



Civil society monitoring report  
on the implementation of the national  
strategic framework for Roma equality,  
inclusion, and participation  
in Hungary

**Prepared by:**  
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and Consumers



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BM	Ministry of Interior ( <i>Belügyminisztérium</i> )
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSOK	Family Housing Allowance ( <i>Családi Otthonteremtési Kedvezmény</i> )
DIMOP	Digital Renewal ( <i>Digitális Megújulás</i> ) Operational Programme,
EBH	Equal Treatment Authority ( <i>Egyenlő Bánásmód Hatóság</i> )
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EFOP	Human Resources Development Operational Programme ( <i>Emberi Erőforrás Fejlesztési Operatív Program</i> )
ELTE	Eötvös Loránd University
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EURSF	EU Roma Strategic Framework
FETE	Catch-up Municipalities Programme ( <i>Felzárkózó Települések Program</i> )
GINOP	Economic Development and Innovation Operational Programme ( <i>Gazdaságfejlesztési és Innovációs Operatív Program</i> )
HH	Disadvantaged student, child ( <i>Hátrányos helyzetű tanuló, gyermek</i> )
HHH	Multiply disadvantaged student, child ( <i>Halmozottan hátrányos helyzetű tanuló, gyermek</i> )
HNSIS	Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 ( <i>Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030</i> )
MA	Managing Authority ( <i>Irányító Hatóság</i> )
MR CHF	MR Community Housing Fund (founded by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid)
KSH	Central Statistics Office ( <i>Központi Statisztikai Hivatal</i> )
MCC	Mathias Corvinus Collegium
MMSZ	Hungarian Maltese Charity Service ( <i>Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat</i> )
MROÖ	Hungarian National Roma Minority Self-Government ( <i>Magyarországi Romák Országos Önkormányzata</i> )
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NRCP	National Roma Contact Point
NRP	National Roma Platform
NRSF	National Roma Strategic Framework
OH	Educational Authority ( <i>Oktatási Hivatal</i> )
OKJ	National Training Register ( <i>Országos Képzési Jegyzék</i> )
ORFK	National Police Headquarters ( <i>Országos Rendőr-főkapitányság</i> )
RCM	Roma Civil Monitor
RGYK	Regular Child Protection Allowance ( <i>Rendszeres Gyermekvédelmi Kedvezmény</i> )
RNÖ	Roma National Self-Government ( <i>Roma Nemzetiségi Önkormányzat</i> )
ROK-T	Roma Coordination Council ( <i>Roma Koordinációs Tanács</i> )
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
RSZTOP	Operational Programme for Assisting Persons in Need ( <i>Rászoruló Személyeket Támogató Operatív Program</i> )
SNI	Student with special educational needs ( <i>sajátos nevelési igényű tanuló</i> )
TEF	Directorate-General for Social Opportunities ( <i>Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság</i> )
TOP	Regional and Urban Development Operational Programme ( <i>Terület- és Településfejlesztési Operatív Program</i> )
VEKOP	Competitive Central Hungary Operational Programme ( <i>Versenyképes Közép-Magyarország Operatív Program</i> )

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 (HNSIS),<sup>1</sup> which is the country's National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF), during the period from mid-2021 to mid-2025. A government decree regulates the NRSF's implementation during this period.<sup>2</sup>

To prepare the report, we analysed available government reports and monitoring studies, comparing them with data from the specific professional fields covered in each chapter. We conducted interviews with government and civil society actors and experts, and a broad coalition of Roma and pro-Roma organisations participated in its creation and – with their contributions – in the development of its final form.

The recommendations collected in each area propose that national authorities strengthen antidiscrimination complaint mechanisms and improve access to them. They emphasise the need for greater civil society involvement in the preparation and monitoring of EU-funded programmes, and that the state should spend more on providing basic services. Based on the proposals, it is essential to strengthen local basic services by significantly increasing resources, across child welfare and child protection systems, as well as health care, education, and social work. Targeted programmes would be needed to integrate Roma culture into the national cultural and heritage policy institutional system; to eliminate segregation in education; and to launch a legal awareness campaign in Roma communities. Other suggestions include launching a social housing construction programme and reinstating the compulsory school age to 18. Employment programmes linked to targeted development programmes for NEET youth would also be necessary.

Directly accessible EU funds are needed to support civil society activities related to discrimination and anti-Roma sentiment, as well as a framework programme to preserve Roma cultural and linguistic heritage. Greater civil society involvement is needed in the preparation and monitoring of EU-funded programmes. In addition to the current complaint mechanism focused on corruption, EU monitoring mechanisms should be extended to assess whether fundamental rights, such as the prohibition of discrimination, are being violated during implementation. The EU should require Member States to create public, searchable databases to facilitate learning about policy and the evaluation of programme effectiveness.

### Implementation of the NRSF

There are a few official documents available on the implementation of the NRSF – monitoring reports for the 2021 and 2022 cycles, with analyses for subsequent years currently being prepared. Due to the freezing of most EU funds, most priority development programmes were not continued after 2023; we provide detailed information on the programmes that were maintained in the report's thematic chapters.

The NRSF was amended in December 2024 following consultations with EC representatives – these amendments included several new indicators and a promise of greater involvement of civil society organisations.

Several of the recommendations from the 2022 Roma civil monitoring report proposals were incorporated into the revised NRSF, including the intent to produce biennial monitoring reports, containing quantitative data and qualitative analyses, and the formulation of new measurable targets and indicators.

According to our interviewees working in government institutions, several measures are expected to be launched in 2025. In the European Semester, the European Commission's country-specific recommendation proposes an integrated approach to education, poverty reduction, and labour market activation measures to promote the integration of Roma. However, except for employment, most indicators measuring these areas did not show improvement during the period under review.

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<sup>1</sup> Hungarian Government. (2024). *Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 [Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030]*. Available at: <https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/MNTFS2030.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Kormányhatározat a Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 végrehajtásáról szóló kormányzati intézkedési tervről 2021–2024 [Government Resolution 1619/2021 (IX. 3.) on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

Implementation during the period under review is difficult to assess due to the lack of measures launched. Although the revised NRSF considered domestic and international strategies and conceptual materials, several of the RCM's critical assessments remained unanswered (these are discussed in the individual technical chapters).

Roma participation in implementation is very modest, while several Roma experts and politicians are involved in the public institutions executing the project. During the 2021-2027 programming period, at the EC's request, independent civil society organisations were also given seats on the monitoring committees, but Roma participation in these committees remains very low. In Hungary, the involvement of civil society organisations, including Roma and pro-Roma organisations, in monitoring the use of EU funds is often limited and takes place within a formal framework. The writing of this report was no exception.

### Review of country situation by area

In the area of **antigypsyism and anti-discrimination**, the government identifies 'mutual awareness-raising' and familiarisation with Roma culture as tools – it is questionable whether these alone would have an impact on prejudice or widespread discrimination. The civil society base for legal protection has been further weakened. The powers of the Equal Treatment Authority (EBH) were transferred to the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, who has much weaker powers, and in 2022, the EBH was downgraded to a partially independent institution. Several international organisations have expressed criticism regarding the situation in Hungary.<sup>3,4</sup>

The number of **early school leavers** and Roma aged 15 and over with at most a primary school education has decreased. Infrastructure and teacher competence development have improved slightly. In 2023, a law was passed against school segregation, but its scope is minimal.<sup>5</sup> The number of Roma schools is increasing, and these generally provide lower-quality education. The rise of church schools contributes to the persistence of segregation. Teachers' salaries have been raised, and teachers of disadvantaged students receive salary supplements. At the same time, the number of students enrolled in teacher training courses has fallen by almost 25% over the past four years, and there is a significant shortage of teachers, totalling 16,000.

Employment has increased significantly in Hungary. On average, around 64,000 people are employed in public employment schemes each year. The government ran several large-scale employment and training programmes until the end of 2023, most of which were not continued in 2024-2025. Support for public employment schemes has been maintained. In-work poverty is increasing, and labour rights protection is very low, especially in jobs requiring low educational qualifications and in public employment. To maintain employment outcomes, it would be necessary to restore compulsory schooling to age 18, launch targeted programmes for NEET youth, continuously investigate discrimination in employment and recruitment, and strengthen protections for workers' rights.

In the field of healthcare, general practitioner partner groups<sup>6</sup> and telemedicine services were established within the FETE Programme to address the issue of limited access to medical care. The issue of frequent lack of health insurance coverage merited only a mention in the NRSF, while anti-Roma discrimination in health care provision remained completely unaddressed. The health visitor system, vital for marginalised and segregated populations, is under severe strain, struggling with a shortage of resources and personnel.

The housing of a large proportion of Roma families is unsafe, overcrowded, and often lacks proper legal documentation. Many segregated or segregating neighbourhoods lack access to clean drinking water and electricity, have limited public transportation, and no municipal waste collection. Two particular problems are

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). (2023). *ECRI Report on Hungary (Sixth Monitoring Cycle)*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-report-on-hungary-sixth-monitoring-cycle/1680ae35dd>

<sup>4</sup> European Parliament. (2024). *European Parliament Resolution of 18 January 2024 on the Situation in Hungary and Frozen EU Funds (2024/2512(RSP))*. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0022\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0022_EN.html)

<sup>5</sup> Nahalka, I. (2023). *Kikre vonatkozik a diszkriminációellenes törvény? Településenkénti adatok [Who is Covered by the Anti-Discrimination Law? Data by Municipality]*. Available at: <https://ckpinfo.hu/2023/10/15/kikre-vonatkozik-a-diszkriminacioellenes-torveny-telepulesenkenti-adatok/>

<sup>6</sup> These are cooperating groups of general practitioners, often including other professionals like physiotherapists, psychologists, and dieticians, who share resources and jointly offer a wider pool of services to patients on site.

the very limited availability of social housing and the high cost of utilities. Among the housing initiatives for Roma communities, there were anti-segregation programmes until 2023, but due to a lack of EU funding, only the FETE programme, which runs in 300 settlements, is still operating, typically with limited funding. Most of the Government's housing subsidies are not available to those in the lowest income quintile. Nearly one-third of Hungarian households live in housing poverty,<sup>7</sup> the figure for Roma households is 52%.<sup>8</sup>

In 2023, 16.6% of GDP was spent on social protection, representing a decline of nearly 20% over a decade.<sup>9</sup> The adequacy of social security has further deteriorated. The poverty-reducing effect of social transfers has been eroded.<sup>10</sup> The social law was amended in 2022 to reduce the state's responsibility significantly. The average monthly childcare allowance per person has been 30,000-31,000 HUF (75 EUR) for a decade and a half.<sup>11</sup> As a result of the inadequate and ineffective social protection system, the proportion of people living in relative income poverty has increased in most groups. The aim of the NRSF is to establish/develop a „benefit system that promotes activity and encourages employment“. This basically means public employment.<sup>12</sup> The employment rate of the population aged 15-64 has increased. The average monthly net income of full-time public workers was still only 98,000 HUF (approx. 245 EUR) in 2024.<sup>13</sup> Measures to support families favour those who are better off, while marginalised groups remain excluded from them.

The social and child welfare/child protection system continues to suffer from a lack of resources and capacity, as well as regional disparities in quality and access. The planned further expansion of free institutional child catering has not been implemented, and there is a lack of comprehensive, complex debt management programmes. Previously, development projects were implemented mainly through EU-funded schemes, but these have not been relaunched after 2023. Budgetary expenditure on the social and child welfare and child protection systems, which are burdened with numerous problems, does not allow for high-quality and efficient operation. There are virtually no systemic improvements.<sup>14</sup> Although more than 17,000 new nursery places

<sup>7</sup> Habitat for Humanity Hungary. (n.d.). Éves lakhatási jelentés 2024 [Annual Housing Report 2024]. Available at: <https://habitat.hu/sites/lakhatasi-jelentes-2024/>

<sup>8</sup> Office of the National Assembly. (2023). *A romák lakhatása, lakáskörülményei [Housing and Living Conditions of Roma People]*. Available at: [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet\\_2023\\_3\\_EU\\_romapolitika\\_lakhatas.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet_2023_3_EU_romapolitika_lakhatas.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). (n.d.). 25.1.1.1. *A szociális ellátás összefoglaló adatai [25.1.1.1. Summary Data on Social Care]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0001.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0001.html)

<sup>10</sup> European Commission. (2025). *Commission Staff Working Document: 2025 Country Report – Hungary* (SWD(2025) 217 final), p. 22. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1df2e420-4158-11f0-b9f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>11</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). (n.d.). 25.1.1.8. *A gyermekneveléssel kapcsolatos támogatások átlagos összegei [25.1.1.8. Average Amounts of Benefits Related to Child-Rearing]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0008.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0008.html)

<sup>12</sup> Hungarian Government. (2024). *Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 [Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030]*, p. 101. Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). (n.d.). 20.1.1.44. *Közfoglalkoztatottak létszáma, átlagkeresete [20.1.1.44. Number and Average Wages of Public Workers]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/mun/hu/mun0180.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/mun/hu/mun0180.html)

<sup>14</sup> Kopint-TÁRKI Zrt. – TÁRKI Zrt. (2022). *Economic Trends 2022/1 Report on Eastern Europe and Hungary*. Kopint-TÁRKI Konjunktúrakutató Intézet. Available at: <https://kopint-tarki.hu/en/economic-trends-2022-1-report-on-eastern-europe-and-hungary-published>

Csizmadia, Z., Kóbor, K., & Tóth, P. (2023). *A szociális intézmények szolgáltatási/ellátási nehézségei, belső megoldási mechanizmusai és szükségletei – egy szakmatámogatási- és fejlesztési problématerkép alapvonalai [Service and Operational Challenges in Social Institutions – A Baseline Map of Support and Development Needs]*. *Párbeszéd: Szociális munka folyóirat*, 10(1). Available at: <https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/parbeszed/article/view/13133>

Meleg, A. (2025). *Hungary's Pride Ban and Constitutional Amendments in 2025*. European Parliamentary Research Service. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/BRIE/2025/775839/EPRS\\_BRI\(2025\)775839\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/BRIE/2025/775839/EPRS_BRI(2025)775839_EN.pdf)

Bihari, Á. (21 August 2024). *Szakszervezet: Néhány gyermekvédelmi intézmény hamarosan működésképtelenné válhat [Union: Some Child Protection Institutions May Soon Become Inoperable]*. *Szabad Európa*. Available at: <https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/szakszervezet-nehany-gyermekvedelmi-intezmeny-hamarosan-mukodeskeptelenne->

have been created since 2021, but only 700 disadvantaged and multiply disadvantaged children attend nursery nationwide.<sup>15</sup> The Sure Start Children's Houses – aimed at supporting children and their parents by providing developmental activities, health guidance, and social support to improve health, education, and social integration – are now implemented as a very uneven and, in many cases, compulsory programme for the most disadvantaged Roma families. Since it has become a specifically Roma programme, the operation of the houses in most places – contrary to the original intention – reinforces early segregation rather than inclusion and integration. The target increase in the number of children has not been achieved, and the number of houses has decreased from the planned level. According to the data, the number of children removed from their families has declined, except for the 0-2 age group. The underlying reason is the informal request,<sup>16</sup> not to refer children because there is nowhere to place them. Since 2023, hundreds of newborns and infants have been left in hospitals every year because there is nowhere else to place them. There has been no meaningful data on the reasons for admission since 2015.<sup>17</sup>

The most significant step forward in presenting Roma culture and history was the opening of the István Szentandrásy Roma Contemporary Gallery. At the same time, most state-maintained public collections and museums have still not integrated Roma history and art. No significant progress has been made in establishing a Roma Museum, cultural centre, or research institute. Support for language use has not strengthened the social status of the Romani and Beás languages. In 2023, fewer than 1,500 people were learning Romani or Beás in Hungary, which is almost invisible compared to the Roma population of 800,000. Support for the cultural programmes of Roma organisations has continued, but only in the form of small-scale, short-term grants that are neither aligned with a long-term cultural development strategy nor commensurate with the actual size of the Roma community. Grants of up to 1-2 million HUF (2,500 – 3,000 EUR) do not provide them with stability or institutional capacity building. During the period under review, no attitude-shaping programmes targeting the majority of society were launched.

### Focus on key issues affecting Roma

One of the most powerful forms of exclusion of Roma in Hungary is school segregation. Segregation is reinforced by 'white flight', and, as a result, there has been an increase in the number of ethnically homogeneous schools, which generally provide a lower standard of education. Several international and domestic institutions highlighted the severity of the problem between 2019 and 2023, yet no meaningful progress has been made. State policy, particularly through its support for the expansion of church schools, contributes to the perpetuation of segregation. In response to the suspension of EU funds, the Hungarian government passed a law in December 2023 on anti-discrimination measures in public education. However, rather than introducing effective intervention, this law merely introduces sanctions and affects only a fraction of schools. Not only is there a lack of practical implementation of the principles laid down in the NRSF, but segregation is becoming increasingly prevalent. There is a decline in anti-discrimination cases because of segregation brought before courts by the Roma in recent years. After the centralisation of schools, conflicts related to educational segregation are much less likely to be fought locally. On the other hand, the gradual weakening of civil and institutional legal protection makes this even more difficult. However, it is not only these factors that influence the situation; local conditions and vulnerabilities also play a role, as we demonstrate in the case studies. No change can be expected without genuine commitment and the launch of a targeted anti-segregation programme.

In Hungary, there are significant disparities between regions and types of municipalities, as well as a high degree of residential and spatial segregation. Social problems are accumulating in disadvantaged areas, small settlements, and, essentially ghettoised, urban, segregated areas, where there are serious deficiencies in services and infrastructure. Taken together, these lead to the multidimensional exclusion of those living there.

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[valhat/33084313.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html)

<sup>15</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). (n.d.). 25.1.1.9. A Szociális Ellátás Egyéb Mutatói [Other Indicators of Social Assistance]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html)

<sup>16</sup> Muhari, Z. (2023). *Gyermekevédelmi intézmények működési nehézségei és a szakmai utánpótlás válsága Magyarországon [Operational Challenges in Child Protection Institutions and the Crisis of Professional Succession in Hungary]*. *Szociális Szemle*, 31(2), 45–62.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF Magyarország. (2024). *A Gyermekevédelmi Rendszer Kihívásai [Challenges of the Child Protection System]*. Available at: [https://unicef.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/0222\\_a-gyermekevedelmi-rendszer-kihivasai-unicef-magyarorszag.pdf](https://unicef.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/0222_a-gyermekevedelmi-rendszer-kihivasai-unicef-magyarorszag.pdf)

The residential segregation of the Roma population in Hungary is one of the most severe among EU member states,<sup>18</sup> and Roma families mostly live in disadvantaged regions where it is difficult to find doctors, teachers, or social workers. The shortcomings of public service systems are even more pronounced in these areas, which, as we will see in the case study, lead to lasting exclusion. The more disadvantaged an area is, the more likely it is that there will be a shortage of professionals.<sup>19</sup> Service systems struggling with these shortcomings should address the high risk of poverty and housing poverty; the inadequacy of income support programmes; the deterioration of the quality and security of the welfare system; and the exclusion of marginalised groups from family support and housing policy measures. A significant problem is institutional discrimination against Roma, from hospital care to the labour market to segregated education, to which the NRSF also offers no response.

Civil society participation in policymaking is formally guaranteed. Still, in practice, it is often limited, as processes are typically top-down, and opportunities for professional dialogue and real influence are severely limited. Participation is further hampered by the limited capacity and political exposure of organisations, the politicisation of civil society, and the silencing of critical voices through the threat of regulatory change. As a result, civil society's influence on policy is often more formal than honest, even though the greater community embeddedness and accumulated experience of civil society organisations could provide meaningful support for planning and implementation. This would require genuine dialogue and the continuous operation of their forums.

### Use of EU funding instruments

Hungary planned most of its NRSF-related interventions through EU funds. Still, some of these were frozen by the European Union, due to concerns about the failure to address concerns over corruption and the rule of law, as well as the 'significant deterioration in recent years' of the situation of vulnerable groups including Roma.

The impact of EU-funded programmes for Roma inclusion is weakened by a lack of coordination, conflicts of interest concerns, limited transparency, and minimal civil society participation. This is further compounded by poor planning and confusion over issues of demarcation between funding streams.

There is very little civil oversight concerning the distribution of EU funds for Roma integration. Government-affiliated institutions and organisations control the management and distribution of the funds. Political loyalty influences and distorts resource allocation, excluding many local Roma and pro-Roma civil organisations, and this critically undermines the prospect of an effective, efficient, and ethically sound Roma inclusion policy.

In 2023, most programmes were discontinued, but some, such as FETE, 'Tanodák' (tutorial schools), and the Sure Start Children's Houses, were maintained. However, the development of basic services cannot be planned solely based on EU funds – the Hungarian budget should also mobilise significantly more funds for the development of disadvantaged groups and regions.

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<sup>18</sup> Office of the National Assembly. (2023). *A Romák Lakhatása, Lakáskörülményei [Housing and Living Conditions of Roma People]*. Information Note, February 2023. Available at: [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet\\_2023\\_3\\_EU\\_romapolitika\\_lakhatas.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet_2023_3_EU_romapolitika_lakhatas.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Daróczi, G. (2024). *A Romák Közszolgáltatásokhoz Való Hozzáférése Magyarországon [Roma Access to Public Services in Hungary]*. Available at: <https://phirenamenca.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/A-romak-kozszoqlaltatasokhoz-valo-hozzaferese-Magyarorszaon-2024.pdf>

# INTRODUCTION

## *National Roma strategic framework*

The framework document for the National Roma Strategy is the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 (hereinafter: NRSF). Its implementation during this period is regulated by two government decrees that adopt action plans for 2021-2024 and 2025-2027. The NRSF was amended in December 2024 following consultations with EC representatives. These amendments include several new indicators and a promise of greater involvement of civil society organisations. A report on the implementation of the NRSF for 2021-2024 will be prepared for the government by 30 November 2025. Its development has recently begun; therefore, a comprehensive government monitoring report for 2021-2022 is available.<sup>20</sup> Since the 2023-2024 monitoring report is not available, it is not clear in what form, with what data, based on what sources, and linked to what other databases it will be prepared.

In the European Semester, the Commission's country-specific recommendation proposes an integrated approach to education, poverty reduction, and labour market activation measures to promote the integration of Roma. However, most metrics measuring achievement of these objectives, except for employment, did not improve during the period under review. As part of its monitoring, the European Semester supports a partnership approach, which includes the involvement of civil society and local and regional authorities, as well as capacity-building support for the parties concerned. These have been implemented to varying degrees, with the partnership tending to be more formal. Although the NRSF supports the integration of Roma, the following points should be highlighted in relation to its implementation:

- the lack of genuine anti-segregation measures;
- the lack of a complex, multisectoral approach;
- the lack of programme planning to ensure sustainability;
- the lack of transparency and the involvement of civil society organisations.

## *About this report*

This report examines the implementation of the NRSF from the second half of 2021 to the second half of 2025. To prepare the report, we analysed available government reports and monitoring studies, comparing them with data from specific professional fields covered in each chapter of the report. We conducted interviews with government and civil society actors and experts, and members and experts of the Egalipe Network (a broad coalition of Roma and pro-Roma organisations) also participated in its creation. At the same time, others also contributed their suggestions to its final form.

The two highest-ranking officials, the State Secretary for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations at the Ministry of the Interior (in writing) and the Prime Minister's Commissioner for Social Inclusion (interview), answered our questions. The National Development Centre responded to our inquiry with an answer that would have required a significant amount of work to extract the data. At lower levels of implementation, three additional interviews were conducted, ranging from the head of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service's education programme to a mid-level ministry official who asked to remain anonymous.

Three interviews were conducted with national and regional Roma leaders. We also sought to interview professionals working closely with communities across education and child protection. Some of them asked that their names be withheld. In addition, interviews with experts and researchers (five in total) helped us in our work. During the preparation of the case studies (case study 1), we interviewed a total of about 30 Roma parents, six local decision-makers, and three institution leaders. In another case study (case study 2), we collected data through questionnaires in 53 households, interviewed the head of a CSO, and held focus groups with the children and parents involved.

The report was reviewed by the following civil society organisations affiliated with the Egalipe Network: UCCU Foundation, Romaversitas Foundation, 1 Magyarország Kezdeményezés [Hungary Initiative], NEKI [Nemzeti és

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<sup>20</sup> [Hungarian Government. \(2023\). MNTFS2030 Program Monitoring Jelentés 2023 \[MNTFS2030 Programme Monitoring Report 2023\]. Available at: https://socialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030\\_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf](https://socialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf)

Etnikai Kisebbségi Jogvédő Iroda - Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities], and *Együttnevelés Szövetség* [Inclusive Education Alliance]. We are grateful for their valuable support.

# 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NRSF

## 1.1. Key developments and effectiveness of implementation

### 1.1.1. Changes in the NRSF and action plans

According to the State Secretariat for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations, which coordinates the implementation of the NRSF at the Ministry of the Interior, the government assigns great importance to the strategy, the action plans are linked to development programmes, and the NRSF is considered in the formulation of policies. During the period under review, two action plans were drawn up for the NRSF: for 2021-2024 and 2025-2027.<sup>21</sup> According to the State Secretariat responsible for implementation, the action plan for 2025-2027 was drawn up considering the recommendations of the European Commission's experts. Regarding the National Strategic Policy Framework for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (enabling condition 4.4) and the National Strategic Policy Framework for Roma Inclusion (enabling condition 4.5), the European Commission proposed that, instead of the previous task-focused intervention package, results-oriented aspects should be prioritised in 2025-2027. The amended NRSF was adopted in December 2024. Still, only four days were allowed for commenting on the extensive document, which made it practically impossible to formulate substantive professional opinions and which is also contrary to EU recommendations.<sup>22</sup> Among the amendments, it is worth noting that two new elements have been added to the indicator table below: reducing the rate of early school leaving among Roma girls and the number of people moving to integrated areas. The achievement of both new indicators is linked to the implementation of EU-funded programmes.

Description	Baseline value (year)	2026 interim target	2030 target
Material and social poverty among families with children	22.9% (2019)	19%	13%
Poverty gap	38.7% (2020)	30%	20%
Number of children attending 'Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház' (Sure Start Children's Houses)	2,379 (2019)	2,700	3,400
Early school leaving rate among Roma students	64.6% (2019)	58%	45%
Early school leaving rate among Roma girls	71.3% (2019)	66%	60%
Number of Roma students aged 15-24 enrolled in higher education	2.2% (2019)	3%	4%
NEET among Roma youth	41.0% (2019)	36%	30%
Proportion of Roma aged 15-74 with low educational attainment	77.4% (2019)	70%	60%
Employment among Roma aged 15-64	45.5% (2019)	51%	60%
Number of people moving to integrated areas with better access to employment and services as a result of the relevant EFOP Plus and TOP Plus programmes	0 (2022)	-	1,926

<sup>21</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). 1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat A Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtására Vonatkozó Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervről A 2021-2024. Évekre [Government Resolution 1619/2021 (IX. 3.) on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021-2024]. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

Government of Hungary. (2025). 1219/2025. (VI. 23.) Korm. Határozat A Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtásának A 2025-2027. Évekre Szóló Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervéről [Government Resolution 1219/2025 (VI. 23.) on the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2025-2027]. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2025-1219-30-22>.

<sup>22</sup> European Commission. (2020). A Union of Equality: EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation.html>

### 1.1.1. Progress in implementation

A report on the implementation of the government Action Plan for 2021–2024 will be prepared for the government by 30 November 2025,<sup>23</sup> and its compilation has recently begun. The State Secretariat coordinating the implementation of the NRSF has highlighted as successful the following measures in advance:<sup>24</sup>

- Birth and childhood – with a particular focus on the continued maintenance of Sure Start Children’s Houses.
- Public education, vocational training, and higher education system – continuous maintenance of *Tanodák* (tutoring centres), *Útravaló Ösztöndíjprogram* – scholarship programme to create opportunities for disadvantaged students by providing personalised support and bursaries and prevent school drop-out and support further learning - and other scholarships to help students catch up (with an increase in the number of scholarships this year), and support for Roma colleges providing assistance for young Roma in higher education to acquire academic degrees.
- Employment, adult education, social economy: the ‘Growing Opportunities’ (*Nő az esély*) training and employment programme was completed during the period under review.
- The ‘Complex Settlement Programme’ based on community development and social work, addressing bad living conditions, housing insecurity, was implemented in 126 segregated areas in 95 municipalities, with a total of 3,455 participants who identified themselves as Roma. (Analysis is in this report’s chapter on housing.)

The implementation of the original plans is significantly affected by the suspension of part of the EU funds. The State Secretariat confirmed that this may cause delays in certain areas, but these „did not result in specific, widely identifiable or foreseeable general delays in relation to the originally planned activities.” In June 2025, the government adopted a new Action Plan for the Period 2025–2027, ordering its implementation in line with available resources.

### 1.1.2. Effectiveness of monitoring

Monitoring is carried out in coordination with the monitoring processes operated by the European Commission, with biennial reports to be prepared from 2021 onwards.<sup>25</sup> The EU monitors developments in Member States implemented with EU support at several levels and using various methods.<sup>26</sup> EU regulations require that public data be published on supported projects, progress in utilisation, and financing. These open government (open data) platforms are partially accessible to researchers and civil society organisations. Although a Hungarian data reporting system exists, there are shortcomings in relation to the use of EU funds, as noted in an independent recommendation from 2022.<sup>27</sup> Expectations regarding open data management would be particularly important in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of measures directly affecting Roma (e.g. data related to public education).

<sup>23</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat A Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtására Vonatkozó Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervről A 2021–2024. Évekre [Government Resolution No. 1619/2021 (IX. 3.) on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>24</sup> During the preparation of the report, the planned interview with Attila Sztojka, State Secretary for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations, was not held due to organisational reasons. We used the responses provided by the State Secretariat to our written questions in the report, quoting them verbatim in several instances. Date of response: 30 July 2025.

<sup>25</sup> Hungarian Government. (2023). *MNTFS2030 Program Monitoring Jelentés 2023 [MNTFS2030 Programme Monitoring Report 2023]*, covering monitoring results for 2021–2022. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030\\_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> European Commission. (n.d.). *Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation*. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation.html>

<sup>27</sup> Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis Ltd. (2022). *Access to and Quality of Public Data on EU Fund Allocations in Hungary [A Közzolgáltatott Adatokhoz Való Hozzáférés és Az EU-Alapok Elosztása Minőségének Vizsgálata Magyarországon]*. Available at: [https://www.budapestinstitute.eu/uploads/HU\\_open\\_data\\_assessment\\_2022\\_BI1.pdf](https://www.budapestinstitute.eu/uploads/HU_open_data_assessment_2022_BI1.pdf)

A significant development is that the NRSF also includes a description of the FETE Programme monitoring system. Based on this, the programme is monitored through municipal reports, group consultations, site visits, and electronic data recording, with results reported to policy forums and ministries funding the programme. The evaluation is based on own and official data, measuring the effects on education, health, housing, and economic development through regular data collection and indicators. A comprehensive external expert evaluation will be completed by the end of 2027. Public data on monitoring activities are not yet available, so the effectiveness of the system cannot be assessed at this time.

In Hungary, civil society organisations, including Roma and pro-Roma organisations, can participate in monitoring the use of EU funds in several ways. However, their involvement is often limited and occurs within a formal framework (see Chapter 4). In preparing this report, we requested data from the National Development Centre (NFK), which coordinates EU funds, on the current status of EU programmes supporting the implementation of the NRSF. In its response, the NFK did not specify any calls for proposals related to the NRSF, but only referred to the official government call for proposals website as a source of information. In practice, however, the portal's search engine is not suitable for listing calls related to NRSF: keywords can only be searched in application titles, so filtering relevant support programmes would be possible only by processing the entire documentation. A public, systematic, and searchable list of programmes related to the NRSF on official platforms would significantly improve transparency and enable civil oversight.

