



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

Prepared by:
Finnish Roma Association
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of the national strategic framework
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CERV	Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DIAK	Diakonia University of Applied Science
EC	European Commission
ELY	Centre of Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
EURSF	EU Roma Strategic Framework on Equality, Inclusion, and Participation
FRA	EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
JTF	Just Transition Fund
Kela	Social Insurance Institution of Finland
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
NRCP	National Roma Contact Point
NRP	National Roma Platform
NRSF	National Roma Strategic Framework
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RCM	Roma Civil Monitor
ROMPO	National Policy on Roma for 2009-2017
ROMPO 2	Finland's National Roma Policy 2018-2022
ROMPO 3	Finland's National Roma Policy 2023-2030
RRP	Recovery and Resilience Plan
SNA	Special Need Assistant
STEA	Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations
THL	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Science

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to Roma civil society, the current political environment does not support the implementation of the National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF). The focus is solely on national security, due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and economic consolidation. The recent political guidance since 2023 has mainstreamed and cut out many targeted measures, although not explicitly targeted at the Roma. Funding for the Roma CSOs is cut at the same time as public services are reduced, making the work of the Roma CSOs very difficult. No wonder the Roma civil society believes the actions implemented under the NRSF have had no significant impact on the key issues over the last two years. Nevertheless, some progress has been made in the fields of fighting antigypsyism and discrimination as well as Roma art, culture and language.

Implementation of the NRSF

There were high expectations for the Implementation Plan 2023-2026 for the NRSF, but it turned out to be weak. The plan includes no binding partnerships, timelines, baselines, or indicators. The weakness of the Implementation Plan underscores that the proposed actions of the NRSF are recommendations and thus not legally binding, and that they can be bypassed altogether. Moreover, the predominance of project-based funding over systemic investment is a fundamental weakness in the implementation of NRSF. There is an urgent need for changes to the NRSF for 2026-2030, but no mid-term report is being prepared, unlike in other EU Member States. Only a financial report will be published later in 2025.

Review of country situation by area

Some progress was made in combating antigypsyism and discrimination, which is the cross-cutting theme of the NRSF. The Government action plan for tackling racism and promoting equality in 2024 mentioned antigypsyism with its proper name for the first time. Moreover, while not explicitly targeted at the Roma, the knowledge base on discrimination in general has improved in recent years. Several reliable institutions have participated in data collection and analysis on discrimination in Finland, and the studies are more in-depth than before. This is likely to make instances of discrimination against Roma more visible.

Progress also took place in the fields of Roma art, culture, and language. As part of the Decolonised Museum activity, major institutions, such as the National Museum of Finland, the Finnish National Gallery, and the Finnish Heritage Agency, began incorporating the history and culture of the Roma population into their activities. Moreover, the Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language runs from 2023 to 2030, and from the outset, many promising projects have been launched across the country. Finland has also formally recognised and acknowledged the significant contributions of Roma communities. In 2024, the President of the Republic, Alexander Stubb, conferred the honorary title of Academician of Arts on master folk singer and musician Hilja Grönfors, highlighting her exceptional role in preserving Roma cultural heritage. Similarly, representatives of Roma civil society were invited to participate in the foundation stone ceremony for the extension of the Finnish National Museum, symbolising the nation's recognition of the Roma people as an integral part of Finnish society. Moreover, International Roma Day, celebrated annually on 8 April, has become widely recognised across Finland and is marked by events that promote Roma culture, history, and visibility.

Focus on key issues affecting Roma

Since the NRSF spans over seven years, there is a need to prepare for changes. For the period 2026-2030, specific actions should be added in the NRSF to fight against racism, to reduce poverty and to prevent drug-related deaths among young Roma. The needs of migrant Roma must also be systematically addressed in the NRSF for 2026-2030, as they are still largely neglected in the action proposals.

It is a constant refrain of Roma civil society that disaggregated data on the Roma population must be gathered at the earliest opportunity, as it is necessary for planning and implementing well-targeted actions with measurable, practical outcomes, as well as for allocating funding. The issue has been identified in the NRSF, but nothing concrete has happened yet. Another continuous requirement is the Government funding allocated to implement the NRSF. At least, funding should be directed to the Roma CSOs to cover the requested co-funding of the EU projects.

The European policies, including the EU Roma Strategic Framework on equality, inclusion, and participation (EURSF) and the EU Anti-racism Action Plan, must be further developed to include binding obligations for member states and proper reporting mechanisms to the EU.

Finally, the Roma Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the Roma community must continue addressing even the less pleasant topics, such as migrant Roma, internal minorities, the culture of honour, harmful cultural practices, and domestic violence, to name a few. There have already been encouraging signs of this.

Use of EU funding instruments

Roma CSOs coordinate no single European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) projects, but the projects are led by public bodies or large non-Roma organisations with substantial financial resources. However, some of the ESF+ project leaders covered co-funding on behalf of the participant Roma CSOs. This is a giant leap for the Roma CSOs, which do not have permanent funding to be used to cover the requested co-funding of the EU projects.

INTRODUCTION

This report assesses the third National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF) of Finland for the years 2023-2030 (also known as Finland's National Roma Policy, or ROMPO 3), and the related Implementation plan 2023-2026 for Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO 3).

National Roma strategic framework

The current NRSF is based on the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030 (EURSF) and the Council Recommendation on Roma equality, Inclusion and Participation, and preceded by the National Policy on Roma for 2009-2017 (ROMPO) and Finland's National Roma Policy 2018-2022 (ROMPO2). The original idea was to harmonise the cycle with the EURSF 2020-2030, which was, however, launched only after Finland had already started its five-year cycle for 2018-2022. Thus, since 2023, Finland has finally aligned with the rest of the European countries by implementing its third NRSF 2023-2030 in line with the EURSF.

The Government's Decision (STM/2023/11) commits Finland, in principle, to implementing the third NRSF until 2030. The NRSF was published in February 2023 in Finnish, Swedish, and English, and is permanently available on the webpage of the Institutional Repository for the Government.¹ In May 2024, a separate Implementation plan 2023-2026 was published in the same place in three languages as well.²

In the third NRSF, a clear positive trajectory was identified compared to the previous one. In particular, the NRSF is more coherent with the related domestic and European policies. In addition, the number of actions was reduced, the monitoring and evaluation process strengthened, and the number of participants in the preparation of the NRSF increased. However, the NRSF remains little known to Roma civil society and the authorities, with serious implications for its effectiveness and sustainability.

As Finland continues to rank among one of the most racist countries in the EU, according to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA),³ many respondents covered in this report were very pleased that tackling antigypsyism was raised as one of the two priorities and a cross-cutting objective of the NRSF, as this will guide all mainstreaming of the Roma policy measures.

Roma policymaking should be evidence-based, but at present, there is a lack of accurate data on the Roma population, as Finland does not keep official statistics on ethnicity. Promisingly, the NRSF addresses this, by aiming to produce ethical guidelines for research and data collection involving Roma, in collaboration with ministries, universities, and Roma Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Another concern is related to the fact that no Government funding is allocated for the NRSF, albeit the long-term nature of the NRSF from 2023-2030 makes it possible to plan for projects and apply for European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values Programme (CERV) funding, for example, which could be used to address the needs of Roma. Roma civil society still hopes that the Government will contribute even a small amount of funding to the NRSF, as Government funding carries monitoring and evaluation obligations that, in turn, would strengthen the programme and its credibility.

Similar to the previous NRSF, the current NRSF does not sufficiently cover the needs of marginalised Roma within the community, notably gender and sexual minorities, nor divorced women and youngsters living with substance abuse, or migrant Roma, to name a few. The Roma civil society itself highlighted that, when compiling data for the EU, it is no longer possible to hide behind cultural restrictions, as comparable information must be produced.

¹ Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. (2023). *Suomen romanipoliitikka 2023-2030 [Finland's National Roma Policy 2023-2030]* Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:9789520038051>

² Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. (2023). *Toimeenpanosuunnitelma Suomen romanipoliitikkaan (ROMPO 3) toteuttamiseksi vuosille 2023–2026 [Implementation Plan 2023–2026 for Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO 3)]*. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:9789520038068>

³ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2018). *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Being Black in the EU*. Publication Office of the European Union. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-being-black-in-the-eu_en.pdf

The Council Recommendations are clearly addressed throughout the NRSF.

About this report

The purpose of the report is to provide participatory and inclusive monitoring of the implementation of the NRSF by Roma civil society. The report provides feedback to national authorities and informs the European Commission's monitoring of NRSF.

Along with the current Roma Civil Monitor (RCM) initiative for the 2021-2025, the Finnish Roma Association has so far compiled an *ex-post* monitoring report in May 2022 on Finland's NRSF 2018-2022 and an *ex-ante* monitoring report in February 2024 on Finland's NRSF 2023-2030.⁴ In the current report, the monitoring period is very short, only from February 2024 to the time of completion of data collection in August 2025, but justified as the Implementation plan 2023-2026 for Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO 3) was published only in May 2024.

As for the methodology behind the report development, the report builds on a combination of desk study, participatory observation, and interviews. The starting point was the desk research, which refers to a review of the NRSF and the related implementation plan, as well as the previous monitoring report, and the policy documents, analyses, evaluations, and reports that were published since the submission of the previous monitoring report. The desk study covered the following areas:

- the horizontal policy objectives of the EURSF (fighting antigypsyism, anti-discrimination, reducing poverty and social exclusion, participation),
- sectoral policy objectives (education, employment, health, housing),
- other policy areas identified by the RCM initiative as important for Roma equality, inclusion, and participation (Roma culture, environmental justice, digital inclusion, social services, child protection, and income support).

In addition to desk study, participatory observation was used as an input. As the Finnish Roma Association is intensively involved in different policy processes and structures (participating in consultations with public authorities, meetings, workshops, seminars and trainings on the topics directly or indirectly related to the topics of this guidelines), provides services to Roma at the national level, and organises and empowers Roma communities, its own experience from the grassroots level is used as a source of information on the needs and interests of Roma, on how national policies work in practice (how they reach and impact on Roma), what barriers Roma face in accessing public services, how effective are safeguards against discrimination and racism, and what is the view of target groups on public policies.

Ten interviews were conducted in June 2026 to get more information on the recent implementation of the NRSF. In-depth interviews were carried out via the online video call software MS Teams by Päivi Majaniemi and Kristiina Elenius. Two of the interviewees preferred to send a written notification instead of an interview. Altogether, the key informants can be categorised as public authority in charge of the NRSF (1), public authorities with responsibility in key areas (2), public authority in the area of EU funds (1), national equality body (2), Roma civil society and activists (2), and experts in critical areas (2).

More specifically, public authorities with responsibility in key areas refer to representatives of the Prime Minister's Office and the Finnish National Agency for Education under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Public authority in the area of EU funds refers to the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY). National equality body refers to the representatives of the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman. Among the Roma CSOs, interviews were conducted with a federation of the Roma organisations in Finland – *Suomen Romanifoorumi* (Finnish Roma Forum) and with an Association *Savonlinnan Seudun Romaniyhdistys* (Savonlinna Region Roma Association) which is active in Eastern Finland. Finally, experts in critical areas refer to the representatives of the Ministry of Justice.

In this report, the problems and conditions in thematic areas are discussed in Chapter 2. The two key areas in which concrete steps forward have been taken very recently, notably fighting antigypsyism and discrimination, as well as promoting Roma arts, culture and history, are focused on more detail in Chapter 3. The Chapter 4 is about the use of EU funding instruments. Finally, the conclusions are drawn.

⁴ Reports are available at: <https://www.romacivilmonitoring.eu/countries/finland/>.

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

The report was prepared by the Finnish Roma Association involving the team of Kristiina Elenius (Chief Financial Officer), Anca Enache (Vice Chair of Board), Yoon-Hee Choi (Development Coordinator) and Päivi Majaniemi (Chair of Board). The team would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who generously shared their time, experience and materials for the purpose of this report.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NRSF

1.1. Key developments and effectiveness of implementation

1.1.1. Changes in the NRSF

The EURSF 2020-2030 was launched after Finland had already started its five-year Roma policy cycle for 2018-2022. Thus, only since 2023, has Finland harmonised its Roma policy cycle with the rest of the European countries by launching and implementing its third NRSF for 2023-2030. The NRSF has not been updated since the previous monitoring cycle. According to the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP), the European Commission (EC) has not recommended any changes to the NRSF either. The Implementation Plan 2023-2026 was published in May 2024 and thus did not have time to incorporate the latest RCM monitoring report from February 2024.

Nevertheless, since the NRSF spans over seven years, there is a need to prepare for changes in both Finnish society and at the European level.

1.1.2. Progress in implementation

According to Roma CSOs, the current political environment does not support the implementation of the NRSF. In particular, funding for Roma CSOs is cut at the same time as public services are reduced. As such, the NRSF has not had any significant impact on the key issues over the last two years.

In the same vein, the interviewed civil servants say that since the launch of the NRSF in 2023, the polarisation, discrimination and hate speech in Finland have increased. The political environment is heavily influenced by a focus on national security, due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and economic consolidation. In difficult times, the resilience of all citizens is being tested, and maintaining young people's faith in the future is challenging.

According to civil servants, the NRSF remains a top-level programme, as national programmes usually are. For the programme to really bring about changes in Roma people's lives, an implementation chain would be needed at the regional and local levels. In the case of the NRSF, no public bodies or other organisations have been concretely committed at any level. It is not the task of civil servants to read from the NRSF what to do. For public bodies, the NRSF is just background paper, as in reality they only carry out the activities that their ministry directs them to do and for which the ministry directs funding.

The interviewed Roma CSOs and civil servants alike agree that the current political guidance mainstreams and cuts out all targeted measures. Nevertheless, to achieve effective results, both targeted measures and mainstream services are necessary. Recently, the political and policy environment in Finland has, however, changed, and political decision-makers are now influencing policy processes and funding more directly. Guidance from some key ministers has focused solely on mainstreaming services. Some political parties have publicly said that there should be fewer CSOs in Finland to reduce administrative costs.

1.1.3. Effectiveness of monitoring

According to the NRSF, an in-depth mid-term evaluation of the EU's current ten-year strategic framework at the EU level will be conducted, and a mid-term evaluation of Finland's NRSF will be conducted as well. In February 2025, the NRCP announced that the mid-term reporting had started in all EU member states. Reporting in Finland will cover the period from 1 June 2023 to 30 March 2025, including all activities and projects in Finland mentioned in the Implementation Plan 2023-2026 and implemented over the past two years.

Apparently, however, the mid-term report is not prepared in Finland⁵ in the same way as in other EU member states, because Finland is not yet halfway through its NRSF, having started only in 2023. Instead, a financial report will be compiled on activities that have had a clear Roma component and for which either public or private funds have been used.

