



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

*Identifying blind spots
in Roma inclusion policy*

Prepared by:
SMS Craft for Consulting and Services
May 2020



Justice
and Consumers

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
Directorate D — Equality and Union Citizenship
Unit D1 Non Discrimination and Roma Coordination

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

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

Identifying blind spots in Roma inclusion policy

***EUROPE DIRECT is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union***

Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you)

LEGAL NOTICE

"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

PDF ISBN 978-92-76-19941-0 doi:10.2838/825404 Catalogue number DS-04-20-337-EN-N

© European Union, 2020
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

The report has been prepared by Mr Sinisa-Senad Musić, independent consultant.

The report has been prepared as part of the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, 'Capacity-building for Roma civil society and strengthening its involvement in the monitoring of National Roma Integration Strategies'. The pilot project is carried out for the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers. It is coordinated by the *Center for Policy Studies* of the Central European University (CEU CPS), in partnership with the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* (FSG) and the Roma Education Fund (REF) and implemented with around 90 NGOs and experts from up to 27 member states.

Although the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, as part of which the report was prepared, is coordinated by CEU, the report represents the findings of the author and it does not necessarily reflect the views of CEU. CEU cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
INTRODUCTION	9
ROMA YOUTH PARTICIPATION	13
Definition of the problem	13
Background and cause of the problem	14
Policy answer to the problem.....	18
ROMA CHILDREN IN ADOPTIVE NON-ROMA FAMILIES	19
Definition and cause of the problem	19
Policy answer to the problem.....	20
RECOMMENDATIONS	22
ANNEX: A CHECKLIST FOR POST-2020 ROMA STRATEGY	24
Background.....	24
The checklist.....	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY	26

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMS	Centre for Peace Studies
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategy
RCM	Roma Civil Monitor
RYO	Roma Youth Organisation
RYO CRO	Roma Youth Organisation of Croatia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report is the result of the third annual cycle of the Roma Civil Monitor project in Croatia aimed at monitoring implementation of the Croatian National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS).¹ The report is focusing on two topics: Roma youth participation and Roma children in adoptive non-Roma families. Additionally, the report includes an annex with a checklist for development of the post-2020 policy document in Croatia.

Roma youth participation

The participation of Roma youth in different spheres of life, such as the labour market, politics or civil society, is not satisfactory in general. Roma youth face a double disadvantage – discriminated against because of their ethnicity by the mainstream society and discriminated against because of their age by their own community and employers. As a consequence, the Roma youth voice is not heard, and the needs of Roma youth are not represented anywhere; this is particularly serious in the case of youth from the segregated settlements.

There are also barriers on the side of the Roma youth that prevent them from more meaningful and effective participation; these barriers include: lack of motivation, lack of self-esteem, and a lack of the necessary skills and other resources (economic and social) to participate in public decision-making or civic self-organising. These obstacles and their lack of participation reproduces their marginalisation. As the author of this report has experienced personally and can attest, increased integration into mainstream society and increased personal growth sometimes result in Roma individuals becoming alienated from the marginalised part of Roma society. This further limits the possibilities for such individuals to take on leadership roles and participate both in mainstream society and in the marginalised part of Roma society.

Roma children in adoptive non-Roma families

This topic has never been addressed in Croatia, and because of personal data protection regulations, it is very hard to get any statistics about how many Roma children are growing up in adoptive non-Roma families.

However, those interviewed for this report stated that non-Roma families who adopt Roma children need special support, both structural and targeted. Roma children need to be in touch with their origins, and adoptive non-Roma parents need to have support to address the manifestations of antigypsyism that their children and their entire family may face, as adoptive non-Roma parents are seldom prepared for this aspect of adopting a Roma child.

The needs of this group should be addressed in the post-2020 NRIS and in the country's de-institutionalisation reform strategy.

¹ The first annual cycle of the Roma Civil Monitor (RCM) was focused on the horizontal preconditions of Roma inclusion – governance, the fight against antigypsyism, and anti-discrimination. The second cycle concerned the four key policy fields of education, employment, healthcare and housing. All reports are available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/roma-civil-monitor-reports>

INTRODUCTION

The Roma population in Croatia is small; the last Census from 2011 identified 16,975 Roma, or 0.5-1.0 per cent of the total population. However, recent research has presented a higher number of around 25,000 Roma living in Croatia.² The country's legal and policy framework draws a significant distinction among the members of the Roma national minority compared to the Roma population in general. While the former group refers to self-declared Roma who have Croatian citizenship, the latter group includes the Roma who do not have Croatian citizenship, as well as Croatian citizens who have not self-declared as Roma. In Croatia, the differences between these two groups are enormous; the Roma national minority has special rights guaranteed by the Constitutional Act on Minorities and can benefit from the available affirmative measures planned within the NRIS. On the other hand, the Roma who do not have the status of officially belonging to the national minority are not entitled to such measures.

The current policy documents relevant to Roma inclusion are the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013-2020 (NRIS)³ and the Action Plan for NRIS Implementation 2019-2020.⁴ (Croatia did not have an Action Plan for implementation of the NRIS during 2017 and 2018).⁵ The central government has established a special committee for monitoring NRIS implementation where national authorities report about the measures realised and Roma members of the committee provide the national authorities' representatives with feedback on these measures at the local and regional level.⁶ The implementation of the Croatian NRIS has also been externally evaluated.⁷ Every local and regional government is recommended to develop an action plan for Roma inclusion, as long as there is a defined number of Roma inhabitants on their territory, but in reality, many of them have failed to do so. In practice, the leadership on the Roma agenda is more often taken up by the regional governments than by local governments. Counties are the ones that are taking leadership at the regional level for Roma integration.⁸

During 2019, there were significant changes in the area of education. The national scholarship for Roma in tertiary education was increased by 30 per cent and is currently

