



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

Prepared by:
Roma Youth Organization of Croatia
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of the national strategic framework
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
EURSF	EU Roma Strategic Framework
GNOM	Government Office for National Minorities
HFRS	Housing Fund of Republic of Slovenia
MDDSZ	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities
MKRR	Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development
NIJZ	National Institute of Public Health
NRP	National Roma Platform
NRSF	National Roma Strategic Framework
RCM	Roma Civil Monitor
SIFOROMA 5	National Roma Platform Project
SPS	Slovene Enterprise Fund
SRRS	Slovenian Regional Development Fund
VGC	Multi-generational Centres
ZRom	Act on the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implementation of the NRSF

The Slovenian National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF) remains a single document combining strategic objectives and an action plan. While it foresees three revisions, none have been completed, leaving measures outdated and limiting responsiveness to emerging challenges. Monitoring mechanisms are weak, and data collection is fragmented, with no systematic approach to ethnically disaggregated data. This gap undermines evidence-based policymaking and evaluation of progress.

Synergy with EU and domestic actions is partial. While the NRSF aligns formally with the EU Roma Strategic Framework (EURSF), implementation lacks coherence across sectors. Complementary policies exist but fail to address systemic issues such as segregation and discrimination. Roma participation in implementation and monitoring remains limited, despite the existence of the National Roma Platform. Engagement is often consultative rather than decision-making, reducing the impact of Roma voices on policy design and delivery.

Review of country situation by area

Persistent **antigypsyism and discrimination** remain critical challenges. Despite measures for police training and cultural awareness, tensions between Roma and non-Roma communities have intensified, with rising hate speech and local protests. Implementation is inconsistent, and systemic interventions are lacking.

Measures to improve preschool and primary **education** inclusion, such as Roma assistants and financial incentives, are in place, but segregation and poor transition rates to secondary education remain unaddressed. Legislative changes introduced in 2024 aim to increase participation, yet their impact is uncertain.

Employment outcomes for Roma are minimal, with only 177 individuals recorded as employed after participation in state measures. Structural barriers, discrimination, and lack of targeted programmes persist, while adult education and NEET-focused interventions are absent.

Health disparities remain severe, with life expectancy gaps and high infant mortality. Positive developments include NGO-led health promotion projects and the RomStat initiative for better health data collection. However, these activities are project-based and not integrated into the NRSF.

In the field of **housing**, investments in Roma settlements improved infrastructure but reinforced segregation. Illegal settlements remain excluded from funding, and one-fifth of Roma communities still lack access to drinking water. Multi-purpose centres are under construction, but systemic housing desegregation measures are absent.

Activation programmes and Child Guarantee measures provide some **social support**, particularly for Roma women. However, minimum income guarantees and access to social benefits remain inadequate, leaving many households at risk of poverty.

Co-financed **social services** and multi-generational centres delivered targeted interventions, including training for social workers and awareness campaigns on early marriages. Despite progress, outreach is limited, and debt management programmes are missing.

Roma **children** face poverty, poor living conditions, and limited access to quality education. Measures addressing early and forced marriages exist, but broader child protection issues are not systematically integrated into the NRSF. Data gaps hinder monitoring and targeted action.

Cultural investments exceeded 1 million EUR in 2022, supporting language, media, and heritage projects. Civil society welcomed these initiatives, but Roma history remains largely absent from school curricula, and systemic integration of cultural measures is lacking.

Focus on key issues affecting Roma

Segregation in education remains one of the most critical and unresolved issues. Roma children are frequently placed in separate classes or programmes, often justified by perceived linguistic or cultural differences, even when geographical barriers do not exist. This practice perpetuates systemic exclusion, limits access to quality education, and reinforces stereotypes. Despite legislative changes aimed at improving inclusion, the NRSF does

not recognise segregation as a problem, nor does it propose targeted desegregation measures. The absence of ethnically disaggregated data further obscures the scale of the issue, hindering effective monitoring and policy intervention.

Housing segregation continues to marginalise Roma communities, with investments focused on upgrading existing settlements rather than promoting integration. While infrastructure improvements have enhanced living conditions in some areas, they have also entrenched isolation, as services remain settlement-based. Illegal settlements are excluded from funding, and one-fifth of Roma communities still lack access to drinking water, despite constitutional guarantees. The NRSF avoids explicit reference to segregation and relies on soft measures, such as informing municipalities about social housing opportunities, which have shown little impact. Without systemic desegregation policies, Roma remain confined to segregated spaces, perpetuating social and economic exclusion.

INTRODUCTION

National Roma strategic framework

The 'National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2021–2030 (NRSF)¹ was adopted in December 2021, which was relatively late given that its timeframe includes the year 2021.

The development of the document was coordinated by the Government Office for National Minorities (GONM), which serves as the Roma Contact Point (RCP), with involvement of all relevant ministries, other stakeholders, and Roma representatives, and based on evaluation of the previous 'National Roma Integration Strategy 2017–2021'.² The NRSF is aligned with the European Union Roma Strategic Framework (EURSF) as well as Slovenia's national policies. While the NRSF formally and structurally meets all the standards set by the EURSF, its substantive and effective implementation does not address many of the challenges Roma communities face.

The NRSF contains a range of administrative measures and adopts a mainstream approach in many areas. However, national policies and laws in some areas restrict the NRSF's impact and expose its weaknesses. One of the most significant weaknesses is that Slovenia does not collect ethnically disaggregated data, as highlighted in the NRSF in accordance with its laws and regulations.

Moreover, authors of this report consider the NRSF's language problematic because it essentialises the social exclusion as inherent to Roma, and reproduces prejudice about Roma; it often uses expressions such as "Roma way of life," "different values," and explains many problems that Roma face by "lack of appreciation for education". On the other hand, it completely ignores structural conditions that in reality largely contribute to Roma exclusion, such as residential segregation or segregation in education.

The Act on the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia (ZRom), adopted in 2007,³ plays a significant role in the NRSF, as some Roma rights are enshrined in this law. Specifically, the law envisions the promotion of activities for the preservation of the Romani language and culture, as well as the organisation and promotion of cultural, informational, publishing, and other activities necessary to the development of the Roma community.

About this report

This report aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Slovenian NRSF, its synergy with other policies and Roma participation in implementation and monitoring.

The assessment is based on key informant interviews, desk research, and focus group discussions. The data collection process commenced in July 2024 and concluded in January 2025. It involved seven key informant interviews with stakeholders, including Žiga Štajnbaher, an expert (interviewed in person in Zagreb), Haris Tahirović representing civil society, and representatives of public institutions, including the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport (MESS), and the Government Office for National Minorities (GONM). Additional interviews were conducted with Jožek Horvat from the Roma Union of Slovenia and Milena Tudij from Romano Veseli, a coalition partner organisation.

¹ Republic of Slovenia. (2021). *National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2021–2030*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/slovenia_-_national_roma_strategic-framework_21_30_en.pdf.

² Republic of Slovenia. (2021). *Roma Inclusion Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2021–2030*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/380d4a75-4f44-4da2-b361-b4939bd117b3_en?filename=roma_slovenia_strategy2_en.pdf

³ The law provides the legal foundation for recognising the Roma as a distinct community with a special status. It formalises their right to representation and participation in public life by establishing the Roma Community Council, which acts as an umbrella organisation that voices Roma interests and offers opinions on legislation affecting them. The law also obliges municipalities with significant Roma populations to ensure Roma representation within municipal councils. It outlines responsibilities for national and local authorities to develop and implement measures supporting Roma integration.

Focus groups were organised with young Roma women and men in Slovenia, providing grassroots-level insights into the challenges and opportunities for Roma inclusion and participation at the local level.

Finally, the report also draws from a comprehensive desk review of relevant documents, including the NRSF, ZRom, the Summary of the Work of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia for 2023, the 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Slovenia by the US Embassy, the Annual Report on ECRI's Activities (2023), and the Sixth Periodical Report of the Government of Slovenia on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, among others.

Draft findings were internally reviewed by key contributors to ensure accuracy and coherence. The data was authored by Sinisa Senad Mušić and Marina Horvat from the Roma Youth Organisation of Croatia. Contributions were also made by Haris Tahirović, who facilitated data collection, and Niko Okorn, who provided proofreading, desk research support, and final comments. Janez Kranjc offered guidance on identifying relevant institutions for Roma-related issues. To further validate the data/results, we conducted two interviews with citizens of Slovenia: Urška Kupec, representing civil society, and an employee of the Ministry of Education who wished to remain anonymous.

The authors declare no conflicts of interest, as they did not participate in the development or implementation of the NRSF.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NRSF

1.1. Key developments and effectiveness of implementation

1.1.1. Changes in the NRSF

The NRSF⁴ encompasses strategic goals, specific objectives, and 'measures' aimed at addressing various priority areas. The strategy, along with most of its measures, has a timeline through 2030. Notably, the document is not accompanied by action plans.

An interim assessment of the NRSF was planned by the end of 2023; however, this has never happened. The interviewed governmental representative explained this by elections; however, considering that they took place in 2022 and no assessment occurred at the time of writing this report, there may be other reasons, such as a lack of political will. The delay in the evaluation, which could serve as the basis for updating the NRSF, has been criticised by Roma CSOs.

However, at the time of writing this report, members of the RCM coalition from Croatia were invited by the Government Office for National Minorities (GNOM) to attend a meeting in May 2025, which would serve as an introductory meeting for preparing the assessment due by 2026, with the possibility of amending and supplementing measures and activities.

A consequence of the lack of assessment and update is that the NRSF still includes some planned measures with expired implementation deadlines.

1.1.2. Progress in implementation

Through interviews with respondents and field research, it became evident that the Slovenian Government is indeed implementing the measures outlined in the NRSF. Mr Muc, one of the key Roma representatives, explicitly expressed his satisfaction with the financing of the CRCRS. Although some activities experienced delays in implementation, public pressure and numerous media reports have led to positive developments.

One of the most significant improvements concerns increased financial allocations for implementing Roma rights at the local level. In 2023, the total amount allocated to municipalities was 6.2 million EUR, while in 2024 this figure increased to 8.6 million EUR, representing an overall 38% increase.⁵ Particularly noteworthy are the smaller municipalities and those in southeastern Slovenia, which received substantial increases. For instance:⁶

- Novo Mesto received 895,733 EUR in 2024 (up from 646,891 EUR in 2023),
- Murska Sobota received 825,534 EUR (up from 599,326 EUR),
- Krško received 730,243 EUR (up from 531,569 EUR).

This consistent increase in funding suggests that, despite the delays in revising the NRSF, the Government recognises the urgency of addressing Roma-related issues and is investing more resources at the municipal level, particularly in areas with the highest need and the most frequent tensions between Roma and non-Roma communities.

⁴ Republic of Slovenia. (2017). *National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2017-2021*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/380d4a75-4f44-4da2-b361-b4939bd117b3_en?filename=roma_slovenia_strategy2_en.pdf

⁵ Sobotainfo. (22 August 2024). *Poziv k reševanju težav Romov, ne zgolj kaznovanju: Kam dajo občine denar, ki ga dobijo za romsko problematiko? [A Call to Address the Problems of The Roma, Not Merely to Punish Them: Where Do Municipalities Spend the Money They Receive for Roma-Related Issues?]*. Available at: <https://sobotainfo.com/novica/slovenija/poziv-k-resevanju-tezav-romov-ne-zgolj-kaznovanju-kam-dajo-obcine-denar-ki-ga>

⁶ *Ibid.*

1.1.3. Effectiveness of monitoring

The Government Office for National Minorities (GONM), which serves as the NRCP, monitors the implementation of NRSF. It involves coordinators from ministries and Government departments, local governments, and individuals from the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia (the Council).

According to the Law on the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia (ZRom),⁷ the Government is obliged to report annually to the National Assembly on its responsibilities toward the Roma community, including the implementation of NRSF measures.

However, the effectiveness of monitoring the NRSF implementation is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, most of the measures planned in the NRSF have the implementation deadline set for 2030; this does not provide for ongoing tracking of progress.

The second reason is that many measures are mainstream actions implemented continuously, and, since ethnically disaggregated data is not collected, it raises the question of how such data can be obtained at all. In some instances, the NRSF itself admits that impact indicators cannot be tracked as there are no data disaggregated by ethnicity.

1.1.4. Data collection

The collection of ethnically disaggregated data is problematic in Slovenia due to personal data protection laws, which significantly limit the ability to evaluate the impact of measures implemented for Roma communities. The NRSF admits that:

"In accordance with applicable legislation in the field of personal data protection, it is not possible to officially collect data based on of nationality or ethnicity, and therefore, data on members of the Roma community is not collected in Slovenia. Slovenia does not approach any national or ethnic groups in this manner. However, several attempts have been made over the last ten years to obtain more comprehensive data on the Roma community through research." (NRSF, p. 12)

This limitation means that the effectiveness of measures aimed at improving the living conditions, education, and integration of Roma individuals is primarily based on estimations. Although various institutions have conducted research projects and sporadic surveys, these efforts remain isolated and non-systematic. As a result, they do not provide a comprehensive, reliable, and consistent data source necessary for accurate monitoring and evaluation.

1.2. NRSF's synergy with domestic and EU actions

1.2.1. Complementary policies

The NRSF itself contains a comprehensive set of mainstream measures, meaning that policies outside of the NRSF are already largely integrated into its scope.

