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# Education rights of Spanish Roma youth: an urgent and pending issue

Findings from the NESET Report to the EAC 2019

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**Gabriela Poblet & Silvia Carrasco**  
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona  
Innocenti Institute, 14 February 2020



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## Presentation based on:

**NESET Ad Hoc Report No 4/2019, 2019**

**Silvia Carrasco; Gabriela Poblet**

Overview of the integration of Roma citizens in Spain and some transferable lessons for the EU

<https://nesetweb.eu/en/resources/library/overview-of-the-integration-of-roma-citizens-in-spain-and-some-transferable-lessons-for-the-eu/>



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# Roma in Spain: model of integration?

- «Spanish model integration» (New York Times, 2010)
- «Spanish model of Roma inclusion» (FSG, 2012)
- Situation of Roma in Spain better than in other EU countries, and improvements since 2011. (EU\_MIDIS II, 2018)



Opinion

LETTER

## Spain's Success at Integrating Roma

Dec. 12, 2010



To the Editor:

Re "[In Spain, Gypsies Find Easier Path Toward Integration](#)" (news article, Dec. 6):

Spain's success at integrating Roma merits replication. But the lesson it teaches is not that Europe has "concentrated too much on issues of prejudice and political rights" rather than access to housing and jobs. That's a false dichotomy.

Expanding access for Roma and other minorities to employment, health care, education and other entitlements requires dismantling the barriers of prejudice that underlie entrenched discrimination. What the Spanish model shows is that the rhetoric of equality requires money and political will to back it up.



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# Roma population in Spain



- 750.000 ? (Council of Europe, 2012)
- Lack of data disaggregated by ethnicity
- Invisibility vs. Improvements
  - Democracy and Welfare State for all
  - Social polarisation among Roma
- Discrimination, racism, inequalities
- Heterogeneity of Spanish Roma



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# Heterogeneity of Roma in Spain

- The case of Andalusia
- Large urban areas
- Roma nationals from other EU countries



Neighbourhood La Cañada Real, near Madrid.  
(Photography: El País).



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# Education rights of Roma population: Improvements or discrimination?



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# Education in Spain



- Competence shared between the central government and the regions
- Basic education compulsory between 6 and 16 years old. >> Free
  - Primary (6-12)
  - Lower Secondary (12-16)
- Post-compulsory: Bachillerato and Vocational Training (16-18 years old) >> Free
- Higher Education: Not free. (Fees and grants according to regional regulations)
- 98% of pres-school attendance (3-6) >> Free
- Highest Early school leaving rate in the EU (18%)



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# Education Rights & Resources

## Education Rights in order to achieve Social Integration

- Social Integration (Ferguson, 2008, N.U.): Focus on Rights, Human Rights and Social Justice.
- Social Justice: Interdependence among Recognition, Redistribution & Representation (Fraser, 1996).
- Social Inclusion (FSG, 2012): economic, political, social and symbolic social inclusion.



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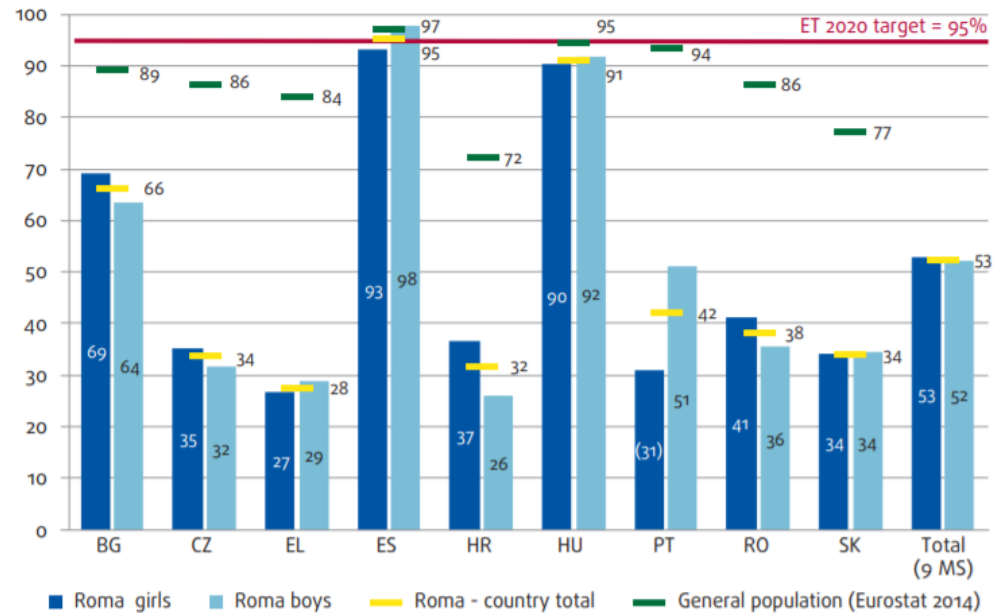