² See: Roma Civil Monitor (2018) *Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Croatia: Focusing on structural and horizontal preconditions for successful implementation of the strategy*, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-croatia-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>

³ National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2013-2020, available at: <https://www.zagreb.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/Nacionalna%20strategija%20za%20uklju%C4%8Divanje%20Roma%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202013.%20do%202020.pdf>

⁴ Action Plan for NRIS Implementation 2019-2020, available at: <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Akcijски%20plan%20za%20provedbu%20Nacionalne%20strategije%20za%20uklju%C4%8Divanje%20Roma%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202013.%20do%202020.%20godine.%20za%202019.%20i%202020.%20godinu.pdf>

⁵ As the first RCM report related (*op cit.* note 2), the political situation at that time was unstable, given that the newly elected government had fallen and new elections held in early 2016; as a consequence of this instability, the NRIS was not revised. Thus, the Committee for the Monitoring of the NRIS implementation was not established in 2016, and the Action Plan for the implementation of the NRIS following 2015 was not developed either. When a Government is not stable, these issues are not prioritized. Also, the NRIS and Action Plan developed by the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights and its documents need to be adopted by the Croatian Parliament. That office is also under-resourced and understaffed.

⁶ For more information, please see: Roma Civil Monitor (2018) (*op cit.* note 2).

⁷ Evaluation of National Roma inclusion strategy: <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Evaluation%20of%20Croatian%20NRIS%20-%20Report%20EN.pdf> <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Evaluation%20of%20Croatian%20NRIS%20-%20Report%20EN.pdf>

⁸ For more information please see Roma Civil Monitor (2018) (*op cit.* note 2).

equivalent to approximately 175 EUR per month. The national scholarship for Roma in secondary education also was increased by 40 per cent and is currently approximately 95 EUR per month. In the academic year 2019/2020, the number of Roma tertiary students in Croatia has increased to an historic level of at least 32.⁹ The Government Office for Human and Minority Rights is preparing a national campaign with the goal of supporting and motivating Roma to continue their education, which should be launched during 2020.¹⁰ On the other hand, some positive measures concerning scholarships for Roma in tertiary and secondary education in the City of Zagreb have been withdrawn. The change has disadvantaged the Roma as potential beneficiaries of the scholarships compared to other targeted groups: while applicants for the scholarships programme for other disadvantaged target groups are entitled to support after having resided in the city for one year, applicants to the special dedicated scholarship programme for Roma need to have at least five years' residency (interestingly, members of the city's Roma council have supported this measure, as they are trying to preserve these limited resources to support local Roma of longer tenure in the community).

When it comes to employment, many Roma have been employed in recent years (since 2017).¹¹ The reason for this is not the measures provided by the Croatian employment office for Roma, but the bigger market demand for labour. Many Croatian citizens have emigrated away from Croatia and the country is facing the challenge of a lack of human capacity on the labour market. This has provided employment opportunities for Roma and for people from less-developed countries from the region and from beyond Europe. Employment of Roma has a positive impact on other areas of Roma inclusion.¹²

Beyond these positive developments, the rise of anti-Roma racism is of concern in Croatia, and in particular in Međimurje County. Roma are being depicted in the media more often as people who misuse income from social benefits in order to consume alcohol and gamble.¹³ Stereotypes concerning the Roma community are intensifying and they are being portrayed as people who steal and commit other criminal acts.¹⁴ Regional authorities and the Government have reacted by preparing punitive measures against poor Roma

⁹ Author's own calculation based on reviewing the number of beneficiaries of Roma scholarships and data collection from students. The real number, including those not benefitting from the Roma scholarships or not participating in Roma youth and student networks/activities may be even higher.

¹⁰ For more information on education, see: Roma Civil Monitor (2019) *Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Croatia: Assessing the progress in four key areas of the strategy*, available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-croatia-2018-eprint-fin.pdf>

¹¹ The 2019 Roma Civil Monitor report (*op cit.* note 10) found that in recent years Croatia has encountered the problem of emigration of working age adults. The resulting demand for labour is affecting the entire country and providing Roma with more opportunities to work - more than employment policies have. Indeed, in the last few years the number of employed Roma has been increasing due to this phenomenon. From January until June 2017, 430 Roma became employed, of which 135 were Roma women, including Roma with an elementary education only (155), followed by Roma without an elementary education (129) and Roma with a vocational education (122). The biggest number of employed Roma were men between 20 and 24 years old (111). During the same period, just 200 Roma (127 men and 73 women) were employed by public works measures and only a very few Roma through other state measures (seven through the "employment support" measure and just one through support for self-employment). There are no specific data available about the sectors in which Roma are employed, but based on the education status reported and on the author's personal experience, they apparently are working in factories, on construction sites, and a certain number work during the summer tourist season at campgrounds and hotels, mostly in cleaning and food service (not as professionals).

¹² For more information on employment, see: Roma Civil Monitor (2019) (*op cit.* note 10)

¹³ <https://epodravina.hr/video-medimurci-zele-uvesti-vaucere-za-rome-orsus-nije-istina-da-trosimo-na-alkohol-i-kocku/>

¹⁴ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/crna-kronika/detalji-strave-u-medimurju-ovo-nije-prvi-put-da-je-nozem-nasnuo-na-zenu-a-do-svade-je-doslo-zbog-optuzbi-za-seksualno-zlostavljanje-kceri/9984967/>

instead of trying to help them to escape their poverty and marginalisation.¹⁵ This growing social tension can be illustrated by a movement calling itself “*Želim normal život u Međimurju*” [“I want a normal life in Međimurje”], some of whose founders belong to the far-right of the political spectrum,¹⁶ that is gaining greater media visibility and mainstream political support. Even some Roma politicians seeking to score political points support this initiative.¹⁷ The movement organises anti-Roma protests that are echoed by social media users. Openly racist social media posts dehumanise Roma, call for their extermination, and praise Hitler or Pavelić (the leader of the Croat fascist *Ustaše* movement). In response to this tension, the Government sent additional police force members and social workers to Međimurje County, but the situation has not improved.