However, it is important to highlight the Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia 2021–2030 (SERS),⁸ which is fully aligned with the NRSF in terms of its timeframe. The reasons for amending the SERS, adopted in 2004, are the belief that higher levels of education and the acquisition of qualifications will enable Roma to achieve a better position in the labour market, thereby contributing to their integration. However, the SERS itself states that this strategy alone is not expected to lead to the genuine inclusion of Roma in Slovenian society without effective measures in other areas, such as employment, housing, healthcare, and related fields. SERS was adopted three months before the NRSF, in June 2021. However, SERS considered the NRSF 2017–2021, and at the same time, the MESS participated in the development of the NRSF. SERS

⁷ Republic of Slovenia. (2007). *Zakon O Romski Skupnosti V Republiki Sloveniji (ZRomS-1) [Act on the Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia (ZRomS-1)]*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia (Uradni List RS), No. 33/07. Available at: <https://pisrs.si/prehledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4405>

⁸ Republic of Slovenia. (2021). *Strategija vzgoje in izobraževanja Romov v Republiki Sloveniji 2021–2030 [Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia 2021–2030]*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.si%2Fassets%2Fministrstva%2FMIZS%2FSRI%2FRomi%2FStrategija-VIZ-Romov-2021-2030.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

encompasses other documents and resolutions, such as the National Programme for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia and the Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy.

SERS outlines the legal basis for financing the Roma community in the field of education and specifies funding or co-funding measures for Roma-related activities, which are later highlighted in the NRSF. These include financing Roma assistants in kindergartens, co-financing shorter kindergarten programmes, various pedagogical activities, and similar measures. Additionally, it describes some mainstream measures, and even in this document, educational activities in multi-purpose centres are already outlined.

However, effective Roma equality and inclusion are hindered by several provisions of Slovenian legislation. Firstly, as discussed later in this section, the law limits the collection of ethnic data. More substantively, the general legal framework enables, and sometimes even justifies, segregation in education, and leaves the residential segregation unaddressed.

As part of the research for this report (desk research and interviews with MESS, GNOM, and the Ombudsperson's Office), we can conclude that authorities do not consider classrooms predominantly attended by Roma students as segregated if they are organised with the intention of helping children achieve better educational outcomes. Or, if the aim is preserving the Romani language, organising preschool groups in Romani centres, organisation of additional learning of the Slovene language, or grouping Roma children in a classroom with a Romani teaching assistant, this is considered a justified reason for having a group or classroom that consists mainly, or entirely, of Roma children.

1.2.2. Alignment with EU actions

NRSF is both contextually and formally aligned with European strategies on Roma equality, inclusion, and participation.

Slovenia has adopted the '*Child Guarantee National Action Plan of the Republic of Slovenia 2022-2030*',⁹ in line with the European Child Guarantee.¹⁰ This document defines Roma children as one of the target groups and mentions them more than 170 times throughout the text. The main objectives of the European Child Guarantee are addressed through mainstream policies. At the same time, the NRSF complements these policies through its activities, ensuring that Roma children can exercise their rights under the European Child Guarantee.

1.2.3. Impact of assessments

As the NRSF has not been updated, no recommendations from assessments were addressed.

1.3. Roma participation in implementation

1.3.1. Involvement of Roma CSOs in implementation

The NRSF foresees partnerships between Roma civil society and institutions in its implementation. The Council has the central role. It is directly funded by the state budget and tasked with assessing needs at the local level and redistributing funds to grassroots Roma organisations. This redistribution operates as open calls for project proposals or activities that aim to improve living conditions, preserve Roma culture, combat discrimination and prejudice, and promote Roma inclusion, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and the elderly.

While this setting provides a basis for Roma participation in the NRSF implementation, the effectiveness of such involvement depends on the capacity of both Roma civil society organizations and the institutions to engage in meaningful collaboration. Interviews conducted for this report indicate that the CSOs' capacities and therefore the whole mechanism of their involvement in the NRSF participation remain low.

⁹ European Commission. (n.d.). *National Action Plans and Progress Reports: European Child Guarantee*. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Available at : https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/investing-children/european-child-guarantee/national-action-plans-and-progress-reports_en

¹⁰ European Commission. (n.d.). *European Child Guarantee*. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. Available at : https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/investing-children/european-child-guarantee_en

1.3.2. Roma in public institutions implementing the NRSF

The special law on the Roma minority, ZRom, formalises their right to representation and participation in public life by establishing the Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia (the Council) at the national level, which acts as an umbrella organisation to voice Roma interests and offer opinions on legislation affecting them. The law also obliges municipalities with significant Roma populations to ensure Roma representation within municipal councils.

The Council consists of 21 members, of which 14 are representatives of the umbrella Roma organisation, *Zveza Romov Slovenije* [Union of Roma of Slovenia], while seven members are elected representatives from local councils formed in areas with a significant Roma population. The umbrella organisation's representative has also served as president of the Council since its establishment.

The president of the Council struggles to unite other Roma organisations. Moreover, many CSOs considered as representing Roma and their interests are not led by members of the Roma community. The reason for this is the overall low educational level among Roma, limited skills necessary for engagement in civil society, and the need to prioritise other issues (such as existential challenges related to poverty). Consequently, active Roma-led CSOs often focus mainly on Erasmus projects and lack the knowledge, human capacity, and willingness to engage in policymaking and strategy development.

While this structure is well-intended, it raises questions about why such a large portion of the Council's membership is drawn from one Roma organisation, even though it is the umbrella organisation. All interviewed Roma respondents from civil society expressed criticism of this setting of representation of Roma interests, specifically of the umbrella organisation of Roma in Slovenia, because its methods of operation raised concerns about a lack of transparency in the distribution of information, and the management of financial resources. Jožek Horvat – Muc, President of the umbrella organisation of Roma in Slovenia, *Zveza Romov Slovenije*, explained in his interview that their privileged role as a partner of the Slovenian Government and as the legally designated organisation representing over 50% of council members stems from the generally limited capacity of the Roma civil society in Slovenia. He emphasised that insufficient cooperation among other Roma organisations makes the umbrella organisation a source of stability and continuity in the functioning of the Council. Beyond this structure of Roma minority representation, there is no available information on the participation of individuals identifying as Roma within public institutions directly responsible for implementing the NRSF and sectoral policies affecting Roma communities.

1.3.3. Roma participation in monitoring and evaluation

The Council plays a key role in ensuring Roma participation in monitoring of the NRSF implementation, as it includes both Roma associations and elected Roma representatives. However, the actual impact of this participation is currently limited by the capacity constraints of Roma civil society and the low educational levels within the Roma community. Despite these challenges, the framework for Roma participation in this process is grounded in the legal act, ZRom, which provides a solid foundation for their involvement.

Nonetheless, while the monitoring arrangements are sound in principle, their practical effectiveness is constrained. Many Roma view the Council as too closely aligned with the Government, raising doubts about its independence and capacity for critical oversight.

In addition to the Council, the National Roma Platform (NRP – see the next section) occasionally organises meetings to discuss monitoring-related topics. Still, these gatherings often see low participation from the Roma community.

1.3.4. Contribution of National Roma Platform to the NRSF implementation

The National Roma Platform (NRP) has been used to support Roma participation; for this purpose, the NRCP has been drawing grants from the European Commission since 2016 through a series of seven successive projects. The most recent one is SIFOROMA7, with the implementation timeframe 2025-2026 and a total budget exceeding 58,000 EUR. The project has several objectives. The first is aimed at supporting the implementation of the NRSF by organising monitoring working groups at the regional/local level, organising events in municipalities with large Roma populations and acute problems, and conducting the NRSF mid-term evaluation. The second is to support the empowerment of Roma women by organising activities for them and mainstreaming the topic in the agenda of the newly established Committee for Gender Equality. And finally, the project aims at raising awareness of civil servants and CSOs on the problems of early and forced marriages and at researching this topic.

The topic of forced and early marriages was also in the focus of previous EC-funded projects, such as the SIFOROMAS (2021-2023). It is questionable to what extent this long-term, focused attention on the issue of early and forced marriages is justified. We do not dispute that this phenomenon occurs to some extent in marginalised Roma communities. However, it is debatable whether it constitutes the most pressing obstacle to Roma equality and inclusion, or whether greater emphasis should be on addressing underlying structural barriers. Such selective attention risks reinforcing stigma against Roma. Furthermore, there is little evidence that this emphasis results from a thorough needs assessment or a participatory dialogue with Roma representatives that would substantiate its prioritisation.

The NRP was also used in the development of the current Slovenian NRSF and to finance discussions with Roma representatives and working sessions with stakeholders. Additionally, in practice, the NRP complements other policy instruments by enabling the implementation of participation measures foreseen in broader strategic documents.

As a funding mechanism, the NRP provides an important resource for GNOM to secure Roma participation. Nonetheless, such participation should be guaranteed as a standard practice, regardless of the existence of this project-based support.

2. REVIEW BY THEMATIC AREA

2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

No significant progress has been achieved since the previous cycle.¹¹ Residential segregation, lack of formal recognition of antigypsyism, and widespread discrimination persist, with perceptions of discrimination increasing, particularly in South-Eastern Slovenia and Prekmurje.¹² Tensions between Roma and non-Roma communities, as well as with the police, remain high. Media reports and interviews confirm repeated conflicts, protests, and growing distrust. Local authorities have publicly criticised the absence of systemic measures,¹³ while parliamentary debates highlighted that the lack of national actions leading to self-organising; the Ombudsman Svetina warned that the “absence of measures at the national level is leading to local communities taking matters into their own hands.”¹⁴ Recent (2024) incidents in Kočevje¹⁵ and other municipalities¹⁶ illustrate recurring interethnic tensions and large-scale demonstrations by non-Roma residents occurred in Šentjernej¹⁷ or Ljubljana,¹⁸ both in 2025. Focus group participants described fear of confrontation, with Roma facilitators recommending locking venues during public events to avoid clashes.

National and international institutions recognise this trend. In 2023, OSCE ODIHR reported persistent hate crimes and gaps in monitoring and enforcement,¹⁹ while the Ombudsman warns that insufficient national measures fuel localised reactions and undermine Roma rights.²⁰ Interviews conducted for this report confirm that antigypsyism increasingly manifests online and in media narratives, where Roma are often portrayed as a source of conflict rather than victims of systemic exclusion.

The NRSF includes measures under ‘Combating Antigypsyism and Discrimination’ and ‘Improving Coexistence in Roma Settlements and Their Surroundings’ such as anti-discrimination training for officials, including police, aimed at preventing violence and ensuring police presence in Roma settlements and areas where Roma live, and promoting integration through culture and awareness-raising. However, two planned revisions to the NRSF have not occurred, and no new measures in this field have been introduced.

¹¹ Roma Civil Monitoring. (2023). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation in Slovenia (RCM-2022-C4 Slovenia FINAL)*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <https://romacivilmonitoring.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/RCM-2022-C4-Slovenia-FINAL.pdf>

¹² Interview with Mr Haris, Mr Kranjc, and Mr Muc.

¹³ STA – Slovenian Press Agency. (2025). *Mayors in Southeast Slovenia and Posavje Urge Systemic Roma Measures*. Available at: <https://english.sta.si/3314854/mayors-in-southeast-slovenia-and-posavje-urge-systemic-roma-measures>

¹⁴ Slovenian Times. (2024). *Progress over Roma Issues Slow*. Available at: <https://sloveniatimes.com/39801/progress-over-roma-issues-slow>

¹⁵ rroma.org. (n.d.). *Slovenia and Roma Protests*. Available at: <https://rroma.org/slovenia-and-roma-protests/>

¹⁶ STA – Slovenian Press Agency. (2025). *Mayors in Southeast Slovenia and Posavje Urge Systemic Roma Measures*. Available at: <https://english.sta.si/3314854/mayors-in-southeast-slovenia-and-posavje-urge-systemic-roma-measures>

¹⁷ Nova24TV. (3 August 2025). *Šentjernejčani sporočajo vladi: Dovolj je bilo romskega nasilja in neukrepanja države*. Available at: <https://nova24tv.si/sentjernejcani-sporocajo-vladi-dovolj-je-bilo-romskega-nasilja-in-neukrepanja-drzave/>

¹⁸ Dnevnik. (16 July 2025). *Tudi nune in obritoglavci na shodu v Ljubljani pozvali k zagotavljanju varnosti* [Also Nuns and Skinheads at a Rally in Ljubljana Called for Ensuring sSafety]. Available at: <https://www.dnevnik.si/novice/ljubljana/okoli-sto-ljudi-pozvalo-k-zagotavljanju-varnosti-v-ljubljani-2744422/>

¹⁹ Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. (2023). *Report Data – Slovenia – 2023*. Available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/reporting/slovenia/2023>

²⁰ Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia. (2024). *Summary of the Work of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia for 2023*. Available at: https://www.varuh-rs.si/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/lp/LP_2023/Summary_of_the_Work_of_the_Human_Rights_Ombudsman_of_the_Republic_of_Slovenia_for_2023.pdf

Despite the recognition of the problem in the NRSF, implementation has been inconsistent and often reactive rather than systemic.

Several actions have been introduced to address tensions and discrimination. Training programmes for law enforcement and public officials were among the most visible measures. In 2023, more than 350 police officers and 120 public officials participated in sessions carried out in partnership with local municipalities focused on recognising stereotypes, preventing discrimination, and improving cooperation with Roma communities.²¹ However, interviews and focus groups conducted for this report revealed that their impact was limited; some participants perceived them as symbolic exercises rather than genuine efforts to change attitudes, with no tangible improvements at the local level.

