



Civil society monitoring report
on implementation
of the national Roma integration strategy
in Spain

*Assessing the progress
in four key policy areas
of the strategy*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOE	State Official Newsletter
CEPG	National Advisory Council for Roma People
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
FAGA	Federation of Roma Associations of Valencian Community
FAGEX	Federation of Extremadura Roma Associations
FAGIC	Federation of Roma Associations of Catalonia
FAKALI	Federation of Roma Women's Associations
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FSG	<i>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</i>
KAMIRA	National Federation of Roma Women's Associations <i>Kamira</i>
KHETANE	<i>Khetane</i> Platform
MSCBS	Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare
MSSSI	Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020* (NRIS), aligned with the recommendations of the European Commission, establishes four action areas for Roma –employment, housing, health and education. This report aims at assessing the results achieved by the Spanish government in the implementation of the NRIS in these areas and their impact on the situation of the Roma people, pointing out some successful experiences from working with and for the Roma population.

Employment

Unemployment remains one of the unsolved issues regarding Roma inclusion in Spain and the financial crisis of 2008 has further complicated their access to the labour market. The crisis had three key factors that affected the society as a whole, while the most vulnerable groups, including Roma, being affected the worst. The onset of the crisis led the Roma to be among the first groups excluded from the labour market. This fact, as well as the Roma low level of qualification, makes it even harder for them to re-enter the labour market. As a consequence, the underground economy without any type of contract and regulation has increased, mainly in the sectors such as construction or restorations, cleaning, people care, unregulated sale.

In 2017, the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality published an interim evaluation report on the implementation of the Spanish National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS).¹ This evaluation highlights a lack of information regarding the achievements of the two specific goals in the field of employment. According to the report, there is no updated information on the employment situation of the Roma population. The last study was published in 2013 containing data from 2012.

One of the main and traditional ways for Roma to enter the labour market is the itinerant trade. The evolution of street markets in recent years has not been studied (the last available studies have been conducted before the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis). However, authors' research and interviews with Roma who work in such markets, made by the editors of this report, emphasize the hardships they encounter and must overcome in order to survive in this professional activity. Among other findings, these studies highlight the lack of interest on behalf of the authorities, especially municipalities, regarding the expansion and promotion of itinerant trade in their cities. Additionally, research has found a heavy competition represented by other cheap retailers such as large chains that lower the prices drastically. A law protecting itinerant trade could help the situation of Roma depending on this type of income generating activity.

Housing and essential public services

Spain is the EU country that has made further progress regarding the residential inclusion of the Roma population.² However, despite these achievements, 2.17 per cent of Roma families (2,273 households) live in slums and 2.78 per cent of the neighbourhoods where the Roma population lives are segregated settlements. 8.63 per cent of the dwellings do not comply with the minimum housing requirements and conditions, the total number of dwellings bellow the standard containing 9,000 houses.

¹ See: Interim Evaluation Report of the Roma National Strategy (2012-2016), available at: https://www.fresnoconsulting.es/upload/14/78/2017_InformeEvaluacionIntermediaEstrategiaPoblacionGitana.pdf

² Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (2018) *Estudio-Mapa sobre Vivienda y Población Gitana, 2015 Informe Septiembre de 2016*. Available at: <https://www.gitanos.org/upload/29/29/informecompletoe-mobreviviendaypg.pdf>

The interim evaluation report on the NRIS implementation depicts an improvement in the housing situation. The NRIS contains two goals related to housing – eradication of shanty towns and substandard houses and improvement in the quality of housing of the Roma population. In both areas, the evaluation demonstrates that progress has been made. The report emphasises an ostensible improvement in the residential overcrowding levels, from 29.4 per cent (starting point) to 8.9 per cent, despite the NRIS itself including a more modest target of 25 per cent only. However, the causes of this substantial improvement are not clear.

On the other hand, the problem of residential segregation is included in the Spanish NRIS in a clearly insufficient way. Although the interim evaluation report considers this to be a persisting problem, there are no objectives or indicators that would allow for the evaluation of the implementation of public policies in this field.

Health policies impact on Roma People

According to the “Second Survey on Minorities and Discrimination” published by FRA EU-MIDIS 2016, Spain is on the first place in terms of the coverage of the basic national health insurance system and/or additional medical insurance among the nine countries analysed. According to the same survey, 98 per cent of the respondents declared having basic medical coverage in Spain.³ Public universal health coverage is the most widespread option, while private insurance providing higher quality medical services is preferred by the better-off minority, including some Roma families who can afford it.

According to the National Health Survey,⁴ during the last few years, the health of the population has gotten worse due to the economic situation: data indicates a higher decrease in the health of the Roma population than in the health of the worst socio-economic groups of in the country. 65.3 per cent of Roma men and 55.5 per cent of Roma women reported that their health status is great or very good, compared to 77.7 per cent and 70.4 per cent, respectively, of the Spanish population. Regarding the self-perceived health status of the Roma population aged from 35 to 54, there were no significant variations between 2006 and 2014 (65.6 per cent of Roma men and 55.6 per cent of Roma women defined their health status as good and very good in 2014). These ratios reach 80.3 per cent (men) and 73.4 per cent (women) for the respondents to the National Health Survey for the same age group, between 35 and 54 years old.

Despite improvements and differences found in the surveys on health and the Roma population, Roma life expectancy is 15 years less than the average life expectancy of the rest of the population.⁵ The evaluation of NRIS confirms that the government has failed to reduce persisting health inequalities, and, thus, to include among the issues of an unhealthy lifestyle, the prevention of accidents and the prevention of and treatment options chronic diseases. On the other hand, there are improvements in the level of awareness among Roma families on the importance of health promotion and prevention and also an improvement in the general access to healthcare services. In particular, Roma children’s access to dental healthcare and Roma women’s access to gynaecology healthcare have improved.

³ The survey is available at: <https://publications.europa.eu/es/publication-detail/-/publication/d1e36336-3168-11e8-b5fe-01aa75ed71a1/>. The figure can be found at page 33 of this publication. The survey was carried out in nine European Union countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia.

⁴ See: https://www.mscbs.gob.es/estadEstudios/estadisticas/encuestaNacional/encuestaNac2017/ENSE17_pres_web.pdf

⁵ See the article at: <https://www.cuartopoder.es/sociedad/2017/11/11/la-poblacion-gitana-a-la-cola-de-la-esperanza-de-vida-en-espana/>

Education

The Education Law in Spain stipulates that the educational system will welcome all children of compulsory school age, recognising its cultural diversity as an inherent characteristic of the society in which they live. The young Roma population is, in general terms, less educated than the young Spanish population. According to official reports and research from third-party entities, 64.4 per cent of Roma aged from 16 to 24 have not achieved the mandatory Secondary Education (ESO) degree. This means that approximately seven out of ten young Roma between the ages of 16 and 24 do not satisfactorily complete the compulsory education level in Spain.⁶

The integration of Roma students into secondary education is still an important step to be made by schools and Roma families. Before the adoption of the "Organic Law for the General Planning of the Educational System of Spain" (LOGSE), almost all Roma students terminated their studies at the age of 14. Although this fact is disregarded, there is still a lack of regular attendance and high school absenteeism at this stage. 47 per cent of the entire Roma population has obtained the Graduate degree in ESO and 24.7 per cent have completed non-compulsory secondary education.⁷

Despite the available statistics published in 2013, that authors of this report concur that the inclusion of Roma students into compulsory education must be done gradually and firmly. 93.2 per cent of Roma students are enrolled in school when they turn six years old, the compulsory school age. It would be desirable if, at six years old, 100 per cent of Roma children were enrolled in primary school. However, an optimistic view for the nearest future stems from the fact that 84.5 per cent of Roma families enrolled their children in school or kindergarten before the age of six years old in 2013 (compared to 79 per cent in 1994). There are different factors that caused this increase in school enrolment over the years, such as family involvement in the educational process, social initiatives implemented by different NGOs promoting the importance of formal and non-formal education for children and the support received from schools, families, civil society and different public authorities in order to raise the number of Roma pupils enrolled compulsory education.

In the field of education, however, one can identify particular structural problems. Firstly, the evaluation of the NRIS implementation was confronted with difficulties in obtaining reliable data that would allow for the assessment of educational policies targeting the Roma population. Secondly, the Spanish NRIS does not consider school segregation to be one of the main problems. According to the authors' opinion, this is probably the most important issue related to education of Roma, because it is arguably one of the main causes of their school failure in Spain; though the NRIS ignores this problem.

Case Study: Navarra, "Health Promotion of Roma Ethnic Minority" Programme

The authors of this report have chosen the health promotion programme for the Roma minority because it was one of the first programmes that were implemented as a practical and real response for decreasing the health and social inequalities the Roma population faces. The programme began in 1987 and involved collaboration between third-sector parties and the public administration. In 1987 the programme targeted four basic health areas and in 2005 it was extended to 15 areas, while having direct contact with more than half of the Roma population living in Navarra. The programme currently includes 24 basic health areas and covers 32 locations and their corresponding health centres, to which some more must be added on demand. The programme has been implemented in the areas with the largest Roma population.

⁶ See full document at: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/42/08/EstudioSecundaria_InformeEjecutivo.pdf

⁷ Idem.

The programme has one main objective that is to reduce health inequalities and improve Roma's health through four instruments:

- Training Roma health mediators,
- Coordination and collaboration with local and central authorities,
- Peer education,
- Roma empowerment and participation.

INTRODUCTION

There have barely been 40 years of policy development in favour of Roma in Spain; the first public policy is known as the „Roma Development Plan“. In addition to the actions developed at national level, since the beginning of the century, so-called „comprehensive plans for the Roma population“ have extended to the regional level, because the responsibility of implementing the majority of social policies in Spain is transferred to the regions (in Spanish terminology: Autonomous Communities), including the areas of education, housing, participation, the empowerment of women, youth, etc. These policies have gone through different stages, depending on the socio-economic status of the country and the interest of regional authorities in promoting comprehensive plans for the Roma.

After the enactment of the “European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies” in 2011, the Spanish Government launched the “National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020” (NRIS).⁸ This strategy has been included in several biannual “operational plans”, the first plan was prepared for the period 2014-2016 while the latest plan was approved for the period 2018-2020. These operational plans allow Spain to adapt the objectives and planned results of the NRIS to changing needs.

In the process of preparing this report, the authors used several research techniques. The most important method was conducting in-depth interviews with key actors involved in the development and implementation of the NRIS, such as policymakers from the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain (MSSSI),⁹ representatives of several associations, foundations and Roma federations, the National Advisory Council for Roma People (CEPG), public officials from different state levels and other professionals who have volunteered to be interviewed by our team.

The knowledge and experience of the Roma organisations that are part of the working group that prepared this report and the coordination work carried out by *Khetane* Platform have been valuable, both for facilitating the interviews and for the documentary archives they have provided.