One of the impacts of the RCM pilot project implementation in Croatia has been that such phenomena have been clearly called antigypsyism, a term that had not been used before in the country. This phenomenon has been recognised by the civil society groups (the NGOs Centre for Peace Studies (CMS) and the Roma Youth Organisation (RYO)) that were engaged in the development of an intercultural course for Roma mediators, which will include antigypsyism as one of the topics (the course was planned for March 2020 but had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus crisis).

Although the Croatian Government has demonstrated political will to tackle the problem of Roma exclusion and has financed inclusion measures (with significant use of EU funds), recently this topic seems to be losing its priority on the political agenda, according to interviewees.¹⁸ The current NRIS, which is valid until the end of 2020, is considered a strong policy document despite some specific weaknesses discussed in its evaluation. The government has taken steps to collect baseline data to enable future evaluations of NRIS implementation. All these aspects should be taken into account when Croatia develops the new strategic document on its Roma inclusion strategy after 2020, as discussed in the annex to this report.

The two main chapters of this report were selected in consultation with both non-Roma and Roma civil society and concern two issues that have not been sufficiently addressed by the current Roma inclusion policy: Roma youth participation, and support to non-Roma families with adopted Roma children. These subjects were chosen through a process in which a broad range of stakeholders (including NGOs and experts) had to select their “top three” themes from among a list of potential topics and then prioritise their selections. The high-scoring subjects were then discussed with the civil society representatives and the RCM team. Interestingly, one potential subject was excluded by non-Roma civil society: the quality of education in segregated classes. This was seen by the Roma civil society representatives as possibly problematic, because it could be perceived as inherently promoting segregation and could risk the need for desegregation no longer being focused on; a lack of quality data about this issue from which to draw conclusions was also considered problematic.

During the research, the author organised one focus group in Poreč with 15 young Roma and another in Marija Bistrica with 14 Roma and two non-Roma participants. Another focus group was organised with stakeholders from the Croatian Employment Office, the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, the City of Zagreb, and County of Međimurje. The interviewed individuals included a Roma MP, Mr. Veljko Kajtazi; the president of the Roma umbrella association in Croatia “*Kali Sara*”, Ms Suzana Krčmar; representatives of 22 other Roma

¹⁵ <http://hr.n1info.com/Vijesti/a487175/Kajtazi-protiv-vaucera-za-Rome-u-Medjmurju.html>;
<https://www.mnovine.hr/hrvatska/aktualno/matija-posavec-o-prijedlogu-izdavanja-vaucera-za-socijalu-vrijeme-je-da-svi-u-ovoj-drzavi-shvate-da-onaj-koji-ima-odredena-prava-mora-imati-i-odredene-obaveze/>

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/zelimnormalanzivotumedjmurju/>

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/pernari/videos/1257427914454394/>

¹⁸ Opinions provided by representatives of local Councils of the Roma National Minority and Roma civil society interviewed for this report.

and non-Roma associations; four non-Roma mothers of families who adopted Roma children; workers in the welfare system; Roma individuals; and representatives of the Councils of the Roma National Minority in Međimurje, Zagreb and Slavonski Brod. Additional information needed for the second chapter on adoptive non-Roma families was obtained through an interview with a representative of the association "Adopta". Two Roma students were involved in the research and writing of the report: Mr Milan Horvat, student in a BA teaching program; and Ms Marina Horvat, student in a BA law programme.

ROMA YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Definition of the problem

Young¹⁹ Roma face a double disadvantage because of their ethnicity and age. The latter is related, on the one hand, to the traditional patriarchal cultural patterns within the Roma community that do not support proactive behaviour or leadership by youth, and on the other hand to the weak position of young people with limited or no previous work experience in the labour market.²⁰ As a consequence, Roma participation in every field (politics, Roma or mainstream civil society, the media, the labour market, parents' councils of schools) is very low and not enough to have an impact.

Young Roma face many problems and challenges besides this discrimination, such as early marriages, the expectations of patriarchal society, and a lack of motivation for and support with completing and continuing their education. They do not participate in decision-making processes that are going to have an effect on them and their voices are not heard. These issues are more visible among Roma from segregated settlements. Without their active participation, the needs of young Roma remain marginalised and not specifically addressed. Even if there are some activities or measures focused on young Roma, they are not developed, led by or owned by them, which has a negative impact on these activities' real effectiveness and sustainability.

When it comes to participation in mainstream youth structures, like local youth clubs, youth councils, or Croatian youth networks, there are no young Roma involved in these.²¹ There is a small number of Roma youth associations but only two of them are active – the Roma Youth Organisation of Croatia and the Roma Youth Association "Better Future". In both cases the leaders of the associations are males between 30 and 40 years old.

As far as local or regional Councils of the Roma National Minority are concerned,²² there are some young Roma participating in them, but not in leading positions. Only once so far has a young Roma man served as president of one of the councils, during the last mandate (2015-2019) of the Roma council in the City of Slavonski Brod.²³

Without recognition of the benefits of Roma youth participating in mainstream youth structures and in Roma platforms, Roma youth issues will stay marginalised, the opportunity for their inclusion will be missed, and specific Roma policies will be needed for a very long time.

¹⁹ Croatia's National Youth Programme defines young people as aged 15 to 30 years old.

https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Croatia_2014_National_Youth_Programme.pdf

²⁰ This problem of low employability concerns the Croatian youth in general. Therefore, the country implements a set of affirmative measures aimed at increasing young people's employment, similar to the affirmative measures targeting Roma.

