



ROMA CIVIL
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Capacity building and empowerment toolkit

for national CSO coalitions of Roma civil society monitoring
the implementation of National Roma Strategic Frameworks

January 2023



The Roma Civil Monitor 2021-2025 initiative, with the full title ***“Preparatory Action – Roma Civil Monitoring – Strengthening capacity and involvement of Roma and pro-Roma civil society in policy monitoring and review”***, is being implemented by a consortium led by the Democracy Institute of Central European University (DI/CEU), and including the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) under a service contract with the European Commission’s Directorate-General Justice and Consumers (DG Just).

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the adoption of the **EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation**¹ on 7 October 2020 and at the initiative of the European Parliament, the European Commission has launched a continuation of the **Roma Civil Monitor** (RCM) initiative for the next four years (2021-2025). The RCM contributes to the ambitious objectives of the new EU Roma Framework in several ways:

1. Strengthening the capacities of the Roma and pro-Roma civil society to provide independent monitoring, assessment and reporting on national strategies for Roma equality, participation and inclusion, their implementation, as well as other policies with impact on Roma,
2. Supporting participating civil society organisations and activists in their advocacy work aimed at making the public policy more effective in fighting the Roma exclusion and participation, as well as communication of the independent monitoring's findings to keep governments accountable in the field of Roma inclusion policy
3. Empowering the Roma and pro-Roma civil society to engage in dialogue and cooperation with public authorities responsible for the Roma inclusion, equality, and fight against racism.

The RCM 2021-2025 initiative is implemented by a consortium of highly acknowledged organisations working internationally for Roma equality, participation and inclusion at the international level: Democracy Institute of the Central European University (CEU, project leader), ERGO Network, Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC).

It builds on the lessons learnt and good practice from the RCM pilot project 2017-2020 implemented by the Central European University, in partnership with the members of the current project's consortium and the Roma Education Fund. Innovations of the new project include a 'cascade model' aimed at strengthening the coordinators of the national civil society coalitions, more actions aimed at capacity-building of the members of the national coalitions and their systematic support in engaging in the dialogue, advocacy and cooperation with national stakeholders.

As part of the RCM actions, a Toolkit on capacity building and empowerment is proposed in order to help national civil society coalitions strengthen their knowledge, skills and experience in successfully monitoring the implementation of the national Roma strategic frameworks and the project activities therein.

How to use this Toolkit?

This toolkit is a capacity building tool for Roma civil society organisations involved in the national civil society coalitions as part of the Roma Civil Monitoring project, funded by DG Justice and developed by the ERGO Network.

- It is based on the capacity needs assessments conducted by national project coordinators at coalition level in each European Union Member State² involved in the project.
- intended to respond to the needs identified as part of the needs assessment exercise and support civil society organisations which are part of the national coalitions engage more effectively in monitoring and implementation of the national Roma strategic frameworks.

¹ Hereinafter "EU Roma Framework"

² All Member States of the European Union, except for Malta.

- It includes a number of specific capacity building instruments, thematic policy factsheets, guidelines about relevant policy and advocacy processes and further useful resources and references.

The Roma Civil Monitor Initiative

What is the Roma Civil Monitoring project and why it is important?

The Roma Civil Monitoring is a policy and advocacy tool used by Roma organisations to provide alternative and independent reporting on national Roma policy development and implementation, in order to influence policy making processes at national and European level on Roma equality, inclusion and participation by using awareness raising and providing possible solutions and recommendations to the problems outlined in the reports.

The Roma civil monitoring provides a monitoring framework of common principles, values and guidelines to national Roma civil society coalitions about specific reporting and advocacy tools and activities. Participating civil society organisations, are developing independent, evidence-based and balanced monitoring reports of the new national strategic frameworks as well as thematic reports by selected NGOs on specific topics shared by several countries (e.g., educational or residential segregation) or on issues of general EU-level significance (such as intra-EU mobility). These issues may include specific barriers that hinder Roma equality, participation and inclusion, similarities in policy approaches and policy/legal contexts, or policy inconsistencies (e.g., in combining targeted and mainstream approaches). The country reports will provide the members states' governments, the EC and the wider public with critical information on the quality, outreach, effectiveness and sustainability of policies, and measures, but also on the blind-spots ('non-issues') that current public policies fail to tackle. Such assessments will have the leverage to hold governments accountable in any major decisions and actions on Roma inclusion, but also generally on social inclusion and the use of EU funds in these areas. - Findings from every monitoring cycle's country reports will be compiled and analysed in synthesis reports and country/thematic fiches by thematic experts. In addition to providing access to a comprehensive analysis and the specific cases of every member state, each synthesis report will identify issues of common European interest, including acute challenges and promising practices to be addressed.

What are NGOs monitoring under the Roma Civil Monitoring?

The national RCM coalition of NGOs are monitoring Roma specific policies and measures under the guidance, coordination and quality assurance of the RCM consortium.

The civil monitoring will address the following 11 themes:

A. thematic and horizontal issues

1. governance (or structural requirements)
2. anti-discrimination
3. fighting antigypsyism

B. thematic sectoral issues

4. education
5. employment
6. health care
7. housing
8. social services
9. fighting poverty and social exclusion

C. horizontal cross-cutting issues

10. participation of Roma and (pro-)Roma civil society

11. gender and diversity among the Roma (focusing mainly on youth and children)

The first RCM reports (2022) focused on the assessment of the new NRSF as policy document rather than implementation of specific policies and measures. As the civil monitoring is aimed at making the governments accountable, if you refer to or analyse any specific policy or measure, NGOs should primarily focus on the governmental policies, programmes and initiatives (at central government, regional and local government or self-government, public agencies and authorities etc.). However, the reports can also include information on non-state initiatives (non-governmental organisations, charities, churches, private enterprises etc.), if:

- a. these non-state initiatives are systematically supported by the State (i. e., the government deliberately regulates or finances such initiatives), or
- b. the government reacts to the non-state initiative by mainstreaming or scaling it up, or
- c. no public initiative in the given policy field exists (so without the non-state initiative, the problem would not be addressed at all).

NGOs should highlight both positive and negative trends compared to the previous period (pre-2020 national Roma integration strategy), as well as unaddressed challenges.

The second monitoring cycle will focus on the actual implementation of the strategy and its effect on local level (considering the 11 themes identified above).

In addition, six thematic reports will be developed by the NGOs of the national civil monitoring coalitions under the CEU coordination – on specific barriers that hinder Roma equality, participation and inclusion, similarities in governments' approaches in addressing Roma exclusion and emerging policy puzzles, or similarities in the national policy or legal frameworks.

RCM society capacity building needs assessments

As part of the Roma Civil Monitoring project, National Coordinators conducted capacity building needs assessments of civil society organisations which are members of their national coalitions.

The needs assessment was based on guidelines including the following aspects:

1. knowledge of national policy fields covered by the EU Roma strategic framework: governance, education, employment, health care, housing, poverty and social exclusion, participation, anti-discrimination and antigypsyism, migration and cross-cutting issues (gender, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, etc.), funding, etc.,
2. policy monitoring and analysis skills, report writing capacities,
3. levels of participation, advocacy and effective engaging with stakeholders at national, regional and local levels,
4. Roma community outreach,
5. media and communication (publication of articles, use of social media, campaigns), dissemination of outputs (reports, informing about projects), relations with media (interviews),
6. working as a coalition and cooperation with wider civil society in securing the Roma perspective and their human rights/equality work,
7. knowledge and use of methodological tools (data collection, analysis),
8. level of English level skills.

Questionnaire Template

I. Profiles of the members

	National coordinator	Member 1	Member ...
membership's gender, ethnic composition			
years in the field			
role and key achievements			
strengths and weaknesses			
any other relevant information			

II. Policy-related knowledge and skills

	National coordinator	Member 1	Member ...
Areas of Roma related policies in which the organisation has knowledge/skills			
How much information or knowledge you have on your current national Roma strategy	no / some / a lot of	no / some / a lot of	no / some / a lot of
Which are the areas of your national strategy that you would be best able to provide input on under RCM monitoring reports?			
What are the policy areas that you would like to understand better?			
How would you assess your experience in ...			
... conducting research interviews with central government authorities?	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience
... writing reports or policy papers?	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience
... collecting data through desk research?	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience
... conducting research interviews with local authorities?	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience
... conducting research interviews with other NGOs?	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience	no experience / some experience / high experience

III. Practical experiences

	National coordinator	Member 1	Member ...
Previous involvement or experience with coalition building			
Part of other relevant coalitions			
Formal partnerships with central, regional or local governments			
Engagement with local Roma communities			
Engaged as a trainer on Roma issues			
Previous relevant trainings (themes, length and training institution)			
What additional training you would like to receive? (indicate themes)			
What additional skills you would like to improve?			

IV. Communication skills

	National coordinator	Member 1	Member ...
Experience with working with the media			
Examples of reports/articles/newsletter that you drafted (please provide links of published items)			
Are you regularly publishing at a webpage/blog/media? (provide links)			
What other skills you would like to improve?			

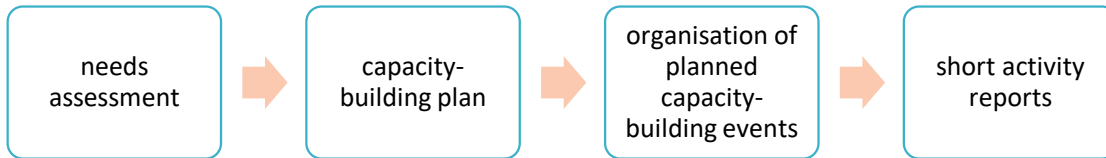
V. Recommendations.

	National coordinator	Member 1	Member ...
Please indicate your additional recommendations for enhancing your capacities			

VI. Other

	National coordinator	Member 1	Member ...
Please indicate any other point you consider relevant			

The outcome of the needs assessment will be used to develop national capacity-building plans:



Challenges of Roma civil society to be effective watchdogs?

Undoubtedly, civil society organisations in general play a vital role in enhancing transparency and accountability which are important pillars in good governance and setting standards in advocating for human rights and better governments.

Over the past two decades, Roma civil society managed to experience both a rise and a decline, in the context of the wider processes of democratisation and accession to the European Union and subsequent financial support to civil society organisations by the EU and regional donors. However, in the absence of a sustained technical support by donors and other institutions, many of the newly established organisations grew to become redundant, irrelevant and inefficient, often in the brink of bankruptcy, as a result of difficult and almost impossible funding and reporting criteria and scrutiny.

As the Roma policy landscape and both European and national level has developed significantly over the last two decades, Roma civil society space and participation have shrunk considerably, threatened both by weakened democracies and by a constant burden of proving relevance and legitimacy. Existing Roma CSOs complain about limited impact on public policy and the lives of marginalised Roma. Empirical evidence from CSOs suggests that this is due not only to political factors in a particular country, but also to the limited capacities of Roma CSOs to act as effective watch dogs and produce ongoing reliable evidence on public policies and their implementation.

This was also confirmed by the capacity building assessment by national Roma civil society coalitions under the Roma civil monitoring, which indicated that many Roma NGOs in the national coalitions lack the capacity and resources to effectively engage in policy implementation and monitoring at national level.

According to interviewed Roma NGOs, the most common barriers were internal to CSOs, with respondents listing insufficient capacity and funding as their biggest constraints. Others cited the access to the policy processes and limited understanding of policy processes thereof, as impediments to their participation.

Often Roma CSOs feel that, given their capacity constraints, they cannot invest the effort needed to understand the policy process and therefore focus on service delivery instead. A poor knowledge of policy processes constrains CSOs strategy and, ultimately, their policy influence. This is why to maximise their policy influence CSOs need to understand the policy processes better and be strategic about their engagement. Only then can they provide the right advice to the right people in the right way at the right time.

Understanding of policy processes

According to the needs assessment, a significant problem is that CSOs often have a limited understanding of policy processes and frameworks, including of the Eu Roma Framework and national Roma strategic frameworks and relevant institutions. As a result, they fail to engage policy processes in a strategic manner or use evidence in an effective way.

A practical starting point for CSOs is to generate rigorous assessments of political contexts and policy processes. What issues should they look out for? And how should they do it?

There are five key clusters of issues that CSOs could focus upon:

- Macro political context: what drives change; impact of civil society.
- Specific policy context: the climate surrounding the relevant stage of the policy process (agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation); extent of policymaker demand; degree of consensus or resistance; and importance of the issue to society.
- Implementation: nature of bureaucratic processes (transparency, accountability, participation, corruption); incentives, capacity and flexibility of organisations to implement policy; degree of contestation; and feasibility of a specific policy reform.
- Decisive moments in the policy process: character of the policy process on an issue; predictability of the policy process; existence of policy windows; and sense of crisis regarding a particular issue.
- The way policymakers think: extent that policy objectives and cause-effect relationships are clear; openness to new evidence; capacity to process information; policymaker motivations; and types of evidence they find convincing.

If CSOs are able to build a portfolio of information within these clusters, they will be able to better understand the policy process and opportunities for policy entrepreneurship. How can they do it? There are a growing number of context-mapping tools available to CSOs. These may, however, be of varying levels of use. It is important to note that each context tends to be distinct and that each tool is designed for different purposes. As such, CSOs must remain aware that varying tools are appropriate in each situation. The context mapping approaches focus primarily on the national level, as do the existing data on democracy and governance issues. These are a useful start for broad strategy development. Stakeholder analysis apart, they are unlikely to provide enough actionable information for specific policy processes. CSOs will mostly need to generate their own data on issues related to political contexts. The challenges of collecting data on specific political and institutional issues and policy processes are substantial. There are emerging lessons regarding approaches and specific tools that might be used. These include interviews, document reviews, surveys, focus groups, participatory exercises, policy mapping and stakeholder analysis. Each has its own value according to aim, but to ensure credibility efforts should use a range of methods and triangulate the findings.

Use of evidence by CSOs

Many national coalition CSOs have a wide repository of knowledge, including real expertise in an issue area or an understanding of the concerns most important to the Roma communities they represent. Using this effectively could help ensure their own work is more effective, that they have greater access to policy processes and that policy decisions are more informed by relevant evidence.

While many CSOs have the potential to generate and use evidence much more effectively than they do, they are not doing so. Using different types of evidence more effectively would help CSOs influence policy and practice in a more impactful manner.

What would make evidence more useful for policymakers? Some key characteristics include:

- Availability. Does a body of (good) evidence exist on a particular issue?
- Accuracy. Does the evidence correctly describe what it purports to do?
- Objectivity. How objective is the source?

- Credibility. What approach was taken to generate evidence and how reliable is the evidence? Is the evidence contested? Can we depend on it for monitoring, evaluation or impact assessments?
- Applicability. Is there extensive information or are there just selective cases or pilots?
- Relevance. Is the evidence timely, topical and have policy implications?
- Practical usefulness. Is evidence grounded in reality? Do policymakers have access to the evidence in a useful format and are the policy implications of the research feasible and affordable? CSOs will need to address these. How can they do it? There are three sets of suggestions: sources of research advice; how CSOs can strengthen their own think tank functions; and how they can access capacity through networks, partnerships or consulting on specific pieces of work. For individuals or projects, there are a number of sources for how CSOs can generate rigorous evidence for their policy influence initiatives.

Technical and financial capacity constraints

CSOs have significant constraints on technical and financial capacities that can limit their ability to engage with policy processes and use evidence effectively. In our assessment, policy influence through research and evidence is substantially limited because ‘CSOs have limited capacity to use and adapt evidence in policy processes’ and ‘CSOs do not have enough funds to do this.’

While the CSOs are given training, they lack adequate human and financial resources to implement the action plans.

CSO capacity

We have seen that for effective policy influence CSOs need to be able to: understand the policy process in their specific context; generate high-quality, relevant research, or have access to such research; and link to and communicate with policymakers and other actors. This requires a wide range of technical capacities.

From our survey, many CSOs noted lack of capacity as an important constraint on their ability to influence policy.

This Toolkit proposes several approaches and tools for capacity building of CSOs that can be used in order to develop and enhance skills and knowledge in any monitoring and advocacy work at national and EU level.

Assessments results

Based on the questionnaires, Roma civil society organisations indicated the following needs for capacity building, relevant for their more effective engagement in the monitoring and implementation of the national Roma strategic frameworks:

- areas of the national Roma strategic frameworks that members would like to understand better: discrimination, antigypsyism, education, healthcare, employment and minimum income, European Pillar of Social Rights, housing, gender equality and empowerment, children’s rights, political participation, leadership, National and EU advocacy, human rights legislation
- strategic planning, governance and decision-making mechanisms, contacts European networks, fundraising and project writing, communication with donors.
- conducting research and data collection
- Communication and (social) media skills
- Building coalitions

What do we mean by “Capacity building” of Roma civil society?

Capacity-building approaches have traditionally focused on improving the leadership, management and operation of an organisation.

And, although there is a general agreement that skill building is important, there is little understanding of how to do it right. Capacity-building initiatives for organisations to use research-based evidence to influence public sector, national, regional and global policies have been targeted (often indirectly) at think tanks, research and policy institutes, which have it in their mission to influence policy. It has been only in recent years that smaller NGOs and other CSOs have started to strengthen their capacity to use research-based evidence to influence policies and promote reforms.

A comprehensive analysis of what capacity-building approaches work best in this area of Roma equality and inclusion is yet to be undertaken. So far, most donors, agencies and organisations that work in this field have embedded capacity building in other programmes. This has led to little monitoring and evaluation of capacity building efforts; funding for Roma civil society policy advocacy has not made a major impact, although well organised and substantially funded NGOs have made a significant contribution in some circumstances.

Recent thinking is that capacity building efforts also need to be considered from a systems perspective, recognising the dynamics and connections among various actors and issues. In this sense, capacity building extends to cover broader systems, groups of organisations and inter-organisational networks.

Based on existing reviews and practical experience, it may be concluded that to be successful, capacity building is a long-term investment by donors, networks and coalitions of civil society organisations, which requires broad-based participation of stakeholders and a locally driven agenda; it needs to build on existing local capacities; it requires ongoing learning and adaptation. These principles highlight the importance of a systems perspective, long-term support based on strategic partnership, effective coordination between the actors offering capacity building and those whose capacity is being enhanced.

National Roma civil society coalitions would require sustained support to be able to effectively help their members with the resources needed to engage with policy implementation and monitoring processes. In addition, successful networking, partnership and cooperation would allow Roma CSOs to access specific capacity lacking in their context. For example, if an organisation lacks the capacity to generate high quality research, then partnering with a think tank will generate an organisational structure able to deliver academically credible research-based evidence to the CSO.

In conclusion, capacity building for Roma NGOs is fundamentally about sustainable investment and resources, innovation and transformation – at individual, organisational, sector-wide and societal levels. To ensure sustainability of results, capacity-building efforts for Roma CSOs involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes need to take into account the following principles:

- Capacity building is a long-term investment by donors, network organisations and CSOs coalitions.
- Capacity building requires broad-based participation of stakeholders and a locally driven agenda.
- Interventions should build on already existing local capacities.
- Capacity-building organisations must be open to learning and adaptation.