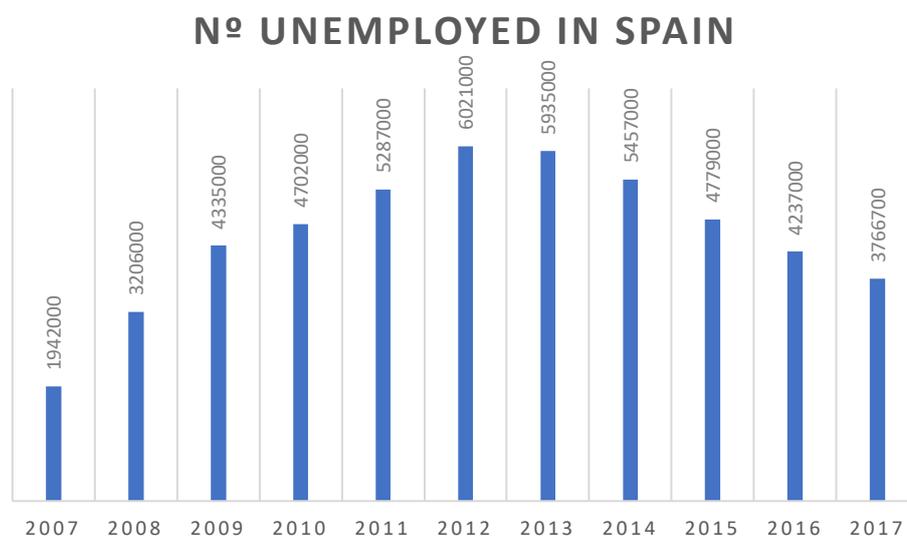
⁸ The National Strategy for de Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020(NRIS) available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/roma_spain_strategy_en_1.pdf

⁹ During the preparation of this report, a change of Government took place in Spain, leading to a change in the nomenclature of the Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare (MSCBS). This is the reason why both nomenclatures are used in this report in order to refer to the ministry responsible for Roma-related issues.

EMPLOYMENT

The financial crisis of 2008 has defined the access to the labour market for the Roma population in recent years. In Spain, the crisis had three key factors that affected the society as a whole, while the most vulnerable groups, including Roma, being affected the worst. On the one hand, the economic engine of the last 15 years was brought to a halt, a fact known as the burst of the real state bubble. On the other hand, the financial crisis led the state to request the bailout of the Spanish banking sector by the European Commission. Finally, the unemployment rate increased to such high levels only seen before at the beginning of the Spanish political transition, the oil crisis (the crisis following the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona) and the Universal Expo in Seville.

The following graphic shows the evolution of unemployment in the last ten years:



Source: Prepared by the authors, data from Wikipedia

The unemployment situation in Spain has been the cause of great unease in the Spanish society in recent years. Unemployment highly affected young people, immigrants and Roma. During the worst part of the financial crisis, the average level of Roma unemployment was 42 per cent,¹⁰ while for immigrants it was 39.16 per cent.¹¹ But the worst statistic data was registered in 2013 when more than 57 per cent of young people between the ages of 18-25 were unemployed.¹² Imagine the situation in which you were part of both groups, being young and Roma.

Youth unemployment in Spain became one of the greatest concerns of the Spanish Government during the worst part of the financial crisis, that is from 2011 until 2015. The situation presents itself as a paradox because the majority of young people who were most prepared could not find work and many of those who held higher education degrees had to emigrate. It is estimated that the number of young people who emigrated from Spain during those years amounts to half a million people. Another negative effect of the financial crisis was that low-qualified workers had even lower chances of finding jobs since some of

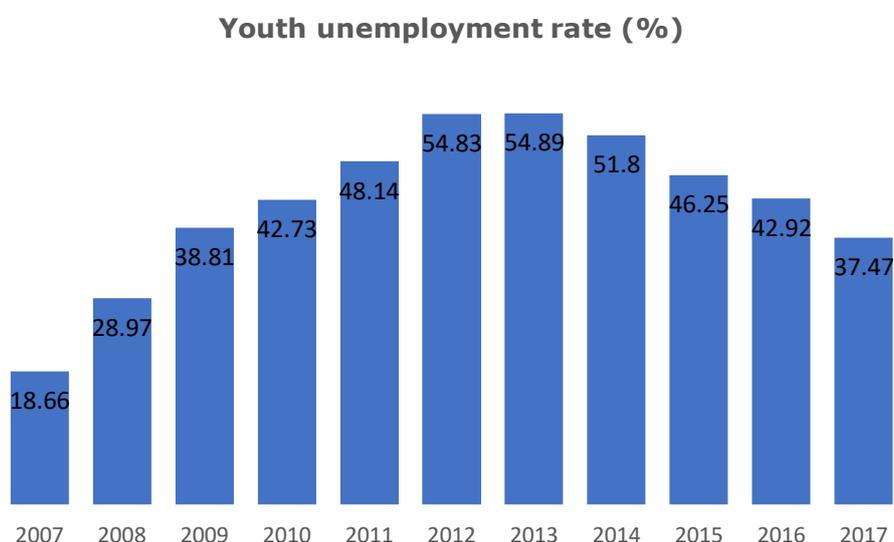
¹⁰ See „El Impacto de la Crisis en la Comunidad Gitana. FSG 2013“, p. 23.

¹¹ See table at: <http://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=4249>

¹² See: <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/04/25/economia/1366875658.html>

the available low-skilled vacancies were taken by people with higher qualifications than those needed to perform the job.¹³

Regarding youth unemployment numbers, only Greece was worse than Spain during the most difficult years of the financial crisis. Youth unemployment rate was higher than 50 per cent during the peak of the financial crisis (between 2012-2014), as one can see in the graph below depicting the youth unemployment rates in the last ten years.



Source: Prepared by the authors on the basis of data supplied by INE.

The authors of this report did not find any official data that would allow us to evaluate how and to what extent was the Roma population affected by the crisis. However, some studies do present some relevant data on Roma and the lack of job opportunities during recent years.

In 2013, *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) published a study titled "The Impact of the Crisis on the Spanish Roma Community" [*El Impacto de la Crisis en la Comunidad Gitana*].¹⁴ This study makes it obvious that unemployment is affecting the Spanish Roma more severely than the non-Roma population from Spain, which is another indicator of the fact that the crisis does not affect all people equally". Between 2005 and 2011, Roma unemployment rate increased by 22.6 per cent, while that of the whole population increased by 10 per cent only.

The rate of self-employed workers increased by 11 per cent, reaching 34.7 per cent, and that of employees decreased by 10.6 per cent. According to the analysis carried out by FSG, Roma unemployment rate in 2013 was 42 per cent.

In 2011, the financial crisis had not reached its peak yet, so one can state that, based on the data provided and trends identified by the FSG study, Roma were affected the most by the economic crisis. In addition to the fall in the employment rate for the rest of the population (mainly in the construction sector), the crisis affected self-employment initiatives and companies that closed due to the fall in consumption.

The decrease in the employment rate in the construction sector determined a decline in the services sector as well, leading to the rejection of thousands of people with low or no qualification at all from the labour market, including rejections for those positions that

¹³ More information about the structural causes of the crisis on youth available at: <https://www.empresascontralapobreza.org/blog/causas-estructurales-del-desempleo-juvenil-espana/>

¹⁴ The report available at: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/09/50/el_impacto_de_la_crisis_en_la_comunidad_gitana.pdf

were occupied mostly by Roma. In addition, the lack of confidence in the country's economic development and, consequently, the fall in the consumption rate, forced thousands of companies and stable businesses to close, regardless of the profit these companies registered in previous years.

The low qualification of many Roma makes the access to the labour market even harder, so informal economy increased again. Informal economy, without any type of regularisation or contract, such as construction or refurbishments, cleaning, people care, unregulated sale, etc. is highly controlled and monitored by the authorities.

According to the same research, companies took advantage of the situation and people's vulnerability during the financial crisis. Precarious working conditions, non-regularized jobs, increasing number of working hours while decreasing wages, contracts for fewer working hours than previous employment contracts, higher effort and productivity demand and employees with an increased level of flexibility and availability. According to the Fundamental Rights Agency report,¹⁵ the situation of the Roma population and access to employment has not improved in 2016:

- 63 per cent of males and 51 per cent of females, declared themselves unemployed.
- The rate for those Roma performing remunerated work aged between 20 and 64, including self-employment, was 13 per cent for women and 24 per cent for man.
- The young Roma population between the ages of 16 and 24, neither studying nor working, amounts to 81 per cent for women and 74 per cent for men, compared to 16 per cent for the whole population.
- The work intensity rate (number of family members of working-age, excluding people aged between 18-24 who are enrolled in school) registered for Roma households with members aged from 0 to 59 years old is 59 per cent, compared to the 17 per cent for the total population of Spain.

On the other hand, the authors want to address the traditional way of entering the labour market by Roma, which is selling different items in street markets. The evolution of itinerant trade market in recent years has not been studied yet (the last available studies are from before the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008). However, some research and interviews with Roma who work in such markets emphasise the hardships they encounter and must overcome in order to survive in this professional activity. Among other findings, these studies highlight the lack of interest on behalf of the authorities, especially municipalities, regarding the expansion and promotion of itinerant trade in their cities.

In short, data is very clear and speaks for itself. Thus, one can state that the financial crisis still affects the Roma population and its access to the labour market.

Improving access to labour market and effectiveness of employment services

The NRIS set the following objectives regarding employment:

- Objective 1: Improve access to normalised employment and reduce job precariousness among the Roma.
 - Specific objectives:
 - 1.1 Increase the employment rate of Roma population.
 - 1.2 Reduce the unemployment rate among Roma population.
 - 1.3 Increase the proportion of Roma population engaged in salaried activities.

¹⁵ The full report in English available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/eumidis-ii-roma-selected-findings>

- 1.4 Reduce temporary employment rate of Roma employees.
- 1.5 Increase the proportion of Roma professionals and self-employed Roma (non-salaried) contributing to Social Security.
- 1.6 Reduce the proportion of Roma population that is dedicated to collaboration with the family economic activity.

- Objective 2: Improve the level of professional qualification for Roma population.
 - Specific objectives:
 - 2.1 Increase the proportion of Roma performing a high qualified job, higher than an elementary occupation.

Despite these objectives, in the follow-up report of the NRIS's Operational Plan 2014-2016, there are no updated data on employment. According to the data published by the consulting firm responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the Operational Plan, 61.2 per cent of the implemented actions were in the areas of social inclusion, education, and employment. Employment is the area in which 42 per cent of the objectives were, at the time of the study, in the implementation phase. Seven actions out of those initiated during 2015-2016 have been financed by the Government with a budget of 6,206,101.82 EUR for the entire duration of those two years. From the actions funded at the regional level, 21 focused on insertion itineraries and four on professional/vocational training and education, with a total budget of 3,158,814.93 EUR.

Nevertheless, it is useful to point out that access to employment at open labour market is still much lower than that of the population as a whole. On the other hand, the existence of a Youth Guarantee Plan as a general measure and strategy for the entire Spanish population, since its implementation started in 2014, is not rendering the expected results in terms of the impact it has on Roma. Some initiatives promoted by NGOs, such as "Learning by doing"¹⁶ targeting the youth have been implemented in different regions. The qualification and training rates to improve employability and professionalisation still register lower levels than those for the rest of the population, the number of Roma accessing professional or vocational training being very limited.

During the peak period of the financial crisis, the employment promotion mechanisms implemented by the public administration collapsed due to the need to serve a large pool of people, either to register them as job seekers, to carry out individualised itineraries for labour market access, or to promote training for employment. In order to be able to process all the requests received from Roma applicants, social organisations had to step up, design and implement projects for labour market access. There is also relevant data referring to the extent to which employment policies are linked to social services (social benefits), whether there are incentives for employers to hire disadvantaged groups, and whether this measure does indeed facilitate Roma's access to the labour market.

One must keep in mind that the public employment services and policies in Spain are managed by regional governments. It is important to note the collapse suffered by employment services during the crisis; however, the analysis can be extended so as to include the role of public employment services and their limited role of intermediates between job seekers and companies. Also, it would be important to clarify that difficulties Roma face on a daily basis in accessing these services (active employment policies in general) and to what extent public employment services have concluded collaboration agreements with private organisations (including NGOs) to carry out the missing role (and insure the most disadvantaged groups, such as Roma, actually receive support in accessing job opportunities).

In the autonomous regions during 2014-2016, 21 actions were implemented targeting socio-labour insertion itineraries and four actions aimed at employment training. These

¹⁶ See more info at: https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/aprender_trabajando.html

actions had an impact on 909 people in 2015 and 1,375 in 2016, according to data in the “Mid-term Evaluation of the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020” and its operational plans.