²¹ Desk research and phone calls to Croatian youth network. Information gathered from more than 40 Roma from Čakovec, Orehovica, Slavonski Brod, Zagreb, Rijeka, Delnice, Beli Manastir, Mursko Središće, and Sisak.

²² See Roma Civil Monitor (2018) for more details on the councils.

²³ Desk research and interview with the Council of the Roma National Minority in Zagreb, Slavonski Brod and Podturen.

Background and cause of the problem

As a national minority group, the Roma have the youngest population in Croatia, with an average age of 21.9 years. The distribution among the different age categories of Roma up to 29 years of age is as follows:²⁴

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of people</i>
0-4	2,706
5-9	2,455
10-14	2,419
15-19	1,825
20-24	1,397
25-29	1,239

According to these data, 26.28 per cent of the Roma population belongs to the category of youth (aged 15-30, 4 461 people out of the total population of 16 975). The data also show that in the future, this percentage has the potential to increase, as more than 44 percent of the population belongs to the category of children.

At the beginning of the millennium the Roma civil society sector started to develop and Roma participation was needed. The law on national minorities provided a chance for Roma representatives to participate in councils at different levels and to nominate their reserved candidate to the Parliament. The Government provided funding for Roma participation. This opportunity window was used by some who took up positions as Roma leaders. This has included Roma women; currently, the leader of the Roma umbrella association *Kali Sara* and leaders of two other recognised NGOs, *Romska Srce* ("Roma Heart") and "Better Future", are women, and their number on the Roma councils is growing as well (although in many cases they do not play an active role in these councils); additionally, there are several Roma women activists recognised by both Roma and non-Roma. However, with rare exceptions, these activists are not from the young generation. One of the main problems today is that the transfer of leadership in political life and within Roma NGOs has not been organised yet. NGOs are perceived as providing opportunities for employment and/or for their leaders to be engaged politically. As a consequence, many NGOs do not actually represent a civil society that is organising people around a joint mission and vision. Instead, they are based on family relationships that do not allow the bottom-up transfer of leadership and also do not allow representation of the needs and interests of the current young generation of Roma.

The needs of the young Roma are multidimensional and differentiated by their life situations (for example, the needs of young Roma continuing in education²⁵ differ from those raising their own families). Moreover, when we refer to "young people", the age group is very broad and the needs among that group are diverse (for example, older "youth" are likely to have their own families, young people from segregated settlements are more likely to become parents at an earlier age, etc.). Roma who do not meet stereotypes (for example, those who are not married, who attend higher education, or who move to other town for work) are often rejected by the Roma community, especially

²⁴ Census 2011, p. 18, available at: https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2012/SI-1469.pdf

²⁵ According to data provided by the Education Ministry, at the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year there were 760 Roma in secondary education. The number of Roma college or university students is not officially recorded, but in the 2019/2020 academic year there were around 32 Roma in tertiary education. Moreover, some 10 per cent of Roma college or university students do not belong to the age category of "youth" and are older.

if they are coming from the segregated Roma communities. All these differences among age groups and among educational levels are reflected in different ways of life or diverging needs and are obstacles to the unification of young Roma around common goals and a shared mission and vision.²⁶

One might believe that lack of education could be an obstacle to youth participation. However, in reality, we can see that there are no active Roma associations among Roma students in Croatia either. Moreover, both Roma and pro-Roma NGOs or other institutions that have engaged in activities targeting Roma youth have reported a problem with reaching and including young Roma in the implementation of such activities. One explanation may be that young Roma were not involved in their planning and therefore did not feel a sense of ownership for such initiatives; as a consequence, their results are not sustainable.

For example, the Government's Office for Human and Minority Rights has organised annual gatherings of young Roma that have included workshops and pieces of training focused on different topics. However, the engagement of Roma youth in these gatherings has not been satisfactory – both in sense of the participants' satisfaction and in the number of attendees. Higher numbers can usually only be attained through "active" recruitment (e.g., organisations have to complete the young people's applications for them because otherwise they would not apply) and by softening the conditions for participation. This problem concerns not just training, but also job opportunities. The Roma Youth Organisation of Croatia (RYO CRO) opened 10 vacancies for young Roma people all over Croatia within an EC-funded project offering a six-month employment contract and a gross salary of 900 EUR per month, and there was still a lack of applicants.²⁷

This lack of interest among young Roma in participation is underlined by both Roma and pro-Roma NGOs, Roma leaders, and the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights. Many of these informants experienced these same problems when organising activities for young Roma.²⁸

Roma youth participation in mainstream youth structures

The Croatian Youth Network stated that they had made an effort to include a Roma NGO in their network - or at least one Roma individual - but reported a lack of interest from the Roma side. One Roma NGO had previously joined the network but had never been active.²⁹ The young Roma who participated in the focus group organised for this report explained why they do not participate in mainstream youth activities:³⁰

- "We do not have information regarding such associations and possibilities to actively participate."
- "We are far away from these [mainstream youth] clubs and networks."³¹
- "They do not address our needs and we are not in the same position as they are."

Young Roma do not recognise the benefits of participation in mainstream youth society, lack self-esteem, and think they are not "good enough" to be part of this kind of structure.

²⁶ Conclusion from a training for young Roma, Poreč, July 2019.

²⁷ The offered work consisted of job-shadowing in big non-Roma NGOs and then practical application of the acquired skills in Roma NGOs (being still paid by RYO CRO). Because of the corona-crisis the project was changed, and the participants are going to help children to catch up the school.

²⁸ Interviews with Roma and pro-Roma organisations, representatives of Government Office for Human and Minority rights and the Roma MP.

²⁹ Round table workshop on youth participation held in October 2017.

³⁰ Statements gathered during a focus group coinciding with a training for young Roma, Poreč, July 2019.