Security measures were strengthened through increased police presence in 20 Roma settlements, accompanied by a 15% rise in joint patrols and preventive visits.²² These interventions aimed to de-escalate tensions and ensure faster responses to incidents. While they improved visibility, Roma representatives noted that trust remains low and preventive policing often feels intrusive rather than cooperative. A more promising step was the targeted employment of Roma police officers – four were recruited in 2025, with plans for annual increases.²³ This initiative is widely regarded as a confidence-building measure, though its scale remains modest.

Cultural and awareness-raising activities were also implemented. The Ministry of Culture financed 85 Roma cultural projects in 2022, allocating 140,000 EUR to promote the Roma language, history, and intercultural dialogue.²⁴ Public campaigns sought to counter stereotypes. Yet, their reach was limited, and Roma history remains marginal in school curricula. Community engagement projects were launched in 15 municipalities, including youth workshops and conflict-resolution sessions, and municipal Roma councillors were supported to strengthen participation.²⁵ These initiatives were positively assessed by local actors but remain fragmented and dependent on short-term funding.

In this context, an important statement was made by a Roma police officer working on Roma issues through counselling and multicultural programmes within the police force. He emphasised that the main challenge is the mutual mistrust between Roma and non-Roma communities and that rebuilding broken trust will take time. However, the effectiveness of implemented measures is often questionable. Interviews and focus groups revealed that those responsible for implementing activities often themselves held negative attitudes towards Roma, despite working with the Roma community. One young Roma woman shared an example where an anti-discrimination workshop was conducted by a police officer whose daughter had previously been involved in a physical altercation with a Roma girl – the interviewee herself.²⁶ Participants in the focus group agreed that some of these trainings serve more as opportunities for informal social gatherings or, as they put it, “gossiping about Roma,” rather than as genuine educational efforts, with no visible changes taking place at the local level.²⁷

Similar concerns were echoed by representatives of the Ombudsman’s Office, which actively collects data and implements activities in Roma settlements. The Ombudsman’s Office interprets discrimination more broadly –

²¹ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the Roma Community in Slovenia (for 2022)*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-polozaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Svet24. (13 January 2025). *Slovenska policija zaposluje štiri Rome, želijo si jih več [The Slovenian Police Employ Four Roma, They Would Like to Have More]*. Available at: <https://svet24.si/clanek/novice/slovenija/6784b4ff42a30/romska-skupnost-slovenija-romi-v-policiji>

²⁴ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the Roma Community in Slovenia (for 2022)*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-polozaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Focus group.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

encompassing not only direct incidents but also systemic issues such as housing conditions, isolation, segregation, police conduct within settlements, and even the denial of services in certain public venues.

Some aspects of antigypsyism remain insufficiently addressed. Online hate speech is widespread but not systematically monitored, with Roma being frequently targeted according to experts.²⁸ Media coverage reinforces stereotypes: cases involving Roma as alleged perpetrators are reported sensationally, while attacks against Roma receive minimal attention. A 2024 article by Reporter criticised the publication of both victim and perpetrator images in a violent incident involving a Roma minor, raising privacy concerns.²⁹ Broader reporting trends frame Roma issues as a 'Roma problem', ignoring structural causes. Although authorities acknowledge these patterns, no review or corrective measures have been introduced to counter media discrimination.

2.2. Education

Slovenia does not systematically collect ethnically disaggregated data, making it difficult to track the educational outcomes of Roma students. Available estimates indicate persistent disparities. According to the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), approximately 1,200 Roma children are enrolled in primary schools. Only about half continue to secondary education.³⁰ The Institute of Ethnic Studies provides a higher estimate of around 2,000 Roma children attending primary school. Still, it confirms that only roughly half of each cohort progresses to secondary education. It also highlights stark differences in grade repetition: among non-Roma children, rates range from 0.6% to 1.2%, while among Roma children, they average 19.8% to 33.5%.³¹ The situation differs regionally, the worst is in southeastern regions, where the grade repetition reaches 42.8%, and in Novo Mesto only 6% of Roma children complete the nine-year primary school programme.³²

The most recent data on Roma enrolment in higher education in Slovenia dates back to the 2018/2019 academic year, when 14 Roma students were reported to be enrolled at university. Interestingly, there is a Roma Academic Club, an organisation composed of academically educated Roma from Prekmurje, which currently has four members with master's degrees and over 30 members in total.^{33, 34}

The NRSF seeks to address absenteeism, prevent dropouts, and increase participation in preschool and secondary education. Measures include financial subsidies for Roma families, additional support for the Slovene language, Romani language teaching, and the employment of Roma assistants. Although these measures address significant challenges and have been beneficial in improving the educational inclusion of Roma children, they remain insufficient to tackle systemic barriers such as segregation and adult education.

Without being part of a wider revision of the NRSF, the Government adopted legislative guidelines in December 2024 aimed at increasing Roma educational inclusion. Proposed measures include mandatory kindergarten

²⁸ Institute Media. (n.d.). *Urška Valentič – Interview*. Available at: <https://institutemedia.org/urska-valentic-interview/>

²⁹ Reporter. (2025). *Anticiganizem: čeduprav problem pometemo pod preprogo, ne bo izginil [Anti-Gypsyism: Even If We Sweep the Problem Under the Rug, It Will Not Disappear]*. Available at: <https://reporter.si/clanek/slovenija/anticiganizem-cetudi-problem-pometemo-pod-preprogo-ne-bo-izginil-komentar-1289893?>

³⁰ IPerić, Tatjana. (15 August 2001). *Insufficient: Governmental Programmes for Roma in Slovenia*. European Roma Rights Centre. Available at: <https://www.errc.org/roma-rights-journal/insufficient-governmental-programmes-for-roma-in-slovenia>

³¹ STA – Slovenian Press Agency. (n.d.). *Education Among Roma Improving but Still Much To Do*. Available at: <https://english.sta.si/3361704/education-among-roma-improving-but-still-much-to-do>

³² 24ur. (20 May 2023). *'Vsak romski otrok, ki pot nadaljuje v srednjo šolo, je pravi čudež' [Every Roma Child Who Continues to Secondary School Is A Real Miracle]*. Available at: <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/vsak-romski-otrok-ki-pot-nadaljuje-v-srednjo-solo-je-pravi-cudez.html>

³³ STA – Slovenian Press Agency. (11 November 2024). *Romska skupnost v Sloveniji: Romski akademski klub združuje visoko izobražene Rome (II) [Roma Community in Slovenia: The Roma Academic Club Brings Together Highly Educated Roma (II)]*. Available at: <https://www.sta.si/3361704/romska-skupnost-v-sloveniji-romski-akademski-klub-zdruzuje-visoko-izobrazene-rome>

³⁴ Despite repeated attempts, the club did not respond to our interview requests sent via official email, Facebook pages, or personal contacts. Available sources indicate that the club is primarily composed of academically educated Roma from the Prekmurje region.

attendance for at least one year before primary school, abolishing child allowance for children who do not attend kindergarten, reducing child benefits for parents who fail to ensure continued education after age 15, and mandatory employment of Roma coordinators in municipalities with Roma settlements.³⁵ These measures aim to strengthen early engagement and local oversight. Still, interviews conducted for this research reveal mixed reactions: Roma representatives acknowledge the importance of education yet criticise financial penalties, suggesting compensatory benefits to avoid deepening poverty.

Government reports confirm that preschool measures are being implemented. Actions include general subsidies, collaboration with Roma assistants, additional payments for classes with Roma pupils, and shorter 240-hour kindergarten programmes.³⁶ However, implementation challenges persist. Many kindergartens resist shorter programmes, and supplementary language classes in multifunctional centres have been halted in some settlements due to poor infrastructure.³⁷

The European Commission noted a slight improvement in preschool inclusion and the creation of 19 new Roma assistant positions during the 2023/2024 school year.³⁸ Communities widely value Roma assistants and play a key role in mitigating absenteeism. In 2022, the Inspectorate for Education conducted 245 misdemeanour proceedings, 223 related to absenteeism, and intervened directly in 43 cases where schools failed to notify social services.³⁹ These actions demonstrate commitment but remain reactive rather than preventive.

Despite progress in early education, systemic gaps undermine long-term outcomes.

Although the NRSF foresees certain measures concerning the secondary education, their implementation has not yet begun. According to an interview with a representative of GNOM, these measures are not currently a priority but are expected to be implemented soon, with the target deadline for achieving results set for 2030.

Even more importantly, the school segregation, which crucially impacts Roma children's educational pathways, is neither recognised nor addressed by the NRSF or other national policies. Multipurpose centres and short preschool programmes, while intended to support inclusion, effectively create Roma-only spaces. The absence of ethnic data allows authorities to bypass the issue, even as they use ethnicity to monitor attendance. Ombudsman representatives confirmed reports of segregated classes, noting that grouping is justified under "acceptable criteria," though these disproportionately affect Roma children.

Civil society actors prioritise attendance over desegregation, while authorities avoid the topic entirely. This contradiction illustrates a structural failure to ensure equal opportunities. Conditions in Roma-only facilities are often worse, reinforcing isolation, a finding echoed by the 2023 U.S. Department of State report. Minority Rights Group Europe previously warned that Roma children are illegally separated in classrooms, and this remains true today, as no systemic measures have been adopted.⁴⁰ For a more detailed analysis of the school segregation, see Chapter 3 of this report.

³⁵ STA – Slovenian Press Agency. (12 December 2024). *Vlada z izhodišči za reševanje nekaterih romskih vprašanj* [Government Adopts Basis for Solving Some Roma Issues]. Available at: <https://english.sta.si/3373286/vlada-z-izhodišči-za-reševanje-nekaterih-romskih-vprašanj>

³⁶ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ European Commission. (2024). *Education and Training Monitor 2024 – Slovenia Country Report*. Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor/en/country-reports/slovenia.html>

³⁹ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

⁴⁰ United States Department of State. (2024). *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Slovenia*. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/slovenia/>

Language support measures face similar obstacles. Supplementary Slovene and Romani classes are inconsistently delivered. While Roma assistants are effective mediators, their roles remain project-based and vulnerable to funding cycles, limiting sustainability. Adult education is absent from the NRSF, despite its critical role in breaking cycles of exclusion. Interviews confirm that Roma who leave school early rarely re-enter education, leaving young people and women particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. This omission perpetuates intergenerational poverty and undermines broader inclusion goals.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are weak. Although some enforcement mechanisms exist, such as absenteeism proceedings, there is no systematic assessment of the effectiveness of these measures or their impact on reducing dropout rates. The lack of reliable data, combined with deliberate avoidance of ethnic indicators, prevents evidence-based policymaking and masks the scale of segregation.

2.3. Employment

Employment remains one of the most critical yet least addressed areas of Roma inclusion in Slovenia. As significant barriers that Roma face in accessing jobs, the NRSF and the governmental reports on its implementation identify the low level of education, lack of work experience, and “insufficient ability and willingness of Roma to actively recognise their own competencies and interests in relation to education, training, and employment”; notably, they omit the discrimination and antigypsyism as structural problems.

Despite the NRSF identifying employment as a priority, it foresees one mainstream measure, “Inclusion of Roma in State Labour Market Programmes Until 2030”, which relies on general employment services rather than tailored approaches. While Roma are formally designated as a priority group, this has not translated into targeted action or systematic collection of data on the mainstream measures’ outreach to Roma. As a result, the effectiveness of the action remains unknown but persistent problems indicate limited impact.

The Government report on the implementation of the NRSF indicates that in 2022, 3,479 Roma participated in state measures. However, when it comes to actual employment outcomes, this number drops significantly to only 177 Roma, with no data on retention.⁴¹ (Due to the lack of available data, especially for the period from 2023 onwards, our information is based on interviews with civil society organisations and focus group discussions).

This stark gap between participation and outcomes underscores the limited effectiveness of existing programmes. Interviews with civil society organisations and focus groups reveal that participation is often mandatory for unemployed individuals. Still the measures fail to address the root causes of exclusion, mainly discrimination and low levels of education. Roma are frequently channelled into short-term, low-paid jobs, primarily in construction and manual labour, without pathways to stable employment or skills development.

Some positive developments have occurred, albeit on a small scale. The targeted employment of Roma assistants in education or the initial recruitment of Roma police officers (four hired in 2025, with plans to increase this number annually)⁴² represent steps toward inclusion. However, these initiatives involve only a few dozen individuals and cannot compensate for the absence of systemic labour market policies.

A key challenge is that many Roma enter the labour market at a very young age without completing their education, making them a highly disadvantaged and difficult-to-employ group. It was also emphasised that participation in these measures is often mandatory for unemployed individuals, yet the outcomes are minimal, particularly for those without formal education. Interviews confirm that Roma who leave school early rarely re-enter education, leaving young people and women particularly vulnerable to long-term unemployment. While the EURSF recognises Roma women and NEET youth as particularly disadvantaged, the NRSF entirely overlooks them, and there are no dedicated programmes addressing their specific needs. Moreover, measures such as

⁴¹ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

⁴² Svet24. (13 January 2025). *Slovenska policija zaposluje štiri Rome, želijo si jih več več* [The Slovenian Police Employ Four Roma, They Would Like to Have More]. Available at: <https://svet24.si/lokalno/pomurje/novice/zaposlitev/romska-skupnost-slovenija-romi-v-policiji-1393871/>

employer incentives, public works programmes, or paid internships are absent, and adult education, which is critical for improving employability, remains omitted by the strategy.