Social organisations are the ones that led initiatives in favour of promoting labour market access for Roma through various projects with the support of the public administration. *Acceder* Programme is the initiative with the most resources and highest impact.¹⁷ The programme has reached 82,402 people, 27,059 of them were trained and educated, 15,775 men and 11,484 women, while 22,498 people were labour market insertions.¹⁸

Successful stories have been recorded both at regional and local level by the Employment Council of the *Junta de Andalucía* through the “Programme of Professional Experiences for Employment” developed by the Federation of Roma Women's Associations (FAKALI). Through this programme, 73 company internships were concluded, and 16 Roma women were employed during its last phase. Unfortunately, the programme did not continue due to funding cuts operated by the *Junta de Andalucía*. Personalised follow-up monitoring has been carried out by FAKALI in all cases to ensure that users have the opportunity to enter the labour market by taking advantage of the program.

The Federation of Roma Associations of Catalonia (FAGIC) developed the “*Kerav Butji*” initiative, aimed at promoting employment and job placement training for young Roma through personalised itineraries, mentoring and training programmes in collaboration with private companies. In 2016, 312 people were assisted, resulting into placement of 74 participants in the labour market.

The initiatives described above are only a few examples of the actions carried out at a regional and local level by Roma organisations. As it happens in other areas of intervention, these organisations have been the main actors in the fight against inequality in entering the labour market.

Fight against discrimination and antigypsyism in employment

Labour market access and its maintenance are two of the topics for which it is harder to obtain data on discrimination and antigypsyism. Firstly, because there are few reports of this kind on Roma people. Secondly, because the labour law allows employers to use phrases such as contract termination due to „failing to successfully pass the probation period” in order to hide the real reasons for the termination of the contract.

The “Discrimination and Roma Community” Report is published annually in Spain.¹⁹ This report presents and analyses discrimination cases from different areas such as media, access to services, education, housing, and employment.

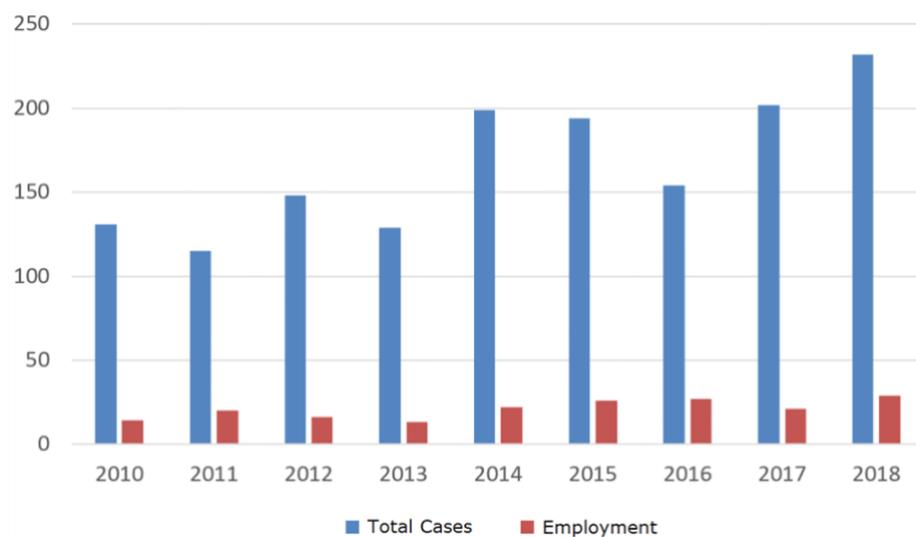
The following graph shows the specific numbers of discrimination cases regarding labour market access recorded by the “Discrimination and Roma Community” Reports from 2010 until 2018.

¹⁷ *Acceder* Programme has been considered as best practice by the European Commission and mentioned often during its 18 years of experience. For an in-depth presentation of the programme, check out its webpage where the results of the last 15 years are presented: <https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/acceder.html.en>

¹⁸ Data obtained from the report: <https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/acceder.html.en>

¹⁹ See all annual reports at: https://www.gitanos.org/centro_documentacion/publicaciones/cuadernos_tecnicos.html.es

Comparison between total cases of discrimination and cases of discrimination in the area of employment between 2010-2018



Source: *Discrimination and Roma Community Reports*. Prepared by the authors

HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES

The right to housing is stipulated in the Spanish Constitution. Article 47 states that "All Spaniards have the right to enjoy decent and adequate housing. The public authorities shall promote the necessary conditions and establish the pertinent norms to enforce this right, regulating the use of the land in accordance with the general interest to prevent speculation".²⁰ Furthermore, there is a division of powers between the State and the autonomous regions, as indicated in articles 148 and 149, which stipulate that the State is responsible for coordinating the housing sector by promoting plans and actions, focusing on housing as an economic sector, in the framework of basic building and construction regulations.

The State is responsible for the coordination of the housing sector as an economic sector and the housing tax policy regulation, except for the provincial territories, in which the competence relies with the provincial councils.²¹ It is also responsible for establishing the basic regulations for building and construction, defining eligible actions for protection, regulating the housing budget, the protection level or the resource distribution.²²

The autonomous regions have limited competence according to their respective "Statutes of Autonomy".²³ In general, they are responsible for planning and managing urban areas. Additionally, they are responsible for:

- Elaboration of their own regulations regarding housing and spatial planning,
- Definition and development of the housing policy,
- Plan, execute, control and monitor public promotions,²⁴
- Administrate their own real estate assets,
- Qualification of protection of private promotions,²⁵
- Control and management of adequate financing for social housing actions, rehabilitation or urbanisation of a land.

Spain has made further progress in the field of residential inclusion of Roma, according to the "Mapping of housing and Roma Population 2015" report.²⁶ The results of this study show that 92.88 per cent of Roma live in urban areas and more than half of the houses are social protection houses (54.5 per cent). 44 per cent of the Roma population live in a rental house, but it is worth highlighting that the number of multi-family houses is 60 per cent and the average number of people living in a household is 4.74 people. However,

²⁰ For a better analysis of Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution, see: <http://www.derechoshumanos.net/constitucion/articulo47CE.htm>

²¹ Provincial Councils refers to the exceptions made in the "Foral" regime. In the regional system (applicable to the Autonomous Region of the Basque Country and the Autonomous Region of Navarra) the financing system is characterized by the fact that the Historical Territories of the Basque Country and the Autonomous Region of Navarra have the power to maintain, establish and regulate their own tax regime. It is a novelty of the Spanish autonomous system.

²² Protected housing: term synonymous with officially protected housing (it represents the sum between social housing and other officially protected housing). In a broader sense, it encompasses all housing units (new and used) that are the object of some sort of protection (public assistance instrumented in any of its meanings and modalities), regardless of whether or not those homes are subject to protection or have been classified as official protection. Public housing is a real type of property that is regulated and managed by a governmental authority, which may be central or local. Social housing is a global term that refers to rental housing (rent) charged by and owned by the state, a non-profit organisation, or a combination of both, usually with the goal of providing affordable housing (note from the authors).

²³ Legislative competences of the different autonomous regions regarding the spatial planning of the territory: <https://www.iberley.es/temas/competencias-legislativas-materia-ordenacion-territorio-62073>

²⁴ Public Promotions refer to promotions for household construction made by public administrations.

²⁵ The protected housing that are privately promoted and others that are publicly promoted, but are both protected housing, what changes is the type of company that once built the house.

²⁶ Report available at: <https://www.gitanos.org/upload/29/29/informecompletoe-mobreviviendaypg.pdf>

despite the developments, the study also found that 2.17 per cent of Roma families live in slums; the absolute number is 2,273 of such households. 2.78 per cent of the neighbourhoods where the Roma live are segregated settlements.²⁷ Finally, 8.63 per cent of the dwellings do not comply with the minimum requirements and conditions of habitability; the absolute number of infra-housing reported in the study is 9,000.

In addition to the statistics previously presented, the terrifying effects the financial crisis had on Roma must be highlighted. The report "The impact of the Crisis on the Roma Community" prepared by FSG in 2013 states the following: "*In every autonomous region, a massive spiral of house loss among the Roma population is happening, in both the home-ownership and the rental sector due to non-payment [...] or because these houses were given as endorsement²⁸ for other houses and were finally evicted. There are families that get a public concession of a social house, under purchase or rent regime, but once it is the time to enter the house, they don't have the mortgage or the bank guarantees required, or they do not have enough resources to afford the rent, therefore they have to renounce the concession.*"²⁹

Access to basic amenities

Regarding the access to basic services,³⁰ more specifically housing amenities and public services, data shows that the districts studied are equipped with the necessary endowments and basic public services, most of them having tap water, access to electricity and waste collection, with percentages close to or greater than 97 per cent.

At this point, a distinction should be made, in terms of access to basic public services and the existence of necessary equipment in the neighbourhood.

In relation to basic services, such as electricity and running water or heating, there is a gap between the housing conditions of Roma households and that of the general population. Recent developments have only been marginal, showing a slight improvement in access to water (from 95.57 per cent in 2007 to 95.83 per cent in 2015), a decrease in access to electricity (95.3 per cent in 2007 to 94.81 per cent in 2015), and a significant decrease in the access to heating (35.72 per cent of Roma households do not have any type of heating), with a drop of more than 8 per cent (from 35.72 per cent in 2007 to 27.59 per cent in 2015), which represents the most significant factor of inequality between Roma and non-Roma households in Spain. According to the qualitative information collected, heating is the first service that families in a precarious socio-economic situation cut down once they find themselves in trouble.

Regarding the existence of public services, the mapping report states that, although it is true that in the last eight years the general conditions have improved, this does not apply to social services, as their physical presence in the territory decreased. Although most basic services are accessible in most neighbourhoods or Roma settlements, there are significant shortages in terms of equipment and resources such as public transportation, health care, secondary education centres, recreation and cultural facilities, and, as previously mentioned, social services. This may be directly linked to the public funding

²⁷ An irregular settlement or substandard housing is a place where a person or a community is established that is outside the norms established by the authorities in charge of urban planning. Irregular settlements usually include communities or individuals housed in self-constructed housing in poor living conditions. They are formed by means of spontaneous occupations of land, public or private, without legal recognition, on marginal lands that are regularly at the outskirts of urban areas, or on land with high risks for the houses settled there.

²⁸ This refers to families that have offered their houses as a payment guarantee, so that other relatives can buy their own houses. When the first cannot pay for the latter, they lose their house.

²⁹ FSG (2013) *The Impact of the Crisis to Roma Population*, p. 19 and following.

³⁰ "Study-map of Housing and Roma Population of 2015" (Executive report, September 2016) available at: http://www.mschs.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/PoblacionGitana/docs/R-E-NGL-_ESTUDIO-MAPA_SOBRE_VIVIENDA_Y_P.G.pdf

cuts of local entities as a consequence of the financial crisis (which affects especially the most vulnerable groups).

This data coincides with the information collected in Spain for the "Second Survey of the European Union on Minorities and Discrimination"³¹ regarding Roma and their access to essential public services. From an international point of view, Roma in Spain have one of the best health and housing conditions compared to the Roma of the other countries analysed. In Spain, only 2 per cent of Roma houses do not have tap water (in Romania 68 per cent, in Portugal 14 per cent, and 30 per cent in all nine countries of the study).³² The Spanish Roma population reports that 1 per cent of the households lack access to indoor-toilet and bathroom, while Romania reports 79 per cent and Portugal 17 per cent. The corresponding figure for all nine countries is 38 per cent.³³

Access to secure and affordable housing

The NRIS forecasts the elaboration of multi-year operational plans that indicate the measures and actions to be implemented in order to achieve the objectives set for 2020.