³¹ This is meant both in terms of physical distance and metaphorically in terms of mindset, based on the different needs of Roma youth compared to non-Roma youth.

Moreover, because of residential segregation, their physical access to such participation is more difficult and they do not have the necessary information about these opportunities or motivation to take advantage of them because of their limited contact with non-Roma. Another obstacle is that many Roma start their families at a young age, and their interest and possibility to participate is very different than their non-Roma peers.³²

Youth participation in Roma civil society

Roma youth are more interested in participation when it comes to Roma policies. They feel more secure in this field and are more interested in it, as they feel they can contribute more to the topic. The reason for their low level of interest in active participation (which is, however, higher than that of youth participation in mainstream structures) can be found in their statements:

- "Activities for Roma are organised while I am working, studying or at a time when I am not available."
- "I have a family and children, and this is what is preventing me from participating."
- "I do not have information about it."
- "I do not know how to apply, how to write a motivational letter."
- "It's far away."
- "The topic is not for me."

Problems of the active Roma youth NGOs (such as YRO or Roma Future) in organising young Roma and engaging them might be linked to the fact that they are led by older men between 30 and 40 years old, which can be particularly sensitive when organising activities for female youngsters, according to the interviewed NGO leaders' reflections. On the other hand, the two interviewed Roma NGOs said they have younger Roma in their structures, but even those young people are not able to reach, motivate, and engage Roma youth in these processes. As previously mentioned, Roma youth perceive the civil society sector as associated with business and politics. This is why many young Roma do not feel comfortable to enter the sector or realise that there are no available places for them there and that it is for older Roma leaders. During the research, the focus group participants said they had been willing to work in Roma NGOs, but their expectations had not been met at the beginning of their engagement.³³

The interviewed organisations explained that another problem concerns their limited capacity and financing, which also impacts youth participation. The interviewed youngsters said they are afraid to self-organise, as they find they do not have the skills to run associations or to find a way to finance their activity. It is very challenging to build an association; at the beginning, a lot of volunteering work needs to be done and specific knowledge to develop and run projects is needed (this is particularly challenging when it comes to projects with big budgets and EU-funded projects), as well as knowledge of how to manage an NGO. Roma with formal educations and the necessary motivation are mostly employed in companies, and thus have just a limited amount of personal time available for active participation in Roma civil society. Young Roma, especially if they have some

³² Focus group held in Poreč, July 2019 with 20 young Roma. Data show that 70 per cent of Roma between 15 and 18 are not in education (https://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/109/Roma_Inclusion_in_the_Croatian_Society.pdf). Most of those not in education begin their own families by the age of 21 and consider themselves already adult.

³³ The disappointment consisted, for example, in the fact that the NGOs are not able to provide the youngsters with stable employment from the beginning, or that the job includes a lot of desk work (such as project writing, which is considered particularly boring) when they expected to just do fieldwork. Another feedback was that as the most junior members of the team, they did not feel respected enough or were unable to participate in decision-making. Source: Focus group held in Poreč, July 2019 with 20 young Roma.

kind of education, rather satisfy their needs by finding jobs in Croatia or abroad, which is what has been happening quite often in recent years.³⁴

Roma youth participation in decision-making structures

The biggest amount of Roma youth participation is seen in the Roma National Minority Councils at local and regional levels. This can be explained by the fact that this participation is an outcome of affirmative action and of the rights of Roma to be represented in those structures if the number of registered Roma in a given territory meets the legal threshold.³⁵ Some councils include a significant number of young Roma men and women, but their level of participation is at the lowest level compared to older members. In many cases they are there just to support a political option led by male, older Roma.³⁶

Other support for Roma youth participation includes the awareness among institutions working on issues relevant for Roma inclusion that Roma participation is necessary: there is a Roma member (Mr Milan Mitrovic) on the advisory board of the Office of the Ombudswoman, and many institutions are aware of the Roma situation and want to finance projects focused on the Roma national minority to support Roma participation. The Croatian Employment Office has a special budget for Roma employment and pro-Roma NGOs include Roma NGOs or Roma activists in the implementation of their projects focused on the Roma national minority.³⁷

This type of focus has had an impact on the inclusion and participation of members of the Roma national minority, but the same focus is not applied to young Roma who are marginalised within their own communities, despite the fact that they represent a large number of people.

Personal experience and reflection by the author

I have personal experience of leading Roma youth NGOs (in the past, the NGO Roma Youth Organisation (RYO), and from 2019 until the present, another NGO called the Roma Youth Organisation of Croatia (RYIO CRO)). I actively work with young Roma, organising trainings, workshops and different activities for them. My observation is that young Roma are not recognised by the Roma community as leaders.

There is a big diversity also among young Roma; some are parents already at a young age and have to prioritise the care and well-being of their family, to ensure their financial stability. They usually have lower educations and face discrimination from the majority society. In many cases they are following in the footsteps of their parents and living in poverty. Another group, who has attained secondary education, begins working very early but faces difficulties in finding jobs or faces discrimination during their careers. They do not become Roma role models and mostly do difficult manual labour. One of their goals is how to find a way to have a decent life.

The third group, who makes their way through the higher levels of education and is also taking a bigger step towards integration into mainstream society, is the smallest. Representatives of this group still face discrimination from the majority, but they also face discrimination from the Roma community. In many cases they find jobs and then start families with non-Roma partners. Many try to work for the Roma, but just a few remain in jobs closely connected with Roma inclusion. As a consequence, they are not recognised as "Roma" anymore by the Roma community - and they tend to harbour prejudices about the

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ See Roma Civil Monitor (2018) for more details.

³⁶ Source: interviews and author's field research on gender dimension in the councils' work, conducted in 2014.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Roma community. A frequent statement by such educated Roma about marginalised Roma is: "If I could do it, they can do it too."

