



*Structural Funds: Investing in Roma*

## **Analysis of references to the Structural Funds in National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS)**

*7<sup>th</sup> March 2012*

EURoma (*European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds* [www.euromanet.eu](http://www.euromanet.eu)) is an initiative launched in 2007 that gathers 12 EU Member States with the aim of promoting the use of the Structural Funds for the social inclusion of the Roma population. Network partners are represented by Managing Authorities and public bodies responsible for Roma policies. The primary objectives of EURoma are the sharing of strategies, initiatives and approaches, mutual learning based on experience, knowledge generation and the dissemination and standardization of such knowledge.



## Structural Funds: Investing in Roma

### Contents

- ✓ Rationale
  - ✓ Reference to Structural Funds in National Roma Integration Strategies
  - ✓ Making better use of Structural Funds for Roma inclusion in the current and next programming periods
  - ✓ Quantification of financing
  - ✓ Roma as direct or indirect beneficiaries: General and targeted actions
  - ✓ Fields of intervention
  - ✓ Efficient and flexible combination of EU funds
  - ✓ Taking advantage of the amendment of Art. 7.2. Reference to integrated actions cofinanced by Structural Funds, specially with reference to disadvantaged micro-regions
  - ✓ Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and follow up mechanisms
  - ✓ Conclusions and proposals
  - ✓ Annex: Table of key indicators
- 

EU Member States recently published, or are in the process of publishing, NRIS at the European Commission's request.<sup>1</sup> Considering the high potential of Structural Funds for the development and scaling up of Roma inclusion programmes and projects, it is in the interest not only of EURoma but of all stakeholders that a brief assessment of the NRIS's reference to Structural Funds be made. The present paper thus analyses comparatively how general recommendations regarding the use of Structural Funds have been translated into concrete, operational proposals for Roma social inclusion and for the improvement of Roma living conditions in the NRIS.

At the time of writing (7 March 2012), 24 out of the 27 EU member states had published their National Roma Integration Strategy (the exceptions are: Belgium, Lithuania and United Kingdom [UK]).

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the European Union (EU) (2011a) *Council conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*. 3089th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting. Brussels. 19 May. Available at:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122100.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122100.pdf)

National Roma Integration Strategies available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm)



## Structural Funds: Investing in Roma

### Rationale

Structural Funds should be a pivotal element of NRIS, especially in countries with large Roma populations. This does not mean that Member States should be allowed to evade their primary responsibility of mobilising their own human and financial resources for the inclusion of those citizens at the margins of mainstream society. Relying on and using EU financing for Roma inclusion should not substitute (local, regional and national) government investments with their own resources, but rather complement them. Its use may serve to create synergies between national and EU resources, acting as a policy and financial driver for the deployment of national and local resources.

Structural Funds should take stock of positive past and existing practices and should play a central financial and policy role in unleashing the necessary human and infrastructural resources to activate and sustain the necessary generational change. This is especially relevant in the context of economic crisis and fiscal restrictions at the local, regional and national levels of governance and as education, healthcare and active employment budgets are affected negatively by these conditions. They are therefore a particularly relevant means contributing to the targets related to education, employment and poverty reduction/social inclusion at the core of the Europe 2020 Strategy.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission has explicitly referred to Structural Funds as a key instrument to be employed by Member States to foster Roma inclusion in employment,<sup>3</sup> education,<sup>4</sup> and whenever possible as part of integrated actions.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the Ten Common Basic Principles of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion, which intend to provide guidance and orientation to the different actors working on Roma issues, make clear that EU member state should make full use of Community instruments (Principle no.7) in promoting Roma inclusion.

