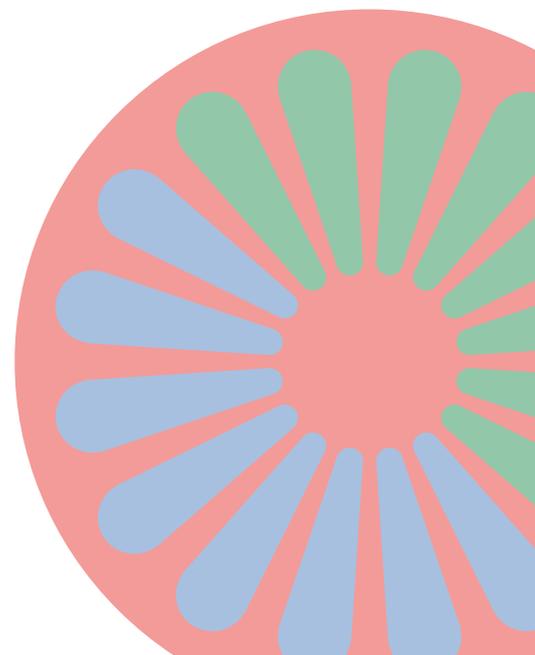
One of the most successful programmes in terms of its targeting, ongoing duration and involvement of the Romani people has been the programme of health mediators. Initially, this programme started as a small-scale NGO initiative that later transformed into a large-scale programme administered by a non-profit organization in a partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. In 2016, the programme's administration was taken up by 'Healthy Regions', a newly formed state agency set up by the Ministry of Health. The programme is now partially refunded by ESF from the OPHR Priority Axis 5, with allocation at around 11.3 million EUR for 36 months.

## The Roma Spirit Awards



*Photo source: Roma Spirit Awards website*

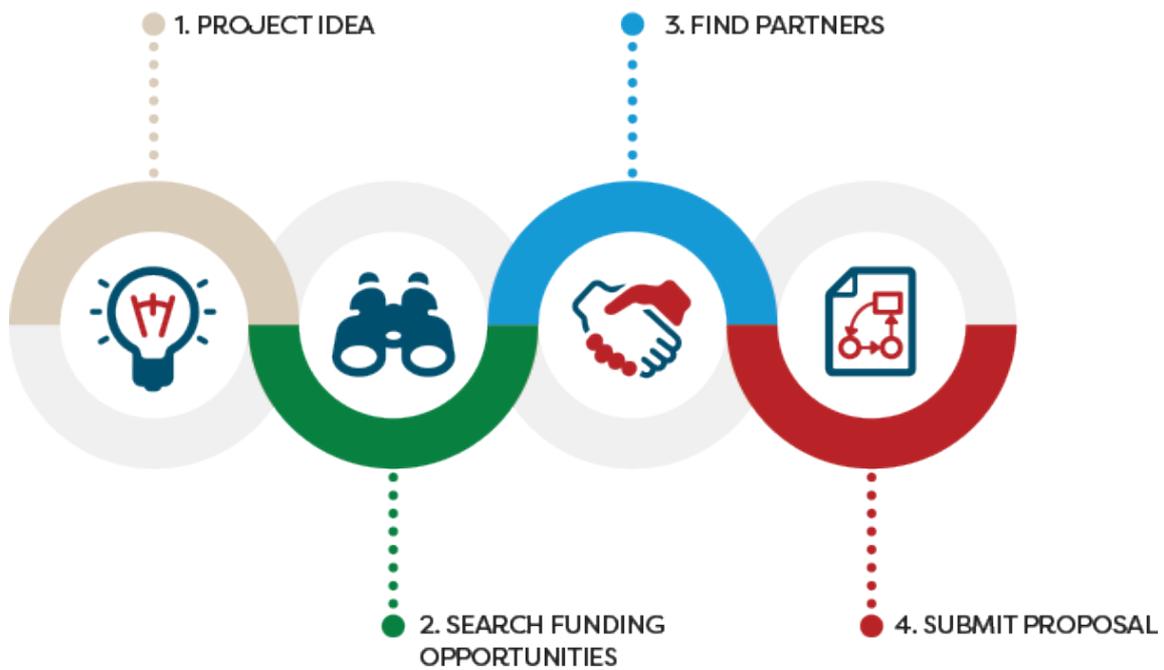
'The Roma Spirit Awards'. The project initiated by the Slovak Republic, replicated by the Czech Republic and brought to the European level, aims to promote the efforts by individuals and organisations in improving the situation of Romani people. The project also promotes a positive image of Romani people, Romani culture and contributes to the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices against Romani people. The Roma Spirit Awards are given to categories such as non-profit organisations, employers, municipalities, individuals, media and good deed of the year.



