

## Country fiche: CYPRUS

### 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"> <li>• The trend of Roma enrolment in pre-primary and primary education is increasing, while the school drop-out rate at these two levels of education is falling.</li> <li>• An ESF-funded project Actions for Social and School Inclusion (DRA.S.E) aims at educational inclusion of vulnerable groups, including Roma. The project is implemented in 96 schools and provides in-school services or teachers training.</li> <li>• Several all-day schools organise after-school activities; in some of them Roma children participate.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Education and Culture offer to Cypriot Roma (<i>Gurbetties</i>) an optional extra-curriculum course “Language, culture and tradition of Roma” in afternoons.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rate of early school leaving among Roma remains high.</li> <li>• Only a few Cypriot Roma attend secondary education, and even fewer complete lower secondary education or even fewer upper secondary education. University education is not achieved yet by Cypriot Roma, researches indicate.</li> <li>• Roma face racial prejudice in schools and in some cases segregation (together with other migrants, minorities, and Greek-Cypriots from poorer backgrounds).</li> </ul> |
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#### EMPLOYMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream public employment services are available to Roma jobseekers; to increase their accessibility for vulnerable jobseekers, temporary dedicated work counsellors have been engaged.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma access to public employment services is limited by lack of information, lack of motivation or due to language barriers.</li> </ul> |
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#### HEALTHCARE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-income residents are entitled for low-cost or even free healthcare. Basic vaccination is provided for free to all citizens.</li> <li>• To ensure access for vulnerable population groups, including Roma, to health care services, various actions are being carried by Ministry of Health; it takes into consideration the protection of minors, combating exploitation and protecting maternity.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous access to primary health care, especially for children, as well as access to sexual and reproductive health services should be improved for the Roma.</li> <li>• Access to water and garbage disposal are grave issues of concern especially in settlements, with concomitant sanitary and health risks.</li> <li>• In general, a health needs-assessment concerning the Roma community would be useful.</li> </ul> |
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#### HOUSING

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Interior has launched a strategy of repairing Cypriot Roma houses, but the process is very slow and with little support of the actual administrative staff.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma families are offered housing in formerly Turkish-Cypriot houses maintained by a state property management service. This policy creates segregated Roma ghettos.</li> <li>• The rent levels in such public housing are very low and do not cover the basic maintenance of the homes, thus, the housing is very dilapidated.</li> <li>• New pre-fab housings in segregated areas were built to improve the conditions; this creates new segregation conditions.</li> <li>• Public housing allocation policies are insufficient, in particular, provided housing is not sufficient for larger families.</li> </ul> |
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## HORIZONTAL MEASURES

### STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

### WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality legislation is in place. Legally, the equality body can accept and investigate complaints from organisations acting in the public interest on their own behalf without a specified victim. However, any such action concerning Roma is not known.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Segregation and discrimination against Roma in housing and education remains unaddressed.</li> <li>Despite offering housing opportunities to Roma returning from the areas not controlled by the Republic of Cyprus in the north, the policy has created segregated ghettos.</li> <li>Part of Roma living in settlements face shortcoming of water or electricity supply and are isolated on sites of a former rubbish dump with no access to public transport.</li> </ul> |
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#### FIGHTING ANTIGYPSYISM

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislation against racism is in place, as well as a 'code of practice against racist behaviour' to help reduce the incidents of bullying and discrimination in schools.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antigypsyism is not recognised and no specific initiatives in this area have been taken.</li> <li>An integrated strategy to combat Roma exclusion in all areas of life, including measures aiming at the elimination of discrimination and prejudice, with objectives and targets, success indicators and a monitoring system assessment should be developed.</li> <li>Hate speech against Roma has not yet been researched and there are currently no specific studies available on this issue.</li> </ul> |
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#### ADDRESSING SPECIFIC NEEDS OF MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS AMONG ROMA

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An ESF-funded project 'SEDRIN: School Education for Roma Integration' was implemented in 2012-2014 with an aim of promoting the education integration of Roma, and addressed also the needs of Roma women/mothers in supporting their children's education achievements.</li> <li>The 'Hope for Children Policy Centre' implemented a project 'PEER: Participation, Experiences and Empowerment for Roma Youth' in 2015-2016, aimed at promoting the leadership skills and building the advocacy capacity of young Roma.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation of Roma children in preschool education, preferably from the age of 3 years, should be promoted, by identifying and addressing the root causes of Roma children's low participation rate.</li> <li>Access to primary health care for Roma children should be improved, as well as access to sexual and reproductive health services, especially for Roma women.</li> <li>No measures have been adopted to address (explicitly) Roma LGBT+ issues.</li> </ul> |
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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"> <li>In January 2012, Cyprus submitted to the EC in lieu of the NRIS a document "<i>Policy measures for the social inclusion of Roma</i>".</li> <li>The Social Welfare Services (SWS) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance have been designated as the National Roma Contact Point for the coordination of Roma related policies.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since Cyprus promotes the inclusion of Roma through integrated policy measures within the existing structures, separate monitoring mechanisms have not been set up.</li> <li>Cyprus has not recognised Roma as a distinct minority group. Therefore, they do not have a separate constitutional parliament representation or do not benefit from minority protection.</li> </ul> |
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#### CIVIL PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During 2016-2017, SWS coordinated the Cypriot National Platform for Roma supported by the European Commission. Its aim was to create a framework for strengthening dialogue</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals of the National Roma Platforms' participants have not led to any tangible actions or other policy impact.</li> </ul> |
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on Cypriot Roma issues through the involvement of national authorities, NGOs and Roma individuals.

- Cypriot Roma with the support of Cypriot non-Roma established their own NGO called CYPROM, which is currently the only NGO focused on Cypriot Roma issues in the country.

- Roma inclusion is not in the focus of NGOs' work in Cyprus; two universities in Cyprus were engaged in projects focusing on Roma.

### MAINSTREAMING OF ROMA INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- Few municipalities have engaged in projects aimed at improvement of Roma living conditions.

- Segregated Roma settlements are mostly neglected by municipalities where they are located. More efforts are needed on the local level to advance in Roma inclusion and desegregation.
- To be eligible for participation in existing measures, Roma must prove that they have resided in Cyprus-controlled area for at least five years.

### DATA COLLECTION

- The population of Roma in Cyprus is small representing about 0.1 per cent of the total population of Cyprus.

- More detailed data on Roma population in Cyprus is missing.

### FUNDING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

- n/a (Roma or pro-Roma civil society is quasi inexistent)

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### EXAMPLE OF PROMISING PRACTICE

An ESF-funded project "Actions for Social and School Inclusion" (DRA.S.E), launched in 2015, targets schools with highest share of Roma. Within the initiative, these schools receive additional support from the Ministry of Education, enables differentiated teaching and adjusted curriculum, all day school programme or educate lower number of pupils per class and the pupils receive meals free of charge.

### MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED

- Previous actions/interventions aimed at Roma inclusion should be evaluated and lessons reflected in future interventions.
- Clear budget should be allocated for Roma inclusion.
- More detailed data on Roma and their needs are necessary. Future policy-making should be based on a robust needs assessment of the target groups, and actively involve them in the project design, implementation and monitoring.
- Residential segregation should be addressed as part of housing-related interventions.
- Employment policies should strengthen the transition between educational levels and support the acquisition of skills that are adapted to the needs of the labour market.