

# CYPRUS

## Country Fiche

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

<b>APPROACH OF THE NATIONAL ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (NRSF)</b>	<p>Cyprus's NRSF 2021–2030 is a mainstreamed strategy, integrating Roma inclusion into general social policies rather than establishing separate Roma-only programs. It covers five key areas (education, employment, housing, health, social support) with horizontal goals of equality, inclusion, and participation.</p>
<b>ESTIMATED ROMA POPULATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size &amp; share. Estimates for Roma living under the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus range from ~650 to 1,250 persons (<math>\approx 0.1\%</math> of population). Multiple authoritative sources note the absence of reliable official statistics and rely on estimates (Council of Europe; OSCE), with Roma concentrated mainly in Limassol (e.g., Agios Antonios) and Paphos.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Official data gap. Under Article 2(3) of the 1960 Constitution, Cypriot Roma are considered part of the Turkish Cypriot community, not a recognized ethnic minority; as a result Roma are not enumerated separately in official statistics, which “<i>impedes policy planning and monitoring</i>” (ECRI).<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Additional populations. Alongside Cypriot citizens, Roma from other countries (e.g., Greece/Balkans) reside in the RoC; the NRSF and official surveys do not separately map this group, and no disaggregated socio-economic data are routinely published.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>National Roma Contact Point (NRCP)</b>	<p>The National Roma Contact Point for Cyprus is housed in the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, specifically within its Social Welfare Services department. This unit leads coordination of NRSF implementation across ministries. The NRCP, staffed by ministry officials (no Roma staff are publicly known to be included), convenes inter-ministerial efforts and represents Cyprus in EU-level Roma framework discussions. However, the European Commission noted that Cyprus's NRCP (like those in several Member States) lacks sufficient empowerment and resources to effectively drive cross-sector coordination and monitoring, limiting its influence beyond a primarily administrative role.</p>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). (2017). *Concluding observations on the combined 23rd and 24th periodic reports of Cyprus* (CERD/C/CYP/CO/23–24).

<sup>2</sup> Roma Civil Monitor (RCM). (2023). *Civil society monitoring report on the quality of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation in Cyprus*. Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>3</sup> Roma Civil Monitor (2025) *Civil society monitoring report on the implementation of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation in Cyprus*. – PENDING PUBLICATION

## HORIZONTAL OBJECTIVES

### 1. FIGHT AND PREVENT ANTIGYPSYISM AND DISCRIMINATION

#### PROGRESS MADE

- School anti-racism policy. Cyprus has a Code of Conduct against Racism & Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents applied in schools (policy instrument referenced by UN Committee on the Rights of the Child).<sup>4</sup>
- Equality infrastructure & external monitoring. The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman/Equality Body) operates as the core equality institution; ECRI (Council of Europe) maintains regular monitoring of Cyprus's anti-racism framework.<sup>5</sup>

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Under-acknowledgement of antigypsyism; enforcement gaps. ECRI calls for stronger prevention and prosecution of hate speech and hate crime and for reinforced equality-body effectiveness; Roma are among the groups affected by general anti-racism shortcomings.<sup>6</sup>
- Monitoring limitations. Systematic tracking of anti-Roma incidents is limited, with equality data gaps noted at national level and by EU overviews.<sup>7</sup>

### 2. REDUCE POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

#### PROGRESS MADE

- Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) Law 109(I)/2014 provides a national safety net incl. housing allowance;<sup>8</sup> GMI links beneficiaries to Public Employment Service activation.