**6.**

**HOW TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL  
EUROPEAN PROJECT ON  
ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**





## 1. PROJECT IDEA

Romani NGOs have a wide range of opportunities to develop successful EU projects on Roma equality, inclusion and participation under the current EU funding programming period, but also under other existing funding at national level.

When it comes to EU funding, the EU usually does not finance projects up to 100 %. In other words, the project will be co-financed by the beneficiary organisation. Therefore, when beneficiary organisations carry out projects with a grant, they partially finance their project. However, other funds may exist at national level which could finance actions up to 100% and could also be used as contribution (co-financing) in EU funded projects.

EU funded projects require a lot of time and preparation. Projects aims and objectives should be in line with the policy objectives of the EU in your activities field, thus meeting the criteria of relevance; they should respond to the real problems of the benefi-

ciaries and it is better to find suitable partners for the achievement of the objectives (internal coherence) and, last but not least, project objectives should be feasible, and should realistically be achieved through the instruments provided; projects' benefits to the beneficiaries should last even after the conclusion of the project: (sustainability). They should also contribute to national and sector policies wherever a public sector activity is being supported.

The source of project ideas may come from a variety of sources, most importantly from prospective implementing partners (either partner governments, non-state actors or multi-lateral or regional development agencies). Local ownership of, and commitment to, potential projects is a key quality assessment criterion. Furthermore, project ideas should be drawn from the priorities and targets identified in the relevant Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme.



## 2. SEARCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The EU Portal is the single point of entry for all EU funding and tenders, i.e. grants, prizes and procurements managed by the European Commission and other EU services.

You can access calls and topics in your area of interest through the Portal [Search funding & tenders](#) page. This page allows you to search in the text of the call and topic titles, call and topic identifiers, topic description and keywords and tags. You can also filter using the quick search per topics related to specific EU priorities.

### CALLS AND TOPICS

The [Search funding & tenders](#) page will display the list of open topics; the name of the call they belong to is visible on the Topic page.

The Topic page contains all the information you need to have for your proposal (*call conditions, legal frame-*

*work and key documents, standard application form and other practical information you need to prepare your proposal*). The Topic page also specifies the call deadline and contains a link to the Portal Submission System, through which you can submit your proposal.

### DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Each topic will specify deadlines and/or cut-off dates. For most topics, you must submit a full proposal by the call deadline. Some topics have a 2-stage submission procedure, which means that you have to submit a short outline proposal for stage 1 and then a full proposal only if you are invited to stage 2 (meaning that your project looks promising).

Some topics are continuously open. This means you can submit a proposal at any time, and cut-off dates mean that all proposals received by a given cut-off date will be evaluated after that deadline.

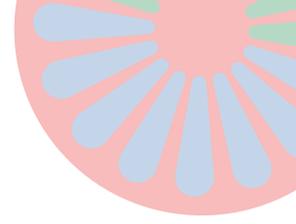


## 3. FIND PARTNERS

### WHO CAN APPLY?

To see whether your organisation is eligible for funding, check the call conditions on the Topic page. In general, most EU funding programmes require that participants (Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities) are:

- ✓ legal entities (public or private bodies, including international organisations)
- and
- ✓ established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
- ✓ EU Member State (including EU overseas countries and territories)
- ✓ eligible non-EU countries:
- ✓ EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway — if opted-in for the programme)
- ✓ associated countries (countries associated to the funding programme by paying a contribution — list differs for each programme).



Please be aware, however, that almost all programmes have additional criteria, which widen or narrow the group of entities that can apply. Some programmes are open to participants from the entire world (e.g. Horizon Europe) others are deliberately restricted to EU countries only (e.g. EDF).

In addition, the situation can be different from call to call even within a programme. It is therefore very important to carefully look at the call conditions.

### PARTICIPANT REGISTER

All participants (Beneficiaries, Affiliated Entities and Associated Partners) must be **registered in the Participant Register** and (by the time the grant is signed) be **validated by the Central Validation Service** (Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities).

### MULTI-PARTICIPANT OR MONO-PARTICIPANT ACTIONS

Most of the calls for EU grants target multi-beneficiary consortia made up of participants from different countries – to enhance the EU added value, promote cooperation between organisations in different countries, reinforce the quality of applications and ensure fair competition and equal opportunities throughout the EU.