2.4. Healthcare

Health disparities among Roma in Slovenia remain severe and closely linked to poverty and poor living conditions, which are outside the direct influence of responsible institutions in the area of healthcare. Infant mortality among Roma is reported to be four times higher than in the general population. The mortality rate for children aged 1-4 is similarly elevated, while life expectancy is approximately 22 years lower than that of the majority population.⁴³ These figures underscore the urgency of targeted interventions, yet progress under the NRSF has been limited and fragmented.

The NRSF defines two objectives in healthcare: building trust between Roma communities and health institutions and promoting healthier lifestyles. Measures include outreach services, health education, and preventive programmes. These initiatives strengthened trust in healthcare and targeted Roma health inequalities.

Implementation has focused on project-based activities rather than systemic reforms. In 2021/2022, the Ministry of Health co-financed programmes for vulnerable groups worth 560,000 EUR, implemented by three CSOs: *Kralji ulice* [Kings of the Street] (health access and support), Romani Union (health promotion for women, children, and the elderly), and Novo mesto Volunteer Development Association – *Zdravita* (healthy lifestyles).⁴⁴ Activities included education on nutrition, hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, COVID-19 awareness, and vaccination. Workshops and individual counselling addressed mental health and empowerment, complemented by media campaigns through Roma newspapers and radio.⁴⁵

An interviewee for this report highlighted progress in healthcare, noting that many projects are being implemented and that some issues, such as access to general practitioners, have been addressed promptly. In contrast, other problems, such as unhealthy habits among Roma, need further attention, and many challenges will take a long time to resolve. Moreover, although many activities are being carried out on a project-by-project basis, which is better than doing nothing, the interviewee pointed out that there is a need for a more systematic approach. Numerous local-level activities have not been documented in media reports or official Government reports. Key areas of work include addiction prevention, reproductive health, access to mammography, and collaboration with healthcare professionals facilitated through Roma community representatives at the local level.⁴⁶

Research and professional engagement have increased in recent years. The National Institute of Public Health (NIJZ) also continued research on Roma women and newborns and prepared a national health survey for 2023. In 2023, a scientific article on Roma women's reproductive health was published in the *Journal of Public Health*, providing evidence for tailored interventions.⁴⁷ In 2024, NIJZ organised a conference titled 'Health of the Roma – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow' in Murska Sobota, presenting research findings and introducing the RomStat project to improve health data collection.⁴⁸

⁴³ Roma Civil Monitor. (2023). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation in Slovenia (RCM-2022-C4 Slovenia FINAL)*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcalclefndmkaj/https://www.romacivilmonitoring.eu/pdf/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-slovenia-2017-eprint-fin.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcalclefndmkaj/https://www.romacivilmonitoring.eu/pdf/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-slovenia-2017-eprint-fin.pdf)

⁴⁴ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Position of the Roma Community in Slovenia]*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Interview with Mr Muc.

⁴⁷ Mihevc Ponikvar, B., Krajnc Nikolić, T. & Zakrajšek, V. (29 May 2023). *Perinatal Health Indicators of Women, Living in Roma Settlements in Slovenia*. Revija Javno zdravje, 2023(1). <https://doi.org/10.26318/JZ-2023-1>

⁴⁸ National Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia (NIJZ). (17 May 2024). *Strokovna konferenca o zdravju Romov v Murski Soboti [Professional Conference on Roma Health in Murska Sobota]*. NIJZ — Regional Unit

The project implemented between February and December 2025 by the National Institute of Public Health of Slovenia (NIJZ), is aimed at creating a sustainable and repeatable system for monitoring the health status of the Roma community in Slovenia. It builds on earlier efforts to understand the health needs of Roma and focuses on analysing national health data for the period 2018-2022. Through this data, the project seeks to identify the main public-health challenges faced by Roma, including health inequalities, patterns of using preventive and curative health services, and the situation of particularly vulnerable subgroups. RomStat also aims to develop evidence-based recommendations for public-health interventions tailored to the social, economic, and cultural context of Roma communities.

2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

Roma communities in Slovenia face persistent housing deprivation and access to essential services.⁴⁹ The MDPI Study on Social Infrastructure for Roma Communities (2023) highlights that many Roma settlements in Slovenia lack proper housing infrastructure, with residents often living in informal or segregated conditions. The study emphasizes the necessity of establishing formal settlements with adequate utilities to ensure that Roma individuals can fully exercise their constitutional rights.⁵⁰ The UNICEF Report on Roma Children (2024) advocates for upgrading Roma neighbourhoods to provide essential services, including housing and sanitation, to improve living conditions and protect children's rights.⁵¹ The poor conditions in Roma settlements also affect other areas, such as education. For example, a project had to be halted in certain settlements due to the inadequate living conditions, as reported under the education chapter of this report.

Another critical issue is housing segregation, which the NRSF partially addresses through a 'soft' measure that specifically informs municipalities with a significant Roma population when social housing calls are announced. Although disaggregated data are not systematically collected, interviews with Mr Žiga and other civil society representatives clearly confirmed that Roma do receive social housing, but under mainstream conditions, meaning there is no affirmative action or at least targeting aimed at promoting desegregation. However, segregation based on ethnicity warrants a different approach, which is currently not a priority.

The NRSF prioritises improving living conditions in Roma settlements through residential desegregation. While investments in Roma settlements contribute to the overall goal of Roma inclusion in society, segregation has broader consequences beyond the housing conditions themselves. The NRSF rarely uses the term 'segregated Roma settlements,' preferring instead 'settlements with a majority Roma population.' For a more detailed analysis of the residential segregation, see Chapter 3 of this report.

To tackle residential segregation, the NRSF includes two measures: firstly, informing municipalities where Roma live about options for co-funding the construction of non-profit apartments and the provision of housing units under the HFRS programmes, as well as providing professional assistance to municipalities. And secondly, informing the interested Roma population about the options for renting apartments under open calls for applications of the HFRS. These are soft measures that were not even monitored during implementation, and we did not find any Government report that provided information on their implementation. However, as we already mentioned above, Roma have access to social housing under the same conditions as all other citizens

Murska Sobota. Available at: <https://nijz.si/obmocna-enota-murska-sobota/strokovna-konferenca-o-zdravju-romov-v-murski-soboti/>

⁴⁹ Roma Civil Monitor. (2023). *Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Quality of the National Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation in Slovenia (RCM-2022-C4 Slovenia FINAL)*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.romacivilmonitoring.eu/pdf/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-slovenia-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>

⁵⁰ MDPI. (2025).

Towards Inclusive Waste Management in Marginalised Urban Areas: An Expert-Guided Framework and Its Pilot in Reșița, Romania. Sustainability, 17(11), 5070. Available at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/17/11/5070>

⁵¹ European Commission. (2024). *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Implementation of the National Roma Strategic Frameworks in Light of the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation and the Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation (COM(2024) 422 final)*. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2024:422:FIN>

of the Republic of Slovenia; a certain number of Roma are allocated social housing units based on their social status.⁵²

However, there are obstacles to materialise at least the priority of improving living conditions within segregated settlements. Primarily, the unsettled legal status of many Roma settlements in the land areas where they are located, prevents investment in infrastructure. Secondly, even after the introduction of measures aimed at legalisation, which would make them eligible for national co-funding for investments, it is still the local authorities who set the investment priorities.⁵³ That fact that the problem persists is confirmed by numerous media articles. Representatives of Amnesty International Slovenia, Roma organisations, and Roma themselves warned at a press conference in Ribnica that one-fifth of Roma settlements in Slovenia still do not have access to drinking water, even though the right to water is guaranteed as a human right by the Constitution. They therefore launched a special petition calling on the Government to provide water where it is still lacking.⁵⁴ In the same year, 2024, Mr Muc, who we had interviewed, shared his views with the media:

“We need systematic rules, structured funding, and a clear definition of responsibilities to resolve these issues. [...] Water provision is a municipal responsibility, but if municipalities do not do it for their citizens, it is the state’s duty to step in and guarantee the constitutional right to water.”⁵⁵

In early 2023, the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development published a two-year public call for co-financing infrastructure projects in Roma settlements. The total funding allocated was 2.5 million EUR, with 1.5 million EUR for 2023 and 1 million EUR for 2024. Municipalities submitted 14 proposals, all of which were approved. These projects aimed to improve basic utilities such as roads, water supply, and electricity in Roma settlements.⁵⁶

Although the investments that continued in 2025 are commendable and funds have also been secured for 2026, looking at this activity in the NRSF, fewer financial resources have been invested than planned. The measure foresees investments of 1,700,000 EUR for 2022, 2023, and 2024, while no investments were foreseen for the following years, as it was assumed that a revision would have been carried out by then, which has still not been done.⁵⁷

In 2024, the national authorities, through a programme supporting local communities to develop independently, also allocated funds.⁵⁸ While there is a national community programme for the Italian and Hungarian minorities, we were unable to find a similar programme for the Roma community. However, we found that under this call, funds were allocated to the municipality of Krško for the Roma. These funds were reportedly misused, or instead stolen, by a construction company and a Roma representative in the local Government, as reported by several media outlets.⁵⁹

In implementation, an obvious distinction remains between registered and illegal settlements. In 2025, the Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development (MKRR) issued a public call to co-finance community

⁵² Interview with Mr Žiga, Mr Muc and Mr Haris

⁵³ Interview with a representative of GNOM

⁵⁴ 24ur. (19 November 2024). *Amnesty International vlado pozval k zagotovitvi vode v vseh romskih naseljih* [Amnesty International Calls on the Government to Ensure Water in all Roma Settlements]. Available at: <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/amnesty-international-vlado-pozval-k-zagotovitvi-vode-v-vseh-romskih-naseljih.html>

⁵⁵ Blue Community. (21 November 2024). *Slovenia: Drinking Water for All Roma*. Available at: <https://blue-community.net/2024/11/21/slovenia-drinking-water-for-all-roma/> blue-community.net

⁵⁶ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Sixth Periodical Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Slovenia*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/6th-sr-slovenia-en/1680ac0ef3_rm.coe.int+1

⁵⁷ Republic of Slovenia. (2021). *National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2021–2030*. Government of Slovenia. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/slovenia_-_national_roma_strategic_framework_21_30_en.pdf

⁵⁸ Republic of Slovenia. (n.d.). *Promoting Regional Development*. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/en/topics/promoting-regional-development/>

⁵⁹ Roma Foundation. (n.d.). *Slovenia and Roma Funds*. Available at: <https://rroma.org/slovenia-and-roma-funds/>

infrastructure in Roma settlements, allocating a total of 1 million EUR.⁶⁰ Nine municipalities submitted applications. The Ministry approved seven applications and issued grant-award decisions to the municipalities of Puconci, Črnomelj, Murska Sobota, Kuzma, Lendava, and two grants to Rogašovci. Not enough funds were available to fully co-finance the municipality of Beltinci's project proposal. The application from the municipality of Ribnica was rejected because it exceeded the co-financing ceiling.⁶¹ For 2026, identical funds have been allocated for the same call.⁶²

These investments are the result of the Government's 2024 announcement, when it declared that MKRR would launch public calls for proposals. The calls are to be implemented by the ministry itself, as well as through the Slovenian Regional Development Fund (SRRS) and the Slovene Enterprise Fund (SPS), to provide both grants and repayable financial incentives to local communities and businesses in 2025.⁶³

MKRR has approved EU funds for the public call to co-finance the Network of Multi-Purpose Roma Centres. The goal of the project is to improve the socio-economic position of the Roma community, strengthen their inclusion in society, and ensure better living conditions. The public call for proposals provides co-financing for five multi-year projects, within which ten multi-purpose Roma centres will be established. The centres will operate in municipalities with a concentrated Roma population. One of these centres will be located in the cohesion region of Western Slovenia, while the remaining nine will be in Eastern Slovenia. The total value of the call is 5.5 million EUR, of which the ESF+ contributes 4.4 million EUR. Four projects have been selected, and the construction of nine centres has begun, with plans to complete all of them by the end of 2025.

2.6. Social protection

In the NRSF, social protection is part of a broader section titled 'Social Security, Social Integration, Protection of Children, Women, and Young People', which also covers social services and child protection. Measures are interlinked, but many aspects remain unaddressed. No revision of the NRSF occurred; however, some activities outside the framework, such as UNICEF's 'Child Guarantee' Programme, had an impact on Roma social protection. For strategic clarity, this area should be separated and aligned with the EU Roma Inclusion Framework.