If a mid-term review were to be conducted, it would be extremely difficult to assess the progress of the NRSF's implementation, as neither the NRSF nor the Implementation Plan 2023-2026 provides appropriate baselines.

⁵ Based on the information available, no mid-term report is foreseen, with the exception of the financial report scheduled for publication later in 2025.

In addition, the implementation periods 2023-2026 and 2026-2030 overlap in the year 2026, creating further challenges for assessing progress over distinct phases. The Implementation Plan also assigns a substantial share of activities to the later period (2026-2030), while no significant progress is expected during 2023-2026.

The financial report will be presented to the National Advisory Board on Roma Affairs at its meeting on 23 September 2025. As this data is not yet available, it is currently not possible to evaluate whether Roma civil society has been meaningfully involved in the monitoring process.

1.1.4. Data collection

According to the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP), data on funding for the implementation of the NRSF was collected from stakeholders through the Webropol Survey and reporting platform until the end of May 2025. Altogether, 61 responses were received.

The public administration bodies which have representatives in the National Advisory Board on Roma Affairs said they are well aware of the NRSF and its progress. These ministries have implemented NRSF measures over the past two years and participated in the above-mentioned Webropol Survey conducted by the NRCP in the spring of 2025. However, respondents say it is difficult to assess the effects of the NRSF measures at this stage.

Accordingly, public administration bodies that are not represented on the National Advisory Board on Roma Affairs may be familiar with the NRSF and may even have implemented NRSF measures over the past two years, yet remained unaware of the monitoring and evaluation process and therefore did not participate in it. Furthermore, it is not known which institutions received the survey. If agencies involved in the implementation were omitted from the distribution, this would constitute a significant shortcoming in the data collection design.

1.2. NRSF's synergy with domestic and EU actions

The most often mentioned domestic policy with which the NRSF operates is the Government action plan to combat racism and promote equality.⁶ In the same vein, the Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language 2023-2030 is in line with the NRSF.

As to EU actions, both the NRSF itself and the Government action plan to combat racism and promote equality are direct contributions to the EURSF 2020-2030 and the EU Action Plan against Racism 2020-2025.

1.2.1. Complementary policies

Compulsory education was extended in 2021, raising the minimum school-leaving age from 16 to 18 years. The impact on Roma youth remains unclear, but the extension enables them to complete a secondary education degree during compulsory education, which is likely to raise the educational level of the Roma population. Moreover, it may prevent school dropout due to early marriage and starting a family.

1.2.2. Alignment with EU actions

Twice a year, the European Commission publishes the Spring and Autumn Packages in the framework of the European Semester, comprising Country Reports, Country-Specific Recommendations, and a Communication on the Packages. Unfortunately, Roma are not being mentioned at all in these documents. Roma are overlooked even though recent social and economic reforms, like cuts to housing support and social benefits, are already exacerbating poverty among the Roma communities. The Country Report fails to acknowledge the specific challenges that Roma in Finland face when it comes to employment, elderly care, and access to services, ignoring both their marginalisation and the impact of structural racism. This silence is unacceptable, given the real and growing inequalities Roma people experience in Finland.

Finland's Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) was published in 2021 following the COVID-19 pandemic and updated in 2023. The plan is part of Finland's Sustainable Growth Programme. The objectives of this programme include reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing productivity, raising the employment rate, improving access to hospital treatment, and advancing equality.

⁶ Finnish Government. (2024). *A New Boost for Equality in Finland: Government Action Plan to Combat Racism and Promote Equality 2024*. Publications of the Finnish Government, 2024:43. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/166644>

The programme states that employment will be boosted through a client-oriented reform of employment services. However, so far, the quality of these services has not improved. Most resources have been directed toward transitioning services from the city level to a new regional structure, creating confusion and uncertainty among clients. The programme also includes health service reforms to improve access to care. Digitalisation is considered one way to enhance accessibility, but this approach does not benefit vulnerable groups within the Roma community, who already face challenges in using digital services.

Gender equality and equal opportunities are identified as cross-cutting goals of the programme. In the same section, it is noted that the well-being, health, and equality of Roma people are promoted through national Roma policies and the recommendations Finland has received from UN bodies.

1.2.3. Addressing concerns of previous assessments

In the previous monitoring cycle, the Roma civil society recommended the national authorities to 1) conduct a follow-up study of Roma wellbeing survey at the earliest opportunity; 2) include the special needs assistants (SNA) in the structures of the regional welfare counties instead of being left as the responsibility of the CSOs, as there is strong evidence that Roma children who had an SNA with a Roma background eventually found greater balance in their everyday lives and continued to upper secondary education; and 3) to recruit Contact Persons with a Roma background in the Regional welfare counties to act as mediators between the authorities and the Roma community. None of these recommendations has been even discussed, which is most likely due to Government austerity measures.

As to European institutions, the Finnish Roma civil society recommended that the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025 be renewed and that the transition from one plan to the next be implemented without any significant breaks. The new Action Plan is under process, and in 2025, the Finnish Roma civil society participated in the European Commission's public consultation to shape the EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030.

In addition, the Finnish Roma civil society recommended that European institutions should call for Member States to protect and ensure the rights of migrant Roma and Roma EU citizens. Despite the clear positive trajectory in the NRSF, which now recognises the migrant Roma in Finland, a further push is needed at the European level, as the migrant Roma and Roma EU citizens are mostly neglected in the level of action proposals of the NRSF.

As to recommendations to civil society, the Roma civil society wished the Roma community to start addressing complex topics such as internal minorities, the culture of honour, harmful cultural practices, and domestic violence, to name a few. This initiative came from the Roma themselves, and similar voices have been heard in the present monitoring cycle as well.

To end up with, it was suggested that the Roma people are given a real opportunity to define and choose what words and concepts they want to be applied when antigypsyism is being discussed and how. It must be guaranteed that scholars belonging to the majority population cannot bypass the Roma community regarding this issue. There are several projects, such as *Active Agency* (2024-27) led by Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), *Rakkavaha dielibosta* (2025-2026) led by STM, and *Amengo horttibi* (2024-2025) and *Amengo saaka* (2025) implemented by the Finnish Roma Association, in which the Roma themselves may have a say on antigypsyism.

1.3. Roma participation in implementation and monitoring

Regarding the implementation of the NRSF, Roma civil society initially had high expectations for the Implementation Plan 2023-2026. However, the plan ultimately proved to be weak. While it seeks to benefit Roma communities and enhance their participation, it lacks binding partnerships, clear timelines, baselines, and measurable indicators. In practice, the Implementation Plan reinforces a concern repeatedly raised by Roma civil society: the actions proposed in the NRSF are formulated as recommendations rather than legally binding obligations, allowing implementing bodies to bypass them entirely.

1.3.1. Involvement of Roma CSOs in implementation

According to Roma CSOs, the NRSF is good overall, even though it doesn't really affect their everyday lives. The action proposals are good, but they are not enough to set actions; they should be implemented as well. Most Roma CSOs refer to the NRSF only when they apply for project funding. Some Roma CSOs, however, appreciate

the NRSF as a manual to help them consider what should be done in their own locality. They wished that the NRSF would be available as a printed book that could be distributed to the stakeholders at the local level.

The information on the NRSF and the Implementation Plan is available, but it requires Roma CSOs to be active and ask questions. Everyone, however, agreed that communication had improved compared to previous programmes. It was hoped that the NRCP would have more contact with national Roma CSOs and share information. Many had heard about NRSF through the Regional State Administrative Agencies, whose planning officers visited different locations.

Only the largest Roma CSOs were able to secure EU funding for implementing the proposed actions of the NRSF. However, there are no ESF+ projects coordinated by Roma CSOs; instead, they are led by public bodies, such as the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), or large non-Roma organisations that have substantial financial resources, such as the Deaconess Foundation and the Diaconia University of Applied Science (DIAK). They can afford to pay the co-funding required for EU projects, while Roma CSOs do not have such funding resources.

Civil servants have observed the efforts of Roma CSOs in implementing the NRSF. According to them, most of the Roma CSOs lack the funding and must rely on 1-2 individuals who are at risk of burnout. The interviewed civil servants called for continuous Government funding without earmarks to bring people together and give them a voice. This, however, is entirely contrary to the current policy and development of the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA), for example. The Government will cut funding to CSOs by two-thirds over the next few years. Such significant savings will no longer be achieved by trimming CSOs' finances; many organisations will have to cease operations altogether. The STEA savings are so massive that they become a primary societal value choice.

The Roma EU citizens and migrant Roma with residency permits in Finland were heard during the NRSF preparation, but unfortunately, participation was limited to this one hearing. The main reason is that these communities have not been part of the policy-making process in the same way that the Finnish Roma communities have. For example, the undocumented Roma have been mainly targeted through emergency social and health services. In contrast, those migrant Roma who have residency have been mainly targeted through mainstream and migrant services and policies rather than by Roma policies. For these communities, getting involved in influencing policy is all the more challenging, as they are not represented by CSOs of their own dedicated to such work. In contrast, those who face homelessness and are living in poverty usually do not have the necessary time or the possibility to join initiatives launched by Finnish Roma CSOs. Furthermore, a lack of a common language may also be a barrier to such collaborations.

Unsurprisingly, migrant Roma are not aware of the implementation of the NRSF, but they nevertheless participate in some projects. For example, in the city of Pietarsaari, the local Roma migrants participate in the 'Roma Gate' Project, and, in Helsinki, they visit the drop-in centre *Hirundo*, both of which are run by the Deaconess Foundation. Similarly, they know about *Iso Numero*, a social enterprise that creates work opportunities for people who cannot earn an income elsewhere. This also demonstrates how there are only a few projects that address the well-being of the migrant Roma rather than any long-term policies.

1.3.2. Roma in public institutions implementing the NRSF

The Roma are part of teams in public institutions involved in the implementation of the NRSF as follows: National Contact Point (one person), Planning Officers at the Regional State Administrative Agencies (four persons), Planning Officer at the THL (one person), Specialist at the Finnish National Agency for Education (one person, on long-term leave of absence).

In 2025, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health received two years of funding from the CERV Programme to advance the NRCP's institutional development and capacity in its role of facilitating national consultation processes, particularly through reforming and strengthening the National Roma Platform (NRP). For the first time, the call was open to a coalition consisting of the NRCP and a co-applicant. As such, the *Rakkavaha dielibosta* project recruited a Roma employee of the Finnish Roma Association whose task is to support both the NRCP and the NRP (one person in 2025-2026).

The above-mentioned numbers of Roma in public institutions provided an interesting point of comparison during a visit to North Macedonia. In North Macedonia, efforts have been made to increase the inclusion of different population groups in society through the 2001 peace agreement, which established public-sector quotas based

on population size. Based on this, for example, approximately 3,000 civil servants with a Roma background work in the country. If Finland had a similar quota, and given that the state alone employs over 80,000 civil servants, Finland should have at least 150 civil servants with a Roma background.

1.3.3. Roma participation in monitoring and evaluation

Based on interviews with Roma CSOs, some had responded to the NRCP Webropol Survey in spring 2025, while others did not know about it, and some did not remember whether they had responded, as there are so many surveys going on all the time. It is a recurring complaint of the Roma CSOs that they are tired of responding to continuous surveys, the results of which are not returned to respondents and for which they are not told what the data is used for.

1.3.4. Contribution of National Roma Platform to the NRSF implementation

The administrative structure of the policy on Roma, or the NRP, consists of the NRCP, National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs in the four corners of the country, under the Regional State Administrative Agencies, as well as the Local Roma Working Groups established in about 20 municipalities with a significant Roma population.

The interviewed civil servants addressed the lack of representative bodies, similar to the Sámi Parliament of Finland, that represent the Sámi in national and international contexts. The current National Roma Platforms do not, by any means, fulfil this task. Furthermore, there is insufficient Roma participation at the national, regional or local level, according to civil servants.

According to Roma CSOs, it is the NRCP's responsibility to raise awareness of the NRSF, as there is currently little awareness among Roma. As the NRSF is not visible in people's everyday lives, nor do they know how to invoke it, it does not come across as something the Roma themselves have achieved, but rather as yet another programme made by the majority population. Even more worrying is that many Roma do not think of the NRSF as something that exists for their benefit but rather as something that may potentially be harmful in the long run, that it too will be used against them if the times get tough again.

The interviewed civil servants emphasised the role of Regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs in spreading the information on equality planning. To begin with, they could involve the Trade Unions, employers' organisations, and Chambers of commerce in a discussion, or even challenge them.

The Local Roma Working Groups, in particular, are the platforms where local Roma may be involved in equality planning either in municipalities or in wellbeing services counties. According to Roma CSOs, the information does not, however, spread among Roma participants in the Local Roma Working Groups, but they only benefit from the training themselves. The problem is that they do not feel ownership over the NRSF. Some Roma may also feel threatened by the NRSF, notably in those provinces where they have lived for several decades and have built good neighbourly relations with the majority population over a long period of time. They do not want to raise problems.

The migrant Roma remain largely excluded from formal participation in decision-making processes. Their voices are underrepresented in policy development, and trust in institutions is often low due to the past experiences of surveillance, discrimination, and fears related to being treated unequally. To promote genuine empowerment, Finland's Roma policy should establish mechanisms that enable migrant Roma to participate meaningfully in both local and national consultations. This includes supporting leadership development within the community through concrete measures and supporting the establishment and development of self-led CSOs.

2. REVIEW BY THEMATIC AREA

2.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

The cross-cutting objective of the NRSF is to eradicate antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma and to ensure the equal realisation of the fundamental rights of Roma. According to Roma civil society, fighting antigypsyism and discrimination is the most essential task of the Roma policy. In the previous monitoring cycle, the Roma civil society identified three critical and three significant problems in this area, more than in any other thematic area.

2.1.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

Roma civil society has identified three critical problems, among which the first is that antigypsyism is not recognised as a specific problem in national policy frameworks. In fact, antigypsyism is not yet sufficiently recognised or acknowledged at any level of society, although the concept is addressed in the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2030 and the EURSF 2020-2030. Some progress, however, took place in 2024 when the Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government, inaugurated in 2023, published the Government Action Plan to Combat Racism and Promote Equality,⁷ in which the concept of antigypsyism was included for the first time.

The NRSF has been mainstreamed into the Government Equality and Nondiscrimination Policy. It aims to conduct a follow-up study of the impacts of experiences of discrimination, non-inclusion, and otherness on the well-being of Roma of different ages, as part of the assessment of the effectiveness of the actions (Action 1). According to the Implementation plan 2023-2026, the goal has been met by the 'Active Agency' Project led by the THL and funded by the ESF+ Programme. Roma are, however, only one of the many target groups of the project. Therefore, there is a danger that the Roma will once again be overshadowed by the other, much larger target groups, notably those with an immigrant background, and the antigypsyism remains undiscussed.