- Capacity building requires successful networking, partnership and cooperation from other sectors, like academia, independent think-tanks etc.

There is a need for innovative forms of capacity building tools aside from the traditional workshop setting. This may include development of toolkits on specific themes and topics; tailored mentoring/support on development plans; selection of capable local partners (in terms of advocacy and lobbying) to be given specific roles and responsibilities in terms of mentoring others. This will make for easy appreciation and a trickle-down process.

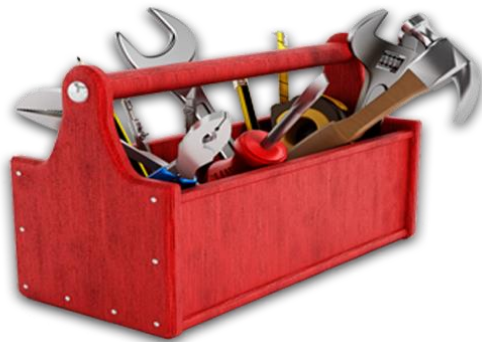
Capacity building is a long-term process, with some estimating that it may take as long as ten years before real results are achieved (James 2001). It is important to be realistic about the kinds of changes that might take place within the timeframe of the capacity building intervention, and to time data collection appropriately. For example, clarifying an organization's mission or establishing a strategic vision is not likely to happen meaningfully in one instance and could take several months or more. The process may require a number of incremental changes, consultation, and buy-in from multiple levels of stakeholders.

How Can Donors Help?

While not the explicit focus of this Toolkit, we believe donors could:

- Invest in the capacity building of Roma NGOs with a view to create a more sustainable, independent and accountable civil society, including by diversifying support to the civil society sector more broadly (not just Roma NGOs) in ways that encourage cooperation and networking with Roma CSOs rather than promoting competition and separation (systemic capacity building).
- Ensure support includes improving the management and resources of the organisation, even when the aim is to increase advocacy and monitoring efforts.
- Encourage and support improved policy processes – to make them more progressive (forward looking, outcome oriented, evidence-based, joined up and inclusive).
- Facilitate and support the formation of Roma led policy research NGOs and networks that can engage with broader mainstream policy and research work and produce Roma independent research and evidence-based policies recommendations at national level.

Toolbox for CSOs



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1. Effective advocacy

What is advocacy?

While there are many ways to conceptualise advocacy, Advocacy is generally understood as a process that aims to bring about change in process, policy or practice, so that structural causes of inequality, poverty and disadvantage are reduced.

Roma Advocacy challenges the root causes of poverty and social exclusion of Roma. It is about achieving equity and social justice through the empowerment of Roma, so that they can participate more directly in decision-making processes that affect their rights and their lives.

Effective advocacy is a deliberate and planned process, and takes place around a policy position held by an organisation, grounded in evidence if it is to be taken seriously. Furthermore, many organisations want to base their advocacy as much as possible on the voices of those who are primarily affected by the issues. Indeed, if possible, it is desirable that advocacy work creates space or opportunities for those affected by the issues to advocate on their own behalf.

Evidence-based advocacy

In an effective, evidence-based advocacy, research is important to gain a clear understanding of issues in the eyes of the people involved and to find out what they believe the solution to be. Good research should build understanding of causes and effects of development issues affecting poor people, and lead to the identification of solutions and recommendations for policy-makers.

To carry out research for advocacy purposes, there needs to be adequate capacity in the organisations wishing to advocate.

Advocacy cycle

A successful advocacy action or process require following a number of key steps, which can be slightly adapted according to the experience of the organisation or and the intended advocacy initiative.

- **STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE ISSUE**

There are a range of issues on which any organisation or individual can undertake advocacy, so a process must be followed to allow for the identification of an appropriate one.

- **STEP 2: ANALYSE THE ISSUE AND SET OBJECTIVES**

Having identified the problem or issue, the next step is to determine what the causes and effects of it are, in order to see what specific changes need to be brought about. The process of research and analysis enables the researcher to draw on a range of voices and views and synthesise them in such a way that solutions and recommendations emerge directly from the experience of the research participants. These are then written up into a research report.

- **STEP 3: DECIDE THE SPECIFIC MESSAGES AND AUDIENCE**

Having decided on the solutions or recommendations that need to be implemented to resolve the issue, the organisation or individual needs to refine these into specific messages to use when engaging with target audiences. The answers to the questions: 'What specific decisions need to take place? What or who is influencing the decision-making processes? How can the decision be influenced?'

- **STEP 4: DECIDE THE ACTIVITIES (POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS)**

Based on the audiences the organisation wants to engage with, how will it try to influence them – what are the most appropriate activities to draw attention to the issue? Possibilities include publishing research; media work; public campaigning; coalition building; lobbying and insider influencing. This depends on the issue and objectives.

- **STEP 5: DESIGN THE ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN**

A written advocacy plan will set out the aims and objectives, the strategies and activities, the timeline and budgets.

- **STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE ADVOCACY PLAN**

Putting together your advocacy strategy plan. An advocacy strategy should contain 1. Aims: The aim is the general declaration of intent, which guides the advocacy campaign. It is what the advocacy campaign seeks to achieve in the long run. 2. Objectives: The objectives are among the most important and difficult aspects of the campaign strategy. Objectives need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound). 3. Targets: These need to be individuals not institutions 4. Main audiences: These need to be influential with the target 5. Approaches: These need to be based on both the resources within the network and member access to different key audiences 6. Action plans 7. Resources & budgets 8. Risks & Assumption.

- **STEP 7: MONITOR AND EVALUATE**

What will be the success criteria (and what is the baseline) for the advocacy work? What indicators will be used?

- **STEP 8: REVISE THE ADVOCACY PLAN**

Approaches to advocacy are generally seen as fitting into either an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ approach. An ‘insider’ approach means that those advocating on a particular issue strategically plan to work within a system – by forming working relationships and partnerships with decision-makers and policy implementers. This contrasts with the more oppositional or confrontational ‘outsider’ approach such as street protests or marches. Good evidence, based on research, will assist the organisation to make decisions about their approach to advocacy.

How to plan your EU advocacy campaign

1) Learning about the European Union

The EU at a glance

➤ **What countries are members of the EU?**

With 27 member states, and a population of nearly half a billion, the EU is the largest development aid donor and provider of humanitarian assistance globally. It is also the largest single market and the main trading partner for most developing countries.

➤ **What institutions make up the EU?**

According to the Treaties there are seven EU Institutions. The four main institutions covered in this guide are:

- The Council of the European Union
- The European Council (new status following the Lisbon Treaty)
- The European Parliament
- The European Commission

The other three institutions are the European Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors and the European Central Bank (new status following the Lisbon Treaty). The Lisbon Treaty also established a new service, the European External Action Service (EEAS). The EEAS commenced its work on 1 December 2010.

➤ **What decision-making powers does the EU have?**

Before the Lisbon Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009, the EU was founded on a ‘three pillar’ structure. The first pillar was supra-national and was commonly referred to as the ‘European Community’ pillar. Under this pillar, the decision-making authority (known as ‘competency’) of the member states had been taken over jointly by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The second pillar was the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs constituted the third pillar. Decision-making under the second and third pillars was inter-governmental and was based on unanimous decisions by the Council. The Treaty of Lisbon abolished this pillar system, and established the EU as a legal entity. Therefore, the EU is now able to sign international treaties in its own name. For example, the EU gained membership of the World Trade Organisation immediately after the Treaty of Lisbon came into force effectively replacing the ‘European Community’ as a member. The Lisbon Treaty clearly sets out policy areas in which the EU shall either have exclusive legislative competence, a shared competence with member states or a supporting competence (see Figure 2). Development cooperation and humanitarian aid are areas of shared competence between the EU and the member states. This means that both the EU and its members have the power to pass legislation in these policy areas within their respective domains.

➤ **Areas of competence of the European Union**

Exclusive Competence

- 1) Areas in which **only the EU may legislate and adopt legally binding acts** (art. 2,3 TFEU):
 - Customs union. The establishing of the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the TFEU)
 - Monetary policy for whose currency the Euro -The conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy
 - Common commercial policy
- 2) **Internal market:**
 - Social policy (for the aspects defined in the TFEU
 - Economic, social and territorial cohesion
 - Agriculture and fisheries (excluding the conservation or marine biological resources)
 - Environment
 - Consumer protection
 - Transport
 - Trans-European networks
 - Energy
 - Freedom, security and justice
 - Common safety concerns in public health matters (for the aspects defined in the TFEU)

Shared Competence

- 1) Areas in which **the EU exercise of competence shall not result in member states being prevented from exercising theirs** (art. 4 TFEU):
 - Research, technological development and space
 - Development cooperation and humanitarian aid
- 2) Areas in which the **EU can take measures to coordinate member states’ policies** (art 5 TFEU):
 - Economic
 - Employment

- Social policies
- Common foreign and security and defense policy

Supporting Competence

1) Areas in which EU can carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement member states' actions:

- The protection and improvement of human health
- Industry
- Culture
- Tourism
- Education, youth, sport and vocational training
- Civil protection
- Administrative cooperation

2) Situating your issue at the EU

Before embarking on advocacy and influencing at EU level – whether you are influencing in Brussels or from your own country – you should consider the following key questions.

➤ **The EU Advocacy checklist**

- What is the problem that you want to address?
- How is the problem relevant to you (your organisation) and what credibility do you have (ie. how does it relate to your mission and what evidence do you have)?
- How is the EU part of the solution to your problem?
- What do you want to change? (concrete policy and practice outcomes)
- Is there existing EU policy/legislation on your issue? – if so, do you feel that it is adequate appropriate? – If so, is it being implemented or not? – if there is no adequate EU policy on your issue, how can you raise awareness and put your issue on the EU agenda?

If you have identified a specific document or legislative proposal you want to influence you will need to determine:

- – what status the document will have (ie. are we seeking to influence a legislative proposal, council conclusions, a policy document or a staff working document?)
- – at what stage is the decision-making process and is there still time to influence it?
- – what is the role and weight of the different Institutions in the procedure?
- – should you be influencing the decision at the national level or in Brussels, or both?
- – who will make the final decision?
- – who are your allies and opponents (both in terms of peer NGOs, MEPs and EU member states)? – what resources (human and financial) will your advocacy campaign require?
- – How will you know when you will have reached your aim?

3) Knowing what you want to change

Any advocacy initiative should have clear change objectives. Once you have situated your issue within the EU political framework, you will need to define the concrete changes in policy and/or practice that you are aiming to achieve. Finding your way around the EU, however, is not straightforward, particularly if you are not well versed in 'Euro-jargon' or familiar with the corridors of power in Brussels. Here is some guidance to help you along the way.

➤ **What are the different types of EU legislative acts?**

To exercise its decision-making powers, the EU institutions can adopt regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions. **Regulations and directives** are adopted by the Council and the European Parliament through ordinary or special legislative procedures explained in more detail below.

An **EU Regulation** is a specific form of legislation which transcends all member state domestic legislation, unless the member state has secured a treaty opt-out in the area covered by the regulation. Regulations are one of the most powerful forms of EU law and therefore they can be very contentious and hotly debated. When a Regulation comes into force, it overrides all national laws dealing with the same subject matter and subsequent national legislation must be consistent with and made in the light of the Regulation.

Examples of Regulations include the Multi-annual Financial Framework for the EU budget from 2021 was set by an EU Regulation. This, among other things, will establish the overall size of the EU budget as well as what the money will be spent on and under what headings. European civil society networks, including Bond, will be influencing this important decision-making process over 7 years.

An **EU Directive** is a form of legislation that is directed at the member states. It sets out the objective or policy that needs to be attained. The member states must then pass the relevant domestic legislation to give effect to the terms of the Directive within a set time frame. Directives can be used to set minimum EU standards to be applied at national level, but also leave member states free to apply more stringent national measures, provided these do not conflict with free movement and free market rules. Directives can be used to establish common social policies including for instance employment issues, labour law, working conditions, and health and safety. Examples of well-known EU Directives in this area are the 'Working Time Directive' and the 'Equal Pay Directive'.

A **Decision** may be addressed to member states or individuals and it is only binding on the person or entity to which it is addressed. Common uses of decisions involve the Commission ruling on proposed mergers, and day-to-day agricultural matters (eg. setting standard prices for vegetables). In some areas, such as competition policy, the Commission may itself issue decisions. A well known example of a Council Decision is the one setting a uniform percentage rate (1.24%) for contributions made by member states to the EU Budget.

Recommendations and Opinions can be issued by either the European Parliament or the Council. They are not legally binding and only serve as guidance to the other Institutions or specifically to the Commission.

Council conclusions:

You may be able to secure high-level endorsement for your issue and advocacy asks by influencing Conclusions adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council, for instance. Although Council Conclusions are not legally binding they may guide relevant EU policy-making and practice in a given area.

Policy documents:

You may also wish to directly input to and inform the development of relevant policy documents issued by the Commission such as for instance thematic communications, green papers (shaping EU acts to come), staff working papers or guidelines to EU Delegations. Although these are also not legally binding, they have a significant bearing on how the European Commission and the EU Delegations in-country Finding your way around the EU is not straightforward. 20 Influencing the European Union an advocacy guide manage and deliver development cooperation programmes on the ground.

Regional and Country Strategy Papers:

Alternatively, you may assist your partners in the south to influence the programming of aid through influencing Regional and Country Strategy Papers under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, for instance.

4) How is EU legislation adopted?

Under the Lisbon Treaty EU legislative acts (including regulations, directives and decisions) can be adopted through either:

- ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as co-decision)
- special legislative procedures

The **ordinary legislative procedure** applies to the joint adoption by the Council and the European Parliament of a regulation, a directive or a decision on a proposal from the Commission (see below for a detailed explanation).

Under **special legislative procedures** the European Parliament and the Council do not act jointly. These procedures envisage the adoption of an act by the European Parliament with the participation of the Council, or by the latter with the participation of the European Parliament where either institution needs to seek the consent of the other. EU decisions on international trade agreements, formerly adopted by the Council, are now subject to consent by the European Parliament. Similarly, the regulation setting the new Multiannual Financial Framework for the Union will also be subject to consent by the European Parliament.

Under special legislative procedures the initiative for the legislative act does not just emanate from the Commission but it may come from a group of member states or of the European Parliament, on a recommendation from the European Central Bank or at the request of the Court of Justice or the European Investment Bank.

5) How can I influence the EU's ordinary legislative procedure?

The ordinary legislative procedure – still widely referred to as co-decision – has been the EU's usual method of decision-making for over 15 years. Under the Lisbon Treaty, co-decision becomes the rule for passing legislation at EU level as it now applies to 85 policy areas from 44 previously.

Co-decision is extended to a significant number of policy areas, including cooperation with third countries, where the European Parliament used to only have a right of consultation (now known as consent) or areas such as international trade where they were previously not involved at all. The procedure as such remains virtually unchanged. It starts with a legislative proposal from the Commission (which has the right of initiative) to the Council and the European Parliament, who then debate it, propose amendments and eventually adopt it as EU law. This may comprise one, two or three 'readings' (see fig. 10). It is important to note that the majority of legislative proposals on development issues are adopted after the first reading and none have gone beyond the second reading stage. For the purpose of this guide, we will cover the process in detail from the preproposal stage at the European Commission to the completion of the second reading.

6) Who has the power to make change happen?

➤ Who should I target at the Council?

Given that the Council represents the interests of member states at the EU, in order to influence decision-making processes at the Council it is best to begin at the national level. It may be useful to know that Permanent Representatives sitting on COREPER and Working Group officials agree their positions with their own national governments. So, if you don't have an office in Brussels or the capacity

to engage in front-line advocacy in Brussels, you can still put your views and recommendations across to decision-makers in your own government. Even if you do have a Brussels presence, national level advocacy is vital.

In recent years, NGOs have had an increasing voice at the Council Working Groups and COREPER through coalitions and alliances such as CONCORD (the European confederation of relief and development NGOs). CONCORD holds regular meetings with Council Working Group on Development (CODEV) on topical issues, such as the recent EU institutional reforms. Targeting Council Working Groups or COREPER is only worthwhile if you can sway a significant number of member states over a common cause. The outcome of such influencing efforts may be the inclusion of your issue, and potentially your advocacy asks, into Council Conclusions following a particular Council meeting (eg. of the Foreign Affairs Council), potentially leading to new policy guidelines and legislation in that area.

Keeping informed

- The Press Room of the Council: www.consilium.europa.eu/press.aspx?lang=en
- The Presidency website: each presidency will have its own dedicated website where you can find all the information on upcoming meetings including the General Affairs and External Relations Council, and the Informal Development Council
- CONCORD: to keep track of upcoming Presidencies' priorities: www.concordeurope.org
- A list of member states' Permanent Representations in Brussels: europa.eu/whoiswho/public/index.cfm?fuseaction=idea.hierarchy&nodeid=3780&lang=en

➤ Who should I target at the European Parliament?

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament has increased powers and authority. It is now more important than ever to include MEPs in your EU advocacy efforts. It should not be forgotten that MEPs are democratically elected in their own countries. MEPs are accountable to their constituencies back home. All MEPs have offices in Brussels, Strasbourg and in their own constituencies, where they can be contacted by members of the public. It is advisable to focus on national MEPs as they will be the most receptive to your voices. Parliamentary assistants act as MEPs 'gatekeepers'.

Assistants will generally be more accessible than MEPs and may actually actively seek support from their contacts – including NGOs known to them – for input on specific reports. Unless you know an MEP personally, making contact with their assistant/s in their Brussels office should be your first step. It is important to invest some time in getting to know them and raising their awareness of your issue as well as targeting their MEP. Through the ordinary legislative procedure – or co-decision – MEPs have the power to amend Commission legislative proposals by tabling and voting on amendments both at the committee level and in plenary. Most MEPs will be open to tabling amendments drafted by reputable and trusted external actors (including NGOs) with whom they have been in contact. It is worthwhile to identify and get to know key MEPs that may have an interest in your area of work in order to raise their awareness of your issue. The most relevant Committee to your issue (eg. LIBE) is a good place to start. You can easily find out which MEPs sit on each Committee by consulting the European Parliament's website (see below for useful links). Once you have identified potential champions within your Committee you can browse individual MEPs' personal pages on the European Parliament's web portal in order to find out more about their background, any relevant parliamentary questions they may have tabled and reports they may have drafted. It is also useful to find out who the Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs and the co-ordinators (for each political group represented on the Committee) are and make contact with them.

Useful links:

The web portal of the European Parliament provides all the information you will need to inform your advocacy work with MEPs: www.europarl.europa.eu There you will find links to:

- MEPs individual pages with contact details and information on parliamentary questions and reports
- Political Groups pages with information on political co-ordinators on all parliamentary committees
- European Parliament Committees homepages with detailed information on mandates, members and work programmes
- European Parliament online Press Service including the latest information updates on what's new at the European Parliament plenary sessions including agendas

➤ **Who should I target at the European Commission?**

The European Commission is the most important institution to focus on if you want to be involved in policy-making at the EU from the start. It is essential to keep track of the Commission's intentions in your area of interest. Even before a legislative proposal is drafted, the European Commission may publish consultative documents (green papers, white papers and communications), conduct open consultations, hold hearings, workshops, conferences, seminars, set up Expert Groups or commission studies by external consultants.