In 2022, Slovenia continued to implement measures to protect the Roma community's social rights. Social activation programmes, co-financed by EU funds, were carried out to reduce poverty risk, empower participants, and facilitate their labour market integration. Three programmes specifically targeted Roma women, with 334 women participating and over 25% achieving employment, training, or education outcomes.⁶⁴ Programmes were implemented in five locations: Novo mesto, Črnomelj, Maribor, Lendava, and Beltinci. The Roma civil society confirmed the programme results, as the association EPEKA, part of the RCM coalition team, was implementing one of these programmes.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Republic of Slovenia. (2024). *Javni razpis za sofinanciranje projektov osnovne komunalne infrastrukture v romskih naseljih v letih 2025 in 2026* [Public Tender for Co-Financing Basic Communal Infrastructure Projects in Roma Settlements for the Years 2025 and 2026]. Ministry for Cohesion and Regional Development. Available at: <https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2024010100004/javni-razpis-za-sofinanciranje-projektov-osnovne-komunalne-infrastrukture-v-romskih-naseljih-v-letih-2025-in-2026-st--4300-122024-1630-46-ob-339624>

⁶¹ Republic of Slovenia. (2 April 2025). *Results of the Call for Proposals to Co-Finance Community Infrastructure in Roma Settlements and Information of the Second Deadline*. Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2025-04-02-results-of-the-call-for-proposals-to-co-finance-community-infrastructure-in-roma-settlements-and-information-of-the-second-deadline/>

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ Republic of Slovenia. (25 October 2024). *Planned Calls for Proposals in the Field of Regional Development in 2024 and 2025*. Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2024-10-25-planned-calls-for-proposals-in-the-field-of-regional-development-in-2024-and-2025/>

⁶⁴ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

⁶⁵ EPEKA Association. (27 September 2022). *Final Event of the Programme 'Social Activation: For Roma Women'*. Available at: <https://www.epeka.si/en/final-event-of-the-programme-social-activation-for-roma-women/>

While Slovenia has implemented several targeted social protection measures for the Roma community, significant structural gaps remain unaddressed, leaving many Roma households at continued risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Despite efforts such as social activation programmes and child-related financial incentives, these measures do not guarantee an adequate minimum income for all households. The European Commission's 2022 report highlights that many Roma in Slovenia live in poor socio-economic conditions, resulting in them being caught in a cycle of poverty, being passive and dependent on financial social assistance.⁶⁶

Access to income support schemes remains limited due to low awareness, administrative burdens, and stigma. The 2022 European Commission report notes that discrimination against socially marginalised Roma persisted in some parts of the country, and organisations monitoring conditions in the Roma community noted barriers to accessing social services.⁶⁷

Finally, it should also be emphasised that measures aimed at promoting the inclusion of Roma children in education and preventing school absenteeism have affected the rules and reduced social benefits for families (see the 'Education' section above).

2.7. Social services

In the NRSF, social services are grouped under a broader priority area 'Social Security, Social Integration, Protection of Children, Women, and Young People', alongside social protection and child protection. Considering the issues identified in previous reports – such as limited access to social services, weak outreach, and concerns about quality – these problems may have been partially reduced, but they remain present. One of the key developments with potentially significant impact is the introduction of UNICEF's Child Guarantee Programme, which performs certain functions through multi-purpose community centres. However, not all of these centres have been established yet.

Social services were supported through co-financing of welfare programmes and multi-generational centres (VGC), delivering activities to strengthen Roma inclusion, provide guidance, and support education and skills development. In 2022, six welfare programmes and three VGCs offered targeted interventions, totalling 400 hours of activities despite limited funding.⁶⁸ One flagship project, 'Together for Knowledge!' implemented in multi-purpose Roma centres received almost 6 million EUR, including 5.1 million EUR from ESF+.⁶⁹

Training for social work professionals (CSD staff and programme implementers) improved awareness of Roma-specific socio-economic challenges and enhanced intervention strategies. Preventive measures addressing early and forced marriages were introduced through awareness campaigns and capacity-building in Roma settlements.⁷⁰ Under the National Roma Platform (SIFOROMA 5), professional trainings for social workers,

⁶⁶ Republic of Slovenia. (2021). *National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2021–2030*. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/slovenia_-_national_roma_strategic_framework_21_30_en.pdf

⁶⁷ United States Department of State. (2023). *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Slovenia*. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/slovenia>

⁶⁸ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]*. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1.docx.pdf

⁶⁹ Republic of Slovenia. (24 May 2024). *EU Funding for Multi-Purpose Roma Centres*. Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2024-05-24-eu-funding-for-multi-purpose-roma-centres/>

⁷⁰ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]*. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji_1.docx.pdf

school counsellors, and Roma coordinators were conducted, including a session in Maribor in November 2022 focused on identifying and intervening in early and forced marriages.⁷¹

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ) cofinanced several CSO projects addressing gender inequality, including a targeted initiative for Roma women implemented by the Association for Assistance and Self-help to Homeless People *Kralji ulice* [Kings of the Street] in Maribor (April to November 2022), which delivered empowerment workshops and community engagement. Its activities focused on supporting and empowering Roma women, one of the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups, through a series of workshops, empowerment initiatives, and community engagement efforts designed to strengthen their social inclusion and reduce inequalities.⁷² Additional professional training for CSD staff was organised in March 2022, covering practical tools for fieldwork and socio-economic interventions.⁷³

The Government's 2024 Biennial report on the Child Guarantee noted expanded mental health services, psychological counselling, and addiction prevention, with 22 child and adolescent mental health centres operating nationwide;⁷⁴ yet, challenges remain, including long wait times and disparities in access for low-income and Roma children.

Activities implemented under the NRSF, as well as initiatives outside of the NRSF framework, partially address the problems identified in previous and current Roma Civil Monitoring reports. However, based on our research, two key challenges remain insufficiently addressed. In particular, the lack of adequate programmes to address indebtedness remains a major gap. While there is some level of cooperation among relevant actors, this issue should be given greater prominence than others, as it remains significantly under-addressed and has a substantial impact on Roma social inclusion.

2.8. Child protection

There is very little direct data available on Roma children; however interviews indicate that they face persistent poverty, limited mobility beyond segregated settlements, discrimination, and inadequate living conditions.⁷⁵ The 2022 report of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman confirmed that poverty is linked to poor educational outcomes and low employability. The report stresses that many children live in unacceptable conditions, such as sharing beds with multiple siblings and lacking privacy for hygiene activities, which particularly affects their dignity and well-being.⁷⁶

Child protection is not treated as a standalone priority in the NRSF but is addressed indirectly through social services and social protection measures. The only specific activity is tackling early and forced marriages through awareness-raising of professionals in institutions working with vulnerable children and youth to identify and

⁷¹ EPEKA Association. (n.d.). *Identifying Early and Forced Marriages in the Roma Community and Taking Action in These Cases*. Available at: <https://epeka.si/en/identifying-early-and-forced-marriages-in-the-roma-community-and-taking-action-in-these-cases/>

⁷² Government of the Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto Poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije O Položaju Romske Skupnosti V Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Available at: https://www.romhr.hr/uploads/document/doc/41/Deseto%20porocilo%20o%20polozaju%20romske%20skupnosti%20v%20Sloveniji_1_docx.pdf

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Eurochild. (15 April 2025). *Slovenia's 2024 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the Child Guarantee – An Overview*. Available at: <https://eurochild.org/resource/slovenias-2024-biennial-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-child-guarantee-an-overview/> eurochild.org+1

⁷⁵ Data from an interview with Mr Haris and Mr Muc, and from a focus group

⁷⁶ Varuh človekovih pravic Republike Slovenije [Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia]. (n.d.). *The Position of the Roma People Can Only Be Improved with Good Will and Cooperation*. Available at: [https://www.varuh-rs.si/en/news/public-information/"the-position-of-the-roma-people-can-only-be-improved-with-good-will-and-cooperation"](https://www.varuh-rs.si/en/news/public-information/)

intervene in such cases; raising awareness within the Roma community about the harmful effects of these practices is planned for the future.⁷⁷

Additional measures outside the NRSF, notably UNICEF's Child Guarantee programme launched in 2024, introduced financial incentives and specialised support for vulnerable families, and particularly Roma, in early childhood education; free textbooks for the first year of primary school; subsidised transport, and extracurricular activities. Additional support is available for children with a migrant background and children from ethnic minorities, as well as children with disabilities. Moreover, a cost-of-living allowance for families entitled to child benefit was introduced. Finally, a special interdepartmental Government working group on Roma was set up in 2023 to address the issue of social exclusion of Roma from several angles.⁷⁸

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

The NRSF supports cultural preservation through public calls for projects, focusing on Roma language, media, cultural activities, or library services for members of the Roma communities.⁷⁹ Measures are implemented via civil society organisations, with funding allocated under the National Programme of Measures for Roma (NPUR 2021-2030). While Slovenia invests in Roma cultural projects, gaps remain in mainstream representation, particularly in Roma history in school curricula.⁸⁰

For example, in 2022, total investments in Roma cultural projects exceeded 1 million EUR through Ministry of Culture calls and NPUR allocations. Key funding streams included:⁸¹

- Public Call for Roma Cultural Projects (JPR-Romi-2022): 142,115 EUR for 86 projects.
- NPUR 2021-2030: 329,378 EUR for cultural and educational activities.

Additional calls supported Roma radio, media content, and library programmes, though specific amounts were not disclosed.

Public calls continued from 2023 to 2025, enabling recurring initiatives. However, information on many activities is not publicly accessible, or it receives only limited media coverage. The following examples of activities supported in 2023/2024 are based on the involvement of RCM coalition members and aim at illustrating the types of supported activities and amounts of grants:

- *Romano Čhon / Roma Month 2023* (9,800 EUR): Festival with performances and workshops.
- *Kultura za vse / Culture for All* (7,000 EUR): Community cultural activities.
- *Romska kultura zame in zate / Roma Culture for Me and You* (79,151 EUR): Preservation and promotion of Roma culture.
- *Romski glasbeni večer / Roma Music Evening* (5,000 EUR): Musical heritage event.

⁷⁷ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/UN/Dokumenti-Romi/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji.docx>

⁷⁸ Eurochild. (15 April 2025). *Slovenija's 2024 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the Child Guarantee – An Overview*. Available at: <https://eurochild.org/resource/slovenias-2024-biennial-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-child-guarantee-an-overview/>

⁷⁹ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/UN/Dokumenti-Romi/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji.docx>

⁸⁰ Interview with Mr Muc.

⁸¹ Republic of Slovenia. (2023). *Deseto poročilo Vlade Republike Slovenije o položaju romske skupnosti v Sloveniji* [Tenth Report of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the Situation of the Roma Community in Slovenia]. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/UN/Dokumenti-Romi/Deseto-porocilo-o-položaju-romske-skupnosti-v-Sloveniji.docx>

Civil society welcomed these investments, highlighting Roma language, radio, and media projects. Erasmus initiatives also contribute cultural components.

Funding allocation is transparent and consistent, but cultural measures are project-based and lack systemic integration. Roma history and heritage are mainly absent from school curricula, and commemoration of Roma victims is limited. While national funding could increase, civil society notes that EU funds are available for cultural activities. A GNOM representative stressed that addressing gaps depends on proactive proposals from Roma organisations.

3. FOCUS ON KEY PROBLEMS AFFECTING ROMA

3.1. Segregation of Roma children in educational system

Roma children in Slovenia face persistent educational segregation and systemic barriers to inclusion. Segregated schooling often occurs even without geographical separation, justified by perceived linguistic or cultural differences. These practices, combined with deeply rooted discriminatory attitudes, undermine equality and perpetuate exclusion. A critical review of the NRSF reveals that its objectives and measures fail to address this issue adequately and, in some cases, risk reinforcing segregation rather than dismantling it.

Segregation of Roma children in the Slovenian education system still prevails, especially in the Southern-Eastern region. The consequences of educational segregation are severe. Roma children are often denied access to quality education, which directly affects their literacy, as well as hinders opportunities for accessing higher education and entering the labour market. Specific educational challenges Roma children face are described in Chapter 2's 'Education' section, with data and references provided.

All in all, segregation primarily affects the overall socioeconomic mobility. This results in a cycle of poverty and exclusion, further marginalising Roma communities.⁸² Segregation also perpetuates stereotypes and prejudices among non-Roma populations, creating significant barriers to social cohesion and integration. The lack of inclusive educational environments denies Roma children the opportunity to interact with peers from different backgrounds, making it harder to foster mutual understanding and break down ingrained biases. Educational outcomes of Roma continue to demonstrate systemic issues, which the Government often attributes to the lifestyle and values of the Roma community, thereby neglecting the responsibility of the educational system.

3.1.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

Slovenia's NRSF completely overlooks the issue of educational segregation. While the NRSF at least partially recognises the issue of spatial segregation of Roma communities (yet effective measures to tackle it are missing – see next section), it fails to acknowledge educational segregation. As a result, the problem remains entirely unaddressed, with no goals or measures identified in the NRSF.

Segregated schooling often arises in Slovenia, justified by perceived linguistic or cultural differences. Discriminatory attitudes are so deeply embedded that a critical review of the NRSF reveals that its objectives and measures could inadvertently perpetuate exclusion rather than foster equality.

It is challenging to precisely identify the scope of educational segregation of Roma children in Slovenia, since there is no ethnically desegregated data available. The lack of intention to gather such data was evident during the joint meeting between the Croatian and Slovenian Roma contact points. However, it came to the attention of the Slovenian RCM coalition that the Ministry of Education conducts strategies and analyses that collect data on the education of Roma, including the percentage of Roma students in certain schools. We, as the RCM coalition, contacted the Ministry and the NRCP to confirm the availability of such data, and to request further information on those strategies and analyses. However, until the development of this report, the Ministry did not react to our inquiries.