The EU Framework for NRIS states, among its central aims, its intention to 'make existing EU funds more accessible for Roma inclusion projects, in accordance with the size and the social and economic situation of the Roma population living in their territories and taking into

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2010b) 'Europe 2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'. COM(2010)2020. 3 March. Available at: [http://europa.eu/press\\_room/pdf/complet\\_en\\_barroso\\_007\\_-\\_europe\\_2020\\_-\\_en\\_version.pdf](http://europa.eu/press_room/pdf/complet_en_barroso_007_-_europe_2020_-_en_version.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2010a) *Communication from the Commission. An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment*. COM (2010) 682 Final. Strasbourg, 23 November. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0682:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2011a) *Communication from the Commission. Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*. COM (2011) 66 final. Brussels 17 February. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf). Council of the EU (2011b) *Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving*. Brussels, 7 June. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlyrec\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlyrec_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> European Parliament and European Council (2010) *Regulation (EU) No 437/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 amending Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalized communities*. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:132:0001:01:EN:HTML> .



## **Structural Funds: Investing in Roma**

account the different national circumstances'.<sup>6</sup> The draft Regulations of the Structural Funds for the next programming period (2014-2020) are consistent with this approach by referring to the explicit but not exclusive targeting of Roma in actions aimed at the promotion of social inclusion and the poverty reduction.<sup>7</sup>

The EU Framework specifically recommends making Structural Funds and other EU funds more accessible for Roma inclusion projects; making full use of the amendment of the ERDF regulations for housing, as part of integrated actions; making greater use of technical assistance by the EU; developing results-oriented projects and increasing their duration; ensuring a more effective, flexible and integrated combination of EU funds; strengthening the partnership principle in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the programmes of the Common Strategic Framework funds<sup>8</sup> and the capacities of NGOs specifically in ESF funded programmes; making access to funds easier, especially to small beneficiaries, through simplified cost options; and developing robust monitoring mechanisms and evaluating results. It is this set of recommendations, together with the relative emphasis on targeted or mainstream programmes for Roma inclusion and the preferred areas of intervention under Structural Funds, as well as the commitment to advance the use of the Structural Funds both in the current and next programming period, what this document analyses. The table at the end of this document provides a quick look at these key indicators.

When analysing how Structural Funds fare in NRIS, it must be pointed out that different contexts and realities are conditioning the ways that different Member States are able to use and earmark these funds for the promotion of Roma inclusion. For instance, the Roma issue is gaining prominence on the political agenda of some member States on account of the increasing demographic weight of Roma, which exceeds 5 per cent of the total population, as is the case of Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria. By contrast, in Northern and Western European countries (except for Spain), the Roma represent less than 0.3 per cent of the total population, which may imply that the Roma issue is less prevalent in the later cases.<sup>9</sup>

Another important qualification is that the lack of reference or development of a recommendation in relation to Structural Funds does not necessarily signify that the NRIS do not refer to or develop them in actions not co-financed by Structural Funds. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse these indicators beyond references to Structural Funds.

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<sup>6</sup> Council of the EU (2011a) op.cit. Par. 19.

<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2011b) op.cit. Section 10, Annex IV, "Thematic ex ante conditionalities".

<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2012) *Commission Staff Working Document. Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020*. Brussels, 14 March. Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic\\_framework/csf\\_part1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part1_en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division (2010) *Statistics*. Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default_en.asp).



## *Structural Funds: Investing in Roma*

### **Reference to Structural Funds in National Roma Integration Strategies**

Reference to Structural Funds is, needless to say, a key indicator of their relevance for Member States in the development of social inclusion policies benefitting Roma. The importance given can be refined by assessing the prominence of Structural Funds in the respective NRIS. However, the use of Structural Funds as the backbone of policies and measures benefitting Roma could be a double-edged sword, as overreliance on Structural Funds might imply a redirecting of state resources away from targeted or mainstream social inclusion policies and should be kept in check by stakeholders.

At the time of writing (7<sup>th</sup> March 2012), 24 out of the 27 EU member states had published their National Roma Integration Strategy (the exceptions are: Belgium, Lithuania and United Kingdom [UK]). A significant majority of member states (17 in total) make an explicit reference to Structural Funds as an instrument of Roma inclusion to be used in the framework of the NRIS.

