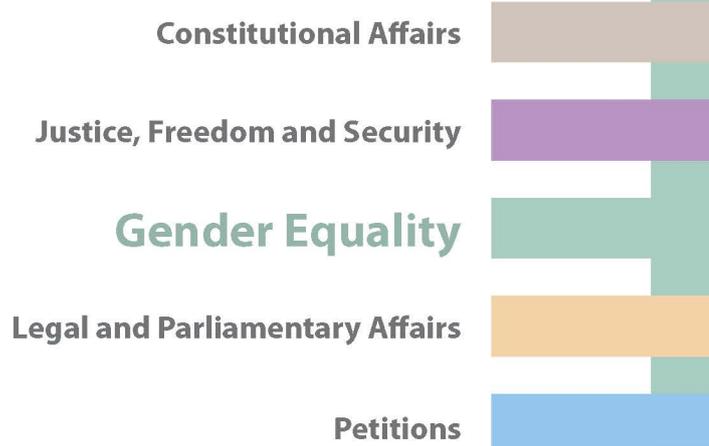


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT **C**
CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



**Empowerment of Roma
Women within the European
Framework of National
Roma Inclusion Strategies**

STUDY





ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT EUROOPA PARLAMENT ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN PARLAIMINT NA HEORPA PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EIROPAS PARLAMENTS
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DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

**POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

GENDER EQUALITY

Empowerment of Roma Women within the European Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies

STUDY

Abstract

This study focuses on the concept of empowerment of Romani women to analyse the existing living conditions of Romani women, interpret the national Roma inclusion strategy and to scrutinise good practices. The analysis shows that the present living conditions of Romani women in European Member States call for intervention. Romani women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming approaches have to be fostered in National Roma Inclusion Strategies.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CSOs** Civil Society Organisations
- CSWD** Commission Staff Working document
- EC** European Commission
- EP** European Parliament
- ESF** European Social Fund
- EU** European Union
- GII** Gender Inequality Index
- NCP** National Contact Point
- NGOs** Non-Governmental Organisations
- NRIS** National Roma Inclusion Strategy
- UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In the EU there are about 6 million Roma who differ in terms of languages, social, cultural and religious attitudes, model of settlement and legal status. Discrimination traps Romani communities in a vicious circle of poverty (more than 90% of Romani people in Europe live in poverty) and social exclusion. Prejudices and negative stereotypes on Roma are deeply rooted in Europe. The situation is even worse for women who suffer from severe forms of discrimination also within their own communities.

The attention of the European Union institutions regarding Romani's conditions has been materialized in many concrete actions, among them the most recent and relevant steps taken are the adoption of the "Ten principles for Roma inclusion" on April 2009 (annexed to the Council conclusions of June 2009, that include also a special attention to the gender issue), and the adoption of the EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion approved by the Parliament on March 2011 and adopted by the European Council on June 2011. More recently the European Commission has taken one further step proposing a "Council recommendation on effective Roma Integration measures in Member States".

Aim

This report presents the results of the analysis on **the empowerment of Romani women in EU Member States**, as outlined by the National Roma Inclusion Strategies, within the framework of European Roma inclusion strategies. It aims to provide background information to the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM) of the European Parliament.

The report's main objectives are:

- To provide a **knowledge of Romani women's conditions** in EU member states based on the most recent data;
- To **discuss** the attention that the 28 National **strategies for Roma inclusion** pay to the needs of **Romani women** and the measures to their **empowerment**;
- To **present** selected **good practices** concerning **Romani women's empowerment** in relation to the four key fields of intervention of the strategy for Roma inclusion identified by the European institutions: education, employment, health, and housing.

Methodology

The study applies an **integrated** methodological approach:

- Analysis of Roma women's conditions is based on **secondary data** collected through the UNDP/WB/EC survey that was conducted in May-July 2011 on a random sample of Roma and non-Roma households living in areas with higher density (or concentration) of Roma populations in the country¹.
- **Literature review** concerning Roma women conditions in EU Member States.

¹ The other EU Member States involved in the survey were Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and the non-EU Member States of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova and Serbia. In each of the countries, approximately 750 Roma households and approximately 350 non-Roma households living in proximity were interviewed.

- Analysis of the 28 national strategies for Roma inclusion focusing on Roma women's conditions and policies to empower them.
- Analysis and **evaluation of good practices** implemented in the EU Member States related to the four main areas of interest of the strategy: education, employment, health, housing.

Key Findings

A. Main Conclusions

1. Romani women's conditions in the EU Member States

- ❖ **Discrimination** traps Romani communities in a **vicious circle of poverty** (more than 90% of Romani people in Europe live in poverty) and **social exclusion**. Among Roma illiteracy is widespread; and children have **poor school attendance**. The situation is even **worse for women** who suffer from severe forms of **discrimination also within their own communities**, with Romani girls being often at higher disadvantage compared to Romani boys.

- ❖ **Roma legal status**

A considerable **part** of the Romani population in the European Member States does **not have** any **legal status**. This is a fundamental issue, as it strongly **influences the rights** to social security, to healthcare and to education, as well as the standards of living and possibilities to participate in public and political life of both Romani women and men. For stateless persons, this conditions increase their risk of being discriminated.

- ❖ **EU institutions and Romani women's protection**

The **legal framework for EU action** against discrimination of the Romani communities is based on the **constitutive documents** and in the inspiring principles of the European Union. The **European Parliament** has adopted some **resolutions to improve living** conditions of Romani people in the EU.

- ❖ **The EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion**

Regarding the situation of **Romani women**, the strategy is to address and define the following objectives (among others): **preventing human rights abuses and protecting victims** with particular attention to the situation of Roma children and women; **reducing health inequalities** with special emphasis on the **protection of vulnerable groups including women**; ensuring **gender equality mainstreaming** by addressing the **specific needs of Romani women** while **involving** them in the development of **policies**; and by **explicitly asking to stop** the practice of **child marriages**'.

❖ **EU institutions and empowerment of Roma**

The resolution on the EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion (March 2011) stresses the relevance of empowerment, albeit in a gender neutral way (gender is not explicitly mentioned with regard to empowerment).

❖ **Staff Working Documents and steps forward**

"The National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework"² presents the collection of the Staff Working Documents **analysing the National Roma Inclusion Strategies**. The "**Steps forward** in implementing National Roma Integration Strategies"³ was instrumental in rethinking and developing national strategies in **concrete terms**, in particular by seeking to organise **horizontal and vertical dialogue** as well as **coordination** for the implementation of their strategies.

❖ **Women discrimination of the Roma communities**

Due to patriarchal traditions, Romani women and girls still **do not enjoy full respect for their freedom of choice** in matters concerning the most fundamental decisions of their lives, and they still face **significant levels of discrimination** and difficulties in all areas of life. Romani women/girls are still highly **undervalued** in their communities regardless of which group/subgroup they belong to.

Having a subordinate role in the families, a large number of Romani women suffer **physical or sexual violence** and a great number of them are victims of **domestic violence**, in many cases over long periods of time. Domestic violence takes various forms and modalities, and living in the extended families makes it more difficult to a woman-victim, as her **freedom of movement is often limited**. She is watched by family members, especially in critical situations, in order to prevent her from escaping from the abusive husband.