It is administrative officials at the European Commission who are tasked with drafting legislative proposals and other policy documents. These officials are generally open to external advice and input at the drafting stage. The earlier this comes the better. It pays to familiarise yourself and build a solid relationship based on mutual respect and trust with key Commission officials working in your area. Sharing any new intelligence, research and reports on your issues will help establish you and your organisation as experts vis-à-vis the European Commission. In order to raise awareness of your issues and mobilise 'political' support more broadly at the European Commission you may also wish to target relevant Heads of Unit, Director Generals and Commissioners. These are less accessible than administrative officials. Your friendly contacts in the Commission may be able to advise on the timing and the best way to go about securing a meeting with a Commissioner is not straightforward and you will need to pass through key members of their personal staff first. Each Commissioner is supported by an entourage of civil servants, which belong to their cabinet. You will be able to find information on who is who in each Commissioner's cabinet on their homepage on the Europa web portal. Working through coalitions and alliances in Brussels is also an effective way of advocating at the higher political levels at the Commission.

Useful links:

The web portal of the European Commission provides links to all of the following and more – ec.europa.eu:

- all the Commissioners' homepages
- all the Directorates General's homepages
- staff directory; europa.eu/who_is_who
- European Commission Press Room: europa.eu/press_room
- European Commission studies
- green papers
- discussion papers
- list of Expert Groups
- European Commission Annual Work and legislative programme
- Directorates General work plans
- European Commission Annual Policy Strategy a meeting with their managers.

Expert Groups Expert Groups are consultative bodies comprising national, private-sector and civil society experts on a specific issue/theme or policy area. The main task of Expert Groups is to advise the Commission and its services in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives as well as in its tasks of monitoring and coordination or cooperation with the member states. These groups can be either permanent or temporary.

For more information on Expert Groups: ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert

➤ **How can I raise awareness of my issue with MEPs?**

Besides directly inputting to the legislative process, MEPs may also help raise awareness of specific issues at the European Parliament. MEPs can table oral and written parliamentary questions (PQs) which can serve the purpose of either obtaining detailed information from the European Commission or the Council (written PQs) or making public political statements (oral PQs). MEPs can support awareness-raising activities, such as public hearings on topical development issues in Committees. External experts, including NGO representatives, can be invited to present to MEPs on the topic of the hearing. Proposals for public hearings may also come from Committee Secretariats. It is advisable to meet with the senior officials on the Secretariat of the parliamentary Committee that is most relevant to you in order to raise awareness of your issues and secure their support. You can also raise awareness of your issues with MEPs through exhibitions (eg. photographic), events (eg. report launches) and informal lunches or breakfast meetings at the European Parliament. MEPs may also belong to informal thematic interest groups, called Intergroups. These are officially registered at the European Parliament and a list of all registered Intergroups can be found on the website. Secretariat services to Intergroups are mostly provided by external actors, including NGOs.

➤ **How can I organise an event at the European Parliament?**

Events cannot be organised without ‘sponsorship’ by an MEP and some administrative support from their assistants. Events should be planned at least six months to a year in advance, particularly if your timing will coincide with a European Parliament plenary session and you wish to book a prominent place/room at the Parliament. Organising an event (eg. a photographic exhibition or a launch) in Strasbourg during a plenary session may be very effective as it will give you good political visibility and ensure good attendance. The organisation however might be more difficult as both MEPs and their ‘regular’ assistants only go there once a month. Timing your event with one of the two-day mini-sessions of the European Parliament in Brussels may also be very effective.

➤ **When is it best to reach MEPs?**

Bear in mind that MEPs do not live in Brussels but that they travel there weekly. Generally, MEPs arrive in Brussels either on the Monday or the Tuesday morning and leave to go back to their constituencies late on the Thursday or on Friday morning. Many MEPs hold meetings in their constituencies back home on Fridays. Before planning your travel to Brussels to meet with your target MEPs, or simply when trying to reach them on the telephone, it is worth first checking the Parliamentary calendar to see whether they will be in Brussels for either political group meetings or Committee meetings or whether they will be in Strasbourg for a plenary session (one week every month). Catching MEPs in Strasbourg may be trickier as they may be less available during a plenary than during Committee and political group meetings in Brussels. Meeting with parliamentary assistants once their MEPs have left for the week on a Friday is a good idea as they will usually be more relaxed and have more time for you.

➤ **How can I make sure an MEP will read my briefing?**

Briefings aimed at MEPs should be very concise (not longer than two pages) and to the point. Grabbing their attention within the first two paragraphs of your briefing is essential. It is a good idea to include your advocacy asks and the action/s that you require the MEP to take at the very top rather than at the bottom of the paper. The action, be it supporting an amendment in a specific report, tabling a PQ or

sponsoring your organisation's event, should always be very clearly spelled out. Any other supporting information, including 'killer' facts and statistics, should be included in the briefing as incisively and succinctly as possible. Bearing in mind that you may wish to influence MEPs from different member states, you might want to consider translating your briefings in other key languages besides English. This will be hugely appreciated by non-English speaking MEPs as it will help them understand and connect to the issue better as well as making your organisation stand out among all the others.

➤ **Top tips for influencing MEPs:**

- target your countries' MEPs
- find out what they are interested in (search for their PQs and reports)
- meet them face to face (remember they will not be in Brussels on a Monday or a Friday) – so you can meet them on those days in your country's capital, alternatively.
- do not give them policy briefings more than two pages long
- use clear messages and 'punching' facts or statistics
- share 'cutting edge' relevant research/reports
- tailor your messages to their interests and political and personal beliefs
- establish yourself as the expert
- try to win over their assistant
- provide concise, relevant, to the point information (maximum one page) with clear advice on what you would like them to do for you (eg. support a specific amendment)
- never try to impose your views

➤ **Getting accredited to the European Parliament**

A code of conduct adopted by the European Parliament regulates lobbying activities at the Parliament. The European Parliament's Quaestors are responsible for issuing individual named passes valid for a maximum of one year to people who wish to enter Parliament frequently to provide MEPs with information relating to their parliamentary duties, in their own interests or those of third parties. Their names are recorded in a public register kept by the Quaestors, which can be consulted on Parliament's website.

For further information on accreditation procedures, contact the relevant department: SecuLongTermPass@europarl.europa.eu

2. Effective communication in advocacy

The development of an effective communication plan is crucial to the success of any advocacy strategy. Internal organisational communication is a vital component inside the advocacy effort itself and is useful when building networks amongst allies.

Communication strategies must also be carefully planned to reach, educate and persuade external audiences – from policy makers to communities. Message development and delivery focuses on tailoring your message to those audiences for maximum impact.

Media advocacy is important to:

- Get your issue on the political agenda
- Make your issue visible and credible in policy debate
- Inform the public about your issue and proposed solutions
- Recruit allies
- Change public attitudes and behaviour
- Influence decision-makers
- Shape policies, programmes and the conduct of public and private agencies
- Raise money for your cause

Communication strategy development

Planning the communication strategy helps to identify:

- The Stakeholder/s: Who do you want to reach with the message?
- The Purpose of communication: How will it boost your advocacy effort?
- The Form of communication: How will you reach your audience and with what type of media?
- The Timing of communication: When will you send your messages?
- The Success of your Communication: How will you measure your effectiveness?

Communication strategy planning is similar to developing a logframe. In the matrix below, list the target groups, stakeholders and target audiences you identified in your advocacy strategy plan. Then, work your way through the horizontal and vertical columns in the same way you would fill in a logframe.

Message development

Your message conveys not just who you are, but what you choose to say about your issue and its solution. How you frame your issues and solutions, and tailor these for different audiences, is, therefore, one of the most critical factors in advocacy. Aggressive strategies tend to close rather than open doors. Look at ways to be engaging and build support for your cause through messages that are appealing and relevant to the lives of your audience. Use the most persuasive format, language and approach possible to inspire a positive response in terms of audience action on your issue.

Below are some basic principles of message development:

- ✓ Know your audience – Draw a power map to help you identify key stakeholders and targets, their position on your issue, and their influence. You should also identify those who clearly oppose and support your issue. In order to tailor your message to reach your audiences in an appealing way, you may need to sharpen your profile of them. Gather information about their interests, values and priorities.

- ✓ Know your political environment – Educate yourself about the contextual factors surrounding your issue, such as levels of political openness and public attitudes. This knowledge will help you make choices about how best to position and frame your message for maximum impact. Direct criticism might work in some instances; collaborative approaches, in others. You can also build the profile of your issue by linking it to another message that has public attention.
- ✓ Keep your message simple and brief – Make sure your message can be understood by anyone. Avoid jargon, technical terms and information overload.
- ✓ Be persuasive, not aggressive – Going on the attack closes doors. Beware of the effects of negative campaigning and avoid it. Instead, concentrate on how best to appeal to your audience through your knowledge of their interests.
- ✓ Use real life stories and quotations – The human element brings the issue to life and can touch audiences, including policy makers, in ways that pure facts and analysis often cannot. Direct quotations and personal stories draw immediate attention to the challenges of the problem
- ✓ Use clear facts and numbers creatively – Good, carefully selected and presented information will boost the credibility of your advocacy initiative.

Generally, it is helpful to provide the following facts, which form the core message of your campaign:

1. What is the problem or issue?
2. What are the causes?
3. Who is directly affected, and how?
4. What are the financial and social costs?
5. Who/What is responsible for the situation?
6. What is the solution?
7. What can the citizen or policy-maker do to help?
8. Present a possible solution – Offer a simple solution to the problem, such as “new laws are needed to ensure women’s access, use and control of land.”

Message delivery

Message delivery involves careful attention to how the information will be delivered and by whom. Multiple information strategies are needed if you have diverse audiences.

Some of the many different options include:

- Person-to person – one-on-one meetings, lobbying visits, group or community meetings, seminars and workshops, public hearings, protests and public demonstrations
 - Print – newspapers, journals, bulletins and newsletters, posters and leaflets, fliers and pamphlets, reports on studies, letters to decision-makers
 - Electronic media – radio inserts and debates, television interviews, videos and films, e-mail circulars, website updates
 - Drama – street theatre, songs and music, poetry, dance
- Working with the media Remember that journalists are interested in news, not the promotion of specific organisations. Focus on making the issue newsworthy by linking it to topical issues or broader social, economic and political trends. Be aware of media deadlines and work within them. Create a database of media contacts and ensure that phone and fax numbers and email addresses are kept up-to-date. Always include your own contact details on any communications with members of the press for follow-up and send your message to as wide a selection of journalists as possible.

Tips for media advocacy

Using the media to promote an advocacy issue can be an extremely useful tool for advocates.

Before you engage with the media, it is useful to brainstorm on:

- What are the media outlets available to you?
- Are some media outlets more effective than others? Which ones?

- What are the potential benefits of using media for advocacy?
- What are the potential drawbacks of using the media for advocacy?
- What are the skills and resources needed to conduct media advocacy?

If you consider contacting the media, you should:

- Have a good reason to engage the media.
 - Is engaging the media useful or necessary for achieving your advocacy goals?
- Be clear about your aim.
 - Why do you want media coverage?
- Develop your message and stick to it.
 - Reduce complex issues into simple talking points for a wide audience. Make it relatable. Make it clear and relevant to your message.
- Be prepared to answer questions.
 - Know who you represent and what you're trying to accomplish. Be aware of local impacts.
- Target key people.
 - To use the media well you need to have good relationships with relevant people who are sympathetic to what you are trying to do.
- Use media hooks.
 - Ask yourself: "Why is this interesting? What will catch people's attention? What is the likely reaction?" News with elements of local impact, personal stories, conflict or controversy, injustice, special events and celebrity involvement tends to get more attention.
- Never lie or say something you are unsure of.
 - If a reporter asks you a question you don't know, say that you don't know and will call back with an answer. Lying or providing false information can cause complications for your campaign or organization.
- Remember that no news is unbiased.
 - Most media have values behind them, whether they are political, religious, poverty focused etc. Make sure you find out what this is before you approach them. You will then have a good understanding of how they may view your issue.

Checklist for your press release:

- ✓ Did I use the right tense and keep it uniform throughout the press release? Write your press release in the active, not the passive voice. Instead of saying: "A meeting will be held on Monday night," try using "The organisation will meet on Monday night."
- ✓ Are my abbreviations, if used, correct? Many organisations use acronyms, so the media have devised a way to employ these in their reporting. The general rule is to use the full name of the in the initial reference, such as European Commission (EC), and the acronym only in all subsequent references.
- ✓ Have I capitalized proper nouns and brand names? Always avoid capitalizing any words that do not require it. Use capitals for proper nouns, names, and recognizable regions.
- ✓ Are any numbers lower than 10 spelled out in word form? One rule of thumb for numerical references is that very small and very large numbers are never written in figure format. The number 1 should be written as one, while 15,000, should appear as fifteen thousand.
- ✓ Have I excluded the use of any time-specific words, such as today or tomorrow? The only time it is appropriate to use these references is when a media sector is speaking of something that has already happened.
- ✓ Have I succeeded in not using any words of fluff that would make my work appear to be biased to the public, such as "best," or "wonderful"? Avoid turning your press release into an advertisement. Rather than appealing to the public, such approaches will turn them off.

- ✓ Is my work addressed to the appropriate personnel, and is my own contact information accurate? Do your research to ensure that your release has been sent to the right person. Update your database regularly.

Have I used my spell-checker and properly proofread the document? Computerized spell-checkers do not guarantee correct word usage. Have another person proofread your press release before submitting it.

Media Tools

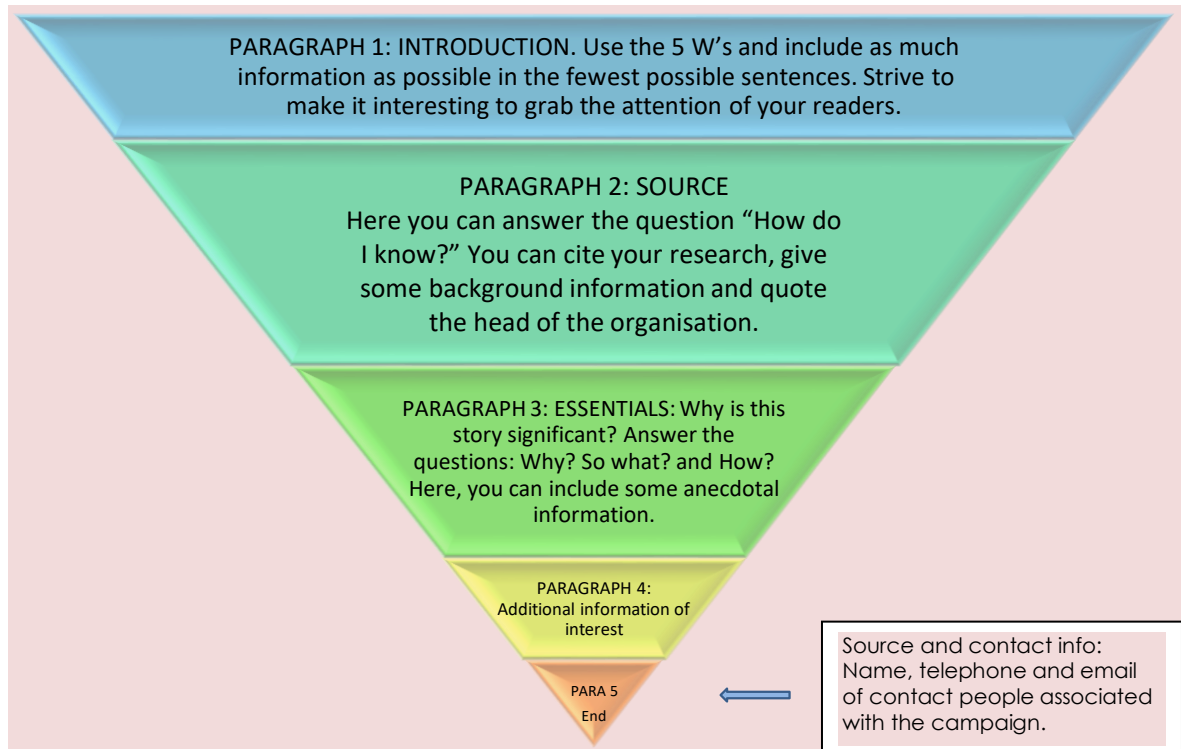
To generate publicity for your issue, choose from a range of mass media tools including:

- Press releases – to attract attention to an upcoming event or one that has just occurred. Headlines and first sentences must be compelling so that journalists notice the release and pick it up as something new and interesting. Keep it short and concise and make use of direct quotations, real-life examples and pertinent facts. Be sure to send your release to the appropriate journalist and follow up delivery by contacting them to see whether they require further information. Such exchanges draw attention to the release and build necessary relationships with the press.
- News conferences – to announce a news story to a number of journalists at once. Speakers usually make a presentation and field questions from journalists. Supplement news conferences with a press release and briefing materials.
- Letters to the editor – these are widely read and provide a good opportunity to promote a cause or debate issues. Letters should be short, the point and end on a challenging note, with a call to action.
- Television or radio interviews – these are the most effective ways to reach the broadest audience. It is important to select a persuasive spokesperson who is knowledgeable, articulate and confident.
- Radio dialogues and educational features – these supplement initiatives to change attitudes and behaviour and can generate citizen dialogue and debate. Press Releases A typical press release looks at the “Five W’s,” namely, “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where” and “Why.” It is also useful to include a “How.” Remember that the most important, attention-grabbing information must be written in the first paragraph. An easy way to remember this rule is by designing a press release like an inverted pyramid with the main points at the top and the less important information further down.

Inverted Pyramid Press Release

HEADLINE

Include the main points of the story.
Remember to write an eye-catching headline



3. Effective monitoring and evaluation in advocacy

Monitoring and evaluation help keep an advocacy initiative on track and assess the change it has achieved against its stated goals. Effective monitoring and evaluation require careful planning and are an integral part of designing an advocacy initiative. It is vital to establish what information is necessary for tracking progress, and how it can be obtained, before the strategy is implemented.

The advocacy indicators used need to be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. These indicators can be used for monitoring and evaluation.

Advocacy activities often need to be adjusted, revised, and re-directed. Such changes, however, should only be made on the basis of good monitoring data. For example, what new information has come to light through public events, meetings, newspapers and online media? Have political conditions changed since the initiative was first planned? Have the target audiences changed their opinions?

As with any other projects, monitoring should focus on tracking outputs, activities and inputs. For advocacy, outputs are usually changes in the knowledge, awareness and/or opinion of target audiences. They should be updated to include changes in your target audience's position, interest, opinion and knowledge about the policy issue. It is also important to monitor activities and inputs. The more people there are who make up the target audience, the more important this becomes.