### 1.1.3. Data collection

According to the 2022 RCM report, the main shortcomings of the NRSF are that there is no clear, quantifiable system of targets and indicators; data collection and evaluation are carried out exclusively by ministries, without the involvement of independent experts and civil society organisations; there is no complex, horizontal approach across policy areas; and it is not transparent to what extent resources reach organisations that directly support Roma integration.

The report recommended introducing biennial monitoring reports containing quantitative and qualitative analyses; setting clear, measurable targets and indicators; making the reports public; establishing who is responsible for data collection and evaluation and setting deadlines; and organising data collection in a way that meets the monitoring requirements of EU co-financed programmes and ensures the transparent use of funds. Several of these recommendations have been implemented – the biennial report, new indicators in the revised NRSF – but as the governmental 2023–2024 monitoring report is not yet available, it is not clear in what form it will be prepared, what sources it will be based on, or what other databases it will be linked to.

Monitoring programmes and processes is made difficult by problems with data collection beyond the scope of the NRSF. In an interview with an education policy expert for the monitoring report,<sup>28</sup> it was stated that the Education Office has released virtually no data to independent researchers for two years. For example, it is impossible to know the exact numbers of the shortage of teachers, and it is also almost impossible to evaluate anti-segregation measures in education. The number and characteristics of segregated areas can currently be determined based on data from the 2011 census.

The data from the 2022 census are not yet available, and, according to our information, this is due to a methodological debate over the definition of segregation. Since it is therefore impossible to know precisely where and how large – and above all, how many – segregated areas there are in Hungary, it is also impossible to plan adequate anti-segregation programmes. An even more serious problem that researchers from TÁRKI and ELTE recently pointed out is that the reliability of the Central Statistical Office's income data (including those relating to income distribution, income inequality, and income poverty) has been highly questionable since 2018.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with István Nahalka, 17 July 2025

<sup>29</sup> Tátrai, A., & Gábos, A. (1 April 2025). *Kutatói Aggodalmak Az EU-SILC Magyarországi Jövedelemadataival Kapcsolatban* [Researcher Concerns About the EU-SILC Hungarian Income Data]. Available at: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/04/01/eu-silc-magyarorszagi-jovedelemadok-kutatoj-elemzes/>

Tátrai, A., Gábos, A., Huszár, Á., Krekó, J., & Tomka, Zs. (3 June 2025). *Rendszerszintű Adatminőségi Problémák Az EU-SILC Magyar Jövedelmi Adataiban (2014–2023)* [System-level Data Quality Problems in the EU-SILC Hungarian Income Data (2014–2023)]. Available at: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/06/03/eu-silc-magyar-jovedelmi-adatok-minosegi-problemak-tanulmany/>

## 1.2. NRSF's synergy with domestic and EU actions

### 1.2.1. Complementary policies

According to the Government's intentions, the NRSF (formally HNSIS) provides a unified framework for several domestic sub-strategies. The 'National Action Plan for Guaranteeing Children's Rights 2030'<sup>30</sup> adopted during the period covered by the report refers to the NRSF in several places. It mentions it as a strategic background among the relevant government programmes, emphasising that the action plan on children's rights aligns with the policy objectives of social inclusion.

When presenting the FETE Programme, it highlights that its interventions target the NRSF target groups, especially children living in poverty and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Regarding monitoring, it states that children's situation is monitored through the NRSF monitoring system and that indicators must also be developed in line with the NRSF indicator system. According to the government decree connected to NRSF, the long-term FETE programme must be continued in line with the objectives of the NRSF, as with its 'model solutions' it can prevent the most disadvantaged settlements from falling behind.<sup>31</sup> The launch and more or less continuous operation of the centrally coordinated, locally implemented programme, which builds on previous EU schemes and draws on their experience,<sup>32</sup> can be identified as an achievement, but the initiative has been criticised on several grounds (due to its effectiveness and parallel services; because it does not adequately address systemic problems,<sup>33</sup> and affects just over a tenth of the country's municipalities).

The 'Healthy Hungary 2021–2027 Strategy'<sup>34</sup> does not directly refer to the NRSF. Still, it addresses the situation of Roma communities, disadvantaged people and those living in poverty in several areas, particularly in the fields of education, health, and social care. The stated objectives include improving equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups and promoting social inclusion.

In the field of education, the government has prepared and adopted a public education strategy for the period 2021–2030,<sup>35</sup> which is linked in several respects (and in its indicators) to the objectives set out in the NRSF, such as reducing the number of students at risk of dropping out or leaving school without qualifications. However, this strategy only outlines general development directions rather than specific measures, deadlines, or responsible parties.

<sup>30</sup> Hungarian Government. (2023). *A Gyermekek Jogainak Garanciáit Biztosító Nemzeti Cselekvési Terv 2030 [National Action Plan 2030 to Ensure Guarantees for the Rights of Children]*. Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/8/87/870/870c9c19948a487e40d5d1b5b674c65ed1f66889.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat A Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtásának A 2021–2024. Évekre Szóló Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervéről [Government Resolution 1619/2021 (IX. 3.) on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>32</sup> Perpék, É., & Kiss, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Véges És Végtelen Lehetőségek [Finite and Infinite Possibilities]*. Available at: [https://real.mtak.hu/185834/1/Perpek\\_Kiss\\_Veges\\_es\\_vegtelen\\_lehetosegek\\_TK.pdf](https://real.mtak.hu/185834/1/Perpek_Kiss_Veges_es_vegtelen_lehetosegek_TK.pdf)

Husz, I., Perpék, É., Kiss, M., Medgyesi, M., & Elek, Zs. R. (Eds.). (2023). *Gyerekesélyek A Végek-en III. A Járási Gyerekesély Programok Működése 2016–2023 Között [Child Opportunities at the Margins III: Operation of the District Child Opportunity Programmes 2016–2023]*. Available at: [https://gyerekesely.tk.hu/uploads/files/Gyerekeselyek\\_a\\_vegeken\\_III\\_boritoval.pdf](https://gyerekesely.tk.hu/uploads/files/Gyerekeselyek_a_vegeken_III_boritoval.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Qubit & CEU Határtalan Tudás. (11 July 2024). *Az Utóbbi Évek Erőltetett Iparosítási Politikája Csak a Leszakadást Konzerválja a Legszegényebb Magyar Járásokban [The Recent Years' Forced Industrial-Policy Only Consolidates the Decline in the Poorest Hungarian Districts]*. Available at: <https://qubit.hu/2024/07/11/az-utobbi-evек-eroltetett-iparositas-politikaja-csak-a-leszakadast-konzervolja-a-legszegenyebb-magyar-jarasokban/>

<sup>34</sup> Hungarian Government. (n.d.). *Egészséges Magyarország 2021–2027 Egészségügyi Ágazati Stratégia [Healthy Hungary 2021–2027 Health Sector Strategy]*. Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/d/dc/dc5/dc5e0cad5e44450024c624018aa351dfc0946e40.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Hungarian Government, Ministry of the Interior. (2023). *Az Európai Unió Számára Készített Köznevelési Stratégia 2021–2030 [The Public Education Strategy 2021–2030 Prepared for the European Union]*. Available at: [https://bmprojektekkormany.hu/download/d/3b/23000/K%3%B6znevel%3%A9si%20strat%3%A9gia\\_20231116.pdf](https://bmprojektekkormany.hu/download/d/3b/23000/K%3%B6znevel%3%A9si%20strat%3%A9gia_20231116.pdf)

The National Strategy Against Anti-Semitism also contains a few specifics.<sup>36</sup> When preparing the report, the State Secretariat for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations referred to this strategy adopted in 2024 in connection with the NRSF's measures to reduce anti-Roma sentiment. However, the document focuses primarily on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, with Roma appearing only incidentally, and does not mention (the much more widespread)<sup>37</sup> antigypsyism as a social problem, thus containing neither specific courses of action nor measures to combat it.

### 1.2.2. Alignment with EU actions

In the European Semester, the European Commission's country-specific recommendations propose an integrated approach to education, poverty reduction, and labour market activation measures to promote the integration of Roma.<sup>38</sup> However, except for employment, most of these indicators did not improve during the period under review (see, for example, the chapter on education of this report).

The European Semester supports a partnership approach to its monitoring, which includes the involvement of civil society, local and regional authorities, and capacity-building support for the actors concerned. Although the NRSF supports the integration of Roma, the following points should be highlighted in relation to its implementation:

- the lack of genuine anti-segregation measures;
- the lack of a complex, multisectoral approach;
- the lack of programme planning to ensure sustainability;
- the lack of transparency and the involvement of civil society organisations;
- the lack of reliable data collection methods.

As indicated in the individual areas, many measures were only planned during this period and could not be launched, mainly due to the withholding of EU funds. According to information from our interviewees working in government institutions, several measures are expected to be launched in 2025.

### 1.2.3. Addressing concerns of previous assessments

The latest 2022 Roma civil monitoring report<sup>39</sup> recommended that (1) detailed monitoring reports be prepared every two years, containing not only quantitative data but also qualitative analyses; (2) clear, measurable targets and indicators be formulated; (3) monitoring and evaluation reports be made public; (4) clarify responsibilities and deadlines in data collection and evaluation processes; (5) organise data collection and reporting in a way that meets the monitoring requirements of EU co-financed programmes.

Implementation during the period under review is difficult to assess due to the lack of measures taken. Although the revised NRSF considered domestic and international strategies and conceptual materials, several of the RCM's critical assessments remained unanswered (as discussed in the individual technical chapters), and implementation often lacks participation from civil society and independent experts.

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<sup>36</sup> Hungarian Government. (2024). *Antiszeizitizmus Elleni Nemzeti Stratégia [National Strategy Against Antisemitism]*. Available at: <https://kormany.hu/dokumentumtar/antiszeizitizmus-elleni-nemzeti-strategia>

<sup>37</sup> Republikon Intézet. (2019). *Előítéletesség, Antiszeizitizmus [Prejudice, Antisemitism]*. Available at: <https://www.republikon.hu/media/84273/20-08-25-republikon-eloteletesseg-es-antiszeizitizmus.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> European Commission. (2020). *A Union of Equality: EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation (Full Package)*. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package\\_hu](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_hu) )

<sup>39</sup> Roma Civil Monitoring. (2022). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Roma Strategic Framework in Hungary [Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Roma Strategic Framework in Hungary]*. Available at: <https://romacivilmonitoring.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RCM2-2022-C1-Hungary-FINAL-PUBLISHED-CATALOGUE.pdf>

### 1.3. Roma participation in implementation and monitoring

#### 1.3.1. Involvement of Roma CSOs in implementation

Participation in implementation is very modest; the government has typically planned predefined programmes<sup>40</sup> and intends to allocate a negligible portion of available resources within the framework of an open, so-called standard procedure, meaning that EU funds will not contribute to the institutional and professional development of Roma civil society organisations. In the largest programme, FETE, there are currently seven Roma CSOs working as implementers of the 300 municipalities.<sup>41</sup>

#### 1.3.2. Roma in public institutions implementing the NRSF

Several Roma experts and politicians play a role in the public institutions involved in its implementation. Roma are represented in the leadership and staff of the State Secretariat for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations of the Ministry of the Interior and the Directorate-General for Social Opportunities (TEF), which acts as a background institution, and are involved in the planning and coordination of several programmes affecting Roma.

#### 1.3.3. Roma participation in monitoring and evaluation

The most important platform for discussing the use of EU funds and other government measures affecting Roma is the Roma Coordination Council (ROK-T), which has been operating since 2011. The Council is chaired by the Minister of the Interior. According to the government decree regulating its operation,<sup>42</sup> it is „an advisory and consultative body for integration, a forum for communicating information on the interests of the social groups concerned to the Government”. The 33 members of the body include delegates from seven national civil society organisations, five county Roma National Minority Self-Governments, and six churches. However, according to several of our interviewees, the Council does not fulfil the role it was intended to play when it was established. It is inconsistent in adhering to its own rules of procedure, ineffective, and there is no opportunity for meaningful professional debate (there was a year when only one meeting was held, and preliminary professional materials were either not sent to members at all or reached them only at the last minute). Overall, the ROK-T can be described as a political rather than a professional consultative body.

In the 2021-2027 programming period, under pressure from the EC, independent civil society organisations were also given seats on the monitoring committees. From 2023, several legal defence and Roma organisations were able to join the monitoring committees of the individual operational programmes through a competitive process, with the *Egalipe Network* of Roma and pro-Roma organisations and the *Autonomia Foundation* delegating members to a total of five committees.<sup>43</sup> However, Roma participation is still very low in these committees, which rarely meet anyway, mainly because ROK-T did not provide information and did not encourage its Roma members to apply to the committees.

Roma participation would be significantly enhanced if the National Self-Government of Roma in Hungary (MROÖ) also delegated members to the various committees. The current MROÖ president considers involvement in the committees' work necessary. Still, in his opinion, the body currently lacks the professional capacity to make this possible.<sup>44</sup> The low number of Roma members is also explained by a lack of capacity, according to

<sup>40</sup> Hungary's use of predefined programmes in EU-financed operational programmes is problematic because it undermines the core principles of EU cohesion policy: competition, transparency, efficiency, and accountability. It reduces the effectiveness of funds and raises legal and ethical concerns.

<sup>41</sup> FETE – Felzárkózó Települések Program. (n.d.). *Megvalósító szervezetek [Implementing Organizations]*. Available at: <https://fete.hu/szervezetek/>

Some programmes also ensured Roma participation: for example, in the 'Focus on Children' Programme running at the beginning of the cycle, family mentors were selected from among the women living in the settlement.

<sup>42</sup> Government of Hungary. (2011). *Act CXII of 2011 on the Right of Informational Self-Determination and on the Freedom of Information [2011. évi CXII. törvény a közérdekű adatok hozzáféréséről és az információszabadságról]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2011-1102-30-22>

<sup>43</sup> Egalipe Hálózat. (n.d.). *Érdekérvényesítés [Advocacy / Interest-Representation]*. Available at: <https://www.egalipe.hu/erdekervenyesites/>

<sup>44</sup> Interview with István Aba-Horváth, president of the MROÖ (23 June 2025)

the leader of an active Roma civil society organisation.<sup>45</sup> However, it is also important to emphasise that the political exposure of Roma organisations is not conducive to carrying out such work, which requires an objective and critical attitude.<sup>46</sup> The situation may be further exacerbated by the draft of the so-called 'On transparency of public life',<sup>47</sup> which also affects Hungarian civil society organisations. The legislation, which has not yet been adopted, could label these organisations as a threat to the country's sovereignty, even classifying funds obtained from European Union tenders as suspicious. Several of these organisations are involved in the preparation of RCM reports. The draft has been temporarily withdrawn, but it still has an impact, as it discourages some civil society organisations from taking a public stance.

Monitoring committee members delegated by civil society organisations receive remuneration and have voting rights at meetings. The experiences of organisations involved in monitoring activities are mixed. The functioning and openness of individual committees towards civil society participants vary greatly. In some cases, constructive work is taking place, while in others, civil society monitoring committee members have been denied access to certain documents related to the selection and implementation of supported projects.<sup>48</sup>

In one case, two member organisations of EFOP Plus MB – a rural and a national Roma/pro-Roma network – were invited to join a monitoring subcommittee (FETE Thematic Committee) only after they had complained, despite their prior request and a previous promise. Members delegated by the government are in the majority in all committees. However, some organisations have still been able to achieve minor successes.<sup>49</sup> It is common experience that government officials and representatives of the European Commission consult each other before making decisions. It is almost impossible to make a decision that reflects civil society's position during the voting process.

#### 1.3.4. Contribution of the National Roma Platform to the NRSF Implementation

According to the State Secretariat coordinating the implementation of the NRSF, the events organised by the National Roma Platform (NRP) provide a regular opportunity for regional and local organisations, including authorities, local Governments, Roma National Self-Governments, and civil society organisations, to discuss the results and challenges of the NRSF's implementation. However, based on the available information, it isn't easy to assess the extent to which these meetings have contributed to this goal. From our interviews and the very incomplete documentation of NRP events, we can conclude that the platform's activities have had little impact on the implementation or professional control of the NRSF and have contributed only to a small extent to mobilising Roma and pro-Roma civil society and other actors. There are no publicly available announcements for the NRP's events; participants were invited to the platform meetings by local organisers. Participants in the meetings did not receive any advance materials, so they were unable to prepare or formulate questions. Based on an analysis of the agendas and minutes of the individual meetings,<sup>50</sup> it can be said that the NRP meetings did not create a real opportunity for dialogue, and were only suitable for providing information and networking.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Judit Berki (civil society organisation leader) and István Aba-Horváth (President of the National Roma Self-Government)

<sup>46</sup> The winning bids for the Government's Rural and Urban Civil Fund, created to support civil organisations, were distorted. According to analyses conducted in connection with the latter, a large portion of the funds was received in 2024 by civil organisations created by pro-Government politicians.

Válasz Online. (22 January 2024). *A Fidesz Gigantikus Álcivil Hálózatot Épített a Választásokra – Városi Civil Alap* [Fidesz Built a Gigantic Pseudo-civil Network for the Elections – City Civil Fund]. Available at: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2024/01/22/fidesz-varosi-civil-alap-nemethszilard-valasztasok/>

<sup>47</sup> Hungarian Parliament. (2025). *Bill T/11923 on the Transparency of Public Life* [T/11923. Számonyú Törvényjavaslat A Közélet Átláthatóságáról]. Available at: <https://helsinki.hu/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/05/Bill-T11923-Transparency-of-Public-Life.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> The experience of the Autonomia Foundation's delegate in the monitoring committee of the Digital Renewal Operational Programme.

<sup>49</sup> Társaság a Szabadságjogokért (TASZ). (3 Mar 2024). *Egy Év Tapasztalata a Monitoring Bizottságokban* [One Year of Experience in the Monitoring Committees]. Available at: <https://tasz.hu/cikkek/egy-ev-tapasztalata-a-monitoring-bizottsagokban/> [tasz](https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1025569016278810&set=a.632208545614861);

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1025569016278810&set=a.632208545614861>

<sup>50</sup> Slachta Margit National Institute of Social Policy. (n.d.). *Roma Platform Rendezvények* [Roma Platform Events]. Available at: <https://socialisportal.hu/tema/roma-platform-rendezvenyek/>

This is supported by the fact that, during meetings held between 2023 and 2025, out of a total of 2025 minutes of presentations, only 330 minutes were devoted to discussing participants' questions and comments.

Overall, the NRP's events served primarily not as a forum for professional dialogue, but rather as a means of top-down information sharing and political, governmental, and constituency representation. An evaluation of the NRP's first two seasons, commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior,<sup>51</sup> gives a generally positive assessment of the meetings. The report bases its findings on questionnaires and interviews with participants, so the opinions of civil society organisations that did not attend or were not invited to the meetings are not reflected in it.

Since 2021, the Egalipe Network has approached the NCP on numerous occasions to discuss how the platform could be opened to systematic discussion of the NRSF and related issues, and how an effective, pre-planned, transparent series of dialogues could be implemented. Among the proposals was that an important objective of the NRP application submitted in 2024 should be a planned, open, and documented professional consultation on the update of the NRSF. The network also offered assistance in developing and operating the methodology for the consultation forum and in reaching out to relevant civil society actors. Egalipe would have joined the application as a partner. Still, the NCP rejected this, while nevertheless indicating on several occasions that it had incorporated the proposal for a central consultation forum into the application. Despite repeated requests, the network did not receive the submitted application, which ultimately omitted its proposals, such as the implementation of a series of pre-planned, transparent, and open consultation forums in Budapest that would be more easily accessible to national and rural organisations.

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<sup>51</sup> HÉTFA Kutatóintézet. (2023). *Záró Tanulmány – A Roma Platform Megerősítése 2023 [Closing Study – Strengthening the Roma Platform 2023]*. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Roma-Platform-zarotanutmany-1130\\_v2\\_final.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Roma-Platform-zarotanutmany-1130_v2_final.pdf)

## 2. REVIEW BY THEMATIC AREA

### 2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

Although the most important challenges in this area are clearly visible (widespread hate speech and prejudice, weakening of institutional legal protection, low awareness among legal authorities), and the European Commission's 2023 assessment report highlights explicitly that „the EU Roma strategic framework focuses on combating antigypsyism and discrimination“,<sup>52</sup> the government has done little on this issue. The 2022 RCM report provided extensive data on the extent of anti-Roma sentiment and drew attention to the fact that the civil society base for legal protection continued to weaken during the period under review.<sup>53</sup> Although ethnic discrimination is prohibited by law, it remains widespread in Hungary.<sup>54</sup> This is also linked to low awareness of fundamental rights: according to the 2024 Eurobarometer survey, Hungary has one of the lowest levels of awareness in this regard.<sup>55</sup> In a 2019 survey, 14% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to do something, even to a small extent, to improve the situation of Roma, for example by donating, volunteering, or joining movements aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting the inclusion of Roma. 86% would not do anything to help the Roma.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, there is something to be said for awareness, as 65% of Hungarian society considers the level of ethnic discrimination in Hungary to be very high or relatively high.<sup>57</sup>

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) wrote in its latest report published in March 2023 that „stigmatising rhetoric against Roma [...] remains widespread in Hungary“ and that „the reporting rate for incidents of discrimination against Roma was 6%“. <sup>58</sup> According to ECRI, „the authorities should increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies to effectively identify and address hate speech and hate crimes“ and „ensure that all forms of de facto segregation affecting Roma children in schools are eliminated“. The issue is also linked to the freezing of EU funds. According to a 2024 resolution of the European Parliament:

*„In Hungary, the rule of law has been deteriorating for years as a result of systematic measures taken by the Government, and because this situation has not been adequately addressed, numerous concerns and problems continue to arise. The situation of various vulnerable groups, in particular women, LGBTIQ+ persons, Roma, migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, has*

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<sup>52</sup> European Commission. (2023). *Staff Working Document: Assessment Report on Member States' National Roma Strategic Frameworks — Full Package (SWD(2023) 3; 1\_4\_50158\_SWD\_Fiches\_Roma\_Str\_Pt2\_En)* [Staff Working Document: Assessment Report on Member States' National Roma Strategic Frameworks — Full Package]. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/1379bd26-0808-4572-b16c-2a8ea5241a47\\_en?filename=1\\_4\\_50158\\_swd\\_fiches\\_roma\\_strat\\_pt2\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/1379bd26-0808-4572-b16c-2a8ea5241a47_en?filename=1_4_50158_swd_fiches_roma_strat_pt2_en.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Roma Civil Monitoring. (2022). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Roma Strategic Framework in Hungary* [Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Roma Strategic Framework in Hungary]. Available at: <https://romacivilmonitoring.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RCM2-2022-C1-Hungary-FINAL-PUBLISHED-CATALOGUE.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). (2022). *Roma in 10 European Countries – Main Results (Roma Survey 2021)*. Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/roma-survey-findings>

<sup>55</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). (2025). *Fundamental Rights Report 2025*, p. 99. Available at: <https://wp.table.media/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/10173241/fundamental2Orights20report202025-TK0125002ENN.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Válasz Online. (22 January 2024). *A Magyarok 86 Százaléka A Romák Sorsának Javulásáért Az Ég Egy Adta Világon Semmit Sem Tenne* [86 Percent of Hungarians Would Do Absolutely Nothing for the Improvement of Roma Fate]. Available at: [https://nepszava.hu/3060461\\_a-magyarok-86-szazaleka-a-romak-sorsanak-javulasaert-az-eg-egy-adta-vilagon-semmit-sem-tenne](https://nepszava.hu/3060461_a-magyarok-86-szazaleka-a-romak-sorsanak-javulasaert-az-eg-egy-adta-vilagon-semmit-sem-tenne)

<sup>57</sup> Wike, R., Fagan, M., Huang, C., Clancy, L., & Lippert, J. (9 January 2025). *Global Perceptions of Inequality and Discrimination*. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2025/01/09/global-perceptions-of-inequality-and-discrimination/>

<sup>58</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). (2023). *ECRI Report on Hungary (Sixth Monitoring Cycle)* [Magyarországról szóló ECRI-Jelentés (Hatodik Figyelő Ciklus)]. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-6th-report-on-hungary-translation-in-hungarian-1680aa687b>

*deteriorated significantly in recent years, and they continue to face fundamental violations of their rights due to the absence of independent institutions capable or willing to protect them.”<sup>59</sup>*

During the period under review, there were also EU-funded projects that resulted in violations of fundamental rights.<sup>60</sup>

### 2.1.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

Despite this, neither the NRSF nor the government decision plans any interventions to combat discrimination or hate crimes. Based on the measures planned in the NRSF, the Hungarian government considers the most effective tools for combating prejudice, discrimination, and hate speech to be the cultivation and promotion of Roma culture. Measures widely used in other countries (free legal aid services, comprehensive complaint mechanisms, anti-discrimination training for law enforcement officials, and support for legal defence organisations) are not included. Although the document states that „based on practical experience, equal access to state legal aid services for all should be strengthened”,<sup>61</sup> this measure does not appear at the policy level. A study was planned for June 2025 on discrimination in the rental housing market, but no information is available on this either. We will discuss the measures taken in the field of cultural and traditional preservation in the last section of this chapter. However, in the absence of monitoring reports, it is unclear whether these measures have had any impact on anti-Roma trends or discriminatory practices.

Two further planned measures could also have an impact on reducing discrimination: the government decision aims to conclude special agreements:

*„With civil society organisations that play a significant role in the life of the community [...] to provide regular, periodic information to the communities concerned about legislative changes, their application and interpretation.“*

The president of the MROÖ is not aware of any such possibilities. According to the only available government report for 2021–2022, „the measure was not implemented during the reporting period, as no specific agreement of this kind was concluded under the Rural Development Programme“.<sup>62</sup>

### 2.1.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

Not only the NRSF but also other government instruments fail to address anti-Roma sentiment and discrimination, and developments beyond the strategy tend to reduce the likelihood of effective action. The 2021 report by Minority Rights Group and the CSO *Idetartozunk Egyesület* (We Belong Here)<sup>63</sup> draws attention to the fact that civil procedure reform has made it more difficult to take legal action: „Without legal assistance, it is impossible to initiate a personal rights lawsuit, those living in extreme poverty cannot afford a lawyer, and free legal aid has largely been abolished“.

In January 2021, the powers of the Equal Treatment Authority (EBH) were transferred to the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, which has much weaker powers. In 2022, the Office of the Commissioner was classified by the International Federation for Human Rights as a lower-level ‘Category B’ institution, meaning that it is only partially independent.<sup>64</sup> Although the Deputy Ombudsman for Nationalities has issued several important

<sup>59</sup> European Parliament. (2024). *Situation in Hungary and frozen EU funds* [Resolution of 18 January 2024 (2024/2512(RSP))]. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0053\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0053_EN.html)

<sup>60</sup> Bridge EU. (2025). *Fundamental Rights Violation in EU Funds – Hungary*. Available at: <https://furi.qcr.qr/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/FURI-Hungarian-Report-ENG.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Government of Hungary. (2023). *Magyar Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret [Hungarian National Roma Strategic Framework]*, p. 156. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030\\_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Government of Hungary. (2023). *NRSF 2030 – Nyomonkövetési Jelentés 2021–2022 [NRSF 2030 – Monitoring Report 2021–2022]*, p. 126. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030\\_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Minority Rights Group. (2021). *Roma in Hungary: The Challenges of Discrimination*. Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/resources/roma-in-hungary-the-challenges-of-discrimination/>

<sup>64</sup> Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). (2022). *Status Accreditation Chart: National Human Rights Institutions [Állami Emberei Jogi Intézmények Akkreditációs Állapota]*. Available at: [https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/StatusAccreditationChartNHRIs\\_27April2022.pdf](https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/StatusAccreditationChartNHRIs_27April2022.pdf)

statements (for example, one on hate-inciting demonstrations),<sup>65</sup> and has taken action in several cases (according to the latest available report from 2023, in 31 cases related to equal treatment), this does not compensate for the weakening of complaint mechanisms. A good example of cooperation could have been the establishment by the government of the Human Rights Working Group of the Ministry of Justice and its Thematic Working Group on Roma Issues for ongoing consultation with civil society organisations. The working group has 15 civil society organisations as members. However, according to the minutes,<sup>66</sup> it met once a year and limited its role to providing information on government measures.

The elimination of discriminatory practices could include the elimination of educational segregation – at the end of 2023, the Parliament passed an anti-discrimination law in education,<sup>67</sup> which does not address widespread school segregation (see Chapter 2.2.2 of this report).

However, an interim report by ECRI indicates that further steps have been taken.<sup>68</sup> In relation to the handling of hate crimes, it states that „the Hungarian authorities have reported on several initiatives in recent years“: among others, a one-day training course on hate crimes for 176 police officers in 2022, training material developed by the National Police Headquarters in 2024, and training for prosecutors and judges in 2023. ECRI concludes that its recommendations have been partially implemented: „the Hungarian authorities should further develop practical training for law enforcement officials (and other criminal justice actors) on the 2019 protocol on hate crimes“. Several civil society organisations have criticised the regulation of hate speech and the measures taken against it.<sup>69</sup> Five civil rights organisations have set up a working group against hate crimes and are operating a monitoring system.<sup>70</sup>

A recently adopted ‘Act on the Protection of Local Identity’<sup>71</sup> gives mayors of municipalities free rein to impose exclusionary conditions on those wishing to move in. According to civil rights organisations, the law will be used to prevent Roma from moving in. At the time of writing, the first reports are emerging that this is indeed being done in several municipalities.<sup>72</sup>

## 2.2. Education

The 2022 RCM report on child welfare and child protection highlights that nursery services are not available to Roma, and that nursery and kindergarten services are often of poor quality. Although the government supports

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<sup>65</sup> Ombudsman Office of Hungary / Deputy Commissioner for the Rights of Nationalities. (2024). *2/2024. számú Elvi Állásfoglalás a Gyűlöletkeltő Demonstrációk Jogi Környezetéről és Társadalmi Hatásairól* [Policy Opinion No. 2/2024 on the Legal Framework and Social Impacts of Hate-Inciting Demonstrations].