❖ **Romani women's educational level**

Romani women's educational level is **lower** than those of **Romani men** and than that of **non-Romani women**. This is due to **direct** and **indirect discrimination** by the main society as well as to **early marriage** and **motherhood**.

❖ **Romani women's employment**

Romani women's low employment rate is related to their **low education, high family care responsibility and discrimination** in accessing the labour market.

❖ **Romani women's health**

Romani women's socio economic conditions represent the strongest and most consisted predictors of poor health. Besides, Romani women face **discrimination** and **inequalities in accessing health** services. Romani women have been victim of forced sterilization in recent years in some EU countries.

² European Commission (21 May 2012 a)

³ European Commission (26 June 2012).

❖ **Romani women's housing conditions**

Segregation and **sub-standard**, poor and extremely precarious living conditions characterise Roma housing. This condition **affects** Romani women's **opportunity for social and labour inclusion** more than men, because of the **family care responsibilities** they have and **difficulties** to accept **job not close** to the house.

2. A new approach: Romani women's empowerment

- ❖ In the patriarchal Roma system, Romani women experience **oppression** as men make the rules by which women have to live. Empowering women's means giving them the capacity to define their own choices in life and to pursue their own goals.
- ❖ **Romani women's empowerment** is a **new approach** to improving Romani women's living conditions. It requires **long term** and **high commitment**, involving both **top-down** (state) and **bottom up** (CSO) strategies. Romani women's empowerment addresses three different dimensions: **personal, relational, and collective**.

3. Romani women empowerment in NRIS

- ❖ **Romani women's empowerment** is explicitly mentioned in 6 NRISs out of 28: **Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden**.
- ❖ **Empowering as the outcome of given** process is **mentioned** in **20** out of 28 NRISs.
- ❖ **Gender equality** is mentioned in the general approach of most of the NRIS concerning equal treatment but **in few NRIS gender mainstreaming** is applied.
- ❖ In the **European Commission (EC) Staff working document**, Romani women's empowerment has **never been explicitly** mentioned, neither in the key elements nor in the identified gaps.

4. Good practices in Romani women's empowerment.

Good practices have been found concerning Romani Women's Empowerment in the EU Member States:

- a. Education: "Empowering Romani parents to support upbringing and education of their children";
- b. Employment: 'Empowering Romani people as beneficiaries of initiatives for labour market integration through participation in the design of active labour market measures, their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation';
- c. Health: '**Empow-air: Empowering women against intimate partnership violence in Roma communities**'.
- d. 'Mentor program for future Romani and migrant women politicians'.

B. Recommendations

In order to promote Romani women's empowerment, an integrated approach that involves different levels of governance is recommended.

Recommendations for **National Governments**

1. **Assume an evidence-based policy approach, grounded** on the analysis of **gender disaggregated** data concerning outputs and outcomes of policy.
2. Make the actual **policy participatory approach operational** by involving all stakeholders throughout the policy-making process. **Romani women have to be involved** in the analysis of their needs, in planning policy and related services, implementing actions, in monitoring and evaluating the outputs and the outcome of the services and of the policies. The active **participation of Romani women's CSOs at local, national, and European level**, as well as of **gender equality bodies and women's rights organizations**, is indispensable.

Specifically with regard to the five key policy areas:

3. Promote Romani women's **political participation** by introducing **Romani women's quotas** at all governmental levels.
4. **Housing policy**: improve housing conditions and desegregation of Roma communities by means of supporting active participation of Romani women's CSOs;
5. **Employment policy**: enhance access to the labour market with measures countering Romani women's horizontal (glass box) and vertical (glass ceiling) segregation;
6. **Education policy**: guarantee access to high quality educational programs for Romani women and girls;
7. **Health policy**: Support active participation of Romani women's CSOs in the drawing-up, implementation and evaluation of health policy concerning Romani women;

Recommendations to the **European Parliament**

The **European Parliament should**:

1. Promote the adoption of **an integrated - gender mainstreamed - evidence-based – participatory** policy approach in the National Roma Inclusion Strategy focused on Romani women's human rights.
2. Raise the conditions of **Romani women in discussions with national parliaments** so that Member States are encouraged **to include** their **empowerment** as a key element in the national strategies to improve the overall condition of all Roma communities;
3. Call upon the Commission to observe that **Romani women's rights** are reflected as a crucial dimension in the national strategies and that gender mainstreaming as a tool supports the reduction of gender inequality and discrimination against Romani women within the Roma communities and in the society.

4. Cooperate with the Council and the Commission to develop more **assertive and binding tools** to promote Roma inclusion in EU Member States, for example by including appropriate objectives in the European Semester process as the situation of Roma minorities influences the economic and social performance of Member States.

Recommendations for the **European Commission**

1. Implement an integrated - **gender mainstreamed - life course – evidence-based – participatory** policy approach focused on Romani women's human rights in the National Roma Inclusion strategies with in particular:
 - a. Specific attention to the **interrelation between the four key areas** (education, employment, health, housing) with a special attention on housing as starting point because of the influence that housing conditions and segregation have on education, employment and health. Moreover, integration implies also a strong relationship to gender equality policies.
 - b. Specific attention in policy making to **the life-course** of Romani women as their needs are different according to their age and because previous life experiences affect all the subsequent living conditions. The empowering approach has to address Romani women's needs in different moments of their lives, through their young, adult, and older age.
2. Request **Roma inclusion in EU Member States in a more sensitive and assertive way.**
3. Foster **specific tools targeted at Romani women's empowerment** in the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion.
4. Foster **gender equality** as a **key objective** to contrast the discrimination Romani women experience within their communities and as a part of the Romani women's empowerment strategy in the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion.
5. Define a clear **step by step EU Roma inclusion process**, linking each local and national initiative to the fulfilment of EU community goals, and establish a clear definition of the procedures concerning the involvement of stakeholders; draw up objectives, implementation processes, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments and allocate resources through the EU budget.
6. Propose measures to eliminate **health inequalities** for Romani women as a prerequisite for Romani women's empowerment.
7. Promote **mutual learning processes** among EU Member States with regard to EU good practices in Romani women's empowerment.
8. Include specific objectives to **tackle trafficking of Romani women in the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion.**

Recommendations for the **European Council**

1. **Invite Member States** to adopt a **policy approach** focused on **Romani women's human rights and empowerment** within the framework of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy by reminding that **all the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion** should be **equally taken into consideration** when designing, implementing and evaluating policies aimed at promoting Roma inclusion. More particularly, Member States should be invited to consider the following:

“awareness of the gender dimension”, “involvement of civil society” and “active participation of the Roma”.

2. Encourage **better cooperation among Member States** in the framework of the **open method of coordination** for health and social inclusion for the **exchange of good practices** for Roma inclusion with special attention to **Roma women’s empowerment** in the **four areas of intervention** and with the aim of assuming an integrated approach between the different areas.
3. **Invite Member States** to assume, besides targeted actions, also a **mainstreaming approach** in the fields of education, employment, housing, and healthcare, towards Romani people and in particular towards **Romani women’s empowerment** with a view to effectively promote their social inclusion.