It is important to keep a record of relevant activities, and the learning from each activity that can make your NGOs more effective as an advocate. For example, it may be worth tracking new information about the target audience that will affect the message or tracking activities that are successful against those that have struggled to hit the mark.

Monitoring the advocacy initiative may also contribute to the policy change itself. When a wide range of stakeholders, even policy-makers, are involved in monitoring an advocacy initiative, change might happen more quickly. Monitoring data offers an opportunity to discuss the status of policy changes with participants from the government, community, business and other sectors, and that process may increase the support to the policy change you are trying to achieve.

As with other projects, evaluation of advocacy focuses on impact and effects. Evaluations assess the extent to which the policy goals have been achieved, as well as the ultimate impact of these changes on the well-being of households and individuals. As with any other project, advocacy initiatives need to demonstrate that they have had a positive impact on people's lives. For this, baseline information is needed on quality of life before a policy change, as well as evaluation data on the extent to which lives have improved after a policy change.

There are a few important considerations for evaluating an advocacy initiative:

- The unique characteristics of advocacy make it necessary to think in new ways about how evaluations should be carried out. While policy-makers may approve new and favourable policies, or revise and change old ones, these changes may take a long time to yield results that can be measured at the household level (impact changes). This may have consequences for the timing of evaluations. Impact may need to be measured in a post-evaluation, after a certain period of time has passed rather than in a final evaluation of an advocacy initiative.

- Unlike our traditional programmes, policy reform often happens in a place far removed from where the impact is sought. As with other projects, it is better to acknowledge that many factors and actors contribute to improvements in people's lives, and not just one. Measuring impact rather than attribution should be the focus of any project, including an advocacy initiative.
- Measuring policy implementation faces some particular challenges. While it is easier to assess if a new policy has been created, or an old one changed, making sure that a policy is being implemented can be difficult to measure. Often, policy implementation depends on many actors carrying out policies at the national, regional and local levels.

Examples of key questions for evaluating an advocacy initiative Evaluating impact:

- Have policy changes resulted in improvements in people's quality of life? Why/why not? Is there data to support these findings?
- Have policy changes contributed to protecting, promoting or expanding people's rights?

Evaluating effects:

- Has the policy change occurred, or are the prospects better than they were before?
- Have new policies been approved, or outdated/adverse policies changed? Are policies enacted at the national, regional and/or local levels? Why/why not?
- What factors enabled/hindered the success of policy change, that is, the creation, reform or enactment of policies? • Were bills or proposals formally introduced in the legislature or other government body or were informal decisions made?
- Who made final decisions that enabled/hindered the policy change? Evaluating your strategy:
- Were appropriate primary and secondary audiences selected? Were the advocacy targets changed along the way? Why/why not?
- Did the advocacy messages change the target audiences' opinions on or knowledge of the policy issue? Which messages were most successful, and which failed to convey the point?
- Did the advocacy initiative have an appropriate role? Could other roles be more effective?
- Did CARE advocate in coalition? What were the benefits/ drawbacks for advocating in coalition?
- Were the voices of those most impacted by the problem included/considered?

How to report effectively?

Types of reporting

There are many different ways of getting the word out about your issue. The one you choose will reflect your desired outcome or the results you wish to provoke from the act of reporting. Your report can be a stand-alone document, be part of a current or future advocacy action plan or used for the purpose of human rights education.

Press Releases

This is one of the most common methods of reporting for NGOs. They should be clear, concise and easy to understand for members of the press, who are not necessarily experts on the issues at hand. Be accurate and allow facts to speak for themselves. Dramatic and inflammatory language will taint the credibility and objectivity of your information. Remember to offer contacts and opportunities for interviews and follow-up information, which may later be requested.

Newsletters

Newsletters can be a very effective way of raising awareness and communicating with your organisation's supporters and the community. This method of reporting is good for getting information out, to a wider, yet targeted audience, raising awareness and creating discussion. In addition to news

reporting, this format allows for articles and other submissions. Although a useful tool, this type of reporting has its limits. Journals take a lot of preparation and can be quite expensive to produce. A less expensive alternative is to create an electronic newsletter.

Using an electronic format allows for a low-cost production and easy distribution, but is limited to recipients who have access to email and the Internet.

Country/thematic report

If your organisation has spent a great deal of time and effort on a specific theme or area of research, you may want to put this information together into a single comprehensive publication. A country or theme publication is a useful tool to present information that has been gathered over a period of time, when objective analysis and patterns of abuses can easily be presented in an essay or argument format. These documents usually take a great deal of preparation, however the result is generally worth while. A single stand-alone publication can be useful as a resource to show your organisation's work, be used for the purpose of human rights education or be sent along as supporting documentation for complaints and reports to governing authorities, making a case for action. Sometimes smaller publications can also be used as a resource for lobbying or for important events and conferences.

Shadow Reports

Submitting what are called "shadow reports" to European and international governing bodies can follow the format of the corresponding government report or may simply be a presentation of the concerns of the organisation as relevant for the international law at issue. These documents serve an important function in exposing international treaty or policy compliance.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the different types of reporting, nor are these methods mutually exclusive. It does, however, give an idea of the scope reporting can take. It is important to keep in mind as well that effective reporting often involves combining reporting methods, such as writing a letter of concern to state authorities and sending out a press release to attract attention to the issue at hand.

4. Data collection

Data collection is a systematic process of gathering observations or measurements. Whether you are performing research for governmental or academic purposes, data collection allows you to gain first-hand knowledge and original insights into your research problem.

Advantages of data collection

In the case of Roma NGOs, data can help identify and verify issues of discrimination, perceptions of treatment, institutional barriers, accessibility of services, racial profiling in law enforcement, and the role of socio-economic disadvantage and inequality in every day life. In addition, data can help to proactively address issues, measure progress and capitalize on opportunities. Collecting data can help measure a general state of affairs, not limited to specific cases or events. When data is gathered, tracked and analysed in a credible way over time, it becomes possible to measure progress and success (or lack of it). Budgets, policies, practices, processes, programming, services and interventions can then be evaluated, modified and improved.

Collecting data on an ongoing basis, using accepted data collection methods, can help an organization show that it has met its duty to protect and uphold human rights.

Disadvantages and risks of data collection

Collecting sensitive information can create feelings of anxiety or distrust, and raise concerns about privacy and confidentiality. This is particularly true in the case of Roma, and their long experience of discrimination, segregation, police violence and surviving the Holocaust. Roma tend to be very cautious when asked to be part of surveys or data collection processes for fear that this data is not misused or used against them.

Therefore, organisations involved in data collection in Roma communities can prevent and overcome such anxiety, distrust and concerns by:

- clearly communicating the rationale, method and benefits of collecting data
- clarifying who has access to the information and why
- outlining how the information collected will be handled and stored confidentially in compliance with privacy, human rights and other applicable legislation
- consulting with affected communities and other appropriate individuals (community leaders /organizations).

Depending on an organization's resources and other factors, hiring a trusted external consultant to collect, store, analyze and report back on the results of the data gathered may also be an option.

Process of data collection

Inform the public

Regardless of the data collection method used, the people data is being collected on and the broader public in general should be advised of why such information is being gathered and its potential uses. They should also be told how the data will be collected, the steps taken or that will be taken to protect privacy and confidentiality, the benefits of collecting data, and the progress reached in achieving stated goals and objectives.

Consult affected communities

Service providers, employers, landlords and other responsible bodies should consult with affected communities about the need for data collection and appropriate methodology.

Use the least intrusive means

The form that data collection takes should be the least intrusive alternative that most respects dignity and privacy of individuals.

Self-identification surveys are one standard method for identifying types of individuals, within or served by an organization. When using this method, make it clear to people that their participation is voluntary and that confidentiality will be maintained.

Another method might be to have a trained employee or an external expert record data through observation. A capable and effective observer can provide an objective viewpoint about the characteristics and behaviour of research subjects that others may be unaware of. A key weakness, however, is that an observer, trained or otherwise, may not be able to accurately differentiate within or between certain groups of people, particularly when an identity is not readily visible (such as religion, mental illness or sexual orientation). This may affect the accuracy of observed results.

Analysing data from multiple perspectives and relying on data gathered from different sources, using accepted data collection techniques, can strengthen the conclusions drawn from research.

Anonymity

Assuring anonymity (e.g. by not requiring any identifying information such as a name) may be necessary to address privacy and confidentiality concerns, particularly where the collective results are so small that reporting them could potentially reveal an individual's identity. For example, in a small organization, it would be reasonable to suppress the statistic that only one employee has a mental illness. In other cases, assuring participants' anonymity might mean that a formal data collection initiative is limited in its ability to achieve objectives, or is unable to proceed with altogether. In all cases, however, measures should be taken to protect privacy and confidentiality.

What is involved in collecting data – six steps

If an organization is considering whether to collect data on its own or get help from an external consultant, it will need to have enough information to make an informed decision about how to proceed.

The main consideration is to make sure that any information collected is done in a way and for a purpose that complies with freedom of information and privacy protection legislation. In the interest of effectiveness and efficiency, it is recommended that efforts be made to collect data that will shed light on issues or opportunities. To protect the credibility and reliability of data, information should be gathered using accepted data collection techniques.

Step 1: Identify issues and/or opportunities for collecting data

The first step is to identify issues and/or opportunities for collecting data and to decide what next steps to take.

Step 2: Select issue(s) and/or opportunity(ies) and set goals

The focus of Step 2 is choosing a priority issue(s) and/or opportunity(ies) for collecting data, and then setting goals and objectives.

The organization reviews the issues and/or opportunities identified from the internal and external assessment done in Step 1, and picks one or more specific issues and/or opportunities for starting a data collection project from among the list of priorities. Some of the questions an organization can consider when deciding to prioritize an issue and/or opportunity for gathering data include: Is there a fundamental reason or opportunity to collect data from which other issues and/or opportunities seem to arise?

Goal setting

While the organization may intend to collect data relating to multiple issues and/or opportunities at the same time, the next steps, including goal-setting, should be individualized for each issue and/or opportunity. The specific goal(s) defined for each issue and/or opportunity may depend on a hypothesis or guess about what is happening that can be tested using data collection techniques and analysis.

Step 2 can also involve an organization brainstorming a smaller set of questions that may be answered by collecting data. Rather than asking a general question like, “Is there any evidence of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in this company?” one might ask, “What percentage of company employees self-identify as being part of the LGBT community?” and “What are the perceptions of discrimination of the employees by self-identified LGBT patrons?” Ultimately, data that is collected should be rationally connected to the goals set and the overall purpose for collecting the data.

Step 3: Plan an approach and methods

In Step 3, organizations will make decisions about who will be surveyed, how data will be collected, the sources of data that will be used, and the duration of the data collection project, among other questions. These decisions may be made in consultation with an expert. The methods and approaches will flow from the goals set in Step 2, and will vary significantly depending on a number of factors, including the organization’s context, size, resources, and the purpose and complexity of the issue(s) or opportunity(ies) selected.

Some of the questions to consider at this stage include:

- **Who will the data be collected about?**

The “group of interest” will be the focus of the study, and the data collection methods used will refer to this group, or the persons within it, depending on the goals of the project.

When thinking about who the data will be collected about, it is important to consider who you think will be most affected by, for example, the discrimination or inequities that you wish to measure. It is important to recognize that based on their unique combination of identities, people may be exposed to particular forms of discrimination. Multiple forms of discrimination can intersect and compound to form a unique experience of discrimination. This perspective is referred to as an “intersectional” analysis of discrimination.

- **How should data be collected?**

In the context of human rights, social-science researchers are commonly asked to lead or help with data collection projects. Two types of data are used in social science research: qualitative and quantitative. A good research effort involves the use of both types. Both approaches, while distinct, can overlap and rely on the other to produce meaningful data, analysis and results.

Qualitative data:

- Typically, data is called “qualitative” if it is in the form of words, but may also include any information that is not numerical in form, such as photographs, videos and sound recordings.
- Qualitative methods are aimed at describing a specific context, event, people or relationship in a broad contextual way, by trying to understand the underlying reasons for behaviour, thoughts and feelings.
- Common qualitative research methods include observation, one-on-one interviews, focus groups and intensive case studies.

Potential strengths:

- qualitative data excels at "telling the story" from the participant's viewpoint (it helps participants feel like they have been heard)
- can help others better understand the issue or problem by providing the rich descriptive detail that explains the human context of numerical results

Potential weaknesses:

- perceived that the accuracy of qualitative data can be influenced by false, subjective or manipulated testimonies. Good qualitative data, checked by a professional researcher and gathered using accepted data collection research methods, can address the impact of such factors
- depending on the nature and size of the project, as well as the sophistication of the methods and analysis used, can take a significant amount of time, be very labour-intensive, and yield results that may not be general enough for policy-making and decision-making purposes.

Quantitative data:

- Typically, data is called “quantitative” if it is in the form of numbers.
- A quantitative approach can be used to count events or the number of people who represent a particular background.
- Common quantitative tools include surveys, questionnaires and statistical data (such as Statistics Canada census information).
- It is important to note that all quantitative data is based on qualitative judgment. In other words, numbers cannot be interpreted by themselves, without understanding the assumptions that underlie them.

Example: A simple 1- 5 rating variable for the survey statement, “My organisation handles human rights grievances in a sensitive and efficient manner” gives respondents the option of circling: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral) 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

A respondent circles “2 = Disagree.” To understand the value of “2” here, a researcher must consider some of the judgments and assumptions that are behind this choice. Did the respondent understand the term "human rights grievance"? Has the respondent had experience filing a grievance with the union? Does the respondent like unions generally?

Potential strengths:

- perceived to be more credible and reliable than qualitative data because of the use of numbers, which are seen as an objective source of data. This is not necessarily the case. The accuracy of quantitative data can be influenced by manipulation and bias of the researcher, among other factors, unless checked by the researcher’s professionalism and the use of accepted data collection research methods
- quantitative data excels at summarizing, organizing and comparing large amounts of information, and drawing general conclusions about a research topic of interest

- can help measure progress and success
- good at identifying trends and determining the magnitude of a research topic of interest.

Potential weaknesses:

a focus on numbers and rankings alone can overly simplify or lead to an inaccurate understanding of complex situations and realities, unless a broader context is provided

➤ **What sources of data should be used to collect information?**

Qualitative and quantitative data are generally gathered from more than one source. Where possible, two or more of the following sources should be used together to strengthen reliability and consistency in results.

Pre-existing or official data

Pre-existing or official data is information that has already been documented (e.g. newspaper clippings, case law, Statistics Canada census data, photographs) or is created by an organization during its routine business operations (e.g. employee personnel files, student registration forms, annual reports, occurrence reports). This data may contain information that directly relates to specific grounds like race, but more commonly will relate only indirectly (for example, in the form of names, place of origin or ethnicity). This type of information could be used as proxies or stand-ins for race, but would be less reliable than actually having self-reported racial data.

Potential strengths:

- is efficient. Avoids the time, energy, expense and disruption involved in collecting data as a separate step from running daily operations

Potential weaknesses:

- to be a useful source of information, organizations need to be willing to collect the data as part of their ordinary record-keeping procedures
- the reliability of this data will depend on the diligence and accuracy of the reporting done by the people collecting it.

Survey data

Survey research is a broad area and generally includes any measurement procedures that involve asking respondents questions. A "survey" can range from a short paper-and-pencil questionnaire to an in-depth one-on-one interview (interviews will be discussed further below).

In designing a survey, it is important to consider the specific characteristics of the respondents, to make sure that the questions are relevant, clear, accessible and easy to understand. Some practical considerations to keep in mind are whether the respondents can read, have language or cultural barriers, have disabilities, and can be easily reached.

Potential strengths:

- very useful for documenting an individual's perceptions and perceived experiences of an organization's work culture, service delivery or other areas of interest

Potential weaknesses:

- quality and reliability of survey data depend on factors like the expertise of the people conducting them, the design and appropriateness of the questions asked, and the credibility of the methods used to analyze and interpret the results

- may not provide an accurate measure of how others perceive a person’s background or experience.

Example: A transgender employee may self-identify as female, but a third party may identify her as male.

Focus groups and interviews

Interviews and focus groups (also referred to as “group interviews”) allow for information to be provided orally, either individually or in a group setting. The data can be recorded in a wide variety of ways including written notes, audio recording and video recording.

Focus groups:

In focus groups, the interviewer facilitates the session. A select group of people are brought together, asked questions, encouraged to listen to each other's comments, and have their answers recorded. The same set of questions may be used for a number of different groups, each of which is constituted slightly differently, and for a range of purposes.

Focus groups may be facilitated by professionals, but this is not always needed. The decision to hire a professional facilitator may depend on the goals of the focus group research, the nature of the questions asked, the skills and experience of staff taking part, and the need for confidentiality or anonymity.

Example: To get the unique perspective of each group, an organization may wish to hold separate focus groups for representatives of each of the organization’s internal and external stakeholder groups, such as senior management, front-line employees, service users, union representatives and community groups. Or, it may be of greater value to organize a group that includes people representing all key internal and external stakeholders, to allow for contrasting ideas to be expressed and discussed.

Whatever format is chosen, it is important that the focus group is structured and managed in a way that cultivates a “safe space” for people to share their experiences. In some cases, this may not be possible without setting up separate focus groups or hiring a professional facilitator who is not connected to the organization.

Potential strengths:

- focus groups allow for multiple narratives to be voiced in one “interview” about a research topic of interest
- act as tools for education because discussion among participants can illuminate the participants’ and the researcher’s views, helping to further refine research about a particular topic of interest.

Potential weakness:

- does not allow participants to fully express their individual opinions and narratives, or ask questions when they immediately come to mind, because of the need to hear and accommodate other voices.

Interviews:

Typically, interviews involve a set of standard questions being asked of all respondents, on a one-on-one basis, so that accurate trends and gaps can be drawn from the data. Interviews are commonly conducted face-to-face, but for more rapid results, can also be done over the telephone, or, as technology advances, through video-conferencing and other means.

Potential strengths:

- interviews can provide a rich, detailed perspective, impression or story on a research topic of interest
- the interviewer generally has the opportunity to probe more deeply or ask follow-up questions than when in a focus group setting
- data from both focus groups and interviews can provide valuable context for understanding and informing research, numbers, events, behaviour and other research goals
- depending on the size of the organization, the purpose of the data collection, the internal expertise available and other factors, focus groups and interviews can be done with relatively little expense.

Potential weaknesses:

- one-on-one interviews allow for just one narrative or perspective on a research topic of interest
- can be very time consuming and resource intensive
- respondents in interviews and focus groups generally want to "look good" in the eyes of others. Depending on the questions asked, they might "spin" their response to avoid being embarrassed, particularly in a face-to-face setting. Skilled interviewers may be able to address this potential weakness by doing a few things, like designing good questions, being perceptive, asking follow-up questions and cross-checking responses with other credible sources of information
- interviewers, in both individual and focus group settings, may distort an interview by not, for example, asking questions that make them uncomfortable or not listening carefully to respondents on topics that they have strong opinions on. The impact of this potential weakness can be addressed by taking steps like making sure that interviewers are properly trained and using standard interview questions.

