

# Gender aspects of the European framework of national Roma inclusion strategies

2013/2066(INI) - 25/10/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality unanimously adopted the own-initiative report by Lívía JÁRÓKA (EPP, HU) on gender aspects of the European Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies.

Members recalled that Roma women often face multiple and intersectional discrimination on the grounds of gender and ethnic origin. Acts of violence against Roma women are frequently committed by authorities in all EU Member States. Members reiterated the fact that Roma education gaps have an important gender dimension, since the literacy rate of Roma women averages 68 %, compared to 81 % for Roma men, and the primary school enrolment rate among Roma girls is just 64 %.

In this context, Members called for **National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) focussing on empowering Roma women**. They called on Member States that have received, in addition, country-specific recommendations under the European Semester on Roma-related issues, to implement these recommendations swiftly and to fight discrimination.

In view of the vulnerable situation of Roma women, Members regretted that the lack of efficiency of the EU Framework for NRIS. They asked Member States to develop **National Action Plans in the four key priority areas**:

- health,
- housing,
- employment, and
- education,

with specific goals and targets, funding, indicators and timeframes; evaluate progress by measuring implementation outcomes.

**Defend the rights of Roma women and ensure their integration at all levels of society:** Members called on Member State governments and local authorities to involve Roma women, through women's organisations, Roma NGOs and relevant stakeholders, in the preparation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the NRIS. They also proposed **numerous measures** to be implemented by Member states or with the support of the Commission. The main ones called on Member States and the Commission to:

- develop a Dashboard of EU Roma inclusion indicators setting out measures taken, objectives and progress made;
- **eliminate the spatial segregation, forced evictions and homelessness** faced by Roma men and women, and to set up **effective and transparent housing policies**;
- ensure that the fundamental rights of Roma women and children are respected and further combat patriarchal and sexist traditions;

- mobilise Roma organisations;
- **ensure that austerity measures do not impact disproportionately on Roma and Traveller women** and that budget decisions are underpinned by human rights principles;
- ensure that disaggregated data for gender and ethnicity are collected by all administrations and used to inform policy development;
- match national policy commitments by allocating proper financial resources for the implementation of NRIS,
- establish a proper framework for consultation, peer learning and the sharing of experience among policy-makers and Roma organisations;
- ensure equality in civil rights and equal access to healthcare services, education, employment and accommodation for Roma women;
- ensure the adoption and implementation of specific and **comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation** in line with international and European standards;
- place greater emphasis on the territorial aspects of social inclusion in their national strategies, and to target the most deprived micro-regions by means of complex, integrated development programmes;
- **strengthen gender mainstreaming when implementing their NRIS**, by applying a gender equality perspective to all policies and practices affecting Roma women;
- ensure that the NRIS reflect Roma women's specific rights and needs and to develop concrete indicators for their implementation, follow-up and monitoring based on, for example, the United Nations Development Programme's Gender-related Development Index (GDI);
- develop a national monitoring and evaluation framework for the NRIS that covers aspects such as budget monitoring and other forms of civil society monitoring;
- ensure NGOs operating in the field in Member States draw up personalised action plans which aim to help women and young people to find employment;
- increase the number and **visibility** of Roma and Traveller programmes and beneficiaries, including specific support to Traveller and Roma organisations working to promote women's empowerment and NGO access to structural funds;
- introduce a **child poverty reduction target into the EU Roma inclusion process**;
- include in their NRIS tailored programmes the active inclusion of Roma women in **the labour market**;
- develop specific measures targeting large families (with four or more children) and single parent households, and **counteract social exclusion and ghettoisation**;
- ensure equal access to quality and affordable childcare and early childhood education

- take all necessary measures to prevent the dismissal of employees during pregnancy or motherhood
- develop micro-loan schemes targeting small business start-ups and entrepreneurs with simple, entrepreneur-friendly administrative procedures;
- develop targeted and integration-oriented measures in the field of unemployment support;
- make full use of the opportunities offered by the Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), to improve both the education and the employment prospects for the Roma girls;
- **combat stereotypes**, in order to prevent the anathematisation of this ethnic group;
- **develop specific programmes to ensure that Roma girls and young women stay in primary, secondary, and higher education;**
- promote **networks of Roma students**, and overcome the isolation of Roma students;
- **ensure access to health**, and ensure that Roma women and girls can make their own choices about their sexuality, health, and maternity;
- prosecute direct and indirect discrimination against Roma women in exercising their fundamental rights and in accessing public services;
- **address all forms of violence against women**, such as domestic violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and to support governmental and civil society initiatives to address these problems
- **fight against arranged marriage, child marriage and forced marriage;**
- fully transpose the provisions of Directive 2011/36 EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims;
- encourage the exchange of information and best practices on the integration of Roma women in all areas of society;
- promote Roma language and culture;
- address the needs of older Roma women.

Members also called for the Commission to deliver legal instruments, including a **European directive to combat gender-based violence**.

Lastly, they requested European solutions from the Member States and the Commission for Roma people's problems, taking into consideration their **right of free movement as European citizens**, and the need for collaboration between Member States to resolve the issues faced by this ethnic group.