

NETHERLANDS

Country Fiche

Assessment of the progress in the NRSF implementation
between 1 June 2023 and 30 March 2025

APPROACH OF THE NATIONAL ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (NRSF)	Predominantly mainstreaming policy measures, with some targeted interventions.
ESTIMATED ROMA POPULATION	CoE estimate: 32 000 National estimate: 40 000 ≈0.24% of population
National Roma Contact Point (NRCP)	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

HORIZONTAL OBJECTIVES

1. FIGHT AND PREVENT ANTIGYPSYISM AND DISCRIMINATION

PROGRESS MADE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 study¹ highlighted systemic antigypsyism, particularly in housing access, contributing to crucial data that can inform policy insight and funding decisions, while also highlighting the gap between policy commitments and local-level implementation. Antigypsyism included in the 2023 National Program against Discrimination and Racism² marks meaningful progress by recognising it as a form of systemic discrimination. Integrating history education strengthens institutional accountability and fosters better visibility and equality. Municipal anti-discrimination services provide legal aid and advice. Social work students in Utrecht attend Mila van Burik's exhibition on Roma culture and Holocaust history to raise awareness 	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roma and Sinti lack formal recognition as national minorities. Ethnic data on Roma is not collected, limiting targeted responses. Roma participation remains limited to consultation without real decision-making power. Broader equality laws fail to address Roma-specific discrimination explicitly, as Roma and Sinti are not formally recognized as a national minority. This lack of recognition contributes to a significant gap in data, making it difficult to assess the true extent of the challenges Roma face. As a result, policy responses, funding allocations, and political prioritization often overlook the unique forms of exclusion experienced by Roma and Sinti communities.
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¹ Available at: From Extinction to Postponement Policy

² Available at: National Programme against Discrimination and Racism 2022

through images and stories, the latest exhibition taking place on 27 January 2024.³

2. REDUCE POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

PROGRESS MADE

- Campaigns launched on benefit info and raised minimum wage and key allowances (healthcare, housing, childcare) to address poverty and social exclusion - issues that disproportionately affect Roma communities.
- Improved support for children in low-income families through higher minimum income benefit levels.
- A 2023 Study⁴ identified bottlenecks in unemployment benefits. As of the identification of bottlenecks, it is foreseen that simplification options that fit within the unemployment benefits reform will be further elaborated in 2025. This implies policy improvements underway.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Roma children in poverty remain overlooked in national plans on Child Guarantee, especially in housing and early education.
- Although authorities claim that Roma CSOs can engage in any initiative, there needs to be a more proactive approach and outreach to ensure meaningful participation.

3. PROMOTE PARTICIPATION THROUGH EMPOWERMENT, COOPERATION AND TRUST

PROGRESS MADE

- Roma and Sinti representatives were involved in discussions on historical persecution, showing commitment to cultural awareness.
- A framework⁵ on municipal mobile homes and pitch policy promotes culturally appropriate housing for Roma and Sinti communities.
- Roma CSOs were invited to the 2024 ECRI high-level meeting, held from 4 to 8 November 2024, addressing equality, rights, and integration. While scepticism expressed by Roma CSOs remains, the invitation to participate signals growing a more proactive approach and creates an opportunity to push for more meaningful involvement.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Roma CSOs view participation in in-person meetings as symbolic due to lack of financial support to attend and limited influence.
- CSOs must take the initiative to join consultations, as outreach on behalf of the National Contact Point is limited.
- Available EU funding is underused; CSOs suggest that unused funding could be optimised by supporting the establishment of a dedicated offices to strengthen their impact and serve as a central point for in-person contact for the community.