In this context, the new "Operational Plan 2018-2020" stipulates guidelines for the actors to be involved in the upcoming years, based on actions taken by the national administration. It also suggests an action framework to be drafted by the autonomous regions and local entities. The national administration sets the guidelines to be followed, and based on these, its own actions and those of the autonomous regions and local entities are developed, depending on the competencies that each of the administrations have assumed. This framework can also determine social entities to achieve a greater alignment and connection in terms of social inclusion and access to basic rights for the Roma population.

Point number four includes actions to be implemented between 2018-2020 for the four main action areas, including housing, which is referred to in section 4.3. Thus, section 4.3.1 presents tips and guidelines for action, while section 4.3.2 discusses measures to be developed by national administration and actions to be initiated by the autonomous regions and local entities. This section differentiates between measures to be developed by the national administration and actions to be implemented by autonomous regions and local authorities, in accordance with the general and specific goals set in NRIS regarding housing.

The report "Study-map on Housing and Roma Population 2015" indicates an increase in shelter housing and other types of low-quality housing, compared to previous years. As such, social houses represented 50 per cent in 1991 and 52 per cent in 2007, compared to 54.5 per cent in 2015; other types of housing tenures represented 28 per cent and 6.8 per cent in 2007, compared to the 9.5 per cent in 2015. The executive summary of the "Mapping Study on Housing and Roma Population 2015" published in September 2016, section C in "Conclusions", referred to the means of access to housing and tenure regime and indicates an increase of 9.5 per cent in protected housing and for other forms of housing (self-made shacks, mobile homes, occupation of uninhabited buildings or uninhabited houses, etc.) compared to 28 per cent in 1991 and 6.8 per cent in 2007. On the one hand, the proportion of shelter housing was 50 per cent in 1991 and 52 per cent in 2007, compared to 54.5 per cent in 2015. The obvious conclusion is that these variations indicate an increase in the difficulties Roma face when accessing housing. On the other hand, in Spain 80 per cent of the houses are in privately owned, whereas only 44.5 per cent of the Roma population are the sole owners of the house they live in.

³¹ Link to the report at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_es.pdf, pp. 38-40.

³² EU Midis Survey: *Second Survey of the European Union about Minorities and Discrimination* – Roma population: main results FRA (2016). Figure number 17, p. 39.

³³ *Idem*. Figure number 18, p. 39.

An alarming fact is that, although housing and social policies have proved to be effective when it comes to Roma inclusion, it is no less worrying that the number of Roma families who, after receiving access to housing through the free market, have to resort to social assistance or look for other alternatives, which represents a setback for all the achievements made regarding housing access. As previously mentioned, a significant improvement was registered in the 1991/2007 period, between the first study and the second one, while during the second period, between 2007 and 2015, a much shorter time period, Roma's access to housing registered deteriorated.

The NRIS establishes several general and specific objectives regarding housing. More specifically, section 3.2.3 dealing with the necessary strategic lines of action related to housing, mentions slum eradication, housing access and quality housing.

Slum eradication:

- Promotion of the category of „renewal areas for the eradication of sub-standard housing and slums” in the case of slum settlements and sub-standard housing identified in studies.
- Encouraging the implementation of complex intervention programmes, in the process of re-housing, with an emphasis on training regarding the use and maintenance of the housing, the involvement of persons affected in all phases of the process, labour occupation and the use of community and education services, as well increasing the use of structural funds (art. 7.2 of the ERDF Regulations).
- Search for decent and humane solutions for homeless or evicted families or those living in condemned buildings.

In terms of access to quality housing and accommodation, the Strategy establishes the following measures:

- Support for the access of young people to rental housing and protected social housing, particularly for those with family obligations, as well as Roma people coming from sub-standard housing and slums.
- Focus on assistance to housing rehabilitation, intermediation programmes³⁴ to increase access to housing and the allotment of private housing for public management.
- Adjustment of public housing leasing costs according to need.
- Encouraging information campaigns, particularly those targeting Roma, related to actions planned within the housing plans.
- Search for Roma-adapted formula when proof of minimum income is required by autonomous regions, in order to allow them access to housing in fair competition with the rest of the population.

During the in-house meeting of the working group of the National Advisory Council for Roma People (CEPG), Mr. Anselmo Menéndez Menéndez, Assistant Director of Policy and Housing Aid, presented the new “State Housing Plan 2018-2021”, RD. 106/2018, with an emphasis on mentioning to the factors that affected the Roma population the most.

The action plan of the “National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020” having as a first objective the eradication of slums and substandard housing, refers to the promotion, regeneration and renewal of urban and rural areas, based on an agreement with each autonomous region in order to become operational. The

³⁴ Intermediation Programmes aim to facilitate the attainment of decent housing for people who live in precarious housing and who find themselves with serious problems in accessing decent housing. Fundamentally, information is provided to potential tenants as well as owners, people and families are accompanied in the necessary procedures and a mediation service is offered between all the parties involved.

available funds amount to 30,000 EUR for new housing, plus the contribution decided upon by each autonomous region, plus 2,000 EUR for urbanisation, 4,000 EUR for relocation for three years, and an additional amount of 1,000 EUR for management expenses.

Comparing these figures to the 2013-2016 plan, the 2018-2020 plan represents an increase of 80 per cent in the funds allocated to autonomous regions, amounting to 1,443,000 EUR, approved by the Council of Ministers on the 16 March 2018.

In the framework of the action plan, housing assistance grants can be provided for up to three years (in the 2013-2016 plan such grants were awarded for one year only), and the 40 per cent rent aid increases to 50 per cent, excluding the 2,400 EUR/year limit from the previous plan for young people and people over 65. The programme to promote conservation, improve security of housing use and accessibility can be applied to a single dwelling - energy efficient housing - (for comparison purposes: in the 2013-2016 plan, such measure could only be applied to an entire building), and to a single-family; rural or urban housing are no eligible for upgrading, as well (these were not included in the 2013-2016 Plan).

The "Programme for People in Eviction or Termination of their Habitual Residence Situations", due to their inability to pay the mortgage or rental fees, is an important novelty. The aid can cover up to 100 per cent of the rent upon the discretion of the housing social services, and up to 400 EUR monthly rent. The share of state support can reach up to 80 per cent, which can be supplemented with the remaining 20 per cent by autonomous regional contributions. Agreements with financial institutions are expected to be concluded, allowing the use of available houses by them as social rental housing with rental fees up to 400 EUR, costs that can be covered entirely for three years. The main idea is to use the available empty houses belonging to these financial entities or those of any other owners.

As an innovation of the new plan, the "Programme for Elderly and Disabled People" has been approved. Aimed at promoting adapted housing to their specific needs, by public or private developers, for a rental period of up to 40 years length for those people with a limited income.

Despite the housing-related objectives in the NRIS, the "State Housing Plan 2018-2021" does not include special measures aimed at the Roma population, a group that according to studies mentioned above, experience difficulties and inequalities in terms of accessing decent housing.

Effectiveness of housing benefits and social assistance to maintain housing

Housing benefits and social aid are meant to guarantee affordability of housing maintenance costs.

Regarding the rate of house loss, according to the "Study-map on Housing and Roma Population 2015", 25 per cent of the families that live in the districts studied have been evicted. It must be mentioned that Roma families that are in the process of losing their homes sometimes resort to alternative resources before the end of the eviction process, such as housing in extended family homes (parents or grandparents), which can cause overcrowding or, in the case of families included in the re-housing programme, or moving to shanty town settlements, from which they originally left.

Fight against residential segregation, discrimination and other forms of antigypsyism in housing

According to Rosalía Vázquez, coordinator of the National Advisory Council for Roma People (CEPG), the housing working group: *"The Roma continue to live in stigmatized neighbourhoods or in authentic ghettos, fact that causes residential segregation [...] authorities should avoid residential segregation of the Roma population as a strategic line*

of action, establishing it as a priority in the implementation of housing plans and policies at both national and regional levels."

The NRIS establishes, in the area of housing, a set of general and specific objectives, as well as a strategy for action.

The eradication of slums and substandard housing, as well as the improvement of the housing quality of Roma are the main goals of this strategy. A series of specific objectives are also mentioned. Although they may directly or indirectly have an effect on residential segregation and discrimination in access to housing for Roma citizens, these objectives do not specifically refer to these issues.

On the other hand, the housing action strategy³⁵ stipulates a set of measures and proposals that can influence the fight against segregation and antigypsyism related to the right to access housing, but it does not specifically refer to the issues themselves.

In addition, the Strategy refers to "non-discrimination and equal treatment" in section "Other lines of action", without specifically referring to non-discrimination in housing access and use by Roma.

However, the "Operational Plan 2018-2020" specifically refers to both residential segregation and the promotion of actions aimed at reducing antigypsyism in housing access.

In spite of this, the measures to be developed by the national administration and actions to be promoted by autonomous regions and local entities, do not set line of actions that specifically address the issues of residential segregation and housing discrimination the Roma population faces.

The Roma encounter numerous difficulties when accessing rental housing. This is revealed in the "Discrimination and Roma Community Reports" of 2015, 2016 and 2017.³⁶ According to reports from 2015, out of the nine cases of discrimination regarding housing access, six of them were reported due to the refusal of home owners and/or real estate owners to rent a house to a Roma person. A similar trend is registered in the 2016 report, where out of the 20 cases reported, 16 were related to rent denial to Roma people. In 2017, ten out of 12 cases were related to this topic. This is why it is possible to talk about antigypsyism in accessing the rental house market.

To sum up, it seems that, although there is clear level of awareness regarding segregation, discrimination and antigypsyism in the housing sector, this issue has not been addressed in a clear and consistent manner, but rather through measures directed at or designed for areas that are indirectly linked to this issue, resulting in a lack of adequate solutions.

Improvement of housing conditions and regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods

Evidence suggests that the issues affecting the Roma population in relation to housing coincide with those already identified in previous studies³⁷ (segregation, substandard housing, overcrowding, etc.).

³⁵ See the document reference at:

https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/WEB_POBLACION_GITANA_2012.pdf

³⁶ Reports from years 2015, 2016 and 2017 are available at:

<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion17/files/assets/basic-html/page-1.html>,
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion15/files/assets/basic-html/page-1.html#>,
<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion16/files/assets/basic-html/page-1.html>

³⁷ See afore-mentioned studies on housing and the Roma population of 1991, 2007 and 2015, available at: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/19/29/R-E-espan-e-mapa_sobreviviendayPG.pdf

The “National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020” encourages the implementation of different initiatives. According to the mapping referred to earlier above, the quantitative objectives set by the strategy have been met in general, taking into consideration all the specific objectives set in the strategy for 2015. In 2016, 13 interventions were under implementation or planned and aimed at improving housing and neighbourhood conditions in less than 23 per cent of the target neighbourhoods, reaching less than 40 per cent of the total houses. This indicates a decrease in the number of interventions compared to 2007, when public actions, in progress or projected at the time, benefited 34.1 per cent of the neighbourhoods.

In terms of policy efforts, there are major obstacles to implementing successful housing integration measures:

- There is a reduction in the public budget due to the crisis of the last eight years. In particular, this reduces the number of available housing implemented measures targeting the Roma.
- The overall situation of the neighbourhoods and, in particular, the condition of the buildings, have improved, although there is still work to be done in order to bring the infrastructure quality of Roma neighbourhoods to the same level as for the rest of the population.
- The majority of Roma resides in dwellings and neighbourhoods or settlements that already have the basic necessary equipment and public services.

Among the actions taken, the report states:

- Comprehensive urban regeneration plans for neighbourhoods, using community funds granted under the P.O. FEDER 2007-2013.
- Housing rehabilitation within the public programme framework, such as the Urban Programmes or State Plans in the field of housing or rehabilitation (such as those from 2009-2012 or 2013-2016 periods).