Of those member states, which responded to the Commission's call for the development of National Roma Integration Strategies, the five member states (Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands) that obviate any reference to Structural Funds do so for a variety of possible reasons, as stated in their respective NRIS: either because of the absence or low magnitude of the Roma presence within their jurisdiction (Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg), because they undertake no ethnic data collection and/or promote a 'republican' approach to integration and universal citizenship that renders an ethnic notion invalid in the national legal framework of public policies (Luxembourg); or because they simply have a limited access to Structural Funds.

With regard to the latter, the level of income per capita in each country is an important factor to take into account in analysing comparatively references to Structural Funds in NRIS; for instance, states defined as part of the 'Competitiveness and Employment' cohort (with a GDP per capita that is superior to 75% of the EU-15 average) enjoy a limited access to and make a limited use of Structural Funds as a general rule (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, UK, Western Germany, Northern Italy, North and Eastern Spain).

A lack of reference to Structural Funds does not necessarily imply a lack of investment in Roma inclusion. An example is the Irish government, which has invested significant funds and human resources to promote and guarantee the rights of Travellers and Roma – including through financial support for capacity-building initiatives benefitting NGOs –, but makes no reference to Structural Funds in its Strategy. Similar cases include Northern Ireland and Wales (UK).

A constrained access to Structural Funds and significant investments in Roma inclusion exclusively with state funds are no justification, however, for states to elude their mandate of mobilising EU Funds for Roma inclusion, as established in the EU Framework for National



## **Structural Funds: Investing in Roma**

Strategies. The Finnish, French, German and Swedish governments, which a priori have limited access to Structural Funds, do refer to a significant extent to existing initiatives undertaken within their jurisdiction and co-financed by the ESF and ERDF for Roma and/or Travellers, although the funds disbursed or under planning are relatively limited.

The Danish and Austrian governments make a brief reference to the possibility of using Structural Funds for projects *indirectly* benefitting Roma. These projects are centred on the development of human resources, the utilization of new technology, the establishment and development of new enterprises and innovation, and knowledge sharing and knowledge building, although EU Funds have not been earmarked for Roma inclusion projects. The UK, on its side, does not appear to be developing a National Roma Strategy. It responded to the call for a Strategy by referring to the pending publication of its progress report on reducing Gypsy and Traveller inequalities and the government's commitment in relation to the strategic areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing.

The prominence ascribed to Structural Funds in the financing and policy design of the strategies varies significantly between countries. Although subject to interpretation, this is a relevant indication of how Member States plan to structure their NRIS, and is related to the positioning of countries within the regional policy. It is precisely the countries where a higher percentage of Roma are concentrated that have more regions characterised as 'Convergence' regions. This means that countries with large Roma population receive larger funds and are required to co-finance a smaller percentage of total allocated funds. There are different reasons for the level of investments in Roma inclusion, including political will, but, in general terms, those member states combining relatively large Roma populations (either in absolute or relative terms) and relatively low GDP per capita tend to make more explicit, frequent and prospective references to Structural Funds for actions directly or indirectly benefitting Roma. This is the case of Romania, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, the Convergence regions of Italy and Spain, and to some extent Latvia. Nonetheless, the majority of Member States make only a brief reference to Structural Funds, including states with Roma minorities and with many regions characterised as 'Convergence' regions (Portugal, Bulgaria, Poland).

### **Making better use of Structural Funds for Roma inclusion in the current and next programming periods**

Roughly half of the Member States referring to Structural Funds in their NRIS explicitly foresee the deployment of funds for Roma inclusion or for actions targeting vulnerable groups and benefitting Roma indirectly in the next programming period. This is the case of Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal (reference to integrated actions under the 2014-2020 ERDF regulations), Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. The reference to the deployment of Structural Funds under the next



## **Structural Funds: Investing in Roma**

programming period is understandably very brief in the vast majority of NRIS, given the fact that EU regulations are not yet ratified and may be subject to substantial revisions. The NRIS cannot commit to any action under Structural Funds for the current lack of legal and financial guarantees implied by the transition from the current (2007-2013) to the next (2014-2020) programming period.