Another critical problem is the persistent prejudice against Roma. Finland consecutively ranks as one of the most racist countries in the EU; in addition to this, Roma are the group facing the most discrimination in Finland by origin. Some progress, however, has taken place as the knowledge base on discrimination in general has improved. Many reliable institutions are participating in data collection and analysis, and the studies are more in-depth than before. This also makes discrimination against Roma much more visible. Nevertheless, discrimination and other similar phenomena (e.g. school bullying, harassment, hate crimes) continues to be a significant problem in Finland, and has proven to increase in recent years.⁸ According to the Roma youth who participated in a focus group discussion in January 2025, the atmosphere has become even more strained since 2023, including a increasing threat of physical violence.⁹

The NRSF relies heavily on including Roma in the development of equality and non-discrimination plans, well-being plans, school-specific equality plans, and other tools across various sectors and areas (Actions 4, 5, 6) to combat discrimination. Roma participation certainly raises awareness, but ultimately, discrimination cannot be solved by the Roma themselves.

The third critical problem is the hate speech towards and against Roma (online and offline). Hate speech in today's Finland is often fuelled by racism. According to interviewed civil servants, the current political

⁷ Finnish Government. (2024). *A New Boost for Equality in Finland: Government Action Plan to Combat Racism and Promote Equality*. Publications of the Finnish Government, 2024:43. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/165805>.

⁸ Mannila, Simo. (2024). *Syrjintä Suomessa 2020-2023. Tietoraportti [Discrimination in Finland 2020–2023. Data Report]*. Publications of the Ministry of Justice, Reports and Guidelines 2024:11. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstreams/7e51638f-030c-4357-9a13-26b0baf86550/download>.

⁹ Choi, Yoon-Hee & Kristiina Elenius (2024). *Romaninuorten Koulutus Ja Työllisyys. Raportti Ternengo Butti - Hankkeessa Vuonna 2024 Tehdystä Kyselystä [Education and Employment of Roma Youth. Report on the Survey Conducted in 2024 Within the Ternengo Butti Project]*. Suomen Romaniyhdistys. Available at: <https://www.suomenromaniyhdistys.fi/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Ternengo-butti-raportti-111224.pdf>.

environment is contradictory as the Government has launched an anti-racism action plan,¹⁰ but at the same time, it disregards political hate speech. More than one in three suspects in recent ethnic agitation or hate speech cases have links to political parties. Most victims of hate speech do not report their experiences anywhere as they think it does not lead anywhere concrete.¹¹ The NRSF mentions that hate speech and derogatory attitudes are manifestations of discrimination, but does not analyse the problem sufficiently. There are no actions related to hate speech in the NRSF.

In addition to the above-mentioned critical problems, three significant issues were identified in the previous monitoring cycle. The first of them is the hate crimes against the Roma. Finland has a proper system via which citizens can report crimes related to discrimination against Roma, in addition to which the Police University College has been monitoring the number of suspected hate crimes since 2008. According to the latest report by the Police University College, the number of alleged hate crimes continues to increase, and 11% of the offences in 2023 were against members of the Roma community.¹² The proportion is very high, considering that Roma are a small minority. Moreover, it is known that only a small fraction of these crimes is being reported.

The NRSF hardly mentions hate crimes against Roma. According to the Implementation Plan, the hate crimes against Roma were addressed by the Peer Action against Hate Project in 2023-2024, led by the Ministry of Justice and funded by the CERV Programme. However, the project focused solely on sharing experiences and increasing awareness. In data collection, the NRSF is right to trust the reporting by the Police University College. In Finland, trust in authorities, including the police, is very high. Public trust in the police has remained stable for a long time. Of those who responded to the latest Police Barometer survey, 92% trust the police a lot or a fair amount¹³.

Secondly, the weak effectiveness of protection against discrimination is a significant problem. In 2022, the Ministry of Justice published a follow-up study on the effects of hate speech and harassment on the sense of security among persons belonging to different minority groups, including Roma. According to the study, 70% of respondents felt less safe due to hate speech and harassment in comparison to 61% in 2016.¹⁴ The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman receives frequent complaints from Roma concerning discrimination. Still, these are only the tip of the iceberg, as the Roma think that complaints seldom lead to concrete results. Since 2023, the resources of the public and third sectors to support Roma people have been cut considerably by the Government. Cuts are not necessarily targeted explicitly at the Roma, but, for example, Victim Support Finland is facing significant cuts to its budget. The NRSF does not adequately address the problem.

The third significant problem is misconduct and discriminatory behaviour by the police and the safety and security sector in general. In 2024, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman issued recommendations to the Helsinki Police Department for follow-up measures regarding the KURI1 operation in 2013-2015 (even 2016-2017) that

¹⁰ Finnish Government. (2024). *A New Boost for Equality in Finland: Government Action Plan to Combat Racism and Promote Equality*. Publications of the Finnish Government, 2024:43. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/165805>.

¹¹ Ministry of the Interior. (n.d.). *Racist Crimes Account for Most Hate Crimes [Rasistiset Rikokset Muodostavat Suurimman Osan Viharikoksista]*. Available at: <https://intermin.fi/en/police/hate-crime>

YLE News. (5 September 2023). *One in Three Hate Speech Suspects Have Party-Political Links, Yle Investigation Finds [Joka Kolmannella Vihapuhe-Epäillyllä on Puoluepoliittisia Yhteyksiä, Ylen Tutkimus Paljastaa]*. Available at: <https://yle.fi/a/74-20048579>

¹² Rauta, J. (2024). *Hate Crime Reported to the Police in 2023 [Poliisille Ilmoitetut Viharikokset 2023]*. Police University College of Finland. Available at: https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/866764/Polamk_katsauksia_38.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

¹³ Ministry of Interior. (2024). *Police Barometer Survey [Poliisibarometri Kysely]*. Ministry of Interior 2025:11. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/36bcc60f-855a-45ca-926b-1fe8e820941e/content>

¹⁴ Nondiscrimination Ombudsman. (13 May 2025). *Nondiscrimination Ombudsman's Recommendations Regarding the Helsinki Police Department's Crime Prevention and Information Gathering Operation Targeting Roma [Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun Suosituksien Koskien Helsingin Poliisin Rikosten Ehkäisy- ja Tiedonkeruutoimintaa Romaniväestöön Kohdistuen]*. Available at: https://yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/0/Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun+suosituksien_EN.pdf/85f14f16-15ef-acc0-5e22-cdc6843b1cad/Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutetun+suosituksien_EN.pdf

was discriminatory to the Roma.¹⁵ Also, the migrant Roma have reported being disproportionately and unfairly profiled, monitored, and removed from public spaces. Particularly, Roma women, and those who wear the traditional Romani clothes, are even more visibly targeted. These practices contribute to the growing stigma against already racialised migrant Roma, many of whom rely on informal work in public areas to survive.

The NRSF takes this problem very seriously. It reminds us that any violations of the prohibition of ethnic profiling constitute discrimination prohibited under the Constitution of Finland and under the Nondiscrimination Act, and experiences of ethnic profiling erode confidence in the police and other authorities. Therefore, it aims at developing cooperation between the police and the Roma population (Action 2) and to ensure awareness of the prohibition of profiling in the structures of the security sector and police administration (Action 3). According to the Implementation Plan 2023-2026, the goals have been met since 2023 in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, National Police Board of Finland, National Advisory Board for Roma Affairs, Roma organisations and the Police University College. The Implementation Plan refers strongly to the report of the Ministry of the Interior working group in 2023, which set many recommendations for the private security sector. The report, however, does not mention Roma at all.

Moreover, the Implementation Plan states that the National Police Board, as the operative actor, is the ultimate decision-maker concerning the above-mentioned actions, but implementation depends on the resources available. At the moment, these resources seem to be nonexistent, at least in the Metropolitan area, following changes at the Helsinki Police Department. There was a long-standing, trust-building and fruitful cooperation between the Police and Roma CSOs, which, however, ended abruptly in 2024. Earlier, Roma CSOs used to provide cultural training and collaborate with the Helsinki Police Department, which carried out preventive work aimed at combating honour-based violence. The preventive work, however, was shut down in 2024, and the focus shifted more toward crimes that had occurred than on crime prevention. Moreover, heightening polarisation has increased the Roma CSOs' reluctance to address the increasing fear the young Roma experience, in addition to the generally tense atmosphere. A growing number of Roma fear that if they report racism, it will just generate more hate towards the Roma as a whole.

2.1.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

Several Roma CSOs raised the issue of discrimination within the Roma community, particularly targeting young Roma who would like to move to a specific location to study or work, but are unable to do so due to the age-old custom to first seek permission from those in the community who have resided in the area the longest. Often, free movement is prevented because the young person is a relative of an unwanted person.¹⁶ This will affect innocent, ordinary young people who would like to study or work. The Roma CSOs suggest that the NRSF start a serious discussion about the problem.

In addition to equality and non-discrimination plans, EU due diligence rules for companies were established in 2024, addressing human rights and environmental risks.¹⁷ There is a concern that EU due diligence rules for

¹⁵ Jauhola, L., Siltala, J. & Nieminen, K. (2022). "Että Puututtaisiin Konkreettisesti": Seurantaselvitys Vihapuheesta ja Häirinnästä ja Niiden Vaikutuksista Eri Vähemmistöryhmiin ["To Intervene Concretely": Follow-Up Report on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Various Minority Groups]. Oikeusministeriön julkaisuja, Selvityksiä ja ohjeita 2022:10. Available at: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/164248/OM_2022_10_SO.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

¹⁶ The moving-permit custom acts as an instrument for the community to prevent alleged 'bad' families from moving too close to them, and from damaging their relations with their majority neighbours. In fact, the moving-permit system enables Roma to live farther from other Roma in Finland. It therefore gives them greater freedom to live in accordance with the community's all-encompassing cleanliness rules and morals, guided by the principle of avoidance. Although the moving-permit custom is unanimously considered essential to the communities' well-being, it can also hamper upward socio-economic mobility for those with questionable family histories.

Berlin, J. (2015). *The Moving-Permit Custom of the Finnish Roma*. Romani Studies, Volume 25, Number 2. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3828/rs.2015.6>

¹⁷ European Parliament and Council of the European Union. (2024). Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence and Amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and Regulation (EU) 2023/2859. [Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence.] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1760/oj>

companies may inadvertently prioritise environmental concerns over human rights. In Finland, minorities have not been involved in the preparation of the regulations; the Roma CSOs know nothing about it.

The NRSF uses the expression 'Europe's mobile Roma' to refer to those Roma who do not have residency in Finland, as well as to those who are residents but have moved to Finland from other countries, especially Eastern Europe. The expression is widely used in Europe in reference to those Roma who migrate to different European countries in the context of the EU free mobility regime, but cannot access residency rights in the host countries. Since Roma in Finland, and in many European contexts, have been stigmatised and policed as 'nomads', the Roma civil society reminds us that the currently used expression 'mobile Roma' can also have stigmatising and racialising effects. Using terms like 'Roma EU citizens' or 'migrant Roma' could send a clearer signal that the Roma also migrate inside Europe, just like any other European citizens, and that the member states have a duty to safeguard their rights and to remove the barriers limiting their access to residency rights in the countries of migration.

2.2. Education

The NRSF has compiled eight actions (31-38) that focus on improving the level of education among Roma. The actions are directed at all levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education. In the previous monitoring cycle, Roma civil society, in turn, identified three significant problems in the field of education.

2.2.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

High dropout rate before completion of primary education is a significant problem among Roma children. The average dropout rate in Finland is under 1%, but in 2011, it was estimated that as many as 19% of the Roma pupils did not complete comprehensive school. There is no new data available. According to a recent survey among Roma youth (N=69) in 2024, however, the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions had interrupted the long-standing positive development in the educational level of the young Roma. For example, every tenth respondent lacked a comprehensive school leaving certificate, and the proportion of young people who had dropped out of comprehensive school had increased compared to previous surveys, which had been carried out in 2020 and in 2014-2015.¹⁸

The NRSF does not discuss school dropouts in detail. They are only mentioned in the context of adults with a Roma background serving a prison sentence, who have dropped out of basic education, and the NRSF aims at ensuring access to basic education for them (Action 36). However, the action is not mentioned in the Implementation Plan. Nevertheless, the NRSF aims (Action 32) to take the needs of Roma children and young people into account in the development of guidance counselling and student welfare services, and to enhance the pupils' personal guidance counselling in basic education. This action may implicitly reflect the political will to reduce school dropout rates among Roma children. According to the Implementation Plan, Action 32 will be started in 2023-2026, but coordination must be strengthened.

Another significant issue is the early leaving of Roma students from secondary education. Due to a lack of statistical data, there is no information on the number of Roma who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The Roma Well-being Study, conducted by the THL in 2018, indicated that across all age groups, only 31% of respondents had received education beyond comprehensive school. According to the aforementioned 2024 survey among Roma youth (N=69) in 2024, more than half of the respondents had no secondary education.

The problem of early leaving from secondary education is not discussed explicitly in the NRSF. There are, however, projects that have supported young Roma in completing vocational qualifications, applying for and completing higher education, and strengthening their attachment to higher education communities, such as the *Romako* projects by the DIAK (2021-2024; 2025-2026). In the same vein, the Cultural Diversity for Study Paths Project (2023-2026), implemented by the DIAK in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland and several universities of applied science in the Eastern Finland region, provides support in finding educational and career

¹⁸ Choi, Yoon-Hee & Kristiina Elenius. (2024). *Romaninuorten Koulutus Ja Työllisyys. Raportti Ternengo Butti - Hankkeessa Vuonna 2024 Tehdyistä Kyselyistä. [Education and Employment of Young Roma. Report on the Survey Conducted in 2024 within the Ternengo Butti Project.]* Suomen Romaniyhdistys. Available at: <https://www.suomenromaniyhdistys.fi/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Ternengo-butti-raportti-111224.pdf>

options, applying for studies, and starting education for Roma and other minorities. All these projects are funded by the ESF+ Programme.

The third significant problem is the increased selectivity of the educational system, resulting in the concentration of Roma or other disadvantaged pupils in educational facilities of lower quality. The study counsellors still guide young Roma only towards vocational education, or discourage them from continuing their education to university level, even when they have already achieved a high level. Roma girls, particularly, are systematically guided towards care work, associated with low wages. As a result, the education for Roma youth still mainly takes place in vocational schools, rather than upper secondary schools, not to mention universities.¹⁹ The NRSF aims (Action 33) at developing a nationally uniform approach to guidance counselling for Roma pupils. According to the Implementation Plan, Action 33 will be started in 2023-2026.