1. THE EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY AND THE ROMA

KEY FINDINGS

- In the EU, **6 million Roma** live in **communities** which **differ** in terms of languages, social, cultural, and religious attitudes; models of settlement; and legal status.
- **Prejudices** and **negative stereotypes** on Roma are deeply **rooted in Europe**.
- **Romani women** are exposed to **multiple and intersectional discriminations**.
- **Combating social exclusion, discrimination, and inequality** is an explicit **commitment** of the **European Union**.
- The **European Parliament's Resolution** of March 2011 stresses the relevance of Roma **empowerment**, albeit in a **gender neutral** way.

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Definition of Roma

The Council of Europe⁴ has introduced a definition of "Roma" which has been commonly adopted also by the European Union institutions⁵. It refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom); it covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

1.1.2. Data and differences among communities

Roma⁶ are estimated to be the largest minority group in the European Union (with 6 million people residing in most of the EU countries **highly concentrated in Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary**⁷) and in Europe at large (10/12 million people)⁸. They live in communities which differ in terms of languages, social, cultural and religious attitudes, models of settlement and legal status. These differences are related to each group's specific history, migration processes, present and past public policies and to the socio-economic conditions they experience.

1.1.3. Discrimination of the Roma and Romani women

In all the EU Member States, Roma are still exposed to **multiple and intersectional discriminations on the basis of many grounds** among which ethnicity and language are

⁴ Council of Europe's (18 May 2012).

⁵ See the definition presented on the European Commission's webpage on the Roma (mentioned in the list of references): "the term "Roma" here refers to a variety of groups of people who describe themselves as Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Sinti and other titles. The use of the term Roma is in no way intended to downplay the great diversity within the many different Romani groups and related communities, nor is it intended to promote stereotypes."

⁶ "In the Romani language, rom is a masculine noun, meaning "man, husband", the plural is roma. Romani is the feminine adjective, while romano is the masculine adjective. The term Roma is used as a noun for the whole community while Romani as an adjective. At the European Union level, policy-makers have chosen to use the term Roma to encompass different related groups throughout Europe (Roma, Sinti, Manouches, Kalés, Kaalés, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkalis, Égyptiens, Yéniches, Travellers, Doms, Loms, etc...), nevertheless taking into account cultural diversity and lifestyles. When referring to EU policies the same distinction is kept (European Women's Lobby Position Paper, 2012:3).

⁷ Council of Europe (latest update: 2010).

⁸ FRA/UNDP (2012).

the pivotal ones⁹. Discrimination traps Romani communities in a vicious circle of poverty (more than 90% of Romani people in Europe live in poverty) and social exclusion. Among Roma, **illiteracy is widespread**; children have poor school attendance. The situation is even **worse for women** who suffer from severe forms of discrimination also within their own communities, with Romani girls being often at higher disadvantage compared to Romani boys¹⁰. Roma usually **live in segregated, isolated districts** where the living conditions are frequently poor, with problems of extreme overcrowding and lack of basic facilities. This contributes also to **aggravating Romani people's health conditions**, especially for Romani women and children. Roma tend to under-use healthcare services because of the negative attitudes/racism/discrimination of some healthcare professionals that also affects their use of family planning services.

Prejudice and negative stereotypes

Prejudices and negative stereotypes on Roma are deeply rooted in Europe, and are reinforced by public leaders and opinion bodies using **racist or stigmatising rhetoric** that has also generated **mob violence** in recent years (this is the case of Hungary where in recent years Romani people have been the target of threats and intimidation by neo-Nazi groups¹¹). **Print and broadcast media tend to report on Roma only in the context of social problems and crime**. Moreover, there is a diffuse lack of recognition of Roma history of past suffering, particularly during the Second World War, when for instance in Germany few thousand Roma survived the genocide in Nazi concentration camps¹².

1.1.4. Legal status of the Roma across EU Member States

Another relevant issue is the legal status of Romani people. The legal status of the Romani minority differs across Europe from country to country and from group to group: it is related, on the one hand, to the period of migration of the groups, and on the other hand recognition in each country as an ethnic or national minority. Some groups of long-established migration are **citizens** of the country where they live, where they are considered national minorities or ethnic minorities and have full citizenship they have freedom of movement within the Union¹³.

There are countries in which some groups are considered **refugees or asylum-seekers** and have no residence permit; in other countries they are considered asylum-seekers/refugees but not in the condition to obtain the official status.

In the last two decades, Roma have **migrated from Eastern European countries** inside or outside the Union because of **armed conflicts, forced migration or poverty conditions**. These Roma communities are characterised by a **precarious legal status** bringing about a condition of **limited access to rights and high vulnerability**.

Roma are recognised as a **national minority** in Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Spain, Germany and United Kingdom, and as **ethnic minority** in Austria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Poland. The lack of identification as ethnic minority affects their full access to the rights deriving from this status in all of the countries, and to specific policy and action against discrimination.

A considerable part of the Romani population in the European Member States **does not have any authorized legal status**. This is a fundamental issue, as it strongly **influences rights** to the social security and health system and to education, as well as the standard of

⁹ See: Sigona, N. and Trehan, N. (eds) (2009); Griffiths, D., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R. (2005).

¹⁰ See section 2.1.3 for further details.

¹¹ See for example: <http://www.dw.de/hungarian-roma-flee-homes-fearing-vigilante-attacks/a-15024684>

¹² (Council of Europe, February 2012).

¹³ Liégeois J.P. (2007).

living and possibilities **to participate in public and political life** of both Romani women and men. As **stateless persons** they have a higher risk of being discriminated. The FRA¹⁴ report 2012 states (referring to a declaration of the Commissioner for Human Rights) that “tens of thousands of Roma live in Europe without a nationality. Lacking birth certificates, identity cards, passports and other documents, they are **often denied basic rights** such as education, health care, social assistance and the right to vote, ”.

Extreme poverty and marginalisation are the main barriers to access to documents and effective citizenship. An evident and strong commitment of all Member States would be necessary to **tackle these structural discriminatory elements**.

1.2. EU Institutions and the Roma

Over the last decade, European Union institutions and agencies have put the human rights situation of Roma on their political agenda, acknowledging that: *“Many Roma still face deep poverty, profound social exclusion, barriers in exercising fundamental rights, and discrimination, which often means limited access to quality education, jobs and services, low income levels, sub-standard housing conditions, poor health and lower life expectancy”*¹⁵

The legal framework for European Union (EU) action against discrimination towards the Romani communities is based on the constitutive documents and in the inspiring principles of the EU. Combating social exclusion, discrimination, and inequality is an explicit commitment of the EU¹⁶. Therefore, the EU can take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation¹⁷. Discrimination against the Roma communities is a widespread phenomenon in the EU countries, in breach of the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, equality, human rights, on which the European Union is based¹⁸.

1.2.1. The European Parliament for the Roma and Romani women empowerment

European Parliament (EP) activities on the situation of the Roma

The European Parliament has taken action to improve the living conditions of Romani people in the EU. The initiatives of the last decade of the EP concerning the Situation of Romani people are the resolutions on:

¹⁴ FRA/UNDP (2012), pp.:183-184

¹⁵ Council of the European Union (24 May 2011).