However, there remain de facto close to four years in the current programming period, and from a normative point of view there are no obstacles to redirect funds towards Roma inclusion projects. Furthermore, in general terms the absorption rate of ESF funds by Member States remains very low for the present programming period. In fact, the European Commission recently urged Member States to intensify its execution of ESF co-financed programmes, emphasising that, by the end of 2011, Member States still have €30 billion in ESF programmes (out of €79 billion in total ESF funding) which have not yet been committed to concrete activities.<sup>10</sup> In this light, it is useful to assess whether Member States intend to allocate or redirect more Structural Funds for Roma inclusion in the current programming period. Several Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden) mention their intention to do so, albeit very briefly in most cases and without quantifying the (re)deployment of funds, and often as part of their existing national Roma inclusion or development programmes, for instance in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.<sup>11</sup>

Again, a lack of reference does not imply a lack of investment in Roma inclusion per se but it may signify that a substantial source of financing, especially in countries with a large Roma population and with relatively low per capita GDP, is simply not envisaged at this point regardless of the specificities of the future Structural Funds regulations.

### **Quantification of financing**

Most Member States refrain from quantifying the investments in Roma inclusion or the improvement of their living conditions. Those Member States that do provide quantitative data on planned investments under Structural Funds (although in most cases it is under the current programming period) are Hungary (clear budgeting for specific actions up to 2014 in Annex), Romania (Annexes listing specific investments for each project in strategic areas, taking into account potential financing lines in the next Structural Funds programming period), France (EUR 1.7 million under the Axis 3 of the ESF OP; EUR 4 million for 46 ESF projects; EUR 9.2 million under the Art.7.2 ERDF for 7 regions up to 2013), Italy (Annex mentions a social infrastructure project in Campania for a total of EUR 7,016 million, operational objective 6.3 of the ERDF ROP Campania 2007 / 2013), Poland (EUR 22 million for the Roma component of

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2011) Communication from the Commission. Youth Opportunities initiative. COM(2011) 933 final, Brussels, 20 December. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7276&langId=en>

<sup>11</sup> Information on the Decade available here: <http://www.romadecade.org/about>



## **Structural Funds: Investing in Roma**

Human Development OP for 50 projects), Slovakia (EUR 177.907 million co-financed with EU and national funds, and invested for targeted actions for Roma inclusion up to 2015 in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion) and Slovenia (with clear budgeting for specific actions up to 2014, and the earmarking of some funds from state budget from 2014). Spain mentions 42 million euros being invested during this programming period to specific measures to Roma population through the ESF-OP Fight against Discrimination, but the total amount of the ESF regional OPs channelled to Roma social inclusion is not currently known accurately.

In relation to the future programming period, in fact no single NRIS except for Slovenia (and only in the case of one project) explicitly earmarks EU funds or a proportion of the EU funds potentially attributed to them for Roma inclusion.

### **Roma as direct or indirect beneficiaries: General and targeted actions**

Roma can benefit either directly or indirectly from projects or programmes co-financed by Structural Funds. In some cases, they benefit indirectly from mainstream projects aimed at vulnerable or excluded persons or groups, or aimed at improving the access of the latter to services or infrastructures. In other cases, they can be direct beneficiaries of specifically targeted projects or programmes (exclusively aimed at Roma) or of explicit but not exclusive projects or programmes.

The soundness of targeted policies for Roma has been a matter of significant debate in the past between different Member States and stakeholders. A common vision has gradually coalesced in Principle no.2 of the Common Basic Principles, 'Explicit but not exclusive targeting', that is, the implementation of targeted actions adapted to the specific circumstances of Roma but from which non-Roma individuals or groups in similar socio-economic circumstances may benefit. In all cases under review, Roma may benefit indirectly from mainstream projects co-financed by Structural Funds through funding for socially vulnerable or excluded communities, or through investment in system/administrative and infrastructural improvements. Among those member states making an explicit reference to Structural Funds, universal or targeted actions for groups on the grounds of socio-economic vulnerability are privileged as a matter of principle: for instance, the German, Austrian, Danish, Estonian, Italian and Portuguese governments promote Roma integration through policy measures targeting vulnerable groups of society within existing structures (e.g. general social inclusion policies and the National Reform Programme).<sup>12</sup> The French government plans targeted investments for Travellers, based on their particular socio-economic circumstances, while it emphasises repeatedly the contradiction between an ethnic-based approach and

