

Country fiche: DENMARK

Position of civil society involved in the Roma Civil Monitor

SUBSTANTIVE POLICY AREAS

STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

EDUCATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing a personal identification number (CPR) entails access to a number of public services including the public education. • Children enrolled in public education can receive mother tongue instruction, if one of the parents is an EU citizen. • In 2016 the Government launched a new strategy to strengthen early childhood education with a specific focus on children from disadvantaged families. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma, both from EU and third countries, face barriers in accessing the CPR and in consequence their children often cannot participate in education. In particular, Roma families who live and work in the streets of big cities (i.e. Copenhagen), do not have contact with the Danish educational system. • There are inequalities in quality of education across school districts; families with better socio-economic conditions have easier access to schools that score high on national PISA testing compared with more vulnerable families. |
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EMPLOYMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream public employment services are available for persons possessing the CPR. • There are dedicated employment measures (apprenticeships, trainings) for including ethnic minorities and new arriving immigrants and refugees into the labour market. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma access to public employment services and dedicated measures' relevance for Roma cannot be evaluated due to lack of ethnic data. • Despite a lack of data concerning specifically Roma, there are tendencies that ethnic biases occur in the de-selection when applying for apprenticeship in enterprises. Hence, there is a need to study if this also affects Roma. • Poor Roma arriving from other EU countries cannot get access to the CPR number because they cannot fulfil national requirements to obtain this registration. This creates an additional barrier to accessing the public employment services. • As for the possibility of adopting affirmative measures in employment of ethnic minorities, the legal system is restrictive and ambiguous; affirmative action toward ethnic minorities should be regulated and promoted as clearly as in case of older employees and persons with disabilities. |
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HEALTHCARE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health care is financed out of tax revenues and ensures universal coverage free of charge to all citizens and eligible residents. • To address complex health concerns of ethnic minority groups, the health districts have specific clinics that focus on the health of ethnic minorities and some municipalities have health communicators for ethnic minorities. • Since 2011, a Red Cross volunteer-based medical clinic for irregular migrants (persons who do not have access to Danish public health insurance) has operated in Copenhagen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denmark has not developed official policies or guidelines for health professionals concerning undocumented migrants' rights to access health care. Undocumented migrants and non-residents are only granted access to emergency health care. • EU-mobile Roma with precarious livelihoods face multiple health challenges and are underserved by Danish health care. There are no health strategies or initiatives specifically for Roma. • Language barrier can be a concern, as most patients (some groups, such as children or persons with reduced capacity and others, are exempt) who have a need for |
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interpretation, and who have lived in Denmark for more than three years, are charged for the interpretation.

HOUSING

- A new strategy “against parallel societies” has been launched to specifically address the needs in segregated areas, but some conditions remain unclear and are controversial (e.g. conditional benefits, levels of benefits for new arrivals, tearing down of housing in ghettos without clear housing replacement actions).
- Specific data collection in the ghetto communities is needed, to better understand the need of Roma families and how they are potentially affected by the new strategy against parallel societies.
- Many mobile EU citizens (e.g. Romanian Roma) resort to rough sleeping since they have difficulties in finding shelter space or accessing any social or private rentals due to the lack of clarity of legal titles, language barriers and insufficient financial means.
- Rough sleeping in camp-like conditions is prohibited according to new legislation. This leads to a criminalisation of homelessness and can lead to a two-year expulsion from the given town.

HORIZONTAL MEASURES

STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

- Direct and indirect discrimination are prohibited; filing a complaint to the Equality Body can be done online.
- There is no segregation in education; in the past, one municipality’s policy of establishing Roma-only classes was loudly criticised by public authorities and deemed illegal.
- There are no public initiatives or programmes established that specifically address discrimination against Roma. The institutional setting is the same as for other ethnic minorities in Denmark, but its impact on Roma is not known.
- Studies indicate that ethnic segregation is connected to social housing, but due to lack of ethnic data, specific situation concerning Roma is not known.
- A comprehensive research to investigate Roma experiences of discrimination within the educational system, employment, healthcare and housing is necessary.
- Recent legislation on public order, despite not mentioning ethnicity, seems to have disproportionate impact on EU-mobile Roma, who face arrests and expulsions.