³ Available at: Pictures speak louder than words: exhibition Roma history

⁴ Available at: Parliamentary Papers II 2022/23, 26 448, no. 718

⁵ Available at: Caravan and pitch policy 2023

SECTORAL OBJECTIVES	
4. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION	
PROGRESS MADE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual 1 million EUR subsidy scheme is in place to support schools with Roma and Sinti students. The scheme has been shaped as follows: Schools for special education, secondary special education or special and secondary special education, which have more than four pupils with a non-Dutch cultural background.⁶ Evaluation commissioned (July 2023) on decentralisation allowance to enhance education and labour participation, mainstreaming Roma. Government funds initiatives supporting school-leavers' transition to work or further education, which can be particularly beneficial for Roma youth, who face higher dropout rates and whose access to employment is often hindered by lower levels of educational attainment. 	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for baseline data on attendance of Roma and Sinti pupils to assess the effectiveness of education subsidy scheme There is a need for available data on participation or impact of OWRS⁷ meetings on school attendance. “State of Education 2025” report does not specifically address Roma and Sinti children. It is recommended to collect and share disaggregated data on Roma and Sinti children, as the absence of specific references hinders the development of targeted and effective policy measures to address their educational needs.
5. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT	
PROGRESS MADE <p>As part of the annual updates and ongoing improvements, general employment support measures have been introduced and implemented in 2023 and 2024,⁸ including supplements for unemployed individuals with low household income.</p>	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the NRSF there are no recent updates or Roma-specific employment interventions. Employment measures targeting Roma remain limited and outdated. Short-term initiatives have proven ineffective; long-term, sustainable efforts are needed to address structural barriers such as discrimination and intergenerational poverty.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.dus-i.nl/subsidies/school-en-omgeving/informatie-over-de-regeling>

⁷ Onderwijs aan Woonwagen-, Roma- en Sintikinderen (National support for education for travellers, Roma and Sinti children).

⁸ Available at: <https://www.rijksfinancien.nl/memorietoeelichting/2024/OWB/XV/onderdeel/2123904>

6. IMPROVE ROMA HEALTH AND EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

PROGRESS MADE

- 2.8 billion EUR allocated under the Integral Healthcare Agreement (2023–2027)⁹ to strengthen primary care, digitization, and regional cooperation, which in turn could allow for improving access to more inclusive, flexible, and personalized healthcare, especially for those facing barriers to traditional care settings.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The National Action Plan for the Child Guarantee lacks specific measures for Roma and Sinti children despite addressing general child needs.
- Inclusion must be embedded in public services with permanent, culturally skilled staff, not just temporary intermediaries.

7. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO ADEQUATE DESEGREGATED HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

PROGRESS MADE

- The 2025 Budget allocates 5 billion EUR for housing and increases rent and child allowances, aiming for 100,000 new homes per year. No targeted Roma measures are included, however such reforms primarily benefit low- and middle-income households, including those in precarious living situations—such as many Roma and Sinti families. Roma communities stand to gain from these changes through improved affordability, reduced administrative hurdles, and greater inclusion in social housing schemes.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Urban planning policies should be made more inclusive to improve the living conditions of Travellers and caravan dwellers by ensuring access to culturally appropriate housing and safeguarding their communities against discriminatory local measures.

PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

While the Dutch government has invited Roma CSOs to policy discussions, many organisations view this as symbolic, citing limited outreach and lack of financial support for participation. Current anti-discrimination laws do not explicitly cover ethnicity, leaving Roma and Sinti without clear legal protection against hate crimes. There is also no mechanism involving CSOs in monitoring or assisting victims of such incidents. The Social Inclusion Monitor 2023 is the only tool addressing Roma and Sinti directly,¹⁰ but CSO involvement in its drafting is unclear. According to the policy measures, dialogue between ministries and Roma and Sinti communities occurs twice a year, but structural support remains weak. The Roma Contact Point lacks Roma staff and operates mainly as an information channel. It is recommended to create a dedicated mechanism to track antigypsyism hate crimes, and ensure meaningful CSO involvement through consistent outreach and support.

⁹ Available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/kwaliteit-van-de-zorg/integraal-zorgakkoord>

¹⁰ Available at: <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/76d493ef-c824-4213-b99c-6bdf2b05d19a/file>

PROMISING PRACTICES

The Netherlands' Child Aid Fund (*Kinderhulp*) is a promising practice supporting children aged 0–21 from low-income families by providing essentials like clothing, school trips, and sports access. Through a digital platform, aid organizations can apply on behalf of children reducing bureaucracy and speeding up support. The system is efficient and user-friendly, and this approach provides timely, targeted aid while maximizing impact. This is particularly important for Roma children and their families, who often face economic hardships that limit their access to basic needs and social participation. By ensuring they receive essential support as well as providing books, opportunities for family outings, and toys, the Child Aid Fund helps promote their inclusion, well-being, and equal opportunities. The streamlined, digital approach also reduces barriers to access, making it a strong example of how targeted, efficient aid can effectively reach marginalized communities.