<sup>66</sup> Hungarian Government. (n.d.). *Romaügyekért Felelős Tematikus Munkacsoport* [Thematic Working Group for Roma Affairs]. Available at: <https://emberijogok.kormany.hu/romaugyekert-feelos-tematikus-munkacsoport>

<sup>67</sup> Government of Hungary. (2023). *2023. évi XCII. Törvény A Köznevelés Területén Alkalmazandó Diszkriminációellenes Intézkedésekről* [Act XCII of 2023 on Anti-Discrimination Measures Applicable in the Field of Public Education]. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/joqsabaly?docid=a2300092.tv>

<sup>68</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). (2024). *Conclusions on the Implementation of the Recommendations in Respect of Hungary – (Sixth Monitoring Cycle)* [Az Magyarországgal Kapcsolatos Ajánlások Végrehajtásáról Szóló Következtetések – (Hatodik Figyelő Ciklus)]. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-conclusions-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-in-respe/1680b1e956>

<sup>69</sup> Political Capital Policy Research and Consulting Institute. (2023, November 7). *„Gyűlöletbeszéd Magyarországon” – Konferencia-beszámoló* [“Hate Speech in Hungary” – Conference Report]. Available at: [https://politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article\\_read=1&article\\_id=3282](https://politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article_read=1&article_id=3282)

<sup>70</sup> Working Group Against Hate Crimes. (n.d.). *Gyűlölet-bűncselekmények Elleni Munkacsoport – Esetek* [Working Group Against Hate Crimes – Cases]. Available at: <https://www.gyulotellen.hu/esetek>

<sup>71</sup> Government of Hungary. (2025). *2025. évi XLVIII. Törvény a Helyi Önkormányzatokról* [Act XLVIII of 2025 on Local Governments]. Available at: [https://net.jogtar.hu/joqsabaly?docid=a2500048.tv#:~:text=\(1\)%20A%20helyi%20%C3%B6nazonos%C3%A1lghoz%20val%C3%B3,karakter%C3%A9nek%20meg%C5%91rz%C3%A9s%C3%A9t%20%C3%A9s%20v%C3%A9delm%C3%A9t%20szolg%C3%A1lja](https://net.jogtar.hu/joqsabaly?docid=a2500048.tv#:~:text=(1)%20A%20helyi%20%C3%B6nazonos%C3%A1lghoz%20val%C3%B3,karakter%C3%A9nek%20meg%C5%91rz%C3%A9s%C3%A9t%20%C3%A9s%20v%C3%A9delm%C3%A9t%20szolg%C3%A1lja)

<sup>72</sup> Roma Press Center. (n.d.). [Facebook Post]. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/RomaSajtokozpontRomaPressCenter/posts/pfbid02uruydYMPZskT7b1GRED82V4L1vw8LkXib8H7F5LHqsb7S1rxVv2HPg8NwHmrixmYl?rclid=Qan1B1tBNdn4EW4#>

the operation of additional institutions for the development of disadvantaged children, the impact of *Biztos Kezdet Gyerekházak* (Sure Start Children's Houses) and *Tanodák* (tutoring centres) is lost when children later attend low-quality, segregated schools. Segregation of Roma children remains widespread, with no improvement in sight. The phenomenon reinforces segregation described as white flight, (which causes segregation as middle-class parents transfer their children to better-equipped schools in the town or district centre); and the segregation within institutions, with the increase in the number of ethnically homogeneous schools, which often provide lower quality education.<sup>73</sup> Research examining the Hungarian education system unanimously concludes that the system remains seriously unfair and further deepens social inequalities.<sup>74</sup> The academic performance of students in Hungary continues to be strongly influenced by their parents' level of education and financial situation.

The situation is further exacerbated by increasing segregation: the number of so-called 'ghetto schools' is also growing. According to the latest available data, more than 40% of Roma students aged 6–15 in Hungary attend segregated or Roma-majority schools.<sup>75</sup> Between 2019 and 2023, several international and domestic institutions – including the country's supreme court (Curia of Hungary), ECRI, OSCE, and European Commission – drew attention to the seriousness of the problem, emphasising that segregation is systemic and that no meaningful progress has been made to curb it.<sup>76</sup> State policy, in particular by supporting the expansion of church schools, contributes to the persistence of segregation.<sup>77</sup> There are significant shortcomings in early childhood education and care. In many cases, the positive effects of early childhood development are lost when pupils attend low-quality schools. School infrastructure and teaching methods often fail to meet modern educational requirements. The reduction of compulsory schooling to 16 years has increased early school leaving, especially among disadvantaged pupils.<sup>78</sup> A low proportion of Roma youth completes secondary school, and they have minimal chances of entering higher education.<sup>79</sup> Although the NRSF acknowledges these problems, it does not set specific, measurable targets in many cases.

The EU has suspended payments for several Hungarian operational programmes due to violations of the rule of law, discrimination in education, and unequal opportunities. The reasons for the decision include the lack of meaningful progress in reducing educational segregation, the failure to integrate disadvantaged children, and the failure to ensure an inclusive educational environment, and „in Hungary, the educational segregation of Roma students remains a concern, and there is no effective strategy to address it“.<sup>80</sup> As Hungary has not met

<sup>73</sup> Nahalka, I. (2023). *Kikre Vonatkozik a Diszkriminációellenes Törvény? Településenkénti Adatok* [Who Is Subject to the Anti-Discrimination Law? Data by Municipality]. Available at: <https://ckpinfo.hu/2023/10/15/kikre-vonatkozik-a-diszkriminacioellenes-torveny-telepulesenkenti-adatok/>

<sup>74</sup> OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 Results (Volume II)*. Available at: [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-ii\\_a97db61c-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-ii_a97db61c-en.html)

<sup>75</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). (2022). *Roma in 10 European Countries – Main Results (Roma Survey 2021)*. Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/roma-survey-findings>

<sup>76</sup> Kádár, A. (2023). *Country Report on Non-Discrimination*. Available at: <https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/country-report-non-discrimination-DSBB23013ENN.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Church schools have nationwide enrolment zones and are free to choose among the children who apply to them. On the other hand, their higher specific subsidies may also attract the local teaching elite away from state primary schools – for the same salary, most teachers who can choose between job offers, for example because of their better qualifications, will select the school where they can achieve better results with less effort, for instance because a higher proportion of children attend private lessons.

Kertesi, G., & Kézdi, G. (2009). *Általános Iskolai Szegregáció Magyarországon Az Ezredforduló Után* [Primary School Segregation in Hungary After the Turn of the Millennium]. *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 56(11), 959–1000. Available at: [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00017/00164/pdf/1\\_kertesi-kezdi.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00017/00164/pdf/1_kertesi-kezdi.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> Hermann, Z. (2019). *The Impact of Decreasing Compulsory School-Leaving Age on Dropping Out of School*. Available at: [https://kti.krtk.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LMYB2019\\_InFocus\\_2\\_5.pdf](https://kti.krtk.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LMYB2019_InFocus_2_5.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). (2022). *Roma in 10 European Countries – Main Results (Roma Survey 2021)*. Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/roma-survey-findings>

<sup>80</sup> European Parliament. (2023). *Resolution of 4 October 2023 on the Segregation and Discrimination of Roma Children in Education (2023/2820(RSP))*. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0342\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0342_EN.html). Also published in the *Official Journal* (OJ C 1180, 10.4.2024). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/1180/oj/eng>

the EU conditions, hundreds of billions of Hungarian forints in development funds have been temporarily made unavailable.

Despite the lack of structural changes, some indicators showed positive developments during the period under review. Although there is still a considerable gap between the educational attainment indicators of the Roma and non-Roma populations,<sup>81</sup> there has been a positive shift when comparing the 2011 and 2022 census data. Among the Roma population aged 15 and over, the proportion with higher education qualifications increased almost 2.5 times, to 2.9%. The proportion of those with a high school diploma increased from 5% to 11%. In comparison, the proportion of those who had completed at most the eighth grade of elementary school decreased from 23% to 13%.<sup>82</sup> In the absence of further analysis, it is not clear to what extent this is due to demographic reasons (older people who died during these 11 years had lower educational attainment than the young people included in the sample) and to what extent it is due to the impact of educational developments. There has been a positive shift in the rate of early school leavers over the past two years: while it previously exceeded 12%, it has fallen to 10.3% by 2024. However, this is still below the EU average.<sup>83</sup> The reasons for this significant improvement cannot yet be identified. At the same time, many education-related data are difficult to access for researchers and independent civil society organisations (see also the analysis of monitoring in Chapter 1).

### 2.2.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

Since 2021, more than 17,000 new nursery places have been created, and by 2025, the number of available nursery places exceeded 65,000. Nurseries are available in 1,150 municipalities.<sup>84</sup> However, most of them are expensive private institutions, rather than the planned institutions designed to reduce disadvantages in small settlements.<sup>85</sup> Only 700 disadvantaged and multiply disadvantaged children attend nursery nationwide,<sup>86</sup> which indicates that the number of Roma children is presumably very low. In the absence of research, it is not known what the actual demand among families would be. Several factors may influence the low number, including regional inequalities (there are no nurseries in settlements with higher proportions of Roma, or the number of places is lower). They may even be influenced by discrimination, either directly at the time of admission or because, for Roma mothers, it is more difficult to find work, while in many places the children of parents in employment are given priority at the time of admission. Another key element of the NRSF is the maintenance of Sure Start Children's Houses. These houses were originally intended to prevent disadvantages in disadvantaged regions, increase parental capacities, and promote social integration through voluntary parent-child programmes. Today, the programme is clearly implemented as a very uneven and, in many cases, mandatory programme for the most disadvantaged Roma families for children who are at risk and under protection. Previous analyses and evaluations have already pointed to this problem, and unfortunately, there has been no further evaluation. However, based on anonymous reports from colleagues working in Sure Start Houses, the situation has deteriorated significantly. According to their information, voluntariness has been replaced by obligation, and the three weekly visits of the families concerned must be documented in detail. As the operation of the houses has become a specifically Roma programme in most places, this reinforces early segregation rather than inclusion and integration. For the Sure Start Houses, the NRSF set a target to increase

<sup>81</sup> European Commission. (2024). *Education and Training Monitor 2024*. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor/en/>

<sup>82</sup> Kopp Mária Intézet a Népesedésért és a Családokért (KINCS). (2025). *Sajtóközlemény a Nemzetközi Roma Nap Alkalmából* [Press Release on the Occasion of International Roma Day]. Available at: <https://www.koppmariaintezet.hu/hu/osszeshir/850-sajtokozelemeny-a-nemzetkoezi-roma-nap-alkalmabol>

<sup>83</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO/KSH). (n.d.). *Early School Leavers* [Korai Iskolaelhagyók]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/okt/hu/okt0028.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/okt/hu/okt0028.html)

<sup>84</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO/KSH). (n.d.). *25.1.1.1. A Szociális Ellátás Összefoglaló Adatai* [Summary Data on Social Care]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html)

<sup>85</sup> Pénzcentrum. (29 August 2024). *Itt a Friss Árlista: Ennyibe Kerül a Családi Bölcsőde 2024 Őszén – Emelkedtek a Magánbölcsőde Árak* [Here Is the Latest Price List: This Is How Much a Family Nursery Costs in Autumn 2024 – Private Nursery Prices Have Increased]. Available at: <https://www.penzcentrum.hu/oktatas/20240829/itt-a-friss-arlista-enyibe-kerul-a-csaladi-bolcsode-2024-oszen-emelkedtek-a-magan-bolcsode-arak-1155711#>

Megtakarítás Gyerekeknek. (n.d.). *Magánóvoda, Magánbölcsőde Költségei* [Costs of Private Kindergartens and Private Nurseries]. Available at: <https://megtakaritasgyerekeknek.hu/maganovoda-maganbolcsode-koltsegei/>

<sup>86</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO/KSH). (n.d.). *25.1.1.9. Gyermekek Napközbeni Ellátása* [Day-time Care for Children]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0009.html)

attendance by 1,000 from the 2019 baseline to 3,400 visitors. This has not yet been achieved and is still extremely low compared to the number of children aged 0–3.<sup>87</sup> The number of Sure Start Houses has decreased compared to what was planned.

The NRSF, as amended during the evaluation cycle, identifies several serious problems, some of which were also mentioned in the previous 2014 Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy, and assigns courses of action to address them. It includes 13 indicators for the quantified targets (including the rate of early school leaving, the proportion of Roma students in higher education, the proportion of Roma with low educational attainment, and the participation of four- and five-year-old children in preschool education). The deadline for achieving the target values is 2030 in all cases. During the period under review, positive measures were taken in the field of education, such as further support for tutoring centres, free textbooks, the operation of Roma colleges for young Roma in higher education; the inclusion of equal opportunity and inclusion considerations in related tenders, and FETE methodological support, but these did not result in systemic changes – they did not substantially remedy the processes of segregation, the shortage of teachers and other professionals, or the further education indicators of Roma students.

Due to the suspension of EU funds, most of the programmes affecting public education have not yet been launched. The relevant operational programmes (EFOP, TOP Plus) and related applications include elements that indirectly support reducing segregation, mainly through equal opportunities and inclusive education. For example, the guidelines for the TOP Plus 3.3.3 Programme (which is already underway)<sup>88</sup> aimed at developing public education infrastructure emphasise the enforcement of equal opportunities, the integration of disadvantaged students, and the reduction of regional disparities. Anti-segregation goals are one of the basic principles of the TOP Plus 3.3. Programme, and the call for proposals excludes segregated institutions from receiving support, although it is unclear how administrators will verify this. The Maltese Charity Service is implementing its ‘Community-Oriented Pedagogy’ project, supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), as part of the FETE Programme.<sup>89</sup> As part of the programme, FETE provides methodological support to teachers in 100 educational institutions operating in the municipalities. The focus is on reducing dropout rates and supporting further education. It is also worth highlighting the ‘Bari shej’ (Great girl) Programme,<sup>90</sup> which was successfully implemented in the previous funding period and aimed to support Roma girls. However, the programme has not yet been relaunched, citing the suspension of EU funds.

Educational programmes funded from domestic sources are smaller in scale. Support for *Tanodák* (tutoring centres) and scholarships to promote further education and vocational training remains available. The Ministry of the Interior maintains the Roma Nationality Study Scholarship Programme, under which more than 100 students have received support since 2019, totalling nearly 100 million HUF (250,000 EUR).<sup>91</sup> Roma colleges for advanced studies have been helping students obtain degrees since 2011 and currently support 350

<sup>87</sup> In 2023, there were 180 homes, 356 employees, 2,192 families, and 2,425 children; in 2024, there were 179 homes, 350 employees, 2,175 families, and 2,375 children.

Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO/KSH). (n.d.). 25.1.1.10. *Gyermekek Napközbeni Ellátása – Konyhai Ellátás* [Day-Time Care for Children – Kitchen/Meal Services]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0010.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0010.html)

<sup>88</sup> Hungarian Government. (n.d.). *Köznevelési Infrastruktúra Fejlesztése TOP Plusz 3.3.3-23-BK1 Pályázati Felhívás* [Development of Public Education Infrastructure TOP Plusz 3.3.3-23-BK1 Call for Proposals]. Available at: <https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/programok/szechenyi-terv-plusz/top-plusz/top-plusz-333-23-bk1/dokumentumok>

<sup>89</sup> FETE. (n.d.). *Oktatási Tevékenységek a Felzárkózó Települések Programjában* [Educational Activities of the Catching-Up Settlements Programme]. Available at: <https://fete.hu/szakteruletek/oktatas/>

<sup>90</sup> Pupek, E. (2020). *A Roma Lányok Végzettség Nélküli Iskolaelhagyásának Megelőzése Program Zárótanulmánya* [Final Study of the Programme to Prevent Roma Girls from Dropping Out of School Without a Qualification]. Available at: [https://www.oktatas.hu/pub\\_bin/dload/unios\\_projektek/efop317/kiadv/EFOP317\\_BariShejZarotanulmany\\_nyomdai.pdf](https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/unios_projektek/efop317/kiadv/EFOP317_BariShejZarotanulmany_nyomdai.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> Government of Hungary. (n.d.). *Példaképpé Válhatnak* [They Can Become Role Models]. Available at: <https://kormany.hu/hirek/peldakeppe-valhatnak>

students in 11 institutions. Since the network was established, more than 700 students have obtained degrees in a network that is church-run primarily and state-supported.<sup>92</sup>

### 2.2.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

In response to the suspension of EU funds, in December 2023, the Hungarian government passed a law on anti-discrimination measures in public education.<sup>93</sup> The legislation aims to reduce segregation in primary schools. Still, instead of actual intervention, it only introduces a sanction: schools where the proportion of disadvantaged students is significantly below the local average will be subject to a 10% reduction in funding. However, the criteria have been set so that only 10% of municipalities with schools can be examined under the law, and only 1-2% of the national school network may be subject to the penalty. In contrast, the number of ghetto schools continues to grow. This suggests that the proposal primarily serves to formally meet EU expectations without making any real progress.<sup>94</sup> According to education researchers,<sup>95</sup> effective action against segregation should not be taken at the level of individual schools, but at the level of school districts, by rethinking school catchment areas. Reducing segregation requires comprehensive intervention that treats all schools in a given area as a unified system.<sup>96</sup>

A 2018 government decree<sup>97</sup> allows for the employment of school social workers, but their overwhelming workload has not lessened. Each school social worker is not only responsible for many (sometimes more than seven) institutions, but also must take on tasks in several types of public education institutions. This overburdening, and sometimes a lack of experience and professional qualifications, makes it practically impossible to provide adequate social assistance.<sup>98</sup>

Teachers in Hungary are heavily underpaid, leading to an ageing of the teaching profession and a shortage of thousands of teachers in public education. The government is raising teachers' salaries in two stages: by 32% in 2024 and by 21% in 2025. Although this would typically have been financed from the national budget, in this case, it was financed by EU funds. Furthermore, under the legislation on the new career path for teachers adopted in 2023, teachers working with disadvantaged students or students with special educational needs (SNI) are entitled to an 'equal opportunity allowance' (salary supplement). In connection with the wage increase and the introduction of the supplement, the principal of a segregated school in a county-level city reported that there are now applicants for specialist teaching positions that have been vacant for several years. Several teachers have returned to the profession (for example, from child protection, where this may lead to an even more serious shortage of professionals than before).

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<sup>92</sup> Roma Szakkollégiumi Mozgalom. (2024). *Roma Szakkollégiumok Országos Tanévnyitója Hajdúböszörményben* [National School Year Opening of Roma Special Colleges in Hajdúböszörmény]. Available at: <http://romaszakkollegiumok.hu/2024/09/30/roma-szakkollegiumok-orzagos-tanevnyitoja-hajduboszormenyben/>

<sup>93</sup> Hungary. (2023). *Act XCII of 2023 on Anti-Discrimination Measures Applicable in the Field of Public Education*. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/joqsabaly?docid=a2300092.tv>

<sup>94</sup> Kiss, S. Á. (9 October 2023). *Brüsszelnek Jó Lehet Pintér Új Törvényjavaslata, de az Iskolákon és a Kirekesztésen Nem Fog Segíteni* [Pintér's New Bill Might Please Brussels, but It Will Not Improve Schools or Reduce Exclusion]. *Mérce*. Available at: <https://merce.hu/2023/10/09/sem mire-sem-jo-pinter-deszegregacios-torvenyjavaslata-de-akadnak-civilek-akik-szivesen-segitenek-a-kormany-nak-ha-valodi-megoldasok-erdeklit/>

<sup>95</sup> Nahalka, I. (2025). Interview: *Oktatáskutató: Valami Nem Stimmel a Kompetenciamérés Adataival* [Education Researcher: Something Is Not Right with the Competency Assessment Data]. *Klubrádió*. Available at: <https://www.klubradio.hu/adasok/oktataskutato-valami-nem-stimmel-a-kompetenciameres-adataival-151375>

<sup>96</sup> Pálos, M. (17 January 2024). *A Gettóiskolák Felé Megy a Magyar Közoktatás, és Aki Változtathatna Ezen, Azt Hiszi, Nem Érdeke* [Hungarian Public Education Is Moving Toward Ghetto Schools, and Those Able to Change It Believe It Is Not in Their Interest]. *G7*. Available at: <https://g7.hu/kozelet/20240117/a-gettoiskolak-fele-megy-a-magyar-kozoktat-es-aki-valtoztathatna-ezen-azt-hiszi-nem-erdeke/>

<sup>97</sup> Ministry of Human Capacities (EMMI). (2018). *2/2018. (I. 18.) EMMI Decree on the Professional Duties and Operating Conditions of Child Welfare and Child Protection Institutions and Persons Providing Personal Care*. (Amending 15/1998. (IV. 30.) NM Decree). Available at: <https://njt.hu/joqsabaly/2018-2-20-22>

<sup>98</sup> Szecskó, J. (2024). *Az Iskolai Szociális Segítő Tevékenység Tapasztalatai a Kutatások Tükrében* [Experiences of School Social Work in Light of Research]. *Különleges Bánásmód*, University of Debrecen. Available at: <https://ojs.lib.unideb.hu/kulonlegesbanasmod/article/view/14507/12433>

However, this will not help in the short term at the national level. The Hungarian National Bank's discussion paper<sup>99</sup> points out that the number of students enrolled in teacher training has fallen by nearly 25% over the past four years, so in the coming years, less than half as many new teachers are expected to enter the system as those who are retiring. The shortage of teachers is significant, at around 16,000, and is particularly noticeable in smaller towns. Higher wages and wage supplements were an essential and necessary step, but they do not replace the need for a complete methodological renewal of educational work with disadvantaged children.

Special educational services are essential for children with learning or other psychological difficulties. Although the NRSF identifies several problems related to special educational services and formulates recommendations for improvement, experience shows that there are serious obstacles: the general shortage of specialists<sup>100</sup> is exacerbated by regional inequalities. Furthermore, the shortage of specialists, for example in the case of SNI diagnostics, may itself contribute to increased school segregation.<sup>101</sup> The more disadvantaged a region (region or district) is, the more likely it is that there will be a shortage of specialists.<sup>102</sup> In addition, most of the existing specialists are only available in regional centres, where disadvantaged parents are unable to take their children for treatment due to a lack of public transportation. The shortage of professionals, especially psychologists, is not only regionally uneven but also sectoral: the available professionals are much more likely to work in private care, but Roma parents rarely have the money to pay for these services. FETE Programme and most locations well identify all these problems, offer activities to compensate for the lack of professional care, or offer services to facilitate access to state care.<sup>103</sup> However, this does not mean an expansion of state care capacity, but rather project-based services in a programme covering less than one-tenth of Hungarian settlements.<sup>104</sup>

### 2.3. Employment

The 2022 RCM report identified the following employment-related problems: overrepresentation of Roma in public employment programmes;<sup>105</sup> violations of Roma rights in relation to employment,<sup>106</sup> and open discrimination in recruitment.<sup>107</sup> Meanwhile, in-work poverty is on the rise,<sup>108</sup> and worker rights protection is very low, especially in jobs requiring low levels of education and in public employment. The NRSF does not address the growing cross-border labour migration. Another fundamental problem for Roma communities is

<sup>99</sup> Szapáry, Gy., et al. (2024). *Javaslatok a Pedagógusok Utánpótlásának Fenntartható Biztosításához – Vitairat* [Proposals for the Sustainable Provision of Teacher Supply – Discussion Paper]. Available at: [https://mkt.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Javaslatok-a-pedagogusok-utanpotlasi-biztositasa-erdekeben\\_2024\\_clean.pdf](https://mkt.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Javaslatok-a-pedagogusok-utanpotlasi-biztositasa-erdekeben_2024_clean.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights. (n.d.). *Az Ombudsman a Sajátos Nevelési Igényű Gyermekek Fejlesztésének Problémáiról* [The Ombudsman on the Problems of Developing Children with Special Educational Needs]. Available at: <https://www.ajbh.hu/-/az-ombudsman-a-sajatos-nevelesi-igenyu-gyermekek-fejlesztesenek-problemairoi>

<sup>101</sup> Rosa Parks Alapítvány. (2024). *Szegregáció a Speciális Oktatásban* [Segregation in Special Education].

<sup>102</sup> Daróczy, G. (ed.). (2024). *A Romák Közszolgáltatásokhoz Való Hozzáférése Magyarországon 2024* [Roma Access to Public Services in Hungary 2024]. Available at: <https://phirenamenca.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/A-romak-kozszolgaltatasokhoz-valo-hozzaferese-Magyarorszagon-2024.pdf>

<sup>103</sup> Vecsei, M. (2022). „Ha Valamit Meg Akarunk Változtatni, Akkor Ott Kell Lennünk” [“If We Want to Change Something, We Must Be Present There”]. Available at: <https://fete.hu/ha-valamit-meg-akarunk-valtoztatni-akkor-ott-kell-lennunk/>

<sup>104</sup> Béres, M. (2024). *A Jószándék Kevés* [Goodwill Is Not Enough]. *Magyar Narancs*. Available at: <https://magyarnarancs.hu/belpol/a-jo-szandek-keves-270583>

<sup>105</sup> Hungler, S., & Kende, Á. (2021). *Diverting Welfare Paths: Ethnicisation of Unemployment and Public Work in Hungary*. *e-Cadernos CES*, 35 (June 15). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4000/eces.6904>

<sup>106</sup> Office of the National Assembly. (2023). *Infojegyzet 2023/2 – EU Romapolitika: Foglalkoztatás* [EU Roma Policy: Employment]. Available at: [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet\\_2023\\_2\\_EU\\_romapolitika\\_foglalkoztatás.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet_2023_2_EU_romapolitika_foglalkoztatás.pdf)

<sup>107</sup> Minority Rights Group International. (2021). *Roma in the Republic of Serbia and Hungary: The Challenges of Discrimination – A Comparative Report* [Romák a Szerb Köztársaságban és Magyarországon: A Megkülönböztetés Kihívásai – Összehasonlító Jelentés].

<sup>108</sup> Eurostat. (n.d.). *Unemployment Rate by Sex and Age Group* [Munkanélküliségi Ráta Nem és Korcsoport Szerint]. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tgs00107\\_custom\\_11195519/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tgs00107_custom_11195519/default/table?lang=en)

the reduction of the compulsory school age to 16, which has led to an increase in school dropouts and a high proportion of Roma youth among NEETs.<sup>109</sup>

### 2.3.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

The government ran several large-scale employment and training programmes until the end of 2023, but the vast majority of these were not continued in 2024 and 2025. The NRSF highlights the following points in relation to the employment of Roma and low-income people:<sup>110</sup>

1. Increase the participation of low-skilled people in education, training, and skills development programmes, including support for completing primary school and continuing learning and mentoring programmes, as well as active labour market programmes. Lifelong learning services for disadvantaged people based on local cultural institutions. To achieve this goal, the government launched the 'Path to the Labour Market' (GINOP-5.1.1 and VEKOP-8.1.1) programmes in 2015. Unfortunately, we only have aggregate data for the eight years. Still, by the end of 2023, when the programme ended, 258,000 people nationwide had been enrolled by government agencies. Through wage subsidies and, for example, mobility subsidies, nearly 212,500 people were able to find employment.<sup>111</sup> A separate 'Homelessness Pilot Programme' was launched with a total of 41 public employers in the capital and 17 counties. In 2021 and 2022, it provided job opportunities for nearly 700 homeless and disabled people with an annual subsidy of 1.17 billion HUF (3 million EUR).

2. Strengthen the targeting of public employment. Ensure public employment in beneficiary regions for those who cannot be returned to the open labour market in the short term. In the Public Employment District Start Work Pilot Programme,<sup>112</sup> an agricultural component was launched in 870 municipalities in 2021-2022, employing an average of 13,688 people. In the 'Active for Knowledge' priority project (EFOP-3.7.1-17), 29,829 people were recruited by 31 January 2023, 16,676 people completed training, and 4,217 people gained work experience. The programme closed in 2023. At the same time, public employment programmes continued: in 2025, there will be 66,800 people employed in public employment, half of whom will be employed in district public employment programmes.<sup>113</sup>

3. In the 'From Public Employment to the Competitive Sector' Programme, those leaving public employment who find employment in the market sector are eligible for a placement allowance. The amount of this monthly allowance is 45,600 HUF (approx. 114 EUR), which the individual will receive for as long as their public employment relationship would have lasted if they had not found employment. Between 15 April and 31 December 2021, 1,653 people benefited from the programme, and between 15 August and 31 December 2022, 485 people benefited. The programme has been announced for the coming years, providing support to an average of 2,000 people per year.<sup>114</sup>

4. The NRSF highlights the active labour market programme for young people who are not in employment or education and for Roma women: the latter benefited from 'Women's Opportunities Training and Employment' (EFOP-1.1.2-16) Programme. By 31 January 2023, 1,220 participants in the training had obtained a qualification. Of these, 735 were employed permanently as social care workers and nurses with specialised qualifications, while 55 were employed by other employers. Sixty people are participating in another programme (VEKOP 7.1.1-16), and 50 of them have obtained National Training Register (OKJ) certificates. The

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<sup>109</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO/KSH). (2023). Fenntartható Fejlődés Indikátorai 2023 – 4.2 SDG 8 [Sustainable Development Indicators 2023 – 4.2 SDG 8]. Available at: <https://ksh.hu/s/kiadvanyok/fenntarthato-fejlodes-indikatorai-2023/4-2-sdg-8>

<sup>110</sup> Hungary. (2021). *Government Decision 1619/2021 (IX. 3.) on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024*. Also referenced in the NRSF 2030 – Monitoring Report 2021–2022. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>111</sup> Nemzeti Foglalkoztatási Szolgálat / National Employment Service (NFSZ). (n.d.). *GINOP 5.1.1 Kiemelt Projekt – Szakmai Beszámoló [GINOP 5.1.1 Priority Project – Professional Report]*. Available at: [https://nfsz.munka.hu/nfsz/document/3/8/7/0/doc\\_url/GINOP\\_5.1.1\\_kiemelt\\_projekt\\_szakmai\\_beszamolo\\_munkahu.pdf](https://nfsz.munka.hu/nfsz/document/3/8/7/0/doc_url/GINOP_5.1.1_kiemelt_projekt_szakmai_beszamolo_munkahu.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> Belügyminisztérium (BM) / Ministry of Interior. (n.d.). *Közfoglalkoztatás [Public Employment]*. Available at: <http://kozfoglalkoztatas.bm.hu>

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>114</sup> National Employment Service (NFSZ). (n.d.). *Közfoglalkoztatásból a Versenyszférába Program [From Public Employment to the Private Sector Programme]*. Available at: [https://nfsz.munka.hu/cikk/2430/Kozfoglalkoztatasbol\\_a\\_versenyszferaba\\_program](https://nfsz.munka.hu/cikk/2430/Kozfoglalkoztatasbol_a_versenyszferaba_program)

programmes ended in December 2023, and no new rounds have been announced. 11,500 NEETs joined the 'Youth Guarantee'<sup>115</sup> Labour Market Programmes in 2021 and 2022, and 5,300 in 2023.<sup>116</sup>

5. The continuation of agricultural programmes supporting the integration and livelihoods of disadvantaged families living in rural areas and the development of agricultural logistics infrastructure owned by local Governments, social enterprises, and social cooperatives. Support enterprises that also employ disadvantaged people with professional, methodological, and administrative services.

As part of the agricultural programme component of the Public Employment District Start-up Programme, an agricultural programme component was launched in 870 municipalities nationwide in 2021-2022, with an average of 13,688 participants. During the given period, the agricultural programme was implemented in 84 of the 118 FETE municipalities. In 2022, 161 social cooperatives obtained the right to use the 'Hungarian product' or 'Domestic product' trademark for a total of 152 products in the 'Preparation for integration' programme element, which provides an opportunity for wider sales of the products. The social enterprise support project was completed in 2021, with 151 social enterprises receiving support.<sup>117</sup> The call for proposals has reopened with a deadline of July 2025. In March 2017, the call for proposals 'Encouraging Social Enterprises' (GINOP-5.1.7-17) was published. Annual breakdowns are not available, but it is known that a total of 2,061 new jobs were created by the end of the programme in 2023. A separate programme supported social cooperatives,<sup>118</sup> which provided 9.6 billion HUF (24 million EUR) to 200 social cooperatives. Neither GINOP-5.1.7 nor the programme supporting social cooperatives will have any further application rounds after 2023.

6. The NRSF promised an economic stimulus programme and the promotion of local job creation and economic development in municipalities designated by the Government, including the development of transport infrastructure in catching-up municipalities. The aim of the 'Employment Pacts' launched within this framework is to ensure a labour force that meets demand and open-labour market placement. Under these programmes, a total of 13,473 people were involved by December 2022,<sup>119</sup> of whom 3,778 were Roma according to the

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<sup>115</sup> Hungarian Government / Managing Authority for Employment and Training. (n.d.). *GINOP-5.2.1 Ifjúsági Garancia – A Fiatalk Foglalkoztatásának Elősegítése* [GINOP-5.2.1 Youth Guarantee – Promoting Youth Employment].