### HOW TO FIND PARTNERS FOR YOUR PROJECT IDEAS?

*To find partners for your project ideas, you can:*

- Use the Partner Search function of the Portal. The function allows you to:
  - look for organisations which received funding in the past
  - create and check Partner Search requests by call/topic
  - Use other Partner Search tools and services. A list of recommended support sites is offered under the Helpdesks & Support Services page.
- Participate in conferences, events organised by the EU or civil society networks in the Member States
- Contact National Roma Contact Points, European Roma Networks in Brussels etc.

### PORTAL PARTNER SEARCH

If you want to find experienced partners who already have ongoing projects, or if you want to browse in the database of registered organisations, visit the **Partner Search** page. You can search by keyword/geographical area/funding type, etc. Search results include complete organisation profiles with lists of funded projects and the possibility to contact representatives.

If you have selected your area of interest via the Topic search, you may publish your offer/interest for one or more of the open/forthcoming topics of a call on the Portal. All your published offers/interests will be visible on your organisation's page too.





## 4. SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Proposals must be submitted electronically using the Portal Submission System. Access to the Submission System is available through the Topic page on the Portal > Start Submission.

### SUBMISSION PROCESS

**Get prepared:** Finding your topic > Find partners > Plan your work and budget

### ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

*Get an EU Login account > Get a PIC number (Participant Register) > Launch Submission wizard > Pre-register your draft proposal > List participants, contact persons > Fill in Administrative Forms (Part A) > Upload Technical Description (Part B) > Submit your proposal > Acknowledgement of receipt.*

[Register an EU Login account](#)

### APPLICATION FORM (PART A AND B)

Proposals are submitted using the application forms available in the Submission System.

**The application form is structured in into two parts, Parts A and B:**

- **Part A:** contains the structured Administrative Forms with data on the participants, legal declarations and contact persons (retrieved from the Submission System screens). It may also include some programme-specific questions.
- **Part B (the narrative part):** Technical Description of the project with the planned activities, work packages, costs, etc. (must be uploaded as PDF).

Part A is generated while entering the data into the Submission System; Part B needs to be prepared in advance (using the template downloaded from the system; do **NOT** use the standard template from the Topic page). Part B will also include annexes and supporting documents if required by the call conditions (detailed budget table, declarations from national authorities, CVs, annual activity reports, etc.)

All participants can contribute to the parts, but it is the person from the coordinating organisation which created the application who finalises and submits the application.

### Tasks of the Coordinator:

- **Mandate:** Make sure that you have the mandate of all participants to submit the application (explicit agreement to participate).
- **Quality check:** Check that the application is coherent and that Part A and B are consistent (especially budgetary information).

Make sure that the template has been followed and all sections are completed; make sure that no annexes are missing.

[Links: User Guide of the Submission system](#)

# 9. TIPS IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

*When developing and EU funded project, applicants should take into account the following attributes, criteria and standards:*

## QUALITY ATTRIBUTES, CRITERIA AND STANDARDS AT IDENTIFICATION



### **RELEVANT – THE PROJECT MEETS DEMONSTRATED AND HIGH PRIORITY NEEDS**



#### **1. Consistent with, and supportive of, EC development and cooperation policies**

- 1.1. The proposal is consistent with EC development policies and decisions, and a coherent argument is provided to demonstrate how the project will support them (i.e. poverty alleviation and/or economic integration, sustainable development and promoting gender equality)
- 1.2. A 'project approach' is an appropriate response given the development context
- 1.3. The initiative is consistent with the Country Strategy Paper (and/or other framework documents)

#### **2. Consistent with, and supportive of, Government policies and relevant sector programmes**

- 2.1. Relevant government policy documents and decisions are referenced, including (where relevant) the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy
- 2.2. The relevant sector policy is described, including key ongoing initiatives, sector targets and resource commitments
- 2.3. Relevant policy, programme and project linkages are described, and it is clearly demonstrated that the project is consistent with the programme and policy framework, and supportive of ongoing initiatives

#### **3. Key stakeholder and target groups are clearly identified, equity and institutional capacity issues analysed, and local ownership demonstrated**

- 3.1. Gender disaggregated data is provided on the socio-economic status of target groups (e.g. health, education, income, human rights) and equity issues are explicitly assessed with respect to other vulnerable groups such as Romani people.