It is controversial that such data has not been fully utilised in the NRSF, nor has it been analysed in terms of intentional segregation of Roma students. This suggests that while data can be collected and used in various ways, segregation in education under the NRSF has not been deemed problematic. It also implies that Slovenia

⁸² The conclusion was drawn by the RCM team based on:

Council of Europe. (2023). *Feasibility Study on Desegregation and Inclusion Policies and Practice*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/feasibility-study-on-desegregation-and-inclusion-policies-and-practice/1680b357d5>

Council of Europe. (2023). *Mapping Study: Trends and Pathways Towards Educational Inclusion*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/mapping-study-trends-and-pathways-towards-educational-inclusion/1680b1d13b>

Amnesty International Slovenia. (2022). *Podatki O Šolskem Uspehu Romskih Otrok Kažejo, Da Se Jih Pušča Na Cedilu [Data on the School Performance of Roma Children Shows They Are Being Left Behind]*. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.si/romi-izobrazevanje>

continues to overlook the problem of segregation, assuming equal rights for all in Slovenia without acknowledging the unique challenges faced by Roma communities.

Additionally, specific working groups mentioned in the Slovenian NRSF have not supported the introduction of affirmative action measures for Roma education. The reason was that the working groups found affirmative measures discriminatory against other citizens of Slovenia. This resistance to positive discrimination further hampers efforts to address the systemic exclusion of Roma. However, the NRSF identified some targeted Roma measures outlined in this report under the education section (such as introducing the teaching of the Romani language in pre- and primary schools or the institution of Roma assistants). Still, these do not address educational segregation. Apart from these, there are no measures in the NRSF aimed at combating educational segregation.

The complete ignorance of the NRSF about the educational segregation of Roma children also partially mirrors the approach of civil society in Slovenia on the matter. Roma CSOs are mainly limited in their advocacy efforts to combat segregation due to a lack of state recognition of the issue, insufficient data, and privacy concerns. It implies that Roma CSOs do not effectively challenge state authorities about the issue of segregation.

3.1.2. Synergy with other actions

Slovenia's educational policies exhibit limited synergy with broader national and EU efforts to combat segregation. While the European Commission has called for inclusive education as a priority under the EURSF, Slovenia's lack of actionable targets or monitoring mechanisms undermines its alignment with these objectives.

Programmes such as early childhood education incentives and cultural inclusion curricula have potential but are insufficient in addressing systemic segregation. Moreover, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport (MESS) has justified segregation cases on procedural grounds rather than addressing root causes, demonstrating a lack of political will to promote equity in education.

Between 2022 and 2025, various international organisations have been actively engaged in efforts to combat the segregation of Roma children in education across Europe, including in Slovenia.

The Council of Europe (CoE) has been instrumental in promoting inclusive education through initiatives such as the Romani-Plurilingual Policy Experimentation (RPPE). Implemented in Slovenia, this three-year project (2022–2025) involves schools like Frana Metelka in Škocjan and France Prešeren in Črenšovci. The RPPE aims to integrate Romani language and culture into the curriculum, fostering a more inclusive educational environment for Roma pupils.⁸³

Additionally, the CoE's Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity, and Inclusion (CDADI) has produced a feasibility study on desegregation and inclusion policies. The study emphasises that segregated schools provide inferior education and hinder equal opportunities for Roma children. It advocates for comprehensive policies to address these disparities.⁸⁴

UNICEF has also been active in addressing the challenges faced by Roma children. Their 2024 report highlights that Roma children continue to experience significant deprivation and barriers to inclusion in education. UNICEF's initiatives focus on breaking down these barriers and ensuring that Roma children have access to quality education.⁸⁵

Regarding the implementation of international recommendations, Slovenia has made progress in aligning with the European Child Guarantee. The 2024 Biennial Report indicates that Slovenia has adopted several measures to improve the quality of life for children, including those from marginalised groups like the Roma. However, the report notes that while some measures are universal, specific actions targeting Roma children are still

⁸³ Council of Europe. (n.d.). *RPPE participating countries – Language policy*. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/language-policy/rppe-participating-countries>

⁸⁴ Council of Europe. (2024). *Feasibility Study on Desegregation and Inclusion Policies and Practices in the Field of Education for Roma and Traveller Children* (CDADI(2024) 19 rev). Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/item-02-cdadi-2024-19rev-feasibility-study-on-desegregation-and-inclus/1680b29c7e>

⁸⁵ UNICEF. (May 2024). *Europe's Forgotten Children: Roma Children and their Families in Europe 2000-2020 – A Child Rights Perspective*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/8211/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-Roma-Children-Report-2024.pdf>

needed to fully address their unique challenges.⁸⁶

While international organisations have been proactive in addressing the segregation of Roma children in education, and Slovenia has made strides in implementing related recommendations, ongoing efforts are essential to ensure that Roma children receive equal educational opportunities.

Since educational segregation of Roma children is not recognised, real and meaningful synergies cannot be identified, as no specific actions have been taken by the respective state stakeholders.

Additionally, international organisations such as the CoE or UNICEF are not in a position to change or significantly influence Government decisions, nor are Roma CSOs able to make the necessary efforts to change the situation.

To mitigate these issues, Slovenia must ensure the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to identify and address segregation effectively. Ethnically disaggregated data collection, while respecting privacy, would provide a clearer understanding of the problem's scope and enable targeted interventions. Inclusive education programmes, such as Roma teaching assistants, must be expanded and evaluated to ensure their effectiveness in fostering equity.

3.1.3. Roma participation

Roma participation in addressing educational segregation in Slovenia remains alarmingly low. Civil society organisations, including Roma-led groups, frequently lack the capacity⁸⁷ or strategic focus to address systemic issues. Their efforts are often directed toward cultural preservation and youth exchange programmes, while the structural problem of segregation in education remains unaddressed. Furthermore, Roma-related NGOs are disproportionately led by non-Roma individuals, undermining authentic representation and the agency of Roma voices.

The limited involvement of Roma in policy formulation, consultations, implementation, and evaluation perpetuates the exclusionary status-quo. Roma stakeholders report that their perspectives are frequently marginalised in decision-making processes, with key policy choices left to Government actors who often lack an understanding of the lived realities of Roma communities. Empowering Roma-led civil society organisations to advocate for educational equity and systematically monitor policy implementation would be essential to tackle these entrenched challenges.

Despite the importance of fostering greater Roma participation, it is critical to acknowledge that their involvement alone may not immediately catalyse significant efforts toward educational desegregation. Focus group participants, as well as experts and Roma leaders, indicated that the Roma community itself often does not perceive educational segregation as a pressing issue. This sentiment reflects a broader phenomenon in which long-standing discrimination becomes normalised, leading to its acceptance or even unawareness among those affected.

Furthermore, the value placed on education within many Roma families remains relatively low. Such an approach is the result of previous and current state policies. For instance, parents were financially motivated to keep their children at home rather than send them to pre-school by receiving more child benefits. In 2024, the Government decided to change the regulation,⁸⁸ cutting child benefit from parents if a child does not attend pre-school. Respondents noted that even among those who recognise the significance of education, efforts to challenge segregated schooling are limited, as Roma communities are not in a position (lack of capacity, knowledge, resources) to fight against the issue. Thus, significant effort is required to elevate the position of

⁸⁶ Eurochild. (15 April 2025). *Slovenia's 2024 Biennial Report on the Implementation of the Child Guarantee – An Overview*. Available at: <https://eurochild.org/resource/slovenias-2024-biennial-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-child-guarantee-an-overview/>

⁸⁷ Roma CSOs face limited funding opportunities for addressing segregation in education. Funds are rather available for cultural initiatives. Additionally, CSOs' human resource capacities are limited, which prevents them from applying for larger-scale EU funds that might address educational issues.

⁸⁸ STA – Slovenian Press Agency. (12 December 2024). *Vlada z izhodišči za reševanje nekaterih romskih vprašanj [The Government Adopts the Basis for Addressing Certain Roma Issues]*. Available at: <https://www.sta.si/3373286/vlada-z-izhodišči-za-reševanje-nekaterih-romskih-vprašanj>

Roma communities and to put in place policies that promote the importance of education for all.

Given this context, it is imperative that the first step, acknowledging and addressing the existence of educational segregation, be initiated by institutions of power, notably the Slovenian Government. Institutions must lead by example, demonstrating a commitment to dismantling systemic barriers and fostering equity in education.

As an illustration of the challenges faced, discussions with respondents revealed the severe underrepresentation of Roma individuals in higher education. Across all focus group participants, only two individuals who self-identified as Roma and had completed university were identified. This glaring disparity underscores the urgent need for targeted measures to not only combat segregation but also to promote the inclusion and academic success of Roma children.

3.2. Residential segregation of Roma

Residential segregation remains a significant challenge for Roma communities in Slovenia, with many residing in informal, isolated settlements, primarily in rural areas.

The number of Roma settlements in Slovenia varies. The Government of Slovenia officially recognises 83 Roma settlements in its official documents.⁸⁹ At the same time, other sources and studies estimate the number of Roma settlements to be between 120 and 130.⁹⁰ However, it should be noted that such sources often classify as Roma settlements even those with as few as 20 to 50 inhabitants.

The exact number of Roma living in Roma settlements has not been definitively established, but it is estimated that around 9,000 Roma reside in such settlements.⁹¹ Data on the exact number of Roma in Roma settlements are sometimes maintained by local municipalities. For example, the Municipality of Novo Mesto reported in 2022 that 1,138 members of the Roma national minority lived within its territory, distributed across eight Roma settlements.⁹²

The larger Roma settlements can have more than 500 inhabitants per settlement.⁹³ These settlements are often informal, primarily located in rural and isolated areas such as Prekmurje, Posavje, and parts of Central Slovenia. Most of them are in the Southeast and Northeast parts of Slovenia. These areas are typically underdeveloped and lack basic infrastructure, including clean water, sanitation, and electricity. These deficiencies contribute to a lower standard of living and exacerbate social and economic disparities.

Although some investments in Roma settlements are visible, they remain insufficient, and many Roma still live without legal access to water, electricity, and other utilities. This practice will continue in illegal settlements,

⁸⁹ Republic of Slovenia. (2024). *Javni razpis za sofinanciranje projektov osnovne komunalne infrastrukture v romskih naseljih v letih 2025 in 2026* [Public Call for Co-Financing Basic Municipal Infrastructure Projects in Roma Settlements for 2025 and 2026]. Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 4300/12. Available at: <https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2024010100004/javni-razpis-za-sofinanciranje-projektov-osnovne-komunalne-infrastrukture-v-romskih-naseljih-v-letih-2025-in-2026-st--4300-122024-1630-46-ob-339624>

⁹⁰ Komac, M., Pirc, J., Rogelj, B., Kristen, S., Kušar, S., & Zupančič, J. (16 November 2018). *Models of Regulation of Roma Settlements – Final Report* (Ed. J. Zupančič). Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Department of Geography & Institute for Ethnic Studies. Available at: https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MNVP/Dokumenti/Prostor_regionalno/modeli_urejanja_romskih_naselij.pdf

⁹¹ European Institutions Office. (2018). *Parallel Lives: Roma Denied Rights to Housing and Water in Slovenia*. Amnesty International. Available at: https://www.amnesty.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/REPORT_Parallel_lives_Roma_denied_rights_to_housing_and_water_in_Slovenia.pdf

⁹² Mestna občina Novo mesto [Municipality of Novo Mesto]. *Strategy for the Roma in the Municipality of Novo mesto for the Period 2022–2030*. Novo mesto: Mestna občina Novo mesto, 2022. Source: <https://www.novomesto.si/mma/-/2022062313085751/>

⁹³ Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Department of Geography, & Institute for Ethnic Studies. (2018). *Models of Regulation of Roma Settlements – Final Report* (Ed. J. Zupančič) [*Modeli Urejanja Romskih Naselij – Končno Poročilo*]. Authors: M. Komac, J. Pirc, B. Rogelj, S. Kristen, S. Kušar, & J. Zupančič. Ljubljana, 16 November 2018. Available at: https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MNVP/Dokumenti/Prostor_regionalno/modeli_urejanja_romskih_naselij.pdf

where resident numbers continue to grow. The increasing Roma population in these settlements also leads to greater tensions between the Roma and neighbouring non-Roma communities.

The issue of residential segregation is particularly pronounced in illegal settlements, where some inhabitants continue to live in improvised dwellings even after certain settlements have been legalised. This situation leads to dangerous living conditions and perpetuates cycles of poverty. As noted in the 2021 report by the Faculty of Law at the University of Ljubljana,⁹⁴ the legalisation of some Roma settlements has opened the door to investment. However, it has not addressed the underlying issue of segregation, and Roma continue to live in areas that remain socially and economically isolated, further increasing their vulnerability. The lack of integration into the broader housing system, along with the persistence of 'ghettoisation', underscores the failure of current measures to address the deep-rooted inequalities faced by Roma communities.