Hungarian Government / Managing Authority for Employment and Training. (n.d.). *VEKOP-8.2.1 Ifjúsági Garancia – A Fiatalk Foglalkoztatásának Elősegítése Budapesten és Pest megyében* [VEKOP-8.2.1 Youth Guarantee – Promoting Youth Employment in Budapest and Pest County].

<sup>116</sup> Hungarian Government / Ministry for National Economy. (n.d.). *GINOP-5.2.1-14-2015-00001 Ifjúsági Garancia Kiemelt Projekt Szakmai Beszámoló – Ifjúsági Garancia* [GINOP-5.2.1 Priority Project Youth Guarantee Professional Report – Youth Guarantee]. Available at: [https://kormanyhivatalok.hu/sites/default/files/dokumentumtar/vas/GINOP/ginop-5.2.1-kiemelt-projekt-szakmai-beszamolo\\_kormanyhivatalok.pdf](https://kormanyhivatalok.hu/sites/default/files/dokumentumtar/vas/GINOP/ginop-5.2.1-kiemelt-projekt-szakmai-beszamolo_kormanyhivatalok.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> Hungarian Government / Managing Authority for Employment and Training. (n.d.). *GINOP-5.1.3-16 – A Társadalmi célú vállalkozások ösztönzése* [GINOP-5.1.3-16 – Promoting Social Enterprises]. (Operational programme call for proposals.) Available at: <https://www.palyazat.gov.hu/ginop-513-16-tarsadalmi-celu-vallalkozasok-osztonzese>

<sup>118</sup> Hungarian Government / OFA Nonprofit Kft. (n.d.). *Fókuszban az Önkormányzati Tagsággal Rendelkező Közfoglalkoztatás Alapjain Szerveződő Szociális Szövetkezetek Támogatása* [Focus on Supporting Social Cooperatives Organised on the Basis of Public Employment with Municipal Membership]. Available at: <https://ofa.hu/program/fokuszbaban-az-onkormanyzati-tagsaggal-rendelkezo-kozfoglalkoztat-as-alapjain-szervezodo-szocialis-szovetkezetek-tamogatasa>

<sup>119</sup> Hungarian Government / Managing Authorities for Territorial Programmes. (n.d.). *TOP-5.1.1-15 – A Társadalmi Együttműködés Erősítése* [TOP-5.1.1-15 – Strengthening Social Cooperation]. (Operational programme call for proposals.)

Hungarian Government / Managing Authorities for Territorial Programmes. (n.d.). *TOP-5.1.2-15 – Helyi Közösségi Programok Megvalósítása* [TOP-5.1.2-15 – Implementation of Local Community Programmes]. (Operational programme call for proposals.)

Hungarian Government / Managing Authorities for Territorial Programmes. (n.d.). *TOP-6.8.2-15 – Közösségi Fejlesztések Megvalósítása – Megyei Jogú Városokban* [TOP-6.8.2-15 – Implementation of Community Developments in Cities with County Rights]. (Operational programme call for proposals.)

records. Although employment pacts continued at the county level in 2024, no data or evaluations were published on them.

In 2021, the Public Education, Employment and Training Programme provided nearly 2,000 people with employment opportunities and related professional training programmes, with 5.5 billion HUF (13.75 million EUR) in state support. The programme ran from 2020 to 2021 and closed at the end of 2021. In 2022, it continued with community development programmes, but we found no material or detailed data evaluating them. It appears that the programme served as a temporary source for performing former municipal tasks.

### 2.3.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

Employment in Hungary increased significantly during the reporting period, reaching 81% in 2025, above the EU average. The labour market is characterised more by labour shortages than by unemployment (the latter rate is 4.3%). As a result of this labour shortage, in 2024, nearly 50,000 workers from Eastern Asia were employed in Hungary, performing simple jobs that did not require vocational training, for which the temporary employment agencies that employed them received subsidies. It is worth comparing this with the annual average of 64,000 people in public employment, which is about 20,000 fewer than in 2021, but even if they could fill the vacancies mentioned above. The number of low-work-intensity households and, with it, the number of residents at risk of income poverty decreased; at the same time, serious problems arose regarding the reliability of the EU SILC survey containing these data.<sup>120</sup>

The NRSF-funded developments were completed in 2023, and no new calls for proposals were issued. After 2023, only subsidies related to public employment programmes continued.

## 2.4. Healthcare

The 2022 RCM report highlighted the following problems in relation to Hungary: (1) limited access to safe drinking water and sewerage networks; (2) lack of health insurance coverage (in 2015–2016, 14% of Roma<sup>121</sup> and 5% of Hungary's general population<sup>122</sup> did not have insurance coverage); (3) limited availability and accessibility of medical care (in the summer of 2025, 22% of general practices nationwide are be unfilled and or rely on substitutions<sup>123</sup>); and (4) institutional segregation practices against Roma in hospitals. Infrastructural deficiencies are discussed elsewhere; the response to the issue of access to care outlined in the NRSF is the establishment of general practitioner partner groups (cooperating groups of general practitioners and often including other professionals like physiotherapists, psychologists, dieticians, sharing resources, and offering a wider pool of services to patients on site jointly) and telemedicine services. The issue of insurance coverage is mentioned only in passing, while discrimination in healthcare is not mentioned at all.

### 2.4.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

The most significant progress has been made in developing telemedicine services and general practitioner partner groups, as well as in promoting recreational sports. In the three other areas mentioned in the government decree connected to NRSF, there has been either no intervention or only minimal intervention: the Mobile Screening Programme has been launched on a very limited basis; no measures were taken in the area of public health care; there were no organised interventions specifically targeting the pregnancies of disadvantaged women; and there have been setbacks and contradictory interventions in the transformation of

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<sup>120</sup> Tátrai, A., & Gábos, A. (1 April 2025). *Kutatói Aggodalmak Az EU-SILC Magyarországi Jövedelemadataival Kapcsolatban [Researchers' Concerns About the EU-SILC Hungarian Income Data]*. *Válasz Online*. Available at: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/04/01/eu-silc-magyarorszagi-jovedelemadok-kutato-i-elemzes/>

<sup>121</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 [Hungarian National Inclusion Strategy 2030]*.

<sup>122</sup> Nemzeti Egészségbiztosítási Alapkezelő (NEAK) / National Health Insurance Fund of Hungary. (2009–2020). *Statisztikai Évkönyv [Statistical Yearbook]*. Available at: [https://www.neak.gov.hu/felso\\_menu/rolunk/kozerdeku\\_adatok/gazdalkodasi\\_adatok/statisztikai\\_kiadvanyok/korabbi\\_stat\\_kiadvany](https://www.neak.gov.hu/felso_menu/rolunk/kozerdeku_adatok/gazdalkodasi_adatok/statisztikai_kiadvanyok/korabbi_stat_kiadvany)

<sup>123</sup> Országos Kórházi Főigazgatóság – Alapellátási Igazgatóság (National Hospital Directorate-General – Directorate for Primary Care). (n.d.). *Tájékoztató a Tartósan Betöltetlen Fogorvosi Körzetekről [Information on Permanently Unfilled Dental Practitioner Districts]*. Available at: <https://alapellatas.okfo.gov.hu/tajekoztato-a-tartosan-betoltetlen-fogorvosi-korzetekrol/>

school sex education and the health visitor system.

Group practices by general practitioners aim to improve access on the one hand and cooperation between care providers on the other. They have been in continuous development since 2021.<sup>124</sup> However, the experiences of the model programme that laid the foundation for this have not been carried forward in several respects, for example, the use of Roma health mediators (assistant health workers) has been omitted.<sup>125, 126</sup> There is no information available on how many group practices target disadvantaged populations.

In 2023, a telemedicine programme specifically targeting people living in underserved small municipalities was launched as part of the FETE Programme, which visits these municipalities with 'mobile clinics' and provides basic medical examinations, paediatric examinations, and public health screenings. The programme has received positive reviews so far.<sup>127, 128</sup> But, in 2024, it was only present in 35 municipalities, which is only a fraction of the 300, covered by FETE.

The third result can be considered to be recreational sports. The Active Hungary Programme and the Hungarian Student Sports Association's Active Schools<sup>129</sup> initiatives support recreational sports for disadvantaged people, especially children.

The other, partially achieved objectives of the government decree connected to NRSF are less relevant to the problems identified in the 2022 RCM report. Approximately 600 municipal medical clinics were renovated,<sup>130</sup> but this had only a marginal impact on access issues. The means of implementing organised screening is the 'We bring screening to you' Programme, which provides various types of screening in ten screening buses converted into 'mobile medical clinics' in municipalities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, which are often underserved. Apart from the controversies surrounding the programme,<sup>131</sup> there have been some positive

<sup>124</sup> Act XCIII of 2021 on Public Health Authority Service (2021. évi XCIII. törvény a népegészségügyi hatóságai szolgálatról). Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a2100053.kor>

<sup>125</sup> Kósa, K., Katona, C., Papp, M., Sándor, J., Fürjes, G., Bíró, K., & Ádány, R. (2021). *Segéd-Egészségőrök Működése Az Alapellátási Modellprogram Praxisközösségeiben* [Operation of Assistant Health Workers in Primary Care Model Programme Practice Communities]. *Egészségtudomány*, 2021(2), 39–50. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29179/EqTud.2021.2.39-50>

<sup>126</sup> Kósa, K., & Sándor, J. (2024). *Egészségmediátorok Által Végzett Egészségfejlesztés Kistelepüléseken a Pandémia Alatt* [Health Promotion Conducted by Health Mediators in Small Settlements During the Pandemic]. *Népegészségügy*, 101(2).

<sup>127</sup> Kovács, R., Győri-Dani, V., Péntes, M., Maróti, P., Iván, E., Sándor, J., & Nagy, F. (2025). *Teleszakorvosi Szolgáltatások Bevezetése a Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat Telemedicinális Programjába* [Introducing Tele-Specialist Services into the Telemedicine Programme of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service]. *IME — Innováció, Menedzsment, Egészségügy*, 24(1), 11–22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53020/IME-2025-102>

<sup>128</sup> Virág, M., Kovács, R., Marovics, G., et al. (2025). *Bridging Healthcare Gaps Through Specialized Mobile Healthcare Services to Improve Healthcare Access and Outcomes in Rural Hungary*. *Scientific Reports*, 15, 12692. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-97447-9>

<sup>129</sup> Aktív Iskola Program / Active School Programme. (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.aktiviskola.hu/>

<sup>130</sup> Magyar Falu Program – Kormányzati Tájékoztató (Hungarian Village Programme – Government Information). (n.d.). *Hatszáz Falusi Orvosi Rendelő Újult Meg 2019 Óta* [Six Hundred Village GP Practices Have Been Renovated Since 2019]. Available at: <https://magyarfaluprogram.hu/hirek/hatszaz-falusi-orvosi-rendelo-ujult-meg-2019-ota>

<sup>131</sup> 24.hu. (30 August 2019). *Emlőrák-Szűrőbusz* [Breast Cancer Screening Bus]. Available at: <https://24.hu/belfold/2019/08/30/emlorak-szurobusz/>

results, but in the past six years, it has only reached at most a few tens of thousands of people<sup>132, 133</sup> (according to the latest available follow-up 2022 report, a total of 40,000 by then).<sup>134</sup>

The NRSF primarily contains data on outputs (e.g., the number of participants) rather than actual goals (e.g., improved health status, increased access), which is partly necessary. However, there is no evidence of a systematic monitoring system to assess the initial situation, without which it will not be possible to evaluate the effects at a later stage. Although the Hungarian healthcare system and public administration in general have extremely rich data resources at their disposal, these are currently very difficult for researchers to access. A good example of this is the public health database built by researchers at the University of Debrecen, a data repository derived from state administrative databases, which is rare even by international standards and, contrary to its developers' intentions, is currently only accessible to 'reliable' state actors.

#### 2.4.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

The overall problem with the NRSF is that poor health cannot be improved by healthcare alone.<sup>135</sup>

For example, access to safe and quality housing and nutrition is particularly important for health. It is particularly cynical to talk about health behaviour in relation to these issues as if it were purely a matter of individual choice – in an environment where it is impossible to purchase food of adequate quality and quantity for financial reasons (In 2024, 37% of poor households will not be able to consume meat or equivalent food at least every two days,<sup>136</sup> and many settlements do not even have a grocery store).<sup>137</sup> In other areas of the NRSF, there have been setbacks. The 2021 amendment to the Child Protection Act further restricted the possibilities for sexual, drug, and mental health education and prevention in schools. As a result, sex education in schools is either non-existent or unsuitable for its purpose,<sup>138</sup> and teachers do not receive adequate training in this area.<sup>139</sup>

The health visitor system, which is particularly important in terms of reaching and providing access to marginalised populations living in segregated areas, is struggling with severe resource shortages: almost 7% of districts are unfilled<sup>140</sup> and approximately the same number of additional districts are being covered by substitutes, causing overburdening and extra time pressure on the active health visitors. These shortages are

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<sup>132</sup> Országos Kórházi Főigazgatóság (National Hospital Directorate-General). (n.d.). *Eredményes a Szűrőbusz Program [The Screening Bus Programme Is Successful]*. Available at: <https://okfo.gov.hu/Hirek-eredmenyes-a-szurobusz-program>

<sup>133</sup> Országos Közegészségügyi és Gyógyszerészeti Intézet (National Public Health and Pharmaceutical Institute). (n.d.). *Helybe Visszük a Szűrővizsgálatokat Program [We Bring Screening Examinations to Local Communities Programme]*. Available at: <https://gokvi.hu/helybe-visszuk-szurovizsgalatokat-program>

<sup>134</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 – Nyomonkövetési Jelentés 2021–2022 [Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 – Monitoring Report 2021–2022]. (2023). Budapest: Miniszterelnökség. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030\\_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MNTFS2030_program-monitoring-jelentes-2023.pdf)

<sup>135</sup> Vokó, Z. & Poór, Gy. (2019). *Bevezetés [Introduction]*. *Magyar Tudomány*, 2019(11). Akadémiai Kiadó. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1556/2065.180.2019.11.1>

<sup>136</sup> Eurostat (2024). *Inability to Afford a Meal with Meat, Chicken, Fish (or Vegetarian Equivalent) Every Second Day (SILC dataset)*. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.2908/ilc\\_mdcs03](https://doi.org/10.2908/ilc_mdcs03)  
Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc\\_mdcs03/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_mdcs03/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>137</sup> Kollányi, Z., Bálint, L., Susovits, K., Csépe, P. & Kovács, K. (2023). *Inequalities in Diabetes Mortality Between Microregions in Hungary*. *International Journal of Public Health*, 68, Article 1606161. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2023.1606161>

<sup>138</sup> Szeged.hu. (n.d.). *A Roma Nőket Két Irányból Is Hátrányok Érik [Roma Women Face Disadvantages from Two Directions]*. Available at: <https://szeged.hu/cikk/a-roma-noket-ket-iranybol-is-hatran yok-erik>

<sup>139</sup> United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). (2023). *Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of Hungary*. Geneva: United Nations. Available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FHUN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FHUN%2FCO%2F9&Lang=en)

<sup>140</sup> Pénzcentrum. (12 February 2024). *Aggódhatnak a Kisgyermekesek, Várandósok – Rengeteg Magyar Ellátása Válhat Bizonytalanná [Parents with Young Children and Pregnant Women Have Reason to Worry – Healthcare for Many Hungarians May Become Uncertain]*. Available at: <https://www.penzcentrum.hu/egeszseg/20240212/aggodhatnak-a-kisgyermekesek-varandosok-rengeteg-magyar-ellatasa-valhat-bizonytalanna-1146875#>

more pronounced in disadvantaged regions, with the proportion of vacant or substitute districts exceeding 20% in some areas.<sup>141</sup> The restructuring ('nationalisation') of the health visitor network in 2023 has also worsened the situation, in many cases leading to a reduction in health visitor remuneration,<sup>142, 143</sup> and strengthening the official role instead of that of a helper. There is no sign of a comprehensive programme to develop a culture of health and health awareness. Only local programmes exist, such as the one launched in Székesfehérvár in 2025 entitled 'Healthy Roma in a Healthy City'.<sup>144</sup>

Neither the NRSF nor the government decree connected to NRSF mentions discrimination against Roma in healthcare.<sup>145, 146</sup> A key area of concern is reproductive health care: in the current healthcare system, which is burdened by numerous problems,<sup>147</sup> verbal abuse, obstetric violence, inadequate information, lack of access to services, segregation, and discrimination are still everyday experiences for Roma women.<sup>148</sup> In order for high-quality, patient-centred care to reach marginalised communities, service providers must be able to communicate effectively and build relationships with the target group. Extensive, effective training or, for example, the use of the previously mentioned health mediators could significantly contribute to achieving this. A problem affecting many Roma is both the physical accessibility of services and their eligibility to use them – since an amendment to the law in 2020, only emergency care has been available, billed retrospectively, for those without legal entitlement – not even general practitioner services. It remains a problem that, although detailed data on insurance coverage trends have not been published since 2020, it can be reasonably assumed that the proportion of people in weak labour market positions who are not eligible for health care remains high. This was also pointed out in the 2022 RCM report, to which the NRSF reflects minimally, indicating mostly incomprehensible and non-operational information campaigns as interventions. Access to public health care remains difficult, as it requires submitting various documents and certificates, and the rules are not entirely clear. The number of permanently unfilled general practitioner positions is constantly increasing, with the proportion already exceeding 20% in one-third of counties.<sup>149</sup> Access to modern specialist care is also

<sup>141</sup> Szabad Európa / Radio Free Europe Hungary. (n.d.). *Védőnő-Államosítás: Körzetek Közötti Különbségek* [State Takeover of Health Visitor Services: Differences Between Districts]. Available at: <https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/vedono-allamositas-korzetek-kulonbsegek/32727049.html>

<sup>142</sup> Szeged.hu. (n.d.). *A Teljes Összeomlás Felé Tart a Védőnői Rendszer az Államosítás Óta* [The Health Visitor System Is Heading Toward Total Collapse Since the Nationalisation]. Available at: <https://szeged.hu/cikk/a-teljes-osszeomlas-fele-tart-a-vedonoi-rendszer-az-allamositas-ota>

<sup>143</sup> Index.hu. (29 August 2024). *Védőnő-Bér, Fizetéscsökkentés – Dél-Pesti Centrumkórház* [Health Visitor Salaries, Pay Cuts – South-Pest Centre Hospital]. Available at: <https://index.hu/belfold/2024/08/29/vedono-ber-fizetescsokkent-es-del-pesti-centrum-korhaz-egeszseguqv/>

<sup>144</sup> Székesfehérvár Municipality. (n.d.). *Egészséges Városban Egészséges Roma Emberek – Új Tájékoztató Program Indult* [Healthy Roma in a Healthy City – New Information Programme Launched]. Available at: <https://www.szekesfehervar.hu/egeszseges-varosban-egeszseges-roma-emberek-uj-tajekoztato-program-indult>

<sup>145</sup> Ignác, J. (2024). *Roma Nők Szexuális és Reprodukciós Egészsége és Jogai Magyarországon* [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Roma Women in Hungary]. In *Lehetne Egy Kicsit Halkabban? Szexuális és Reprodukciós Egészség Roma Női Szemmel* [Could You Be a Bit Quieter? Sexual and Reproductive Health Through the Eyes of Roma Women]. Budapest: Romaversitas – EMMA Egyesület.

<sup>146</sup> Balogh-Szabó, K. (2024). „...Lehetne Kicsit Halkabban Is...” – *Roma Nők Szüléssel Kapcsolatos Attitűdjeinek Feltérképezése a Félelem Társadalmi Konstruktívójának Szemszögéből* [“...Could It Be a Bit Quieter Too...” – Exploring Roma Women's Attitudes Toward Childbirth Through the Lens of the Social Construction of Fear]. In *Lehetne Egy Kicsit Halkabban? [Could You Be a Bit Quieter?]*, Romaversitas – EMMA Egyesület.

<sup>147</sup> Csányi, G., & Kerényi, Sz. (2021). *Boszorkányság vagy Nőkörpontúság: Női Önrendelkezés a Szülészetben: A Feminista Mozgalom Mostohagyereke* [Witchcraft or Woman-Centeredness: Women's Autonomy in Obstetric Care: The Stepchild of the Feminist Movement]. In *Várószoba: Női Gyógyítók és Páciensek az Orvoslás Perifériáján* [Waiting Room: Female Healers and Patients on the Periphery of Medicine] (pp. 37-44). Budapest: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

<sup>148</sup> Szabó, L., & Veroszta, Zs. (2022). *A Folyosó Végén: Roma Nők a Várandósgondozás és Szülészeti Ellátás Rendszerében* [At the End of the Corridor: Roma Women in the System of Prenatal and Obstetric Care]. *Esély*, 33(3), 3–24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48007/esely.2022.3.1>

<sup>149</sup> Országos Kórházi Főigazgatóság (National Hospital Directorate-General). (n.d.). *Tájékoztató a Tartósan Betöltetlen Háziorvosi Körzetekről* [Information on Permanently Vacant General Practitioner Districts]. Available at: <https://alapellatas.okfo.gov.hu/tajekoztato-a-tartosan-betoltetlen-haziorvosi-korzetekrol/>

hampered. People living in segregated conditions make less use of outpatient specialist care services than the majority, and overall, less is spent on their healthcare than on those living in better conditions.<sup>150</sup>

## 2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

The 2022 RCM report on housing emphasised that a large proportion of Roma families live in physically unsafe, overcrowded homes, are unable to always heat all rooms, and many use solid household waste for heating. In many cases, property titles are correctly registered, which also makes it difficult to obtain housing subsidies. The data was confirmed by an official statement from the National Assembly.<sup>151</sup> In several settlements inhabited by Roma and low-income groups, clean drinking water,<sup>152</sup> electricity, and sewage disposal are unavailable, and municipal waste collection is limited or non-existent. Many segregated neighbourhoods are located in unsuitable areas that are prone to natural disasters or environmentally hazardous, with limited or no access to public transport and limited internet access.<sup>153</sup> A particular problem is the very limited availability of social housing,<sup>154</sup> and the level of indebtedness due to utility bills or other debts, which means that many people can be evicted at any time. Some housing subsidies do not reach the lowest income quintile (e.g., firewood prices were not covered by utility subsidies, although there were smaller-scale state firewood programmes).<sup>155</sup> Nearly one-third of Hungarian households live in housing poverty, and the same proportion is 52% in the case of Roma households.<sup>156</sup>

### 2.5.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

The NRSF does not provide answers to many of the questions, and its points have only been partially fulfilled.

#### General programmes, priority EU projects

The NRSF and the government connected to NRSF promise complex settlement programmes in non-urban settlements and social urban rehabilitation measures in cities, if necessary, by eliminating settlements that are separated from the town, with a special focus on legalising housing. By the end of 2022, the State had spent a total of 64.4 billion HUF (161 million EUR) on 291 social urban rehabilitation projects. After this, our data is only available for the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (EFOP); we have not found any official reports or data on the Regional and Urban Development Operational Programme (TOP) and Competitive Central Hungary Operational Programme (VEKOP) after 2023.<sup>157</sup> In addition to this, the EFOP, TOP, and VEKOP

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<sup>150</sup> Kasabji, F., et al. (2024). *Cross-Sectional Comparison of Health Care Delivery and Reimbursement Between Segregated and Non-Segregated Communities in Hungary*. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, Article 1152555. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1152555>

<sup>151</sup> Országgyűlés Hivatala (Office of the National Assembly). (2023). *A Romák Lakhatása, Lakáskörülményei [Housing and Living Conditions of Roma People]*. Available at: [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet\\_2023\\_3\\_EU\\_romapolitika\\_lakhatas.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet_2023_3_EU_romapolitika_lakhatas.pdf)

<sup>152</sup> HVG – Eurologus. (19 November 2024). *WC Világnapja: Vízöblítéses Vécé Magyarországon – Adatok a Pulse Felmérésből [World Toilet Day: Flush Toilets in Hungary – Data from the Pulse Survey]*. Available at: [https://hvg.hu/eurologus/20241119\\_wc-vilagnapja-vizobliteses-vece-magyarorszag-adatok-pulse](https://hvg.hu/eurologus/20241119_wc-vilagnapja-vizobliteses-vece-magyarorszag-adatok-pulse)

<sup>153</sup> Országgyűlés Hivatala (Office of the National Assembly). (2023). *A Romák Lakhatása, Lakáskörülményei [Housing and Living Conditions of Roma People]*. i.m.

<sup>154</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal). (n.d.). *Lakásállomány Jogcímen, Év Közben [Housing Stock by Legal Title, Mid-Year]*. Contains data indicating that in 2024 local governments rented out 36,000 apartments nationwide on social grounds, representing less than 1% of the country's total housing stock. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/lak/hu/lak0004.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/lak/hu/lak0004.html)

<sup>155</sup> Hungarian Government / Ministry of Public Administration and Regional Development. (26 March 2025). *Szociális Tüzelőanyag Támogatás 2025 [Social Fuel Support 2025]*. Available at: <https://kormany.hu/dokumentumtar/szocialis-tuzeloanyag-tamogat-as-2025>

<sup>156</sup> Országgyűlés Hivatala (Office of the National Assembly). (2023). *A Romák Lakhatása, Lakáskörülményei [Housing and Living Conditions of Roma People]*. (i.m. — previously cited) Available at: [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet\\_2023\\_3\\_EU\\_romapolitika\\_lakhatas.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/64399821/Infojegyzet_2023_3_EU_romapolitika_lakhatas.pdf)

<sup>157</sup> Hungarian Government / Ministry of Culture and Innovation (Kulturáért és Innovációért Felelős Minisztérium). (n.d.). *Befejeződik az EFOP-1.6.1 és VEKOP-16-2016-00001 „Felzárkózási Együttműködések Támogatása” Elnevezésű Kiemelt Projekt [Completion of the Priority Project “Supporting Cooperation for Social Inclusion” Under EFOP-1.6.1 and VEKOP-16-2016-00001]*. Available at: <https://kormany.hu/hirek/befejezodik-az-efop-161-vekop-16-2016-00001->

Programmes were already in the process of closing/settling accounts in the second half of 2023, and there are no government or managing authorities' (MA) summaries or evaluations, and no new rounds of applications. The total amount of support for the EFOP Programme was 3.1 billion HUF (7.75 million EUR), of which, according to the report, a complex programme to help eliminate segregated living conditions was implemented in 95 municipalities nationwide, with central coordination, professional support, and national-level monitoring. According to the government report, the living conditions of more than 3,000 families in 125 marginalised areas of the country improved, and approximately 10,000 individual development plans were prepared, 287 new apartments were built, and 375 apartments were renovated. At the same time, the Prime Minister's Office commissioned an evaluation of the anti-segregation programmes in 2022. One of its findings is that the desegregation effects of the programmes are not demonstrable, and in many cases, the developments and housing services do not reach those most in need, but rather those households that can afford the subsidised rent.<sup>158</sup>

### The Catching Up Settlements (FETE) programme

Another priority intervention named in the NRSF is the FETE Programme: in 2024, it was implemented in 238 settlements, and according to plans, it will reach the target set for 2025 of involving 300 settlements.<sup>159</sup> The interventions planned in the NRSF were predominantly implemented in the FETE programme after 2023; however, as the FETE Programme covers less than 10% of Hungarian municipalities, they do not have a nationwide impact. Under the FETE Housing Programme, participants can receive support at several levels:

- 1) The most disadvantaged households can receive up to 300,000 HUF (750 EUR) for minor renovations (roof repairs, plastering, heating modernisation, or pipe repairs) under a sub-programme called 'roof commando'.
- 2) Those in need can access public rental housing purchased or newly built by the MMSz from Resilience and Recovery Facility (RRF) funds. Lease agreements cover a one-year period, which may be extended for up to five years. The aim is to promote independent living for residents and to provide additional support for moving out, such as the use of the Family Housing Allowance (CSOK). The basic requirement for submitting an application is at least six months of verified income (wages, pension, family allowance, or other official source). The rent is generally between 30,000 HUF and 50,000 (75 to 125 EUR), and a monthly income of at least 186,000 HUF (465 EUR) is expected for a two-person household. Experience shows that it is very difficult to reach this level on two public employment salaries.
- 3) Families participating in the programme are supported by housing advisors, debt managers, and CSOK administrators. Social rental housing is available to residents of municipalities covered by the FETE Programme.

The construction of social solar power plants was planned in FETE municipalities: under the Community Renewable Energy Production and Use Programme (RRF-3.4.1.-22), a total of 20 solar power plants with a total capacity of 499.5 kW were installed in 19 municipalities, with a total capacity of 12,513 kWp.<sup>160</sup>

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[felzarkozasi-egyuttmukodesek-tamogatasa-elnevezesu-kiemelt-projekt](#). We were unable to find such data on the TOP and VEKOP programmes, and our request for data of public interest was also unsuccessful.

<sup>158</sup> Teller, N. (Lead evaluator), Városkutatás Kft., Collective-Intelligence Kft., & Field Consulting Services Zrt. (2022). *Szociális Településrehabilitáció Eredményességének Értékelése [Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Social Urban Rehabilitation]*. Budapest.

<sup>159</sup> FETE – Felzárkózó Települések Program (*Catching-Up Settlements Programme*). (n.d.). *A Programról [About the Programme]*. Available at: <https://fete.hu/a-programrol/>

<sup>160</sup> FETE – Felzárkózó Települések Program. (26 July 2024). *Tizennyolc Szociális Napernőművet Helyeztek Üzembe a Legszegényebb Települések Támogatására [Eighteen Social Solar Power Plants Put Into Operation to Support the Poorest Settlements]* (Press Release). Available at: [https://fete.hu/app/uploads/2024/09/RRF\\_Energetika\\_sajtokozlomeny\\_Tizennyolc-szocialis-naperomuvet-helyeztek-uzembe-a-legszegenyebb-telepulesek-tamogatasa\\_2024\\_07\\_26.pdf](https://fete.hu/app/uploads/2024/09/RRF_Energetika_sajtokozlomeny_Tizennyolc-szocialis-naperomuvet-helyeztek-uzembe-a-legszegenyebb-telepulesek-tamogatasa_2024_07_26.pdf)

## Other programmes mentioned in the NRSF

Another measure provides food packages containing basic food items and soup kitchen services for the poorest members of society.<sup>161</sup> 55,000 people were eligible for support under the programme. Between 2018 and 2023, 717,000 food packages worth 8.6 billion HUF (21.5 million EUR) were distributed.<sup>162</sup> The implementation of the programme was not without problems. Government audits were launched due to overpricing.<sup>163</sup> Another set of measures attempts to remedy regional inequalities by bringing cultural services and programmes to local areas and providing professionals.<sup>164</sup> Based on the reports of the implementing organisations, actual service expansion could only take place in a few places — EFOP Programmes struggled with a severe shortage of professionals everywhere.

Planned measures relating to data collection include the following: the implementation of the desegregation objectives of EFOP Plus 3 and 7, and TOP Plus 1 and 3 priority desegregation objectives; and the development of a monitoring and evaluation methodology for this. Also, a similar evaluation is planned of the operation of the MR Community Housing Fund, and the experiences of the operation of social rental housing by housing agencies. Beyond the planning of such measures, there is no information on the implementation.