Observed data

Trained staff or external experts can gather data by identifying and recording the characteristics and behaviour of research subjects through observation, either within or outside of an organization. Observed data can include information gathered using all of the senses available to the researcher, including sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

Example: A human rights organization that offers a mediation service hires a mediation expert to observe mediators and service users and provide feedback about any issues of concern related to human rights. To minimize potential stress and anxiety experienced by the people being observed, staff and service users are informed in advance of the purpose and goals of the exercise. Service users' consent is sought. Staff is advised that the observed data gathered will only be used for research purposes and not shared with their managers. The expert maintains access to the data, and the results are reported on an aggregated and summarized basis to prevent individuals from being identified.

Hiring experts, while potentially expensive, can add validity and credibility to research analysis because they are often perceived as having no vested interest in the research results.

Information gathered using observation techniques differs from interviewing, because the observer does not actively ask the respondent questions. Observed data can include everything from field research, where someone lives in another context or culture for a period of time (participant observation), to photographs that show the interaction between service providers and service users (direct observation). The data can be recorded in many of the same ways as interviews (taking notes, audio, video) and through pictures, photos or drawings.

- **How long will the data be collected (the scope of data collection)?**

Data can be collected and analyzed on a short-term or project basis in response to situations or needs that arise from time to time. A short-term data collection project would include a start and a finish date, with set deliverables to be carried out over a certain period of time.

The best practice is to collect data on an ongoing, permanent basis, and to analyze this data as often as is needed to identify, address and monitor barriers to *Code*-protected persons or other persons based on non-*Code* grounds.

Data collected in a time-limited study may be less complete than data collected through ongoing monitoring. This is because short-term studies do not allow for the assessment of trends, patterns or changes over time. However, where costs, time and resources are a factor, short-term studies may be the preferred choice to fulfil a need and project goals.

Other factors may also influence the reliability of the data. For example, people may modify behaviour while under scrutiny during the data collection period.

Step 4: Collect data

When planning on how best to collect data in Step 4, it is important to be aware of the practical considerations and best practices for addressing logistical challenges organizations often face at this stage of the process. Implementing a data collection plan requires attention to matters such as:

- Getting buy-in from senior leadership and key stakeholders, in or outside of the organization. This group could include boards of directors, management committees, union representatives, employees, community groups, tenants, customers and service users.
- Establishing a steering committee or selecting a person(s) to be consulted and held accountable for all major decisions about the data collection process, such as design, logistics, communication management, coordination and finances.
- Determining who will collect the data (e.g., experts or trained employees).
- Identifying the logistics, resources, technology and people needed to develop and implement a data collection initiative.
- Anticipating and addressing key stakeholder concerns and questions about the project.
- Designing a communication and consultation strategy that will explain the data collection initiative and encourage the highest possible participation rate.
- Protecting privacy and personal information by using carefully controlled procedures for collecting, storing and accessing data that comply with privacy, human rights and other legislation. Dignity and confidentiality must be respected.
- Minimizing the impact and inconvenience for the people affected in the workplace or service environment, which includes choosing the best time to collect the data.
- Aiming for flexibility to allow for changes without great expense or inconvenience.
- Considering a test period or a pilot phase to allow you to improve and modify data collection methods, as may be needed.

Step 5: Analyse and interpret data

Step 5 involves analysing and interpreting the data collected. Whether quantitative and/or qualitative methods of gathering data are used, the analysis can be complex, or less so, depending on the methods used and the amount of data collected.

An organization will have to determine whether it has the internal capacity and expertise to analyse and interpret data itself, or whether it will need the help of an external consultant.

A smaller organization that has basic data collection needs may be able to rely on internal expertise and existing resources to interpret the meaning of gathered data.

Step 6: Act on results

Once an organization has analysed and interpreted the results of the data collected, it may decide to act on the data, collect more of the same type of data or modify its approach.

Quantitative and qualitative information can provide a solid basis for creating an effective action plan designed to achieve strategic organizational human resources, human rights, equity and diversity goals identified through the data collection process. If an organization feels it has enough information to develop an action plan, it should consider including the following elements:

- a summary of the results of the analysis and interpretation of the data
- identification of the barriers, gaps and opportunities that exist or may exist for Code-protected persons and other individuals/groups based on non-Code grounds
- steps that will be taken to address these barriers, gaps or opportunities now and in the future
- realistic, attainable goals with short-term and longer-term timelines
- input sought from stakeholders and affected communities
- how progress in meeting these goals will be monitored, evaluated and reported.

In some cases, an organization may decide that it needs to collect more information because there are gaps in the data collected, or areas where the data is unclear or inconclusive. This may prompt them to conduct a more detailed internal and external assessment (go back to Step 1) or try another approach.

5. Sources of funding for Roma

Sources of funding

Roma NGOs in the EU countries can benefit from various types of funding, which include the following:

- Governmental budgetary sources – national, regional, municipal/local;
- EU financial support – Structural Funds, other instruments; and
- Voluntary donors – international, national, local

National funding

The social inclusion of Roma is primarily the responsibility of the state and so national funding is a source of funding that is available for NGOs nationwide. While states have varying degrees of decentralization, there is a widespread trend towards transferring of administrative structures and competences. Consequently, nationally provided funding is often delivered at regional or local level rather than from the central level.

Much financial support for Roma is specifically targeted but some is included in general funding, while Commission reports in the Member States indicate that it is difficult to monitor whether mainstreamed support, unless earmarked, is reaching the intended beneficiaries in the absence of ethnically disaggregated data.

Main EU funding instruments and programmes

For the 2021-2027 period, the EU set forward seven shared management funds to support economic development in Member States:

- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**
- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**
- **Cohesion Fund (CF)**
- **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)**
- **Asylum and Migration Fund (AMIF)**
- **Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI)**
- **Internal Security Fund (ISF)**

In addition, there are several funding programmes, managed directly by the Commission which are relevant for Roma equality and inclusion:

- **Just Transition Fund (JTF)**
- **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**
- **Horizon Europe**
- **InvestEU**
- **Digital Europe Programme**
- **Erasmus+**
- **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)**
- **Creative Europe**
- **EU4Health**
- **Justice Programme**
- **Citizens, equality, rights and values programme (CERV)**

How?

There are two forms of managing EU funding: through shared management and through direct management.

Shared management means that the EU funds are managed jointly between the European Commission and the Member States. Approximately 80% of EU funding sources for NGOs are managed by EU countries themselves. While the supervision of the funds that are managed through shared management remains the responsibility of the European Commission through its so-called Director-Generals, the responsibility for implementation lies at the Managing Authorities in each Member States.

Direct management means that a fund or programme is directly managed by the European Commission or one of its agencies. The management involves the publication of call for proposal and tenders, selecting contractors, awarding grants, transferring funds, monitoring activities and others.

The European Commission also issues contracts to buy in services, goods or works they need for their operations – like studies, training, conference organisation, IT equipment.

There is one **Managing Authority (MA)** for each Fund or Programme in every country, responsible for the development of an investment plan or **operational programme (OP)**, which defines the types of activities that can be financed by EU funding in the specific country or region. Each country provides detailed information about funding and application procedures on the websites of their managing authorities.

Member States are required to appoint **Monitoring Committees** that comprise regional, economic and social partners, including NGOs. A monitoring committee's key tasks include checking that operational programme (OPs) are correctly implemented.

Potential beneficiaries:

- Local, regional and national authorities and administrative bodies
- Social, cultural and educational institutions
- Workers' and employers' organisations, as well as organisations providing training, support for workers, labour market support
- NGOs, charities, foundations and organisations of a social character
- Public administrations and municipal institutions
- Companies and associations.
- Individuals from specific target groups like young people, pupils, apprentices, students, volunteers, women, people from marginalised groups, etc.

How much?

The EU's is defining a seven-year forecast for how much money is available for such investments. This forecast is called the [Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#), which defines more generally what amounts will be spent on which thematic spending priorities. The current programming period is 2021-2027.

What is particular about the current EU budgetary planning, is that amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, an additional emergency 'recovery fund' called '[NextGenerationEU](#)' (NGEU) was agreed in parallel to the MFF. The NGEU was designed to help address the short and medium-term effects of the pandemic until 2024. Part of it will be transferred via a new Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), set up explicitly to fund investments and reforms in the Member States, including but not limited to their health care systems.

In the context where the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the extreme exposure of excluded and marginalised Romani communities to negative health and socioeconomic impacts, the Recovery and Resilience Facility is a good opportunity to tackle the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Romani people, ensuring digital inclusion and delivering environmental justice, access to employment, access to healthcare, social and basic services and adequate housing and ending educational and housing segregation.

Priority areas

The MFF will cover the following main areas:

- single market, innovation and digital
- cohesion, resilience and values
- natural resources and the environment
- migration and border management
- security and defence
- neighbourhood and the world
- European public administration

NextGenerationEU will cover:

- single market, innovation and digital
- cohesion, resilience and values
- natural resources and the environment

The aspects that are mostly relevant for Roma equality and inclusion are linked to single market, innovation and digital; cohesion, resilience and values.

EU funding programmes

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is by far the most significant contributor on Roma issues. In the new funding programming period, 2021-2027, ESF+ includes the investment priority “Promoting socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma”, and the enabling condition of a National Roma Integration Strategy, whose fulfilment criteria under ESF+ include measures to accelerate Romani integration, taking into account the gender dimension and situation of Romani youth; and preventing and eliminating segregation. In addition, ESF+ can support Romani related actions in the areas of education, employment and social inclusion through a combined approach of mainstream with explicit but not exclusive targeting.

Further info: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf-plus>

European Regional Development Fund

Also important are the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). ERDF and the Cohesion Funds contribute to the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, with particular focus on Romani people through integrated measures, connected across thematic areas, including education, employment, social housing, health and social care, antidiscrimination, etc. Under ERDF, the needs of Romani communities can also be addressed through mainstream measures under local and territorial development strategies.

Further info: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes_en

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Under this mechanism, LEADER is a “bottom up” approach, in which farmers, rural businesses, local organizations, public authorities and individuals from different sectors come together to form local action groups (LAGs). LEADER approach has been adopted by ERDF, ESF) and the EMFF in a wider Community led local development (CLLD). The CLLD approach, implemented under the Rural

Development Program, remains one of the most important funding instruments relevant to the social inclusion of vulnerable communities, including Romani communities, at local level.

Further info: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/agrip>

ERASMUS+

The new Erasmus programme will include enhanced efforts to promote equity and inclusion by facilitating access to participants with fewer opportunities compared to their peers (e.g. due to educational difficulties, economic and geographical obstacles, and cultural differences). It will maintain support for projects dealing with topics of relevance for Romani people, building on experience from the INSCHOOL project.

In addition, the Commission is launching the first comprehensive Inclusion and diversity strategy for the Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps Programmes to make the programme more inclusive to people with diverse background.

Further info: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>

Citizens, equality, rights and values programme

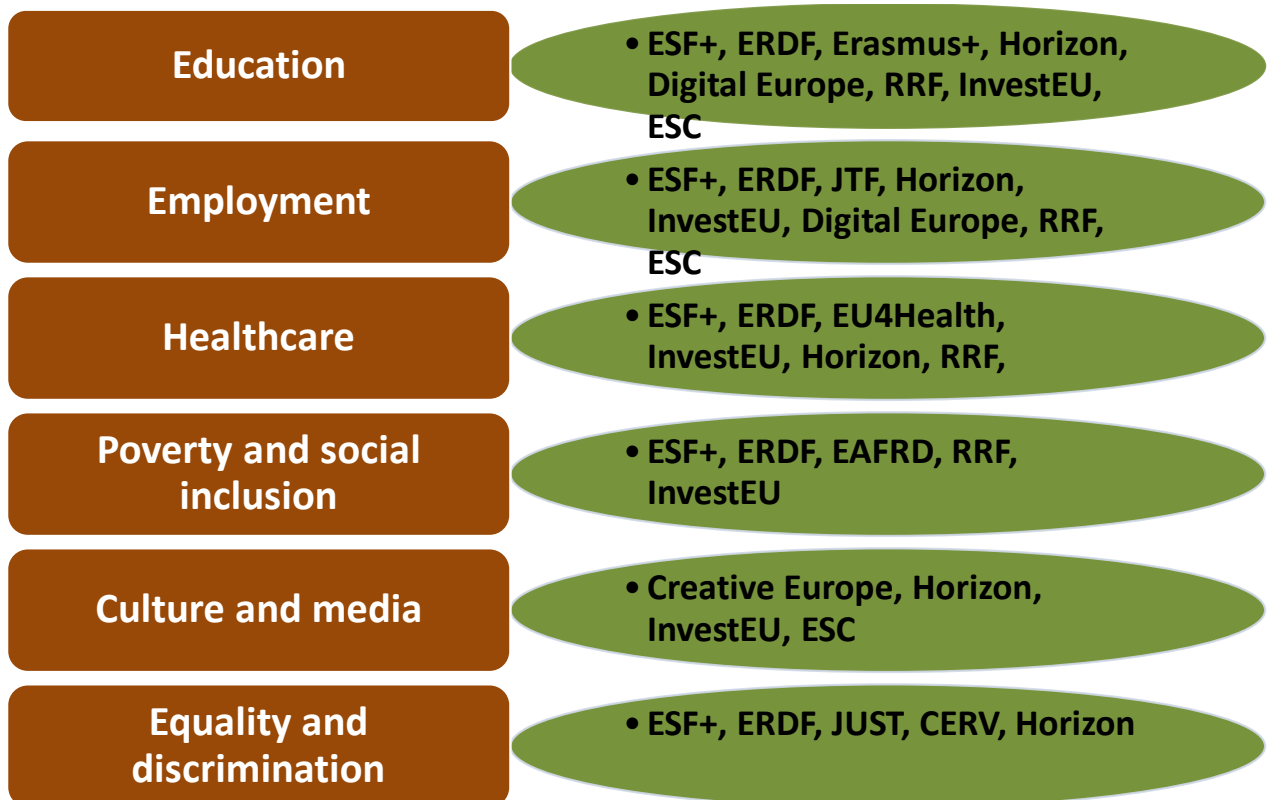
The objective of the Calls for proposal under this budget strand is to support an intersectional approach and specific actions to prevent and fight against intolerance, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination, in particular on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, including antigypsyism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred, Afrophobia and LGBTIQ phobia, offline and online.

Specific calls on Roma are published a few times a year.

Further info: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme_en

EU funds and programmes can be used through both targeted action and inclusive mainstream reforms and investments to address Roma equality and inclusion.

Table EU funds for Roma Equality and Inclusion



For more info on specific Roma actions that can be funded under each area and funding mechanism, please see the [Guide on EU Funds for Roma Equality and Inclusion 2021-2027](#).

6. Building coalitions

What is a coalition?

A coalition is a group of organisations working together in a coordinated fashion toward a common goal.

Coalition building

Getting to know the key players in your issue is an important step. Just as important however is building professional relationships with influential actors. Networking encompasses developing allies amongst other NGOs, grassroots movements, political sympathisers, leaders, experts and academics that contribute to the movement you support and strengthen your work. Hosting or attending conferences, panels and workshops provide such opportunities as well as the chance to educate and strategise about relevant issues.

Coalitions can help show that you have the backing of a strong constituency. This showing of political strength and support for your issue can help win the additional support of political actors. Perhaps more importantly, coalition building helps ensure that human rights messages are harmonized and not conflicting. However, there are both advantages and disadvantages to belonging to coalitions. On one hand, you can benefit from shared resources and expertise, which can expand the reach of your action and influence. On the other hand, coalitions can make decision-making processes quite difficult and inefficient, as well as possibly dilute the message you wish to get across. Coalitions can also compromise an organisation's independence. Always weigh the pros and cons of forming a particular coalition before committing.

Advantages and disadvantages of working as coalitions

Advantages

- Enlarges your base of support; you can win together what you cannot win alone.
- Provides safety for advocacy efforts and protection for members who may not be able to take action alone.
- Magnifies existing resources by pooling them together and by delegating work to others in the coalition.
- Increases financial and programmatic resources for an advocacy campaign.
- Enhances the credibility and influence of an advocacy campaign, as well as that of individual coalition members.
- Helps develop new leadership.
- Assists in individual and organizational networking.
- Broadens the scope of your work.

Disadvantages

- Distracts you from other work; can take too much time away from regular organizational tasks.
- May require you to compromise your position on issues or tactics.
- May require you to give in to more powerful organizations. Power is not always distributed equally among coalition members; larger or richer organizations can have more say in decisions.

- You may not always get credit for your work. Sometimes the coalition as a whole gets recognition rather than individual members. Well-run coalitions should strive to highlight their members as often as possible.
- If the coalition process breaks down it can harm everyone's advocacy by damaging members' credibility.

Types of Coalitions

Like advocates, coalitions come in all shapes and sizes; each type serves a purpose. These categories are not mutually exclusive; for example, a coalition can be a permanent, formal, single-issue coalition, or an informal, geographic, multi-issue coalition.

Coalitions range from being very fluid to highly structured. Different types of coalitions will attract different organizations.

Definition

Permanent - Permanent coalitions are incorporated organizations with a staff and board of directors. Decision-making is structured and systematic. Members often pay yearly dues. Many coalitions start as temporary and informal groups and can take years to mature into a permanent coalition such as an association, trade union, or federation.

Temporary - Temporary coalitions come together for a specific purpose or goal. When the goal is achieved, the coalition disbands. Sometimes the coalition can remain intact if it takes on another goal.

Formal - Members formally join the coalition, pay dues, and are identified as coalition members on letterhead, coalition statements, etc.

Informal - There is no official membership in these coalitions, therefore members constantly change. With membership turnover, the issues and tactics of the coalition may also shift.

Geographic - The coalition is based on a geographic area such as a school district or a region of the continent.

Multi-Issue - The coalition works on a number of issues or advocacy objectives during the course of its existence. However, for strategic and organizational purposes, the coalition may choose to work on only one objective/issue at a time.

Single Issue - The coalition works on one issue or objective. Sometimes strange alliances can evolve between organizations which usually oppose one another, but can agree to work together on a single issue.

Participating in Coalitions

Joining Coalitions

The following hints will help you benefit from any coalition you join.

- Understand clearly who is running the coalition, who the members are and what the goals and positions are before you join.

- Be sure you understand clearly the financial, programmatic and staff support you and your organization will be expected to contribute.
- Make sure you and your organization have the time and resources to participate.
- Find out exactly how your organization will benefit by being involved. Learn what the coalition will offer you; e.g., will your organization have opportunities to present its work through the coalition? Will you gain access to decision makers or the media?
- Do not miss meetings. A coalition will not be responsive to your needs and requests unless you are committed to participating. In addition, you cannot have a voice in decisions unless you are at the meeting to speak up.

Forming Coalitions

You may decide to take on the responsibility and effort of organizing a coalition to help reach your advocacy objective. Consider two different ways to form coalitions:

Have an open meeting

This is one of the most common ways to organize a coalition quickly, it is usually used for informal coalition building. Only use this technique for coalition formation if your advocacy issue and objective are flexible.