In terms of NRIS plan achievements, the Spanish interim report on NRIS implementation³⁸ shows an improvement in the housing situation. There are two main goals in that field: “eradication of shanty towns and substandard houses” and „improvement of the quality of housing for the Roma population”. Regarding the first goal, both of its two specific objectives have been accomplished in the first period. According to the report, the rate of shanty towns and substandard houses has been reduced to 2.17 per cent (the starting point was 3.9 per cent). Regarding the second goal, results are also positive in three of its four specific objectives it contains. The authors of this report emphasise an apparent improvement in residential overcrowding levels, from 29.4 per cent (starting point) to 8.9 per cent. It is surprising that the NRIS objective was to achieve 25 per cent. It is not clear what the causes of this substantial improvement are, nor in what way the study has collected the information. Finally, this same data surprises us even more by indicating that the level of Roma overcrowding in their homes is still high, considering it as a persistent problem. Moreover, the problem of residential segregation is included in the Spanish NRIS in a tangential and clearly insufficient way, while the Spanish NRIS interim evaluation report considers it a persisting problem, though there are no objectives or indicators that would allow for the evaluation of public policies implemented in this field.

The new “State Housing Plan 2018-2021”, which, as indicated by the Assistant Director-General for Housing Aid and Policy, refers to Article 47 of the “Promotion of Urban and Rural Regeneration and Renewal Programme”, specifically mentioning the fight against slums and substandard housing. Although one of the housing objectives of the 2020

³⁸ Interim Evaluation Report on NRIS implementation (2012-2016) available at: https://www.fresnoconsulting.es/upload/14/78/2017_InformeEvaluacionIntermediaEstrategiaPoblacionGitana.pdf

strategy has found its way into the new state housing plan, no specific measure addresses the needs of the Roma. In addition, the “Operational Plan 2018-2020” of the “National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020”, within the framework of the measures set to be promoted during this period in the housing area, collects measures to be implemented by the national administration, autonomous regions, and local entities.

IMPACT OF HEALTH CARE POLICIES ON ROMA

Ensuring equal access to public healthcare services

Democracy in Spain instated, among many other things, the national healthcare system for all the residents of the country. The right to health care protection for all citizens is recognized in the Constitution itself. Article 43 of the Spanish Constitution stipulates that „the right to health protection is recognized by the state”,³⁹ and grants the competence to organize and manage the public healthcare services as well as their coverage to public authorities by creating preventive measures and the necessary services and benefits. Preventive measures and benefits must be established by law. In addition, the Constitution itself establishes that public authorities will promote health education, physical education and sports.

The “General Law of Public Health” establishes the guiding principles and empowers public authorities and private entities to maintain and promote these principles. The most remarkable principles of the law are:⁴⁰

- Principle of equity: probably the most important one for the Roma population, because it implies that policies and programmes that have an impact on the population’s health will promote the reduction of social inequalities as well by incorporating actions that target their social determining factors, including specific objectives regarding inequality.
- Principle of health in all policies. Beyond health care and health promotion, public health actions will take into account non-health policies that affect the health of the population, promoting those that favour healthy environments and discouraging, when appropriate, those that pose health risks.

The other regulatory principles iterated by the public health law are relevance, precaution, evaluation, transparency, integrity, and safety. These principles affect the Roma less than those previously described.

It is necessary to keep in mind that in Spain the responsibility of managing health issues are transferred to autonomous regions, so these must legislate within the limits of their competences and according with the Spanish Constitution and other national laws. This leads to cases in which the responsibility to promote, for example, access to general healthcare falls within the exclusive competence of autonomous governments. All autonomous regions have developed public health laws that stipulate the applicable framework for healthcare, benefits and the services offered by health care systems within their territories.⁴¹

Both the national and regional laws, through their guiding principles, acknowledge that all residents of Spain and/or of the respective autonomous regions are targeted by such healthcare measures.

However, during the financial crisis, with the aim of reducing health care spending, the conservative government of the Popular Party approved the Decree-Law 16/2012, of 20 April 2012, on the adoption and implementation of urgent measures that guarantee the sustainability of the National Health System and improve the quality and safety of its benefits. This decree law introduced a set of reforms. Two categories were created to be

³⁹ *Spanish Constitution* from 1978. Art. 43, available at: <http://www.congreso.es/consti/constitucion/indice/titulos/articulos.jsp?ini=43&tipo=2>

⁴⁰ *General Public Health Law 33/2011*, available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2011-15623>

⁴¹ For example, in Catalonia the *Public Health Law 18/2009* from 22 October 2009. In Extremadura Law no. 7/2011 from 23 March 2012.

used as either “beneficiary” or “insured” and for the first time since the start of the transition to democracy and the consecutive establishment of the National Health System in 1986, the system stopped being universal.

On 31 July 2018, the new progressive Government formed by the Socialist Party approved a regulation that led to the implementation of the most criticised reforms of the previous law. Among others, health care is once again universal, including undocumented immigrants or irregular administrative cases.

Most Roma in Spain hold Spanish citizenship and are citizens with full rights. This is the reason why this law, enacted by the Popular Party, did not affect the majority of the Roma population, according to the “Second Survey on Minorities and Discrimination published by the FRA (EU-MIDIS 2016)”. This report also shows that Spain is on the first place in terms of the coverage of the basic national health insurance system and/or additional medical insurance among the nine countries analysed. According to the same survey, 98 per cent of the respondents declared having basic medical coverage in Spain.⁴² This proportion is twice as big as the corresponding percentage in Bulgaria (45 per cent), the country with the lowest coverage.⁴³ Regarding private medical coverage, the authors of this report have not found any evidence of discrimination reported by the assistance service and published by the Council for Promotion of Equal Treatment in Spain. Some Roma families, who can afford to pay for a private health insurance, choose this option. One of the main reasons for this is the flexibility offered by private medical centres in terms of accessing a room and the possibility of being hospitalised in a single room accompanied by more than two relatives, instead of a shared room, as it happens in the public health sector. The research study “Roma Never Die Alone”⁴⁴ demonstrates the great impact solidarity ties have among the Roma, an aspect that is less present among non-Roma people. This cultural aspect has positive consequences for the Roma, countering the negative image that the majority of the society has about them. If taken into account, the particularities of Roma culture could be an element of utmost importance for health institutions, especially when it comes to how one wants to live his or her last hours, as it can increase the access of Roma population to the health system, as well as improve the perception of „remoteness” that this community has about the system. At the same time, incorporating cultural particularities into the design of public policies would pave the way for a health system that is culturally more inclusive and permeable to such differences.

According to the “Second Survey on Health and the Roma People 2014”, Roma use the private health sector less than the rest of the population. During the survey, participants were asked if they had used healthcare services. Specifically, the question was “Where did the medical consultation take place within the last two weeks?”.⁴⁵

The analysis of the results reflects that women have had their last medical consultation in a healthcare centre in a higher percentage than men. Private doctors’ consultation records however show the opposite scenario, one in which a low percentage of Roma went to private doctors, especially in the case of women. With regard to the rest of the services, it can be observed that women requested a higher number of emergency consultations and men used more often the external consultations outside of hospitals.

⁴² http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/2940_2959/2947/es2947mar.pdf, p. 12.

⁴³ The survey available at: <https://publications.europa.eu/es/publication-detail/-/publication/d1e36336-3168-11e8-b5fe-01aa75ed71a1/>, The figure can be found on page 33 of this publication. The survey was carried out in nine European Union countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia.

⁴⁴ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1049732317729138?journalCode=qhra>.

⁴⁵ See: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/prevPromocion/promocion/desigualdadSalud/docs/ENS2014PG.pdf>

The following table offers the most relevant figures from the "Second National Health Survey for Roma Population 2014" carried out by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of the Spanish Government, regarding the place where the medical consultation was carried out by sex (there are no significant differences), type of service and placement of the most usual health centre:⁴⁶

Age range	Men in percentage			Women in percentage		
	Public Health Services	Private Health Services	Other	Public Health Services	Private Health Services	Other
16-34	95.4	4.1	0.5	96	3.5	0
35-55	95.1	3.9	1	96.7	2.4	0
55 +	98.1	1.9	0	98.8	0.6	0

Source: prepared by authors based on the findings of the Health Survey 2014 carried by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

Regarding the health condition perceived by the Roma population in Spain and following the analysis of M. Carmen Albert and others in "The health of the Roma population in Spain: Inequalities continue", "for most of the health indicators analysed, during the last few years, the health of the population worsened due to the economic situation: Data indicates a higher drop in the health of the Roma population than in that of the worst socio-economic groups of the Spanish population. 65.3 per cent of Roma men and 55.5 per cent of Roma women reported that their health status is great or very good, compared to 77.7 per cent and 70.4 per cent, respectively, of the Spanish population. Regarding the self-perceived health status of the Roma population aged from 35 to 54, there were no significant variations between 2006 and 2014 (65.6 per cent of Roma men and 55.6 per cent of Roma women defined their health status as good and very good in 2014). These ratios reach 80.3 per cent (men) and 73.4 per cent (women) for the respondents to the National Health Survey for the same age group, between 35 and 54 years old".⁴⁷

Despite the improvements and differences found in the surveys regarding the health of the Roma population, Roma life expectancy is 15 years less than the average life expectancy of the population.⁴⁸

Regarding reproductive health, when comparing data from the most current surveys, it is observed that the frequency of visits to the gynaecology clinic and the performance of mammograms and cytology testing is lower among Roma women than among women from the rest of the population.

The frequency of using preventive healthcare practices is lower among Roma women than for the general population, although it is similar to women from the most disadvantaged social groups.

However, since 2006, the percentage of Roma women who report having attended a gynaecology consultation has increased from 75.6 per cent to 83.6 per cent, a figure that is very similar to the 86.3 per cent of the women from the general population.

The organisations and institutions supporting Roma inclusion and promotion have played and still play a fundamental role in preventive healthcare. Roma organisations play a

⁴⁶ See the complete survey at: http://www.msrebs.gob.es/en/profesionales/saludPublica/prevPromocion/promocion/desigualdadSalud/docs/EN_S2014PG.pdf

⁴⁷ See: https://www.msrebs.gob.es/estadEstudios/estadisticas/encuestaNacional/encuestaNac2017/ENSE17_pres_web.pdf, p. 6.

⁴⁸ See the article at: <https://www.cuartopoder.es/sociedad/2017/11/11/la-poblacion-gitana-a-la-cola-de-la-esperanza-de-vida-en-espana/>

positive role of reference and confidence gaining in certain Roma environments, promoting prevention actions and training to both healthcare professionals and Roma. The health mediator, a position where women predominate, is a recognised and important element for the promotion of healthy habits, preventive healthcare and health information. But today such services are external to the Public Health System.

With regard to the Spanish NRIS in relation to the field of health, the general positive evaluation included in the interim evaluation report of the Spanish NRIS is striking. From the first goal "1.A. Improvement of the health status of the Roma population and reduction of social inequalities in health: Intervention in the adult population", of the five specific objectives, three have not been achieved (1.1 Improvement of the perception of the health of the Roma population, perception of the state of health as "good" or "very good" in the population aged 35 to 54 years; 1.3 Reducing smoking among Roma men aged 16 years and over; 1.4 .Reduce obesity in Roma women), one cannot be assessed because of lack of data (1.2. Reduce traffic accidents among Roma population 16 years of age or older) and only one goal was achieved (1.6. Reduce the number of Roma women who have never been to gynaecological consultation). From the second goal "1.B. Improvement of the health status of the Roma population and reduction of social inequalities in health: Intervention in children", two specific objectives have not been achieved (2.1. Reduce the number of accidents at home; 2.2. Reduce childhood obesity among 2-17-year-old children) and only one has been implemented satisfactorily (2.3. Increase oral care, reduce the number of girls and boys who have never gone to the clinic). With these data it is not possible to make a positive evaluation of the development of policies that come from the NRIS in the field of health.