Therefore, there is a need for empowerment of marginalised Roma youth through targeted capacity-building and support for local, grassroots organisations in segregated settlements. This would enable the emergence of a leadership among those marginalised Roma who are the closest to socially excluded Roma youth. This type of leadership cannot be replaced by Roma belonging to - or perceived as belonging to - the élite. Urban Roma and older Roma also cannot lead marginalised Roma youth.

Policy answer to the problem

Young Roma are recognised by the NRIS and the Action Plan for its implementation for 2019/2020.³⁸ However, there are no specific measures to target the needs of young Roma. The main achievement of the NRIS and the Action Plan is that they specifically name women and youth as subgroups; however, no specific measures target those two groups.

General, mainstream policies are focused on all young people, but in many cases, they do not address the specific needs of young Roma. Roma policies and youth policies do have an impact on the life of young Roma, but the level of their participation in building these policies is not satisfactory to the young Roma and does not meet some of their special needs, which are not covered by either policy (such as educating them in parental skills, mentoring them during secondary and tertiary education, making youth structures accessible to them, providing them sex education from an early age, and making (social) housing available that would enable them to engage in employment). Neither the local, nor the regional, nor the national government has a special focus on financing the development of the Roma youth sector; without financial support, Roma youth participation will be hard to create and sustain.

In the last few years, the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights has tried to get Roma youth on board, and they organise trainings and workshops. In the current such project implemented by the Office they have planned to train at least 45 young Roma in Croatia to participate in monitoring the NRIS implementation at the local level. The first group was trained in 2019 and a follow-up is planned for Summer 2020.³⁹

The Roma MP, Mr Veljko Kajtazi, has invited Roma youth to organise a Roma Youth Congress in 2020 and offered financial support for this both from his own budget and from the budget of the NGO *Kali Sara*, the Roma umbrella association in Croatia.⁴⁰ The event did not take place because of the coronavirus crisis.

The Council of Europe (Department of Youth) also co-financed and co-organised several trainings for young Roma in 2018,⁴¹ and in September 2019 an expert seminar was held on the topic of supporting young Roma in the transition from education to employment.⁴²

³⁸ Available at:

<https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Akcijски%20plan%20za%20provedbu%20Nacionalne%20strategije%20za%20uklju%20C4%8Divanje%20Roma%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202013.%20do%202020.%20godine,%20za%202019.%20i%202020.%20godinu.pdf>

³⁹ Information gathered from representatives of the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights. For more information on the training, please see: <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/vijesti/odrzani-prvi-trening-za-aktivno-ukljucivanje-mladih-pripadnika-romske-nacionalne-manjine-u-provedbu-nacionalne-strategije-za-ukljucivanje-roma-od-3-do-5-srpnja-2019-godine-u-porecu/900>

⁴⁰ Information gathered during initial meeting of the young Roma in the NGO *Kali Sara*, October 2019.

⁴¹ <https://rm.coe.int/2018-training-workshop-call-for-participants-croatia-final/16808eb542>

⁴² Information gathered from Denis Durmish, representative of the Council of Europe. For more information, see: <https://rm.coe.int/expert-seminar-concept-final-2019-06-10/1680971a1b>

ROMA CHILDREN IN ADOPTIVE NON-ROMA FAMILIES

During the pre-research stage of the development of this report, this topic was flagged as among the most relevant for the RCM's third monitoring cycle because it has never been in the focus of Roma NGOs or activists and concerns issues that are neglected by the NRIS and mainstream policies. In this particular area it is very hard to get more detailed information because access to ethnic data about adopted children and their adoptive families is very limited. However, we interviewed four non-Roma mothers who adopted Roma children and one Roma child adopted by a non-Roma family.

It is important to note that this chapter does not discuss in detail the problem of the overrepresentation of Roma children removed by the state from their birth families and placed in foster care, whether in institutions or in foster/adoptive families. It also does not discuss the policies that cause that particular problem. Rather, it focuses on the special case of Roma children adopted by non-Roma families.

Definition and cause of the problem

Roma children are indeed overrepresented in institutions for abandoned children and for children removed from their birth families by the state.⁴³ The reasons for this are multidimensional. The measure of removing children from their birth families is the very last step social institutions will take to safeguard the interests of a child, and this ultimate measure should always be taken in the interest of a child's well-being.⁴⁴ The reasons for removing a child from his or her birth family are diverse, and sometimes such child-protection action needs to be taken immediately to protect the child. Some of the reasons reported including a housing environment that is unfit for children, domestic violence, or child molestation. Sometimes parents willingly ask social institutions to take care of their children (due to the parents' alcoholism, manifestations of extreme poverty, etc.).⁴⁵ After the children are removed from their birth families by the state, or after they are abandoned by their families, they are institutionalised. Such children receive structural support within those institutions (for example, support in their education, psychological services, etc.). Such children can be settled in foster families either immediately or after some time, but there is currently a lack of capacity within foster care families.⁴⁶

Six years ago there was an assumption that Roma children had less of a chance to be adopted, but this is not the case at the moment. There is a significant number of families registered for adoption who still have not managed to adopt a child, so the problems discussed here concern a growing number of families.⁴⁷ The problem of racism against Roma in Croatian society also remains unaddressed.

Roma children adopted by non-Roma families lose touch with their Roma identity. There is no support system available for them or their families during the process of their identification with an ethnicity perceived as problematic by mainstream society. If those children have a typically "Roma appearance," they face prejudice, discrimination and racism from society, another level of burden additional to the fact that they are adopted.