Usually diverse coalitions form first, the specific agenda is set later depending on who has joined and what interests are represented.

You can issue an invitation to a broad array of organizations or publish an announcement of the meeting in specific newsletters. Tailor your invitation to reach as broad or narrow a group as required.

Assemble the coalition by invitation only

This method is used to create more solid, long-term coalitions. Creating a coalition by invitation means the issue and agenda are more likely to stay focused on your objective and you can select the groups that will bring prestige, power, resources and energy to your effort. The disadvantage of this technique is that the coalition will not be as broad or its members as numerous.

You will want to meet with each group individually to introduce the coalition idea and discuss their possible participation. Once you have met with all the potential members, you can hold the first meeting to officially kick-off the new coalition.

Running an Effective Coalition

At the first meeting of a new coalition you should clearly state the purpose for forming the new coalition, the goals, what is expected of each member, and the benefits of membership. There should be plenty of time on the agenda for groups to introduce themselves and for initial discussion about the issues, objectives, strategies and tactics of the coalition. At this point groups will decide whether to join the coalition.

Once you have formed a coalition, the work begins. Below are some hints to strengthen your coalition and keep it running smoothly and effectively.

Keep in personal contact with key coalition members and make sure that all members are informed regularly of developments on your issue, actions taken by the coalition, or other items of interest. Most organizations join coalitions to have access to information on a timely basis, so continual information flow is essential.

Get to know all the coalition members well so as to be properly informed about their positions and opinions. These might be quite different from yours.

Achieve consensus among coalition members on short-and long-term goals. Do not set goals and objectives that are too ambitious. Choose an objective which the coalition can achieve in a timely manner. An early success will help build confidence, credibility, and support for your group. Your coalition can use Module 3 to help select a good advocacy objective.

Involve powerful coalition members in all decision-making. If a key organization or individual is left out of a decision, you may have to revisit the decision and, in extreme cases, you risk losing that group.

Keep coalition meetings brief and on a regular schedule. Lengthy meetings will discourage people from attending; meeting too often can cause "meeting fatigue." Have a time limit and clear agenda for all meetings. In addition, facilitate discussion to make sure that all are heard. Always circulate a sign-in sheet.

Develop subgroups strategically to take on specific tasks. Do not let the number of subgroups grow uncontrolled-your members will be spread across too many groups or will burn out.

Do not avoid troublesome issues. Difficult issues must be discussed openly at meetings, or they will split apart your coalition. If the issues are too contentious, you can talk individually to the parties that disagree and try to develop a solution. Or you can involve an outside mediator or facilitator.

Factsheets

Thematic areas

I. RACISM

Racism, which is a global phenomenon and one of considerable historical density, is sometimes defined very broadly as being synonymous with the rejection of others.

Although the word 'race' entered the European vocabulary towards the end of the fifteen century and became established as a scientific category in the nineteenth, the term 'racism' was not coined until the twentieth century, between the two world wars period, while its widespread use dates after the Second World War with the discovery of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust. But although the notion of racism is new, the phenomenon is older long before it acquired its present name.

More generally, in the second half of the 19th century, the whole of Europe was obsessed with measuring skulls and bones, examining skin pigmentation, and the colour of eyes and hair. Everywhere racial classifications were drawn up, links were being made between an applied scientific knowledge and doctrines. However, the climate of ideas of the 19th century was still far from the perspective Nazim would bring. Most of the existing disciplines, including medicine, biology, chemistry, genetics, anthropology, ethnology, psychiatry, jurisprudence, demography and even archaeology would all play their part in the classification of populations and the scientific treatment of the Jews, half-Jews, quarter-Jews, Gypsies and mental patients, who were also racialised. And some of these disciplines would voluntarily provide the regime with historical legitimacy and justification for their elimination. That it, when these doctrines entered the political arena, they became full-blown ideologies. According to Hannah Arendt, they were: "systems based upon a single opinion that proved strong enough to attract and persuade a majority of people and broad enough to lead them through the various experiences and situations of an average modern life."³ She adds that: "Every fully fledged ideology has been created, continued and improved as a political weapon and not as a theoretical doctrine...without immediate contact with political life, none of them could be imagined."⁴

Racism as a myth is another theory according to which racism is based on elaborations of myth which consists in integrating various of the elements which make up a national culture into a single image and organising a representation of its origin. If the notion of myth is different from that of ideology they both suggest, in fact, that racism is an imaginary construct which allows the racialised group to be categorised biologically and essentialised, which is to be treated in such a way as to detach it from all humanity and, even more, from any social relations, either by naturalising it or demonising it, or doing both at the same time.

The distinction between the two is that the notion of ideology puts the accent on the meaning of the racist act and discourse, on the function of justification and rationalisation of the massacre, exploitation and negation of the Other, which the racism performs, while the notion of myth stresses rather a particular mechanism which consists in reconciling more or less disparate and contradictory elements in an imaginary directory and unifying them in a single representation. However, both account for racism's capacity to interpret everything in its own categories, whatever the reality of the facts or the rigorousness of the demonstration put up against those categories.

In conclusion, in order to conceptualise racism, we have to put aside the notion of race, at least as a category of analysis. Solutions which introduce or maintain even a partial biological explanation within the field of social relations, can only produce confusion and misunderstanding. The shift by which we

³ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Chapter Six. *Race-Thinking Before Racism*, 1951. Available online at: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/hannah-arendt-the-origins-of-totalitarianism>

⁴ Idem

move from race to racism does not exclude the study of relations between groups defined by race, but it does demand that we reaffirm without any ambiguity, the subjective, socially and historically constructed character of the alternative to that notion, which belongs to the discourse and consciousness of the social actors and not, in any sense, to sociological analysis.

The image of racism commonly found in literature is a three-dimensional one, including a first sub-set made up of prejudices, opinions and attitudes, a second grouping together behaviours and practices (of discrimination, segregation and violence, and a third deriving from arguments of scholarly or doctrinal nature to racism as a full-blown ideology. None of them is able to provide us with a theory of racism; however, each offers a good starting point to understanding racism.

For the purpose of this Handbook we propose further the second dimension of racism, according to which, racism refers to a variety of practices, beliefs, social relations, and phenomena that work to reproduce a racial hierarchy and social structure that yield superiority, power, and privilege for some, and discrimination and oppression for others. It can take several forms, including representational, ideological, discursive, interactional, institutional, structural, and systemic.

Racism exists when ideas and assumptions about racial categories are used to justify and reproduce a racial hierarchy and racially structured society that unjustly limits access to resources, rights, and privileges on the basis of race. Racism also occurs when this kind of unjust social structure is produced by the failure to account for race and its historical and contemporary roles in society.

Contrary to a dictionary definition, racism, as defined based on social science research and theory, is about much more than race-based prejudice—it exists when an imbalance in power and social status is generated by how we understand and act upon race.

Racism takes seven main forms, according to social science. Rarely does anyone exist on its own. Instead, racism typically operates as a combination of at least two forms working together, simultaneously. Independently and together, these seven forms of racism work to reproduce racist ideas, racist interactions and behaviour, racist practices and policies, and an overall racist social structure.

Structural Racism

Structural racism refers to the ongoing, historical, and long-term reproduction of the racialized structure of our society through a combination of all of the above forms. Structural racism manifests in widespread racial segregation and stratification on the basis of education, income, and wealth, the recurrent displacement of people of colour from neighbourhoods that go through processes of gentrification, and the overwhelming burden of environmental pollution borne by people of colour given its proximity to their communities. Structural racism results in large-scale, society-wide inequalities on the basis of race.

Systemic and institutional racism

Since the late 1960s, the notion of institutional racism has been developed, one of the first formulations of which was inseparably linked to the rise of the black movements in the USA. Racism may be overt and individual or covert and institutional. The former is explicit, the latter does not need to be, and in this case, racism does not need to appear intentional. It becomes implanted in routine practices and in the functioning of the organisations. Within this perspective, racism constitutes a structural property of the system and becomes an “objective phenomenon”, localised in domination and the social hierarchy. This conception of racism implies the existence of a vicious cycle, a mechanical form of operation which ensures the consolidated reproduction of the system.

Racism takes institutional form in the ways that policies and laws are crafted and put into practice through society's institutions, such as the decades-long set of policing and legal policies known as "The War on Drugs," which has disproportionately targeted neighbourhoods and communities that are composed predominantly of people of colour. Other examples include New York City's Stop-N-Frisk policy that overwhelmingly targets black and Latino males, the practice among real estate agents and mortgage lenders of not allowing people of colour to own property in certain neighbourhoods and that force them to accept less desirable mortgage rates, and educational tracking policies that funnel children of colour into remedial classes and trades programs. Institutional racism preserves and fuels the racial gaps in wealth, education, and social status, and serves to perpetuate white supremacy and privilege.

II. DISCRIMINATION

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is a multifaceted phenomenon; it is in particular about social exclusion as a process. Social exclusion occurs where particular groups are excluded by mainstream society from fully participating in economic, social and political life. Discrimination can exist explicitly, through institutions, norms and values. It can also have invisible impacts, where values and ideas affect the self-perceptions of excluded people and their ability to claim their rights. It is also about the misuse of equality; about the equal treatment that leads toward further inequality. And, it is about expressions: See-No-Evil-Hear-No-Evil and the denial of being somebody who is a “discriminator”, as a question of self-presentation as a civilized person who accepts non-discrimination as an expected behaviour.

What is structural discrimination?

Structural discrimination is the new dark star in the discriminatory sky. It is about equality per se and about exclusion.

Structural discrimination primarily relates to the ways in which common behaviour and equal legislation and norms for everybody can affect, and obscure, discriminatory intent. Structural discrimination refers to rules, norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behaviour in institutions and other societal structures that represent obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities that are available to the majority of the population. It is also important to recognize that the consequences of rules, norms and behaviours are that some are affected negatively and others positively. Such discrimination may be either open or hidden, and it could occur intentionally or unintentionally. Structural discrimination is about "them" and "us". It is our action as individuals, the intentional as well as the unintentional action, which create and maintain structures. Discrimination on the grounds of people's ideas of ethnicity, religion, gender, race, culture, age, sexual orientation, etc. must be seen from a structural perspective. By doing so individual action cannot be excluded or kept apart from structural discrimination. When an individual or an institution acts in accordance with the current norms and ideas of society, it is a question of structural discrimination.

The result of structural discrimination is that the patterns of interaction among groups within society, exclude identified groups or individuals on the basis of concrete traits. The concept of 'structural inequality' is a state which arises when certain groups enjoy unequal status in relation to other groups, as a result of unequal relations in their roles, functions, rights and opportunities.

The very basic characteristic of structural discrimination is that it is very difficult to trace directly to intentional, discrete actions of particular actors but there are three essential components to structural discrimination: the equal treatment of people with different statuses; common behaviour or expectations for all; and blaming of the victim.

The fight against discrimination should step out of the courts and into the sphere of education and politics. The State should lead the way by multi-layered activities against structural discrimination. The State is the actor that should create the framework and the general atmosphere of equality. The process starts by building mechanisms of identification of structural discrimination. The next step is defining the basic parameters of behaviour. The third level is the holistic approach - implementation in all the spheres of public life, regardless of acting within the public or private structures or individuals, and regardless of the ground of discrimination.

What is (racial) discrimination?

The EU Race Equality Directive does not define 'race'. It leaves it up to Member States. Whereas the notion of race is rooted in the idea of biological classification of human beings into subspecies according to morphological features such as skin colour or facial characteristics, ethnicity has its origin in the idea of societal groups marked by common nationality, tribal affiliation, religious faith, shared language, or cultural and traditional origins and backgrounds. Although 'race' and 'ethnicity' are both social constructs referring to the 'origin' of the individual, they remain distinct concepts within the meaning of antidiscrimination law, in Europe at least.

'Race' is used primarily to refer to situations where persons are discriminated against based on physical characteristics which may be observed externally. 'Ethnicity' on the other hand refers rather to membership of a group that has certain shared common characteristics, such as language, a shared history or tradition, and a common descent or geographical origin.

The EU Racial Equality Directive, Article 2 (2) and ECHR art 14 make a distinction between direct and indirect discrimination.

Direct discrimination: EU "shall be taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin".

Under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the ECtHR uses the formulation that there must be a 'difference in the treatment of persons in analogous, or relevantly similar, situations', which is 'based on an identifiable characteristic'.

Under EU law, unlike the ECHR, direct discrimination can be established, even if there is no identifiable complainant claiming to have been a victim of such discrimination. In the Belgium Feryn case⁵, the CJEU found that an employer which declares publicly that it will not recruit employees of a certain ethnic or racial origin constitutes direct discrimination in respect of recruitment within the meaning of the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43), since such statements are likely to strongly dissuade candidates from submitting their applications and hinder their access to the labour market.

Indirect discrimination: EU "shall be taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary".

Examples:

- Providing meals with meat for all prisoners irrespective of dietary condition of individuals (e.g. health condition, religious beliefs)
- A failure to take into account a prisoner's religious beliefs when determining the escorting arrangements for his hospital appointments.

ECtHR - 'a difference in treatment may take the form of disproportionately prejudicial effects of a general policy or measure which, though couched in neutral terms, discriminates against a group'.

Multiple and intersectional discrimination

Addressing discrimination from the perspective of a single ground fails to tackle adequately various manifestations of unequal treatment.

⁵ Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/ALL/?uri=CELEX:62007CJ0054>

‘Multiple discrimination’ describes discrimination that takes place on the basis of several grounds operating separately.

‘Intersectional discrimination’ describes a situation where several grounds operate and interact with each other at the same time in such a way that they are inseparable and produce specific types of discrimination.

Intersectionality is officially recognised by the CEDAW Committee as a pertinent concept for understanding the scope of State Parties’ obligation to eliminate discrimination. The Committee stated that: “States parties must legally recognise and prohibit such intersecting forms of discrimination and their compounded negative impact on the women concerned.”

III. Roma

Definition of Roma

The Council of Europe has introduced a definition of “Roma” which has been commonly adopted also by the European Union institutions. It refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom); it covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

Data and differences among communities

Roma are estimated to be the largest minority group in the European Union (with 6 million people residing in most of the EU countries highly concentrated in Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary) and in Europe at large (10/12 million people).

They live in communities which differ in terms of languages, social, cultural and religious attitudes, models of settlement and legal status. These differences are related to each group’s specific history, migration processes, present and past public policies and to the socio-economic conditions they experience.

Discrimination of the Roma in the EU Member States

Roma are still exposed to multiple and intersectional discriminations and antigypsyism⁶, which trap Romani communities in a vicious circle of poverty (more than 90% of Romani people in Europe live in poverty) and social exclusion. Among Roma, illiteracy is widespread; children have poor school attendance. The situation is even worse for women who suffer from severe forms of discrimination also within their own communities, with Romani girls being often at higher disadvantage compared to Romani boys. Roma usually live in segregated, isolated districts where the living conditions are frequently poor, with problems of extreme overcrowding and lack of basic facilities. This contributes also to aggravating Romani people’s health conditions, especially for Romani women and children. Roma tend to under-use healthcare services because of the negative attitudes/racism/discrimination of some healthcare professionals that also affects their use of family planning services.

Prejudice and negative stereotypes

Prejudices and negative stereotypes on Roma are deeply rooted in Europe, and are reinforced by public leaders and opinion bodies using racist or stigmatising rhetoric that has also generated mob violence in recent years (this is the case of Hungary where in past years Romani people have been the target of threats and intimidation by neo-Nazi groups). Print and broadcast media tend to report on Roma only in the context of social problems and crime. Moreover, there is a diffuse lack of recognition of Roma history of past suffering, particularly during the Second World War, when for instance in Germany few thousand Roma survived the genocide in Nazi concentration camps.

Legal status of the Roma across EU Member States

Another relevant issue is the legal status of Romani people. The legal status of the Romani minority differs across Europe from country to country and from group to group: it is related, on the one hand, to the period of migration of the groups, and on the other hand recognition in each country as an ethnic or national minority. Some groups of long-established migration are citizens of the country where they live, where they are considered national minorities or ethnic minorities and have full citizenship they have freedom of movement within the Union. There are countries in which some groups are considered refugees or asylum-seekers and have no residence permit; in other countries they are considered

⁶ The Phenomenon and terminology will be detailed in a separate section.

asylum seekers/refugees but not in the condition to obtain the official status. In the last two decades, Roma have migrated from Eastern European countries inside or outside the Union because of armed conflicts, forced migration or poverty conditions. These Roma communities are characterized by a precarious legal status bringing about a condition of limited access to rights and high vulnerability.

Roma are recognized as a national minority in Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Spain, Germany and United Kingdom, and as ethnic minority in Austria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Poland. The lack of identification as ethnic minority affects their full access to the rights deriving from this status in all of the countries, and to specific policy and action against discrimination.

A considerable part of the Romani population in the European Member States does not have any authorized legal status. This is a fundamental issue, as it strongly influences rights to the social security and health system and to education, as well as the standard of living and possibilities to participate in public and political life of both Romani women and men. As stateless persons they have a higher risk of being discriminated. Lacking birth certificates, identity cards, passports and other documents, they are often denied basic rights such as education, health care, social assistance and the right to vote, “.

Extreme poverty and marginalization are the main barriers to access to documents and effective citizenship. An evident and strong commitment of all Member States would be necessary to tackle these structural discriminatory elements.

IV. Antigypsyism

Most Roma in Europe continue to face antigypsyism, harassment, and hate crimes because of their ethnic origin. As a result of antigypsyism, significant parts of the Roma population struggle with poverty, social exclusion and institutional discrimination in their access to employment or services, such as education, healthcare, housing and others. In addition, Roma have been subject to scapegoating, hate speech in the media and public discourse, and to racially-motivated police violence and brutality.

The new EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Participation, and Inclusion contains the fight against antigypsyism as a cross-cutting priority. It includes a very good reference to antigypsyism, using the wording proposed by the Alliance against Antigypsyism. Member States are called upon to dismantle and prevent systemic / institutional / structural discrimination experienced by Roma, as well as to curb hate speech in the public discourse and the media. Antigypsyism must be recognised and enshrined in EU and national legislation on equal footing with other forms of discrimination, such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and combatted in all its forms. Moreover, the Action Plan against Racism must be fully mainstreamed in the Action Plan for the Social Pillar. Ensuring equal opportunities goes through comprehensively tackling multiple and intersectional discriminations, including in what concerns Roma women and children, Roma LGBTQIA+, Roma with disabilities, elder Roma etc. The EU Roma Strategic Framework further proposed an intersectional approach to tackle discrimination, defining intersectional discrimination as such for the first time. The diversity within Roma communities, in what concerns multiple ethnic groups across Europe, must be recognised, while protecting and promoting Roma identity and cultural heritage. Reduced inequalities is also one of the Sustainable Development Goals (10).

Definition of Antigypsyism

The term “antigypsyism” was first used by Romani activists in the 1920s and 1930s in the early Soviet Union, and since has been rediscovered in European scholarly and activist discourse in the 1980s. Since then, its use has broadened among activists and scholars, even though it remains a controversial term. In recent years, the notion of “antigypsyism” has gained increasing attention Europe-wide both in political and scholarly fields.