# EU MIDIS II (2018): Early Childhood Education



- Only Spain (95 %) and Hungary (91 %) have participation rates that come close to the ET 2020 target
- Increase in participation rates in all countries, except Portugal and Romania, compared to Survey 2011.

Figure 8: Children aged between 4 years and the (country-specific) starting age of compulsory education who participate in early childhood education, by EU Member State (%) <sup>a,b,c,d</sup>



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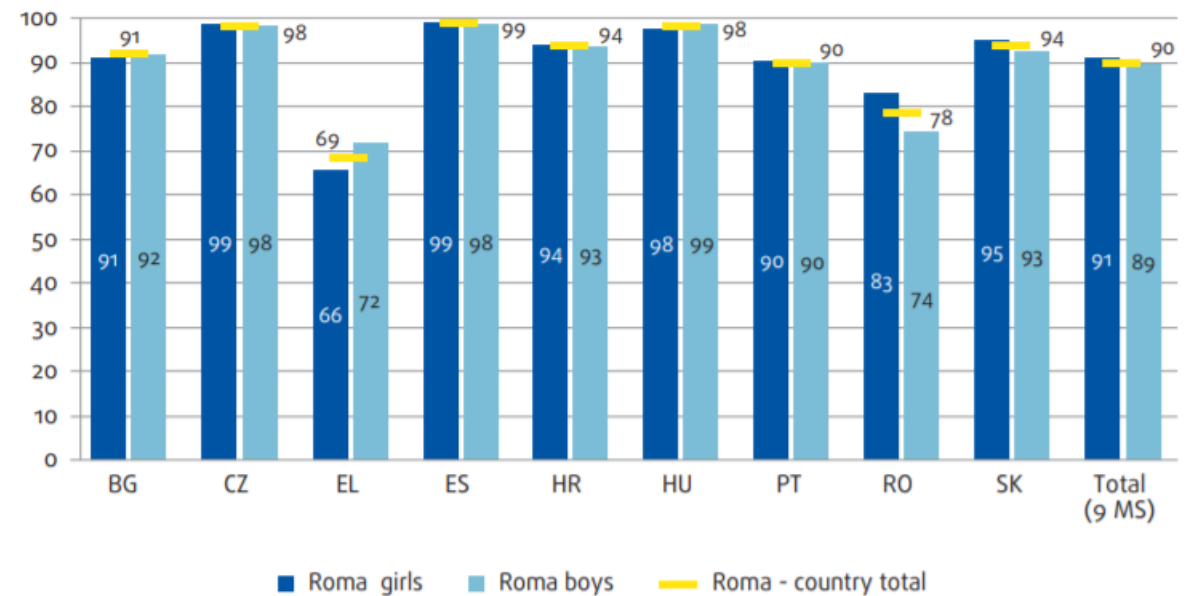


# EU MIDIS II (2018): Compulsory-ages Education



- Slightly higher enrolment rates in most countries (except Romania and Slovakia)
- Participation rates (94 %) are above average (except Romania and Greece).

Figure 9: Compulsory-school-age children (country-specific) participating in education, by EU Member State (%) <sup>a,b</sup>