Additionally, the government plans to conduct research on discrimination in the rental housing market; update the National Segregation Database; and, with the involvement of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, collect regular data that can help local Governments identify segregated areas and areas at risk of segregation.<sup>165</sup> These points have either not been fulfilled or the update of the segregation database has not been made public. All data collection tasks<sup>166</sup> have been set with a deadline of 30 June 2025, and no public analyses are available.

### 2.5.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

Housing-related subsidies include the nearly decade-old utility subsidy system and a range of housing subsidies linked to childbearing – from the purchase of new properties to the renovation of used properties in rural areas, based on subsidised loan programmes. Some utility subsidies do not reach those living in the most severe housing deprivation, and the loans favour higher-income earners; since they are primarily intended to support home ownership, many low-income families are left out. Both the governmental and FETE's housing-related loan programmes tie actual subsidies to continuous social security coverage and minimum income limits,<sup>167</sup> which a significant portion of Roma communities are unable to meet. The NRSF does not address targeted support for them.

Compared to the problems of the nearly 1,300 segregated Roma neighbourhoods, the interventions in the FETE programme, the approximately 130 apartments available for allocation each year from the housing fund of

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<sup>161</sup> Hungarian Government / EFOP Managing Authority. (n.d.). *RSZTOP – Rászoruló Személyeket Támogató Operatív Program* [Operational Programme for Supporting the Most Deprived (OP FEAD/RSZTOP)]. Available at: <https://efop.kormany.hu/rsztop>

<sup>162</sup> Szociális és Gyermekvédelmi Főigazgatóság (Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection). (n.d.). *Tájékoztató a Rászoruló Személyeket Támogató Operatív Program Végrehajtásáról* [Information on the Implementation of the Operational Programme Supporting the Most Deprived]. Available at: <https://szgyf.gov.hu/tajekoztato-a-raszorulo-szemelyeket-tamogato-operativ-program-vegrehajtasarol/>

<sup>163</sup> Integritás Hatóság (Integrity Authority). (n.d.). *Nyerészkedés a Szegényeken és Rászorulókon – Lezárult a Rászoruló Személyeket Támogató Operatív Program Vizsgálata* [Profiteering on the Poor and Deprived – Investigation of the Operational Programme Supporting the Most Deprived Concluded]. Available at: <https://integritashatosag.hu/nyereszkeses-a-szegenyeken-es-raszorulokon-lezarult-a-raszorulo-szemelyeket-tamogato-operativ-program-vizsgalata/>

<sup>164</sup> Complex housing projects included several community activities, including cultural ones. Although its direct target group was mainly children of the segregated communities, some trainings and lectures focused on parents and young adults – the project management teams had the freedom to choose these activities, but a shortage of professionals was a common obstacle.

<sup>165</sup> Miniszterelnökség. (2024). *Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030* [Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030]. Government of Hungary. p. 14.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>167</sup> Based on an interview with the MMSZ regional housing programme coordinator, who wanted to remain anonymous. 6 May 2025

the Maltese Charity Service and the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, or the very low subsidies of the ‘roof commando’ are too insignificant to bring about real change. Housing segregation can be observed in both the country’s peripheral areas and urban agglomerations. The lack of housing mobility also contributes to the very low level of social mobility, a problem that requires practical solutions. Neither small-scale anti-segregation programmes nor FETE can significantly change the miserable housing conditions affecting the masses; at best, they can point to a few cases of good practice, the extension of which is consistently delayed due to a lack of political will and resources. Since local Governments do not have the resources for their own developments and programmes, the municipal social rental sector cannot be expanded, and most Roma families are excluded from programmes that support home ownership, thus further increasing housing exclusion and segregation.

## 2.6. Social protection

In addition to the shortcomings identified in the RCM 2022 report, the following main problems can be identified in the current monitoring period: (1) a decrease in budgetary resources allocated to social protection expenditure; (2) high poverty risk rate; (3) income support programmes do not guarantee an acceptable minimum income for all households, and the quality and security of the welfare system is weakening; (4) the number of people receiving regular child protection benefits (RGYK) is decreasing, but there is no data available on the reasons for this decrease or on the extent to which the benefits reach those most in need; (5) marginalised groups are excluded from income support programmes and family support and housing policy measures.

### 2.6.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

According to the NRSF, major social policy systems, including the social protection system, were reformed starting in 2015 „in the spirit of subsidiarity, efficiency, and equal access”,<sup>168</sup> and the NRSF contributed to strengthening the adequacy of social protection.<sup>169</sup> However, although the document refers to social protection on several occasions, it does not contain any specific measures aimed at strengthening the system or improving the social security of marginalised social groups.

In 2023, Hungary spent 16.6% of its GDP on social protection expenditure, representing a decrease of nearly 20% over a decade.<sup>170</sup> In 2024, a total of 1.1% of GDP was spent on family support measures targeting various groups not just at risk of poverty and exclusion, representing a decline of nearly 40% compared to 2013.<sup>171</sup> Overall, the adequacy of social protection has further deteriorated, with the poverty-reducing effect of social transfers significantly eroded since 2021.<sup>172</sup> The Government’s attitude towards social protection is reflected in the 2022 amendment to the social law, which significantly reduced the state’s responsibility in the field of social security.<sup>173</sup> As the development of social transfers is not a government priority, most of these types of benefits have been reduced in recent years and have lost much of their value. The amount of the essentially universal (but conditional) family allowance (kindergarten and school support) has not changed since 2008; therefore, its purchasing power has fallen by about a half.<sup>174</sup> The minimum pension is only 28,500 HUF (71

<sup>168</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 14). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>169</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 28). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>170</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). (2025). *25.1.1.1. A szociális ellátás összefoglaló adatai [Summary Data on Social Services]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0001.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0001.html)

<sup>171</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>172</sup> European Commission. (2025). *Commission Staff Working Document: 2025 Country Report – Hungary*.

<sup>173</sup> Magyarország Országgyűlése. (1993). *1993. évi III. törvény a szociális igazgatásról és szociális ellátásokról [Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits]*. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99300003.TV>

Meleg, A. (2024). *Szociális jogalkotás és ellátási reformok Magyarországon [Social Legislation and Welfare Reforms in Hungary]*. *Esély*, 2024(3), 56–68.

<sup>174</sup> Nagy, Zs. (23 January 2024). *Félig már megszűntette a családi pótlékot az infláció [Inflation Has Half-Erased Family Allowances]*. *Telex / G7*. Available at: <https://telex.hu/g7/penz/2024/01/23/felig-mar-megszuntette-a-csaladi-potleket-az-inflacio>

EUR), which has not changed since 2008. The monthly amount of the non-employment-related, aid-type childcare allowance is similar, averaging only 31,000 HUF (75 EUR) per month in 2024.

The poverty risk rate and the rate of material and social deprivation are high. As a result of an inadequate and ineffective social protection system, the proportion of people living in relative income poverty has increased (or at least has not decreased) in most groups in recent years.<sup>175</sup> The NRSF primarily deals with the development of poverty in detail in its situation analysis. Poverty reduction is set as a goal in several places, but measures directly aimed at reducing income poverty and improving financial benefits are largely absent. One of the quantified targets is to reduce the proportion of families with children living in 'material and social poverty' from 23% to 13% (by 2030; the interim target for 2026 is 19%).<sup>176</sup> The development of the indicator cannot be tracked from the publicly available data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH). What is known is that in 2019 and 2021, 9% of households with children lived in relative income poverty (below 60% of median income), and in 2023, 12% did.<sup>177</sup> However, the proportion of households with children affected by severe material and social deprivation decreased slightly (from 13% to 11%) between 2019 and 2023.<sup>178</sup>

Income support programmes do not guarantee an acceptable minimum income for all households, and the quality and security of the welfare system are weakening. They appear among the NRSF's areas of intervention, but the relevant government decree<sup>179</sup> lacks the related elements (e.g., debt management counselling, support for income-supplementing activities), which, moreover, do little to improve the income situation and social security. Local interventions (FETE) reach only a small proportion of those in need, and their operation and quality depend on the intentions and resources of local authorities.

Part of the NRSF's objectives is to establish/develop a 'benefit system that promotes activity and encourages employment'. This basically means public employment.<sup>180</sup> According to data from the Ministry of the Interior, between 2019 and May 2025, the number of people in public employment fell by 37% (from 106,000 to 66,900),<sup>181</sup> while the number of people in employment (aged 15–64) increased by 0.5% (25,200 people) between 2019 and 2024.<sup>182</sup> The employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (one of the main indicators of

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<sup>175</sup> In terms of vulnerable groups, 34% of those with at most a primary education, 47% of the unemployed, 24% of pensioners, and 42% of Roma lived in income poverty in 2023.

Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (n.d.). 5.1.1.4. *Relatív jövedelmi szegénységi arány nem, korcsoport, iskolai végzettség, gazdasági aktivitás, háztartástípus és lakáshasználat jogcíme szerint* [Relative income poverty rate by gender, age group, educational attainment, economic activity, household type and housing tenure]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/ele/hu/ele0004.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/ele/hu/ele0004.html). The relevant data from the HCSO, as will be discussed later, are highly questionable (see subsection 2.6.1).

<sup>176</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030* [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]. Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabcd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>177</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (n.d.). 5.1.1.4. *Relatív Jövedelmi Szegénységi Arány Nem, Korcsoport, Iskolai Végzettség, Gazdasági Aktivitás, Háztartástípus És Lakáshasználat Jogcíme Szerint* [Relative Income Poverty Rate by Gender, Age Group, Educational Attainment, Economic Activity, Household Type and Housing Tenure]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/ele/hu/ele0004.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/ele/hu/ele0004.html)

<sup>178</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (n.d.). 5.1.1.5. *A Jövedelmi Szegénység Mélysége Nem, Korcsoport, Iskolai Végzettség, Gazdasági Aktivitás, Háztartástípus És Lakáshasználat Jogcíme Szerint* [Depth of Income Poverty by Gender, Age Group, Educational Attainment, Economic Activity, Household Type and Housing Tenure]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/ele/hu/ele0035.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/ele/hu/ele0035.html)

<sup>179</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. határozat a Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 végrehajtásának a 2021–2024. évekre szóló kormányzati intézkedési tervéről* [Government Resolution 1619/2021 (IX. 3.) on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>180</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030* [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030] (p. 101). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabcd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>181</sup> Ministry of Interior – Hungary. (n.d.). *Közfoglalkoztatás* [Public Employment]. Available at: <http://kozfoglalkoztatás.bm.hu/>

<sup>182</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (n.d.). *Munkaerőpiaci Statisztikák – Foglalkoztatottak Száma Nem, Korcsoport, Iskolai Végzettség, Gazdasági Aktivitás És Háztartástípus Szerint* [Labour Market Statistics – Number of

the NRSF) increased by 3% (to 75.1%) between 2019 and 2024. It can be considered a success that the gross monthly minimum wage for public sector employees rose by 78% (nearly 64,000 HUF or 160 EUR) between 1 February 2021, and 1 January 2025.<sup>183</sup> At the same time, the average monthly net wage of full-time public employees in 2024 was still only 55% of the net minimum wage (98,000 HUF, approx. 245 EUR).<sup>184</sup>

Social assistance for people of working age is shrinking, with the average monthly number of people receiving employment replacement benefits falling by 34% between 2019 and 2024, while the average monthly amount of support per person has decreased (to 22,300 HUF, or 56 EUR). The amount of the benefit (22,800 HUF, or 57 EUR), which does not even cover basic living expenses, has not changed since 2015. The minimum old-age pension (28,500 HUF, or 71 EUR) has remained unchanged since 2008. We have no data on the number of people receiving the minimum old-age pension, but approximately 800,000 pensioners live below the subsistence level. These people can apply for targeted benefits (e.g., public health care, local social benefits) if they meet the eligibility criteria. However, these do little or nothing to improve their quality of life.

The remaining elements of the welfare system have increasingly fallen under the discretion of local Governments, reinforcing subjective factors and weakening social security. The social protection system has been weakened, its coverage is incomplete, and its ability to mitigate the risk of poverty is limited, so there is a need to improve the effectiveness of social transfers.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, „the opaque maze of diverse eligibility criteria and conditions, as well as the associated administration, make the system not only cumbersome, but also unfair and inefficient”.<sup>186</sup>

The number of people receiving regular child protection benefits (RGYK) is declining. Extending the RGYK to ensure that the benefit reaches ‘all families in need’ is one of the interventions of the NRSF and the government decree.<sup>187</sup> In 2019, 263,000 people received RGYK, compared to 190,000 in 2024, representing a 28% decline.<sup>188</sup> The decline might be mainly due to the income threshold for eligibility, but no recent analyses are

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*Employed Persons by Gender, Age Group, Educational Attainment, Economic Activity and Household Type*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/mun/hu/mun0003.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/mun/hu/mun0003.html)

<sup>183</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (n.d.). *Munkaerőpiaci Statisztikák – Foglalkoztatottak Száma Gazdasági Ágak Szerint* [Labour Market Statistics – Number of Employed Persons by Economic Sectors]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/mun/hu/mun0190.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/mun/hu/mun0190.html)

<sup>184</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (n.d.). *Munkaerőpiaci Statisztikák – Foglalkoztatottak Száma A Munkanélküliségi Ráta Szerint, Nem, Korcsoport, Iskolai Végzettség, Gazdasági Aktivitás És Háztartástípus Szerint* [Labour Market Statistics – Number of Employed Persons by Unemployment Rate, Gender, Age Group, Educational Attainment, Economic Activity and Household Type]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/mun/hu/mun0180.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/mun/hu/mun0180.html)

<sup>185</sup> European Commission. (2025). *Commission Staff Working Document: 2025 Country Report – Hungary. Accompanying The Document Recommendation for A Council Recommendation on The Economic, Social, Employment, Structural and Budgetary Policies of Hungary* (SWD(2025) 217 final, pp. 100–101). Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1df2e420-4158-11f0-b9f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>.

<sup>186</sup> Egyensúly Intézet [Equilibrium Institute]. (2021). *Hogyan Csökkentsük A Szegénységet? [How To Reduce Poverty?*

<sup>187</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 51). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabdb7b18b.pdf>

Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat A Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtásának A 2021–2024. Évekre Szóló Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervéről* [Government Resolution on the Implementation Plan of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>188</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *25.1.2.7. Szociális Támogatásban Részesítettek Száma Vármegye És Régió Szerint* [Number of People Receiving Social Assistance by County and Region]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0044.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0044.html). This meant nearly 124,000 families in 2019 and only 86,000 in 2024.

Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *25.1.2.25. Szociális Ellátásban Részesülők Száma Ellátási Formák Szerint* [Number of People Receiving Social Benefits by Type of Provision]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0062.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0062.html)

available on the reasons for this or on the extent to which the benefit reaches the poorest households.<sup>189</sup> However, it is a step forward that the income threshold for eligibility has been raised as of 1 July 2024.<sup>190</sup>

Income support programmes, family support, and housing policy measures favour the better-off, while marginalised groups are excluded from these benefits. The NRSF identifies the further development of the family support system as a challenge and, as a course of action, that family support benefits, including housing subsidies, should reach the 'families most in need'.<sup>191</sup> Still, the document does not refer to an indicator for monitoring this. The government decree connected to NRSF does not contain any measures to this end.<sup>192</sup> The NRSF acknowledges that the nominal level of universal family support benefits (family allowances) has remained unchanged for a long time, which, according to the document, is offset by benefits tied to earned income and health insurance status.<sup>193</sup> However, marginalised social groups are typically excluded from these.<sup>194</sup> The government announced in the fall of 2024 that it would double the amount of the family tax benefit for children that can be claimed by employed persons.<sup>195</sup> Still, it has no intention of increasing the family allowance.

## 2.6.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

The decline in government involvement fundamentally determines the weakening of social security. Significant improvements in social transfers and family allowances are needed to reduce monetary poverty. As the 2025 Commission Staff working document on Hungary points out, the situation of the poorest groups of the population is not improving due to the low progressivity of the tax system, the declining impact of social benefits, unequal access to social services, and poorly targeted tax, housing, and energy benefit systems.<sup>196</sup> Current redistribution policies are not reducing income inequalities, and wealth inequalities have increased significantly (they were the highest in the EU in 2023).<sup>197</sup> According to the Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), which cover or affect several areas of social policy (including education, social institutions, systems, healthcare, and the pension system), Hungary has the lowest score among the 30 OECD and EU member states surveyed.<sup>198</sup> The primary data on social protection expenditure, the number of people receiving benefits, and

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<sup>189</sup> TÁRKI Social Research Institute [Társadalomkutató Intézet]. (2016). *Szociálpolitikai Monitoring – Első Eredmények* [Social Policy Monitoring – First Results]. Available at: [https://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2016/kitekint/szocpol/20160823\\_szocpol\\_monitoring\\_1.pdf](https://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2016/kitekint/szocpol/20160823_szocpol_monitoring_1.pdf)

<sup>190</sup> Government of Hungary. (1997). *1997. Évi XXXI. Törvény A Gyermek Védelméről És A Gyámügyi Igazgatásról* [Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration]. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99700031.tv>

<sup>191</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030* [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030] (p. 51). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>192</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat A Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtásának A 2021–2024. Évekre Szóló Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervéről* [Government Resolution on the Implementation Plan of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>193</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030* [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030] (p. 44). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>194</sup> Budapest Institute [Budapest Intézet]. (2022). *A Magyar Adórendszer Újraelosztási Hatásai* [Redistributive Effects of the Hungarian Tax System]. Available at: [https://www.budapestinstitute.eu/uploads/BI\\_adorendszer\\_ujraelo\\_hatas\\_2022.pdf](https://www.budapestinstitute.eu/uploads/BI_adorendszer_ujraelo_hatas_2022.pdf)

<sup>195</sup> Government of Hungary. (30 November 2024). *Megduplázzuk A Családi Adókedvezményt* [We Will Double Family Allowances]. Available at: <https://kormany.hu/hirek/megduplazzuk-a-csaladi-adokedvezmenyt>

<sup>196</sup> European Commission. (2025). *Commission Staff Working Document: 2025 Country Report – Hungary. Accompanying The Document Recommendation For A Council Recommendation On The Economic, Social, Employment, Structural And Budgetary Policies Of Hungary*.

<sup>197</sup> European Commission. (2025). *Commission Staff Working Document: 2025 Country Report – Hungary. Accompanying The Document Recommendation For A Council Recommendation On The Economic, Social, Employment, Structural And Budgetary Policies Of Hungary* (SWD(2025) 217 final, p. 22). Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1df2e420-4158-11f0-b9f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>198</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung. (2024). *Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), Hungary – Social Sustainability*. Available at: [https://www.sqi-network.org/2024/Hungary/Social\\_Sustainability](https://www.sqi-network.org/2024/Hungary/Social_Sustainability)

income inequality, poverty and social exclusion are collected by and published on the website of the Central Statistical Office (KSH) largely in accordance with EU-SILC, but with the reference year indicated.<sup>199</sup> Data on income poverty, exclusion, and deprivation are available in the main breakdowns (age, gender, educational attainment, economic activity, household type), including (from 2013) a breakdown between Roma and non-Roma.<sup>200</sup> As mentioned above, it is a serious problem that the HCSO's income data including data on income distribution, income inequality, and poverty, have been highly questionable since 2018.<sup>201</sup>

## 2.7. Social services

The latest 2022 RCM report identified six problems in the social services area, five of which relate to the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of services, while one indicates a lack of appropriate programmes to manage indebtedness. It highlights that the care system is struggling with financial and regulatory challenges, a shortage of professionals, and the need to improve the attitudes of some social workers. It highlights that, in line with the Government's intentions, church-run institutions have been gaining ground in the sector since 2010, thereby further reducing the State's role. Summarising the problems mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, most of them still exist today: (1) the lack of resources and capacity in the social and child welfare/child protection system; (2) regional inequalities in quality and access; (3) low wages and social prestige of those working in the sector continue to be prevalent; (4) the further expansion of free institutional child catering has not been implemented; and (5) there is a lack of comprehensive, complex debt management programmes at the central level.

### 2.7.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

The NRSF includes several development needs and measures related to social and child welfare/child protection services.<sup>202</sup> It identifies the high number of children in temporary care and specialised child protection as a challenge. Its set of objectives includes „improving the availability, quality, and effectiveness of child welfare and child protection benefits and services“<sup>203</sup> but there are no indicators given for this. According to the government decree on NRSF implementation,<sup>204</sup> ‘attention to parents’ must be strengthened to prevent children from entering specialised child protection care; services must be developed in municipalities and parts of municipalities where there is a lack of services, and access must be improved. Previously, projects aimed at developing the sector were implemented mainly with EU funding (EFOP, TÁMOP, VEKOP), and have not been

<sup>199</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *STADAT: 25. Social Care Protection; 5. Living Conditions*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_eng?lang=en&theme=ele](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_eng?lang=en&theme=ele)

<sup>200</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *5.1.1.2. People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion by Sex, Age, Educational Attainment Level, Income Quintile, Most Frequent Activity Status, Household Type*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/ele/en/ele0034.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/ele/en/ele0034.html)

Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *5.1.1.4. At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate by Poverty Threshold by Sex, Age, Educational Attainment, Income Quintile, Most Frequent Activity Status, Household Type and Dwelling Tenure Status*

<sup>201</sup> Tátrai, A., & Gábos, A. (2025). *Kutatói aggodalmak az EU-SILC magyarországi jövedelemadataival kapcsolatban [Researchers' Concerns About the Hungarian EU-SILC Income Data]*. Available at: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/04/01/eu-silc-magyarorszag-i-jovedelemadok-kutato-i-elemzes/>

<sup>202</sup> Ensuring access to quality social services at the municipal level; developing and expanding the capacity of family and child welfare services and services that improve children's opportunities ('Birth and childhood', B1). Source: Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 40). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

Extending free institutional and holiday meals for children ('Public Education, Vocational Training and Higher Education System', B2). Source: Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 69). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>203</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 26, Table 2, Section 2.1.2). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>204</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat a Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtásának a 2021–2024. Évekre Szóló Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervéről [Government Resolution on the Implementation Plan of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

relaunched. The budgetary expenditure allocated to the social and child welfare/child protection system, which is burdened with numerous problems, does not enable high-quality, efficient operation. There are almost no systemic developments.<sup>205</sup> In disadvantaged regions, the FETE Programme is the Government's primary tool for service development. It is prominently featured in both the NRSF and the government decree. The programme:

„Contributes to the integration of the municipality and the people in need [...] living there by aligning with existing basic services and the institutional system of integration, supplementing them as necessary, and strengthening the links between them.”<sup>206</sup>

According to the government decree, the long-term FETE Programme must be continued in line with the objectives of the NRSF, as with its 'model solutions' it can prevent the most disadvantaged settlements from falling behind.<sup>207</sup> The launch and more or less continuous operation of the centrally coordinated, locally implemented programme, which builds on previous EU schemes and draws on their experience,<sup>208</sup> can be identified as an achievement, but the initiative has been criticised on several grounds (due to its effectiveness and parallel services; because it does not adequately address systemic problems,<sup>209</sup> and affects just over a tenth of the country's municipalities).

Both the NRSF and the government decision emphasise the need to expand free institutional child catering and to extend catering during school breaks.<sup>210</sup> According to the latter, the extension of the discount system for nursery and kindergarten children to lower primary school pupils should be examined.<sup>211</sup> The latter has not taken place (although primary school pupils receiving RGYK also receive free meals, the income eligibility threshold is less favourable in their case) The extension to secondary school students has been long-awaited.

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<sup>205</sup> Kopint-TÁRKI Zrt. & TÁRKI Zrt. (2022). *Economic Trends 2022/1 – Report on Eastern Europe and Hungary*. Budapest: Kopint-TÁRKI Konjunktúrakutató Intézet.

Csizmadia, Z., Kóbor, K., & Tóth, P. (2023). *A szociális intézmények szolgáltatási nehézségei és szakmai utánpótlási problémái – Egy fejlesztési problématerkép alapvonalai [Service Challenges and Professional Succession Issues in Social Institutions – A Baseline Map of Development Needs]*. *Párbeszéd: Szociális munka folyóirat*, 10(1), 45–62.

Meleg, A. (2025). *Szociális jogalkotás és ellátási reformok Magyarországon [Social Legislation and Welfare Reforms in Hungary]*. *Esély*, 2025(1), 56–68.

Szabad Európa. (21 August 2024). *Szakszervezet: Néhány gyermekvédelmi intézmény hamarosan működésképtelenné válhat [Union: Some Child Protection Institutions May Soon Become Inoperable]*. Available at: <https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/szakszervezet-nehany-gyermekvedelmi-intezmeny-hamarosan-mukodeskeptelenne-valhat/33084313.html>

<sup>206</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 128). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabdb7b18b.pdf>

<sup>207</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. Határozat a Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 Végrehajtásának a 2021–2024. Évekre Szóló Kormányzati Intézkedési Tervéről [Government Resolution on the Implementation Plan of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

<sup>208</sup> Perpék, É., & Kiss, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Véges és végtelen lehetőségek [Finite and Infinite Possibilities]*. Centre for Social Sciences. Available at: [https://real.mtak.hu/185834/1/Perpek\\_Kiss\\_Veges\\_es\\_vegtelen\\_lehetosegek\\_TK.pdf](https://real.mtak.hu/185834/1/Perpek_Kiss_Veges_es_vegtelen_lehetosegek_TK.pdf)

Husz, I., Lannert, J., & Szikra, D. (2023). *Gyerekesélyek a végeken III [Child Opportunities in the Peripheries III]*. Centre for Social Sciences. Available at: [https://gyerekesely.tk.hu/uploads/files/Gyerekeselyek\\_a\\_vegeken\\_III\\_boritoval.pdf](https://gyerekesely.tk.hu/uploads/files/Gyerekeselyek_a_vegeken_III_boritoval.pdf)

<sup>209</sup> Qubit & CEU Határtalan Tudás. (11 July 2024). *Az utóbbi évek erőltetett iparosítási politikája csak a leszakadást konzerválja a legszegényebb magyar járásokban [The Forced Industrialization Policy of Recent Years Only Entrenches the Lag in Hungary's Poorest Districts]*. Available at: <https://qubit.hu/2024/07/11/az-utobbi-evek-eroltetett-iparositasi-politikaja-csak-a-leszakadast-konzervolja-a-legszegenyebb-magyar-jarasokban>

<sup>210</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 69). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabdb7b18b.pdf>

<sup>211</sup> Government of Hungary. (2021). *1619/2021. (IX. 3.) Korm. határozat a Magyar Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia 2030 végrehajtásának a 2021–2024. évekre szóló kormányzati intézkedési tervéről [Government Resolution on the Implementation Plan of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 for the Years 2021–2024]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2021-1619-30-22>

The government will spend 140 billion HUF (350 million EUR) on child nutrition in 2025.<sup>212</sup> No public data is available on the number of people receiving free or discounted institutional meals.

The NRSF identifies debt management counselling, household budgeting and financial awareness development, and the exploration of new debt management methods as areas for intervention,<sup>213</sup> but the relevant government decision does not include such measures. The debt management service, which was previously mandatory for municipalities with a population of more than 40,000, was removed from the social welfare law in 2015, and the budgetary financing of debt reduction support was restructured. Since then, as with housing maintenance support, it has been up to the local authorities to decide whether they provide this service, depending on their intentions and resources. From now on, similar elements can be found in the FETE Programme, which is necessarily limited to only 300 municipalities.

One aim of local aid-type subsidies is to prevent the accumulation of housing-related debt. In 2024, only 6,000 people received such subsidies, and the average monthly amount per person was only 3,300 HUF (8 EUR). The average annual amount of support per person increased by 9,000 HUF (22.5 EUR) over four years (2019–2023); in 2023, it was 3,800 HUF (9.5 EUR) per month. Due to the accumulation of arrears related to housing expenses,<sup>214</sup> 4,400 people received municipal support in 2023, with the average monthly amount of support per person being 5,100 HUF (13 EUR) in 2023.<sup>215</sup> However, in 2024, 9% of the total population, and one-third (34%) of those living in income poverty, lived in households where housing costs exceeded 40% of their income.<sup>216</sup>

### 2.7.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

A fundamental problem in social services is the lack of a sectoral strategy setting out development directions,<sup>217</sup> which, as can be seen from the amendment to the social law discussed elsewhere, is precisely the further reduction of the state's role in welfare and social services. In the case of basic social services and day care, there has been an increase in the number of places available and a slight improvement in capacity, but in the case of several other types of care, the opposite is true.<sup>218</sup> The number of professionals employed in family and child welfare services has stagnated between 2021 and 2024 (however, the number of professional staff in family and child welfare centres has increased slightly), while the number of people receiving care has increased by tens of thousands.<sup>219</sup> Low wages in the sector are a major problem, and the primary cause of the shortage of professionals and career abandonment, but the system is also burdened with other serious

<sup>212</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *2024. évi XC. törvény Magyarország 2025. évi központi költségvetéséről* [Act XC of 2024 on Hungary's Central Budget for 2025]. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a2400090.tv>

<sup>213</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030* [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030] (p. 138). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aaabdb7b18b.pdf>

<sup>214</sup> Government of Hungary. (1993). *1993. évi III. törvény a szociális igazgatásról és szociális ellátásokról* [Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits], § 45 (1) d). Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99300003.tv>

<sup>215</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *Tájékoztató adatbázis* [Information Database]. Available at: <https://stainfo.ksh.hu/Stainfo/index.jsp>

<sup>216</sup> Eurostat. (n.d.). *Housing cost overburden rate (tespm140)*. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tespm140/default/table?lang=en>

<sup>217</sup> Kopint-Tárki Zrt. & Tárki Zrt. (2022). *Az egészségügyi és szociális közszolgáltatások fejlesztését célzó intézkedések értékelése: Szociális közszolgáltatások ÉRTÉKELÉSI JELENTÉS MUNKAVÁLTOZATA* [Evaluation of Measures Aimed at Developing Health and Social Public Services: Social Services Evaluation Report – Working Version]. Available at: [https://kopint-tarki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Szocialis\\_Ertekelesi\\_Jelentes.pdf](https://kopint-tarki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Szocialis_Ertekelesi_Jelentes.pdf): 12. „A key feature of social public services is that there was no comprehensive sectoral strategy, only policy and strategy documents relating to specific target groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, the elderly)”.

<sup>218</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *25.1.1.30. Szociális alapszolgáltatások és nappali ellátások* [Basic Social Services and Day Care Provisions]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0025.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0025.html)

<sup>219</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *25.1.1.11. A család- és gyermekjóléti szolgáltatások* [Family and Child Welfare Services]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0012.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0012.html)

issues.<sup>220</sup> In the country's disadvantaged regions, social and child welfare services are either unavailable or only available to a limited extent and at a lower standard.<sup>221</sup> The spread of church-run institutions and services further reduces the role of the state, and the distribution of resources favours church actors over municipal and civil society operators.<sup>222</sup> Current statistics by operator are only available to a limited extent. It is known that in 2019, 21% of those in social institutions providing temporary accommodation and long-term residential care lived in church-run institutions, and in 2024, this figure rose to 27%.<sup>223</sup> In 2023, almost all (98%) foster care places belonged to church-run or church-affiliated organisations.<sup>224</sup>

## 2.8. Child protection

The 2022 RCM report on child welfare and child protection highlights that the availability and quality of child welfare and family support services, child protection services, and benefits have continued to deteriorate, mainly due to a shortage of professionals and low funding.