FIGHTING ANTIGYPSYISM

- Danish Institute of Human Rights also works with matters concerning racial and ethnic origin and gender equality, and the Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC) is an independent organization that works against discrimination.
- There are no public initiatives or programmes to counter antigypsyism.
- Public authorities do not interfere with or criticise politicians for their use of antigypsyist rhetoric.
- There is a need for enhanced data collection on experiences of racism towards Roma.

ADDRESSING SPECIFIC NEEDS OF MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS AMONG ROMA

- Preschool (for at least 25 hours a week) is compulsory for children from the age of one from families living in residential areas defined as ‘ghettos’.
- Families living in segregated neighbourhoods, defined as “ghettos”, may lose partially their entitlement for child welfare allowance if they fail to enrol their children in preschool education.
- Some municipalities provide prenatal classes for pregnant women from minority groups.
- No measures have been adopted to address (explicitly) Roma LGBT+ issues.

- In 2016, a governmental strategy was launched to promote early childhood education, with a special focus on children from disadvantaged families.

STRUCTURAL MEASURES

STRENGTHS/KEY ELEMENTS OF THE MS APPROACH

WEAKNESSES/GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AT THE CENTRAL LEVEL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Roma Contact Point is established within the Ministry of Immigration and Integration. • Instead of a special strategy aimed at Roma inclusion, Denmark has an integrated set of policy measures within Denmark's social inclusion policies (NRIS). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is very little information (including contact details) available online concerning the Roma Contact point in Denmark. • No particular initiatives or measures are defined for Roma within the NRIS, who are rather subsumed under general integration initiatives. There are no specific integration tools, safeguards and "outreach" activities to ensure that the Roma population is included into broader integration initiatives. • Roma inclusion is not mainstreamed as a particular component across ministries and other public authorities at national level. |
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CIVIL PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the adoption of the NRIS in 2011, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs consulted several organisations and institutions about this issue. The Ministry of Social Affairs also consulted a few Roma organisations that were active at the time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important NGOs' recommendations were not included; these recommendations included: recognition of Roma as a national minority; establishment of a national resource centre for Roma; translation of the integrated sets of measures into Danish; and cooperation with Roma organisations in the collection of data on the Roma population's experience with access to education, health, employment and housing. |
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MAINSTREAMING OF ROMA INCLUSION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The empowerment and participation of Roma in politics is not promoted explicitly at governmental level or municipal level. • Roma are not mentioned in documents and programmes concerning social inclusion at municipal level. |
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DATA COLLECTION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic data is not available on the national Roma population and there is a general lack of knowledge about their situation. |
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EXAMPLE OF PROMISING PRACTICE

A church-based organisation *Kirkens Korshær* runs an initiative *Kompasset* to help EU-mobile populations in Copenhagen, who have only limited knowledge of English and formal work experience record to present when seeking for job. *Kompasset* assists them with knowing the Danish system, how to register and get employment, what will enable them to access public services such as education or healthcare and integrate into Danish society. The initiative also helps persons in situation of homelessness by providing them with place to rest, store personal items or have shower. Moreover, it provides legal advice and personal support. These services are provided by staff and around 30 competent volunteers, who together speak the main European languages. Users can therefore get advice and comfort in e.g. English, Romanian, French, Spanish, German, Polish, Italian and Bulgarian.

MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED



- To collect data (qualitative research) on the national Roma population to gain insight into their situation including their access to education, employment, health care, housing as well as other issues relating to non-discrimination and equality in Danish society.
- To grant EU-mobile Roma the access to CPR numbers (enabling access to public services, including education or employment services, as well as actual employment) and yellow card (requested in healthcare and shelters); in their country of origin they should be provided with the EU health cards that is accepted in Denmark.
- To further research on the current practices of criminalizing homelessness in Denmark which seems to have a dimension of ethnic profiling as in practice it mainly targets non-Danish homeless. In case that unequal treatment of other EU member states is confirmed, to monitor and enforce the compliance with the EU law.
- Services for EU-mobile populations, such as provided by Kompasset, should be expanded and provided in cooperation with employment officials in the Danish municipalities to further assist people in finding work since this could potentially also be a way to reach out to those persons who are more limited in job searching (since they don't speak English and don't have a prior working record) to find jobs that do not require such skills.