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<sup>12</sup> The Italian case is particular because three regional OPs (Liguria, Abruzzo and Calabria) target Roma explicitly while the national OPs and other regional OPs only provide for actions benefitting Roma indirectly (as part of actions targeting migrants).



## ***Structural Funds: Investing in Roma***

French Law, and hence discards targeted action for Roma. This approach is also promoted by Luxembourg and Cyprus (which do not make any reference to Structural Funds) among others.

In contrast, in the cases of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain as well as Sweden, specifically targeted or explicit but not exclusive actions under Structural Funds are preferred, in line with the spatial concentration of Roma communities in some of these cases.

### **Fields of intervention**

The respective NRIS refer to five predominant areas of action for projects benefitting Roma directly or indirectly under Structural Funds currently as well as in the next programming period:

- Education, including early childhood education and adult learning (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Wales), usually under the ESF. Educational investments with Structural Funds aim primarily at desegregation actions, intercultural education, prevention of early school leaving and bridging the gap between formal schooling and access to the labour market.
- Employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Wales), usually under the ESF. Employment actions focus primarily on training activities (the access of Roma to all types and to all levels of vocational and professional training and retraining, including practical work experience) and the access of Roma to the labour market, labour adaptability, self-employment, personalised labour insertion pathways, and in some cases the promotion of entrepreneurship, including the creation of cooperatives and social community work, and increasingly includes the provision of microcredits.
- Housing (Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain), including financial planning for housing (Czech Republic).
- Healthcare (Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Spain). Reference is made to health education for Roma, training and employment of community health education workers (ESF funding), as well as the construction of community centres where such services are provided (ERDF funding).
- Community-level social integration includes inclusive infrastructural development, housing and access to services, awareness-raising, capacity building and civic participation. These often involve the development of integrated actions, which may take advantage in some cases on the amendment of Art. 7.2 of the ERDF Regulation. Access to administrative and social services by Roma persons, the improvement of



## **Structural Funds: Investing in Roma**

social infrastructure (eg. social housing, kindergartens with ERDF funding) feature prominently in almost every NRIS.

In addition, Structural Funds are used for the exchange of best practices and mutual learning as well as capacity-building initiatives, and in a few cases for the defence of Roma culture (usually other EU funds are employed for these initiatives).

### **Efficient and flexible combination of EU Funds**

The Commission's draft Structural Funds regulations propose the possibility to combine more systematically ESF and ERDF programs for social inclusion. This proposal opens up interesting possibilities for integrated actions, for example in disadvantaged micro-regions, settlements or neighbourhoods, and for the simplification of the planning, programming and coordination of Roma inclusion projects. It has been taken on board by France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. In some cases a valuable reflection on existing managing models and institutional makeups and on finding the most appropriate tools to achieve effective results on the ground is made.

For instance the Greek government reflects on the limitations of its 2001-2008 Integrated Action Plan and emphasises the need to organise integrated interventions through a single centre in charge of coordinating interventions, and the need to shift from a vertical (sectorial) to a horizontal (geographical) approach to interventions in the future Action Plan (2012-2020), which will be aligned with the future Structural Funds programming period. Spain proposes joint action programmes in the framework of an inter-fund committee (ESF, ERDF, and EAFRD) focused on the use and follow-up of Structural Funds in actions concerning the Roma. Slovakia, in turn, suggests the establishment of a multi-fund operational programme using ESF and ERDF funds, which would finance programmes centred on inclusive infrastructural development and public services as well as specific labour inclusion and educational programmes.