### 2.8.1. 2.8.1 Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

The NRSF specifically mentions improving the availability and quality of child welfare and child protection services. However, the activities of child welfare services and family support centres show that these goals are not being met and that there is a severe lack of resources. Family and child welfare services operate in 678 municipalities, with 3,144 employees who handled cases for 435,148 clients. There are also 201 family and child welfare centres with 3,266 employees, who handled 136,845 cases in the same year, in 2024.<sup>225</sup> Considering that there are 3,155 municipalities in Hungary, the distribution and accessibility of service providers and their ability to reach children and families is inadequate.

Serious concerns about the reliability of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office's poverty data, discussed elsewhere, make it difficult to measure changes in the number of people receiving care. Considering this, it

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<sup>220</sup> Csizmadia, Z., Kóbor, K., & Tóth, P. (2023). *A szociális intézmények szolgáltatási/ellátási nehézségei, belső megoldási mechanizmusai és szükségletei – egy szakmatámogatási- és fejlesztési problématerkép alapvonalai* [Service and Provision Challenges, Internal Mechanisms, and Needs of Social Institutions – Baselines of a Professional Support and Development Problem Map]. *Párbeszéd: Szociális Munka folyóirat*

<sup>221</sup> Magyar Hang. (19 December 2024). *Egyes szociális intézményekben a szakdolgozók 30–50 százaléka hiányzik* [In Some Social Institutions, 30–50 Percent of Skilled Workers Are Missing]. Available at: <https://hang.hu/belfold/egyes-szocialis-intezmenyekben-a-szakdolgozok-30-50-szazaleka-hianyzik-170779>

Albert, F., & Szőke, A. (2023). *A szociális szolgáltatások területi egyenlőtlenségei és a hozzáférés problémái* [Territorial Inequalities and Access Issues in Social Services]. *Szociológiai Szemle*, 33(2), 4–28. Available at: <https://socio.hu/index.php/so/article/view/846/888>

Győri, Á., & Perpék, É. (2021). *Work Conditions and Burnout: An Exploratory Study Among Hungarian Workers in Family and Child Welfare, Child Protection and Pedagogical Professional Services*. *European Journal of Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2021.1997926>

<sup>222</sup> Meleg, S. (2023). *Az egyházi térnyerés dilemmái a szociális ágazatban* [Dilemmas of Ecclesiastical Expansion in the Social Sector]. *Párbeszéd: Szociális Munka folyóirat*, 10(Különszám). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.29376/parbeszed.2023.10/K/11>

G7. (14 May 2024). *Az egyházak finanszírozásában is megvan a kormányzati kétharmad* [Government's Two-Thirds Majority Also Evident in Church Financing]. Telex. Available at: <https://g7.hu/kozelet/20240514/az-egyhazi-finanszirozasaban-is-megvan-a-kormanyzati-ketharmad/>

<sup>223</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *25.1.1.32. A tartós bentlakásos és átmeneti elhelyezést nyújtó szociális intézményekben ellátottak fenntartók szerint* [Residents in Long-Term Residential and Temporary Social Care Institutions by Maintaining Authority]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0027.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0027.html)

<sup>224</sup> SzocOkos. (12 May 2023). *Nevelőszülők* [Foster Parents]. Available at: <https://tamogatoweb.hu/neveloszulok-2/>

<sup>225</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). *25.1.1.11. A család- és gyermekjóléti szolgáltatások* [Family and Child Welfare Services]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0012.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0012.html)

Herczog, M. (2025). *A gyermeki jogok érvényesítésének lehetőségei a gyermekjóléti alapellátások biztosítása során Magyarországon* [Opportunities for Enforcing Children's Rights in the Provision of Basic Child Welfare Services in Hungary]. *Fundamentum – Az emberi jogok folyóirata*, 29

cannot be said with certainty that these numbers have decreased.<sup>226</sup> The number of children taken into care has increased, reaching 31,379 on 31 December 2024.<sup>227</sup> Still, this figure alone would only be meaningful if there were any available information on the reasons for taking children into care and the services provided to children and families.

Comparing the data on those registered as receiving care or those required to receive care with the availability and professional quality of services, the situation has not improved. Furthermore, these data do not reflect the shortage of care, which further increases social workers' workload: there are not enough psychologists, psychiatrists, special education teachers, speech therapists, and other professionals available. According to estimates, there are currently 50-60 child psychiatrists practicing in the country, while international recommendations suggest that, ideally, three times as many, at least 180, would be needed for 1.8 million children.<sup>228</sup> Students are facing increasingly serious mental health challenges, with one in five children now affected, but school psychologists are few in number, overworked, working under challenging conditions, and many are considering leaving the profession.<sup>229</sup>

According to the NRSF, „the most spectacular expansion of basic care has taken place in the area of child protection, where more than two-thirds of the 23,000 children and young adults who have been removed from their families by official measures and are receiving aftercare now live with foster parents“.<sup>230</sup> It considers the increase in the number of Roma foster parents and the family-like nature of residential homes to be positive developments, but sees the increase in the number of 0-2-year-olds being placed in care, the shortage of staff in institutions and foster homes, and the frequent separation of siblings as problems.<sup>231</sup> The situation has deteriorated significantly since the NRSF was drafted. According to the data, there is a shortage of at least 600 professionals in children's homes and residential homes, which has led to the closure of a significant number of foster groups, residential homes, and children's home groups, and those currently operating are severely overcrowded. According to calculations, there is a shortage of at least 2,000 foster parents, and many of those currently working are overburdened and often do not care for the children adequately, with neither they nor the children receiving help or services.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>226</sup> Richardson, D., Harris, D., Mackinder, S., & Hudson, J. (2023). *Too little, too late: An assessment of public spending on children by age in 84 countries* (p. 44). UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/reports/too-little-too-late>

<sup>227</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). 25.1.1.12. *A gyermekjóléti szolgáltatások keretében ellátott gyermekek és fiatal felnőttek [Children and Young Adults Served Within Child Welfare Services]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0013.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0013.html)

<sup>228</sup> ElitMed. (17 October 2024). *Több hónapos várakozás a gyermekpszichiátriakon – Drámai a fiatalok mentális egészsége, pedig ma egyetlen gyermeköngyilkosságnak sem szabadna előfordulnia [Months-Long Waits in Child Psychiatry – Youth Mental Health in Crisis, and No Child Suicide Should Occur Today]*. Available at: <https://elitmed.hu/ilam/orvoslas-es-tarsadalom/tobb-honapos-varakozas-a-gyermekpszichiatriakon-dramai-a-fiatalok-mentalis-egeszsege-pedig-ma-egyetlen-gyermekongyilkossagnak-sem-szabadna-elofordulnia>

MedicalOnline. (10 February 2023). *Pillanatkép a magyar pszichiáterképzés helyzetéről [Snapshot of the State of Psychiatrist Training in Hungary]*. Available at: [https://medicalonline.hu/gyogyitas/cikk/pillanatkép\\_a\\_magyar\\_pszichiaterképzés\\_helyzeterol](https://medicalonline.hu/gyogyitas/cikk/pillanatkép_a_magyar_pszichiaterképzés_helyzeterol)

<sup>229</sup> ElitMed. (24 October 2024). *A magyar diákok egyre súlyosabb mentális kihívásokkal küzdenek – derül ki az UNICEF friss kutatásából [Hungarian Students Face Increasingly Severe Mental Health Challenges – According to UNICEF's Latest Research]*. Available at: <https://elitmed.hu/ilam/orvoslas-es-tarsadalom/a-magyar-diakok-egyre-sulyosabb-mentalis-kihivasokkal-kuzdenek-derul-ki-az-unicef-friss-kutatasabol>

<sup>230</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (p. 113). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabcd7b18b.pdf>

<sup>231</sup> Government of Hungary. (2024). *Nemzeti Roma Stratégiai Keret 2030 [National Roma Strategic Framework 2030]* (pp. 45-46). Available at: <https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/document/1/19/198/1989dd38d363c0498f09e05ae22e5aabcd7b18b.pdf>.

<sup>232</sup> Muhari, J. (19 December 2024). *Csak idén a gyermekvédelmi dolgozók egyharmada távozott a szakellátási intézményekből – A 793 gyermekotthoni csoport bő 10 százalékát összevonták vagy bezárták [This Year Alone, One-Third of Child Protection Workers Left Institutional Care – Over 10% of the 793 Residential Groups Were Merged or Closed]*. Népszava. Available at: [https://nepszava.hu/3262115\\_gyermekvedelem-szakellatasi-intezmenyek-dolgozok-tavozas-belugyminiszterium](https://nepszava.hu/3262115_gyermekvedelem-szakellatasi-intezmenyek-dolgozok-tavozas-belugyminiszterium)

According to the data, the number of children removed from their families has decreased, except for the 0-2 age group reported in the NRSF, despite the declining birth rate; however, this decrease is only apparent.<sup>233</sup> not to refer children because there is nowhere to place them. Since 2023, hundreds of newborns and infants have been stranded in hospitals each year, as they too cannot be placed.

The main reasons why children are placed in care are poverty and lack of services, this is mainly a punitive measure affecting Roma families – as has been confirmed by both research and the European Court of Human Rights.<sup>234</sup> There has been no meaningful data on the reasons for placement since 2015.<sup>235</sup> There are few foster parents, the requirement that children under 12 be placed exclusively with families has not been met, and more than 7,000 children live in children's homes.<sup>236</sup> There are many children who are permanently on the run, their number is estimated to be around 1,000, and the amended legislation allows new children to take their place.<sup>237</sup>

Thousands of abused and neglected children are not being identified or are waiting for placement because of the lack of space and a chronic shortage of professionals. Previous care facilities are also closing, local basic

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Sashegyi, Zs. (21 July 2025). *Mint a forró krumplit, úgy dobáljuk a gyerekeket – Először szólal meg egy befogadó otthon volt vezetője [We Toss Children Around Like Hot Potatoes – A Former Shelter Director Speaks Out for the First Time]*. Válasz Online.

Rozgonyi, Á. (6 October 2024). *Kevés a nevelőszülő, az örökbefogadás segítségével oldaná meg a helyzetet a kormány [Few Foster Parents – Government Proposes Adoption Support to Solve the Crisis]*. Infostart / Inforádió.

24.hu. (14 June 2025). *Pert nyertek a gyermekvédelmi gyámok – 70 millió forint túlórapérez jár nekik [Child Protection Guardians Win Lawsuit – 70 Million Forints in Overtime Pay Awarded]*. Available at: <https://24.hu/belfold/2025/06/14/pert-nyertek-a-gyermekvedelmi-gyamok-70-millio-forint-tulorapenz-jar-nekik/>

<sup>233</sup> Muhari, J. (19 December 2024). *Csak idén a gyermekvédelmi dolgozók egyharmada távozott a szakellátási intézményekből – A 793 gyermekotthoni csoport bő 10 százalékát összevonták vagy bezárták [This Year Alone, One-Third of Child Protection Workers Left Institutional Care – Over 10% of the 793 Residential Groups Were Merged or Closed]*. Népszava. Available at: [https://nepszava.hu/3262115\\_gyermekvedelem-szakellatasi-intezmenyek-dolgozok-tavozas-belugyminiszterium](https://nepszava.hu/3262115_gyermekvedelem-szakellatasi-intezmenyek-dolgozok-tavozas-belugyminiszterium)

<sup>234</sup> European Roma Rights Centre [ERRC]. (2024). *Written Comments by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (AC-FCNM) in Advance of the Delegation's State Visit to Hungary (2–6 December 2024)* (p. 12).

European Roma Rights Centre [ERRC]. (2025). *European Court Condemns Hungary for Removal of Romani Child from Family: Case of B.T. and B.K.CS. v Hungary, 458/16*. Available at: <https://www.economx.hu/belfold/korhazak-elhagyott-csecsemok-belugyminiszterium-informaciohiany.805045.html>

<sup>235</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). 25.1.1.42. *A gyermekvédelmi szakellátás keretében ellátott gyermekek és fiatal felnőttek [Children and Young Adults in Professional Child Protection Care]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0043.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0043.html)

Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). 25.1.1.12. *A gyermekjóléti szolgáltatások keretében ellátott gyermekek és fiatal felnőttek [Children and Young Adults Served Within Child Welfare Services]*. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0013.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0013.html)

UNICEF Magyarország. (2024). *A gyermekvédelmi rendszer kihívásai [Challenges of the Child Protection System]*.

<sup>236</sup> Rozgonyi, Á. (6 October 2024). *Kevés a nevelőszülő, az örökbefogadás segítségével oldaná meg a helyzetet a kormány [Few Foster Parents – Government Proposes Adoption Support to Solve the Crisis]*. Infostart / Inforádió.

<sup>237</sup> Muhari, J. (30 October 2025). *Törvényi szintre emelte az Orbán-kormány, hogy a „szökésben” lévő gyerekek helyére másokat helyezhetnek el a gyámhatóságok [Orbán Government Codifies That Guardianship Authorities May Replace “Runaway” Children with Others]*. Népszava. Available at: [https://nepszava.hu/3263535\\_gyermekvedelem-szokesben-levo-fiatalok-gyamhatosag-gyermekelhelyezes-hende-csaba-torvenymodositas](https://nepszava.hu/3263535_gyermekvedelem-szokesben-levo-fiatalok-gyamhatosag-gyermekelhelyezes-hende-csaba-torvenymodositas)

Hungarian National Legislation Database [Nemzeti Jogszabálytár]. (2025). *2025. évi III. törvény a gyülekezési jogról szóló 2018. évi LV. törvénynek a gyermekek védelmével összefüggő, valamint az ehhez kapcsolódó törvények módosításáról [Act III of 2025 on Amendments to the Right of Assembly Act and Related Child Protection Legislation]*. Available at: <https://njt.hu/jogszabaly/2025-3-00-00>

care is poor and inadequate, and in an increasing number of cases, the identification and treatment of children at risk is lacking, according to an interview with a former manager of a foster home.<sup>238</sup>

### 2.8.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

There have been many worrying changes to the law in recent years. Some of them check if child protection workers are fit for the job, using inappropriate methods. Instead of prevention and meaningful victim support, restrictions have been introduced that humiliate the professionals and foster parents concerned, but are not suitable for screening out those who pose a threat.<sup>239</sup>

Other rules aim to make it easier to remove unborn babies from their families - the guardianship authority is expanded to include determining the non-returnability of unborn children. (Until now, child protection services could only make decisions about babies who had already been born).<sup>240</sup> According to the Civil Coalition for Children's Rights, which brings together the most prestigious civil society organisations working in the field of child protection, „the laws that have been passed still do not provide the services necessary to prevent and solve child welfare and child protection problems, the necessary number of professionals and their training, or the resources necessary for the proper functioning of the child protection system“.<sup>241,242</sup>

## 2.9. Promoting (awareness of) Roma arts, culture, and history

The 2022 RCM report identified eight problems concerning the social representation of Roma culture, language, and identity. These are: (1) the absence of Roma culture and history in the national cultural institutional system; (2) the lack of a permanent Roma museum, cultural centre, and research institute; (3) the weak status and symbolic support of the Romani and Beás<sup>243</sup> languages; (4) the project-based, fragmented nature of cultural programmes; (5) the lack of impact assessment and community participation; (6) the isolated, non-structural treatment of identity; (7) the volume and accessibility of programmes not being proportional to the size of the Roma community; and (8) the lack of interventions aimed at social acceptance.

### 2.9.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

In terms of incorporating Roma culture and history into the national cultural institutional system, the most significant step forward during the period under review was the opening of the István Szentandrassy Contemporary Roma Gallery, which provides a professional exhibition space for Roma artists, thereby increasing the social visibility of contemporary Roma art. Although the NRSF sets the goal of supporting Roma culture, no mechanism has been created to ensure its structural presence in the national cultural institutional system.

No significant progress has been made in establishing a Roma museum, cultural centre, or research institute. The plan for the Cziffra Centre on Tavaszmező Street in Budapest, which could have been a comprehensive arts, science, and community institution, has not been realised. In fact, the eviction of one of the oldest Roma civil society organisations, the Roma Parliament, from the building has caused damage to the process. The building has remained unused ever since, and the NRSF does not contain any specific measures to secure

<sup>238</sup> Vaskuti, G. (2 April 2025). *Mire lenne szüksége a hazai gyermekvédelemnek valójában?* [What Does Hungarian Child Protection Really Need?]. WMN. Available at: <https://wmn.hu/cikk/64569/>

<sup>239</sup> Kassai, Zs. (20 June 2025). „Éjszaka nyílnak meg a lányok” – döbbenetes részletek a Szőlő utcai javítóintézet letartóztatott igazgatójáról [“The Girls Open Up at Night” – Shocking Details About the Arrested Director of the Szőlő Street Correctional Facility]. 24.hu. Available at: <https://24.hu/belfold/2025/06/20/szolo-utcai-javitointezet-visszaeles-gyermekvedelem-kormany/>

<sup>240</sup> Népszava. (30 October 2025). *Ma ismét módosul a gyermekvédelmi törvény – Könnyebben mondhatják majd egy családra, hogy alkalmatlan a gyermeknevelésre* [Child Protection Law Changes Again – Families May Be Declared Unfit More Easily]. Available at: [https://nepszava.hu/3285654\\_ma-ismet-modosul-a-gyermekvedelmi-torveny-konnyebben-mondhatjak-majd-egy-csaladra-hogy-alkalmatlan-a-gyermeknevelésre](https://nepszava.hu/3285654_ma-ismet-modosul-a-gyermekvedelmi-torveny-konnyebben-mondhatjak-majd-egy-csaladra-hogy-alkalmatlan-a-gyermeknevelésre)

<sup>241</sup> Gyermekjogi Civil Koalíció. (2024). *Állásfoglalás a gyermekek valós védelméről a 2024. évi XXIX. és a 2024. évi XXX. törvények alapján* [Position Paper on the Real Protection of Children Based on Acts XXIX and XXX of 2024].

<sup>242</sup> Gyermekjogi Civil Koalíció. (2024). *„Mit kíván a magyar gyermekvédelem” – Javaslatok 40 pontban a gyermekvédelmi rendszer megújításáról* [“What Hungarian Child Protection Needs” – 40 Recommendations for System Reform].

<sup>243</sup> The Beas or Boyash is an archaic dialect of Romanian spoken by the Beas/Boyash Roma, the second-largest Roma community that uses its native language.

another location or establish the institution. This is particularly problematic as representatives and experts of Roma communities have been demanding the establishment of a complex cultural institution for decades.

Regarding strengthening the social status of the Romani and Beás languages, the NRSF mentions the preservation of linguistic diversity as an objective. However, support is mainly limited to project-based, extracurricular, or research initiatives and has not increased the prestige, educational integration, or administrative use of these languages. The NRSF does not include comprehensive educational policies or cultural interventions to ensure the intergenerational transmission and social use of the Romani and Beás languages.

At the same time, there are undoubtedly attempts to increase the number of ethnic minority teachers: in cooperation with the national self-government of Roma in Hungary, students participating in training in this field receive scholarships,<sup>244</sup> and a call for proposals has also been issued for higher education institutions and National Self-Governments for the further training of Roma nationality teachers.<sup>245</sup> However, the total budget is only 10 million HUF (25,000 EUR), and 4-12 winners are expected. The breakthrough has not materialised - a 2023 study on ethnic education showed that fewer than 1,500 people studied the Roma or Beás languages in Hungary,<sup>246</sup> which is almost invisible compared to the Roma population of 800,000.

Cultural programmes remain project-based and fragmented. Support for the cultural programmes of Roma organisations has continued (with a budget of 210 million HUF, or 0.5 million EUR in 2025),<sup>247</sup> but only in the form of small-scale, short-term grants that do not fit into either a long-term cultural development strategy or match the actual size of the Roma community. The state cultural support system remains relatively inaccessible to Roma civil society and community actors, with grants of 1-2 million HUF (2,500-5,000 EUR) not providing them with stability or institutional capacity-building.

The government decree highlights the support of Roma theatres. Although there were no separate funding sources for Roma theatres, during the period under review, the Czinka Panna Roma Theatre Foundation received between 800,000 HUF and 1.2 million HUF (between 2,000 EUR and 3,000 EUR) each year for its annual operations through the Roma National Cultural Initiatives Programme.<sup>248</sup>

Roma identity continues to be presented separately within the NRSF's logic, mainly in a folkloric or cultural context. No progress has been made in integrating Roma cultural identity into other sectoral public policies, such as education, media policy, urban policy, or memory policy systems. The lack of an intersectoral approach limits the social integration of Roma culture and further reinforces its enclave nature.

A further problem is that the volume and accessibility of cultural programmes are not proportional to the Roma community's national presence. Most supported programmes are implemented in Budapest or county seat centres. Although there are smaller, programme-based subsidies that also reach people living in small municipalities, these tend to be ad hoc, one-off projects, typically events such as 'Roma Day'.<sup>249</sup> The NRSF does not include principles relating to regional coverage, target group specificity, or proportionality.

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<sup>244</sup> Országos Roma Önkormányzat. (2024). *Felhívás a Roma/Cigány Nemzetiségi Pedagógus Tanulmányi Ösztöndíjra a 2024/2025-ös tanévre* [Call for Applications: Roma National Minority Pedagogical Study Scholarship for the 2024/2025 Academic Year]. Available at: [https://umz.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/nop\\_felhivas\\_roma\\_2024-25.pdf](https://umz.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/nop_felhivas_roma_2024-25.pdf)

<sup>245</sup> Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság. (2025). *Pályázati kiírás: Roma nemzetiségi pedagógus-továbbképzések 2025. évi költségvetési támogatására (ROMA-NEMZ-PED-25)* [Call for Proposals: Roma Minority Teacher Training Grants for 2025]. Available at: <https://tesztgef.gov.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Palyazati-kiiras-ROMA-NEMZ-PED-25.pdf>

<sup>246</sup> Kállai, E. (2023). *Nemzetiségi oktatás a magyar iskolarendszerben* [Minority Education in the Hungarian School System]. *REGIO: Kisebbség, Kultúra, Politika, Társadalom*, 31(1), 5–30. Available at: <https://real.mtak.hu/172456/>

<sup>247</sup> Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság. (2025). *Roma nemzetiségi pályázatok – információs oldal* [Roma Minority Grant Portal]. Available at: <https://tef.gov.hu/roma-nemzetisegi-palyazatok/>

<sup>248</sup> Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság. (2025). *ROMA-NEMZ-KUL-25 döntési lista* [Decision List for ROMA-NEMZ-KUL-25 Grants]. Available at: [https://tef.gov.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/ROMA-NEMZ-KUL-25\\_Dontesi\\_lista.pdf](https://tef.gov.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/ROMA-NEMZ-KUL-25_Dontesi_lista.pdf)

<sup>249</sup> Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság. (2025). *Pályázati kiírás: Roma nemzetiségi kulturális programok 2025. évi támogatására (ROMA-NEMZ-KUL-25)* [Call for Proposals: Roma Minority Cultural Programs 2025]. Available at: <https://tef.gov.hu/palyazati-kiiras-roma-nemz-kul-25/>

Although the NRSF aims to increase social acceptance, no attitude-shaping programmes targeting the majority society were launched during the period under review. There were no campaigns or structured cultural dialogue programmes that could have promoted greater social acceptance of Roma culture. At most, only symbolic steps were taken regarding Roma cultural rights and representation. The gap between the strategic objectives and the actual measures remains significant. Most of the structural problems identified earlier remain unchanged.

### 2.9.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

No state programme or long-term civil cooperation was launched during the period under review that would have systematically remedied the lack of national institutional presence of Roma culture. Public collections, theatres, archives, and memory policy institutions have not yet engaged in comprehensive cooperation with Roma communities, artists, or heritage preservation experts. The inclusion of Roma cultural content in mainstream institutional practice continues to rely on marginal, underfunded civil initiatives and is not part of a structured government policy.

There is still no permanent academic centre or cultural collection in Hungary that ensures the historical representation of Roma. This absence is one of the most significant obstacles to the Roma community's autonomy in self-representation. No initiatives have been launched in the areas of memory politics, education, media policy, or urban policy that would structurally integrate Roma culture and history. However, some progress has been made regarding the Roma content in state textbooks and teaching materials. Due to a lack of research, the extent of these changes is unknown, as is the extent to which experts were involved in the process. Cultural heritage is not represented in public spaces, local history exhibitions, or architectural reconstructions, neither in Budapest nor in the countryside. The Roma presence in urban spaces remains invisible.

State programmes aimed at shaping social attitudes have not been launched outside of the NRSF.<sup>250</sup> According to TEF data, the budget allocated 860 million HUF (2.15 million EUR) to Roma cultural projects in 2025. However, these funds were sporadic and primarily used to finance local events. Awareness-raising programmes run by the civil sector typically lack resources and have low coverage. As a result, the objectives of strengthening social dialogue and reducing prejudice have not achieved meaningful results.

Roma civil society and community actors not affiliated with the ruling party have remained marginalised. There is no support system in place to help organisations dealing with Roma culture achieve sustainability, strategic operation, or professional autonomy. The principles of partnership and participation are therefore not being implemented outside the NRSF either. Overall, no systemic State development or initiative has occurred outside the NRSF framework that would have significantly improved Roma cultural representation, language rights, or social acceptance.

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<sup>250</sup> Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Főigazgatóság. (2025). *Roma nemzetiségi pályázatok – információs oldal* [Roma Minority Grant Portal]. Available at: <https://tef.gov.hu/roma-nemzetiseqi-palyazatok/>

### 3. FOCUS ON KEY PROBLEMS AFFECTING ROMA

#### 3.1. Segregation of Roma children in schools

One of the most powerful forms of exclusion of Roma in Hungary is segregation in schools. In section 2.2 of this report, we describe in detail how segregation is reinforced by the flight of the middle class and how the spread of church schools contributes to the perpetuation of segregation. As the case study shows, this is done with the tacit approval of local Roma organisations in some cases due to political loyalty constraints.

*Case study: School segregation in a multi-school community – political support for segregation through the maintenance of church schools<sup>251</sup>*

The population of this town in northern Hungary is approximately 6,000, of which about 1,800 are Roma. The Roma population lives mainly in three segregated areas, which differ in terms of material and cultural conditions. There are few jobs in the town for the Roma population, who are mainly unskilled and have a low level of education. The largest employers are the municipalities operating local public employment programmes and local farmers, who mostly employ seasonal workers. The construction industry is also active, and many workers commute weekly, mainly performing semi-skilled work. In recent years, the drug abuse problem has become increasingly severe, and dealing with it has exceeded the capacity of the local leadership.

There are three kindergartens and two elementary schools in the town. Eight years ago, one of the elementary schools came under church administration and now only accepts a small number of Roma children from well-off families. Non-Roma children from the surrounding area also attend this school. This school provides an opportunity for 'white flight', i.e. for the children of non-Roma parents to avoid contact with children from the Roma community. Only one class starts each year in the segregated public school, while the church school has roughly twice as many students. Non-Roma parents are satisfied with the quality of education, as the church school provides a higher standard of education, and the basic skills of the children who graduate from it are better than those of the children attending the Roma school. The educational work carried out in the Roma school cannot fully compensate for the socio-cultural disadvantages of Roma children.

Roma parents show considerable dissatisfaction, as they see that after completing the segregated elementary school, their children struggle to succeed in vocational education and have little prospect of continuing to higher levels of study. Children are often exposed to abuse at school, although in many cases, Roma children themselves are the perpetrators in such situations. However, it is also true that Roma parents fear integrated education because of the possible 'contempt' and exclusion they may face from non-Roma children.

A part of the non-Roma residents of the settlement has also expressed a desire to consider desegregation. Still, the process has not been initiated due to fears of expected short-term conflicts. The local government has recognised the tension between the Roma and non-Roma communities and launched a three-year series of actions as part of a TOP Programme, which, however, meets the requirements of the grant rather than local needs. But the local government is open to fine-tuning the measures.

The role of the church school is particularly significant in maintaining the status quo. The school's operator, the local leader of the Hungarian Reformed Church, has contact only with the town's leader and the church leadership, and is accountable only to the latter for the school's operation. They make no secret of their segregationist practices and do not fear any resistance or attacks that could jeopardise their position. It should be noted that segregation does not pose any financial difficulties for the school: it receives the additional church subsidy regardless of whether it segregates or not.

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<sup>251</sup> The case study is based on fieldwork conducted by the Autonomia Foundation (Tibor Béres) in a town in northern Hungary in 2024-2025 as part of a TOP+ Programme. In the meantime (August 2025), the Deputy Ombudsman for Nationalities ordered an investigation into the matter, with the overall aim of uncovering the segregating practices of church schools. The case study is linked to the desegregation action plan prepared by the Autonomia Foundation for the town's leadership. In preparation for this, several consultations were held with local Roma leaders (three people), local Roma parents, group interviews (ten people), and town and institutional leaders (six people).

The segregation in the town is so obvious that legal advocacy organisations are already paying close attention to it, having previously acted in other cases that attracted national attention (e.g., Nyíregyháza,<sup>252</sup> Gyöngyöspata<sup>253</sup>). Although the legal successes are unquestionable, they have not led to significant changes in ending segregation. The local government tries to avoid conflicts, but it is not directly responsible for maintaining institutions, and a significant part of the population, including voters, supports the existing segregation. They aim to minimise political risks to prevent the issue from generating political upheaval.

The current situation reflects a 'calm before the storm', with the parties sizing each other up. Legal advocates are trying to achieve results through negotiation, as confrontation that provokes social rejection is not their goal either. The municipal leadership believes that the church responsible for maintenance should handle the situation, trusting in its political embeddedness, which provides it protection.

Several Roma leaders are active in the municipality who are part of Government-supported programmes (and receive remuneration for their participation in various programmes). Their loyalty to the Government's Roma policy is so strong that they do not reflect on the issue of segregation. They do not hide their allegiance, as they actively participate in political campaigns alongside the ruling party. Local leaders also do not take a proactive stance, partly because of local voters' will and partly because of the church's political role. In other words, the church's support means political protection for segregationist practices.

### 3.1.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

Educational segregation is an issue in which the dysfunction of the NRSF and the conflict between practice and the principles it sets out are evident: the NRSF explicitly mentions educational segregation as one of the primary sources of disadvantage affecting Roma students. It aims to promote inclusive, integrated education and emphasises the need to reduce institutional segregation between Roma and non-Roma students. It also sets out clear expectations:

- Legal compliance: it refers to the Equal Treatment Act, which prohibits discrimination in education.
- Development of desegregation programmes: local Governments and school operators are required to develop desegregation plans.
- Responsibility of school operators: state, local Government, and church operators are expected to ensure that classes are mixed.
- Monitoring and sanctions: monitoring the composition of school populations and, if necessary, intervening with financial measures (e.g., reducing funding).

Nevertheless, the case study also shows that local segregation often has a political background and that politicians and churches with close ties to the government are actively involved in maintaining it. The planned reduction in funding will not affect churches much, as they already receive higher levels of funding, and it is likely that non-Roma parents would be willing to compensate for the 10% reduction in exchange for their children not having to attend classes with Roma students. Not only is there a lack of practical implementation of the principles laid down in the NRSF, but the practice of segregation is becoming increasingly widespread.

### 3.1.2. Synergy with other actions

In the absence of effective measures to eliminate segregation, the rise of church schools and the general flight of the middle class are reinforcing segregation. Paradoxically, we can speak of an inverse synergy - an adverse effect: since no meaningful steps have been taken in Hungary to combat segregation, the EU is withholding funds for educational development to bring about change. At the same time, these funds are also lacking in other areas of integration.