2.2.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

Compulsory education in Finland was extended in 2021, raising the minimum school-leaving age from 16 to 18 years. The impact on Roma youth remains unclear, but the extension enables them to complete a secondary education degree during compulsory education, which is likely to raise the educational level of the Roma population. Moreover, it may prevent early marriages and early school leaving.

According to the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study, the differences between schools and individual students have increased. The differences between schools are most significant in the Helsinki metropolitan area, which indicates deepening school segregation. This applies to Roma pupils too, because at least in Helsinki, low-income families, including many Roma, are increasingly being housed on the outskirts of the city where the prices are lower, public transportation is scarce, and services are nonexistent. And as the children are assigned to their nearest school based on their address, the children of low-income families, including Roma children, end up going into the same schools, which accelerates the segregation.

As to the migrant Roma, the NRSF aims to develop means and create opportunities for migrant Roma children and young people living in Finland to access education, health care, and leisure activities that support their growth. The Implementation Plan, however, does not mention the migrant Roma at all.

There is a lack of understanding in schools regarding the needs and circumstances of Roma migrant children. This often leads to challenges in the relationship between the parents and the schools. Many parents struggle to use the schools' digital platforms and lack information about the Finnish educational system. Due to the fear of discrimination, families often choose not to disclose their Roma identity, which results in children not receiving instruction in the Romani language. Additionally, some parents fear child protection authorities, further complicating their engagement with schools.

The families without residency permits often leave their children in their country of origin. In the rare cases where children are brought to Finland temporarily, parents may avoid registering them in school out of fear that the children could be taken into custody by the child protection services.

There is a need for targeted measures to ensure that the migrant Roma children are enrolled, supported, and retained in school. This includes culturally sensitive guidance, flexible schooling options, and cooperation between schools, municipalities, and Roma communities. Educational policy must explicitly address the needs of migrant Roma to ensure equal access and outcomes.

The Deaconess Foundation implements a *RomniME* Mentoring Project (2024-2026),²⁰ which supports young Roma migrant women in the field of education, working life, and cooperation with the public authorities. The project idea was however based on the EURSF 2020-2030, not the NRSF. The project is funded by the CERV Programme.

¹⁹ Stenroos, M. & Helakorpi, J. (2021). *The Multiple Stories in Finnish Roma Schooling*. In M. M. Mendes, O. Magano & S. Toma (eds.), *Social and Economic Vulnerability of Roma People: Key Factors for the Success and Continuity of Schooling Levels*. Springer, Cham, pp. 99–116. Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-64872-9_6

²⁰ Deaconess Foundation. (n.d.). *RomniME Project*. Available at: <https://www.hdl.fi/en/romnime/>

2.3. Employment

The NRSF recognises unemployment as a serious problem and proposes seven activities to promote employment among Roma. In the previous monitoring cycle, the discrimination of Roma in the labour market by employers was identified as a critical problem; in addition to this, four significant issues were identified.

2.3.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

Employer discrimination in the labour market is a critical problem. In Finland, the most significant factor putting a job seeker in a significantly weaker position than the other applicants is a Roma background.²¹ The pay subsidy reform²² in 2023 is likely to weaken further the companies' motivation to hire a person in a vulnerable labour market position for a job or an apprenticeship. Along with the reform, the employer's subsidy for hiring someone was reduced to 70% of payroll costs, down from 100% earlier.

According to the Implementation Plan, Roma's access to employment can be increased by enhancing their participation in societal policy debates on poverty reduction and diversity in working life. The Implementation Plan suggests that Roma themselves can influence how they are treated in the workplace. According to the Roma civil society, discrimination in the labour market by employers definitely cannot be blamed on the Roma, nor can it be solved by the Roma.

The following four significant problems are interlinked, as they all relate to supporting Roma employment. First, poor access to or low effectiveness of public employment services were identified as significant problems. At the beginning of 2025, responsibility for providing employment services was transferred from the state to municipalities, which is likely to create significant service discontinuities. With the special reference to the abovementioned discrimination by employers, there is not much the employment services can do if the employers do not want to recruit a Roma.

The second significant problem is the large number of Roma youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). As mentioned earlier, nobody knows the exact figures. Still, according to a 2024 survey of Roma youth (N=69), more than half of the respondents were unemployed, and 13% had no work experience, including some Roma youth who were almost in their 30s. When a lack of work history is combined with a lack of education and prolonged unemployment, a young person's probability of employment drops to only 7% after one year of follow-up, according to a recent study, which was conducted among the majority of youth in Finland.²³

The third significant problem is that the primary labour market opportunities are being substituted by public work. According to the Roma civil society, the employment services do not even offer jobs to the Roma, but merely send them to different kinds of job coaching, over and over again. There are Roma who have worked at workshops for 4-5 years in a row, at an hourly wage of 9 EUR and who never entered the open labour market. Occasionally, Roma people are even recommended by the employment authorities to change their family name to help them get a job, which is outrageous and simply not acceptable at all.

The fourth significant problem consists of barriers and disincentives to employment (such as indebtedness and low work income relative to social income). In 2024, several changes to unemployment benefits were made. Among them were cuts to the basic unemployment allowances and labour market subsidies, both of which are paid by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela). For example, the 300 EUR monthly exempt amount will no longer be applied to unemployment benefits, which has indeed made it less financially worthwhile to accept small part-time jobs. The impacts are likely to hit the already marginalised people, including Roma, whose socioeconomic status is lower to start with than that of the majority population. In particular, youth under 25 must actively seek education and employment opportunities to maintain their unemployment benefits. Young

²¹ Mannila, Simo. (2024). *Syrjintä Suomessa 2020-2023. Tietoraportti*. [Discrimination in Finland 2020-2023. Data Report.] Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstreams/7e51638f-030c-4357-9a13-26b0baf86550/download>

²² Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland. (n.d.). *Pay Subsidy Is Granted for Employing Unemployed Persons*. Available at: <https://tem.fi/en/pay-subsidy>

²³ Pykkönen, J. (2025). *Yli Puolet Työttömistä On Vaikeasti Työllistettäviä Rakennetyöttömiä – Kolme Keinoa Nuorten Työllistämiseen* [More Than Half of the Unemployed Are Hard-to-Employ Structural Unemployed – Three Ways to Boost Youth Employment]. EVA Artikkeli. Available at: <https://www.eva.fi/blog/2025/08/20/yli-puolet-tyottomista-on-vaikeasti-tyollistettavia-rakennetyottomia-kolme-keinoa-nuorten-tyollistamiseen/>

Roma facing barriers like multigenerational unemployment or poverty, health problems, lack of childcare, and discrimination may struggle to meet these requirements, potentially leading to a benefit loss and further hardships.

The NRSF recognises the seriousness of unemployment, but implementation in the field of employment has been left to the individual projects. The abovementioned *Romako* Project, funded by the DIAK (2021-2024) Programme, for example, successfully supported young Roma in obtaining jobs and internships. However, when starting from a situation in which a job search is already hopeless due to a recognisable Romani name, there is only so much and so many that a single project can achieve.

The 'Cultural Diversity for Study Paths' Project (2023-2026) by the DIAK in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland and several universities of applied science in the Eastern Finland region has received ESF+ funding. The joint project programme provides support for minorities in finding educational and career options, applying for higher education, and pursuing higher education. There is a risk that the Roma youth are overshadowed in this kind of project by larger target groups, such as youth with an immigrant background.

2.3.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

The NRSF does not mention the migrant Roma at all in the context of employment. Nevertheless, the migrant Roma continue to face significant barriers to employment, such as a lack of formal qualifications, language barriers, discrimination, and limited access to employment services, particularly for those without residency status. Many rely on informal or precarious work, which offers little security or income.²⁴ There is a clear need for targeted employment pathways that include language training, skills development, and support for accessing legal employment. Effective cooperation between municipalities, employers, and NGOs is essential to create inclusive labour market opportunities. National employment strategies should explicitly address the situation of migrant Roma and ensure equal access to employment for all.

Beyond the NRSF, the Deaconess Foundation has systematically supported Roma EU citizens and migrant Roma since 2009 and has implemented employment projects for them. The 'Roma Gate Employment Lab' Project (2024-26) takes place in Pietarsaari region, on the Western coast, and is funded by the ESF+ Programme.

2.4. Healthcare

The Finnish healthcare system is based on the public healthcare services to which everyone residing in the country is entitled.

The Roma civil society has not identified any critical or significant problems in this area. It does not, however, mean that there are no problems at all. However, as this report focuses only on critical and significant issues. Therefore, healthcare issues are not discussed.

The lack of disaggregated data on Roma makes it challenging to direct any targeted actions to the Roma population. The THL has, however, clearly demonstrated that it is possible to gather and provide accurate knowledge about Roma people, as it through with the Roma Well-being Study conducted in conjunction with the FinHealth 2017 population survey. It is the constant demand of the Roma civil society that a follow-up study to THL's Roma wellbeing survey must be compiled at the earliest opportunity.

The aim of the NRSF is to ensure that Roma EU citizens and migrant Roma are considered in the actions mentioned in the health and well-being section of the NRSF. They are, however, not even mentioned in the Implementation plan.

Some progress has been made in providing basic health-related services to the migrant Roma in Helsinki through the cooperation between Hirundo and Global Clinic, a voluntary based initiative, and the City of Helsinki. Roma migrants have more knowledge of municipal health and social services in Helsinki. This progress, however, has

²⁴ Katsiko, M., Enache, A. & Jylhö, M. (2022). *"If You Want to Work, You Need to Speak the Language of the Employer": Roma Migrants' Narratives of Agency and Insecurities in Pietarsaari*. Deaconess Foundation. Available at: https://www.hdl.fi/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Deaconess_Foundation_Roma_Gate_project_Roma_migrants_narratives_on_agency.pdf

taken place beyond the NRSF, driven by the City of Helsinki's political will and the close collaboration between the City of Helsinki and the Deaconess Foundation since 2009.

Nevertheless, the migrant Roma face significant challenges in accessing healthcare services, as appointments often need to be booked by phone or through digital platforms. Many lack the necessary language and digital skills to make these reservations independently.²⁵ In Helsinki, the municipality makes efforts to provide interpretation services. Still, suitable translators are not always available, which further limits their access to care.

2.5. Housing, essential services, and environmental justice

In Finland, the Roma population had settled more permanently by the early 1980s. Their access to housing and settlement was supported by many social measures, leading to a significant improvement in the Roma's housing situation. Currently, however, the long-term positive development in the field of Roma housing is at risk. The previous positive trajectory was mainly due to the Ministry of the Environment's active intervention. In recent years, unfortunately, the role of the Ministry has been almost non-existent, likely due to cuts to ministry budgets, which have justifiably raised concerns among the Roma civil society. The Roma civil society identified one significant problem during the previous monitoring cycle.

2.5.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

According to interviews with the authorities, one of the most significant problems in the field of housing is the practice of outsourcing public housing services to private companies without requiring a valid equality plan. The Nondiscrimination Act requires authorities to promote equality in society, but the problem arises when private companies run services on behalf of the Government. Municipalities, in particular, tend to outsource their housing services to privately or municipally owned housing companies. These companies do not have any obligation to justify an adverse decision; thus, there is no way to complain about decisions either. Particularly in the larger cities, there may well be several housing companies, but, for example, only one which offers housing to the Roma population.

Discrimination in the housing market, mainly due to the origin of the person looking for housing, is unfortunately all too common.²⁶ It still happens that a private lessor states to the estate agent a wish not to rent the dwelling to a Roma, as it is not known that the Nondiscrimination Act applies to renting housing. The seller, lessor and estate agent of the housing can choose the residents, but not on discriminatory grounds. They naturally require that the buyer or tenant be able to pay and fulfil the other obligations related to tenancy. Still, the selection cannot be based on factors such as the person's origin, religion, or disability. They are guilty of discrimination in violation of the Nondiscrimination Act if a person is treated more unfavourably than others because of a personal characteristic, without a justified reason.

This problem is hardly mentioned in the NRSF. The Roma civil society urges municipalities to act in line with the Nondiscrimination Act. As such, whenever a public authority outsources a service, one criterion must be that the operator provides a valid equality plan. According to the definition of the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, an equality promotion plan sets out how an organisation promotes equality, works to prevent discrimination and tackles discrimination in its own activities and as an employer. The purpose of equality planning is to assess and develop the activities from the perspective of safeguarding equality and to ensure equality in the activities. The aim is to achieve *de facto* equality.

2.5.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

In 2023, significant cuts to the general housing allowance were made. Due to strict income restrictions, many people living in state-subsidised rental housing have been forced to move to cheaper apartments. Therefore, at least in Helsinki, low-income families, including many Roma, are increasingly being housed on the outskirts of

²⁵ Enache, A., Dorofte, M. & Iordache, A. (2025). *Mentoring as Support for Roma Women's Life Goals. National Research Report for Finland*. Deaconess Foundation. Available at: https://www.hdl.fi/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/NATIONAL-RESEARCH-REPORT-FINLAND_FINAL-19.11.2025.pdf

²⁶ Nenonen, T., Kivelä, J., Ervasti, E. & Villa, S. (2021). *Perusoikeusbarometri [Fundamental Rights Barometer]*. Publications of the Ministry of Justice 2021:17. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/163261>

the city. As children are assigned to their nearest school based on their address, every time the family moves to cheaper housing, the child's school changes. As a result, the child's path through school is interrupted.

While the state records substantial savings in housing benefit payments, the broader housing market is adjusting to new pressures. Despite population growth in major cities, new social housing construction has nearly come to a halt. In the long term, there may be significant consequences as the cuts are now made from both ends.

The housing of Roma EU citizens and migrant Roma is not discussed in the NRSF at all. The Roma migrants without a permanent residence status must obtain a referral from Helsinki Social Services to access the temporary emergency housing. However, some face difficulties accessing these services, and due to the uncertainty of support, many opt for informal housing arrangements or end up sleeping on the streets. As individuals with severe addictions also use these emergency shelters, it is understandable why some Roma feel unsafe and reluctant to use such facilities.

Migrant Roma with residence permits also face significant barriers in accessing stable housing. Discrimination in the rental market is common, and those who do manage to secure housing often struggle to afford rent - especially since housing subsidies have been reduced.²⁷ Sometimes several families share one apartment, as they cannot secure state-subsidised rented apartments of their own.

