Stepping up Roma Health in Europe: the EU Framework for National Roma integration Strategies
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The issue at stake:
Health inequalities of Roma in Europe

• Higher perinatal and infant mortality
• Lower vaccination rates
• Higher level of chronic disease and disability
• Women particularly disadvantaged
• Inequalitites in access to high quality healthcare services
• Life expectancy gap
B) Population EU-27

A) European Roma population

Causes for health inequalities

Living conditions
- basic needs, warmth, housing, food, water, environmental quality

Services
- healthcare, education, social protection

Work & working conditions
- job quality, health & safety at work

Health related behaviours
- lifestyle, smoking, alcohol, exercise
Cross-fields interrelation

- Social and health problems are interrelated and create a *vicious circle of social exclusion*

  - Poor health
  - Unemployment
  - Inadequate housing
  - Low education
  - Wide discrimination

Overcoming Roma health inequalities requires integrated inclusion policies
Roma health: not a new concern for the EU

- 2nd EU Roma summit (Cordoba, 2010) – focus on health
- Commission’s Communication COM(2010) 133 on ‘the social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe’ – lists EU actions, including on health
- December 2010: report of the Roma Task Force highlighting that strong and appropriate measures are still not in place in the EU Member States
The EU Framework: a new impetus


This has been followed up by the EU Member States’ commitment in the Council:

- 19 May 2011: the 27 social affairs Ministers adopted detailed conclusions on the EU Framework

- 23-24 June 2011: the 27 Heads of States / Governments called for the rapid implementation of these conclusions
1) The EU Framework
MS committed to prepare, update or develop **national**
Roma integration strategies/sets of policy measures

- **Recommended approaches:**
  - Pay attention to a number of priorities in education, health, employment and housing
  - Promote desegregation
  - Identify EU funds to support this policy
  - Monitor and evaluate the impact

- **Horizontal aspects:**
  - Comply with the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion
  - **Involve all stakeholders, including the Roma and the local authorities**
  - Follow an integrated approach
  - Appoint a national Roma contact point to ensure effective monitoring

MS committed to present strategies/sets of policy measures that cover access to healthcare ‘with particular reference to preventive healthcare and health education’, with a transversal attention to the gender dimension.
2) The EU Framework
MS committed to set or continue working towards their goals

EU goals (by 2020) defined in the EU Framework:

● Ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school
● Cut the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population
● Reduce the gap in health status between the Roma and the rest of the population
● Close the gap between the share of Roma with access to housing and to public utilities (e.g. water, electricity and gas) and that of the rest of the population
3) The EU Framework
MS committed to make a more effective use of **EU funds** to support Roma integration

Under the current programming period, Member States committed to ensuring the effective use of EU funds for the socio-economic integration of the Roma, for example via:

- Modifying their Operational Programmes co-financed by EU funds to better support Roma integrated projects;
- Making greater use of technical assistance for buying expertise of regional, national and international organisations in preparing, implementing and monitoring Roma targeted interventions;
- Improving the predictability of financing by increasing the duration of project and maximising the uptake of funds.
4) The EU Framework
Putting in place a strong **monitoring** mechanism

To make sure that the EU Framework makes a tangible difference the Commission will:

- **report annually to EP and Council on progress made in the MS.**
- use data on the social and economic situation of Roma collected by FRA in cooperation with other organisations.
- take into account ongoing work within the Open Method of Coordination in the field of social policies.
- Use information provided in national reform programmes and peer reviews.
- **In parallel, MS should foresee internal self-monitoring together with stakeholders.**
5) The EU Framework

Enlargement countries

- EU goals (including access to quality healthcare) are equally relevant; invitation to enlargement countries to review the existing strategies/action plans in line with these goals

- Improvement of EU financial support for Roma inclusion (via the Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance)

- Recall the need for supporting civil society involvement

- EU close monitoring of progress
Where are we now?

- To date, 17 strategies/sets of policy measures presented; 8 more are expected
- Assessment by the Commission of the national Roma integration strategies/sets of policy measures
- Extraordinary meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion (Brussels, 22nd March 2012)
- A first step in a sustainable process