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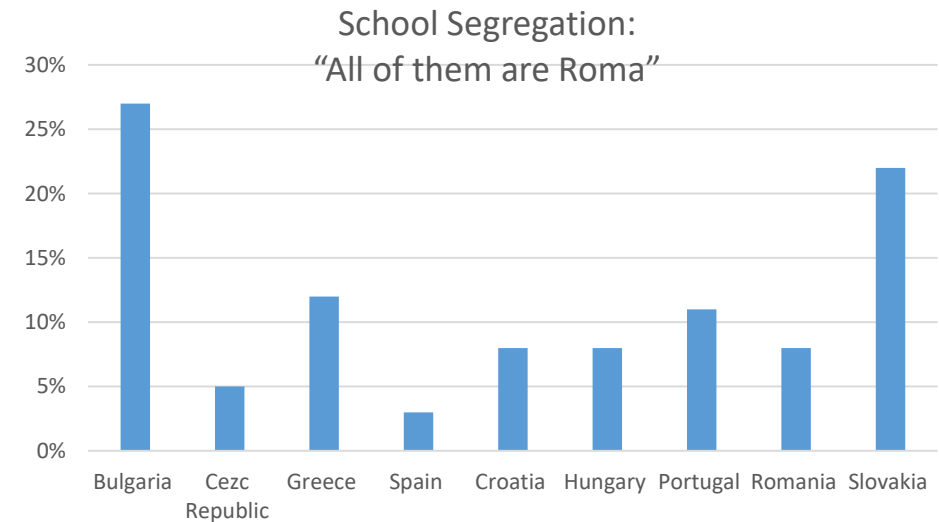
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# EU MIDIS II (2018): School Segregation



- Council recommendation requires the elimination of school segregation, but official statistics do not exist.
- EU MIDIS estimates the proportion of Roma among the classmates of children in their households.
- “All of them are Roma”, in **Spain: 3%** (MS: 13%)
- Is this indicator determinant for the quality of their education?



**Source:** Elaborated by the author using data from FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016, Roma.



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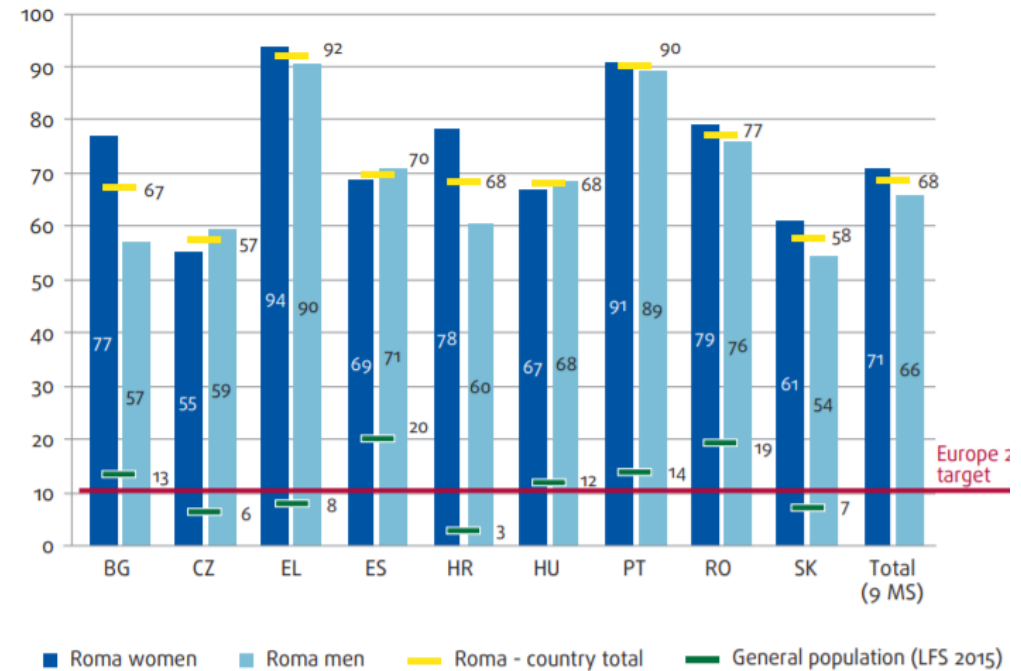
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# However... EU MIDIS II (2018) shows early leaving

- Reducing the early leaving is a priority of education and training to less than 10 %.
- The survey results suggest that this target will not be achieved by 2020 for Roma in any of the countries surveyed.