The consequences of living in segregated settlements are far-reaching, impacting multiple aspects of life. These communities are often isolated from urban centres and mainstream society, resulting in conditions of extreme deprivation. The lack of basic services and infrastructure leads to poor health outcomes, with residents struggling to access clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. These conditions contribute to higher rates of preventable diseases and limit Roma individuals' ability to fully participate in society. For example, children living in segregated settlements often miss out on essential educational opportunities due to geographic isolation from schools and a lack of transportation. Combined with the poverty that characterises many of these communities, this results in lower educational attainment, perpetuating cycles of poverty and social exclusion. For instance, the transition rate of Roma children (6%) from primary to secondary education is very low, and the dropout rate is high.⁹⁵ The same is confirmed by UNICEF research,⁹⁶ which states that children from Roma settlements face multiple barriers in education. These obstacles include lower school attendance rates, higher school dropout rates, lower completion rates of primary and secondary education, and reduced opportunities to acquire basic skills. Living in segregated settlements also exposes Roma to discrimination and stigmatization. These communities are often viewed by broader society as 'different' or 'inferior,' and the social isolation inherent in these areas reinforces negative stereotypes. Roma individuals who attempt to move out of segregated settlements frequently face discriminatory practices, such as landlords or non-Roma neighbours refusing to rent to them.⁹⁷ This discrimination severely limits their housing options, forcing many to remain in segregated areas where the cycle of exclusion continues. Even when Roma individuals gain access to public housing, these units are often segregated, and the lack of social services further exacerbates inequalities, creating an environment where Roma remain isolated from broader social and economic networks.⁹⁸

The NRSF largely overlooks residential segregation, mentioning it only sporadically in relation to settlements with a majority Roma population. Desegregation is not a priority in the framework; instead, the focus is on

⁹⁴ Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana. (2021). *Barriers to a Dignified Life for the Inhabitants of Roma Settlements in the Areas Identified in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 [Ovire Za Dostojno Življenje Prebivalcev V Romskih Naseljih Na Področjih, Ki So Definirana v Okviru EU]*. Available at: <https://www.pf.uni-lj.si/raziskovanje-inprojekti/nacionalni-raziskovalni-projekti/ovire-za-dostojno-zivljenje-prebivalcev-romskih-naseljih-na-podrocjih-ki-so-definirana-v-okviru-eu/>

⁹⁵ The number of Roma students completing primary school or enrolling in secondary education is stagnating or even declining. In Southeastern Slovenia, for example, only 6% of Roma children successfully transition to secondary school.

24ur.com. (2023). *Vsak Romski Otrok, Ki Pot Nadaljuje v Srednjo Šolo, Je Pravi Čudež [Every Roma Child Who Continues to Secondary School Is a Real Miracle]*. Available at: <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/vsak-romski-otrok-ki-pot-nadaljuje-v-srednjo-solo-je-pravi-cudez.html>

⁹⁶ UNICEF. (2022). *Education Pathways in Roma Settlements: Understanding Inequality in Education and Learning*. UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/UNICEF-2022-Education-pathways-in-Roma-settlements.pdf>

⁹⁷ 1. Mirovni Inštitut. (2019). *Zmanjševanje in odpravljanje diskriminacije na podlagi etničnega porekla – Končno poročilo [Reducing and Eliminating Discrimination Based on Ethnic Origin – Final Report]*. Ljubljana: Mirovni Inštitut. Available at: <https://www.mirovni-institut.si/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/MI-CRP-Koncno-vsebinsko-porocilo.pdf>

2. University of Ljubljana. (2022). *Romi v Sloveniji: vztrajne problematike – Zbornik [Roma in Slovenia: Persistent Issues – Proceedings]*. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana. Available at: <https://ebooks.uni-lj.si/ZalozbaUL/catalog/download/651/1026/10726?inline=1>

⁹⁸ Interview with Žiga Štajnbaher

preventing further segregation of Roma settlements and integrating these areas into Slovenia's broader settlement system. The goal is to have Roma settlements included in the national settlement system by 2030, with an emphasis on investing in these communities.

The discriminatory roots and the negative impacts of segregated housing are only partially recognised by the NRSF. It is also illustrated by the Slovenian Government's identification of Roma settlements as "settlements with a majority Roma population" rather than recognising them as segregated communities. While the NRSF mentions residential deprivation, it does not explicitly address the harmful consequences of living in segregated Roma settlements. In our view as the RCM Slovenian coalition, the naming of the problem fails to reflect the real recognition, indicating the lack of real governmental commitment to tackle the issue.

Furthermore, the NRSF's mainstream approach to social housing, which targets Roma families based on their social status and family structure, does not tackle the root causes of segregation. While some Roma families may qualify for social housing, the limited scope of this policy, combined with low incomes and high utility costs, leaves many unable to sustain these living conditions. In the absence of sufficient education and faced with visible discrimination, Roma communities remain trapped in social deprivation. Housing policies do not adequately address the complex and interconnected issues of residential, educational, and social segregation.

The Government's failure to recognise the gravity and consequences of residential segregation, coupled with its reluctance to implement effective desegregation measures, worsens the challenges Roma face in accessing equal opportunities. The absence of comprehensive policies for integration, as well as the lack of coordination with other relevant policies, will likely result in the continued marginalisation of Roma communities. If segregation is not recognised as a form of discrimination and addressed accordingly, the situation for Roma in Slovenia will continue to deteriorate. Without a confrontation with the issue of segregation, Roma communities will face significant barriers to integration, and their exclusion from mainstream society will persist.

3.2.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

As mentioned above, the NRSF does not explicitly address the need for desegregation, but instead focuses on preventing the further isolation of Roma settlements from administrative policies. Under 'Section 5: Development of Roma Settlements and Access to Housing of the NRSF', there are five objectives, four of which focus on administrative processes intended to enable investment in settlement development and infrastructure but have no direct impact on desegregation.⁹⁹

The fifth objective, titled 'Greater Utilisation of Co-Funding Opportunities Under Housing Policy Programmes and Renting Housing Owned by the HFRS', consists of two measures:

1. Informing municipalities where Roma communities reside about options for co-funding the construction of non-profit apartments and providing housing units under HFRS programmes, as well as providing professional assistance to municipalities.
2. Informing the interested Roma population about the options for renting apartments under open calls for applications of the HFRS.

The efforts that might lead to desegregation are minimal from these measures. They do not include targeted Roma-specific approaches; their primary goal is merely to inform the Roma community about existing administrative processes.

Even it is a notable proposal within the NRSF to inform municipalities about co-financing opportunities for public housing, which might help improve access to housing for Roma. However, there is no mention of any dedicated measures to support the relocation of Roma from segregated areas or to provide desegregated housing.

Since specific desegregation measures do not exist in the NRSF, their effectiveness cannot be measured. The only measure that partially addresses the issue is social housing, but this is not part of the NRSF, as this is mainstream policy, which affects all people in Slovenia and fails to target the Roma community specifically. It needs to be emphasised that the provision of social housing is a single measure aimed at tackling citizens'

⁹⁹ Republic of Slovenia. (2021). *National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2021–2030*. Government of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/slovenia_-_national_roma_strategic_framework_21_30_en.pdf

housing challenges, including those of Roma. All other objectives and measures Under ‘Section 5: Development of Roma Settlements and Access to Housing of the NRSF’¹⁰⁰ are aim to invest in segregated “areas with majority Roma populations” that does not reflect to the real problem, Additionally, the potential impact of social housing given the size of the problem will be limited not bringing an ultimate solution.

While the NRSF outlines the general need for better living conditions and the prevention of further segregation, these objectives remain vague, with no clear actions or deadlines specified. This lack of specificity has led to limited impact on the ground, as Roma continue to face significant barriers to accessing decent housing. Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive approach to desegregation means that Roma are often left in areas that remain underdeveloped, with little support from local authorities.

The absence of targeted actions in the NRSF reflects a broader issue in how housing for Roma is approached in Slovenia. No recognition of the structural inequalities in housing disproportionately affect Roma communities, and the policy focus remains on legalising settlements without addressing the underlying social exclusion that persists.

3.2.2. Synergy with other actions

As mentioned above, the provision of social housing is a mainstream policy, which is not part of the NRSF. In Slovenia, social housing is primarily managed by the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (*Stanovanjski sklad RS*), which allocates housing units through a system of open calls and tenders. These calls are published on the Fund's official website and are designed to ensure transparent and equitable distribution of housing to eligible individuals and families.

The application process typically involves submitting a completed application form along with required documentation, such as proof of income, family status, and housing needs. Priority is often given to young families, families with children in primary school, and other vulnerable groups. The selection process may include a scoring system to assess applicants' eligibility based on predefined criteria.

It is necessary for social housing to be included in the NRSF and for the existing policy to be directed explicitly toward desegregation. However, this is unlikely to happen given that segregation is not recognised as a problem.

The NRSF does not operate in isolation but is intended to work alongside other initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of Roma. This is precisely what the NRSF aims to achieve by 2030, with the goal of creating synergies and enabling investment in Roma settlements, which has nothing to do with desegregation.

International reports, such as those from the European Commission,¹⁰¹ highlight the need for Slovenia to address housing issues more comprehensively. These reports recommend the legalisation of settlements, the integration of Roma into the broader housing system, and measures to prevent the further isolation and ghettoisation of Roma communities. Despite these recommendations, challenges persist in ensuring effective coordination between the NRSF and other actions.

In addition, the ongoing efforts by the European Commission and the Council of Europe¹⁰² to monitor housing conditions for Roma should be more closely integrated with the objectives of the NRSF. This alignment ensures that Slovenia meets its international obligations and provides Roma communities with the support needed for long-term integration and improved living conditions.

3.2.3. Roma participation

Roma participation in decision-making processes is crucial to addressing the housing issues they face. In the

¹⁰⁰ Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (Stanovanjski sklad Republike Slovenije). (n.d.). *Call for Housing Units for Rent*. Available at: <https://ssrs.si/en/tenders/open-calls-and-calls-for-tenders/call-for-housing-units-for-rent/>

¹⁰¹ European Commission. (2022). *National Roma Strategic Frameworks: Commission Assessment and Implementation Reports*. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu/national-roma-strategic-frameworks-commission-assessment-and-implementation-reports_en

¹⁰² Council of Europe. (2024). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)1 on the Equality of Roma and Traveller Women and Girls*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-cm-rec-2024-1-on-the-equality-of-roma-and-traveller-wom/1680b21286>

context of the NRSF, Roma communities are often consulted through organisations like the Council for the Implementation of the Roma Community Act. However, the extent of Roma representatives' influence in shaping housing policies remains limited. While consultations with Roma organisations are essential, their effectiveness is questionable if their recommendations are not adequately reflected in the policies or actions that follow. However, without a strong civil society, the NRSF will remain unable to address segregation.

In the case of housing, Roma interlocutors in studies such as the 2021 FLUL report¹⁰³ expressed the need for greater involvement in decisions related to housing allocation and the design of public housing projects. Furthermore, Roma communities themselves have called for more concrete measures to address segregation, such as the purchase of housing for Roma outside segregated areas. The NRSF, however, does not provide clear mechanisms for ensuring meaningful participation in the formulation and implementation of housing policies.

This undermines the effectiveness of the NRSF and prevents Roma from having a direct say in the policies that affect their daily lives. For Roma participation to be truly effective, it must be more than a token consultation process; it must result in real changes that reflect the needs and aspirations of Roma communities.

¹⁰³ Faculty of Arts, University of Lisbon. (n.d.). *Documentos de Gestão [Management Documents]*. Available at: <https://www.lettras.ulisboa.pt/pt/sobre-a-flul/documentos-de-gestao/>

4. ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The coordinator of this current RCM cycle comes from Croatia, as do some members of the coalition responsible for this report. Several observations are particularly striking. While it was expected that the situation in Croatia and Slovenia would be similar, the differences are significant. Surprisingly, segregated housing is not even identified as problematic in the NRSF. A similar issue arises with educational segregation, where Government institutions frame it as a matter to be resolved through dialogue.

Furthermore, the NRSF perpetuates stereotypes, attributing certain problems solely to the Roma community by referencing 'their way of life', 'their values', and similar narratives. Baseline data and measurable targets are missing, making it difficult to assess the NRSF's impact. Many measures are implemented through a mainstream approach, which may lead readers unfamiliar with the Slovenian context to perceive that these measures have either had no effect or were never intended for Roma, particularly in the area of housing.

For instance, the strategy envisions a nine-year timeline to include Roma settlements in the broader national settlement strategy and enable investments in these areas. While this is an entirely different approach from desegregation, it is perplexing that such legislative adjustments require nine years to implement.

Considering all these factors, there is no political momentum focused on addressing the needs of the Roma community. This lack of focus has raised concerns among both Roma and non-Roma stakeholders. Affirmative measures are often rejected in many areas because they are perceived as discriminatory toward the general population. This stance contradicts principles aimed at supporting marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Interestingly, the fields of culture and education receive significant attention, while housing is also emphasized. However, in the area of improving coexistence in Roma settlements and their surroundings, where the police play a central role, the terminology becomes inconsistent. In this context, Roma settlements are specifically mentioned, yet in sections where such terminology is crucial, the phrase "settlements with predominantly Roma residents" is used instead.

It is also worth noting the high level of intolerance toward Roma, coupled with a significant divide between Roma and non-Roma communities. Although this divide may not be immediately evident, it becomes apparent in more intimate settings. During an Erasmus project where coalition members spent several days in Slovenia conducting interviews and focus groups, the fear that Roma experience in interactions with the majority population was palpable. For instance, one young Roma individual reported physical assaults by police officers, while a police officer addressing young Roma described his own behaviour as 'naughty'.

In conclusion, it is evident that discrimination against Roma is pervasive, the Roma civil sector is severely underdeveloped, and there is no political will to integrate Roma effectively. Instead, Roma issues are ignored, and this neglect is reflected in the NRSF, which fails to address the actual needs of the Roma community. Moreover, these needs are not adequately defined within the NRSF itself.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The NRSF demonstrates political commitment through its formal alignment with the EURSF and a structured process for monitoring and evaluation. Notable strengths include:

- A legally grounded framework (ZRomS-1) that ensures Roma representation and participation.
- Co-financing of targeted Roma-specific measures through EU funds.
- Efforts to integrate Roma topics into the educational curriculum and support cultural visibility.