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No Roma-specific monitoring of poverty exits. National antipoverty tools are not disaggregated for Roma, so results for Roma households are not systematically tracked.<sup>9</sup>
- Access barriers persist. Policy documents highlight administrative and information hurdles for vulnerable families (digital procedures, documentation, debt/arrears), suggesting the need for targeted outreach in Roma neighborhoods.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area Fourth Status Report 'For Roma, With Roma' — The collective pursuit of equal rights, dignity, and opportunities Status Report 2023, [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/f/555066.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/f/555066.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>5</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). (2023). *ECRI's Sixth Monitoring Cycle – Cyprus* (country monitoring documents/press information; see also 2016 Fifth Report for background), [https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/-/cyprus-work-access-for-asylum-seekers-is-improved-and-the-hate-speech-ban-in-parliament-welcomed-but-problems-remain-says-anti-racism-commission-in-new-report?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/-/cyprus-work-access-for-asylum-seekers-is-improved-and-the-hate-speech-ban-in-parliament-welcomed-but-problems-remain-says-anti-racism-commission-in-new-report?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu-country/cyprus\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu-country/cyprus_en)

<sup>8</sup> [https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3\\_isn=100698](https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/r/natlex/fe/details?p3_isn=100698)

<sup>9</sup> Republic of Cyprus. (2021). *National Strategic Framework for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Cyprus Roma 2021–2030* (NRSF). Social Welfare Services, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare. Retrieved from European Commission website.

<sup>10</sup> Roma Civil Monitor (2025) *Civil society monitoring report on the implementation of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation in Cyprus*. – PENDING PUBLICATION

### 3. PROMOTE PARTICIPATION THROUGH EMPOWERMENT, COOPERATION AND TRUST

#### PROGRESS MADE

- The NRSF established a Committee on the Progress of the NRSF (inter-ministerial plus NGOs) for monitoring and adjustment.<sup>11</sup>

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Meaningful participation. External monitors recommend deeper inclusion of Roma representatives in planning, implementation and evaluation (e.g., ECRI's calls to strengthen participation across anti-racism and inclusion policies).<sup>12</sup>

## SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

### 4. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

#### PROGRESS MADE

- Instances of targeted supports where Roma are present. In Limassol (Agios Antonios), authorities have used measures such as Greek-as-second-language support, teacher assistants/mediators, free meals, and provision of devices/connectivity (during COVID-19) to sustain attendance; these are documented by the Ombudsman and civil monitoring.<sup>13</sup>
- Policy instruments. The school anti-racism Code & Guide provide a national protocol to record and address racist incidents, including antigypsyism.<sup>14</sup>

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Data & targets. No Roma-specific baselines or targets for attendance, early-leaving or transitions are routinely published, limiting evaluation of gap-closing.
- Measurement. The NRSF does not include Roma-specific indicators/baselines (attendance, chronic absenteeism, completion), making progress difficult to evidence.<sup>15</sup>

### 5. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

#### PROGRESS MADE

- Open access to PES and activation. Roma can register with the Public Employment Service and, where eligible, are linked to

#### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Targeting & evidence. No Roma-specific participation or outcome indicators are publicly reported for PES/ALMPs; EU

<sup>11</sup> ibid

<sup>12</sup> ibid

<sup>13</sup> ibid

<sup>14</sup> Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI). (n.d.). *Anti-racism policy – Code of Conduct against Racism & Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents* (overview page). <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2089760.html>

<sup>15</sup> Republic of Cyprus—Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Social Welfare Services. National Strategic Framework for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Cyprus Roma 2021–2030 (approved 13 Dec 2021).