Fight against discrimination and antigypsyism in health care

There is no manual on antigypsyism and health, only the book "*Sastipenaj Rroma. Inequality in health and the Roma People. Analysis and proposals from the socio-sanitary field*", by authors La Parra & Jiménez from the University of Alicante, has been published in 2016. This book includes several sections that address the lack of equity and health the Roma population faces. In addition, it has a specific chapter on antigypsyism and Roma in which activist Nicolás Jiménez asks: "Does antigypsyism affect health?". The author makes an analysis of how discrimination affects victims' health, with references to various authors who have written on this topic before-hand. According to the author, "research shows that racial discrimination is related to disease in some populations" (Gee et al., 2009). Other studies describe racism as a relevant factor in the prevalence of chronic diseases (Gee et al., 2007), asthma (Smith et al., 2005) or overweight (Hunte & Williams, 2009) among marginal populations. Finally, racism has a negative impact on children's health (Pachter & García Coll, 2009), reaching, in some countries, situations in which the Roma infant mortality rate is twice as high than that of the majority of the population".⁴⁹

Beyond discourse and academia, both always necessary and important, in the field of health and health promotion, there is an important organisation in Spain, which is the *Equis Sastipen* Network. The *Equis Sastipen* Network was created under the auspices of the Roma organisation Socio-Cultural Association of Ethnic Minorities *Unga* in 2010. The Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality contributes to its financing. 21 associations and Roma federations from all over Spain are part of this network. Furthermore, the Health Work Group of the National Advisory Council for Roma People (CEPG) is actively collaborating and consists of several associations and the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. The network integrates Roma associations that develop projects in the healthcare field. It is characterized by horizontal non-hierarchical relationships between its members. It is a flexible network, open and under permanent development.

⁴⁹ Jiménez, N. (2016) "Does antigypsyism affect health?" In: *Sastipen aj Rroma*. La Parra et Jiménez (eds.), p. 43 and following.

It does not pretend to homogenize, but to organize the heterogeneity of its different members.⁵⁰

The network, as its name suggests, promotes networking in order to share experiences among the members. One of its strategic objectives is to sensitize, train and support different organisations, public administrations and professionals working in the field of health. For this reason, they share spaces for discussion and joint training, including two annual training sessions for organisations participating in the network.

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality has made several publications, but its most important milestone, as defined by the network itself, has been the development of the "*Manual Equi-Sastipen-Rroma for the Promotion of Health in the Roma Community*".⁵¹

Following the same work trend of prevention and reduction of inequalities in the health field for Roma, the network implements two key actions to prevent antigypsyism. On the one hand, it promotes intercultural mediation in this area as one of the fundamental tools to overcome barriers between the Roma and the health system. During the last few years, hundreds of professionals in this field have been trained in Spain. In addition, the network, in collaboration with the Public University of Navarra, launched in 2014 an on-line training course which is recognised in the official training for medical doctors and nurses.⁵²

On the other hand, it promotes on-going training for socio-health professionals.⁵³ In recent years, they have promoted training activities as a response to diversity, the need for intercultural and equity competencies for professionals working in the social-health field, such as doctors, nurses and other health system professionals.

One of the key points in the fight against antigypsyism in the health field is to train future professionals working in the health system. For this purpose, the network carries out undergraduate training in collaboration with various universities, targeting socio-healthcare students from fields such as medicine, nursing, social work, social education, etc. This training is carried out in collaboration with different universities and faculties all around Spain.

The second key point in prevention is training socio-health care professionals. This training is carried out in collaboration with socio-health institutions from the area where each course is developed. The course may be targeting a heterogeneous group of socio-health professionals or focus specifically on, for example, professionals of any specialty in primary care who work in a specific health area, in the hospital, or professionals with management and planning responsibilities.

The team of trainers for these courses is composed of people connected to the network and coming from academia, institutional sector and people in direct contact with the Roma.

Public statements and the research pursued by the academia, as well as the efforts to raise the awareness level and training work done by different Roma organisations, as a tool to avoid antigypsyism, have been key elements in fighting antigypsyism and health inequalities in recent years. Complaints have always been made outside the legal framework, either through the media, through reports on Roma discrimination, etc.

⁵⁰ Data published at: <https://asociaciongitanaunga.com/red-equi-sastipen-rroma/que>

⁵¹ The guideline can be found and downloaded from: https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/prevPromocion/promocion/desigualdadSalud/docs/Equi_sastipen_rroma.pdf

⁵² The programme and its objectives can be seen at: <https://www.unionromani.org/downloads/noti2014-07-31c.pdf>

⁵³ Socio-health professionals is a common Spanish term that includes, among others, doctors, social workers, nurses and support teams.

For example, on 14 November 2017, various mass media outlets reported the statements the Federation of Roma Women (FAKALI) made during the meeting "Advances in the fight against inequalities in Roma population and health".⁵⁴

FAKALI warned that Roma have a life expectancy of 15 years less than the rest of the population and that the first "structural cause that we have to take into account is antigypsyism, which is deeply rooted in the society and has put its imprint on the relationships between Roma and the rest of the society". "This institutional racism has left a residue that organisations are striving to eliminate. There are still few Roma politicians and the stigma continues to be present in the media".⁵⁵

However, health-related complaints are not common among Roma. The only quantitative sources that the authors of this report have found that assesses cases of health-related antigypsyism cases are *the* "Discrimination and the Roma Community Reports" published by FSG.

In the last five years, the number of cases recorded in these reports has been low. The reports from 2014, 2016 and 2017 show a total of five registered cases. In 2015, only one case was registered in the annual report and in the latest published report, that of 2018, the number of registered cases was nine. For the most part, they refer to derogatory comments that refer to "race" or prejudices regarding Roma habits or physical characteristics.

In comparison with the cases registered in employment or media sectors, these cases hardly represent a small proportion of all complaints.

⁵⁴ The meetings took place during the 8th and 9th of November, 2017 in Seville, the full agenda of these journeys can be found at: http://www.fakali.org/files/Jornadas_Antigitanismo_y_Salud.pdf

⁵⁵ Article published in „Cuarto Poder“, available at: <https://www.cuartopoder.es/sociedad/2017/11/11/la-poblacion-gitana-a-la-cola-de-la-esperanza-de-vida-en-espana/>

EDUCATION

All the progress the Roma achieved in education since the dawn of democracy can be defined as extraordinary.

In 1978, despite the fact that primary education was mandatory, the state did not control and monitor of this requirement and the rate of Roma children accessing educational facilities was residual. In just 30 years it went from system exclusion to inclusive schooling, a period in which the schooling of Roma children was carried out in a targeted and separate manner in establishments known as "Bridge Schools". The Bridge School centres were created as "specific special transition centres for Roma children, whose objective was to help Roma children adapt to the society and to create basic socio-cultural habits".⁵⁶ The Bridge School centres disappeared when the Organic Law of Right to Education (LODE) in 1986 was approved. This law stipulates the "right to education in an integrated school system that conceives schools as schools for everybody, without limitations imposed by social, economic or residence reasons",⁵⁷ in order to alleviate the differences in terms of rhythms, routines and school rules. Thus, a model focused on generating equal opportunities and compensatory measures was created, so that Roma children can be integrated into the educational system on equal terms as the rest of the students.

Education is recognised as a fundamental right in article 27 of the Spanish Constitution. Public authorities and administration guarantees the right for everyone to education through a general education programme, with the effective participation of all socio-economic groups, and the creation of teaching and educational centres".⁵⁸ During the recent years of democracy, various education laws have been adopted in Spain, as can be seen in the table below, created specifically for this report.

<i>Law and year or approval</i>	<i>Relevant aspects</i>	<i>Consequences for Roma</i>
<i>LODE: Organic Law 8/1985, of July 3, regulating the Right to Education (1985)</i> ⁵⁹	It does not modify the education system It establishes the duality of the education system (public and private)	Roma remain away from the education system at this point Roma families do not exploit the opportunity their children have of going to school; they consider that school is "a <i>paya</i> school" that does not accept Roma
<i>LOGSE: Organic Law 1/1990, of October 3, on the General Regulation of the Law of the Education System (1990)</i> ⁶⁰	Education system is based on the constitutional principles and democratic management of the centres An open and flexible curriculum model with different levels and model of compulsory and free basic education is established and the age of compulsory education is extended to 16 years	Appears the right to respect the culture of each citizen in the education field and emphasises the need for intercultural education Compensatory education policies are established in order to reinforce the actions of the education system in such a way as to avoid inequalities derived from social, economic, cultural, geographic, ethnic or other factors

⁵⁶ *History of Roma Students' Incorporation and Integration to the School System. Informational Brochures number 64 2015*, available at: <http://publicacionesdidacticas.com/hemeroteca/articulo/064026/articulo-pdf>

⁵⁷ *Evaluation of the Educational Normalisation of Roma Students in Primary Education. FSG 2002*, p. 22, available at: <https://www.gitanos.org/upload/42/98/completa.pdf>

⁵⁸ *Spanish Constitution 1978*, articles 21, sub-articles 1, 3 and 5, available at: <https://www.laconstitucion.es/articulo-27-de-la-constitucion-espanola.html>

⁵⁹ *Organic Law 8/1985, of July 3, regulating the Right to Education*, available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/1985/BOE-A-1985-12978-consolidado.pdf>

⁶⁰ *Organic Law 1/1990, of October 3, on the General Regulation of the Law of the Educational System*, available at: <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/1990/10/03/1/dof/spa/pdf>

<p>LOE: education organic law (2006)⁶¹</p>	<p>The main purposes of this new law are the personality and capacity development of students, respect one's rights and freedom, tolerance, responsibility, personal effort and training to communicate in foreign languages</p>	<p>Public authorities will prepare and implement the necessary actions, provide the necessary resources and the specific support needed to offset the effects of socially disadvantageous situations in order to achieve the foreseen educational and training goals</p>
<p>LOMCE: Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, to improve education quality (2013)⁶²</p>	<p>The purpose of this new law is to reduce the school drop-out rate</p>	<p>Emphasis is placed on the groups of students that require educational attention, exhibiting a specific need for educational support, as well procuring the necessary resources aimed at achieving their complete integration, including the educational treatment for students who require support due to certain social circumstances, among others</p>

From a historical point of view, one of the government initiatives that was most effective in terms of regulating and equalising the access and maintenance of Roma children in compulsory education was the "Decree of Compensatory Education of 1983". This decree, according to the expert in Roma education, Jesús Salinas, "changes the educational policy targeting Roma". Although it does not explicitly refer to Roma, it does indicate a series of actions aimed at alleviating the disadvantages that certain students face in order to access or remain in school, due to their location of their residence or their disadvantaged social and economic status. The higher allocation of teachers and resources, the establishment of resource centres and school support services, as well as food and books, together with a certain flexibility in the school admission rules, favour the integration of Roma students into the education system".⁶³

The "National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020" sets four objectives to be developed in the field of education, which are related to school access and attendance in early childhood education, educational success in primary education, completion of secondary and post-secondary education and improving the educational level of the adult Roma.⁶⁴

Considering "Spanish Intermediate Monitoring Report of the implementation of Roma Strategy",⁶⁵ the authors of this report would like to point out the lack of "quantitative" data that allows monitoring the objectives set out in the strategy. It is a must to highlight that from the ten specific objectives that should be achieved by developing and implementing the strategy, there is available information on two of them, while for the remaining of the objectives, according to the report prepared by external evaluators, it is not possible to offer any information.

⁶¹ Organic Law 2/2006 available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2006/BOE-A-2006-7899-consolidado.pdf>

⁶² Organic Law 8/2013, of 9 December 2013, to improve education quality, available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2013/BOE-A-2013-12886-consolidado.pdf>

⁶³ "A trip through Roma enrolment in school history in Spain Contemporaneous History" 2009. Jesús Salinas Catalá.