### 3.1.3. Roma participation

Roma participation in discussions on educational segregation has declined significantly in recent years. On the one hand, with the nationalisation of schools, conflicts related to schools, such as educational segregation, are much less likely to be fought locally. The gradual weakening of civil and institutional legal protection makes

<sup>252</sup> Kegye, A. (2015). *Áldott szegregáció [Blessed Segregation]*. *Fundamentum*, 2015(1), 75-85. Available at: [https://epa.oszk.hu/02300/02334/00067/pdf/EPA02334\\_fundamentum\\_2015\\_01\\_075-085.pdf](https://epa.oszk.hu/02300/02334/00067/pdf/EPA02334_fundamentum_2015_01_075-085.pdf)

<sup>253</sup> Index.hu. (16 October 2018). *Gyöngyöspata: Iskolai szegregáció, oktatás, szegénység [Gyöngyöspata: School Segregation, Education, Poverty]*. Available at: [https://index.hu/belfold/2018/10/16/abcug\\_gyongyospata\\_iskolai\\_szegregacio\\_oktatas\\_szeqenyseg/](https://index.hu/belfold/2018/10/16/abcug_gyongyospata_iskolai_szegregacio_oktatas_szeqenyseg/)

this even more difficult (see Chapter 1). However, it is not only these factors that have an influence, but also local conditions and vulnerabilities, as demonstrated by the case study.

In the case study, we illustrate the delicate role of (Roma) legal protection organisations. While segregation is clearly present in the community presented, and it is also clear – even to local Roma parents – that segregated education has a negative impact on further education and labour market opportunities, there is no unanimous support for clear action against segregation, not even among Roma.

There are several reasons for this:

- Roma rights advocates are considered ‘outsiders’ not only by the local non-Roma establishment, but also by local Roma leaders. The latter are more inclined to support the maintenance of segregation, which is harmful to local Roma, than to confront the authorities, national Roma leaders, and the local representative of the ruling political party. Although they have no ties to the church that runs the school (the local Roma do not belong to this denomination), the Roma know that they cannot confront it because of the church’s strong political ties.
- As we have written, most of the local Roma do not necessarily want their children to be exposed to sudden desegregation because they fear interaction with non-Roma children.<sup>254</sup> The idea that there could be pedagogical tools and methods to deal with this does not even occur to them, as there is currently no intention to do so.
- Even if the majority of Roma parents could be persuaded about desegregation, it is doubtful that the current institutional system, funding, number of teachers, and their level of preparation would give hope for the successful implementation of such a programme. Thus, maintaining the current status quo – except for a few local Roma parents – seems to be more of a general local interest than a situation that local actors could be persuaded to change.

It cannot, therefore, be expected that local Roma parents alone will resolve such conflicts. Change would require simultaneous systemic change (education policy, education organisation, a political attitude that promotes general social acceptance), which would require the active involvement of Roma politicians who are influential in national Roma policy and who currently openly or tacitly accept segregated education, as well as convincing the local community that changing the situation is in the long-term interest of the community as a whole. This would also require the Roma community’s willingness to end segregation.

### 3.2. Social exclusion, spatial segregation, and inequalities in access to services

The close interconnection between spatial and social exclusion and its consequences is well known.<sup>255</sup> In Hungary, there are significant inequalities between regions and types of municipalities, as well as a high degree of residential and spatial segregation. Social problems are concentrated and accumulate in the country’s marginalised regions, disadvantaged small villages, and urban segregated areas, which are largely ghettoised, and there are serious deficiencies in services and infrastructure. Taken together, these deficiencies lead to the multidimensional exclusion of the people living there. Most of the Roma population in Hungary lives in such areas, in a segregated environment that represents severe physical/spatial and social exclusion, where public utilities are lacking or only partially available (no running water or clean drinking water, electricity, sewage, waste collection). The residential segregation of the Roma population in Hungary is one of the most severe among EU member states.<sup>256</sup> The majority of Roma lives in disadvantaged regions where it is difficult to find

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<sup>254</sup> Group interview, November 2024

<sup>255</sup> Váradi, B., & Virág, T. (2015). *A szegregáció újratermelődése a közoktatásban [The Reproduction of Segregation in Public Education]*. In C. Dupcsik & O. J. Tóth (Eds.), *Társadalmi integráció a mai Magyarországon* (pp. 147–172). Budapest: MTA TK Szociológiai Intézet. Available at: [https://real.mtak.hu/37501/1/varadi\\_virag\\_2015\\_1\\_89\\_113\\_oldal\\_1.pdf](https://real.mtak.hu/37501/1/varadi_virag_2015_1_89_113_oldal_1.pdf)

<sup>256</sup> Országgyűlés Hivatala. (February 2023). *Infojegyzet – A szociális ellátórendszer aktuális kihívásai [Information Brief – Current Challenges in the Social Welfare System]*. Budapest: Országgyűlés Hivatala.

Európai Bizottság. (2020). *Roma inclusion measures in the EU: Progress report 2020*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/roma-inclusion-progress-report-2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/roma-inclusion-progress-report-2020_en)

doctors, teachers, and social workers. In these areas, the shortcomings of public service systems are even more pronounced, which, as we will see in the case study, can lead to lasting exclusion, even within a single city. There is already a significant shortage of professionals and capacity in disadvantaged areas:

In summer 2025, 22% of GP practices nationwide will be unfilled and covered by substitutes,<sup>257</sup> resulting in poorer primary care.<sup>258</sup> The health visitor system is struggling with severe resource shortages (7% of districts are unfilled),<sup>259</sup> and approximately the same number of districts are covered by substitutes. There is a nationwide shortage of 16,000 teachers, which is particularly noticeable in smaller towns.<sup>260</sup> The more disadvantaged an area is, the more likely it is to have a shortage of professionals.<sup>261</sup>

Such institutional conditions should be addressed to tackle high poverty risk and housing poverty; the inadequacy of income replacement and support programmes; the deterioration in the quality and security of the welfare system; and the exclusion of marginalised groups from family support and housing policy measures. This is further reinforced by discrimination against Roma in areas ranging from hospital care to the labour market and segregated education.

#### *Case study: Excluded on the outskirts of the city*

The segregated area is located on the outskirts of a county-level city in northern Hungary. The traditional Roma settlement of about 300 people (approx. 70 households) is an example of the serious inequalities within certain cities, the intertwining of spatial and social exclusion, and how Roma communities are excluded in a larger city, both socially and physically. 40% of people living here live in income poverty; nearly 1/5 of households lack a functioning bathroom and/or flush toilet; more than 1/10 lack running water; and 8% have had their water supply cut off due to unpaid bills. 35% of the working-age population lives on casual work, and two-thirds of young people aged 18-24 are early school leavers; because of ghettoisation, drugs and littered, neglected environments are serious problems.<sup>262</sup> Social disadvantages are greatly reinforced and perpetuated by spatial and physical exclusion and segregation; upward social mobility is rare (and is almost only possible with the continuous intervention of a local civil society). Health visitors, social workers, and child welfare workers rarely or never visit the settlement (or do so almost exclusively in an official capacity, in cases of removal from the family); no preventive activities are carried out.<sup>263</sup> Compared to other parts of the city, these basic services are not available or are only available to a limited extent, and are accompanied by controlling and discriminatory practices. Access to public services is made difficult by the costly and complicated journey to the city centre.

Európai Bizottság. (2019). *Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/evaluation-eu-framework-national-roma-integration-strategies-2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/evaluation-eu-framework-national-roma-integration-strategies-2020_en)

<sup>257</sup> Országos Kórházi Főigazgatóság. (2024). *Tájékoztató a tartósan betöltetlen háziorvosi körzetekről [Briefing on Permanently Vacant General Practitioner Districts]*. Available at: <https://alapellatas.okfo.gov.hu/tajekoztato-a-tartosan-betoltetlen-haziorvosi-korzetekrol/>

<sup>258</sup> Bíró, A., & Elek, P. (2019). *The Effect of Primary Care Availability on Antibiotic Consumption in Hungary: A Population-Based Panel Study Using Unfilled General Practices*. *BMJ Open*, 9(9), e028233. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-028233>

<sup>259</sup> Koós, A. (12 February 2024). *Aggódhatnak a kisgyermekesek, várandósok? Rengeteg magyar ellátása válhat bizonytalaná [Should Young Families and Expectant Mothers Be Worried? Many Hungarians Face Uncertain Access to Care]*. *Pénzcentrum*. Available at: <https://www.penzcentrum.hu/egeszseg/20240212/aggodhatnak-a-kisgyermekesek-varandosok-rengeteg-magyar-ellatasa-valhat-bizonytalan-na-1146875>

<sup>260</sup> Szapáry, Gy., Asztalos, P., Kiss, D. M., Marmoly, N., & Szalai, Á. (2024). *A pedagógushány fenntartható megoldásáról [Sustainable Solutions to the Teacher Shortage]*. *Magyar Közgazdasági Társaság*. Available at: <https://mkt.hu/hu/2024/06/25/a-pedagogushiany-fenntarthato-megoldasarol/>

<sup>261</sup> Daróczy, G. (Ed.). (2024). *A romák közszolgáltatásokhoz való hozzáférése Magyarországon II [Public Service Access by Roma in Hungary II]*. *Phiren Amenca*. Available at: <https://phirenamenca.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/A-romak-kozszoigaltatasokhoz-valo-hozzaferese-Magyarorszag-2024.pdf>

<sup>262</sup> Questionnaire-based data collection in the segregated community (June-July 2024; 53 households were included in the sample).

<sup>263</sup> Interview with the leader of a civil society organisation that has been present in the settlement for decades (July 2025).

Most of the children from the settlement attend segregated kindergartens located in housing estates on the outskirts of the city (but further away from the segregated area). Most schoolchildren do not attend the local elementary school in the suburban area bordering the settlement but are sent to two segregated schools farther away in the city. In this high-quality school, primarily attended by children from suburban and urban middle-class families, even though it is the district school for the settlement, relatively few Roma children study (at most one or two per class), and they are admitted to the school's secondary education programme only rarely. The reasons for this are complex, but the hidden selection mechanisms of the school and its teachers, as well as the lack of support programmes (apart from the civil society organisation present), play a significant role.<sup>264</sup> In the absence of central government/local government intervention, a local civil society organisation is attempting to address systemic problems (primarily by focusing on helping children with their studies).

No infrastructure developments took place in the settlement from the mid-1950s until 2006; between 2006 and 2008, the physical rehabilitation of the settlement was partially implemented with EU funds (ROP). Members of the settlement community actively participated in the rehabilitation process and the preceding advocacy work, with the support of the civil society organisation, and they even established their own formal organisation for this purpose.

Since then, no progress has been made in terms of the physical environment, infrastructure, or the provision of public services. The local government does not consider the segregated area to need development or service provision; only the police presence has been increased (with little result so far).

### 3.2.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

The NRSF promises complex social urban rehabilitation measures in cities, including, if necessary, the elimination of Roma neighbourhoods separated from the city. The EFOP Programme provided 3.1 billion HUF (7.75 million EUR) in funding, which, according to the governmental report, was used to implement programmes to eliminate segregated living conditions in 95 municipalities. According to the governmental report, the living conditions of more than 3,000 families in 125 segregated areas of the country improved, and 287 new apartments were built and 375 renovated. However, according to the 2022 report of the Prime Minister's Office, the desegregation effects of the interventions are not measurable.<sup>265</sup>

In 2023, Hungary spent 16.6% of its GDP on social protection, a decrease of nearly 20% over the previous decade. The adequacy of social security has deteriorated, and the poverty-reducing effect of social transfers has eroded. In the most disadvantaged districts, more than half of 0-17-year-olds live in income poverty.<sup>266</sup> 42% of Roma live in income poverty, and 47% live in severe material and social deprivation.<sup>267</sup>

There is a significant shortage of professionals in social care in peripheral areas, which is typically addressed through local integration programmes. However, this can only remedy the shortage of professionals for short periods of time. The systemic problems characteristic of the sector (lack of capacity, shortage of professionals, low wages and social prestige, insufficient quantity, and quality of services) have a particularly severe impact

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<sup>264</sup> Interview with the leader of the civil society organisation (2025). Focus groups with the children and parents concerned (2024).

<sup>265</sup> Teller, N., et al. (2022). *School Segregation, Student Achievement, and Educational Attainment in Hungary: Evidence from Administrative Data*. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00207152231198434>

<sup>266</sup> According to data collected in 2023 in the five most disadvantaged districts (to be developed with a complex programme), the income poverty rate among 0-17-year-olds was 59% (compared to the national average of 14%).

Bass, L., Darvas, Á., & Farkas, Z. (2025). *Income Poverty and Child Vulnerability in Hungary's Most Disadvantaged Districts* [Manuscript in preparation].

<sup>267</sup> Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). 5.1.1.4. *A gyermekes háztartások jövedelmi szegénységi aránya* [Income Poverty Rate of Households with Children]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0054.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0054.html)

Hungarian Central Statistical Office [Központi Statisztikai Hivatal]. (n.d.). 5.1.1.5. *A gyermekes háztartások jövedelmi szegénységi aránya régió szerint* [Income Poverty Rate of Households with Children by Region]. Available at: [https://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_files/szo/hu/szo0055.html](https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/szo/hu/szo0055.html)

on small settlements and disadvantaged areas, inhabited mainly by Roma. Regional differences in services are „linked to regional and local disadvantages and the regional concentration of complex social problems“.<sup>268</sup> In healthcare, there have been no or hardly any interventions: the mobile screening programme has only been launched to a limited extent; there have been no organised interventions specifically targeting the pregnancies of disadvantaged women, and there have been setbacks in the transformation of the health visitor system. In disadvantaged small settlements, the FETE Programme is the Government’s primary tool for service development. The programme was implemented in 238 municipalities in 2024 and is expected to reach its target of 300 in 2025, covering less than one-tenth of Hungarian settlements, thus having no impact on systemic national deficiencies. The programme targets the settlement level, while service organisation and the provision of quality public services would often require intervention at the county level.

Of the approximately 1,300 segregated areas, complex programmes have been implemented in 126 of them across 95 municipalities,<sup>269</sup> but these are too small in scale, both individually (at the local level) and collectively (at the national level), to bring about real change. Meanwhile, residential segregation is evident in the country’s peripheral areas and urban agglomerations. The lack of residential mobility also determines the very low level of social mobility, and these are all problems that need practical solutions. Neither anti-segregation programmes nor FETE can make any real difference to these living conditions.

Along with service deficiencies and spatial segregation, widespread discriminatory practices also worsen exclusion. The NRSF does not address the latter either; regarding anti-Roma sentiment and anti-discrimination measures, the government names ‘mutual awareness-raising’ and familiarisation with Roma culture as tools. The legal protection provided by authorities and civil society organisations has also weakened further (see the chapter on anti-Roma sentiment and discrimination).

### 3.2.2. Synergy with other actions

In the case of social and child welfare services, there is a lack of a sectoral strategy that would define complex development needs in a coordinated manner, focusing, among other things, on areas and settlements with a shortage of services. Although the FETE Programme is implementing significant developments at the local level and is at least temporarily alleviating the severe shortage of services, in the absence of such synergies, it does not address the systemic problems and shortcomings of public services. It thus does not contribute to their long-term sustainable development. It is worth noting that, since 2018, any infrastructural development in segregated areas must be accompanied by a human development project. At the same time, due to the nature of project financing, these can only operate in a fragmented and isolated manner and are not suitable for continuous provision and development, as local Governments are the implementers, but service organisation is predominantly carried out at the county level.

### 3.2.3. Roma participation

Most programme elements of the FETE Programme are ‘ready-made’ upon arrival in the municipality, with Roma communities having little or no involvement in their development. Roma organisations or communities are not involved in any way in the development of social/child welfare, health services, the identification of local public service development needs, or the planning of developments. Concerning housing programmes, it can be concluded that they are not involved in the planning, operational implementation, or monitoring of the programmes.<sup>270</sup> As shown in the case study, the active involvement and participation of the Roma concerned in various initiatives can be achieved at the local level (in individual marginalised communities). Due to their lack of information, knowledge, resources, and networks, and their vulnerability, i.e. their multidimensional exclusion, marginalised Roma communities are typically unable to assert their interests without external intervention and support processes effectively.

## 3.3. Limited participation of civil society in policymaking

In Hungary, civil society participation in policymaking is formally guaranteed (e.g. through consultation forums, monitoring committees, and partnership platforms). In practice, however, the role of civil society organisations

<sup>268</sup> Kopint-TÁRKI Zrt. (2022). *Economic Trends 2022/3 Report on Eastern Europe and Hungary* (p. 14). Available at: <https://kopint-tarki.hu/en/economic-trends-2022-2-report-on-eastern-europe-and-hungary-out/>

<sup>269</sup> State Secretariat for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations. (2025). *Public Statements and Programme Briefings*. See: <https://hungarytoday.hu/roma-culture-and-community-celebrated-with-awards-ceremony/>

<sup>270</sup> Based on an interview with István Ába Horváth, President of ORÖ, 23 June 2025

is often limited - decision-making processes are typically top-down, and opportunities for professional dialogue and real influence are severely limited. Participation is further hampered by the limited capacity and political exposure of organisations, as well as the politicisation of the civil sphere and the silencing of critical organisations through planned changes to the regulatory environment. As a result, civil society's influence on policy is often more formal than real.

*Case study: The role of civil society organisations in EU funds' monitoring committees*

In the 2021-2027 programming period, in line with EU law, independent civil society organisations can participate in the monitoring committees for individual operational programmes (a return to the practice that existed before 2013). Committee members delegated by civil society organisations receive remuneration and participate in meetings with voting rights. Regarding the composition of the committees, it is generally felt that the 50% government and 50% civil society membership ratio stipulated in the regulation does not mean that the civil society side consists only of truly independent organisations with policy intentions that are willing to speak out in what is often a formal and sometimes even hostile official atmosphere. The 'civil society' side usually includes organisations that are loyal to the government and do not express their views on the merits of the issues, such as associations and bodies that are formally considered civil society organisations or that represent the interests of specific sectors, employers, or entrepreneurs, but which are in fact dependent on the Government. In many cases, they have a fundamental financial interest in ensuring that calls for proposals are published as soon as possible and operate continuously, regardless of whether they may raise fundamental rights objections.

Several legal defence and Roma organisations have joined the committee's work through a competitive application process. Roma participation in the committees is very low, which can be explained primarily by the lack of capacity and information among Roma organisations and local Governments. The experiences of organisations involved in monitoring the committees' work are mixed, and the committees' functioning and openness to civil society participants vary greatly, as illustrated by the following cases.

Government delegates are in the majority in all committees, so there is minimal opportunity to advance civil society perspectives. Nevertheless, there have been a few cases where the committee has accepted the proposals of civil society delegates in part or in whole: within the framework of the DIMOP Operational Programme, primarily as a result of the work of the Autonomia Foundation, it was possible to ensure that civil society organisations, and not only church-based organisations, could apply for grants aimed at developing the digital skills of disadvantaged people. The support programme, with a budget of approximately 11 billion HUF (27.5 million EUR), thus became available to the civil sector as well.<sup>271</sup> The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee were able to enforce their proposals in connection with a measure aimed at the reintegration of prisoners. During the consultation, they succeeded in making the elimination of an unlawful measure in all prisons a condition for the implementation of the project: the Hungarian State re-regulated the use of plexiglass walls, which previously made it difficult for prisoners to maintain contact.<sup>272</sup>

However, despite these partial successes, it is important to note that in some committees, civil society members' access to certain documents related to the selection and implementation of supported projects was restricted. A good example of this is that, despite repeated requests, the civil participants of the FETE Thematic Committee were unable to obtain documentation related to one of the programme elements (housing), which was eventually obtained by a civil society organisation not participating in the committee's work through a public interest data request.<sup>273</sup>

### 3.2.4. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

In its presentation of the institutional system of the strategy, the NRSF treats as fundamental the principle that inclusion policy is based on the 'nothing about them without them' principle, meaning that social inclusion measures are implemented with the active involvement of the target groups, including Roma communities. It identifies local and ethnic minority Governments, civil society organisations, and religious organisations as

<sup>271</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=979053147597081&set=a.556688843166849>

<sup>272</sup> Társaság a Szabadságjogokért. (2024). *Egy év tapasztalata a monitoring bizottságokban* [One Year of Experience in the Monitoring Committees]. Available at: <https://tasz.hu/cikkek/egy-ev-tapasztalata-a-monitoring-bizottsagokban/>

<sup>273</sup> The request for data of public interest was submitted to the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service by the National Association of Disadvantaged Families.

important partners because they respond flexibly to society's needs, strengthen community autonomy, and have significant capacity. It treats the strengthening of Roma civil organisations and their involvement in decision making, implementation, and monitoring at all levels – EU, national, regional, and local – as a priority objective. The NRSF outlines the various levels of consultation forums and identifies strengthening, transparency, and extending the inclusion consultation system as areas for improvement. The areas of intervention include maintaining existing consultation mechanisms, further developing the regulatory framework for cooperation, and strengthening publicity and professional communication on social inclusion. In addition, the aim is to improve the efficiency, transparency, and operational publicity of partnership forums.

The objectives and areas of intervention set out for the partnership are clearly positive, but the NRSF does not include any specific commitments or measurable indicators in this regard.

Of the consultation forums mentioned in the NRSF, the following three platforms are the most important in terms of ensuring Roma participation:

- One of the most important platforms for discussing the use of EU funds and other government measures affecting Roma, such as issues related to the implementation of the NRSF, is the Roma Coordination Council (ROK-T), which has been operating since 2011. According to its founders' intentions, this council, established by the Government, is an 'advisory and consultative body serving the purpose of integration', whose 33 members include delegates from seven national civil society organisations, five county Roma National Self-Governments, and six churches.
- The events of the National Roma Platform (NRP - see also in section 1.3.4 of this report) could be an important forum for civil participation. The aim of the series of events held in recent years was to promote cooperation and involve local actors in the implementation of the NRSF objectives, the discussion of related activities, and the evaluation of results. A total of 751 people participated in the 15 events held between 2022 and 2023. An evaluation commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior gave a generally positive assessment of the meetings.<sup>274</sup> However, based on the agendas and minutes, it can be concluded that the Platform's events served primarily not as a forum for professional dialogue, but rather as a means of top-down information dissemination and political, governmental, and constituency representation.
- We discussed the function of the monitoring committees related to the individual operational programmes in the case study. The work of the committees is made significantly more difficult by the particularly intimidating atmosphere, which also threatens the existence of certain organisations, primarily those seeking to maintain civil control. The Sovereignty Protection Act, with its prolonged uncertainty, directly violates the principle of partnership and undermines the trust atmosphere that is a prerequisite for the effective functioning of these committees. (the impact of the planned law is tackled in Section 1.3.3.).

### 3.2.5. Synergy with other actions

Hungarian civil society, including Roma civil society, is sharply divided along lines of loyalty to the Government. This affects the use and control of EU and domestic funds. While the NRSF calls for the broadest possible involvement of the organisations concerned those organisations that support the Government's policies are much more likely to receive funding than those that are even slightly critical of it. The exclusion of the civil society organisations that are independent of the government from the support system is well illustrated by the operation of the Municipal Civil Fund (VCA),<sup>275</sup> which is financed from domestic sources. Under the support programme, the government distributed approximately 14 billion HUF (35 million EUR) in three rounds of applications (4.4 billion HUF / 11 million EUR in 2021, 4.8 billion HUF / 12 million EUR in 2022, and 4.8 billion HUF / 12 million EUR in 2024). An investigation of 251 organisations receiving larger grants of 15-37 million HUF (37,500 to 92,500 EUR) revealed that 87% of them were clearly linked to Fidesz. In contrast only a

<sup>274</sup> Hétfa Kutatóintézet. (2023). *Zárótanulmány – 'A Magyar Nemzeti Roma Platform megerősítése 2022–2023' elnevezésű projekt értékelése [Final Study – Evaluation of the Project 'Strengthening the Hungarian National Roma Platform 2022–2023']*. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Roma-Platform-zarotanutmany-1130\\_v2\\_final.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Roma-Platform-zarotanutmany-1130_v2_final.pdf)

<sup>275</sup> Bethlen Gábor Alapkezelő Zrt. (n.d.). *Városi Civil Alap – támogatási információk [Urban Civil Fund – Grant Information]*. Available at: <https://bqazrt.hu/tamogatások/varosi-civil-alap/>

negligible proportion of truly independent or opposition-affiliated organisations received funding.<sup>276</sup> Among the beneficiaries, foundations and sports associations linked to pro-government politicians were particularly prominent, receiving tens of millions of Hungarian forints. The spirit of the NRSF is also contradicted by the practice described in the case study, in which civil monitoring committee members were repeatedly denied access to certain documents related to the selection and implementation of supported projects.

### 3.2.6. Roma participation

Roma participation is ensured across all three platforms described above, but the number of Roma representatives from civil society organisations on the monitoring committees is very low. Roma participation would be further strengthened if MROÖ also delegated members to these committees, including through the civil organisations represented by its members. Although the current president of the self-government considers it necessary to participate in the work of the committees, in his opinion, this should go hand in hand with the capacity-building of the body. This need is confirmed by others, including the leader of an active Roma civil society organisation. In many cases, the political exposure of Roma organisations is not conducive to objective, critical work.

However, their greater community involvement and accumulated experience could provide valuable support for planning and implementation. This would require genuine dialogue and the continuous operation of their forums. It would also be important to strengthen Roma participation in the implementation of development programmes funded by EU resources. The government is primarily considering predefined programmes, while planning to allocate only a negligible portion of the available resources through an open, so-called standard procedure. As a result, EU funds cannot fulfil their role in significantly strengthening the institutional and professional capacities of Roma civil society organisations. This hinders the strengthening of Roma self-organisation and advocacy mechanisms, as well as the development of the capabilities essential to their effective participation in public policy processes.

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<sup>276</sup> The winning bids for the Government's Rural and Urban Civil Fund, created to support civil society organisations, were distorted. According to analyses conducted in connection with the latter, a large portion of the funds was received in 2024 by civil society organisations established by pro-government politicians.

Bódis, A. (22 January 2024). *A Fidesz gigantikus álcivil hálózatot épített a választásokra – sok kis „Németh Szilárd” léphet akcióba* [Fidesz Built a Gigantic Pseudo-Civil Network for the Elections – Many Little 'Németh Szilárd' Mobilized]. *Válasz Online*. Available at: <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2024/01/22/fidesz-varosi-civil-alap-nemethszilard-valasztasok/>

## 4. USE OF EU FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

### 4.1. Conditions for EU funds implementation for Roma equality

The two main actors in the use of EU funds for Roma are the State Secretariat for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations of the Ministry of the Interior (BM) and the related ministerial background institution, the Directorate-General for Social Equality (TEF), as well as the Programme for Inclusive Communities led by the Prime Minister's Commissioner responsible for implementing the Diagnosis-Based Inclusion Strategy (the strategic document orienting the FETE Programme). Based on expert interviews conducted during the preparation of the report, it appears that there is no close professional cooperation between organisational units, and the programmes tend to run in parallel rather than being designed to build on and mutually reinforce one another.

The leaders of both organisations are burdened by controversial issues that conflict with the neutrality expected of public officials. After the disclosure of Attila Sztojka's remarks, which placed pressure on Roma representatives and hinted at rewards in return for loyalty, he was appointed state secretary.<sup>277</sup> He focused his activities on political matters rather than on professional inclusion programmes. His most visible activity was the organisation of the Roma Civil Alliance (CIKÖSZ), to be established to secure a parliamentary seat on the minority list in 2026, while projects in his portfolio (under the EU Operational Programme) were delayed. There were also reports of rewards for loyal Roma leaders.

Miklós Vecsei, who headed the FETE Programme under the direction of the Prime Minister's Commissioner, transferred the FETE Programme from Hungarian budget financing to EU financing without interruption. The FETE Programmes and calls for proposals have already switched from the previous development cycle's funds to EU funds from 2023, and programmes linked to the new cycle have also been launched. Miklós Vecsei's ability to effectively represent interests is overshadowed by the incompatibility of his various positions, which the European Commission is also aware of. While serving as a ministerial commissioner, Vecsei was vice president of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, and after a few years as honorary vice president, he will once again become vice president in May 2025.<sup>278</sup> This situation violates at least two rules governing conflicts of interest among Hungarian public officials.<sup>279</sup>

One of the tasks of the State Secretariat for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations at the Ministry of the Interior is to coordinate government strategies and programmes aimed at creating social opportunities, Roma integration, and equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. It participates in the professional and methodological management of integration projects financed by EU development funds, thus playing an important role in EFOP Plus social integration developments. The support schemes also include targeted Roma programmes, which can be applied for through open calls for proposals. After many years of delay, the calls for proposals had still not been published by August 2025.

As the TEF Programmes had not yet been launched at the time of the report, only information on the implementation of the FETE Programme is available. Launched in 2019, the programme aims to

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<sup>277</sup> Népszava. (30 October 2023). *Újabb hangfelvételen beszél Sztojka Attila arról, hogy „aki a család tagja, azt családon belül kezelik”, de kívül ezt senki nem érezheti* [New Audio Recording: Attila Sztojka Says “Those in the Family Are Handled Internally”]. Népszava. Available at: <https://nepszava.hu/3142979>

Index.hu. (12 January 2022). *Most hűtlen kezelésről és a meleglobbibról beszélt Sztojka Attila* [Sztojka Attila Now Speaks About Mismanagement and the “Gay Lobby”]. Index. Available at: <https://index.hu/belfold/2022/01/12/most-hutlen-kezelesrol-es-a-meleglobbiral-beszelt-sztojka-attila>

<sup>278</sup> Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat. (2024). *Tisztújítás a Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálatnál* [Leadership Change at the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta]. Embassy of the Sovereign Order of Malta to Hungary. Available at: <https://hungaryembassy.orderofmalta.int/hu/h%C3%ADrek/tisztujitas-a-magyar-maltai-szeretetszolgalatnal/>

<sup>279</sup> Magyarország Országgyűlése. (2018). *2018. évi CXXV. törvény a kormányzati igazgatásról* [Act CXXV of 2018 on Government Administration], §3. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1800125.tv>

Magyarország Országgyűlése. (2007). *2007. évi CLXXXI. törvény a közpénzekből nyújtott támogatások átláthatóságáról* [Act CLXXXI of 2007 on the Transparency of Publicly Funded Grants], §§2 & 6. Available at: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a0700181.tv>

comprehensively develop the 300 most disadvantaged settlements in the country, all of which have a significant Roma population. The beneficiary settlements are being implemented in stages, with 300 scheduled for completion by 2025. The Hungarian Maltese Charity Service (MMSZ), which is responsible for professional coordination, and the four major church charitable organisations working in most of the settlements involved, play a key role in the implementation. From 2023, the MMSZ selected, through a call for proposals, the organisations that could subsequently submit applications to work in the newly included municipalities.<sup>280</sup> Based on its selection criteria, the call for proposals primarily favoured complex, large, and diverse organisations, while local, more focused, but well-embedded organisations were at a disadvantage. The call did not provide sufficient information for applicants to make an informed decision, and participation only ensured eligibility to apply in subsequent calls, but did not guarantee it, while preparing the professional plan required significant resources. The application requirements called for a wide range of skills, which made it doubtful that an organisation could consistently provide all of them. The validation of municipalities conducted before 2022 was limited to checking previously mandatory activities and did not assess their effectiveness or quality. Overall, in the absence of basic information, the call for proposals required organisations to sign a cooperation agreement without being able to provide a clear picture of the conditions of the subsequent programme due to a lack of available resources.