activation/training via GMI mechanisms—described within national antipoverty/Child-Guarantee measures. <sup>16</sup>	overviews emphasise the need for better data and monitoring of Roma outcomes. <sup>17</sup>
<b>6. IMPROVE ROMA HEALTH AND EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	
<b>PROGRESS MADE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The universal GESY framework legally enables access (with income-based protections); school medicine and public-health services support children/adolescents in public schools.<sup>18</sup></li> </ul>	<b>AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language/navigation barriers &amp; monitoring. There are no Roma-specific health indicators reported nationally; external reviews of the equality framework stress better equality-data collection and inclusive delivery of services.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>
<b>7. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO ADEQUATE DESEGREGATED HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES</b>	
<b>PROGRESS MADE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainstream schemes. Housing support for vulnerable households is primarily delivered through general social-policy instruments (e.g., GMI-linked housing support and municipal schemes).<sup>20</sup></li> <li>Prefab settlement in Paphos was discontinued.</li> </ul>	<b>AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End segregating solutions; improve conditions. ECRI has repeatedly criticised segregated, container-type settlements and urged desegregated, adequate housing solutions for Roma in Cyprus; improving living conditions is a recurring recommendation.<sup>21</sup></li> <li>Data &amp; targeting. No Roma-specific housing indicators (e.g., overcrowding, access to utilities) are published regularly, limiting monitoring of progress.</li> <li>The Turkish-Cypriot Property Management Service (MoI) manages stock and tenancy formalities for eligible families. However increasing housing needs (for example due to increasing family members) are not addressed and residents express the constant</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). (2023). *ECRI's Sixth Monitoring Cycle – Cyprus* (country monitoring documents/press information; see also 2016 Fifth Report for background).

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Health Insurance Organization (HIO) – GESY. (n.d.). *General Healthcare System (GESY) – access and coverage* (official portal). [UN Documentation](#)

<sup>19</sup> Roma Civil Monitor (2025) *Civil society monitoring report on the implementation of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation in Cyprus*. – PENDING PUBLICATION

<sup>20</sup> Republic of Cyprus. (2021). *National Strategic Framework for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Cyprus Roma 2021–2030* (NRSF). Social Welfare Services, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare. Retrieved from European Commission website.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). (2023). *ECRI's Sixth Monitoring Cycle – Cyprus* (country monitoring documents/press information; see also 2016 Fifth Report for background).

fear of loosing their home to another eligible family.<sup>22</sup>

## PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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#### 1) Roma & pro-Roma NGO participation across the NRSF life-cycle

- Design (2021): NRSF prepared mainly via inter-ministerial consultations; limited Roma CSO participation reported.<sup>23</sup>
- Implementation (2022–2025): Committee on the Progress of the NRSF created.
- Monitoring/Review: No systematic role for Roma CSOs in indicator-based monitoring or evaluation; participation is consultative, not co-decision.<sup>24</sup>

Assessment: Consultation has resumed (platform/committee) but Roma NGOs still lack formal decision-making and evaluation power within the monitoring architecture.<sup>25</sup>

#### 2) Monitoring architecture & stakeholder inclusion

- On paper: NRSF provides for coordination/monitoring via the committee and inter-ministerial set-up, but public reporting, indicators and baselines are under-specified.
- Roma NGO role: Consultative, not embedded in indicator/reporting structures. 3) CSO involvement in hate-crime/hate-speech monitoring & victim support
- No structured role for Roma CSOs in official hate-crime/hate-speech monitoring; complaints flow mainly through Police/Ombudsman

## PROMISING PRACTICES

Initiative	Why it matters
<b>School anti-racism Code &amp; Incident-Recording Guide</b>	Provides a national protocol to prevent, record and address racist incidents in education, referenced by CRC 2023; can be leveraged to address antigypsyism at school level if fully implemented with staff training and follow-up. <sup>26</sup>
<b>DRA.SE / School &amp; Social Inclusion Actions (ESF-cofunded): extra teaching, Greek L2,</b>	A concrete locally-anchored inclusion model that improves attendance/learning and reduces barriers in schools serving Roma.

<sup>22</sup> Roma Civil Monitor (2025) *Civil society monitoring report on the implementation of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation in Cyprus*. – PENDING PUBLICATION

<sup>23</sup> Roma Civil Monitor (RCM). (2023). *Civil society monitoring report on the quality of the national strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation in Cyprus*. Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/f/555066.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/f/555066.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**meals, counselling in disadvantaged schools  
with Roma pupils (Limassol)<sup>27</sup>**

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<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Education (MoECSY). (n.d.). *School and Social Inclusion Actions (DRA.SE)* (programme documentation/overview; GR). [https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/cyprus?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/cyprus?utm_source=chatgpt.com)