Non-Roma adoptive families have problems providing support to their children when it comes to manifestations of antigypsyism and their children's connection with their Roma

⁴³ Interviews with employees (social workers) in institutions for abandoned children and for children removed from their birth families by the state.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Internet source: <https://centar-sirius.hr/udomitelji/https://centar-sirius.hr/udomitelji/>

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

identity in the broader sense of the term. However, many Roma children adopted by non-Roma families may even share mainstream society's stereotypical perception of "Roma," for example, because they are exposed to the influence of the Croatian media, which often reports negatively about the Roma community. As one Roma youth respondent said: *"I am interested in my origin, but I am afraid of what I will find there. [...] I am different, but still, society looks at me as if I belong to them [the Roma]."* It is clear that this adopted child of Roma origin has assimilated those negative stereotypes about Roma and has had no opportunity to establish a positive relationship toward his Roma identity and origin. Some non-Roma adoptive families also reproduce stereotypes towards the Roma that are typical of mainstream society. For example, some of the interviewed non-Roma parents interpret the behavioural problems of their children as caused by their genetics: *"He is going in a wrong direction, but he has this in blood,"* one non-Roma mother said of her adopted Roma child.

Other non-Roma parents are willing to support their adopted Roma children in establishing a relationship with their Roma identity. Some such parents have taken some steps but were not successful in the process. The main reason for their failure is that there is not any available support for them, for example, from Roma civil society, which could play a key, very useful role. One non-Roma mother said: *"I am from the Serbian minority and we have youth clubs, but I could not find Roma youth clubs anywhere,"* that could support ethnically "mixed" families with adopted Roma children. The non-Roma parents said they do not know how to cope with the discrimination and bullying their children are experiencing or may experience in the future.

In addition to the discrimination and racism from the mainstream society, the interviewed parents also reported that their children have also experienced being rejected by other Roma who do not recognise them as Roma because of the language they speak, their non-Roma family members, etc.

Like any family who has adopted children, these parents may fear what would happen if their adopted children encountered their birth parents. Roma children raised by adoptive, non-Roma families may behave and speak differently from their birth family, but their physical appearance may still mark them to others as belonging to the Roma minority, and therefore they will experience the same discrimination and racism as other Roma. As this problem has not been recognised, there is no systematic support with it being provided to the adoptive families.

Policy answer to the problem

Public policy does not address these special needs of adoptive non-Roma families with Roma children and has yet to consider them.

Foster care families get financial support for foster children ranging from approximately 65 EUR to as much as 300 EUR per month, depending on the age and disability of the child. They also receive financial compensation for their services ranging from approximately 55 EUR to as much as 170 EUR, again depending on number of children and whether the foster care family is legally obligated to support them.⁴⁸ As for adoptive families, they do not receive any financial remuneration for having adopted a child (besides the regular child allowances all parents receive), as the child is legally considered to be their own. However, a more serious consequence of the new adoptive family becoming the legal, primary caregiver is that child and the family receive no support from the state once the adoption process is completed. There are some NGOs that provide adoptive families with professional support, such as the NGO *Adopta*, but their functioning is dependent on project-based funding and their services are not available everywhere (for example, *Adopta's* outreach is limited to Zagreb). Such NGOs provide general support (for example,

⁴⁸ For more information about foster care families, please see: <https://centar-sirius.hr/udomitelji/https://centar-sirius.hr/udomitelji/>

counselling, organisation of support groups or activities for young people), but they do not provide the special services needed by non-Roma families with Roma adopted children.⁴⁹

The fact that civil society in the Roma community is undeveloped; the lack of recognition of the special needs of these groups; the manifestations of antigypsyism in society; the media's negative representation of "Roma"; the lack of the kind of interaction by adopted Roma with Roma society that would enable them to build a positive image of the Roma and therefore also a positive self-image of themselves as Roma; and the lack of structural support for adoptive families all place an additional burden on them.

This topic surprised many of the stakeholders we interviewed, including members of the Councils of the Roma National Minority, the Roma MP Mr Veljko Kajtazi, and the Roma Contact Point (the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights). On the one hand, Roma children raised in non-Roma families remain entitled to ethnic-affirmative measures aimed at the social inclusion of socially marginalised Roma, such as Roma scholarships. (All of the interviewed non-Roma families provided the information that their children are taking advantage of such affirmative measures as planned in the NRIS.) On the other hand, there are no measures in place to address the special needs of adopted Roma children and their non-Roma parents. There are associations supporting adoptive families like "Adopta," but they are focused on the problems of "mainstream" adoptive families, i.e., non-Roma parents adopting non-Roma children. Similarly, there is no targeted support for Roma families adopting children; such families face a completely different set of special problems, such as suspicions by institutions and society that their motivation to adopt is just so they will be allegedly entitled to benefits, or other forms of discrimination and racism.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Roma youth participation

To the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights:

1. Specific measures for the inclusion of young Roma should be introduced in the policy for Roma inclusion post-2020. They should be designed with the actual participation of members of their target groups – young Roma men and women, boys and girls.
2. The category of “Roma youth” is too general and includes different people with diverging needs; therefore, specific target groups (disaggregated by age, gender, socio-economic position) and their special needs should be considered.
3. Young Roma should be invited to take part in the relevant committees (such as the committee for monitoring implementation of the future Roma inclusion policy/strategy, committees that decide on various grants, specialised committees on Roma inclusion created at the local levels, and others that may be established after 2020) and the Roma national minority councils.

To the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights, local and regional governments, and ministries:

4. Special funds need to be allocated and technical support and capacity-building need to be provided for the development of Roma youth associations led by young Roma women and men.
5. There is a need for real participation, which means Roma youth should be firstly empowered (see previous point) and then engaged in planning, organising and decision-making on the matters that concern them. Without such empowerment, their participation risks just being tokenism.

To the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights and Roma NGOs:

6. A public discussion on Roma youth participation with a specific focus on political participation should be opened between the Government and civil society; Roma youth should be encouraged and empowered to voice their needs, priorities and interests in such a discussion.

To youth councils and youth clubs:

7. Organise promotion of your work in Roma settlements and consider the actual accessibility of your activities for Roma youth.