¹⁶ As set out, inter alia, in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (2012) as well as Articles 8, 9 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012).

¹⁷ As stated in Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012).

¹⁸ As it follows from Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (2012) and from Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2010).

- Roma in the European Union (April, 2005)¹⁹;
- The Situation of Romani Women in the European Union (June, 2006)²⁰;
- A European strategy on the Roma (March, 2008)²¹;
- The Social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU (March, 2009)²²;
- The Second European Roma Summit (March, 2010)²³;
- Social Integration of Women belonging to Ethnic Minority Groups (September, 2010)²⁴;
- The Situation of the Romani people and freedom of movement in Europe (September, 2010)²⁵;
- The EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion (March, 2011)²⁶.

The March 2011 Resolution presents the:

“EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion as an EU-wide, indicative, inclusive and multilevel action plan, to be prepared and implemented at all political and administrative level building on the fundamental values of equality, access to rights, non-discrimination and gender equality and to be based on the tasks, objectives, principles and instruments defined by the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, as referred to above, as well as the relevant EU legislation and is furthermore based on shared competences, as well as the supporting, coordinating and complementary actions of the Union”.

European Parliament for Romani women empowerment

In particular, as regards the situation of Roma women, the Resolution proposes the following objectives (among others):

- *“Preventing human rights abuses and protecting victims, ensuring that legal aid and effective legal remedies are provided for them, with **particular attention to the situation of Roma children and women, who are often subject to multiple discrimination**,*
- *combating health inequalities by providing **equal access to quality health care and health promotion, particularly in order to reduce health inequalities with special emphasis on the protection of vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities**,*
- *ensuring **gender equality mainstreaming** by addressing the specific needs of Roma women while involving them in the development of policies; stopping the practice of child marriages”.*

The resolution stresses the relevance of empowerment, even if the statement to this regard is gender neutral:

*“**empowering Roma civil society**, including by means of a capacity-building policy and by strengthening administrative capacity at national, regional and local level as well as encouraging the civil and political participation of Roma people”.*

¹⁹ European Parliament (8 April 2005).

²⁰ European Parliament (1 June 2006).

²¹ European Parliament (31 January 2008).

²² European Parliament (11 March 2009).

²³ European Parliament (25 March 2010).

²⁴ Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P7-TA-European Parliament \(7 September 2010-0305+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN\)](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P7-TA-European Parliament (7 September 2010-0305+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN)).

²⁵ European Parliament (9 September 2010).

²⁶ European Parliament (9 March 2011).

As a consequence, on 5 April 2011 the European Commission adopted a Communication on a "EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020" aimed at integrating the objectives of the EU Strategy for Roma Inclusion in the framework of the EU 2020 Strategy. The strategy is analysed in the next section in general and with specific attention to gender and empowerment

1.2.2. Romani women empowerment in the EU Framework

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 adopted by the European Commission is structured in 9 Sections:

1. Improving the Situation of Roma: a Social and Economic Imperative for the Union and its Member States,
2. A Need for a Targeted Approach: an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies,
3. Expressing the EU Ambition: Setting Roma Integration Goals,
4. National Roma Integration Strategies: a Clear Policy Commitment from Member States,
5. Achieving Concrete Results for Roma People, that is divided into two sections: Making progress under the present programming period (2007-2013) and Beyond,
6. Promoting Roma Integration beyond the EU: the Particular Situation of Enlargement Countries,
7. Empowering Civil Society: a Stronger Role for the European Platform for Roma Inclusion,
8. Measuring Progress: Putting in Place a Robust Monitoring System,
9. Conclusion: 10 Years to Make a Difference.

It explicitly **recognises gender differences only in relation to the objectives on health:**

*"This is why Member States should **provide access to quality healthcare especially for children and women** as well as preventive care and social services at a similar level and under the same conditions to the Roma as to the rest of the population. Where possible, qualified Roma should be involved in healthcare programmes targeting their communities."*

However, the Commission communication refers to the **Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion**²⁷ which comprise the principle of gender equality, although formulated in a way that is insufficiently binding:

1. *"constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies,*
2. *explicit but not exclusive targeting,*
3. *inter-cultural approach,*
4. *aiming for the mainstream,*
5. ***awareness of the gender dimension,***
6. *transfer of evidence-based policies,*
7. *use of EU instruments,*

²⁷ They were stated at the first Platform for Roma Inclusion on April 2009 and annexed to the Council conclusions of 8 June 2009. The Platform was launched in April 2009 in Prague and brings together experts from Member States, EU civil servants, the main international organisations, NGOs, representatives of Roma civil society as well as academics and experts in the field. The aim of the Platform is to provide an arena for exchanging knowledge, experience and good practice, for making commitments on specific initiatives and possibly for monitoring progress achieved towards the inclusion of Roma in Europe. For more information see the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/meetings_en.htm
In 2009 the European Commission published a handbook on how to implement activities and projects to favour Roma inclusion comprising the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion to promote them among policy makers.

8. *involvement of regional and local authorities,*
9. *involvement of civil society,*
10. *active participation of Roma”.*

The document devotes an entire section to empowerment (Section 7: **Empowering Civil Society: a Stronger Role for the European Platform for Roma Inclusion**) which recalls the importance of the European Platform as a forum for debate and concerted actions of all relevant stakeholders at both EU level and Member states' level. Empowerment is also addressed by the term “civic participation”. The involvement of Roma in decisions that concern them is considered in two sections:

In Section 1 (Improving the Situation of Roma: a Social and Economic Imperative for the Union and its Member States), the identification of Roma's specific needs regarding equal access to employment, education, housing, and healthcare is indicated as a privileged route to meet the challenges of improving their living conditions.

In Section 3 (Expressing the EU Ambition: setting Roma Integration Goals), active participation of Roma families is considered as key to improve the education level of Romani children with as a minimum target Roma children complete at least primary school.

1.2.3. National Roma Integration Strategies

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) unanimously backed the Framework on 19 May 2011²⁸. The European Council in its conclusions of 24 June 2011²⁹ welcomed the Communication which invited Member States to adopt or develop further a comprehensive approach to Roma inclusion and encouraged

*“them to set achievable national goals in the fields of **education, employment, healthcare and housing**, as well as to put in place monitoring mechanisms and 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 account the different national circumstances”³⁰.*

Since June 2011, the EU Member States have adopted their Roma Integration Strategies or have presented their sets of policy measures within their social integration strategies for improving the situation of Romani women. Every EU country has also indicated the National Contact Point (NCP) for the implementation of the Strategy or the Set of Policy Measures. The EC assessed these strategies and published its conclusions which were adopted on 21 May 2012³¹.

²⁸ Council of the European Union (19 May 2011).

²⁹ Council of the European Union (23/24 June 2011)

³⁰ Previous initiatives of the Council have been: the presentation of the Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion (8 June 2009); the Conclusions on Advancing Roma Inclusion (7 June 2010) when the Europe 2020 Strategy was adopted; the adoption of the Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion (21 February 2011).

³¹ See the References for the availability of National Roma Integration Strategies. For the respective assessments in the Staff working documents see European commission (21 May 2012 b).