### **Taking advantage of the amendment of Art. 7.2. Reference to integrated actions co-financed by Structural Funds, especially with reference to disadvantaged micro-regions**

The amendment to Article 7.2 of the ERDF Regulation has opened up significant opportunities to implement integrated actions in marginalised areas (through the articulation of investments in education, employment generation and access to healthcare with the pivotal development of basic infrastructure, including the rebuilding and renovation of houses) and to scale them up through substantial financing and the combination of EU funds.

Several Member States (France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) make an explicit reference to the possibilities offered by Art. 7.2. In various



## **Structural Funds: Investing in Roma**

member states (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), relatively widespread situations of geographical segregation and marginalisation have already induced the implementation of integrated actions at the community level aimed at achieving inclusion, including through the provision of housing and healthcare as well as education and professional training.

### **EU technical assistance**

The Communication of the European Commission on an EU Framework for NRIS underlines that:

*“There are significant amounts of EU technical assistance at Member States' disposal (4% of all Structural Funds), out of which Member States on average had only used 31% of their planned allocations until late 2009. These amounts would be lost if not used. When designing their national Roma integration strategies, Member States should therefore make a greater use of EU technical assistance to improve their management, monitoring and evaluation capacities also with regard to Roma-targeted projects”.*<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, taking advantage of EU technical assistance is mentioned explicitly only in the cases of Spain and Bulgaria.. This indicates a significant loss of opportunity for Member States to improve the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects aimed at Roma inclusion.

### **Monitoring, evaluation, reporting and follow up mechanisms**

The European Commission emphasises in its Communication on an EU Framework for NRIS that the need to collect reliable data to measure results and plan follow-up actions makes it necessary to:

*“put in place a robust monitoring mechanism with clear benchmarks which will ensure that tangible results are measured, that money directed to Roma integration has reached its final beneficiaries, that there is progress towards the achievement of the EU Roma integration goals and that national Roma integration strategies have been implemented”.*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> European Commission (2011) *Communication from the Commission. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*, p.10. Available at :

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com\\_2011\\_173\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. The Commission will report annually to the European Parliament and to the Council on progress on the integration of the Roma population in Member States and on the achievement of the goals. It will do so by building on the Roma household survey pilot project carried out by the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation particularly with the World Bank and the Fundamental Rights Agency. The survey covers 11 Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal).



### ***Structural Funds: Investing in Roma***

Peer Reviews and the Open Method of Coordination, along with the monitoring of National Reform Programmes, will be built upon to assess progress on Roma inclusion. Furthermore, the Commission intends to intensify the coordination between Eurostat and national statistical offices in the development of a territorial approach to data collection in order to generate an EU map out the most disadvantaged micro-regions, including parameters. Moreover, ESF Technical Assistance is used to draw up poverty maps in each Member State with the support of the World Bank.

The governments of Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden have taken on board the insistence of the EU Framework on systematising and improving monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanisms in relation to the Structural Funds.

Greece mentions the gradual downgrading of existing interventions during implementation – as a result of the absence of strict specifications and shortage of evaluation and monitoring procedures, and emphasizes the need to systematize monitoring. The Greek 2012-2020 Action Plan intends to decentralise the design and monitoring of actions, which will take place at the regional level, through Regional Authorities and with the participation of Roma representatives.

Bulgaria states that an interim review/updating of the Action Plan is foreseen for 2017 in the framework of the OP and national action plan with a view to ensuring efficiency and sustainability of the measures. The coordination and control of the implementation of the Strategy is to be exercised by the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues, with the technical support of a Secretariat. Slovakia, in turn, offers a welcome insistence on an effective results-oriented monitoring, which implies: orienting the dialogue of all participating parties – public administration, civil society including Roma – towards results during all stages of inclusion efforts; harmonising monitoring and evaluation programmes with results; creating a standardised template for monitoring and evaluation reports; using resulting data for the improvement and policy decision-making.