Roma children in adoptive non-Roma families

To the Ministry of Demographics, Family, Youth and Social Policy:

8. Non-Roma adoptive families with Roma children should be a very important target of the big governmental and non-governmental programmes aimed at supporting adoption and should also be included as a target in the post-2020 Roma inclusion policy/strategy.
9. Adoptive families should be provided with accessible professional support after adoption that will reflect the specific needs of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, in particular Roma.
10. The implementation of Croatia’s de-institutionalisation reform should be transparent; its results and failures should be critically analysed, and those

analyses should be made available for the media and civil society and communicated to the general public.

To the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights:

11. Include non-Roma families with adopted Roma children as one of the target groups of the future Roma inclusion strategy.

To NGOs and Councils of the Roma National Minority:

12. Develop a programme, in cooperation with the NGO *Adopta* and/or other partners, to support non-Roma families with adopted Roma children; make trainings available for such parents to build their adopted children's positive Roma identity.

ANNEX: A CHECKLIST FOR POST-2020 ROMA STRATEGY

Background

The NRIS and its action plan for implementation are expiring in 2020. Roma inclusion as a topic should stay relevant after 2020, because the Roma community is still not included in society, there are still big gaps between Roma and non-Roma, and manifestations of antigypsyism are rising. In some areas progress is being made, but others are in a phase of stagnation, while some new challenges have arisen that are not addressed by the previous NRIS. Those interviewed for this report said the political focus on the Roma community is lower than it was 10 years ago.

There is some information indicating that instead of the Government approving a new NRIS, a national programme might be adopted which would have a much less binding character. The appointed body for developing the policy of Roma inclusion will be the current Roma Contact Point, the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights. This body is, however, overwhelmed with other tasks and lacks capacity. However, it has a lot of data on the Roma community, collected during the most extensive research to be conducted about the Roma community in Croatia, which was published in 2018.⁵⁰

Croatia is undergoing changes and is coping with major emigration. This situation is having an impact on the Roma community and its needs. For example, many Roma from the Roma settlements have been able to get employed. Mapping of the changing Roma needs is crucial before the next NRIS will be developed. The needs of some subgroups among Roma that have not been addressed by the current NRIS should also be taken into account.

Moreover, 2020, when the new policy should be drafted, is an election year. A similar situation happened during the process of development of the 2017-2018 Action Plan for NRIS implementation, and the change of the political cycle and political discontinuity caused a two-year delay in that development. If the new Roma inclusion policy is again delayed, ministries or other public institutions that are crucial to Roma inclusion will not be able to plan the funding of measures like scholarships or free kindergarten for Roma.

Most of the people interviewed for this report said they do not believe that a new programme for Roma inclusion will be developed and accepted by the Government by the end of 2020. For now, the Government Office for Human and Minority Rights does not have a backup plan for the situation.

Political will and awareness at the Government Office for Human and Minority rights are both at a high level, currently, and the office is run by a director who is Roma. In the past, the office always included all stakeholders and Roma subgroups in order to have a view of these matters from different angles. This practice should be nurtured.

The checklist

Based on a wide range of consultations made during the RCM implementation in Croatia, the authors consider the following to be necessary:

- The National programme/strategy should be developed and adopted by the government by December 2020.
- The process of developing the new national programme/strategy should be preceded by mapping Roma needs at the local level and considering the subgroups

⁵⁰ Kunac, S., Klasnić, K., Lalić, S. (2018) *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study*. Available at: https://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/109/Roma_Inclusion_in_the_Croatian_Society.pdf

within the Roma community that have special needs, such as Roma youth, Roma woman, Roma children in non-Roma adoptive families, and others.

- The special measures for recognised subgroups with special needs within the Roma community should be developed, the authorities responsible for their implementation should be defined, the necessary funding for those measures should be provided.
- The recommendations from the evaluation of the current NRIS (Friedman, E., Horvat, M. (2015)) should be addressed by the programme/strategy and the data from the most extensive research to date about Roma in Croatia (Kunac, S., Klasnić, K., Lalić, S. (2018)) should be taken into consideration.
- The action plan for the implementation of the next policy document for Roma inclusion should also be developed, discussed in the Parliament, and approved by the end of December 2020.
- Combating antigypsyism should be recognised as a priority by the post-2020 policy document for Roma inclusion as an additional, self-standing area alongside the traditional policy areas. Special attention should be paid to combating residential and educational segregation as manifestations of antigypsyism and barriers to effective social inclusion.
- Reporting on the implementation of the NRIS in Croatia should be made available through an online platform to increase the accountability of the Government towards the public.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Action plan for implementation of NRIS, 2017-2019, available at:

<https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Akcijski%20plan%20za%20provedbu%20Nacionalne%20strategije%20za%20uklju%C4%8Divanje%20Roma%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202013.%20do%202020.%20godine,%20za%202019.%20i%202020.%20godinu.pdf>

Friedman, E., Horvat, M. (2015) *Evaluation of Croatian National Roma Inclusion Strategy. Evaluation report*, available at:

<https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Evaluation%20of%20Croatian%20NRIS%20-%20Report%20EN.pdf>

Kunac, S., Klasnić, K., Lalić, S. (2018) *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study*, available at:

https://www.cms.hr/system/publication/pdf/109/Roma_Inclusion_in_the_Croatian_Society.pdf

National Roma Integration Strategy, available at:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/roma_croatia_strategy_en.pdf

Roma Civil Monitor (2018) *Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Croatia: Focusing on structural and horizontal preconditions for successful implementation of the strategy*, available at:

<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-croatia-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>

Roma Civil Monitor (2019) *Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Croatia: Assessing the progress in four key areas of the strategy*, available at:

<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-2-croatia-2018-eprint-fin.pdf>

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
- by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications>

Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

