



Co-funded by the  
Rights, Equality &  
Citizenship Programme  
of the European Union



RISE  
Roma Inclusive  
School Experiences

## The recent European situation of the Roma

The documents that we present concern the issue of protective measures that the European Union suggests to protect minorities - linguistic or cultural ones - including those represented by Roma people present in the Member States. Some of these documents have a broad scope and address the issue from the point of view of general protection which - according to the Parliament and the Commission - must be guaranteed to all minorities in the European Union through a strengthening of minimum measures and regulations by the Member States, to prevent any kind of discrimination against them. Other documents, instead, specifically address issues related to Roma (including the 2019 European Parliament Resolution and European Commission Reports), also focusing on the issue of the right to education of Roma children living in the Union and the need to strengthen the strategic framework even beyond 2020. There is no doubt - as the European Parliament immediately reminds us that the Member States have the precise responsibility to take corrective measures against discriminatory practices against members of the Roma community, especially when such practices are attributable to regional and national administrative authorities and concern subjective positions enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the general principles of EU law. However, this is a point that should now be clear to both the EU Member States and the people who populate them: the protection of the rights of people belonging to minorities is never an end in itself, but contributes to building a more sustainable future for Europe and guaranteeing general respect for the principles of dignity, equality and non-discrimination, promoting stability and general economic development. Once this perspective is adopted, it is a natural logical consequence that children are considered a priority in the planning and implementation of the national strategies of integration of the Roma and, therefore, that it is considered essential to protect and promote the equal access of those children to most important services, therefore to education.

This should be pursued through adequate allocations of public funds and the **involvement of the representatives of the Roma communities to be implemented (also) through a consultation procedure, visible and accessible, which allows them a significant participation in the implementation**, monitoring and evaluation of the framework EU strategy. This is revealed as the best way to strengthen ownership of the actions carried out and to fight anti-Gypsyism, which is a priority at the heart of the EU strategic framework. In this regard, interesting is the Report 4 December 2018 (updated in 2019) which presents an evaluation of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020. The evaluation examined the Union framework and how to mobilize other European political, financial and legal instruments for Roma inclusion. The report provides a summary of the main trends identified and focuses on the four strategic areas of the EU framework for national strategies Roma integration (**education, employment, health and housing**), as well as on the **fight against discrimination and anti-Gypsyism**. Within each sector, the report then **focuses** on the situation of the Roma and - as reported by the national contact points for the Roma - **summarizes the main types of inclusion measures adopted, the results achieved and the challenges related to their implementation**. In addition, it formulates lessons to be drawn from policies, highlighting promising approaches and priorities to be addressed.

The document shows that most Member States - as many as 18 states - invest in measures aimed at reducing early school leaving. The most frequently adopted measures include: **those aimed at addressing the needs of individual pupils by cooperating with families** (14 states); **those aimed at improving access and quality of early childhood education and care** (13 Member States); **those aimed at encouraging Roma children to follow and complete secondary and tertiary education** (11 Member States).

Interventions have been made to promote **the fight against school segregation** and **support the use of inclusive teaching methods** also through the development of skills appropriate to the needs of the labor market (12 Member States for each of these actions). It can be seen that Member States, in pursuing their action, have often focused on measures aimed at improving the level of education, that is, aimed at



Co-funded by the  
Rights, Equality &  
Citizenship Programme  
of the European Union



RISE  
Roma Inclusive  
School Experiences

combating early school leaving, promoting the transition to secondary and tertiary education and the completion of these education cycles or to offer support to compensate for educational deficiencies or material disadvantage: measures representing 36% of all interventions in the education sector. **Other important interventions** also concern **the transition from education to employment, supporting vocational training, career advancement and lifelong learning**, as well as the development of professionals skills (9-11%). Measures taken less frequently include integrated inclusion interventions and the introduction of Roma history and culture into study programs. At the level of **evaluation of the activity carried out**, according to what observed by the national contact points for Roma, the positive result most frequently mentioned in the education sector is mediation, but there are also others such as: the development of school skills childhood; support for the fight against early school leaving; the integration of issues concerning the inclusion and non-discrimination of Roma in the context of teacher training or national study programs.

**Among the most significant challenges** highlighted by the national contact points for Roma are: **school attendance, absenteeism, early school leaving, the transition from primary school to secondary school and the completion of the secondary education cycle**; but also the **fight against segregation; cooperation between stakeholders; the promotion of data availability**; and the **promotion of early childhood education and care**, together with adult education. In fact, education is the sector that boasts the greatest number of interventions and evaluations and is therefore also the one with the **relatively highest number of promising approaches and lessons common to different countries**. The main lessons to be learned in this sector include: the importance of early intervention and prevention; the need to ensure the **participation and emancipation of Roma parents** as a fundamental element to support the child in every phase of education; **the role of extracurricular activities** to strengthen the identity and social networks of Roma minors; the usefulness of complex and permanent support measures to promote the transition between different levels of education and towards employment.

Although the actions carried out have contributed to improving the participation of Roma in education, it emerges that it is still necessary to avoid reserving specific places for Roma children who qualify for admission to school. Indeed, especially in Member States with a high percentage of Roma pupils, a **systematic, complex and long-term approach is needed to combat segregation within schools and classrooms**, which continues to be an urgent problem and compromise the effectiveness of other inclusion measures.

The latest **Report COM(2019) 406** - focusing on the implementation of Roma inclusion measures in the Member States - confirms that education is the sector in which Member States are making the most efforts to promote Roma inclusion by also developing measures to contain early school leaving of Roma children aware that success for the integration of Roma children into national education systems from an early age is the key not only to giving them real life opportunities but also for long-term integration in the European company. Among the priorities to be addressed are funding and reform of teacher training methods, attracting the best teachers in disadvantaged schools/regions. However, there is still a long way to go to help Roma to fully integrate, especially as regards access to public services, adequate housing, employment and healthcare.

### Main reference legislation

European Parliament Res P8\_TA(2018) 0032, 7 February 2018, [Resolution 7 February 2018 on the protection and non-discrimination of minorities in the EU Member States](#)

European Parliament Res P8\_TA(2018) 0056 1 March 2018, [Resolution 1 March 2018 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2016](#).

European Parliament, Resolution P8\_TA(2018) 0447 13 November 2018, [Resolution 13 November 2018 on minimum standards for minorities in the EU](#).

Istituto  
degli  
Innocenti





Co-funded by the  
Rights, Equality &  
Citizenship Programme  
of the European Union



RISE  
Roma Inclusive  
School Experiences

European Commission, Communication COM (2018) 785 final 4 December 2018, [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Report on the evaluation of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020.](#)

European Parliament, Resolution 12 February 2019, P8\_TA(2019) 0075, [Resolution 12 February 2019 on the need to strengthen the post-2020 EU strategic framework for national Roma integration strategies and step up the fight against anti-Gypsyism.](#)

European Commission, Communication 5 September 2019, COM (2019) 406 final, [Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies - 2019](#)