Complementary definitions have been produced both by standard-setting organisations like the Council of Europe and civil society and that they are acknowledged or used by EU institutions, such as the European Commission, European Council, European Parliament, Fundamental Rights Agency, etc.

Council of Europe [ECRI General Policy Recommendations No.13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma](#), 2011, states that: *Antigypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination; is especially persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace form of racism.*

The [Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner report on Human rights of Roma and Travellers in Europe](#)”, 2012, defines “anti-Gypsyism” as “*the specific expression of biases, prejudices and stereotypes that motivate the everyday behaviour of many members of majority groups towards the members of Roma and Traveller communities*”.

[Alliance against antigypsyism working definition](#), 2016: *Antigypsyism is a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigma ‘gypsy’ or other related terms and incorporates: 1. a homogenizing and essentializing perception and description of these groups; 2. an attribution of specific characteristics to them; 3. discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background, which have a degrading and ostracizing effect and which reproduce structural disadvantages.*

ANTIGYPSYISM:

- **IT IS NOT JUST WHAT IS SAID, BUT ALSO WHAT IS DONE.**

Antigypsyism should be understood as involving both speech and action that discriminate against the Roma, directly or indirectly. This has to be dealt with both by legal means (using the equal treatment legislation, filing complaints) and, when there is a pattern of such discrimination on part of public authorities, by investing into prevention – i.e., training the staff of these authorities so that they develop an awareness of what constitutes discriminatory conduct, and learn to avoid it.

- **IT IS NOT JUST WHAT IS SAID & DONE BY INDIVIDUALS, BUT ALSO WHAT STATES SAY AND DO.**

It is not just about speech and action (discrimination) by individuals, but also about State policies that have a discriminatory impact on the Roma, even when they are formulated in a seemingly ethnically neutral way, without explicit reference to the Roma. Here the instruments again need to be different – we need credible evidence of disproportionately negative effects of such policies on the Roma, and we need to be able to launch discussions on such policies in the public domain.

- **IT IS NOT JUST WHAT STATES ACTIVELY DO, BUT ALSO WHAT THEY DON'T DO.**

It is not just about policies that actively damage the Roma, but also about a State's failure to act, their inaction and neglect, which is often based on the fatalistic, self-fulfilling acceptance of low expectations. Lack of action on extremely poor living conditions of Roma – conditions that would not be tolerated if they concerned people of the majority ethnic background – is also a form of antigypsyism. Here the activists and allies of Roma equality once again need to bring the evidence and create a powerful moral momentum for change. It can probably be done more effectively by emphasizing common humanity and human rights rather than emphasizing cultural identity and difference, which are being used (at least implicitly) to blame the Roma themselves and justify the lack of action by public authorities.

- **NOT JUST ALL THE ABOVE, BUT ALSO THE DENIAL OF ANTIGYPSYISM**

Denial is a major problem because if all of the above forms of antigypsyism are being systematically denied, it becomes difficult to address them. What we need here is to at least start a public discussion about overcoming denial, in the most non-accusatory way possible, admitting that we all have prejudices, and that we all need to be self-critical and start from ourselves.

- Antigypsyism can be manifested by speech: e.g. hate speech and degrading statements by individuals, groups of people or state actors and politicians. Explain that it can also be manifested by individual, group or state action, such as: hate crime, segregation in education and housing, forced evictions, police violence and structural and institutional racism and discrimination.

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Recognize antigypsyism as a specific form of racism, as defined by the European Commission and European Parliament. Ensure a rights-based approach and implementation of the Rule of Law that will strengthen the understanding of Roma as communities deprived of their rights, rather than as “vulnerable”. Implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (ICERD).
- Mainstream the fight against racism and antigypsyism across all Social Pillar principles, as it is a key structural driver of Roma exclusion that undermines the process intended to decrease Roma deprivation. End any form of structural antigypsyism, including all forms of segregation,

forced evictions, environmental injustice and other, in education, employment, health, housing, and access to social protection and other services.

- Set clear, measurable objectives for the fight against discrimination, antigypsyist speech and crime, in line with the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law and the Race Equality Directive. Develop structural and impact indicators to measure progress in fighting antigypsyism / anti-Roma racism.
- Require statistical data that is disaggregated by ethnic background when measuring progress across the Social Pillar principles, including in the use of the Scoreboard, and establish links with the measuring conducted under the EU Roma Strategic Framework.
- Monitor and sanction the dissemination of misinformation, hate speech and the scapegoating of Roma by the media, politicians or public figures, including the ethnicising of crimes allegedly committed by Roma in the public discourse.
- Rigorously investigate incidents of police abuse to ensure there is no impunity for introducing and/or implementing repressive, violent measures against Roma individuals or communities, as well as for inducing fear and intimidation.
- Address the inadequate access to justice of Roma, particularly obstacles to seek legal counsel and redress, lack of free legal aid, but also biased police recordings and reporting, prosecution and court judgements, violence in police custody and ill-treatment by police and the overrepresentation of Roma in prisons.
- Set up “Truth and Reconciliation Committees” and/or “Independent expert commissions on antigypsyism / anti-Roma racism” to address historic injustices such as slavery, forced sterilisations of Roma women, school segregation of Roma children etc.

V. Education, training and lifelong learning of Roma

Only 53% of young Roma children attend early childhood education. 63% of Roma aged 16-24 are not employed, in education or training. Only 18% of Roma completed higher secondary education or higher; one in three Roma children attends classes where most classmates are Roma. Only 39% of non-Roma would feel comfortable if their children had Roma classmates. Two thirds of Roma and Travellers aged 18–24 years leave school early with at most only lower secondary education. The figures for Roma and Travellers aged 30–34 years achieving tertiary education in 2019 are close to zero.

Roma children and students are not provided, from a very early age, with the same learning opportunities, as the vicious circles of poverty and discrimination act as powerful barriers in accessing education and training. Subsequently, they have lower attendance and completion rates, which in turn lead to poor labour market integration and social participation. Lack of majority languages skills, limited access to early childhood education and care, and a state of poverty which does not allow for proper studying at home mean that Roma pupils are even sometimes placed in schooling for children with learning disabilities. Additionally, segregated educational establishments breed a sectioned view of society, which fuels inequalities and discrimination. During the Covid-19 pandemic and associated protection and prevention measures, many Roma students found themselves unable to access online education, due to absent infrastructure and equipment (the digital divide). The lack of adequate and accessible second chance schools and opportunities to continue one's education makes it much harder for Roma to resume their studies at a later stage in life.

Additionally, Roma typically benefit much less from lifelong learning opportunities for training, finding themselves discriminated against when trying to access them. It is important that targeted lifelong learning and training measures are put in place to guarantee that Roma in general, and young Roma in particular, are prepared for the jobs of the future and can reap the full potential of the green and digital transitions. It is equally important to foster the training of Roma teachers and staff in educational settings, to contribute to diversity and inclusion, as well as to better respond to the needs of Roma pupils and students. In order to ensure that every Roma child gets a good start in life, we must ensure equal access to quality and inclusive education, training, and lifelong learning, which is one of the four sectoral priorities of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, as well as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (4).

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Prioritise the specific educational needs of Roma and vulnerable children, with a view to guaranteeing their right to, participation and outcomes in education, and to effectively reducing the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma – including through the Child Guarantee.
- End structural discrimination in education settings – abolish Roma-only schools and classes and sanction educational establishments staff and local authorities who discriminate between pupils; ensure that schools do not apply discriminatory measures, such as justifying poor grading or suspension of Roma students because of an inability to follow long-distance learning.
- Acknowledge that segregation is illegal, by amending their legislation to reflect ICERD and RED, and promote a zero-tolerance policy against segregation in education. Systematically monitor and end school and class segregation or misdiagnosis of Roma children, build explicit desegregation programmes and revise national law on education, where relevant.
- Ensure quality, affordable services in Roma communities, specifically with regard to housing, health, nutrition, transport, but also school materials and equipment – including access to computers, electricity and Internet, and the necessary training to use them.

- Invest in early intervention: support efforts to include Roma children in free or affordable, quality early childhood education and care and remove financial and non-financial barriers to access.
- Tackle the high rates of early school leaving for Roma girls and boys by addressing the underlying causes and obstacles. Provide additional targeted support at school for those who need it: train school mediators and in-class assistants to support teachers and educators; provide majority language support (not just for Roma children), and after-hours support with homework; provide free meals within the school setting.
- Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, LGBTQUIA+, and disadvantaged children. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender- sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- Promote positive narratives of diversity and social cohesion within school settings, as well as better awareness of Roma, their history, culture, and traditions. Ensure the teaching of Romani language and history in schools, including about the Holocaust and slavery of Roma. Invest in schoolbooks and teaching materials with the support of Roma scholars and civil society.
- Substantially increase the number of Roma youth and adults with relevant technical and vocational skills to access decent jobs, through targeted programmes for example under the Youth Guarantee, investing in second chance schools, and the recognition of non-formal qualifications, to ensure that people, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to lifelong learning opportunities.
- Ensure that EU emergency funds allocated for tackling Covid-19, such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, specifically reflect the needs of Roma and vulnerable children, by identifying binding criteria and indicators, also in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans.
- Bring together all stakeholders: Roma and non-Roma pupils, Roma and non-Roma parents, school staff, local authorities, civil society, to identify and implement positive solutions.

VI. ROMA POVERTY

80% of Roma are at risk of poverty. In Spain (98%), Greece (96%) and Croatia (93%), this means almost the entire Roma population. Every fourth Roma (27%) live in households where someone went to bed hungry. 92% of Roma indicate that they face difficulties in making ends meet. 44% of Roma live in low-work-intensity households.

Most Roma in Europe experience both relative as well as absolute levels of poverty and social exclusion, with rates multiple times higher than those for the non-Roma population. In a cash-based economy, the impact of cash transfers on the poverty rate, monitored explicitly by the Social Scoreboard, is a key indicator, particularly where less than 50% of Roma are in standard, paid employment. The latter means that the Roma are often not eligible for contributive benefits, such as unemployment allowance or pension. If they are, such benefits are often accompanied by strict conditionality and sanctions, which Roma jobseekers can't always comply with, since poverty and precariousness themselves act as lock-in barriers to seeking employment. Lack of information about one's rights and complex bureaucratic processes and further deterrents for the Roma to access the necessary resources that would allow them to survive and thrive. In Ireland, access to basic social protection payments or the associated state-funded employment services and training schemes are contingent upon presenting proof of habitual residence – due to a restrictive transposition of the European Directive 2004/38 – which many Roma living in Ireland are unable to provide, thus being cut out from supports. In many Member States, social protection, including minimum income, is set at inadequate levels, which don't allow the recipients and their families to lead dignified lives. Additionally, non-take-up of entitlements is a prevalent phenomenon in Roma communities, motivated by a wide range of factors – from facing discrimination and antigypsyism from state offices, to facing “double” stigma from the wider population for being both Roma and a benefit claimant. Access to adequate income schemes is a necessary prerequisite of social and economic inclusion, as well as the cornerstone for our European Social Model, which must work for all. Investment in strong, sound social protection systems is beneficial for all, and ensuring equal access to financial resources is paramount, to ensure that people can access opportunities and reach their full potential. Reducing poverty is a cross-cutting priority objective of the new EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, while ending poverty and hunger are also Sustainable Development Goals (1, 2). We hope to see a strong poverty-reduction dimension and target also in the EPSR Action Plan.

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Enact an EU Framework Directive on Minimum Income, based on art 153, 1, h TFEU, which would include common definitions of adequacy, linked to the 60% of median income (poverty line), complemented by reference budgets to ensure purchasing power.
- Governments must invest in rights-based activation strategies, that put the beneficiary at the core and ensure ownership through personalised approaches that can't always follow an employment-first approach. Put an end to punitive conditionality, which involves sanctions and benefit cuts, and which only contributes to further exclusion and hardship.
- Provide anti-discrimination training to public offices disbursing social protection and penalise discriminatory behaviours in relation to minority recipients, including the Roma. Combat the public discourse which stigmatises benefit claimants and people experiencing poverty.
- Make entitlements automatic (rather than having to be applied for), to ensure that lack of knowledge of one's rights does not act as a deterrent to receiving entitlements, as well as to eliminate red tape and simplify delivery.
- Put in place programmes that ensure that social protection entitlements are accessible to categories of the population experiencing multiple difficulties in accessing them, such as not

knowing how to read or write, not having an ID card, not having a fixed address or a bank account, not being able to apply online etc.

- Roll out specific provisions to ensure that those who work in the informal economy are also entitled to income support, particularly during the pandemic and in its aftermath, and shield this income from penalties deriving from previous debt and arrears.
- Annually measure Roma poverty through Eurostat, using the combined AROPE indicator – at risk of poverty, material deprivation, and households with low work intensity – to be able to keep track of the multifaceted aspects of poverty and social exclusion in Roma communities.
- In order to design an effective social safety net, consider piloting targeted social audits to identify poverty risks that stem from the intersectional vulnerabilities of Roma.
- The fight against poverty and social exclusion should be made a transversal dimension through the Action Plan implementation, ensuring that quality, sustainable employment opportunities, inclusive education, quality housing, and adequate healthcare contribute to the overall improvement of Roma wellbeing and quality of life, in an Active Inclusion approach.

VII. EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA

40% of Roma reported feeling discriminated against when looking for work, as well as every fourth Roma and Traveller in six countries. 45% of non-Roma think that not enough is being done to promote diversity in the workplace in what concerns Roma workers, while only 64% would feel comfortable having a Roma co-worker. 26% of men and 11% of women among Roma and Travellers in six countries think it is hopeless to look for a job or think they will not be hired because of their Roma and Traveller background. 25% of all Roma and Travellers who had looked for work in the 12 months preceding the survey felt discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity.

Public Employment Services, and particularly private employment agencies, often engage in ‘creaming’ practices, where those easiest to place are supported first, while those furthest from the labour market, which often include Roma jobseekers, are left behind. An “employment-first” approach doesn’t always work when dealing with people in complex, difficult circumstances such as poverty, debt, low skills, poor health, inadequate housing, etc. These require tailored, integrated approaches, rooted in the reality of each individual and providing comprehensive pathways, which begin with adequate income and quality services. This approach is particularly relevant in a post-pandemic reality, with Roma communities having been disproportionately hit by Covid-19 and associated measures. Lastly, diversity is not considered an asset in the labour market, and discrimination in the job market – on behalf of employment services, employers, other employees etc. – is insufficiently tackled. Having more Roma in employment breaks the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, helps counter widespread discrimination, creates positive role models and contributes to a more inclusive and resilient economy. Employment is one of the four sectoral priorities of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, while decent work is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (8).

Only 1 in 4 Roma aged 16 years or older reports ‘employed’ or ‘self-employed’ as their main activity. Only 43% of Roma aged 20-64% are in paid work. 41% of Roma feel they have been discriminated against over the past 5 years in everyday situations, including looking for work and at work. The share of Roma and Travellers in paid work in six countries ranges from 15% in Ireland to 55% in the Netherlands, well below the employment rate of the general population.

Lack of support and intervention early on means that a very high number of Roma come from a background of poverty and low skills, which in turn means that many of them can only access precarious, low-paid employment. Even if employed, they are more likely to experience discrimination and antigypsyism and be treated unfairly in the workplace, such as being paid less (ethnic pay gap), being overlooked for promotions or learning opportunities, or being given dangerous or unsuitable tasks. As many Roma are employed in frontline positions – healthcare and educational facilities, commerce, hospitality industry, public authorities etc. – they have also been particularly exposed to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to those in standard, paid employment, many Roma earn their livelihood from atypical forms of work – as traders, craftspeople, artists, seasonal workers etc., which are often not covered by adequate labour protection legislation, which would give access to employment rights and social security. Increasingly, Roma living in poverty, including on garbage sites, see themselves forced to engage with garbage collection and recycling, in unregulated and unsanitary conditions which bring about an incredibly detrimental health impact. We must ensure that Roma workers can access quality, sustainable, meaningful jobs with adequate pay, on equal footing with non-Roma workers, and that they are safe from harassment and discrimination, as well as from hazard, in the workplace. Employment is one of the four sectoral priorities of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, while decent work is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (8).

Roma women in employment

Only 16% of Roma women are in employment (compared to 34% of men). 72% of young Roma women are not employed, in education or training (compared to 55% of men) . 40% of Roma women are not in employment or looking for work because of taking care of children / elderly / sick relatives. Every second Roma or Traveller woman in six countries indicates childcare or other home-based obligations as one of the main reasons not to look for work. Three forced sterilization cases against Slovakia were brought and won before the European Court of Human Rights.

Roma women have been subject to multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination and gender-based violence, more so based on their combined ethnicity, gender, and social status. This is particularly important during a pandemic – for instance, gender segregation in the labour market leads to different levels of exposure to Covid-19, particularly for Roma women in frontline jobs – caring professions, shop staff, cleaners etc. Even without a crisis, caring responsibilities usually fall disproportionately on women, which acts as a disincentive to them seeking employment or educational opportunities. With the closure of schools and workplaces due to Covid-19, the unpaid workload of Roma has further increased, while they are also the ones most likely to care for the ill. Childcare facilities, as well as other support services such as long-term care, are often not accessible to Roma families, because of poor territorial coverage, high costs, and institutionalised antigypsyism. In communist Czechoslovakia, Roma women were forcibly sterilised beginning in the 1970s, a practice continuing after 1989 in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Since the 1980s, as many as 90,000 women may have been affected throughout the former Czechoslovakia and at least 300 Roma women have complained that doctors have sterilised them without consent. While no longer a systemic practice, sporadic cases of forced sterilisation of Roma women have been also reported in Hungary. Gender mainstreaming is crucial, since not addressing structural barriers in policies is costly: ineffective implementation of the Racial Equality and the Employment Equality Directives at the national level costs the EU €224–305 billion in lost GDP and €88-110 in lost tax revenue. In order to identify and understand the intersecting discrimination affecting Roma women, data and research with an intersectional perspective need to be strengthened. Gender Equality is also one of the Sustainable Development Goals (5).

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- End structural discrimination in access to employment and in the workplace by supporting the full implementation of the Racial Equality and the Employment Equality Directives, with a specific emphasis on combatting antigypsyism.
- Ensure that Public Employment Services have the necessary resources (staff, training) to adequately support Roma jobseekers in a personalised way, rooted in a comprehensive Active Inclusion approach, including enabling services and adequate income support, and developed with the full ownership of the beneficiaries.
- Strengthen measures supporting initial work experience or providing on-the-job training, including apprenticeships, internships, entry-level positions, social economy, subsidised and adapted workplaces, lifelong learning, access to opportunities for progression by using the full potential of the European Social Fund (ESF).
- Promote positive narratives of diversity in the workplace – provide anti-discrimination training for Public Employment Services, employers, and staff; sanction any occurrence of discrimination; invest in adapted workplaces; reward diversity employers.
- Put in place concrete strategies to combat antigypsyism and promote diversity in the workplace, targeting both employers and co-workers, for example through the use EU funds to provide anti-bias and equality training.
- Support quality, sustainable job creation as well as bridges into employment that Roma workers can access. Use public employment schemes as a temporary solution for unemployment as an

opportunity for re-qualification and further training, while ensuring that the jobs thus created are stable and of quality, with adequate pay, working conditions, and employment rights.

