

Country fiche: PORTUGAL

Position of civil society involved in the Roma Civil Monitor

SUBSTANTIVE POLICY AREAS

STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

EDUCATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma children's (pre)school attendance increased as consequence of linking it to social benefits. • Alternative education programmes have been created with the aim of reducing social and educational inequalities. Moreover, the government recently launched Roma-targeted programmes (see example of promising practice below) to combat inequalities in education, which are coordinated and funded by the National Roma Contact Point. • The NRIS was revised in 2018 and a priority has been given to Roma schooling and professional integration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational segregation is often consequence of the residential one. It has several forms, ranging from clear and evident segregation to more covert forms such as measures to remedy situations of disadvantages that ended up in Roma only classes. • Some alternative education programmes did not bring the expected improvement of school success, but rather lead to the educational segregation of Roma. • 'White flight' of non-Roma children from mixed schools is consequence of negative representations Roma communities, unaddressed problems in interethnic relations and poverty among Roma. |
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EMPLOYMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main public employment services' measure available to Roma is public works. • A wider range of ESF-funded measures targeting Roma will be available in 2019. • New measure aimed at improving employment among Roma are planned, they will include awareness raising among the public and employers to fight stereotypes about Roma, diversity trainings in public services, but also aimed at increase of professional qualification of Roma and job creation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public works are not tailored to individual needs and rarely lead to employment in primary labour market. • Measures aimed at increasing employment should be better coordinated among themselves (e.g. training and accompaniment) and their outreach to Roma strengthened. • Effectiveness of employment measures, specifically among Roma, should be monitored and evaluated. • Discrimination against Roma is an important barrier in their integration at the labour market. |
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HEALTHCARE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to and use of primary health care among Roma is mostly adequate. • NRIC include interventions (developed based on data and studies) aimed at fighting the health inequalities existing in Roma communities, including adapted information materials and awareness-raising actions on teenage motherhood, paediatric follow-up, and healthy eating habits. • Some hospitals and health centres employ intercultural mediators to ease communication between health professionals and Roma communities and raise Roma's awareness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further promotion of intercultural mediation in the field of health care and training of healthcare professionals can strengthen the trust and cooperation between the healthcare system and Roma. |
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HOUSING

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Housing Strategy (2015-2031) was adopted to promote equality in access to social housing, including covering resettlement needs of immigrant communities and ethnic minorities and to provide social housing by using the renovating of abandoned buildings. • A key role in development of housing and implementation of the social housing is given to municipalities and horizontal cooperation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma communities continue to live without the minimum conditions of habitability, health and hygiene. • No results achieved so far within the National Housing Strategy. • Segregation practices prevail, even in the most recent relocation processes building on new construction. |
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- Some centrally funded local projects applied progressive and integrative methods.

HORIZONTAL MEASURES

STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to set up segregated classes were halted by joint action from parents and municipal mediators. • In 2017, new grounds of discrimination based on ancestry and origin, multiple discrimination, and discrimination by association were included in the legislation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, there is only limited information available on the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation. • The state should ensure that alternative education programs do not lead to greater ethnic segregation, and take steps to ensure that elementary schools in poor neighbourhoods do not turn into segregated Roma only ghetto schools. • Roma families are being moved to prefabs on the outskirts of towns, far away from most public services. In 2016, Roma only neighbourhoods were built in Albufeira and in Campomaior. |
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FIGHTING ANTIGYPSYISM

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRIS recognises Roma as ethnic minority and prioritises “promotion of the fight against discrimination and raising awareness”, thus some of the manifestations of antigypsyism. • State has been working with NGOs on breaking stereotypes and preventing hate-speech and discrimination. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The civil society is asking for more education for relevant officials in partnerships with Roma NGOs, in addition to supporting the promotion of intercultural mediation and Romani movement at the national level. |
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ADDRESSING SPECIFIC NEEDS OF MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS AMONG ROMA

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Insertion Programme had a positive impact on children’s attendance in preschool/school (both in the cases of mainstream society and Roma families) given that the social insertion contract includes conditional cash benefit. • The revised version of the NRIS, adopted in November 2018, provides for the commitment towards gender equality as a “priority area” for interventions. • Roma Associative Movement Support Programme, established in 2017, aimed at increasing the involvement of the Roma civil society into the implementation of, among others, Roma women’s empowerment initiatives within the framework of the NRIS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the field of healthcare, cultural issues of traditional Roma communities related to gender should be systematically considered. • No measures have been adopted to address (explicitly) Roma LGBT+ issues. |
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STRUCTURAL MEASURES

STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRIS is coordinated by the High Commission for Migration (ACM), through its Support Office for Roma Communities (GACI). • The NRIS established a Consulting Group for Roma Communities Integration (CONCIG) that involves representatives of seven key ministries as well as representatives of local governments municipalities, NGOs, Roma associations, research institutes and experts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In CONCIG, Roma are under-represented, and decisions are taken by a simple majority vote. • Roma inclusion policy coordination is not yet consolidated because there is a lack of information and knowledge about the strategic guidelines and commitments undertaken by the ministries among the professionals in the areas of intervention. |
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- Operational Programme for Social Inclusion and Employment (POISE) focuses on the less privileged and supports interventions targeting socially vulnerable Roma communities.

CIVIL PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- Self-empowerment initiatives in Roma communities are increasing (but they are still only a few).
- Roma organisations still have weak structures; their development should be supported.

MAINSTREAMING OF ROMA INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- Roma inclusion activities vary depending on the level of sensitivity and commitment across the local authorities. There are municipalities committed to the inclusion of Roma communities that support active participation groups of Roma citizens (mainly promoted by the ROMED programme).
- Social Network Programme encourage local government and other institutions to plan and develop social inclusion. This programme supports NRIS implementation on the local level and information sharing.
- Portugal is facing a deceleration on inclusion processes in some municipalities due to the socioeconomic context and economic crisis experienced in recent years.
- In some municipalities the intervention is developed with collaboration of Roma citizens themselves, but in others the measures are developed without the active participation of the Roma communities.
- Despite existence of NRIS, there is also a need for local strategies to consider the local needs and monitor local progress.

DATA COLLECTION

- A “Roma Communities Observatory” aimed at producing studies and publications about Roma communities was established.
- Data on impact of measures in different policy fields on Roma and their inclusion are missing; this concerns in particular the mainstream measures.

FUNDING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

- Authorities in Portugal created the NRIS Support Fund (FAPE) whose goal is to fund experimental, innovative projects (fight against discrimination, promoting public awareness, training in active community participation and citizenship of Roma communities, and training about Roma history and culture).
- Roma Associative Movement Support Programme (PAAC) is aimed at reinforcing Roma civil society involvement in the implementation of NRIS by funding projects.
- Roma communities do not have much experience with associations and lack financial resources to develop the initiatives.

EXAMPLE OF PROMISING PRACTICE

There are important programmes to fight the inequalities in education: the *Opre* and *Choices*. The *Choices* programme is a nationwide government programme, created in 2001, promoted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and under the ACM, whose mission is to promote the social inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable socio-economic contexts, aiming at equal opportunities and strengthening social cohesion. This project also includes Roma children; note that 80 of the 112 projects developed in the 6th generation of this programme have Roma communities as target audiences, supporting inclusion and school success. The *Opre* programme is an initiative aimed at young higher education students from Roma communities with the aim of fighting early dropout by allocating 30 university scholarships and a set of training, mentoring and monitoring measures for these young scholarship holders and their families. It is funded by ACM (under the *Choices* programme). Developed in partnership with the *Choices* programme, Associação Letras Nómadas and the Portuguese Youth Network for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men.

MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED

- Municipalities and their association should assume a key role in NRIS implementation by engaging in local needs assessment, planning and implementation; they can more extensively use existing platforms, such as the Social Networks Programme (a special programme to support social inclusion at the local level) or other local existing platforms.
- Local action plans (for which municipalities are responsible) should focus on elimination of informal and substandard housing (such as tents or informal settlements by providing access to decent housing integrated into urban agglomerations to the greatest extent possible, avoiding ghettos and exclusion).



- The current administrative offence law and penalties are not enough to prevent the discrimination experienced by Roma citizens based on hate speech and intolerance built up against them. It is necessary to invest in proceedings that are timelier and use dissuasive sanctions.
- Ministries should focus on the training and qualification of their professionals and other key players in fighting discrimination in partnership with civil society organisations (Roma associations and other associations working directly in this field).
- Priority should be given to creation of jobs for Roma, promotion of equal opportunities and participation in professional life, including promotion of entrepreneurship and training that enables business and self-employment opportunities.