⁶⁴ The goals and success indicators of the strategy available at: https://www.mscbs.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/docs/WEB_POBLACION_GITANA_2012.pdf

⁶⁵ The report is available at: https://www.fresnoconsulting.es/upload/14/78/2017_InformeEvaluacionIntermediaEstrategiaPoblacionGitana.pdf

Access to quality early childhood care and preschool education

Before starting our pre-school education analysis and the implementation of the strategy, in Spain the age for pre-school education is between zero and six years old, consisting of two training cycles divided into age groups, each of them with a duration of three academic years. The first cycle includes children aged from zero to three years old and the second cycle from three to six years old. First cycle is not mandatory, it either remains in the private family sphere or it is managed by municipalities, private business organisations, or religious organisations, especially by different orders belonging to the Catholic Church. The second cycle is mandatory for the Administration to organise but not mandatory for families, who can decide whether or not to take their children to pre-school education known as P3, P4 and P5. The explicit objectives of pre-school education in Spain are related to the development and evolution of children at a social, relational and cognitive level.

Regarding Roma and the National Strategy, the objective for the period 2012-2020 is to increase the proportion of Roma children who have attended pre-school education prior to their compulsory schooling. To achieve a greater progress, the strategy establishes three lines of action:

- Supporting incorporation in pre-school education of zero to three-year olds, giving priority to families at risk of social exclusion.
- Raising the family's awareness and support family involvement in school, as well as training young people to become educators.
- Promoting work, family and personal conciliation.

In the middle of the implementation of the strategy there is a problem of a lack of quantitative indicators that would allow the comparison and analysis the implementation level of the strategy.

According to the "Interim Follow-up Report of the National Strategy", published in September 2017, data on the objective "increase the proportion of Roma children who have attended pre-school education before their compulsory schooling" is not available. Thus, we find ourselves in the middle of the strategy implementation with a starting point of a rate of 87 per cent attendance in early childhood education that cannot be evaluated,⁶⁶ because of the lack of indicators held by administration and the lack of real studies in the field of childhood education.

According to the "Interim Follow-up Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Spain 2012-2020" in the field of early childhood education, the main findings are that, "although school enrolment rates for Roma are still lower than those for the rest of the population, they increased significantly in recent years".⁶⁷ During the preparation of this report, the authors were wondering how was it possible for this statement to be included in the report if there is no data available to evaluate the access to early childhood education for Roma children in a differentiated way. On the other hand, the same report highlights an additional persistent problem according to which "the frequency of school absenteeism and premature abandonment continue to be a cause for concern".

The number of actions that have been carried out in this first implementation phase in the field of early childhood education is three. Authors of this report have not been able to identify the specific types of activity, nor the impact it had or its duration. Even so, it seems that for a country like Spain, where there are between 800,000 and 1,000,000

⁶⁶ Data coming from the report „Evaluation of the *Educational Normalisation of Roma Students in Primary Education* edited by the FSG in 2010, available at: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/76/26/normalizacion_educativa.pdf

⁶⁷ *Idem*, p. 13.

Roma, the fact that only three actions have been implemented in this period seems to be insufficient.

In terms of economic investment, the intermediate report reflects the „scarce“ amount of money invested in this field. Thus, from the 3,417,598.99 EUR allocated for the implementation of specific measures in the area of education, the amount spent on pre-school education was 0.00 EUR.

Despite this “investment slowdown”, Roma families are making progress in understanding and acknowledging the importance of accessing education during early childhood. FSG in its study on the “Evaluation of the Educational Normalisation of Roma Students” (2010),⁶⁸ concludes that “more than half of Roma children start attending school at three years old, coinciding with the beginning of the second cycle of childhood education. Almost all students are integrated in the education system without any significant problems and the responsibility of enrolling children in school relies with the families.”

Improving quality of education until the end of compulsory schooling

The Education Law establishes that the educational system will welcome the entire school population, acknowledging personal and cultural diversity as an inherent characteristic of the society they live in. Young Roma population is, in general terms, less educated than the rest of the young Spanish population. According to official reports and research from third-sector entities, 64.4 per cent of Roma aged from 16 to 24 have not achieved the compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) degree. This means that almost seven out of ten young Roma people between 16 and 24 years old do not satisfactorily finish the compulsory education level in Spain.

The integration of Roma students into secondary education is still an important step to be made by schools and Roma families. Before the adoption of the “Organic Law for the General Planning of the Educational System of Spain” (LOGSE), almost all Roma students terminated their studies at the age of 14. Although this fact is disregarded, there is still a lack of regular attendance and high school absenteeism at this stage. 47 per cent of the entire Roma population has obtained the Graduate degree in ESO and 24.7 per cent have completed non-compulsory secondary education. Despite the available statistics, it must be emphasised that the integration of Roma students into compulsory education is being done gradually and firmly, according to FSG in the “Study on Educational Normalisation”. This study established five analysis variables:

1. Access to school centres.
2. Learning of daily rhythms and routines.
3. Social interaction in class.
4. School achievements based on the school curriculum.
5. The relationship between the Roma student, his/hr family and the centre.

Regarding access to pre-school and primary school, this study shows that 93.2 per cent of Roma students are enrolled in both when they turn six years old, the compulsory school age. It would be desirable if, at six years old, 100 per cent of Roma children were enrolled in primary school. However, an optimistic view for the nearest future stems from the fact that 84.5 per cent of Roma families in 2013 enrolled their children in pre-school or school before the age of six years old (compared to 79 per cent in 1994).

Research gives us some light on the learning of rhythms and routines for Roma students and their behaviour development in time. For example, during the 2009 school year, 77 per cent of the students participated in and followed the work routine normally, without missing long periods from school. It is necessary to emphasise that in the analysis carried

⁶⁸ Complete report available at: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/76/26/normalizacion_educativa.pdf

out in 2001, the rate was 68 per cent and in 1994 only 43 per cent attended school on a regular basis.

The advances are significant in this area. Nevertheless, one should not forget three important realities of compulsory education: school drop-out, school failure and educational segregation in “ghetto schools”.

With regard to the school drop-out rate, different projects and campaigns have been carried out to promote the integration and keeping of Roma children in compulsory education.⁶⁹ Also, we are following an ascending trend with regards to young Roma people who finish compulsory studies. This green trend should not make us fall into the trap that the work has already been done or that the trend is not going to reverse in the upcoming years. It is necessary to maintain and extend the activities, reach out to more schools, collaborate with more families and continue working to empower Roma children school enrolment. For that it is necessary to help Roma children feel integrated, and teach Roma history in Spain in order to make the Roma feel they matter and are taken into consideration in the preparation of the educational curriculum. Thus, the authors would like to point out the campaign developed by FSG on behalf of the Spanish Advisory Council of the Roma People (CEPG), named “Samuel’s question” (*La pregunta de Samuel*).⁷⁰ This campaign is a clear example of how a communication action can influence and convince the public opinion and the country’s political representatives to make positive changes in the case of the Roma students.

There is the need for improvement along these lines of intervention in order to continue moving forward in the fight against school drop-out, which is dramatic among Roma compared to the Spanish society.

As described in the education bulletin of the National Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in its February 2014 edition,⁷¹ “enrolment in different school levels of Roma children up to the age of 14 are very similar to those of the population as a whole. It is from the age of 15 that the number of Roma students enrolled in school starts to decrease on a constant basis, with a high drop rate of 30.8 per cent between 15 and 16 years old, years during which they finalise the mandatory school preparation. Between 12-24 years old, 61.1 per cent of men and 64.3 per cent of women drop out of school. Girls show higher drop-out rates at younger ages, from 10 to 14 years old, and at 15 the situation is reversed”. More recent data or reports are not available about these phenomena. During a discussion of this issue with Mr. Antonio Vazquez (Roma Education work group coordinator at CEPG), he said that “*for the lack of data and analysis, thinking about my own experience, there are different causes: cultural and economic causes, lack of monitoring and traceability by the public administration, as well as a widespread lack of confidence of Roma in education centres (both primary and secondary schools) regarding the protection Roma women need [...] On the other hand, there are also cause related to identity, both Roma and gadye. After five centuries of demolishing Roma identity, such as language, occupations, clothing, cultural racism based on cultural appropriation of Roma cultural expressions [...] and other*”. It means that Roma identity is mostly viewed as related to religious and moral issues, including guarding of single Roma women’s virginity.

⁶⁹ It is not possible here to make a list of all the projects that have been carried out during the recent years that favour the integration and maintenance of Roma children in compulsory education. For example, the *Promociona Programme* led by FSG can be highlighted, the *School Promoters Programme* implemented by *Pere Closa Private Foundation* or the *Learning Communities* promoted by CREA. Regarding awareness campaigns, the ones carried out by FSG under the motto “When I grow up, I want to be ...” is an example of educational promotion campaign.

⁷⁰ See more information about the campaign at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woKPB7tXP5g>

⁷¹ Available at http://educalab.es/documents/10180/62610/boletin14_febrero2015/a34157dc-caf1-491c-b36c-44c94bf66ff6

It must be added that the enrolment rates of Roma women are lower than those of Roma men, as opposed to what happens in the population as a whole.⁷²

Among the reasons for school drop-out, research on Roma students shows that only 5.5 per cent declared that they dropped out „because they had finished their studies ...”, however 40 per cent declared that they abandoned their studies to try entering the labour market either by their own decision (27.3 per cent) or because of their family’s pressure or desire (12.7 per cent). Family matters are also an important factor when dropping out of school, 8.1 per cent of students abandoned their studies because they were married and 28.4 per cent had to take care of their siblings. It must be highlighted that 10 per cent of young people left school because of boredom and lack of interest, and it is striking that 6.4 per cent do not know the reason why they dropped out of school.⁷³

Regarding school failure, the same study from 2014 reports that “Roma are, in general terms, less educated than the whole group of young people. While 64.4 per cent of Roma between 16-24 years old have not achieved the Graduate degree in ESO, for the rest of the society only 13.3 per cent in this age group did not achieve it. In addition, only 8.9 per cent of Roma have completed high school or Vocational Intermediate Education and only 2.6 per cent have finished higher education. While academic results, divided by gender, in the population as a whole are notable, women have a school failure rate of 11.5 per cent compared to the rate of 15 per cent in men; at the same time, there are no greater differences among Roma students. Roma students repeat academic courses more during the first cycle of ESO, with a rate of 41.8 per cent for the second year, that is 29 per cent more than the global rate for the same year, which stands at 12.8 per cent. In the third and fourth years of ESO, the repetition rates decrease to 19 per cent and 14 per cent respectively, coming close to the ones of the total population”.⁷⁴

Fight against discrimination, segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in education

Regarding school segregation, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), recommended in its “Fifth ECRI Report in Spain” (2017) that the Spanish Government take measures to ensure an equitable distribution of student places for immigrants and Roma children.⁷⁵

According to the report published by KAMIRA and *Fundación Mario Maya* in 2017, 3 per cent of Roma children go to schools in Spain where all students are Roma and 28 per cent go to schools where the majority of students are Roma.

School segregation is not a new issue in Spain, as it has existed for many years, introduced by various public policies, such as Bridge Schools. Today the elimination of schools with a high number of Roma students has not been done yet. As the “Report on School Segregation of Roma Students in Spain” states, “*school segregation is frequently associated with residential segregation, as a result of the housing policies of the 1980s and 1990s that led to the formation of neighbourhoods with a high concentration of Roma population, that in many cases became areas with a high degree of social exclusion. Such neighbourhoods with a high number of Roma populations are still a reality nowadays. This is a factor to consider because the greater percentage of Roma population in a neighbourhood, the higher the percentage of Roma students in the school*”.