In relation to mapping micro-regions where poverty is highly concentrated, Hungary, Slovakia (which have been developing such mapping exercises for some years), Greece mention the development of bottom-up mapping instruments, including digital tools. The Spanish NRIS emphasises that the territorial dispersion of Roma in Spain renders a micro-territorial mapping less relevant in its case. Member states should whenever possible use the newly developed poverty maps and, more importantly, take stock of and make a rigorous use of the Europe 2020 indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes of the NRIS. Those NRIS lacking reference Europe 2020 indicators should therefore be amended promptly.



## Structural Funds: Investing in Roma

### Conclusions and proposals

In some Member States, significant progress is observable in the importance given to Structural Funds to address Roma issues, while in others progress is more limited. Almost half of the Member States envisage a deployment of Structural Funds in the next programming period. However, the fact that the majority of Member States make only a brief reference to Structural Funds, including states with large Roma minorities and with many regions characterised as 'Convergence' regions, potentially implies a loss of opportunity for these countries to make full use of Structural Funds in driving Roma policies.

The overall assessment is that in many cases the NRIS should describe more clearly how improvements in the use of Structural Funds for Roma inclusion will be made and develop more explicitly the criteria set by the EU framework and endorsed by the draft Structural Funds regulations. However, the disparity between the EU requirements and NRIS can be resolved by the revision and development of the latter. The role of Structural Funds as policy instruments can also be bolstered through a more activist role of the 2014-2020 regulatory framework in committing Member States to a coordinated action plan for Roma inclusion.

It is of fundamental importance that Member States take advantage of the opportunities offered by Structural Funds to make a qualitative leap in the reduction of gaps between the Roma and the majority populations, focusing if possible on integrated actions that make a difference in areas where large Roma communities experience segregation, discrimination and severe poverty.

Member States still have €30 billion in ESF programmes (out of €79 billion in total ESF funding) which have not yet been committed to concrete activities. This window of opportunity must be taken advantage of by Member States for Roma inclusion projects, with a view to aligning the use of Structural Funds with the strategic priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its objectives related to employment, education and poverty reduction.

The NRIS should therefore be revised regularly and most importantly before the launch of the 2014-2020 programming period,<sup>15</sup> in order to reflect the key role that Structural Funds can play in kick-starting, sustaining and qualitatively improving effective, results-based integration processes. This would contribute to aligning both Structural Funds and NRIS with the priorities and objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Regular evaluations and transparent monitoring mechanisms, based on clear indicators, should be fleshed out more clearly in some NRIS in order to allow for the concretion of the planned actions. At the same time, all Member States should take advantage of the possibilities offered by EU technical assistance, especially considering that less than a third of available Structural

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<sup>15</sup> This could possibly be undertaken using coherent strategic planning tools like the results-based management (RBM) developed by the OECD. OECD (2000) *Results-based Management in the Development Cooperation Agencies: A Review of Experience. Background Report*. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/1/1886527.pdf>.



### ***Structural Funds: Investing in Roma***

Funds for technical assistance have been allocated. This indicates a significant loss of opportunity for Member States to improve the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects aimed at Roma inclusion.

EURoma therefore urges Member States to build on the advances made by the EU Framework and take advantage of the use of the Structural Funds for the development of more transparent, efficient and results-oriented programmes and projects within the NRIS.