Financial support through EU's structural funds

The EU's cohesion policy complements the broader European policy agenda of non-discrimination and social inclusion by **co-financing a range of projects to support Roma inclusion**.³² Many EU policies help to promote Roma inclusion and integration in the European society: The European Social Fund (ESF) which supports the improvement of living and working conditions of Roma, in particular by investing in education and skills development; The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the PROGRESS programme (including the 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination' information campaign), funded awareness-raising activities aiming at combating discrimination against Roma and supporting the networking of NGOs representing Roma and defending their rights; other European Commission activities and related funding mechanisms (Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action Programme Culture, Public health Programme).

The overall **European policy approach has been widely endorsed by eminent scholars** studying the issue, however further actions for improvement have been highlighted³³. Likewise, in the context of this study, it became evident that there is **still room for strengthening the commitment towards gender equality in the Roma inclusion strategies** as the gender equality principles on which the strategies are based have to be considered as not sufficiently binding with negative consequences for women's empowerment.

1.2.4. Other activities on the European level addressing Romani women and their living conditions

European Parliament

After March 2011, the EP has never again directly addressed the issue of Roma, however the **living conditions of Roma women** have been taken in due consideration in other resolutions. It is possible to recall the following:

- On the impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women's rights³⁴;
- On strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime³⁵;
- On women's rights in the Balkan accession countries (May, 2013)³⁶;
- Impact of the crisis on access to care for vulnerable groups (July, 2013)³⁷;
- On social housing in the European Union (June, 2013)³⁸;
- Provisional edition Situation of fundamental rights: standards and practices in Hungary (July, 2013)³⁹.

European Commission

The EC, following the requests of the EP resolution "The EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion (March, 2011)"⁴⁰ produced a number of documents in which the activities of Member States in relation to Roma living conditions are assessed and shows ways of how to improve the implementation of the strategies.

³² See: ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/activity/roma/index_en.cfm

³³ Sigona, N. and Vermeersch, P. (eds) (2012); Sigona, N. and Trehan, N. (2011), Kocze A. and Popa R. L., (2009); Kahanec M., Zaiceva A., Zimmermann K. F. (2010); Demirovski, M. (2013).

³⁴ European Parliament (19 February 2013).

³⁵ European Parliament (14 March 2013).

³⁶ European Parliament (4 April 2013).

³⁷ European Parliament (18 June 2013).

³⁸ European Parliament (30 April 2013).

³⁹ European Parliament resolution 3 July 2013.

⁴⁰ European Parliament (9 March 2011).

- ❖ "The National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework"⁴¹ presents the collection of the Staff Working Documents analysing the National Roma Inclusion Strategies.
- ❖ The "Steps forward in implementing National Roma Integration Strategies (June, 2013)"⁴² was instrumental in rethinking and developing national strategies in concrete terms, in particular by seeking to organise horizontal and vertical dialogue as well as coordination for the implementation of their strategies.
- ❖ To speed up the progress on Roma integration along the four pillars of access to education, employment, healthcare and housing, the Commission presented also a "Proposal for a Council recommendation on effective Roma Integration measures in Member States" (June, 2013)⁴³.

⁴¹ European Commission (21 May 2012 b).

⁴² European Commission (26 June 2013).

⁴³ European Commission (26 June 2013).

2. THE SITUATION OF ROMA WOMEN IN MEMBER STATES

KEY FINDINGS

- The **Roma patriarchal family** model affects Romani women's access to basic **human rights** and exposes them to all forms of **violence**.
- Romani women's **educational level** is **lower** compared to Romani men as well as to non-Romani women.
- **Direct** and **indirect discrimination** by the main society. On one hand, **early marriage** and **motherhood**; on the other hand, affect Romani women's level of education.
- Romani women's **low employment** rate is related to **low education, high family care responsibility**, as well as **discrimination** in accessing the labour market.
- Romani women's **socio-economic conditions** represent the strongest and most consisted predictors of **poor health**.
- Romani women have been victim of **forced sterilization** in some EU countries also in recent years.
- Romani women face **discrimination** and **inequalities** in accessing health services.
- **Segregation** and **sub-standard**, poor or even extremely precarious living conditions characterise Roma **housing**.
- **Housing segregation** affects Romani women's opportunity for **social and labour inclusion**.

2.1. Discrimination of women within the Roma communities⁴⁴

2.1.1. Gender inequality

Romani women are subordinated to men within the Roma patriarchal family system. Nonetheless, relations between men and women differ according to groups and nationalities. In most of the Roma communities, young women's choices are overdependent from family and communities' rules and interests.

2.1.2. Control of women's body

In traditional patriarchal communities, young women are barred from **public life**: they cannot leave their communities without being watched by other family members. **Virginity** of the girl is very important for the honour of all family members and weddings are celebrated traditionally but in most of the cases not legally. Preservation of chastity is of special importance and in most of the subgroups evidence of preserved virginity are publicly shown and specially celebrated⁴⁵. The parents of the girl receive **money** from the boy's family. An exploratory qualitative research in Rome, **Italy**, brought to the light that

⁴⁴ Data concerning women discrimination within their own communities are part of the results of the exploratory research run within the project 'Empow-air, Empowering Women Against Intimate partnership violence in Roma communities', involving Bulgaria, Italy, Spain and Romania.

⁴⁵ SURT (2012) Empow-air, Empowering Women Against Intimate partnership violence in Roma communities, National Bulgarian country report, p. 9-10

payment for a beautiful, virgin, young woman could reach 80,000 Euro⁴⁶. **Arranged marriage and child marriage are common practice**, accepted by Roma women⁴⁷.

2.1.3. Women's subordination to the family

An exploratory qualitative research in **Bulgaria** shows that

«from early childhood a Romani girl is taught that the most important thing is family. Preparation for family life starts at very early age. Before starting to visit school, a Roma girl is supposed to know how to observe personal hygiene, how to maintain a house clean, how to sweep floors (in poor households) or to use a vacuum-cleaner (in richer households), how to do laundry (some subgroups insist male and female clothes to be washed separately), how to clean dust, to wash dishes, to assist in cooking, and to take care of smaller siblings or cousins. The young bride is usually expected to live in her husband's parents' house and to accept without objection the order and the power of her mother-in-law and her husband there. It is considered a serious offence by the young wife to disobey to the slightest extent her mother-in-law's requirements on cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing, on the cares to be performed for the husband and his parents, as well as on the behaviour before other relatives. Any absence from home without permission or other disobedience leads to punishment. The young bride is expected to become pregnant and give birth as soon as possible. Delay of pregnancy may be used as a ground for dissolution of marriage and expulsion of the girl. Young girls are presumed guilty for not becoming pregnant immediately or fast enough. Birth of a child, especially son, increases first the social status of the husband and the girl's mother-in-law, and just then her own»⁴⁸.