2.6. Social protection

The Finnish social policy effectively prevents poverty, and there is an efficient income redistribution system, yet pockets of relative poverty and social exclusion persist. As mentioned earlier, the socioeconomic status of the Roma people is lower than that of the majority population. The interviewed civil servants also remind that the Roma community suffer, as a result of racism, from intergenerational exclusion, i.e. a lack of equal opportunities in all areas of life. Yet the Roma do not perceive themselves as poor nor marginalised and may consider any discussions about poverty to be stigmatising. Thus, the NRSF mentions poverty only briefly. The Roma civil society has identified two significant problems in social protection.

2.6.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

High rates of at-risk-of-poverty and material and social deprivation are significant problems in the case of the Roma population. According to a survey among Roma youth (N=69) in 2024, 61% of respondents were worried about poverty.²⁸ Given that low levels of education, poor employment and economic conditions are common among the Roma population, the young people's fear is understandable and real - even shocking. The result is in line with the Roma well-being study of the THL in 2018, in which 39% of Roma boys and 54% of Roma girls aged 18-29 had feared running out of food in the previous year.²⁹ Both surveys found that Roma people's experiences of poverty were significantly more common than in the general population.

In the NRSF, poverty is mentioned only in the context of employment. There is an action (Action 39) that aims to include Roma clearly in the societal policy debate on poverty reduction and to take their perspectives into account in discussions of diversity in society and working life. According to the Implementation Plan 2023-2026, the action has already been implemented through the 'Access to Inclusion' Project by the DIAK and *SuomenRomanifoorumi* (the Federation of the Roma organisations in Finland) in 2023-2026. The project promotes the inclusion and well-being of Roma people and is funded by the ESF+ Programme..

The Roma civil society criticises the NRSF as it ties poverty and employment together in a way that implies that

²⁷ Enache, A., Dorofte, M. & Iordache, A. (2025). *Mentoring as Support for Roma Women's Life Goals. National Research Report for Finland*. Helsinki: Helsinki Deaconess Institute Foundation sr. Available at: https://www.hdl.fi/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/NATIONAL-RESEARCH-REPORT-FINLAND_FINAL-19.11.2025.pdf

²⁸ Choi, Yoon-Hee & Kristiina Elenius (2024). *Romaninuorten koulutus ja työllisyys. Raportti Ternengo butti-hankkeessa vuonna 2024 tehdystä kyselystä* [Education and Employment of Roma Youth. Report on the Survey Conducted in the Ternengo Butti Project in 2024]. Suomen Romaniyhdistys. Available at: <https://www.suomenromaniyhdistys.fi/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Ternengo-bitti-raportti-111224.pdf>

²⁹ Weiste-Paakkonen, A., Lämsä, R. & Kuusio, H. (2018). *Suomen romaniväestön osallisuus ja hyvinvointi. Romanien hyvinvointitutkimus Roosan perustulokset 2017-2018* [Inclusion and Wellbeing of the Finnish Roma Population. Basic Findings of the Roma Wellbeing Study 2017–2018]. Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-343-246-8>

the poverty of Roma people could be eliminated simply by going to work. Poverty, however, is not just an employment issue, as it can be related to insufficient education, insufficient health, or discrimination, for example. Moreover, there is no longer a need for political debates; rather, practical measures are needed that make concrete improvements to the socio-economic status of the Roma.

Another significant problem is the limited flexibility of income support programmes to address household conditions that change over time. If the client's situation changes, the social assistance will be terminated until the applicant has delivered additional information. The additional information extends the processing time, and the delay may have serious consequences for people whose livelihoods depend on state support. This problem has been reported for years; however, the current issues are caused by the Government's recent austerity measures. This problem is not discussed in the NRSF.

2.6.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

The significant cuts to basic social security benefits in 2024 affect unemployment benefits, housing benefits and social assistance. These cuts will increase the number of low-income people by approximately 110,000, of whom 27,000 are minors.³⁰ As such, the impacts are likely to hit the Roma people as well.

Many elderly Roma, in particular, are low-income earners. According to a 2024 survey of elderly Roma (N=59), 29% of respondents received only the national pension (775.70 EUR) or no earnings-related pension at all. The incomes of respondents ranged from 550 EUR to 1,450 EUR, placing them in the low-income category, as the average retirement in Finland is 1,869 EUR. It is worth noting that the respondents all belong to the wealthier Roma elders, as the most vulnerable are not reached or do not answer in such surveys.³¹ The elderly Roma with the lowest income are at serious risk of falling into a vulnerable position as they do not have sufficient access to the services or a livelihood, they do not have adequate digital skills. They cannot afford even basic medication or medical equipment. They may not be able to afford to use public transportation either.

Migrant Roma continue to live in conditions of extreme poverty and social marginalisation, as discussed earlier. Those who managed to become permanent residents are prone to unstable employment and have difficulty accessing social and employment services. There is a clear need for more sustainable, long-term solutions that go beyond mere emergency aid. These should include inclusive employment pathways, culturally sensitive outreach, and coordinated national strategies that explicitly incorporate migrant Roma into anti-poverty measures. The Hirundo Day Centre, operated by the Deaconess Foundation, serves as a key platform for engaging with the Roma migrant community in Helsinki. It provides not only emergency social support but also opportunities for dialogue and empowerment.

2.7. Social services

Everyone residing in Finland has the right to receive urgent assistance. The Roma civil society, however, has identified two significant problems in the social services field.

2.7.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

First of all, the limited quality, capacity, and comprehensiveness of the help provided by social services were identified as a significant problem. In particular, the ever-increasing digitalised service system is incapable of addressing customers' multiple issues. Many Roma have insufficient education and no digital skills, which makes it next to impossible to apply benefits through e-services.³² This leads to delays in seeking support and further accumulation of problems.

³⁰ Tervola, J. & Ollonqvist, J. (2025). *Muuttuuko arvio sosiaaliturvaleikkausten vaikutuksista, kun toimeentulotuen simulointia tarkennetaan? [Does the Assessment of the Impacts of Social Security Cuts Change When Social Assistance Simulation Is Refined?]*. INVEST Working Papers 127/2025. Available at: <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/f7yxn>

³¹ Autio, P., Valerius, A., & Schwartz, B. (2024). *Romanivanhusten palvelutarvekartuksen seurantaselvitys: Anna kunnia vanhuksille [Follow-Up Report on the Service Needs Assessment of Elderly Roma: Give Honor to the Elderly]*. Suomen Romaniyhdistys. <https://www.suomenromaniyhdistys.fi/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/palvelutarvekartitus2024.pdf>

³² Suomen Romaniyhdistys ry [Finnish Roma Association]. (n.d.). *DIRA – Dигиталinen Osallisuus Romaniaikuisille: Tietoa Ja Taitoja Sähköisiin Palveluihin [DIRA – Digital Inclusion for Roma Adults: Knowledge and Skills for E-Services]*. Available at: <https://www.suomenromaniyhdistys.fi/hanketointi/hankkeet/dira/>

In the NRSF, digital skills and media literacy are addressed as essential indicators of equality and inclusion. As such, Action 17 aims to ensure equal access to digital services by increasing digital skills and media literacy training for the Roma population. According to the Implementation Plan, Roma organisations and municipalities young Roma's everyday life management skills through digital skills training in 2023-2030, a statement that is quite vague.

The digital skills and media literacy of Roma women have been supported by the Finnish Roma Association in the *Sastipe tukke* project since 2023. The STEA funds the project. The project has noticed that most Roma do not need much support in using digital devices, but rather in navigating the authorities' e-services, conducting digital transactions, and understanding the official language used in them.

In 2022-2024, an international project called the 'Digital Inclusion for Roma Adults: Gaining Knowledge and Skills in eServices' (*D/IRA*) was conducted. The project was funded by the ESR+ Programme and implemented by the Deaconess Foundation and partners, including the Finnish Roma Association, which provided tailored digital skills guidance for Roma migrants.

Another significant problem is the limited ability of social services to work together with other agencies to help clients effectively. The service system is unable to help clients with multiple problems because services are heavily siloed and do not communicate with one another. For example, the *Bahtalo phuuriba* Project, implemented by the Finnish Roma Association since 2005 and funded by STEA, has reported a case in which the social services worker clearly stated that they could not help an elderly Roma client because she had too many simultaneous problems.

The NRSF has defined specific actions to support young Roma who engage in criminal activities, notably Actions 13 and 14, which are relevant as even 20%-30% of the Roma are living with vulnerabilities related to intergenerational poverty, marginalisation, crime, or drugs. According to the Implementation plan, the Anchor activity has been made accessible to the young Roma, and the Association *Romano Missio* has developed support services for persons with a criminal background. Moreover, Actions 28-30 call for a study on the accessibility of mental health and substance abuse services among Roma, making mediation part of the development of the social support and service models for work with the Roma involved in crime, and the creation of a national approach and coordination related to the substance abuse, violence and prison work carried out with the Roma. The Implementation Plan schedules the task for 2023-2026, but the activities are not described in detail.

2.7.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

As a result of the Government's social security cuts, income adequacy weakened in 2024–2025 in almost all households receiving basic security benefits. Social protection has weakened, especially for unemployed families with children. Therefore, social assistance is used to replace cuts in primary benefits.³³ The impacts are likely to hit many Roma as well.

According to Roma CSOs, however, the NRSF does not focus on the drug-related problem sufficiently at all, but preventing drug-related deaths among young people should even be the top priority of the NRSF. The number of drug-induced deaths of youth has tripled in Finland since 2015, being one of the highest in Europe. These deaths are either accidents or suicides, and therefore preventable deaths. According to Roma CSOs, drugs are a growing problem in the Roma community alike. Earlier, it was thought that intoxicants were not part of good behaviour in the Roma culture; they were used only by the general population. Nowadays, however, drugs are widely accessible, even in schools, often through peers who do not fit the stereotypical image of drug dealers.

Roma CSOs have identified three types of drug users: first of all, some people with an addiction finance their drug habits by committing crimes. These people represent the ultimate rock bottom. They are mainly people who have fallen through every crack in the system. The second group is formed by socially acceptable 'white collar' workers with bright clothes and polished shoes, whose drug usage has increased but is still in control. Well-to-do adults with recreational drug usage form the last group. These people are mostly using, some also

³³ Mukkila, S., Ollonqvist, J. & Tervola, J. (2025). *Perusturvan riittävyyys 2023–2025: Hallituskauden Väliarvointi* [Adequacy of Social Security 2023–2025: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Government Term]. Tervyden ja hyvinvointin laitos (THL). Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-408-495-6>

dealing, cocaine.

No action can help when a youngster from the countryside moves to a city, when that youngster comes from a family with substance abuse in the third generation, having grown up with a criminal lifestyle with all its side effects, and possessing a general attitude that nothing in life matters. Such issues negatively affect the whole community, with fights, threats and money extortion. Similarly, in small communities, the drug-related death of even a single young person can have a devastating, paralysing effect on the entire Roma community.

Another alarming development is that these days, girls have also started to use drugs increasingly; there have even been drug-related deaths among Roma girls, as the interviewed Roma CSOs pointed out. When addressing substance abuse, the NRSF does not mention girls at all. Understandably, Roma CSOs state that they have not found the NRSF helpful in their efforts to help drug-addicted youth.

Migrant Roma are not discussed in the NRSF in the context of social services. Digitalisation in particular also poses a challenge for them. They face significant challenges accessing social services, as benefits must be applied for online, through e-services. Many lack the necessary language and digital skills to operate e-services independently. In Helsinki, the municipality makes an effort to provide interpretation services, but suitable translators are not always available. Moreover, Roma migrants have greater knowledge of municipal social services in Helsinki thanks to the Hirundo drop-in centre operated by the Deaconess Foundation.

2.8. Child protection

Roma children continue to be overrepresented in child welfare services, and the NRSF takes the matter seriously. In this field, three significant problems have been identified by the Roma civil society.

2.8.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

Segregated or discriminatory child welfare services provided to the Roma are a significant problem. The issue is discussed in the NRSF, and the relevant targets are well defined (Action 7). According to the Implementation Plan 2023-2026, solutions to the problem are sought through the 'Social Innovations in Child Welfare' (SOILA) Project 2023-2026, which aims to accelerate social innovations for the reform of child welfare and the improvement of services nationwide. There is, however, a risk that the Roma children will be left behind by the majority of children in this project.

The number of places in Finland's only child welfare unit for Roma children was recently reduced. At the same time, however, the Roma family support association *Romaniperheen tukiylsikkö* (Support unit for Roma families), established in 2022, launched a new project for the period 2024-2026 aimed at supporting Roma children and young people placed outside the home, as well as their families, and at strengthening cohesion during periods of child protection. The project, *Yhtä matkaa huomiseen* (Together towards tomorrow), is funded by STEA.

Another significant problem is the biased treatment of Roma youth by security and law enforcement. The problem is discussed in the NRSF, but there is still room for improvement. Roma civil society has expressed its concern about the lack of knowledge of Roma culture among the child welfare services. In addition, they assume that much of the tension between the child welfare services and the Roma families is, in fact, based on mutual but continuous misunderstandings. From the Roma point of view, the children who are clients of the child welfare services are given more rights and freedom than those who are brought up in the Roma community, where they naturally learn to live according to the cultural etiquette and manners expected in a Roma community.

In particular, Roma civil society is worried about the child welfare clients who no longer have any contact with their Roma relatives. In such cases, the whole family may be broken, and as a result, children will lose contact not only with their immediate family but also with the entire Roma culture. For centuries, the Roma people have felt proud of their culture, and their tendency to take care of their own has been strong. Historically, if the parents did not know how to raise a child or faced any challenges during raising the child/ren, the other relatives were eager to help or take care of them. However, nowadays, as societies are more individualistic, the wonderful Roma tradition has started to erode. This worrisome development was further enforced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced separation and isolation upon families and relatives.

The third significant problem is inadequate participation by children and adolescents. Most often, Roma children

and young people do not participate in anything beyond congregations considered safe, meaning they do not participate in school pupil and student body activities or have hobbies. Not all families can afford to pay for children's hobbies, whose prices have become out of control, especially in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Roma youth are also underrepresented in international exchange programmes because they are not encouraged to participate or never reach study levels where such programmes are organised. According to the interviews with the Roma CSOs, young people are not heard or taken seriously in Roma policy. They are not encouraged to participate in youth associations, delegations, or other activities. It is still difficult for young people to find a place in the Roma hierarchy.

The NRSF recognises that children and young people enjoy school, but their own access to influence is mainly limited to their family and friends. Therefore, the NRSF aims to develop local and national Roma youth work to improve the opportunities for young Roma people to engage in leisure activities and their inclusion (Action 8). Unfortunately, the action is postponed to 2026-2030 in the Implementation Plan.