⁷² The electronic bulletin available at: http://educalab.es/documents/10180/62610/Boletin3_Febrero2014.pdf/96a096d2-6b3d-4bab-805f-9465e9df6025

⁷³ *Idem*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Idem*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁵ *The 5th ECRI Report in Spain*, published in 2018, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-spain-spanish-translation-/16808b56cb>

School segregation was the topic of interest for the April 8 celebration organised by FSG with the hashtag *#NoQuieroUnaEscuelaSegregada* [*#IDon'tWantSegregatedSchools*]. This campaign was aimed at sensitising the society and especially the public authorities about the "unfair situation that has serious consequences on the education quality, by reducing learning opportunities for Roma children, affecting social cohesion and mutual knowledge, and perpetuating discrimination and inequality".⁷⁶

One of the key elements to improve the maintenance in school and educational success of Roma students is the preparation, training and motivation of the teaching staff. In Spain, teachers must have the necessary degree that corresponds to the level of education they want to teach. Thus, teachers in general must have a degree in early childhood, primary or secondary education, which are compulsory education levels in Spain.

Reviewing the curriculum of subjects of the faculties of education we find that in most of them diversity does not appear as a compulsory topic. However, there is a possibility that the future graduate in primary education will get a "mention in attention to diversity".⁷⁷ In a general way and without wanting to fall into a simplistic analysis, the authors of this report notice that the majority of special mentions focus their attention on functional diversity and leave out ethnic diversity or interculturality.

In this field especially, there is a structural obstacle. The NRIS does not consider school segregation to be one of the main problems. According to the opinion of the authors of this report, this is probably the most important issue, but the NRIS ignores it.

⁷⁶ The campaign available at: <http://www.noquierounaescuelasegregada.org/>

⁷⁷ The mentions are curricular intensifications or itineraries intended to provide specialised training within a knowledge field. As indicated in the 861/2010 Royal Decree of 2 July 2010, in section 3 of article 9, "the design of the degrees may include references to itineraries or curricular intensifications".

LOCAL CASE STUDY: NAVARRA – PROGRAMME „HEALTH PROMOTION OF ROMA ETHNIC MINORITY”

The Roma population of Navarra is approximately 7,553 people, which represents approximately 1.2 per cent of the total population of this autonomous region. The indicators show us that the Roma of Navarra, similar to the cases in the rest of Spain, is younger than the rest of the population. In the field of health, Roma from Navarra follows the same pattern as the rest of Spain, such as obesity and weight problems, smoking, etc.

The authors of this report have chosen the health promotion programme for the Roma minority because it was one of the first programmes that were implemented as a practical and real response for decreasing the health and social inequalities the Roma population faces. The programme began in 1987 and involved collaboration between third-sector parties and the public administration. In 1987 the programme targeted four basic health areas and in 2005 it was extended to 15 areas, while having direct contact with more than half of the Roma population living in Navarra. The programme currently includes 24 basic health areas and covers 32 locations and their corresponding health centres, to which some more must be added on demand. The programme has been implemented in the areas with the largest Roma population in the Navarra region (but has not been replicated in other Spanish regions, because, in the meanwhile, they started to implement their own Integral Roma Actions Plans).

The programme has one main objective and that is to reduce health inequalities and improve Roma's health through four instruments:

- Training Roma health mediators,
- Coordination and collaboration with local and central authorities,
- Peer education,
- Roma empowerment and participation.

The programme has three main partners at the central and coordination levels:

- The Public Health Institute: a technical-assistance organisation, specialising in health promotion and surveillance, prevention and intervention on collective health problems. It works closely with the Directorate of Primary Care. Both are structures of the Department of Health of the Government of Navarra.
- Roma associations:
 - Federation of Roma Associations of Navarra *Gaz Kaló*: a federation whose mission is to coordinate, complement and provide services to Roma associations, favouring dialogue with different sectors of the society (public administration, other entities, mass media, political parties, etc.) in order to promote treatment equality, social promotion, cultural identity and the image of the Roma from Navarra.
 - *La Majarí* Roma Association: an organisation that works for the integral promotion of the Roma collective, and in parallel for the strengthening their own culture. It primarily serves Roma from Pamplona and its region.
 - Roma Association *La Romaní*: an association that promotes the development and social integration of Roma, recognition of their culture and information campaigns on the situation of poverty and social exclusion. It is mainly aimed at the Roma population of Tudela and its region.
- The following actors are usually involved in each implementation area:
 - The primary healthcare centre (a social worker, responsible for the commission and in contact with the central coordinator).
 - The social services of the municipality (a technician).

- Educational centres (a representative).
- A Roma association (one person).
- The health promoter who is a Roma person from the implementation area. There are currently ten promoters hired (nine women and one man).

The Roma promoter is a key figure in the implementation of this project, since it is a member of the community who knows the health system, the social protection system and the educational system and that acts as a "bridge" between the Roma and the services provided by the administration. The work of the mediators, called "health agents", consists of:⁷⁸

- Reporting on activities and operation of services in the area.
- Advice and support in different health situations: vaccinations, periodic health check-ups (children, pregnant women, chronic patients, etc.).
- Support offered for rehabilitation treatments, drug addiction, mental health, breast cancer prevention, children's oral health, prosthetics, etc.

Health promoters also have competences in implementing activities and finding resources for health promotion in collaboration with organisations such as the Red Cross, *Cáritas*, etc. At the moment, they are key agents for those Roma who find themselves in confusing situations, of not understanding certain aspects of health care, such as healthy lifestyles, diagnoses, medical tests, etc.

Health agents receive prior training for performing their duties, which has the following key points:

- Roma population health needs: chronic diseases, lifestyles, mental health, positive parenting, and children's and women's health.
- Topics such as personal empowerment on how to combat stress, how to manage workload and how to raise awareness about the socio-economic conditions faced by Roma, and about the culture and health of the Roma people.
- The operation of other services used Roma, such as, social services, education, housing, employment and work.
- Different aspects of health education; for example, vaccinations, health programmes and resources, family planning, healthy habits, and substance abuse.

The programme has achieved the following results for the families it collaborated with in the different areas mentioned below:

- Primary health care: 100 per cent have an individual health card that provides accessibility to the public health system; almost 100 per cent of boys and girls are considered to have completed the vaccination scheme; and 60.2 per cent of boys and girls participate in the children's dental prevention program.
- Women's health: regarding the centres for sexual and reproductive health, among women of reproductive age: 62 per cent use such services, almost 100 per cent use birth control, 25 per cent attend birth preparation courses, and 72 per cent participate in the breast cancer prevention program.
- Health education: it includes individual, group and community networking with a total of 56 group workshops that include 657 sessions and participation in a total of eight professional networks. These projects addressed the health issues that were identified by means of assessing the needs of the Roma.

⁷⁸ Data collected from the programme. These statistics can be found at: <http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/04CC0542-D742-42BB-ADCE-49B2F7BB7939/232874/TRIPticocomunidadgitana.pdf>

- School attendance: 90 per cent of Roma children attend school until the age of 12 (primary school) and only 33 per cent continue their compulsory secondary education up until they reach 16 years old. There are also high levels of absenteeism.

Thus, it is worth to mention the qualitative results of the programme. “The Health Promotion Programme of Ethnic Minorities in Navarra” has been successful in empowering Roma communities by means of active participation and by taking control of their own health and its determinants. Health education in Roma communities has improved. Cross-sectoral collaboration has benefited Roma communities and public service professionals, since prejudice has been reduced and mutual understanding and acceptance increased.

The programme is financed every year through a grant from the Department of Health of the Government of Navarra, which in 2019 has amounted to 230,000 EUR with the expectation to continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Employment

1. To include young Roma as a special target group of the youth employment strategy and youth guarantee programme:

The number of young Roma who neither study nor work is much higher than the rest of the young population of Spain. It is necessary to take advantage of the young employment strategy and the youth guarantee programme to establish a plan for improving the access to the labour market of young Roma aged between 16 and 25 years, adapted to the reality of this target group, where the majority have family responsibilities and low level of education or training.

2. To develop entrepreneurial actions engaging Roma:

It is necessary to train and support young Roma to develop their own ideas and become entrepreneurs who are close to their community, both in neighbourhoods and in business spaces.

3. To establish school-to-work transition actions, especially for Roma women:

The transition from compulsory education to the labour market should be a priority in the post-2020 strategy. Supporting young Roma women within the framework of the programme and help them access the labour market is essential for the improvement of both skills and autonomy, as well as for self-esteem in this particular target group.

4. To fight against discrimination and antigypsyism in employment:

It is necessary to promote awareness campaigns among Roma for them to learn how to recognise and understand discrimination in the field of employment. Public authorities should act upon receiving such complaints and reports against companies and employers who commit racist or discriminating acts.

Housing and essential public services

5. To fight against residential segregation:

It is necessary to fight against the residential segregation of Roma, which is also the cause of other segregations, such as segregation in schools. In this fight, it is necessary to bring together public administrations to engage with Roma organisations and develop a strategy against segregation that will propose specific measures and rely on an adequate budget in order to face such issues. Such an anti-segregation strategy should be integrated into housing plans, both at national and regional levels.

6. To incorporate criteria for accessing public housing that can be accessed by the most vulnerable groups among Roma:

Having a decent home is a right recognised by the Spanish Constitution. The criteria for accessing social housing should take into account the situation of Roma families, and especially the young Roma, who are not able to take upon themselves the expenses of living in social houses, such as rent, community payment, etc. Public authorities need to take marginal and economical situations like these into account and support young Roma families in the process.

7. To reduce slums and Roma overcrowded households:

Despite the advances made regarding housing, there are still Roma families living in slums and sub-standard housing. The new housing plan should carry out interventions aimed to eliminating shanty towns in Spain. The economic crisis that Spain still

struggles with has led many families to allow their children to live in their homes despite having reached adulthood and getting married. This has led to the average number of family members per house, for the Roma population, to be close to five. The lack of means and support to face the emancipation of young Roma households is a problem that must be faced in the upcoming years.

Impact of health care policies on Roma

8. To promote programmes for health mediators with the Roma People.

It is necessary to continue and expand the health mediator programmes among Roma communities, as advised through various recommendations of the Council of Europe. Roma mediators serve as references for the promotion of both prevention and access to healthcare services.

9. To maintain and increase in a consistent manner the education and training of university students in the healthcare field:

Understanding the different healthcare needs of different patient groups is the key to a correct diagnosis and to appropriate and efficient recovery solutions. The training of health professionals who will be responsible for working directly with Roma is essential and should be included in the curriculum of the degrees, such as nursing, medicine, social work, etc.

10. To support the collaboration between Roma organisations and the public health administration to improve Roma's healthy habits:

Roma organisations are the first contact point for the Roma. Promotion of joint protocols and projects between public administrations and Roma organisations will contribute to promotion of healthy habits, including exercising and healthy eating, thus contributing to improving health standards among Roma.

Education

11. To include Roma history and culture in the curriculum of compulsory education:

It is necessary that the history and culture of Roma to be integrated into the academic curriculum. This should include Roma reference and identity elements and celebrate the most important Roma days, such as the International Roma Day on 8 April, *Samudaripen* on 2 August, etc., so that the educational system is not completely ignorant of Roma history and culture.

12. To establish mediation between families and the education system:

It is important to continue and support programmes such as school promotion in which the school promoter becomes an important link between school and families, with the aim of bringing families closer to the educational centre and the educational community closer to Roma families.

13. To promote second chance projects among young Roma and access to university for those over 25 years old:

Many young Roma marry between the ages of 17 and 20, the age at which many of them drop-out of school. The results registered by the *Generalitat de Catalunya* by promoting university access for young Roma over the age of 25 could be replicated at national level since many Roma people at that age have the opportunity to return to the educational system.

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