- Regularise informal work: make sure seasonal workers, craftspeople, traders, artists and the self-employed are covered by employment legislation contracts giving access to decent work rights, including social security rights.
- Promote adequate statutory minimum wages at a level of at least 60% of median wages, complemented by the reference budgets methodology; support wage transparency and ethnic- and gender-neutral job evaluations, as a key means to combat the ethnic and gender pay gap and discrimination in remuneration and wage bargaining.
- Ensure that all employers have an obligation to provide protective equipment (masks, disinfectants), as well as a healthy and safe work environment that respects all legal protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19, as well as other diseases, particularly to frontline workers.
- Improve access to finance for Roma entrepreneurs, as well as provide technical assistance, adapted financial products, and access to market opportunities.
- Support social economy initiatives, particularly Work Integration Social Enterprises, which provide quality jobs for those furthest from the labour market.
- Include a strong intersectional discrimination component, to enable the development of policies and legislation that adequately address gender inequalities, particularly for groups experiencing multiple discriminations, such as the Roma.
- Tackle the gender and ethnic pay and pension gap, to ensure that Roma women in paid employment are not doubly penalised by receiving reduced income for equal work.
- Improve access to childcare for Roma families, who often cannot afford it, or cannot access it, by supporting community-based, free care facilities, employing also Roma staff.
- Invest in specific, adequate financial support for Roma single parent households, most of which are led by women, to assist with childcare, rent payments and other household expenses.
- Ensure fair and affordable access to quality healthcare for Roma women (and men), including sexual and reproductive health and rights and family planning services.
- Address the risk of gender-based violence which disproportionately affects Roma girls and women, particularly in countries where antigypsyism is also highly prevalent.

VIII. HEALTHCARE FOR ROMA

One in four (26%) Roma is not covered by national health insurance and/or private insurance. 28% of Roma feel limited in their activities by their state of health. 22% of Roma have a longstanding illness or health problem. There is a 10-year difference in life expectancy between Roma (64 years) and non-Roma (74 years), as well as a tenfold higher vulnerability to tuberculosis. One in 10 Roma and Travellers felt discriminated against when accessing healthcare in six countries, while almost all report worse health and more limitations than the general population.

A significant health inequality gap exists between Roma and the majority population. This inequality gap persists across every area of physical and mental health and wellbeing, including rates of suicide, life expectancy, and infant mortality. The significant health inequality gap arises from compounding social determinants, such as poverty, inadequate housing, lack of sanitation, poor nutrition, hard physical labour in unsuitable conditions, high levels of discrimination and racism in accessing healthcare, as well as impaired access to both healthcare and long-term care services, and also medicines. The life expectancy of Roma across Europe is 10 to 15 years lower than that of the majority population. In some Member States, many Roma living in poverty who are eligible to apply for subsidised medical care are unable to access such supports due to language, literacy, and information and bureaucracy barriers. The Covid-19 pandemic presents a very worrying vista in regard to health outcomes for Roma children and adults. In April 2020, FRA and the OSCE sounded the alarm about the significant risk that the virus posed to Roma communities, given their status as a highly marginalised and disadvantaged. Specific health issues noted were: the inability to socially distance and self-quarantine, or to maintain good hand hygiene in a context of overcrowding in accommodation without adequate facilities. Another OSCE report from July 2020 notes that authorities have largely failed to ensure Roma communities can access information about emergency measures and their necessity, and on how to prevent the spread of the virus. The report also notes a “surge in inflammatory (anti-Roma, media) articles” following the onset of the crisis, blaming Roma for spreading the virus and presenting them as a risk to the majority population: in some States, civil society organisations noted an increase in Roma-targeted hate-crime and hate-speech. Entire settlements were placed in quarantine and cut off from the world without any accompanying provision of basic supplies. Many Roma also have underlying health issues, which put them in increased jeopardy.

This is a situation they have to face all their life, not just during a pandemic, and the situation is twice as hard for Roma living with a physical or mental disability when trying to access employment, social protection, or supportive services such as long-term care. The public health infrastructure in many countries does not cover local communities, with the nearest clinic (not to mention hospital) often located far away. Private clinics are often prohibitively expensive for people on low incomes, and various administrative obstacles (such as lack of an ID card or a legal address) are impediments to obtaining insurance. Investing in people must mean, first and foremost, guaranteeing good health and wellbeing for all, particularly disadvantaged communities such as the Roma. Good health is one of the four sectoral priorities of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, and it is also supported by the Sustainable Development Goals (3).

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Prioritise access to user-friendly health information, care, and testing services, as well as to programmes of future vaccination or immunization against Covid-19 for Roma communities, and particularly those Roma over 45. Without specific outreach, they will miss out.
- Roll out mass vaccination programs, not only for Covid-19 but also for other diseases, as the pandemic measures will likely increase the number of non-vaccinated Roma children.
- Ensure universal health insurance coverage among Roma, at least 95%, and reduce the disproportionate exposure of Roma to public health and environmental harms.

- Significantly reduce, with the aim of eliminating completely, the health inequality gap between the Roma and the majority population, through both mainstream as well as targeted health strategies, using a social determinants of health approach.
- Ensure non-discriminatory, equal access to health and long-term care by condemning all forms of discrimination and exclusion from health care services and by supporting anti-bias training and awareness raising of medical staff of specific Roma health needs.
- Scale up and reinforce the health mediators' scheme, which provides an invaluable link between medical professionals and Roma communities. Roma health mediators must be formally recognised as a profession and paid adequately according to their work and the value they bring.
- Provide compensated medication or other forms of financial support for those on low incomes, however prioritising the provision of universal healthcare, free at the point of use.
- Establish internal control systems to monitor the quality of health services for Roma, including emergency assistance, that would include racism audits of health institutions.
- Improve nutrition and fight unhealthy living conditions, reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and pollution. Support universal access to drinking water as well as sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation.
- Reduce Roma maternal and infant mortality, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (prenatal and postnatal care, counselling and family planning), and provide reparations for victims of forced sterilization. End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture of women and children.
- Address the prevention and fight against drug addiction, HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, cardiovascular diseases, premature births, with an emphasis on harm reduction.
- Ensure that Roma with disabilities or long-standing illnesses can benefit on equal footing from available support schemes (income, services, adapted housing and workplaces, care etc) and strive to improve the overall quality, accessibility, and affordability of such services for all.
- Support an independent living approach to long-term care, promoting deinstitutionalisation while ensuring that the burden of care does not fall on relatives.

IX. ROMA HOUSING

One in three Roma (32%) live in households with a leaking roof, damp walls, or rot. One in five Roma (20%) live in dwellings that are too dark. 41% of Roma felt discriminated when looking for housing. 76% of Roma live in a neighbourhood where all or most residents are Roma. 78% of Roma live in overcrowded households. Up to 10% of caravan dwellers and Roma were evicted at least once in the past five years in Belgium and France. 26% of Roma and Travellers live in housing with bad conditions. Travellers in Ireland are especially affected by bad housing conditions such as leaking roofs, mould and damp walls.

Europe is facing a deep housing crisis ever since the last financial recession ten years ago, if not before. Accommodation is scarce, and costs are prohibitive, with housing expenses representing an ever-increasing share of household disposable incomes. In this context, Roma communities are particularly hard hit, as they are frequently unable to meet housing costs, a situation which often results in evictions and entire families ending up homeless. Not being able to legally prove ownership of a family abode that has been used for generations is another common factor that leads to forced evictions. Last but not least, the Roma are forced to leave their homes because of blatant displays of antigypsyism on behalf of local authorities, who move them to unsuitable encampments out of sight. In Ireland, Travellers are significantly over-represented in the homeless population, however one third of all local authorities in 2018 consistently failed to utilise their ring-fenced Traveller accommodation budgets. Two state-commissioned reports show that the key reason was opposition to proposed Traveller-specific planning applications by members of the public and elected representatives. . Banished at the margins, many Roma end up living in informal settlements and segregated neighbourhoods, in inadequate dwellings, without access to utilities' infrastructure, and in unsanitary conditions. Many communities are disproportionately exposed to environmental degradation and pollution stemming from waste dumps and landfills, contaminated sites, or dirty industries. Around half of Romanian Roma live close to waste dumps. The Covid-19 pandemic has evidenced that poor housing conditions represent a systemic risk for the public health system, placing a disproportionate burden on Roma inhabitants and requiring a longer-term government response to build resilience. Europe should honour its commitments and deliver on adequate housing for the Roma, one of the four sectoral priorities of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, supported also in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (11).

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Regulate and implement in practice the concept of “adequate housing” for all, including Roma, as defined by the United Nations: “Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one's head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water-supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health-related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities: all of which should be available at an affordable cost”.
- Recovery efforts must include temporary suspension of mortgage payments and utility bills, a suspension of forced closing of utility services and evictions for families at risk as a result of the pandemic, particularly those already experiencing difficulties, such as the Roma.
- Establish a legal framework to provide effective protection against unlawful evictions, in line with international human rights standards. Support the legalisation of informal settlements and property rights for dwellings where Roma live.
- Provide for permanent, decent, affordable, environmentally safe, desegregated housing for Roma in the case of lawful evictions, which must be strictly defined by legislation enshrining a

human rights approach. This should include consultations with the community, reasonable notice, provision of information, effective legal remedies and free legal assistance.

- Invest in long-term solutions to address inadequate, overcrowded housing conditions and lack of access to basic utilities in Roma communities, by delivering quality social housing which is accessible to the Roma, and by capping rents and property prices for family dwellings.
- Define segregation as illegal in housing, in conformity with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (ICERD), which condemns in Article 3 “apartheid and racial segregation” and obliges parties to “prevent, prohibit and eradicate” these practices in territories under their jurisdiction, as well as includes “an obligation to eradicate the consequences of past policies of segregation, and to prevent racial segregation arising from the actions of private individuals.”
- Undertake a systematic review of housing legislation, policies and practices in Member States and remove all provisions and procedures that result in direct or indirect discrimination against Roma. Establish adequate mechanisms to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination laws and allow for participation of Roma representatives and NGOs at all stages of monitoring.
- Affirm and ensure the right of people to pursue a nomadic lifestyle and provide the necessary quality infrastructure (camping sites etc) for such lifestyles to be pursued. Invest in creative alternatives to by-pass the need for a fixed address to access services and income.
- Integrate a new policy focus on environmental justice, in particular regarding the disproportionate exposure of Roma to environmental degradation, pollution and natural hazards, the denial of environmental services, and forced evictions – as well as the relationship between environmental degradation in segregated settlements and poor health outcomes.
- Establish appropriate monitoring mechanisms to ensure the implementation of housing policies and practices for Roma, involving Roma representatives through the process.
- Ensure targeted EU funding for addressing Roma housing exclusion, through better quality housing and living conditions for Roma. Substantial resources must be made available in national programming for inclusive housing projects accessible to Roma in the framework of multi-fund programmes combining the ERDF and ESF.
- The EU should continue and further initiate infringement proceedings against Member States in cases where EU law has been breached and follow up on the proceedings, including in cases of forced evictions.

X. ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES OF ROMA

30% of Roma live in households with no tap water. 46% have no indoor toilet, shower or bathroom. One in ten Roma live in housing without electricity. Every fourth Roma and Traveller in five countries does not have a bank account, a percentage much higher than in the general population. Around a fifth of Caravan dwellers in Belgium, and Gypsies and Travellers in the United Kingdom, do not have access to tap water or electricity at halting sites, while lack of access to public services such as public transport or post is notably high in France.

The Roma in Europe face multiple obstacles in accessing good quality, affordable essential services. Basic utilities, such as energy or sanitation, are either too expensive for the low budgets that most Roma families live on, or the infrastructure is completely missing to deliver such services to their homes. Many Roma communities are located far from key services, forcing Roma residents to undertake expensive, lengthy journeys to the nearest service provider. Transport links with Roma settlements, particularly informal ones, are often poor or non-existent, and the cost is prohibitive. In some countries, a significant number of Roma lack identity papers, which is partly due to, as well as results in, a lack of a legal address, which in turn significantly hinders consumers in accessing services, both public and private. Concrete examples include the inability to access financial services such as a bank account, or to register for health insurance or social services and income support. In a world that is increasingly moving to the online space, the digital divide sees most Roma left behind on the losing side, due to both lack of equipment and infrastructure, as well as the cost of connecting, with very damaging impacts on the ability to, for instance, follow online education. Last but not least, Roma consumers are faced with deeply rooted, widespread discrimination and antigypsyism when trying to access services, which constitutes a clear infringement of their human rights. Access to clean water and sanitation, as well as to affordable and clean energy, are also Sustainable Development Goals (6, 7).

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Urgently address the lack of water, adequate sanitation, and electricity, as well as the corresponding needed infrastructure, in Roma communities. This could be done by reconnecting families or settlements cut off from utilities, or by the regular delivery of water by vehicle to the settlements. Adequate subsidies for families in need to cover utilities should also be put in place.
- Develop a comprehensive transport infrastructure that ensures that people can get where they need to go and that communities are not cut off. Subsidise or cap transport costs to protect vulnerable consumers and ensure their rights.
- Immediate steps should be taken to resolve the issues of lack or renewal of identity and lack of legal status, in order to ensure access to rights, services, and resources.
- Provisions should be put in place to tackle the digital divide in a comprehensive way, with targeted interventions for the most vulnerable users, such as the Roma, ensuring that they have free or at least affordable access to both equipment (PC, smartphone, tablet) as well as needed infrastructure (network coverage, internet subscription, electricity etc).
- Invest in community-based services, including through social economy initiatives, to both create local jobs as well as to respond to community needs where and when they arise.
- Combat all forms of discrimination, including antigypsyism, on behalf of service providers, public and private, by the necessary legal measures and diversity training to ensure equal access and respect for all consumers.

XI. CHILDCARE AND SUPPORT TO ROMA CHILDREN

Every third Roma child (30%) lives in households where someone went to bed hungry at least once in the previous month. Only about half (53%) of young Roma children are enrolled in early childhood education and care programmes. With the exception of Sweden, participation of Roma and Traveller children in early childhood education in six countries is far below the target set by the EU's Education and Training Strategy. In Sweden, every fifth Roma and Traveller child (22%) went to bed hungry at least once in the previous month, while every second Roma or Traveller child lives in a household that has difficulties or great difficulties in making ends meet. Every fourth Roma and Traveller child in six countries lives in a household affected by severe material deprivation.

The first years of a child's life are the most important in their personal development, and yet Roma children have been left behind for centuries in terms of what constitutes a good start in life. Poverty and lack of access to basic services has a considerable impact on children's physical, mental, and emotional development, and increases the chances of lagging behind in all aspects of their adult life. While education, including early childhood education and care, is touted to be free in many countries, in reality this is not the case, and many poor Roma families can't cope with the associated costs of clothing, nappies, transport, hygiene etc. Additionally, many Roma neighbourhoods are segregated or isolated, with no childcare facilities nearby. Roma parents and their children are often turned away due to institutional antigypsyism. Cuts in national spending on social protection and public services have left Roma communities in a dire situation, with poor living conditions which in turn determine poor health and lower educational outcomes. Additional complicating factors include the lack of identity papers or of a fixed address, lack of information about registration processes and available services, as well as language barriers. The Covid-19 situation highlights the urgent need to invest in proper care services and support to children and their families. In order to provide equal opportunities for every Roma child, we must guarantee that Roma children and parents have access to affordable early child education and care of a good quality which is in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4.2.

Possible recommendations for policymakers:

- Enact the thorough implementation of the Investing in Children Recommendation of 2013 through an ambitious Child Guarantee that specifically includes and targets the multiple needs of Roma children, to ensure their healthy and harmonious development.
- Provide children in need with free, nutritious, healthy meals, through school meal programmes as well as soup kitchens, social cafeterias and hot meals delivered directly in the community, to avoid holiday hunger.
- There are no poor children in rich families – ensure wrap-around support for parents, including adequate income, decent living conditions, access to quality healthcare and other essential services, and opportunities for quality employment.
- Support quality, affordable or even free community-based childcare services that Roma parents can access, including through social economy initiatives.
- Combat discrimination against Roma parents and their children in both public and private early childhood education and care facilities, by providing anti-bias training and resources and ensuring diversity and Roma workers also within the staff.
- Foster cooperation between early childhood education and care services and parents, to support active participation of Roma parents, and raise awareness about pre-primary school benefits among them.
- Increase the capacity of pre-school personnel to provide quality, inclusive education including diversity games and awareness about Roma language, culture, history, and employ Roma staff.

XII. Gender Equality and Roma women's empowerment

Women throughout the European Union still face inequalities in many respects. Roma women have been subject to multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination and gender-based violence, more so based on their combined ethnicity, gender, and social status.

In the area of education, according to FRA⁷ there is still exists a significant ethnic gap between Roma and non-Roma with regard to self reported literacy; and for Roma women the gap is even bigger. More Roma men (85 %) than women (77 %) say that they can read and write and more Roma women (19 %) than men (14 %) say that they have never been to school. The situation is better for Roma aged 16 to 24, and especially for Roma women within that age group, who achieve, on average the same literacy levels as Roma men in the same group. In Greece, literacy levels are the lowest among the EU Member States surveyed, even for Roma men and women aged 16 to 24. On average, across all Member States surveyed, fewer Roma women (37 %) than men (50 %) aged 16 to 24 are reported as remaining in education after the age of 16. Employment is another area with a pronounced gender gap. On average across the Member States surveyed, 21 % of Roma women are in paid work, compared to 35 % of Roma men. At household level, however, the financial situation of women is reflected in the at-risk-of-poverty household indicator. Of Roma households in the survey, 87 % have an income below the national at-risk-of-poverty level, compared to 46 % of non-Roma households surveyed and 17 % of the EU population in general. Roma families with four or more children have the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate across the surveyed EU Member States; in many Member States, 90 % or more of these families have an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. When looking at health, there are relatively few differences between Roma women and men are registered. When comparing Roma women to non-Roma women (aged 16 and above), however, more Roma women say that their health is 'bad' or 'very bad', a difference which is even more pronounced for women over 50. With regard to housing, FRA results show that 42 % of the Roma surveyed live in conditions of severe deprivation, which is to say that they have no running water and/or connection to the sewage system or a sewage tank and/or electricity, compared to 12 % of non-Roma living nearby. Roma households with four or more children face an even higher likelihood of severe housing deprivation. This situation disproportionately affects Roma women. There are relatively small gender differences with regard to perceived discrimination and rights awareness: overall 22 % of Roma women and 27 % of Roma men– although there are important differences between EU Member States. Roma women are, on average, less aware of anti-discrimination legislation than Roma men.

⁷ FRA report: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-roma-survey-gender_en.pdf