3.2. The past and ongoing stakeholder identification and consultation process is described – who, how, when and different stakeholder interests (expectations and concerns) are appropriately analysed

3.3. Existing or potential conflicts between stakeholders have been explicitly identified and analysed

3.4. An assessment of institutional structures, capacity and governance issues is provided (strengths and weaknesses), particularly for the institution(s) which will be primarily responsible for project implementation

3.5. Evidence is provided of local ownership of project ideas, such as previous or current commitments of resources (cash or kind) to related activities and active local involvement in decision making

#### **4. Problems have been appropriately analysed**

4.1. The problem analysis includes assessment of cause-and-effect relationships, and identifies underlying problems which impact on target groups

4.2. The problems facing different socio-economic groups (Romani people, including gender differences) are appropriately identified and described, including the nature and incidence of poverty

4.3. The set of problems and/or opportunities that the project should aim to address are identified

#### **5. Lessons learned from experience and linkages with other ongoing/planned projects or programmes have been assessed and incorporated into strategy selection**

5.1. Reference is made to the lessons learned from other projects/programmes implemented in the sector or in similar environments (from review and evaluation reports), and these lessons are reflected in the proposal

5.2. Complementarity with ongoing or planned programmes/projects is assessed, including those of other donors

5.3. Implementation options/strategies are appropriately analysed, including the requirements for further formulation/design work

**B.**

**FEASIBLE. THE PROJECT IS WELL DESIGNED AND IS LIKELY TO DELIVER TANGIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE BENEFITS TO TARGET GROUP**

#### **6. The preliminary objectives are clear and logical, and address clearly identified needs**

6.1. The project's (preliminary) Overall Objective is clearly linked to a relevant policy or sector objective, and thus demonstrates how the project is likely to contribute to a long-term development outcome

6.2. The project's (preliminary) purpose clearly specifies a direct benefit(s) that the target group(s) will derive from the implementation of the project, and is consistent with the analysis of problems facing the target group(s)

6.3. The project's (preliminary) results/outputs describe tangible improvements to services, facilities or knowledge that will directly support achievement of the project's purpose

## **7. The preliminary resource and cost implications are clear, and a preliminary economic and financial analysis has been carried out**

7.1. The (preliminary assessment of) resources required to implement the project are clearly described

7.2. Project investment and operating costs are described and analysed in sufficient detail, including the financial contributions of different stakeholders

7.3. Recurrent cost implications are estimated, and an assessment made of the local capacity to meet these costs at the end of the project investment phase

7.4. Where appropriate, initial estimates of the likely financial and economic viability of the project are provided, and requirements for further Economic and Financial analysis of the project's costs and benefits is specified

## **8. Preliminary coordination/management and financing arrangements are clear and support institutional strengthening and local ownership**

8.1. Anticipated project management responsibilities are briefly defined, build on the analysis of institutional arrangements and capacity, and promote local ownership and capacity building

8.2. Anticipated arrangements for coordinating the work of different stakeholders are briefly described, give 'voice' to target groups, allow potential conflicts of interest to be addressed, and appear practical to implement

8.3. Anticipated arrangements for providing overall direction to the project are described (i.e role and composition of a project steering committee)

8.4. Anticipated financial management arrangements for providing an adequate level of overall internal control are described (i.e. accounting and financial information and reporting systems).

## **9. This criterion (on monitoring and evaluation) does not need to be applied at the Identification stage**

## **10. Assumptions/Risks are identified and assessed, and appear acceptable**

10.1. Assumptions in the (draft) Logframe Matrix highlight key factors outside the direct control of project managers which have the potential to impact negatively on the project (risks)

10.2. The importance of different risks is assessed, including the degree of negative impact they might have on achieving objectives

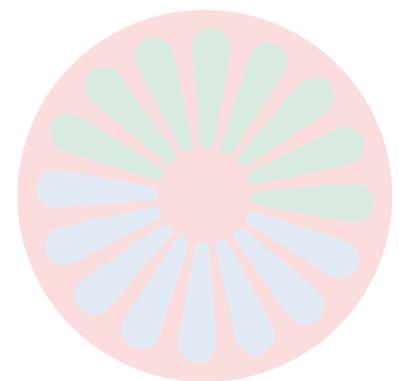
**7.**  
**EXISTING BARRIERS IN  
ACCESSING EU FUNDS FOR ROMA  
EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**



## WHAT ARE THE EXISTING BARRIERS IN ACCESSING EU FUNDS FOR ROMANI EQUALITY AND INCLUSION BY ROMANI CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS?