Community expectations towards women

The same research from **Bulgaria** explored the Community expectations towards women and concluded that

*'the young woman is expected to be a good and caring mother, housewife, wife and daughter-in-law and simultaneously to prove constantly her **fertility**. Usually this is proved by giving birth to second and third child within short periods of time. In most of the traditional families if the first children are girls, the young spouse can be required to give births until a son is born. The woman may be chased out of the family if she continues to give births to girls. **Abortion** is another evidence of female fertility and male potency and therefore in many traditional communities and families women are required to use **no contraceptives**. In 2009, young Roma women from Samokov with adequate education explained that neither their husbands, nor their mothers-in-law would allow the use of contraceptives due to "prestige" considerations. The good wife is expected to demonstrate her love for her husband and to be ready to "pay for his pleasure with her blood and pain". In addition, complaints in the pub before friends that he needs once again money for abortion allow the man to demonstrate indirectly "how strong his semen is", i.e. his sexual potency.' Roma women are entirely responsible for household, taking care of all husband wishes, raising children and serving parents in law⁴⁹.*

⁴⁶ SURT (2012) Empow-air, Empowering Women Against Intimate partnership violence in Roma communities, National Italian country report, Angela Genova- Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini

⁴⁷ Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance (2011).

⁴⁸ SURT (2012) Empow-air, Empowering Women Against Intimate partnership violence in Roma communities, National Bulgarian country report, p. 9-10.

⁴⁹ SURT (2012) Empow-air, Empowering Women Against Intimate partnership violence in Roma communities, National Bulgarian country report.

2.1.4. Intimate partnership violence

Intimate partnership violence is **socially accepted** as a legal exercise of men's power. Access to social and protection services for Romani women is very difficult because of the general mistrust between public services and Roma communities and the fear of losing the support of the family and communities⁵⁰.

2.1.5. Trafficking and sexual exploitation

Particularly low socio-economic conditions and low educational achievements bring about higher vulnerability for young Roma women⁵¹, and increase the risk of trafficking and prostitution. Roma are estimated to represent between 50 and 80 % of trafficking victims in Eastern European countries⁵².

2.2. Education

The survey on the situation of Roma highlights that **only 15% of young Roma adults have completed upper secondary general or vocational education**⁵³. Gender-disaggregated data on Eastern European countries show that Romani women's educational level is lower than those of Romani men and than that of non-Romani-women. In **Bulgaria**, only 4.23 % of Romani women have completed secondary education, and only 0.24% have completed higher education⁵⁴. 23% of Romani women have not received any kind of formal education: the share is almost six times as high as the share among women in the general population (4 percent)⁵⁵. In **Albania**, almost one third of primary school aged Roma girls have not taken part in education, compared to 19 per cent of boys⁵⁶.

2.2.1. Direct and indirect discrimination by the main society

Many elements contribute to the low level of education of Romani women: they are victims of direct and indirect discrimination by the mainstream society. Segregation in 'special schools' for children with developmental disabilities, or in Roma ghetto schools or in all-Roma classes, are forms of **systematic racial segregation** in education that were subjects of proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights⁵⁷. Moreover, housing conditions affect children's school attendance because of the **difficulties in getting to the school** but also because of the threat or actual carrying out of **evictions**.

2.2.2. Discrimination within the Roma community

With regard to internal discrimination, the patriarchal family system and the highly differentiated gender roles in Roma communities overload women with family responsibility at an early age⁵⁸. At the age of 16, 50% of **Bulgarian** Roma with the lowest educational level is in a committed relationship⁵⁹. **Child marriage** affects girls' school attendance, undermining their right to education and limiting their future employment opportunities.

⁵⁰ SURT (2012) Empow-air, Empowering Women Against Intimate partnership violence in Roma communities, Toolkit.

⁵¹ Kocze A. And Popa R.L, (2009).

⁵² ERRC (March 2011).

⁵³ FRA/UNDP / (2012).

⁵⁴ Balogh, L. and Kocze, A., (2011).

⁵⁵ Surdu M. and Surdu L. (2006).

⁵⁶ UNICEF (2007).

⁵⁷ In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that this pattern of segregation violated non-discrimination protections in the European Convention on Human Rights. See: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/litigation/czechrepublic> See also: 'From Segregation to Inclusion: Roma Pupils in the United Kingdom. A Pilot Research Project'. November 2011 http://equality.uk.com/Education_files/From%20segregation%20to%20integration_1.pdf

⁵⁸ Corsi M. et al., (2008) and SURT (2012) Empow-air Comparative research report, 2012.

⁵⁹ Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, (2011).

Early school drop-out of Roma girls has been reported throughout Europe, including in **Albania, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo**.

Low education increases women's vulnerability and is one of the main factors behind social exclusion and poverty.

2.3. Employment

2.3.1. Access to employment and working conditions

Many barriers limit the access of Romani women to the formal economy. Discrimination occurs when they are looking for employment. Moreover, the **under-education of most Romani women is a structural limit** for accessing the labour market. A research carried out in **Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia** shows that one in four working Roma declares their **working conditions to be less favourable** than those of non-Roma doing the same job. Moreover, most of the university-educated Roma have found a **job related to their ethnicity**, such as community work, or are employed in public services dealing with Roma issues, trapped in a so-called '**glass box**'⁶⁰. Roma are **over-represented in under-qualified employment** and in the **informal economy**⁶¹.

Moreover, **indirect discrimination** against Roma can find its way in the administrative and legal architecture of a country: for instance, the **French** regulative system for accessing employment uses exceptions in the application of the right to free movement of workers to limit job opportunities for migrating population from Bulgaria and Romania, mostly affecting Roma people⁶².

Typical Roma **settlements**, located in the marginalised outskirts of urban spaces or in economically deprived county areas, hamper the access to the labour market. Furthermore the **lack of regular identification documents or proof of a permanent residence** makes it very difficult or even impossible for them to access any job or social services.

2.3.2. Internal community discrimination

In addition to these external structural and cultural barriers, Roma women have to deal with that strongly limits their opportunities for paid employment outside of their community as well as for economic independence. In the patriarchal family system women are accountable for house and family care, **even if Roma women frequently take part in small family-run economic activities** such as working in markets, rural trade and seasonal agricultural work. Women's **low educational level precludes them any occupation in production or services**. Roma women's integration into the labour market was aggravated by the socio-economic transformations which took place in the 1990s in former Eastern European countries⁶³.

Women's family responsibilities and the lack of adequate public services to support childcare strongly affect women's participation to the labour market.

2.4. Physical and mental health

Romani **women's socio-economic conditions** represent the strongest and most consistent predictors of poor health. Pervasive poverty, geographic isolation, direct discrimination by healthcare providers, direct and indirect discrimination in governmental

⁶⁰ ERRC, The glass box: exclusion of Roma from employment, Budapest, February 2007, p. 44.

⁶¹ Council of Europe, February 2012: p. 163.

⁶² Council of Europe (20 November 2008).

⁶³ Council of Europe, February 2012.

policies, lack of citizenship and personal documents, communication barriers between Roma and healthcare providers represent the main barriers to equal access to health care⁶⁴. On the other hand, in most Roma communities, women's health and maternity choices are often managed at family and community level.

Data show higher rates of poor health and mortality among Roma than in society at large⁶⁵. **Life expectancy of the Roma population in Eastern Europe is about 10 years less** than that of the overall population. In Slovakia, life expectancy of Romani women is 17 years lower than that of the majority population⁶⁶. 51% of Roma women aged 16-50 living in settlements near Belgrade, **Serbia**, were found to be **undernourished**. Almost all women in Roma settlements around Belgrade smoke tobacco, many beginning at the age of 11 or 12⁶⁷. In the survey⁶⁸ on the status of Romani women in **Romania**, the percentage of Romani women evaluating their health as poor was higher compared to non-Romani women.