Annex: Table of key indicators

Member State	Strategy	Reference to SF	Greater use of SF in current Prog period	Reference to next Progr. period	Quantification of financing?	Roma as direct beneficiaries	Areas of intervention mentioned	Combination of funds	Art.7.2; integrated strategy;	EU Technical assistance	Monitoring & Evaluation
Austria	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	EM; ED	N	N	N	N
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bulgaria	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	No mention	N	N	Y	Y <sup>16</sup>
Czech Rep.	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	AD; ED; EM; FP (esp. For HO); HE	N	N	N	N
Cyprus	Y	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denmark	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	EM; ED; BP	N	N	N	N
Estonia	Y	Y	N	N	N	N <sup>17</sup>	EM	N	N	N	N
Finland	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	EM; ED; BP	N	N	N	Y <sup>18</sup>
France	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y <sup>19</sup>	Y (Travellers)	BP; ED; EMP; HO; AD	Y	Y	N	Y
Germany	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	ED; EM; AD; FP; HE; CB	N	Y	N	Y
Greece	Y	Y	Y	Y	Partial <sup>20</sup>	Y	ED; EM; HE; HO;	Y	Y	N	Y
Hungary	Y	Y	Y	Y <sup>21</sup>	Y <sup>22</sup>	Y	ED; EM; HO; HE; AD	Y	Y	N	Y
Ireland	Y	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y <sup>23</sup>	AD; ED; EM; HE; HO; FP	Y	Y	N	Y
Latvia	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	ED; EM; HE; HO; CB	N	N	N	N

16 Interim review 2017; monitoring by NCCEII.

17 Survey launched for subcultures.

18 Interim evaluation 2011.

19 1,7 million EUR to 2013 Axis 3 OP ESF; 4 million EUR 46 ESF projects ; 9,2 million EUR Art.7.2 ERDF for 7 regions.

20 15 million EUR for Health Social Care programme up to 2020.

21 Quadrupling of SF investments in social inclusion if 20% of ESF for poverty actions are maintained in regulations.

22 Clear budgeting for specific actions until 2014. HUF97 billion integrate actions in micro-regions, no timespan.

23 Roma as direct beneficiaries of ESF- and ERDF-funded projects only in the Regional OPS of Liguria, Abruzzo and Calabria.



## Structural Funds: Investing in Roma

Member State	Strategy	Reference to Structural Funds	Greater use of SF in current Prog period	Reference to next programming period	Quantification of financing?	Roma as direct beneficiaries	Areas of intervention mentioned	Combination of funds	Art.7.2; integrated strategy;	EU Technical assistance	Monitoring & Evaluation
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	Y	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malta	Y (justified)	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	Y	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	Y <sup>24</sup>	Y	N	N	Y <sup>25</sup>	Y	ED; EM	N	N	N	Y <sup>26</sup>
Portugal	Y	Y	N	Y (ERDF up to 2020)	N	N	HO; HE	N	Y	N	N
Romania	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ED; EM; HO; AD	Y	Y	N	Y
Slovakia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y <sup>27</sup>	Y	ED; EM; CB; HO (pilot); BP	Y (combined OP)	Y	Y <sup>28</sup>	Y
Slovenia	Y <sup>29</sup>	Y	N	N	Y <sup>30</sup>	Y	ED; EM; AD; RC	N	N	N	Y <sup>31</sup>
Spain	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ED; EM; HO; HE; BP	Y <sup>32</sup>	Y	Y	Y
Sweden	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	ED; EM	N	N	N	Y
UK	N <sup>33</sup>	Y	N	N	N	Y (Travellers)	ED; EM; AD; CB	N	N	N	N

**Abbreviations:** AD: antidiscrimination and awareness-raising; BP: Best practices, knowledge sharing and mutual learning; CB: Capacity-building and civic participation; ED: Education (incl. ECEC and adult education); EM: Employment, self-employment and professional training; FP: Financial planning and micro-credit; HE: Healthcare; HO: Housing; RC: Roma culture.

<sup>24</sup> 2003 Roma prog.

<sup>25</sup> EUR22 million Roma component up to 2013; 50 projects.

<sup>26</sup> Annual evaluation - publication 2011 Evaluation of 2003 programme.

<sup>27</sup> EUR142 million up to 2015.

<sup>28</sup> The Managing Authority concluded 2 contracts with the World Bank (IBRD) aimed at social inclusion and marginalised Roma communities in the 2007/2013 programming period.

<sup>29</sup> 2010 Roma Plan.

<sup>30</sup> Clear budgeting, up to 2014; post-2014 some funds earmarked from state budget.

<sup>31</sup> Yearly assessment by special government working commission.

<sup>32</sup> Joint action programmes.

<sup>33</sup> Wales Plan referred to here.