However, the implementation of the NRSF reveals critical weaknesses:

- Lack of ethnically disaggregated data that undermines evidence-based policy-making and the evaluation of measures.
- Inadequate targeting of housing and educational segregation, with no recognition of these as structural issues.
- Reliance on mainstream measures and soft interventions that fail to address systemic barriers faced by Roma communities.
- Limited impact of affirmative action, with measures constrained by legislative and political barriers.
- Insufficient attention to employment, health, and housing disparities, perpetuates poor outcomes for Roma communities.

Recommendations to national authorities

1. For the effective implementation of the NRSF, it is crucial to explore alternative data-collection methods that comply with personal data protection regulations, while still ensuring disaggregated data. Possible solutions include anonymised surveys or voluntary self-identification options that allow the collection of essential data without compromising individual privacy. Without such data, it becomes challenging to assess the impact of policies, identify gaps, and allocate resources effectively.
2. Despite the formal inclusion of Roma organisations and representatives in the implementation process, the practical effectiveness of their involvement and their ability to drive meaningful change may be hindered by limited capacities and insufficient coordination. Strengthening these aspects should be a priority to ensure that Roma communities can fully engage in the decision-making and implementation processes, with a tangible impact on their inclusion and integration.
3. To enhance the effectiveness of Roma participation, it is crucial to address the capacity limitations and invest in educational and institutional support for Roma civil society. Strengthening these elements will enable Roma communities to more actively and effectively contribute to the monitoring and implementation of the NRSF.
4. However, for the purpose of drafting strategic documents and facilitating reporting, the social protection topic should ideally be separated into distinct categories and aligned with the format of the EU Roma Inclusion Framework.
5. Upon the revision of the NRSF, the UNICEF 'Child Guarantee' Programme should be incorporated into the NRSF.
6. To enable the Roma inclusion, the problems of residential and educational segregation need to be recognised and effectively tackled. For this aim, it is essential to introduce targeted desegregation programmes and allocate investments that prioritise inclusive education and housing. These measures should dismantle structural barriers and foster integration.
7. To address systemic inequalities, affirmative action measures must be implemented and communicated as instruments of equity. Framing these actions as fairness tools will help overcome resistance and ensure broader acceptance.

8. To strengthen social support in Roma communities, funding for Roma-focused social services should be expanded, accompanied by specialised training for professionals. Deploying dedicated social workers in Roma settlements will improve outreach and service delivery.
9. To improve the local implementation of NRSF measures, collaboration between ministries and Roma organisations needs to be reinforced. Establishing structured coordination mechanisms will enable more coherent and effective action at the municipal level.

Recommendations to European institutions

10. To strengthen compliance with EU standards, it is essential to provide technical assistance that supports Slovenia in improving data collection and reporting on Roma inclusion. This will enable evidence-based policy design and monitoring.
11. To ensure accountability, Slovenia's progress in addressing segregation in education and housing should be monitored through regular evaluations and targeted recommendations. These reviews will help identify gaps and guide corrective measures.
12. To achieve sustainable outcomes, funding priorities should focus on projects that dismantle systemic barriers, including those related to desegregation and health disparities. Investments must be structured to deliver long-term impact rather than short-term fixes.
13. To promote equity, affirmative action policies should be encouraged through funding conditionalities and policy dialogues. Linking financial support to inclusive measures will incentivise systemic change.
14. To foster innovation and shared learning, cross-border knowledge exchange on successful Roma integration practices should be facilitated. Structured platforms for collaboration will enable replication of effective models across member states.

Recommendations to the civil society

15. To ensure inclusive and transparent monitoring of the NRSF, civil society should advocate for participation mechanisms that address systemic issues and strengthen accountability.
16. To challenge stereotypes and foster social cohesion, awareness campaigns promoting positive narratives about Roma communities should be organised at national and local levels.
17. To support evidence-based policymaking, independent research and advocacy on housing and educational segregation should be prioritised, providing data for targeted interventions.
18. To enhance Roma representation in decision-making, capacity-building programmes for Roma leaders should be expanded to focus on leadership skills and institutional engagement.
19. To amplify impact and secure resources, collaboration with international organisations should be strengthened, enabling joint advocacy and support for community-driven initiatives..

Recommendations to other stakeholders

20. To expand employment opportunities for Roma, private-sector actors should be actively engaged in initiatives that prioritise regions with high unemployment and create pathways to sustainable jobs.
21. To strengthen knowledge and professional capacity, academic institutions should be encouraged to develop research and training programmes focused on Roma inclusion and anti-discrimination practices.
22. To reduce health disparities, community-based projects that improve healthcare access and address gaps in life expectancy should be supported and scaled up.
23. To counter stereotypes and foster understanding, Roma voices should be promoted in media through inclusive content and partnerships with civil society.
24. To ensure effective implementation of measures, partnerships between local governments and civil society should be reinforced, enabling targeted and coordinated action at the community level.

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List of interviews

- Interview with GONM (online), two representatives.
- Interview with Ombudsman's Office (online), two representatives.
- Interview with MESS (online), two representatives.
- Interview with expert (in person).
- Interview with the Umbrella Roma association in Slovenia (on-line), one representative.
- Interview with the Roma association Romano Veseli (in person), two representatives.
- Interviews with three Roma activists involved in several Roma associations (in person).
- Interview with one Roma activist involved in several Roma associations (online).
- Interview with a pro-Roma activist (in person).
- Focus group with young Roma (in person), 15 participants and two older Roma from the Roma civil sector.
- One anonymous interview (in person) with a person from MESS.

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ANNEXE: LIST OF PROBLEMS AND CONDITIONS

Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Antigypsyism not recognised as a specific problem in national policy frameworks	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Adequate but with room for improvement	Adequate but with room for improvement	There are measures in place; however, their effectiveness is expressed in nominal numbers, while the actual efficiency remains unclear, given the increasing trend of discrimination in Southeastern Slovenia. The outreach of measures is being monitored, and data is collected in this regard.
Prejudice against Roma	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not adequate	There are measures in place; however, their effectiveness is expressed in nominal numbers, while the actual efficiency remains unclear, given the increasing trend of discrimination in Southeastern Slovenia. The outreach of measures is being monitored, and data is collected in this regard.
Hate speech towards and against Roma (online and offline)	Critical problem	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not adequate	Measures are not in place; some measures should have sporadic impact on this problem.
Weak effectiveness of protection from discrimination	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Measures are not in place. Some measures should have impact on the prevention of discrimination but effectiveness of protection is not part of the NRSF.
Misconduct and discriminatory behaviour by police (under-policing/under-policing)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Present but insufficient	Present but insufficient	Measures in place, there are specific measures to this theme, but effectiveness is problematic, as the police behaviour is the most often mentioned when it comes to the Roma. Data is collected in nominal numbers or trainings.

CIVIL SOCIETY MONITORING REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
in Slovenia

Segregation in education, housing, or provision of public services	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	absent	absent	Not having data; some measures could have some reach, but it is not recognised as a problem.
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Education

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Lack of available and accessible pre-school education and ECEC services for Roma	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Problem, but measures are in place: Roma-targeted approach, firming segregation, outreach, and some data collection on the number.
High drop-out rate before completion of primary education	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Adequate but with room for improvement	Measures are in place, but with limitations; the problem is their effectiveness. Lack of indicators.
Early leaving from secondary education	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures could have some impact, but it is not the focus of the NRSF.
Secondary education/vocational training disconnected from labour market needs	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF

Misplacement of Roma pupils into special education	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRFS
Education segregation of Roma pupils	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not recognised, not part of the NRFS.
Increased selectivity of the educational system resulting in concentration of Roma or other disadvantaged pupils in educational facilities of lower quality	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRFS
Limited access to second-chance education, adult education, and lifelong learning	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRFS
Limited access to and support for online and distance learning if education and training institutions close, as occurred during the coronavirus pandemic	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRFS

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Low level of digital skills and competences and limited opportunities for their development among pupils	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Low level of digital skills and competences and limited opportunities for their development among adults	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF

Employment

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Poor access to or low effectiveness of public employment services	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.
Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.
Poor access to (re-) training, lifelong learning and skills development	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.
Discrimination on the labour market by	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.

employers					
Risk for Roma women and girls from disadvantaged areas of being subjected to trafficking and forced prostitution	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Some targets defined but not relevant	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.
Primary labour market opportunities substituted by public work	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.
Barriers and disincentives to employment (such as indebtedness, low income from work compared to social income)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies. .
Lack of activation measures, employment support	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF. Only one measure in this area, and it is mainstream to include Roma in employment policies.

Healthcare

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Poor supply/availability of healthcare services (including lack of means to cover out-of-pocket health costs)	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Absent	Absent	There are two measures that focus on providing information and education in the Roma settlement; there are no other measures.

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Limited access to emergency care	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	There are two measures that focus on providing information and education in the Roma settlement; there are no other measures.
Limited access to primary care	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	There are two measures that focus on providing information and education in the Roma settlement; there are no other measures.
Limited access to prenatal and postnatal care	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	There are two measures that focus on providing information and education in the Roma settlement; there are no other measures.

Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Poor physical security of housing (ruined or slum housing)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Some measures could affect it in the future, as could additional laws. Measuring effectiveness focuses only on administrative outcomes.
Lack of access to drinking water	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures could affect it in the future, as could additional laws. Measuring effectiveness focuses only on administrative outcomes.
Lack of access to sanitation	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures could affect it in the future, as could additional laws. Measuring effectiveness focuses only on administrative outcomes.
Lack of access to electricity	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures could affect it in the future, as could additional laws. Measuring effectiveness focuses only on administrative outcomes.

Limited or absent public waste collection	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures could affect it in the future, as could additional laws. Measuring effectiveness focuses only on administrative outcomes.
Restricted heating capability (families unable to heat all rooms/all times when necessary) or solid waste used for heating	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Lack of security of tenure (legal titles are not clear and secure)	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures are addressing this issue and should be effective, but there is no precise data on this.
Lacking or limited access to social housing	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	Some measures are ineffective, lack a targeting approach, and use nominal data that focus on informed municipalities rather than on the impact of access to social housing.
Overcrowding (available space/room for families)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Some measures could have an influence on this area.
Housing-related indebtedness at levels which may cause eviction	Significant problems	understood with limitations	Present but insufficient	Present but insufficient	There is a measure regarding this issue that should be effective and reach those in need.
Housing in segregated settlements/ neighbourhoods	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Absent	Absent	Not recognised by the NRSF

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Housing in informal or illegal settlements/ neighbourhoods	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Measures should have impact on this issue, but they are depending on administrative issues and political wiliness.
Limited or lacking access to public transport	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Limited or lacking internet access (e.g., public internet access points in deprived areas, areas not covered by broadband internet)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Limited or lacking access to green spaces	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Roma excluded from environmental democracy	Critical problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF

Social protection

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
High at-risk-of-poverty rate and material and social deprivation	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Have measures, but with the goal of increasing the number of Roma in mainstream measures.

Income support programmes fail to guarantee an acceptable level of minimum income for every household	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	No additional measures.
Limited access to income support schemes (low awareness, barrier of administrative burdens, stigma attached)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement	Measures are going in this direction, which should produce outputs, and the indicator set is properly set.
Ineffective eligibility rules (well-designed means-testing ensures that those who need support can get it; job-search conditions ensure the motivation for returning to work)	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Some measures could affect this, but they are not directly targeted at the issue.
Low flexibility of income support programmes for addressing changing conditions of the household	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF

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Social services

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Limited quality, capacity and comprehensiveness of help provided by social services	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Limited access to social services: low awareness of them, low accessibility, (e.g., due to travel costs) or limited availability	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures could affect this area.
Services providers do not actively reach out to those in need	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Measures set but with questionable outputs. Data are not collected.
Limited ability of social services to effectively work together with other agencies (e.g., public employment service) to help clients	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures should have effect on this area, but in general outcomes and indicators are more narrowly defined and fail to address the broader need for integrated, multi-agency support systems.
Lack of adequacy of programmes for addressing indebtedness (providing counselling and	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Present but insufficient	Some targets but not relevant	Some measures should have effect on this area, but in general outcomes and indicators are more oriented toward basic service provision and do not address structural drivers of indebtedness.

financial support)					
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Child protection

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Child protection not considered in the NRSF	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Specific vulnerability of Romani children as victims of violence not considered	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Activities aimed at strengthening parental responsibility and skills not available or not reaching out to Roma parents	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Inadequate child/ adolescent participation	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF

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

Problems and conditions:	Significance:	Identified by strategy:	Measures to address:	Targets defined:	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem:
Poor or lacking awareness of the general population of the contribution of Roma art and culture to national and European heritage	Significant problems	Mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	Absent	Absent	There are no direct measures for that, but some measures could influence this.

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Exclusion of Roma communities from national cultural narratives	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Adequate but with room for improvement	Adequate but with room for improvement	Measures are set, effectiveness is visible, and data are collected.
Romani history and culture not included in school curricula and textbooks for both Roma and non-Roma students	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF
Lack of inclusion of Romani language in schools, and development of necessary educational materials and resources for Romani language preservation and teaching	Significant problems	Understood with limitations	Adequate with room for improvement	Adequate with room for improvement	Reasonable measures, good indicators, good outreach, and data collection regarding that could be available.
Lack of memorialisation of Roma history through establishing monuments, commemorative activities, and institutionalising dates relevant to Roma history	Significant problems	Irrelevant	Absent	Absent	Not part of the NRSF

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