Figure 11: Early leavers from education and training,<sup>d</sup> aged 18-24 years, by EU Member State (%) <sup>a,b,c</sup>



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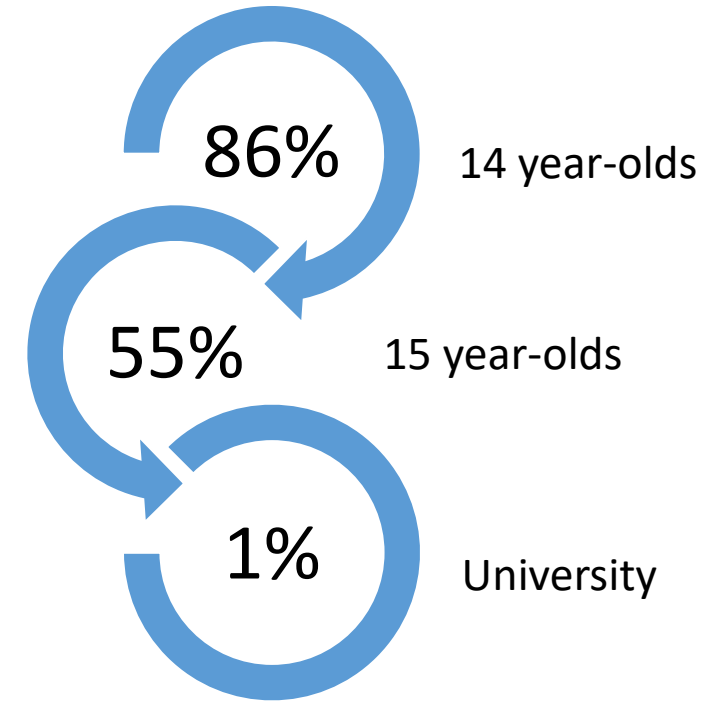
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# Early leaving without qualification



- Still lower level of formal education than Spanish population but almost no illiteracy (Laparra, 2001; FSG, 2013)
- School dropout at 15.
- 64% dropout from compulsory education
- 90% dropout from after that
- Compensatory programme ACCEDER for training and access to labour market



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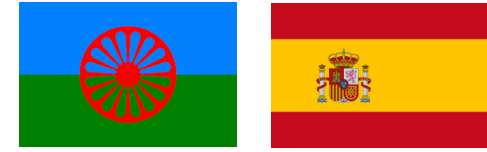
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Source: FSG (2013)

# What does the research really show and why?



“Although the participation of Roma students in post-compulsory academic and vocational tracks as well as in higher education has definitely increased, their presence remains very low. Among the reasons given for leaving education at different stages in the FSG 2013 study:

- around 28% of respondents mentioned the need to work (higher among boys),
- need to take care of family members (higher among girls and women),
- and also being required to leave by their parents, or due to lack of motivation...

## BUT...



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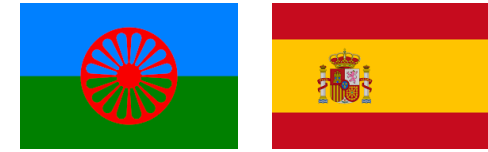


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# What does the research really show and why?



In spite of these discouraging answers, they also expressed:

- high aspirations,
- thought education was important,
- planned to re-engage with education in later life,
- and liked their teachers and schools.



80% denied having experienced racism or exclusion at school, and the majority said they had both Roma and non-Roma friends.”



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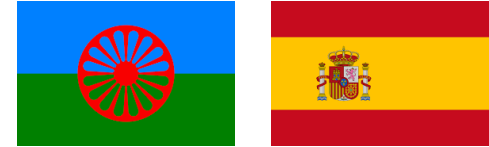


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# Good programmes and initiatives still at small-scale



- Programme PROMOCIONA (mentoring and grants in transition to post-compulsory education)
- Experience of **La Mina** high school in Barcelona, 90% of students are Roma

<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/sociedad/20170321/instituto-escuela-sant-adria-besos-mina-desafia-fracaso-escolar-5915357>



IES La Mina. Photography: DANNY CAMINAL, El Periodico, 22/03/2017



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# Conclusions I

- Spain stands out for access to and participation in compulsory education, ensuring the basic education rights of Roma childhood, but fails to avoid **dropout of Roma students at 15**, leading to outrageous early school leaving and subsequent reproduction of social exclusion of future Roma generations, in a growing knowledge-based economy.
- Need of more targeted and qualitative studies to reconstruct what is going on between schools and families.
- Need to improve both general and targeted education policies and teachers' training.
- Focus on Roma population specificities but also as class inequalities.



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# Conclusions II

- Education is by far the most important area requiring attention and intervention in order to promote Roma inclusion/social integration.
- Education Rights of Spanish Roma youth are at risk of contributing to higher levels of exclusion, division and new forms of stratification.
- As a matter of urgency, a new and massive step forward needs to be taken in this area, not only to be acknowledged as full citizens but to enjoy full citizenship -recognition, redistribution and representation- for all the Roma people.



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