2.4.1. Reproductive health

Most Romani women from the sample (88%) are aware of contraceptive methods, but almost one third (36%) say they have never used any. **In the sample, abortion is the main contraceptive method for 78% of Romani women**. 71% of Romani women taking part in the survey have declared **experiences of ethnic discrimination from medical staff**.

Of particular importance is the status and care of pregnant and parturient Roma women. In **Bulgaria** and **Hungary**, as well as in other EU countries, pregnant Roma women are segregated from others in hospital wards **with lower frequency in staff visits**⁶⁹.

2.4.2. Forced sterilisations

In 2007 and 2008, cases of forced sterilisations were reported. Presently, two trials regarding coercive/forcible sterilisation brought by Romani women are pending before the European Court of Human Rights against the **Czech Republic**⁷⁰. In 2011, a similar case for **Slovakia** was judged by the European Court of Human Rights⁷¹. Between 1971 and 1991 in Czechoslovakia, now Czech Republic and Slovakia, the "reduction of the Roma population" through surgical sterilization, performed without the knowledge of the women themselves, was a widespread governmental practice. The sterilization would be performed on Romani women without their knowledge during Caesarean sections or abortions⁷².

2.5. Accessing housing

Residential segregation

Discrimination takes place when Roma try to access adequate housing, as well as in housing policy and practice. Residential segregation of Roma is evident in **Bulgaria**,

⁶⁴ EUMC (2003) and Genova A. (2011).

⁶⁵ Ringold D, Orenstein MA, and Wilkens E. (2003).

⁶⁶ European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia (2003).

⁶⁷ OSI (2007).

⁶⁸ Open Society Foundation (2006).

⁶⁹ ECRI (2003).

⁷⁰ European Women Lobby - references in Hungarian background report.

⁷¹ On November 8, 2011, the European Court of Human Rights issued its first judgment dealing with sterilization. The court unanimously found that a Slovak woman of Roma ethnic origin had been the victim of coerced sterilization in violation of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

⁷² For more information see: <http://romediafoundation.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/forced-sterilization-of-romani-women-a-persisting-human-rights-violation/>

Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain⁷³. Segregation is accompanied by sub-standard, poor or even extremely precarious living conditions for the Roma who are **often without access to electricity, garbage removal services, sewerage or water⁷⁴**. Forced evictions of Roma have taken place in many EU countries, and the **absence of adequate public policies and services have worsened the living conditions** of many Roma families.

2.5.1. Women are particularly victims of this situation

Substandard housing conditions **affect the health status** of all the members of family but in particular of women, children and the elderly. Roma women are the main caregivers of the family; therefore **they spend most of their life in the house**. Improvements in the location of Roma settlements may **increase opportunities for social inclusion** and **reduce barriers in accessing public services and the labour market**.

⁷³ FRA (2010).

⁷⁴ FRA, 2012 p. 144

3. THE EMPOWERMENT OF ROMA WOMEN PIVOTAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE ROMA IN MEMBER STATES: NATIONAL STRATEGIES

KEY FINDINGS

- In the patriarchal Roma system, Romani women experience **oppression** (“power over”) as men make the rules by which women have to live.
- Empowering women means giving them the **capacity to define their own choices in life and to pursue their own goals**. It also means generating **change in the whole society** and not only in the female population.
- **Romani women’s empowerment** is a **new approach** to improving Romani women’s living conditions. It requires **long term** and **high commitment**, involving both **top-down** (state) and **bottom up** (CSO) strategies. Romani women’s empowerment addresses three different dimensions: **personal, relational, and collective**.
- **Romani women’s empowerment** is explicitly mentioned in **6 NRISs: Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden**.
- **Empowerment** as a process or outcome is mentioned in **20** out of 28 NRISs.
- **Gender equality** is mentioned in the **general approach of most NRIS** in relation to equal treatment but only in a **few cases gender mainstreaming** is applied.
- In the 27 European Commission Staff working documents, Romani women’s **empowerment is not explicitly mentioned**, that is neither in the key elements nor in the identified gaps.

3.1. Romani women empowerment as community empowerment

3.1.1. The definition of empowerment

The UN Millennium project (2005:p.33) states that ‘**the core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny**’ (Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender 2002; Kabeer 1999). This implies that to be empowered, women must not only have **equal capabilities** (such as education and health) and **equal access to resources and opportunities** (such as land and employment) but they must also have the **agency** to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices⁷⁵ and decisions (such as is **provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions**). And for them to exercise agency, they must **live without the fear of coercion and violence**’.

The term ‘empowerment’ is widely used by several range of institutions such as the World Bank and Oxfam but “**few of these share common definitions** with different focus on process or on outcome, different scope and approach stressing the role of agency versus structure and the role of outsiders in empowerment processes” (Scrutton, Luttrell, 2009, p.27).

⁷⁵ Strategic choices are those concerning livelihood such as where to live, whether to marry, who to marry, whether to have children, how many children to have, freedom of movement (Kabeer, 2001: 19).

Oppression and “power over”

The **feminist approach** has enriched the debate on empowerment highlighting that empowerment is not about replacing one form of power with another (Kabeer, 2001a). Four types of power relations have been drawn, stressing the difference between 'power over' (the ability to influence and coerce) and 'power to' (organise and change existing hierarchies), 'power from' (power from collective action) and 'power within' (power from individual consciousness) (Rowland 1997).

Women have experience of 'power over' in patriarchal systems, under which men make the rules by which women have to live (Townsend et al. 1997: 27). Women's empowerment considers the **power that women acquire to create new possibilities and actions** without domination (Rowlands 1997: 13), to **have decision-making authority**, to **solve problems**, to **be creative and enabling** (Oxaal and Baden 1997).

Collective and individual empowerment

Empowering women means giving them the '**capacity to define their own life-choices and to pursue their own goals**' (Kabeer 2001: 21). Women's empowerment is the **collective empowerment of a group** that needs to tackle the same inequalities but at the same time, the power is acquired at the individual level, in terms of **self-acceptance**, **self-respect**, and **self – esteem** (Williams, Seed and Mwau 1994: 233).

Women's empowerment is a complex process and at the same time an outcome that involves simultaneously three dimensions: '**Personal**: developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression. **Relational**: developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it. **Collective**: where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone.' (Rowlands, 1997: 13).

3.1.2. Theoretical background

Since the 1980s, empowerment has been a **crucial aspect in many development organizations** which consider 'empowerment as an emancipation process in which the disadvantaged are empowered to exercise their rights, obtain access to resources and participate actively in the process of shaping society and making decisions' (Luttrell, C., Quiroz, S., Scrutton, C., & Bird, K. (2009, p.).

The empowerment approach has been introduced by emergent feminist writings and grassroots organizational experience of Third World women in particular within **UNDP initiative DAWN** ('Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era')⁷⁶. They brought the attention on the so-called 'false consciousness' claiming that '**gender-based subordination** is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of both men and women and is usually viewed as a natural corollary of the biological differences between them. It is reinforced through religious beliefs, cultural practices, and educational systems (both traditional and modern) that assign women lesser status and power'⁷⁷. The empowerment approach considers the issues of women's gender subordination as embedded in a **complex socio-political, economic and cultural context**.