2.8.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

The NRSF does not discuss migrant Roma in the context of child protection. One of the biggest fears among the migrant Roma who are in Finland with their children is that the latter will be taken into custody. Such fears are based on the stories that circulate among the migrant Roma community. Some of these stories are based on facts, while others might rely more on personal experiences of tense or unpleasant discussions about childcare with social work professionals. Many of the parents underline that they do not use drugs or any other addictive substances and that the well-being of their children is essential to them. Some families even moved back to their country of origin or into another country as they feared their children would be taken into custody if they stayed in Finland.

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

The NRSF lists ten actions (Actions 54-63) that support the Romani language and Roma culture and art, significantly more than in any other field. This is probably because arts, culture, and history-related activities are something the Roma themselves can actively participate in and implement on their own. At the same time, these actions are not considered 'threatening' to the majority population. The Roma civil society identified five significant problems in the field of Roma arts, culture and history. According to the instructions for this RCM report, we should focus only on issues we earlier deemed critical or significant. This is what we have done here. The remaining actions of the NRSF on promoting Roma arts, culture and history do not address critical or significant problems. Therefore, they are not discussed here.

2.9.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problems

The first significant problem identified by the interviewed Roma civil society is a lack of awareness among the general population of the contribution of Roma art and culture to national and European heritage. Already, the previous NRSF 2018-2022 included an ambitious plan to develop a programme to promote Roma culture in line with the national Cultural Heritage Strategy and to establish a centre to promote Roma culture. As these were not implemented, they were transferred to the third NRSF 2023-2030. In the current Implementation plan 2023-2026, the implementation of the programme is further postponed to 2026-2030, while the centre is mentioned without any concrete actions or timeline. This greatly increases the pressure to get the plan implemented towards the end of the programme. Eventually, the question arises: can the plan be implemented at all?

The most ambitious action (Action 54) is the establishment of a centre for promoting Roma culture, linked to the national Cultural Heritage Strategy and the related action plan. The action is included in the Implementation plan 2023-2026, but there is no concrete plan. Roma civil society doubts whether anything will ever come of it.

Meanwhile, a promising development has been that major institutions, such as the National Museum of Finland, the Finnish National Gallery, and the Finnish Heritage Agency, have begun to include key elements of the history and culture of the Roma population as part of their Decolonised Museum activities. For example, the permanent exhibition at the Finnish National Gallery offers fresh perspectives into Finland's oldest and most extensive art collection by asking how Finnishness is portrayed. It admits that many of the Ateneum Art Museum's most famous works are associated with the spread of the 19th century nationalistic view of Finland. Therefore, it is worth asking who is excluded. In the new permanent exhibition, which explores the construction of Finnish national identity in the visual arts, Roma have finally been included in the national story. Once the decision has

been made, further actions are likely to be expected.

What makes these actions important is the way they make Roma visible. Moreover, it is remarkable that the opinions of the Roma were both asked and heard in the planning of the activities. This may be a small step, but it is an important one towards the right direction. It is a clear indication of the museum's willingness to be more inclusive in the future by including all population groups. By doing this, the institutions also acknowledge the fact that this has not always been the case.

Another significant problem is the exclusion of Roma communities from national cultural narratives, a topic closely related to the one described above. Very recently, however, there have been signs of recognition of the Roma community. For example, in 2024, President of the Republic of Finland, Alexander Stubb, conferred the honorary title of Academician of Arts on master folk singer, musician Hilja Grönfors. In the same vein, representatives of Roma civil society were invited to the foundation stone ceremony for the extension of the Finnish National Museum, symbolising the recognition of the Roma people.

The third significant problem is that Roma history and culture are not included in school curricula or textbooks. In 2023-2024, the Finnish Roma Association in collaboration with the Youth Academy, implemented an *Amengo skoola* project that increased the knowledge of middle school and upper secondary school teachers and students about Roma culture and the position of the Roma people in today's Finland. The project was funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The fourth significant problem is the lack of inclusion of the Romani language in schools³⁴ and the development of necessary educational materials and resources for its preservation and teaching. The Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language 2023-2030³⁵ takes this matter seriously. Municipalities are not obliged to organise teaching in pupils' own mother tongue, but they can apply for Government funding if they wish. In 2024, only 12 Roma pupils received education in the Romani language, as principals were not interested in organising it, and there was a shortage of qualified teachers. In addition, hourly-paid staff are hardly available after Kela removed the 300 EUR monthly exemption for recipients of an unemployment benefit.

Finally, there is a lack of memorialisation of Roma history through the establishment of monuments, commemorative activities, and the institutionalisation of dates relevant to Roma history. Recently, the International Roma Day on 8 April has become familiar and celebrated in Finland. The Roma youth have suggested to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs that the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day on 2 August would be commemorated in Finland, similarly to the many other EU countries. Now, Finland only commemorates the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January, when the Roma victims, however, are overshadowed by the Jewish victims.

In the field of Roma culture, arts and history, small steps forward have been taken in Finnish society by various actors. In many cases, the initiatives have been created by individual actors who have been able to develop and secure funding because the issues have been mentioned in the NRSF. The most significant problems in the field, however, cannot be solved by individual actions but require longstanding collaboration among multiple actors and public funding.

2.9.2. Addressing the problems beyond the NRSF

There are no targeted measures and almost no mainstream initiatives to support the culture, art, and language of the migrant Roma communities. Even in the municipalities where the children have the right to study their native language, many migrant Roma families choose not to disclose their identity due to the fear of discrimination. As a result, they often refrain from applying for Romani language teaching for their children. In Helsinki, the Hirundo drop-in centre has organised gatherings and events, including Christmas celebrations. In Pietarsaari, the *Romaniportti* Lab project provides opportunities for community gatherings and celebrations.

³⁴ This issue is not cross-referenced with the education sections, as the Romani language is not regarded as an educational matter in Finland but rather as a gesture of goodwill.

³⁵ Finnish National Agency for Education. (2022). *Suomen Romanikielen Elvytysohjelma Ja Toimenpide-Ehdotukset 2023-2030 [Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani Language and Proposals for Measures 2023-2030]*. Publications 2022:6. Available at:

https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/Suomen_romanikielen_elvytysohjelma_toimenpide-esityksineen.pdf

3. FOCUS ON KEY PROBLEMS AFFECTING ROMA

3.1. Fighting antigypsyism and discrimination

Racism and antigypsyism are problems that affect all members of the Roma community; there has been no tangible impact, and on current form, none likely in the immediate future; and the fact that this lack of progress is a critical deficit is made clear by the fact that Roma civil society voices have stressed that combating antigypsyism and discrimination is the most important task to be accomplished by the Roma policy.

Nondiscrimination Ombudsman's recommendations to the Helsinki Police Department

This case shows that even complex issues can be discussed constructively among all parties and that progress can be made.

In 2013-2017, Helsinki Police Department's conducted the 'Kuri1' operation, a crime prevention and information-gathering operation targeting Roma. During the operation, it was reported that the Helsinki Police made 2258 entries for Roma, which means that up to half of the Roma population in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area was recorded. The Ombudsman found that the action gave rise to an assumption of discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. Judging from the operational guidelines, it was based on an instruction to discriminate, which is prohibited under the Nondiscrimination Act. In their statement, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman stressed that this incident must be taken seriously, since discrimination based on ethnic origin is a severe form of discrimination. The guideline's description of the Roma who were to be subjected to intensified monitoring and surveillance could be understood to mean that the operation targeted all people assumed to be Roma by the police and travelling by car or in a group.

In 2023, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman facilitated a forward-looking discussion of the 'Kuri1' operation and the issues arising from follow-up investigations into it. In addition to the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman, the round table was attended by representatives of the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior, the National Police Board's legality control unit, the Helsinki Police Department, and Roma organisations. The key questions were how to ensure the police operations would be non-discriminatory and in compliance with the prohibition of ethnic profiling and how to increase the Roma population's trust in the police.

In 2024, based on the round table discussion, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman recommended these follow-up measures:³⁶

- The National Police Board develop its operations to ensure that the prohibition of ethnic profiling is fully understood in all police departments.
- The National Police Board designs and implements information-gathering measures on whether ethnic profiling is being used in police operations. The police should regularly collect both qualitative and quantitative data on how police operations target various ethnic minorities.
- The police departments hold regular discussions with the Roma on police operations targeting them. The Roma population's distrust of police activities can be dispelled through open and honest exchanges of information.
- The discussion continues on the development of the Police Barometer so that its respondents can be extended to cover various ethnic minorities. The Police Barometer is a follow-up and evaluation survey that studies citizens' perceptions of police activity and the state of internal security in Finland. The Barometer's knowledge base should also be expanded to enable the broader use of diverse ethnic minorities' experiences and views in the development of police activities.

³⁶ Non-Discrimination Ombudsman. (13 May 2024). *Recommendations Regarding the Helsinki Police Department's Crime Prevention and Information Gathering Operation Targeting Roma*. Available at: https://yhdenvertaisuuusvaltuutettu.fi/documents/25249352/0/Yhdenvertaisuuusvaltuutetun+suosituksset_EN.pdf/85f14f16-15ef-acc0-5e22-cdc6843b1cad/Yhdenvertaisuuusvaltuutetun+suosituksset_EN.pdf?t=1715671600267

- The police departments ensure that all Regional Advisory Boards on Romani affairs also include a police representative. Police members must also be appointed to local Roma working groups to ensure straightforward cooperation and information exchanges at the regional level.

- The police invest in more extensive antiracism work at all levels in addition to ensuring compliance with the prohibition of ethnic profiling through targeted measures. The 'Kuri1' operation was a manifestation of deep-rooted structural racism, and recognising and acknowledging this is a necessary condition for the equality of police work and improvement of trust in the police.

- The conclusions on the discriminatory nature and discriminatory procedures of the Kuri1 operation should be discussed at all levels in all police departments. The commitment of and example set by police leadership play a significant role in this. The development of operational equality-promotion planning is also an effective way to address structural inequality.

The Roma civil society is satisfied that the Roma were involved in the entire process from start to finish, and they were asked to approve the recommendations made by the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman. Alongside the process, Roma CSOs continued to provide cultural training and collaborate with the Helsinki Police Department, which carried out preventive work to combat honour-based violence. Unfortunately, the long-standing trust-building and fruitful cooperation between the Police and Roma CSOs ended abruptly in 2024, when the Helsinki Police Department shut down its preventive work and shifted the focus to crime rather than crime prevention.

3.1.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

According to the Implementation Plan, actions in the field of combating antigypsyism and discrimination began in 2023 and will be implemented through 2026. The scope of the measures is not sufficient for the extent of the problems being addressed.

According to interviewed civil servants, the NRSF has not been able to have an impact on racism and antigypsyism. Therefore, support is sought from the Government action plan for combating racism and promoting equality. The Government action plan aligns with the NRSF's aims to fight discrimination and antigypsyism. The Government action plan is, however, based on the equality statement the Government submitted to Parliament in 2023 as a direct response to several scandals that had involved members of the Government and questions about their conduct related to equality and discrimination. The series of racism scandals involving Finns Party Ministers has been widely covered in the Finnish Media, e.g. the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE.³⁷ This background, plus the constant racist statements by Government members, significantly erode the credibility of the action plan.³⁸

Furthermore, the progress in the area is hindered due to Government budget cuts. Health and social services organisations were among the first to see their budgets cut, including Victim Support Finland. Moreover, the Government has ceased offering grants for peace work at a time when polarisation is accelerating, and continuous overlapping crises are causing instability in societies in Finland and around the world. Peace work and anti-racist work share many common goals, as they both aim to strengthen mutual trust in society.

As the Government actions are likely to worsen the situation, pressure from the EU is very much needed. The European institutions should call for Member States to protect and ensure the rights of Roma. The EURSF 2020-2030 and the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2026-2030 are of utmost importance. Still, they could be even more effective if they include binding obligations for member states and a proper reporting mechanism to the EU.

3.1.2. Synergy with other actions

In addition to the Government action plan for combating racism and promoting equality, the Government launched an anti-racism campaign 'Action, Not Only words' in August 2024.³⁹ Organisations from different

³⁷ YLE News. (5 June 2025). *Finnish Ministers Attend Anti-Racism Training Following Political Controversy*. Available at: <https://yle.fi/a/74-20166057>

³⁸ Politico. (28 July 2023). *Third Racism Scandal Hits Finland's Government in Space of a Month*. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/racism-scandal-in-finland-economic-minister-under-fire-for-racist-slurs/>

³⁹ Finnish Anti-Racism Campaign. (n.d.). *Toimi Rasismia Vastaan*. [Take Action Against Racism]. Available at: <https://toimirasismiavastaan.fi/>

sectors were invited to make commitments and select measures that are suitable for their organisations. The commitments took place on the Sustainable Development Commission's *Sitoumus2050* online platform.⁴⁰ Only two Roma CSOs have committed to the anti-racism campaign. Still, their involvement reminds others what is at stake. Nevertheless, the obligation to make commitments lies with others, namely, employers, educational institutions, sports clubs, and many others.

The NRCP participated in preparing the training materials for the anti-racism training session delivered to Government members in April 2025 and facilitated the discussion. The material itself does not mention Roma but focuses on people with immigrant backgrounds.

From the perspective of Roma civil society, the Government action plan for combating racism and promoting equality, despite its credibility problems, is of particular importance, as is the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025, for which Finnish Roma civil society has demanded continuation. Roma CSOs participated in the European Commission's public consultation to shape the EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030.

At the moment, the Government action plan for combating racism and promoting equality does not have any reporting mechanism to the EU, which is a serious shortcoming. National data was collected from member states on the use of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025, and the Prime Minister's Office has delivered the requested data. Still, it was more technical than an effectiveness assessment.

Moreover, evidence-based and European-level advice, such as the EU Minorities and Discrimination Surveys by the FRA, is essential not only for collecting and analysing data but also for raising awareness internationally through EU publications.

According to the Roma civil society, it is essential that the EU develops strategies, programmes and plans that are binding on the national governments. Civil society can then rely on them when the domestic political environment does not support minorities.

3.1.3. Roma participation

Most Roma CSOs have chosen to withdraw from the public debate on racism or to participate only by highlighting positive role models, out of concern that drawing attention to racism could further reinforce negative stereotypes about Roma and ultimately exacerbate racism.

Two national Roma CSOs have committed themselves to the Government's Anti-racism Campaign.

In 2025, the Prime Minister's Office nominated a representative of Roma civil society to the working group of the anti-racism collaboration network, where they serve as one of eleven members. This working group is responsible for coordinating and implementing the Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Equality.

3.2. Finnish Romani language

This chapter examines the revitalisation of the Finnish Romani language in greater detail. Several Roma CSOs argued that the Finnish Romani language should have been designated as a top priority within the NRSF, given that the language is seriously endangered.

Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani language 2023-2030

The case shows that it is possible to build a commonly accepted programme when its preparation involves a broad participation of both experts from different fields and those who are the ultimate beneficiaries, i.e. the Roma community.

The Finnish Romani language (*Kalo*) is seriously endangered. Only about one-third of the Finnish Roma have good conversational skills in Romani, and the majority of those belong to older age groups. Nevertheless, only a few Roma do not understand Romani.

⁴⁰ Sitoumus2050. (n.d.). *Anti-Racism Umbrella Commitment*. Available at: <https://sitoumus2050.fi/en/rasisminvastainen-kattositoumus#/>

In 2020, the Finnish National Agency for Education appointed an expert group to prepare a restoration programme for the revitalisation of the Finnish Romani language. The task came from the NRSF for 2018-2022, from which some of the measures were later transferred to the NRSF for 2023-2030.. The expert group organised open hearings in 2022, attended by 19 parties, after which it completed its work in November 2022.

The key issue highlighted in consultations with the Roma population was whether they wanted to revive the Romani language and, if so, by what measures they would like to take. Almost everyone has heard that the revival of the language should begin now if it is to be done at all. However, it was also important to hear from those who were against the revitalisation programme. Many Roma are afraid of cultural appropriation, by which the language is left in the hands of non-Roma philologists and linguists. At the same time, Roma themselves have never attained a high enough level of education to be able to learn their own language. For the Roma, their own language is essential from an identity perspective, and it is learnt at home if anywhere. For many Roma, the language is the last refuge where they do not have to fear discrimination.

Soon after, the Finnish Cultural Foundation announced it would support the revitalisation of the Finnish Kalo language and Romani art and culture with 1 million EUR between 2023 and 2030. As a result, the Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language, which runs from 2023 to 2030, consists of 11 measures, some of which are also included in the NRSF.

3.2.1. Effectiveness of the NRSF in addressing the problem

The goals of the NRSF in promoting Roma arts, culture, and language are relevant to the needs of Roma, but are insufficient, at least in the case of the Finnish Romani language, which is endangered. There is a danger that the language dies, and with the language, the entire Roma culture.

Some of the actions of the Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language 2023-2030 have been directly included in the NRSF (Actions 59-63). Among them, the distance learning project (Action 60) is at the forefront. It refers to the need for support in situations where the Romani language is dying out in schools due to a lack of qualified teachers. Another is Action 61, which aims to plan and produce language-learning material packages from early childhood education and care to adult studies. The material production is funded by Government subsidies for low-circulation publications. The implementation of the two Actions is the responsibility of the Finnish National Agency for Education. However, no measures are planned for a specific time in the Implementation Plan 2023-2026.

Action 59 in the NRSF aims to ensure a sufficient number of Romani language teachers and instructors; Action 62 aims to increase the visibility of the Romani language and Roma culture in the media among children; and Action 63 aims to produce a Romani social media platform. There are, however, no measures planned for a specific time in the Implementation Plan.

The key barrier in the field of Romani language is, once again, the lack of disaggregated data on Roma. There are no statistics on the number of Roma children, which makes the Ministry of Education and Culture reluctant to invest in teaching. According to Roma CSOs, the Romani language should be taught in primary schools, not in extracurricular clubs, but as part of the regular curriculum. Municipalities, however, are not obliged to organise teaching in pupils' mother tongue and do not inform parents. They may apply for Government funding to organise the teaching if they wish; however, school principals are usually not interested in arranging it. The Roma parents would need training and broader public discussion on the Romani language to be able to demand teaching for their children.

There is a lack of qualified Romani language teachers, and they are not available where needed. As a solution, a pool of teachers has been suggested, in which teaching and methods are developed together and shared, ensuring uniformity and equality, with the same goals for everyone. Recently, hourly-paid staff have become hard to find following Kela's removal of the 300 EUR monthly exemption for recipients of an unemployment benefit.

3.2.2. Synergy with other actions

A report on the constitutional status of autochthonous minority languages in Finland, prepared by the Ministry of Justice, was published in accordance with Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government Programme, which was approved as a decision-in-principle by the Government in 2022. The report examined, by legal methods, what the Constitution of Finland (731/1999, Constitution) means for different language groups regarding the right to

maintain and develop one's own language and culture. Minority language groups have the right to retain and develop their own language and culture; however, the Finnish Constitution does not create such right. On the one hand, this means that the minority groups have considerable leeway to maintain and develop their own language and culture. On the other hand, the public authorities have no express obligation to support the realisation of the linguistic or cultural rights of various minorities.⁴¹ According to the current government programme, linguistic rights will be promoted by continuing to implement the measures defined in the national language strategy and the language policy programme.

According to the interviewed authorities, the political will of the Governments has produced significant benefits. For example, funding was obtained to hire a part-time person with a Roma background, the discussion at the ministerial level was initiated, and the status of the Finnish Romani language was advanced.

3.2.3. Roma participation

Many Roma CSOs participate in the implementation of the Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language 2023-2030. The national Roma CSOs implement the largest projects. The *Suomen Romanifoorumi* creates social media content in Romani, while Romano Missio implements the master-apprenticeship language-learning programme. The Finnish Roma Association, in its turn, implements a series of Language technology projects and produces learning material for universities..

In addition, there are Roma CSOs and individuals who produce language-learning materials for children, translate texts into Romani, and develop distance-learning resources. *Savonlinnan seudun romaniyhdistys* continues to organise a one-week-long summer school for Romani language learners. The Finnish Cultural Foundation funds all the above-mentioned projects.

⁴¹ Dahlberg, Maija. (2024) *Selvitys Kotoperäisten Vähemmistökielten Valtiosääntöoikeudellisesta Asemasta – Eriyisesti Perustuslain 17 §:n 3 Momentin Sisältö ja Tulkinta* [Report on the Constitutional Status of Indigenous Minority Languages - Especially the Content and Interpretation of Section 17(3) of the Constitution]. Ministry of Justice, Publications, Reports and Guidelines 2024:6. Available at: <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/166150>

4. USE OF EU FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

4.1. Conditions for EU funds implementation for Roma equality

The NRSF identifies the ESF+ and the CERV Programmes as the primary EU funding sources for Roma-related policy actions. With regard to national funding, STEA, operating under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, is identified as the main source of financial support.

With regard to data on project funding, the EURA2021 digital system serves as a key source of information, as it lists all projects approved under the ESF+, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the Just Transition Fund (JTF).⁴² Another important source is the grant database of STEA.⁴³ According to the ELY Centre, however, inclusion in a database generally requires that the main focus of a project is explicitly linked to the target group in question. Nevertheless, a number of other projects may also involve participants with a Roma background, even if this is not reflected in the primary project classification.

Currently, the architecture of ESF+ allows for investments in Roma equality, inclusion, and participation; however, constraints related to access and implementation limit the potential impact of this funding. Using the keyword 'Roma', a total of six ESF+ projects can be identified for the current seven-year programming period, with a total planned EU contribution of 3.4 million EUR as of the end of August 2025.

Among them, the largest project, with a planned ESF+ funding of 1.9 million EUR, is a 3-year national *Active Agency* project (2024-27) coordinated by the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare, a research and development institute under the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The project consortium partners are the University of Helsinki, the City of Kajaani, the Central Uusimaa Wellbeing Services County, *Moniheli* Association, *Romano Missio* Association, *Setlementti Tampere* Association and the Vantaa and Kerava Wellbeing Services County. The project is an answer to the one-off call in the Summer 2023 under the national theme of promoting equality and gender equality, combating disadvantage, and the objective of the project is to strengthen the inclusion, equity, nondiscrimination, active agency and gender equality of migrant origin persons, victims of human trafficking and the Roma population. As such, Roma are only one of the project's target groups. Therefore, the planned EU funding for the only participating Roma association, the *Romano Missio*, is less than 0.1 million EUR. *Romano Missio*, however, succeeded in obtaining the required self-funding, in addition to EU funding, from the STEA.

With the keyword 'Roma', the most active organisation is the Diaconia University of Applied Science (DIAK), which coordinates three ESF+ projects. The three-year national '*Romako for Higher Education*' Project has a planned ESF+ funding of 0.3 million EUR and began in March 2025, in collaboration with Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK). The project supports Roma students in applying for higher education. Another three-year '*Le phallo butti*' project with a planned ESF+ funding of 0.3 million EUR takes place in Western Finland from 2023 to 2026. The partners are the Fingerroos Foundation and Association *Länsi-Suomen Romanit* (Roma in Western Finland). The co-funding for the Roma CSO was provided by the City of Turku's employment appropriations. The project promotes the employment of Roma people. The third project, '*Access to Inclusion*', has a planned ESF+ funding of 0.1 million EUR, and it takes place in Helsinki from 2023 to 2026. The project promotes the inclusion and well-being of the Roma people in collaboration with the *Suomen Romaniforum* (the Federation of the Roma organisations in Finland).

The 'Romano Participating Together' Project is led by Oulu University of Applied Science in collaboration with the youth association *Nuorten Ystävät* (Young Friends). The project aims to support active participation, well-being, work-life skills, and the integration of Roma youth into education and the labour market. The planned ESR+ funding for the three-year project in North Ostrobothnia is 0.3 million EUR.

⁴² European Union. (n.d.). *Hanketietopalvelu – Alue- Ja Rakennepoliikan Hankkeet 2021-2027 [Project Information Service for EU Regional and Structural Policy 2021-2027]*. Available at: <https://eura2021.fi/hanketietopalvelu>.

⁴³ STEA. (n.d.). *Avustustietokanta [Database of STEA Grants]*. Available at: <https://avustukset.stea.fi/>

'The Priima Butti! – The Bridge to the Working Life!' is a three-year project carried out by the South Ostrobothnia Welfare Services County. The project aims at supporting Roma in employment and education. The planned ESF+ funding is 0.2 million EUR.

The Deaconess Foundation implements a three-year project on employment among the Romanian and Bulgarian Roma migrants in Western Finland, in the city of Pietarsaari. The planned ESF+ funding is 0.1 million EUR, in addition to which the project has private funding from the foundation itself.

The smallest project 'Zetanes' takes place in 2023-26 by the *Mikkelin Rukoushuoneyhdistys* (Mikkeli Prayer House Association), which refers to the Pentecostal congregation in Eastern Finland. It runs a café where local Roma can meet each other and receive support in planning their education and employment. In addition to the planned ESF+ funding, which is less than 0.1 million EUR, the project has private funding from the congregation itself.

4.2. Roma civil society in EU funds implementation

In three of the eight projects mentioned above, a Roma CSO is included as a consortium partner. In these cases, Roma CSOs are appointed to the steering group, which guides, supports, and monitors the project's progress in terms of both content and financial implementation. In the remaining projects, Roma are involved solely as members of the target group, from whom feedback is collected.

The participation of Roma CSOs in EU-funded projects is significantly constrained by the lack of co-funding. None of the Roma associations in Finland receive permanent core funding from which they could cover the required co-financing, which typically amounts to 20% of the total project budget. Only the very largest Roma CSOs active in the fields of health and social welfare receive general operational grants from STEA, and even this support must be applied for annually. Moreover, in April 2025, the Government decided to cut STEA funding by approximately 130 million EUR, representing about one third of its total budget of 384 million EUR, starting in 2026. Even prior to this decision, STEA funding for Roma CSOs had already decreased by 18%, from 2.2 million EUR in 2024 to 1.7 million EUR in 2025.

Ultimately, there are no ESF+ projects coordinated by Roma CSOs themselves under the current EU Multiannual Financial Framework as of August 2025. Instead, projects benefiting the Roma community are implemented exclusively by public authorities or by large non-Roma organisations with substantial financial capacity, such as the Deaconess Foundation and DIAK.⁴⁴ Currently, the planned ESF+ funding directly allocated to Roma CSOs amounts to less than 0.3 million EUR. Nevertheless, the benefits of the above-mentioned projects, with a total value of 2.9 million EUR, are expected to be targeted primarily at the Roma population.

In the *Active Agency* and *Romako for Higher Education* projects, the target group includes both Roma and non-Roma participants. In the remaining six projects, the target group consists exclusively of Roma, with a total of 802 targeted Roma participants, representing approximately 8% of the Roma population. In addition, the Deaconess Foundation plans to specifically target 57 migrant Roma.

The administration of the EU structural funds in Finland is currently undergoing a transition. To date, the ESF+ Programme has been administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in the case of national projects, and by the ELY Centres in the case of regional and local projects. At the beginning of 2026, the current 15 ELY Centres will be replaced by ten regional Economic Development Centres, which will also entail changes in the administration of the structural funds. This restructuring is likely to generate a degree of discontinuity, at least in the short term, as the transformation will take place in the middle of the EU's current Multiannual Financial Framework.

Roma civil society has consistently argued that Government funding should be more directly allocated to the implementation of the NRSF. In particular, targeted funding should be provided to Roma CSOs to cover the required co-financing for EU-funded projects. The status and practical relevance of the NRSF would be significantly strengthened if it were supported by a dedicated budget, even a modest one.

Funding of the Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani language 2023-2030

⁴⁴ The Deaconess Foundation is one of the major owners of DIAK.

The Programme for the Revival of the Finnish Romani Language is funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. While the foundation's commitment to supporting this initiative is highly appreciated, it is nevertheless somewhat unusual that a state-level programme relies on private funding.⁴⁵ As part of its thorough evaluation process for open calls, the Finnish Cultural Foundation requests statements from the Finnish National Agency for Education, Roma CSOs, and other stakeholders. However, it remains unclear to what extent these statements meaningfully influence the final funding decisions.

⁴⁵ In our opinion, it is peculiar as this goes against the very idea of the Nordic Welfare Model.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring period of this report is very short, from February 2024 to August 2025, and little progress was made during this period. After publishing the NRSF 2023-2030, there were high expectations for the Implementation Plan 2023-2026. Unfortunately, the plan proved weak. There are no binding partnerships with duty bearers, nor are there exact timelines, baselines, or indicators. The weakness of the Implementation Plan underscores that the proposed actions of the NRSF are recommendations and thus not legally binding, and that they can be bypassed altogether. Moreover, the predominance of project-based funding over systemic investment is a fundamental weakness in the implementation of the NRSF.

Moreover, the mid-term report is not made in Finland in the same way as in the other EU member states, because Finland is not yet halfway through its NRSF, as it started only in 2023. Instead, the NRCP will publish a Financial Report later in 2025. There is, however, an urgent need for changes to the NRSF for 2026-2030, and it is unclear whether they will be considered, if at all.