*In many countries, EU Funds are currently underused, especially at local and regional administration level but also by national and local civil society organisations. Common barriers to accessing EU Funds at local level by both local authorities and civil society organisations include:*

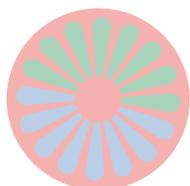
- Lack of political will to address Romani issues
- Institutional and structural antigypsyism against Romani people
- Lack of information on EU funding opportunities
- Lack of active involvement of the local level in the planning process of EU Funds
- Limited technical capacity in civil society organisations, sometimes due to their small size
- Complex administrative and financial rules and procedures managing ESI Funds
- Requirement of co-financing, coupled with lack of resources and cash-flow problems
- Difficulties in establishing effective partnerships
- Restrictive conditions for participation of NGOs
- Unnecessary, bureaucratic requirements for reporting on activities, which further burdens the work of partner civil society organizations.

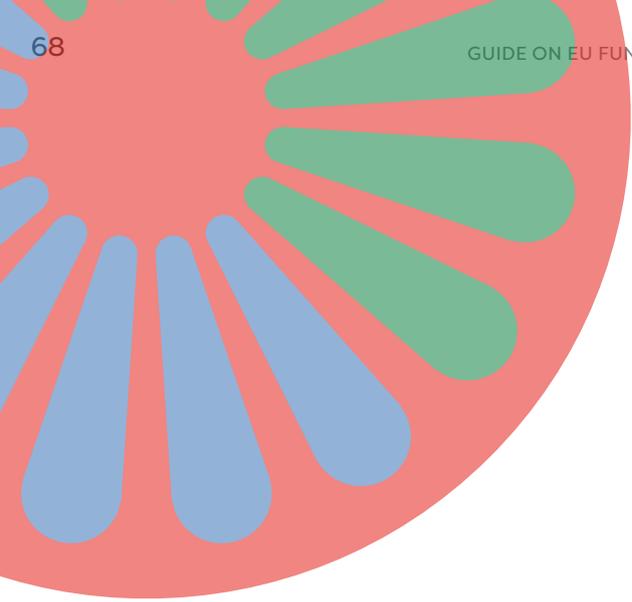


## HOW TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO EU FUNDS BY ROMANI CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION?

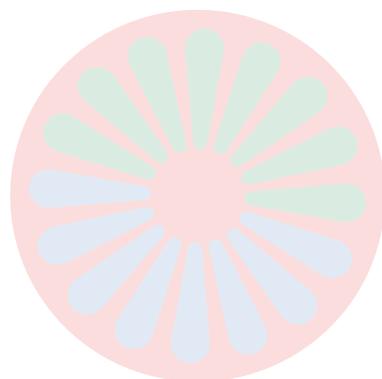
*Existing NGO reports include important recommendations to the European Commission and Member States for improving their access to EU funds and national funds, such as:*

- Improve procedures and reduce bureaucratic requirements in EU funds, including by introducing more flexible co-financing requirements, which in turn will enable participation of smaller, local level NGOs.
- Adjust the existing financial mechanisms to make them flexible for blended use of funds in Romani communities by enabling access to information, outreach, capacity building, delivery of technical assistance and guarantees during the funding application process.
- Member States must integrate mapping methodologies for marginalized Romani communities and strengthen funding mechanisms into their regional and local development structures. This will allow more targeted investments in marginalized Romani communities and improve their outreach and inclusion as well and increase the effectiveness and use of funds.
- Member States should include more Romani people in the Monitoring Committees of the operational programmes.
- Improve the communication between the different managing authorities in integrating procedures and introducing uniform requirements to the beneficiaries.
- Provide means for wider NGOs to participate in the technical procedures of the calls for applications.





- Build capacity of local authorities for the adequate implementation of the projects.
- Introduce specifications of national budget allocations complementing the EU funds under measures to improve the situation of Romani people in national Roma strategic frameworks and other related policies.
- Funds often are most effectively spent at local level by local governments and NGOs; therefore, the Commission should increase the funds distributed directly to them and involve local Romani representatives in the implementation.
- Ensure quality and independent evaluation of the implementation of EU funds for Romani people.
- Introduce intermediary evaluations during the project implementation process and qualitative indicators, followed by financial corrections. The new Roma Civil Monitor can also be an advocacy tool in that direction.
- Ensure transparent, traceable, accountable, comprehensive information about the use of EU funds including the quantitative and qualitative results of the individual programs.





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