The MMSZ and its Foundation are also involved in implementing the FETE Programme. In the selection of participating organisations, one the organiser of the tender programme and the other an applicant, which applied for all 180 announced settlements. The MMSZ ultimately withdrew from several municipalities, and as a result of the tender, only seven Roma civil society organisations were included in the implementation alongside large church-based charitable organisations. Civil society actors criticised the call for tenders, which did not ensure equal opportunities, and the MMSZ's tender procedure at the time of its announcement.<sup>281</sup> The monitoring committee of the EFOP Plus Programme, which primarily finances the programme, did not investigate the contested procedure.

The FETE Programme is currently financed mainly from EU funds. Among other things, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) planned to build and renovate 2,000 social housing units from a budget of 51 billion HUF (127.5 million EUR).<sup>282</sup> Although this funding is currently unavailable due to the freezing of EU funds, according to experts, the state has advanced it to the Maltese Charity Service, so there are no financial obstacles to its implementation. However, this housing component will not be implemented in the settlements carried out by the other FETE implementing organisations, as these organisations cannot be expected to take on the financial risk. According to a statement by the MMSZ, by June 2025, one year before the planned completion of the project, 127 apartments had been handed over out of the planned 2,000. The interviews revealed that, compared to the original plans, the programme managers are now only planning to renovate 600 apartments.

The involvement of the remaining 300 planned settlements in FETE and the financing of the already operating programmes will take place within the framework of two EFOP Plus<sup>283</sup> priority tenders, both of which have MMSZ as the beneficiary, and MMSZ is also responsible for their distribution. The scheme providing ESF funds has already been launched, while the programme providing ERDF funds, which can be used for infrastructure investments and improving housing conditions, with a budget of approximately 10 billion HUF (25 million EUR), has not yet been launched.

In the case of EU funds, the issue of demarcation between the various schemes has arisen. Due to a planning shortcoming, the FETE Programme is currently unable to fulfil its objective of enabling the implementing organisations involved in the programme to apply for additional EU calls for proposals that expand opportunities and increase the chances of residents, in addition to providing the support necessary for their operations. To avoid double financing, the municipalities named in the government decision are not eligible to

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<sup>280</sup> 444.hu. (12 October 2022). *A nagy szegénységfelszámoló programba is belenyúlnak az uniós pénzek érdekében* [Even the Major Poverty Eradication Program Is Being Reshaped for EU Funding Purposes]. Available at: <https://444.hu/2022/10/12/a-nagy-szegenysegfelszamolo-programba-is-belenyulnak-az-unios-penzek-erdekeben>

<sup>281</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>282</sup> FETE – Felzárkózó Települések Program. (n.d.). *Lakhatás – szakterületi bemutatás* [Housing – Thematic Overview]. Available at: <https://fete.hu/szakteruletek/lakhatas/>

<sup>283</sup> FETE – Felzárkózó Települések Program. (2024). *Jelenlét a felzárkózó településeken – EFOP\_PLUSZ-7.1.1-24-2024-00002 projektismertető* [Presence in Disadvantaged Settlements – EFOP\_PLUSZ-7.1.1-24-2024-00002 Project Overview]. Available at: [https://fete.hu/jelenlet-a-felzarkozo-telepuleseken-esza-efop\\_plusz-7-1-1-24-2024-00002/](https://fete.hu/jelenlet-a-felzarkozo-telepuleseken-esza-efop_plusz-7-1-1-24-2024-00002/)

apply for EU operational programmes that overlap with the activities of FETE. This restriction also applies if the municipality or civil society organisation in question is not directly involved in the implementation of FETE. Still, the programme is taking place in its municipality. The rule intended to prevent resource leakage has been mechanically transferred to the individual operational programmes, leaving these 300 municipalities in a challenging position.

## 4.2. Roma civil society in EU funds implementation

Overall, Roma civil society participation in the use, planning, and monitoring of funds is generally weak, and political loyalty plays a major role in selecting implementing partners. Hungarian civil society, including Roma civil society organisations, is sharply divided along lines of loyalty to the Government. This affects the use and control of EU and domestic resources. Organisations that support the Government's policies are much more likely to receive resources than those that are even slightly critical of them.<sup>284</sup>

In 2024, the Egalipe Network, which has 16 member organisations and is independent of the Government, received invitations to join monitoring committees or was selected through applications. One of the members of Egalipe Network is the Autonomia Foundation: TOP Plus, EFOP Plus, Partnership, DIMOP, GINOP, FETE Thematic and the Education Subcommittee. Apart from these network members, the only other Roma organisation to be included in the TOP and EFOP Plus monitoring committee is the Bihm Rao Association.

In Hungary, civil society and independent professional organisations currently have minimal access to financial resources relevant to Roma inclusion, and there is little civil control over the distribution of EU and domestic funds, implementation mainly carried out by the government or networks committed to it.

Most EU funds earmarked for Roma integration are controlled by government-affiliated institutions and organisations working closely with the government (e.g., MMSZ), so the distribution of funds is typically directed toward organisations and networks with government backing.<sup>285</sup>

Roma and pro-Roma organisations regularly criticise the fact that the application and resource allocation system does not offer real opportunities to independent local Roma civil communities, but rather that the majority of resources go to government partners selected based on loyalty.

All of this hinders the effectiveness and efficiency of a transparent, professional, and socially sound Roma integration development policy.

<sup>284</sup> Telex. (26 July 2021). *Akik nem felülről akarják megmondani, a cigányoknak mit kellene tenni – Harminc év a civil és roma fejlesztésben: az Autonomia Alapítvány küldetése* [Those Who Don't Want to Dictate from Above – Thirty Years in Civil and Roma Development: The Mission of the Autonomia Foundation]. Telex. Available at: <https://telex.hu/komplex/2021/07/26/roma-integracio-roma-fejleszt-es-ciganyuqv-autonomia-alapitvany>

<sup>285</sup> Hétfa Kutatóintézet. (2023). *Zárótanulmány – A Magyar Nemzeti Roma Platform megerősítése 2022–2023* [Final Study – Strengthening the Hungarian National Roma Platform 2022–2023]. Available at: [https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Zarotanutmany\\_2022\\_2023\\_Romaplatform.pdf](https://szocialisportal.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Zarotanutmany_2022_2023_Romaplatform.pdf)

## 5. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

EU decision-makers and analysts are publishing more and more material on how Hungary is moving further and further away from democratic standards.<sup>286</sup> This also affects public policy processes, including emergency legislation and governance. For almost a decade, accepting new laws without correct consultations has been limiting professional debate and participatory processes. Where participatory forums do exist, they are organised with carefully selected, loyal partners. Moreover, the takeover of institutions not only hinders implementation but also, as we have seen in the case of serious concerns surrounding the data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), makes monitoring processes impossible. At the same time, power is becoming increasingly centralised in Hungary, continuously taking away institutions (i.e., public schools) from local Governments and narrowing the scope of their legal authority, minimising the fields in which a local Roma CSO or minority self-government can effectively represent the interests of the local Roma community. The distribution of civil resources based on political loyalty further reduces the Roma community's ability to protect its interests and organise itself. Overall, these processes provide the context for this report.

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<sup>286</sup> European Parliament. (15 September 2022). *MEPs: Hungary Can No Longer Be Considered a Full Democracy* [Press release]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220909IPR40138/meps-hungary-can-no-longer-be-considered-a-full-democracy>

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Hungary, the quality and accessibility of public services have steadily deteriorated over the past few years. In most areas, particularly in social protection, the resources available for this purpose have also decreased. The legal environment has changed, leading the state to reduce its responsibility for solving social problems. Modest results have been achieved in a few indicators (e.g., the number of early school dropouts and employment rates in the field of FETE Programmes, which cover less than 10% of Hungarian settlements). Educational segregation has increased, housing data has not improved, and housing subsidies are available mainly for the middle class. Regarding development resources, professional dialogue on planning and monitoring is often formal, and partners are selected based on loyalty. Legal protection institutions have been weakened. Cultural support is sporadic, and basic institutions for preserving Roma identity are lacking.

### **Recommendations to national authorities**

1. Strengthen relevant institutions and:
  - Improve access to anti-discrimination complaint mechanisms;
  - Expand training on the implementation of anti-discrimination procedures and the Hate Crime Protocol;
  - Ensure the training is of high quality and made mandatory for key professional groups.
  - Make child safety guidelines mandatory and provide training on them for all institutions and staff working with children.
  - Targeted structural strengthening of the Roma cultural institutional system is needed. The state should fund the creation of an independent, Roma-led cultural institution.
2. Ensure greater civil society involvement:
  - In the preparation and monitoring of EU-funded programmes,
  - Supplementing monitoring processes with on-site evaluations and impact assessments focusing on fundamental rights.
  - Establish regularly functioning consultation forums that also have a decision-making function.
  - Independent Roma civil society organisations should be meaningfully involved in decision-making and resource allocation concerning Roma cultural programmes.
3. Increase state spending on the provision of basic services:
  - It is essential to strengthen local basic services by significantly increasing resources, valuing professionals, and improving their pay and working conditions in the social, child welfare, health, and education systems.
  - Modify the suitability assessment of those working in basic child welfare and child protection services, using a meaningful, evaluable methodology and providing appropriate training and supervision.
  - Increase social protection expenditure as a proportion of GDP, increase significantly the amount of support for kindergarten and school education, and index it annually.
  - Develop and introduce an adequate guaranteed minimum income system, as exists in most EU countries.
  - Further expand the provision of free institutional child catering, and the development of a complex debt management programme, and reintroduce debt reduction support.
  - Launch targeted and effective support measures that provide meaningful assistance to the most vulnerable groups.
4. Make analyses, measurements, evaluations, and data collection publicly available to researchers, decision-makers, and civil society organisations across education, health care, and social and child welfare services.
5. Create detailed sectoral and cross-sectoral development strategies for the social and child protection/child welfare system, the healthcare system, the education system and develop a national housing strategy. Key objectives would be to reduce the shortage of professionals, improve the quality and efficiency of services, reduce regional inequalities, and ensure entitlements.
6. Mainstream and integrate the Roma culture into the national cultural and memory policy institutional system. Major public collections should enter into cooperation agreements with Roma civil society

organisations to ensure that Roma heritage is represented meaningfully. National media campaigns should be launched using state resources to promote the values of Roma culture. Roma artists and civil society actors should be involved in the planning and implementation of programmes.

7. Implement targeted programmes:

- to eliminate educational segregation and modify the enrolment practices of church and private schools so that they do not reinforce the phenomenon of white flight.
- Provide genuine mentoring and quality assurance for teachers who teach multiply disadvantaged students.
- Restore the compulsory school age to 18. Launch a broad-based legal awareness campaign in Roma communities.
- Launch a social housing construction programme with the involvement of domestic and international organisations.
- Launch employment programmes for NEET youth combined with a targeted development programme.
- Ensure geographical mobility, and repeal the 'Self-Identity Protection' law, so that it cannot be used for housing discrimination.
- Ensure proportionality and regional equality in cultural support.
- Develop a support system that also reaches Roma communities living in small settlements and ensures that Roma communities receive support in proportion to their size.
- Make the teaching of the Romani and Beás languages a compulsory part of Roma ethnic education.

### **Recommendations for EU institutions**

8. Make EU funds directly accessible to support civil society activities related to discrimination and antigypsyism, and a framework programme for the preservation of Roma cultural and linguistic heritage.
9. Ensure greater civil society involvement in the preparation and monitoring of EU-funded programmes. In addition to the current complaint mechanism, which focuses on corruption, examine whether fundamental rights, such as the prohibition of discrimination, are being violated during implementation and whether the rule-of-law guarantees are being upheld. The EU should not support programmes that increase educational segregation, and should enforce sector-neutral funding when distributing grants. In terms of transparency and monitoring requirements, the EU should require Member States to establish public, searchable databases to facilitate policy learning and the evaluation of programme effectiveness.
10. Introduce a set of criteria for evaluating Member State strategies. The EU evaluation of national Roma strategies should also be linked to indicators in the field of culture, such as the proportion of participants in Roma-language education, the functioning of Roma cultural institutions, and the outcomes of cultural mainstreaming.
11. Support EU-level awareness-raising campaigns to promote the values and history of Roma culture, with a view to shaping the attitudes of majority societies.

### **Recommendations for civil society organisations**

12. Seek resources and establish partnerships to strengthen efforts to counter anti-Roma sentiment and discrimination. Identify cases of segregation and develop, test, and adapt proposals and new methods to eliminate it.

### **Recommendations for other decision-makers**

13. Support the self-development of local government leaders and officials in anti-discrimination issues, their greater involvement in local education, and engagement in the elimination of segregated education.

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<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Organisation/title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Attila Sztojka	Ministry of the Interior, State Secretary for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations	Provided written answers to our questions.
Anonymous1	Ministry of the Interior	Interview 16.06.2025
Anonymous2	Ministry of the Interior	Interview 16.07.2025
Anonymus3, regional housing programme coordinator	MMSZ	Interview 06.05.2025
Ádám Kullmann	European Commission	Interview 16.06.2025
István Aba-Horváth	National Self-Government of Hungarian Roma, President	Interview 23.06.2025
Miklós Thaisz	Hungarian Maltese Charity Service School Foundation, Director	Interview 15.07.2025
István Nahalka	Education researcher	Interview 17.07.2025
Miklós Vecsei	Prime Minister's Commissioner for Social Inclusion	Interview 29.07.2025
Judit Berki	NMCKKSZSZ	Interview 14.07.2025
Marianna Balogh	EMMA Association, Ibrány	Interview 30.06.2025
József Bonifác Solymosy	Public health expert, researcher	Background discussion 07.07.2025
Annamária Somhegyi	Developer of the Comprehensive School Health Promotion Programme	Background discussion 19.07.2025
Adél Kegye	Rosa Parks Foundation	17.07.2025
Expert speaking anonymously	'Sure Start' Children's House, Hajdú-Bihar County,	Interview 24.06.2025
Anonymous	Mid-level manager at the Ministry	Interview 03.07.2025

Szilvia Szénási	UCCU Foundation	E-mail 08.08.2025
Ildikó Török	Romaversitas	E-mail 08.08.2025
Béla Rácz	1 Magyarország Kezdeményezés	E-mail 08.08.2025
dr. Erika Muhi	NEKI	E-mail 27.06.2025
Valéria Dósa	Együttnevelés Szövetség	E-mail 25.07.2025
<b>case study 1</b>		
23 Roma parents		Conversations, 2025
3 local Roma leaders		Background discussions, 2025
3 local decision-makers		Background discussions, 2025
3 local teachers, institution leaders		Background discussions, 2025
<b>case study 2</b>		
53 households in the segregated area		Questionnaire-based data collection June-July 2024
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## ANNEXE: LIST OF PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS

### *Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination*

<b>Problems and conditions</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Identified by the strategy</b>	<b>Measures to address</b>	<b>Targets defined</b>	<b>Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem</b>
High levels of prejudice and widespread hate speech	Critical problem	Mentioned, but analysis not sufficiently in-depth	Exists, but insufficient	Some objectives, but not relevant	Exclusively the cultivation and promotion of Roma culture. These alone do not solve the problem. There is no regularly collected data using a uniform, international methodology
Widespread discrimination, low trust in communities in relation to dealing with this	Critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not indicated	Some objectives, but not relevant	Planned research on discrimination in the rental housing market. Raising legal awareness through agreements with Roma organisations.  The research is not available; the latter has not taken place or is not widespread. No data collection.
Weakening of civil and state legal protection mechanisms	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No intervention planned
Low awareness among law enforcement officials	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No intervention planned, sporadic training sessions

## Education

Problems and conditions	Significance	Identified by the strategy	Measures to address	Targets defined	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem
Educational segregation	Critical problem	Interpreted in a limited way	Exists, but insufficient	Some objectives, but not relevant	The NRSF 2030 draws attention to the prevention and elimination of segregation, but no related programme was identified during the period under review.
Higher support for church-run institutions than for state-run institutions	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	The growing role and presence of church-run institutions not only fails to reduce segregation, but increases it.
Insufficient number of teaching assistants	Serious problem	Identifies and analyses in sufficient detail	Exists, but is insufficient	Adequate, but still needs improvement	The Strategy does not contain specific measures in this regard, but emphasises the importance of the role of teaching assistants.
Teacher shortage	Critical problem	Identified and analysed in sufficient detail	Adequate, but still needs improvement	Well-defined, relevant objectives	The strategy treats this as a complex challenge and responds with a multi-level, coordinated action plan. Based on data and monitoring reports, the problem is decreasing, but continues to require ongoing measures to maintain the quality and capacity of teacher training. Data on teacher training is collected and published annually by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH). The NRSF 2030 is based on this data.
High rate of early school leavers	Critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Suitable, but still an area for improvement	Well-defined, relevant goals	prevention programmes; pedagogical and specialist support; tutoring and catch-up programmes; career guidance and openness to learning paths; strengthening vocational training programmes for school leavers without qualifications; social support; expansion of free textbooks, meals, and school supplies. In Hungary, the rate of early school leaving among Roma youth fell to 45% by 2023. Complex strategies financed by state and EU funds have reached a large number of young people in this area. Data on school dropouts is collected and published annually by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH).

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Regional disparities in the quality of educational institutions	Critical problem	Interprets it in a limited way	Adequate, but still needs improvement	Adequate, but still needs improvement	The NRSF 2030 proposes complex measures. Of the measures aligned with the objectives, only a few (FETE Programme, Swiss Fund) were launched during the period under review. The effectiveness of some of the measures was already disputed by independent experts during the planning phase. No significant, data-supported change has been observed so far. Regarding regional inequalities, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) and the national competence assessment collect data, but regional data series are also available for education. These were also used in the preparation of the NRSF.
Inadequate professional support for teachers	A critical problem	Mentions it, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	There is some, but it is not sufficient	Some goals, but not relevant	The NRSF identifies the problem, but does not go beyond generalities. No visible results yet. Beyond the FETE Programme, no specific measures serving this goal could be identified during the period under review.
Shortcomings in access to education-related specialist services	Critical problem	Limited interpretation	Adequate, but still needs improvement	Adequate, but still needs improvement	The NRSF identifies interventions, but no measures that meet these objectives were identified during the period under review. The data from the Kréta and TEIR systems are currently available.
Institutions compensating for socio-cultural disadvantages require further development	Critical problem	Interpreted in a limited way	Suitable, but still needs improvement	Some objectives, but not relevant	The NRSF contains several related measures: Children's Houses, Tanoda tutorial groups, Roma colleges for advanced study, FETE Programme, etc. Some of the measures (Tanodas, colleges) are showing results. However, the institutional system is currently far from covering the entire target group.

*Employment*

<b>Problems and conditions</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Identified by the strategy</b>	<b>Measures to address</b>	<b>Targets defined</b>	<b>Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem</b>
Poor access to or low efficiency of public employment	Critical problem	Sufficiently identified, but understanding is almost exclusively limited	Adequate, but still an area for improvement	There are some goals set, but they are not relevant	The number of public sector employees is steadily declining, but this also means that they are becoming more socially homogeneous, with those who cannot find employment elsewhere remaining in the public sector

High proportion of NEET youth, including a high proportion of Roma youth	Critical problem	Limited attention is paid to the issue	Adequate, but still an area for improvement	Relevant objectives have been identified	No programme supporting this has been launched since 2023.
Poor access to (re)training and skills development	Critical problem	Limited attention to the issue	Adequate, but area for improvement	Relevant objectives have been identified	No programme supporting this has been launched since 2023.
Employer Discrimination	Critical problem	Mentioned, but not analysed	exists, but is insufficient	Not indicated	No research or data collection on this topic or on related programmes.
The risk of human trafficking and forced prostitution for Roma women and girls from disadvantaged areas	Significant problem	Mentioned, but not analysed	Exists, but not sufficient	Some objectives are listed (employment & education)	No programme supporting this has been launched since 2023.
Public employment instead of primary labour market opportunities	Critical problem	Addresses the issue to a limited extent	Suitable, but still needs improvement	There are some goals set, but they are not relevant	No programme supporting this has been launched since 2023.
Barriers to employment and deterrents to employment (e.g., indebtedness, low earnings compared to social benefits)	Critical problem	Limited deals with the issue	It exists, but is insufficient	Not indicated	No programme supporting this has been launched since 2023.
Activation measures and lack of employment support	Critical problem	Limited addresses the issue	Exists, but insufficient	Not indicated	No programme supporting this has been launched since 2023.
Abuse of temporary agency work	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No research, data collection, or related programme on this topic,
Termination violations	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No research, data collection, or related programme on this topic.
Accidents at work high number	Serious problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No research, data collection, or related programme on this topic.

Healthcare

<b>Problems and conditions</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Identified by the strategy</b>	<b>Measures to address</b>	<b>Targets defined</b>	<b>Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem</b>
Discrimination and segregation experienced by Roma in healthcare, and the resulting mistrust	A critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No mention of the problem.
Care problems resulting from a lack of resources in the healthcare system (e.g., unfilled GP and nurse districts) are concentrated in disadvantaged areas of the country.	Critical problem	Interpreted in a limited way	Exists, but insufficient	Not indicated	One of the strategic objectives is to improve access to healthcare services, primarily primary care. Some interventions aim to achieve this, but they are either unsuitable for improving access (e.g., infrastructure developments) or have very limited reach (e.g., telemedicine programme).
It should be explicitly stated that the range of factors determining health status is much broader than healthcare, behavioural, and direct physical characteristics of living conditions	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated,	Not indicated	Although the strategy states that improving health requires a multi-sectoral approach involving all social actors, later only healthcare and health behaviour appear in the planned interventions. The entire strategy should emphasise at every relevant point that the poor health of marginalised communities is not primarily due to healthcare: the primary conditions for improving their health are improving their living conditions and ending their marginalisation.
Examining and reducing the proportion of people without insurance coverage and improving their access to insurance	Is a critical issue	Not relevant	Not indicated,	Not indicated	As a result of changes to social security eligibility rules in 2020, many people in weak labour market positions have likely lost their eligibility for health care benefits. Exact data are not available, but the 2022 monitoring report also highlighted this problem, which the Strategy has not addressed since then.

*Housing, essential services, environmental justice*

<b>Problems and conditions</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Identified by the strategy</b>	<b>Measures to address</b>	<b>Targets defined</b>	<b>Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem</b>
Physically unsafe housing (dilapidated or slum dwellings)	Critical problem	Analyses it in sufficient detail	Well-defined, relevant objectives	Well-defined, relevant objectives	EFOP 162 and ERDF 241 Programmes, no new round announced after December 2023 closure. Under the FETE Programme, a settlement diagnosis was prepared for 300 settlements, but the processing and evaluation of these is not public The KSH national segregate database has not been completed or is not available.
Access to drinking water and electricity and lack of sewage disposal	Is a critical problem	Not mentioned	Not indicated	Not indicated	Under the FETE Programme, 300 settlements were diagnosed, but the processing and evaluation of these diagnoses is not public. The KSH national segregate database has not been completed or is not available.
Limited or missing municipal waste collection	Critical problem	Not mentioned	Not indicated	Not indicated	
Limited heating capacity (families cannot heat all rooms/at the necessary times) or use solid waste for heating	Critical problem	Not mentioned	Not indicated	Not indicated	Under the FETE Programme, a settlement diagnosis was made for 300 settlements, but the processing and evaluation of these is not public.
Housing titles are not clear and do not provide security	Critical problem	Not mentioned	Not indicated	Not indicated	Under the FETE Programme, a settlement diagnosis was made for 300 settlements, but the processing and evaluation of these is not public. The KSH national segregated database has not been completed or is not available.

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Lack of or limited access to social housing	Critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Exists, but not sufficient	Not indicated	EFOP 162, ERDF 241, TOP, and VEKOP programmes; no new round has been announced since the December 2023 closure. Under the FETE Programme, fewer projects than planned are being implemented.
Overcrowding	Critical problem	Not mentioned	Not indicated	Not specified	Under the FETE Programme, a settlement diagnosis was prepared for 300 settlements; the processing and evaluation of these is not public. The KSH national segregate database has not been completed or is not available. The 2022 FRA data collection contains data that is not nationally representative
Level of housing indebtedness that could lead to eviction	Critical problem	Not mentioned	Not indicated	Not indicated	Regulations are not uniform. MR Community Housing Fund involvement has taken place.
Housing in segregated settlements, segregated areas	Critical problem	Identifies and analyses in sufficient detail	Well-defined	Well-defined, relevant objectives	EFOP 162 and ERDF 241 Programmes, no new round announced after December 2023 closure.
Informal or illegal housing settlements, segregated areas	Is a critical problem	Identifies and analyses in sufficient detail	Well-defined	Well-defined, relevant objectives	EFOP 162 and ERDF 241 Programmes, no new round announced after December 2023 closure.
Limited or non-existent public transport	Significant problem	Not indicated	Not indicated	Not indicated	
Limited or non-existent internet access	Critical problem	Not specified	Not specified	Not indicated	
Legal relationship of apartment rental legal relationship based on ethnicity is a critical problem	Critical problem	Not indicated	Rsearch planned on the issue	Not indicated	No public research results.

## Social protection

Problems and conditions	Significance	Identified by the strategy	Measures to address	Targets defined	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem
Decrease in budgetary resources allocated to social protection expenditure.	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Not indicated	No government intention to improve social protection spending. Family and housing policy measures largely support better-off social groups. More detailed, analysable data are not publicly available.
The poverty risk rate and the rate of material and social deprivation are high.	Critical problem	Identifies and analyses in sufficient detail	Exists, but is insufficient	Adequate, but still needs improvement	Measures directly aimed at reducing income poverty and improving cash benefits are largely lacking. HCSO data are available in the main breakdowns, including Roma/non-Roma breakdowns. The HCSO's income data have been questionable since 2018.
Income support programmes do not guarantee an acceptable minimum income for everyone, and the quality and security of the welfare system is weakening.	Critical problem	Not relevant	Not indicated	Some objectives, but not relevant	The NRSF includes related elements, but these do not significantly improve social security. In the target system, the development of a 'welfare system that promotes activity and encourages employment' basically means public employment. The main data are available and accessible. Since 2015, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) has not calculated or published the subsistence minimum, the number of people living below the subsistence minimum, or their characteristics.
The number of people receiving regular child protection benefits is declining, but there is no data on the reasons for this decline.	This is a serious problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	There is, but it is not sufficient	Adequate, but still needs improvement	No specific measures. In the NRSF, the FETE Programme and one of the indicators of EFOP Plus (the comprehensive evaluation will be completed by the end of 2027). Available data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. However, it is not possible to track the extent to which the assistance reaches those in need, as intended by the NRSF.

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Income support programmes and family support and housing policy measures favour those who are better off, while marginalised groups are excluded from the benefits.	This is a critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Exists, but is insufficient	Adequate, but still needs improvement	The NRSF defines the extension of family support benefits as a course of action, but there is no indicator to monitor this. Marginalised social groups are excluded from benefits linked to earned income and social security status. Basic related data are available, but data suitable for more detailed analysis are not available.
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*Social services*

<b>Problems and conditions</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Identified by the strategy</b>	<b>Measures to address</b>	<b>Targets defined</b>	<b>Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem</b>
Persistent problems in the social and child welfare/child protection system, lack of resources and capacity, and regional inequalities in standards and access.	Critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Exists, but insufficient	Adequate, but still needs improvement	The need for service development appears at the level of strategic objectives. In the FETE Programme (in less than 10% of Hungarian settlements), service development is a priority tool. There are no system-level developments. Data is available for some services (KSH, e.g., number of users, number of places), but these are only of limited use for monitoring processes. There are no recent analyses of regional inequalities in social services.
The further expansion of free institutional child nutrition has not been implemented.	This is a serious problem	Limited interpretation	Adequate, but still needs improvement	Adequate, but still needs improvement	This is planned in both the NRSF 2030 and the government decision. However, it has not been implemented.
There is a lack of comprehensive, complex debt management programmes.	Serious problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not indicated	Some objectives, but not relevant	No such measures exist outside of a few municipalities involved in the FETE Programme.

## Child protection

Problems and conditions	Significance	Identified by the strategy	Measures to address	Targets defined	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem
The number of nursery places is low, and they are less accessible to HH (disadvantaged) and HHH children (multiply disadvantaged)	Critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not indicated	Not indicated	Increasing the number of nursery places is a declared goal. Nurseries are currently available in one-third of municipalities. Participation among HH and HHH children is low. The data is available on the KSH website.
'Sure Start' Children's Houses are not accessible to everyone	Serious problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Exists, but is insufficient	Some goals, but not relevant	Only operation and modest growth in the number of children are mentioned. Participation is low, and the planned number of houses has not been achieved. Instead of inclusion, the underfunded programme focusing on the poorest and Roma children does not meet the original objectives. Statistics are available, but there are no recent analyses.
The availability, quality, and effectiveness of child welfare and child protection benefits and services need to be improved.	This is a critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not indicated	Not indicated	Formulated as a goal, but accessibility and quality have deteriorated. Only the FETE Programme has seen meaningful improvements. The situation in child protection has further deteriorated, with a shortage of at least 600 institutional professionals and 2,000 foster parents. Closures of facilities are making placement more difficult. Legislative changes further worsen the situation in the sector. The main data are available, but there is no evaluation or research on the forms and effectiveness of assistance. There are only estimates for the thousands of children awaiting referral and the hundreds of newborns and infants stranded in hospitals.

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*Promoting (awareness of) Roma arts, culture, and history*

<b>Problems and conditions</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Identified by the strategy</b>	<b>Measures to address</b>	<b>Targets defined</b>	<b>Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem</b>
The representation of Roma culture and history in Hungarian state cultural institutions is low.	Critical problem	Mentions it, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	There are some, but insufficient	Some goals, but not relevant	Only one art gallery opened during the period in question, which does not solve the institutional deficit (not a systemic step).
The lack of a permanent Roma Museum, cultural centre, and research institute.	A critical problem.	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not indicated	Not indicated	Some cultural subsidies are available, but these do not compensate for the lack of permanent institutions.
The low status and inadequate support for the Romani and Beás languages. Their social prestige, integration into education, and use in public life are extremely low.	Critical problem	Interpreted in a limited way	Exists, but insufficient	Some goals, but not relevant	The measures (scholarship programme for students of ethnic pedagogy) did not result in any meaningful progress.
Cultural subsidies and programmes are project-based and fragmented. The current subsidy system is not based on a long-term cultural development strategy and is not suitable for institutional capacity building.	This is a serious problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	There is, but it is not sufficient	Some goals, but not relevant	The programmes typically do not reach a wider range of Roma communities and do not support the institutional strengthening of self-representation.

Roma identity appears in the NRSF primarily in a folkloric and cultural context, without connection to other public policies. (e.g., education, media policy, urban development, memory policy)	It mentions a serious problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not indicated	Not indicated	Although Roma culture is present in certain cultural programmes, these cannot be considered intersectoral-integrated measures.
The volume and accessibility of the programmes are not proportional to the size of the Roma community. The Roma community is one of the largest minorities in Hungary, yet the volume and territorial coverage of cultural programmes do not reflect this reality.	Critical problem	Interpreted in a limited way	Exists, but is insufficient	Some goals, but not relevant	The geographical and social reach of existing measures is limited and does not ensure the widespread involvement of Roma communities.
Lack of interventions aimed at social acceptance. No comprehensive attitude-shaping campaigns or intercultural dialogue programmes have been launched. Civil society organisations operate small-scale awareness-raising programmes on low budgets.	Critical problem	Mentioned, but the analysis is not sufficiently in-depth	Not mentioned	Not indicated	As no substantive interventions have been launched, their effectiveness cannot be assessed; however, their absence has contributed to the stagnation or deterioration of acceptance.

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