Regarding the strengths of the NRSF implementation, some progress was made in combating discrimination and antigypsyism, a cross-cutting theme of the NRSF. In particular, the Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Equality, published in 2024, mentions antigypsyism by its proper name for the first time. Moreover, while not specifically targeted to the Roma, the knowledge base on discrimination in general has improved in recent years. Several reliable institutions have participated in data collection and analysis on discrimination in Finland, and the analyses are more in-depth than before. This also makes discrimination against Roma visible.

In 2024, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman issued recommendations to the Helsinki Police Department for follow-up measures regarding the '*Kuri1*' operation in 2013-2017 that was discriminatory to the Roma. Among other things, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman recommended that the National Police Board develop its operations to ensure that the prohibition on ethnic profiling is fully understood across all police departments. The recommendations were based on a round table discussion organised by the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman in 2023.

EU due diligence rules for companies were established in 2024, addressing also human rights alongside environmental risks. In Finland, however, minorities were not involved in the preparation of the rules; the Roma CSOs know nothing about it.

In the field of education, compulsory education was already extended in 2021, raising the minimum school leaving age from 16 to 18 years. The impact on Roma youth remains unclear, but the extension enables them to complete a secondary education degree during compulsory education, which is likely to raise the educational level of the Roma population. Moreover, it may also prevent too early adulthood of Roma teenagers.

The successful '*Romako*' projects by the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (2021-2024; 2025-2026) supported young Roma in completing vocational qualifications, applying for and completing higher education, strengthening their attachment to higher education communities, and obtaining jobs and internships, though their scope remains limited.

The '*Roma Gate Employment Lab*' (2024-26) by the Deaconess Foundation strengthened the long-term employability, equality and inclusion of migrant Roma in the Pietarsaari region. The international '*RomniME*' Mentoring Project (2024-2026), led by the Deaconess Foundation, also supported young Roma women - Finnish and migrant - in the fields of education, working life, and co-operation with public authorities.

In the field of health, THL continued to follow the development of health and wellbeing of Roma people.

Particular progress was made in the fields of Roma art, culture, and language. As part of the Decolonised Museum activity, the major institutions, such as the National Museum of Finland, the Finnish National Gallery, and the Finnish Heritage Agency, incorporated the history and culture of the Roma population into their activities. Moreover, the Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language runs from 2023 to 2030, and from the outset, many promising projects have been launched across the country. Finland has even formally recognised and acknowledged significant Roma contributions. For example, in 2024, President of the Republic of Finland Alexander Stubb conferred the honorary title of Academician of Arts on master folk singer and musician Hilja Grönfors. In the same vein, representatives of Roma civil society were invited to the foundation

stone ceremony of the extension of the Finnish National Museum, as a symbolic gesture of recognition of the Roma people. In addition, International Roma Day on 8 April has become widely recognised and is now celebrated across Finland.

Some ESF+ project applicants, primarily public organisations, covered the required co-financing on behalf of the participating Roma CSOs. This represents a major breakthrough for Roma CSOs, which do not have access to permanent core funding that could otherwise be used to meet the co-funding requirements.

With regard to the weaknesses in the implementation of the NRSF, it is evident that the current political environment is not conducive to its effective delivery. Political priorities have largely shifted toward national security in response to the Russia's invasion of Ukraine and toward economic consolidation. Since 2023, political guidance has increasingly emphasised mainstreaming, resulting in the reduction or discontinuation of many targeted measures, albeit not specifically aimed at Roma. At the same time, funding for Roma CSOs has been cut in parallel with broader reductions in public services, significantly constraining the operational capacity of Roma civil society. Against this backdrop, it is therefore unsurprising that Roma civil society considers that the actions implemented under the NRSF over the past two years have had no significant impact on the key issues it was intended to address.

With regard to EU funding, there are no ESF+ projects coordinated by Roma CSOs themselves under the current EU Multiannual Financial Framework as of August 2025. Instead, projects benefiting the Roma community are implemented exclusively by public authorities or by large non-Roma organisations with sufficient financial capacity to provide the required co-funding.

Recommendations to national authorities

1. Disaggregated data on the Roma population should be collected at the earliest opportunity, as it is essential for the planning and implementation of well-targeted actions with measurable and effective outcomes, as well as for evidence-based funding allocation. As a first step, a follow-up survey should be conducted building on the earlier Roma well-being study carried out by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).
2. Dedicated Government funding should be allocated to the implementation of the NRSF. At a minimum, targeted funding should be directed to Roma CSOs to enable them to cover the required co-financing for EU-funded projects.
3. For the period 2026-2030, the NRSF should include specific, targeted actions in the areas of combating antigypsyism and discrimination, poverty reduction, and the prevention of drug-related deaths among young Roma.
4. The needs of migrant Roma should be systematically addressed in the NRSF for the period 2026-2030, as they remain largely neglected at the level of concrete action proposals.

Recommendations to European institutions

5. Comprehensive European policies and action plans should be further developed to include binding obligations for Member States, along with robust and enforceable reporting mechanisms at EU level.

Recommendations to the civil society

6. Roma CSOs and the wider Roma community should continue to engage openly with sensitive and less visible issues, including the situation of migrant Roma, internal minorities, the culture of honour, harmful cultural practices, and domestic violence, in order to promote inclusive, rights-based, and sustainable community development.

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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	critical problems	understood with limitations	absent	absent	For the first time, antigypsyism was explicitly included under its proper name in the Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Equality. However, despite this important step, antigypsyism is still not widely recognised or sufficiently acknowledged within Finnish society.
Prejudice against Roma	critical problems	understood with limitations	absent	absent	Finland has repeatedly ranked among the countries with the highest levels of perceived racism in the EU, and Roma are consistently identified as the group experiencing the most severe discrimination in Finland on the basis of ethnic origin.
Hate crimes against Roma	significant problems	irrelevant	absent	absent	In 2023, the number of suspected hate crimes continued to rise. 11% of these offences were committed against members of the Roma minority, a disproportionately high share given the very small size of the Roma population. Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that only a small fraction of such crimes is actually reported, suggesting that the real scale of the problem is likely to be significantly greater.
Hate speech towards and against Roma (online and offline)	critical problems	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	No measures.
Weak effectiveness of protection from	significant	understood with	understood with	present but	Since 2023, Government cuts have substantially reduced the resources available to both the public and third sector for supporting Roma people. For

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discrimination	problems	limitations	limitations	insufficient	example, Victim Support Finland, a non-profit organisation heavily reliant on Government funding, is facing significant budget reductions. At the same time, the Nondiscrimination Ombudsman continues to receive frequent complaints from Roma concerning discrimination; however, these cases appear to represent only the tip of the iceberg, as such complaints rarely lead to effective remedies.
Misconduct and discriminatory behaviour by police (under-policing/underpolicing)	significant problems	identified and analysed sufficiently	identified and analysed sufficiently	adequate but with room for improvement	In 2024, the NonDiscrimination Ombudsman issued recommendations to the Helsinki Police Department concerning follow-up measures related to the 'KURI1' operation, which was found to have been discriminatory toward Roma during the period 2013-2017.

Education

Problems and conditions	Significance	Identified by strategy	Measures to address	Targets defined	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem
High drop-out rate before completion of primary education	significant problems	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	The measures are limited to those serving prison sentences, even though the problem is also significant among Roma children.
Early leaving from secondary education	significant problems	irrelevant	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	Compulsory education was extended in 2021, raising the minimum school-leaving age from 16 to 18 years. While its impact on Roma youth is not yet fully clear, the reform enables the completion of a secondary-level qualification within the compulsory education period, which is likely to contribute to raising the overall educational attainment of the Roma population. Moreover, it may help prevent the premature transition to adulthood among Roma teenagers, including early school leaving and early marriages.

					In addition, the 'Romako for Higher Education' Project has received ESF+ funding for the period 2025-2027 and is expected to support the educational pathways of Roma in higher education.
Increased selectivity of the educational system resulting in concentration of Roma or other disadvantaged pupils in educational facilities of lower quality	significant problems	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement	Study counsellors still tend to guide young Roma primarily towards vocational education or to discourage them from pursuing university-level studies, even in cases where they have already demonstrated high academic achievement. To address this structural bias, a plan has been envisaged to develop a nationally uniform approach to guidance counselling for Roma pupils, which is intended to be initiated during the 2023-2026 period.

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 problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement	There is no disaggregated official data on the employment rate of Roma; however, the latest estimate places it at around 60%. The most significant factor placing a job seeker in a weaker position compared to other applicants remains having a Roma background. In practice, employment offices have very limited means to intervene when an employer is unwilling to hire a Roma person, which highlights the persistent impact of discrimination in the labour market.
Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	significant problem	irrelevant	absent	absent	The 'Romako' Project implemented by DIAK during 2021-2024 and funded under the ESF+ successfully supported young Roma in securing employment and internships. However, when job seeking is already severely constrained at the outset due to a recognisably Romani name, the scope of what any

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					<p>single project can realistically achieve remains inherently limited.</p> <p>In addition, the 'Cultural Diversity for Study Paths' Project (2023-2026), implemented by the DIAK, the University of Eastern Finland, and several universities of applied sciences in Eastern Finland, has also received ESF+ funding. This joint programme provides support for identifying educational and career pathways, applying for studies, and entering education for Roma as well as for other minority groups. However, there is a risk that Roma youth may be overshadowed within this project by larger target groups, such as young people with an immigrant background.</p>
Discrimination in the labour market by employers	critical problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement	In 2023, as part of the pay subsidy reform, the employer subsidy for hiring an individual was reduced to 70% of payroll costs, from the previous level of 100%. This change weakened employers' incentives to recruit individuals in vulnerable positions in the labour market, both for regular employment and for apprenticeships.
Primary labour market opportunities substituted by public work	significant problem	irrelevant	absent	absent	Employment services often do not offer Roma people direct access to jobs but instead repeatedly refer them to various forms of job coaching and preparatory programmes. There are cases in which Roma individuals have worked in workshops for four to five consecutive years at minimum wage without ever transitioning into the open labour market. This highlights a structural failure to convert activation measures into sustainable employment outcomes.
Barriers and disincentives to employment (such as indebtedness, low income from work compared to social income)	significant problem	irrelevant	absent	absent	In 2024, several changes were introduced to the unemployment benefit system, including cuts to the basic unemployment allowance and the labour market subsidy, both of which are administered by Kela. These changes are likely to disproportionately affect already marginalised groups, including Roma, whose socio-economic status is already significantly lower than that of the majority population.

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
Housing services outsourced to private companies without requiring a valid equality plan	significant problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	absent	No measures. Significant problems arise when the private companies run services on behalf of the Government.

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 problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	Although the socio-economic status of Roma is, on average, lower than that of the majority population, Roma themselves do not necessarily perceive their situation as one of poverty or marginalisation and may view discussions framed around poverty as stigmatising.
Low flexibility of income support programmes for addressing changing conditions of the household	significant problem	irrelevant	absent	absent	In 2023, the Government introduced significant cuts to the general housing allowance. Due to stricter income-related eligibility thresholds, many people living in state-subsidised rental housing have been forced to seek cheaper accommodation; however, such affordable alternatives are often not available in practice.

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 problem	irrelevant	absent	absent	<p>The increasingly digitalised service system has limited capacity to effectively support clients facing multiple and complex problems. This often results in delays in accessing appropriate services and leads to the accumulation and escalation of difficulties over time.</p> <p>Since 2023, the digital skills and media literacy of Roma women have been supported through the 'Sastipe tukke' Project, implemented by the Finnish Roma Association and funded by STEA.</p> <p>In addition, during 2022-2024, an international project titled 'Digital Inclusion for Roma Adults' (DIRA) - Digital Inclusion for Roma Adults: Gaining Knowledge and Skills in eServices - was implemented with funding from the ESF+. The project was coordinated by the Deaconess Foundation in partnership with several organisations, including the Finnish Roma Association, and provided tailored digital skills guidance specifically for Roma migrants.</p>
Limited ability of social services to effectively work together with other agencies (e.g., public employment service) to help clients	significant problem	mentioned but not analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	The service system is often unable to provide effective support to clients with multiple and complex problems because services are heavily siloed and lack systematic communication and coordination with one another.

Child protection

Problems and conditions	Significance	Identified by strategy	Measures to address	Targets defined	Details of NRSF implementation relevant to the problem
Segregated or discriminatory child-protection services provided to Roma	significant problem	understood with limitations	adequate but with room for improvement	relevant targets well defined	The Roma Family Support Association, established in 2022, has launched a new project titled ' <i>Yhtä matkaa huomiseen</i> ' to support Roma children and young people placed outside the home, as well as their families, and to strengthen cohesion during periods of child protection. The project is funded by STEA for the period 2024-2026.
Biased treatment of Roma youth by security and law enforcement	significant problems	understood with limitations	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement	No measures.
Inadequate child/ adolescent participation	significant problems	understood with limitations	adequate but with room for improvement	adequate but with room for improvement	The NRSF aims to develop both local and national Roma youth work in order to improve young Roma people's access to leisure activities and strengthen their social inclusion; however, the implementation of these actions has been postponed to the 2026-2030 period.

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	significant problem	identified and analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	As part of the Decolonised Museum activities, major national institutions, such as the National Museum of Finland, the Finnish National Gallery, and the Finnish Heritage Agency, have begun to integrate key elements of Roma history and culture into their public programmes and activities.

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national and European heritage					
Exclusion of Roma communities from national cultural narratives	significant problem	identified and analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	<p>In 2024, the President of the Republic of Finland, Alexander Stubb, conferred the honorary title of Academician of Arts on master folk singer and musician Hilja Grönfors.</p> <p>In the same vein, representatives of Roma civil society were invited to the foundation stone ceremony of the extension of the National Museum of Finland as a symbolic gesture of recognition of the Roma people.</p>
Romani history and culture are not included in school curricula and textbooks for both Roma and non-Roma students	significant problem	identified and analysed sufficiently	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	The 'Amengo skoola' Project (2023-2024), implemented by the Finnish Roma Association in collaboration with the Youth Academy and funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, enhanced the knowledge of lower and upper secondary school teachers and students about Romani culture and the position of Roma in contemporary Finnish society.
Lack of inclusion of the Romani language in schools and development of necessary educational materials and resources for Romani language preservation and teaching	significant problem	identified and analysed sufficiently	appropriate	some targets but not relevant	The 'Programme for the Revival of the Romani Language' is being implemented over the period 2023-2030. From the outset, numerous promising projects have been launched across the country. However, there remains a significant lack of coordination, as well as of systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
Lack of memorialisation of Roma history through establishing	significant problem	understood with limitations	present but insufficient	some targets but not relevant	The International Roma Day, celebrated on 8 April, has become widely recognised and is now observed across Finland.

monuments, commemorative activities, and institutionalising dates relevant to Roma history					
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