⁷⁶ Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) is a network of feminist scholars, researchers and activists from the economic South working for economic and gender justice and sustainable and democratic development. More information are available at: <http://www.dawnnet.org/>

⁷⁷ Sen G. and Grown C., (1988):p.26, Development, Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives, Hearstscan Publications Ltd..

Three main approaches

To better understand the empowerment approach, it is necessary to briefly outline its main background experiences. In gender and development studies⁷⁸, empowerment has gradually taken the place of **three main approaches**: the '**welfare approach**', the '**women in development**' (WID) and the '**gender and development approach**' (GAD). All of them are still well rooted in most of the development policy and therefore have not been totally overcome. The welfare approach mainly considers women for their **reproductive role** and does not question their traditional roles.

Women in development approach (WID)

The 'women in development' approach has promoted **equity**, and then focused on **antipoverty** and finally fostered **efficiency approaches**⁷⁹ (Tasli, 2007). All of these approaches consider **women as passive recipients** and not active participants in the process of development (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 6-7).

The "gender and development" approach

The 'gender and development approach' (GAD) focuses on 'social relations of gender', seeing **women as agents of change** and promoting a **gender mainstreaming approach** in top-down interventions by the state (Razavi, Miller, 1995).

3.1.3. Developing empowerment

Empowerment operates simultaneously across three dimensions:

- **Personal**: developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression.
- **Relational**: developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it.
- **Collective**: where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone." (Rowlands, 1997: 13) This dimension includes political structures, cooperative actions, at local or institutional level.

The main instruments

The main instruments to support women's empowerment are: **networking, political mobilization, and awareness-raising**. Crucial is the role of **public and political institutions** as well as **CSOs** in supporting grouping of women. External support in organizing women empowering groups is important also in providing skills training.

⁷⁸ Tasli, 2007.

⁷⁹ 'The equity approach is the first and the original WID approach. It is also the most critical among the three WID approaches. The equity approach points out that women and men do not benefit equally from the economic growth. According to the equity approach, economic growth has even negative impacts on women. It therefore advocates the equal distribution of the benefits of economic growth between women and men. More importantly, the equity approach demands not only economic but also political and social equity. However, due to its critical features, the equity approach was soon replaced by the milder anti-poverty approach. This second WID approach is a diluted form of the equity approach. It simply shifts the focus from economic and political equity to poverty reduction for poor women. The anti-poverty was later followed by the efficiency approach. The efficiency approach reflects the concerns of the neoliberal policies. It considers women as an untapped resource for the economy' (Tasli, 2007, p.2).

Women's political empowerment

Women's political empowerment aims to **increase the number of women** in formal and informal political institutions and includes the reform of political parties, quotas and other forms of **affirmative action**, training to develop women's **political skills**, working with women's sections of political parties, development of women's political organizations (Oxaal and Baden, 1997, p.12-13) but also **active participation in civil society actions** at local and international levels⁸⁰ (Rowlands, 1997).

Moreover, the empowerment approach aims at **generating change in the whole society** and not only in the female population: "**empowerment of women is a gender issue and not simply a women's issue** [...]."Rowlands (1997: 131). Women's empowerment processes require deep changes in gender relations and therefore they involve specific work both with men and women.

3.1.4. Measuring women's empowerment and challenges

In 2010 the UNDP⁸¹ introduced the Gender Inequality Index (GII) to measure gender disparity on three main dimensions: **reproductive health** (maternal mortality rate, adolescent fertility rate), **empowerment** (share of parliamentary seats held by each sex, women's educational attainment of secondary education and above), and **labour market participation** (women's participation in the workforce). These three dimensions are crucial in **analyzing improvements** in Roma women's empowerment.

Development policy has shown an **increasing attention to the empowerment approach**, nonetheless the main risk remains that it 'became a buzzword (...) used to add glamour (rather than value) to interventions which actually **seek to achieve a variety of economic and social outcomes**, which, though they may be extremely desirable in themselves, **do not necessarily challenge existing patterns of power**' (Sarah Mosedale 2005: 248).

The empowerment approach is a new paradigm to promote better living conditions of women, requiring long term and high commitment, involving top-down (state) and bottom-up (CSO) strategies.

Education and knowledge play an important role in increasing women's empowerment (Nikkhah, 2010), nonetheless women's empowerment entails and fosters **new gender relations** and **some unintended consequences**⁸² have also to be considered (Rocca, 2009).

3.2. The importance of empowerment of Roma women in the national Roma strategies

3.2.1. The analysis

In the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), all Member States presented to the European Commission a strategy for Roma inclusion in 2011. The analysis aims to investigate the attention that the NRISs pays to the dimension of Romani women's empowerment.

⁸⁰ Batliwala (1994) suggests to substitute the term 'participation' with 'ownership' to stress the process of active involvement in the decision-making processes.

⁸¹ UNDP 2013

⁸² 'Efforts to help women empower themselves through vocational training, employment opportunities and social groups need to consider the potential unintended consequences for these women, such as an increased risk of domestic violence' (Rocca, 2009).

The analysis covered the 28 NRIS and focused on three main aspects:

1. The explicit attention to Romani women's empowerment;
2. The presence of empowerment as a general approach; and
3. The focus on gender equality.

Romani women's empowerment is the main aspect to investigate in the NRIS, however the analysis assumes that two variables are affecting it: the **presence of an empowerment approach** in all the strategy and the **attention to gender equality**. In the present study, it has been assumed that without an explicit interest in the empowerment approach and in gender equality it would have been difficult to develop an explicit interest for Romani women's empowerment.

Moreover, the variables were analysed in relation to the key priority areas (education, employment, health, and housing) and in the different phases of the policy-making process.

3.2.2. Results

Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Gender and empowerment in the NRISs

COUNTRY	GENDER MENTIONED IN AREAS	GENDER MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED AREAS	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	EMPOWERMENT AS CONCEPT AND APPROACH MENTIONED
Austria	Education, Employment, Health, Culture	Yes	No	No	Yes
Belgium	Education, Employment, Health	No	No	No	Yes
Bulgaria	Education, Health	No	No	No	Yes
Croatia	Education, Employment, Health	Yes	Employment	Yes	Yes
Cyprus	Health	No	No	No	Yes
Czech Rep.	Education	No	No	No	Yes
Denmark	Education, Human Trafficking	No	No		Yes

COUNTRY	GENDER MENTIONED IN AREAS	GENDER MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED AREAS	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	EMPOWERMENT AS CONCEPT AND APPROACH MENTIONED
Estonia	Employment, Health, Housing	Yes	No	No	No
Finland	Employment, Health	Yes	No	No	Yes
France	Education, Health, Human Trafficking	No	No	No	No
Germany	Education, Employment, Health	No	Employment	No	Yes
Greece	Education, Employment, Health	Yes	Health	Yes	Yes
Hungary	Education, Employment, Health	No	No	No	Yes
Ireland	Education, Health	No	No	No	No
Italy	Education, Employment, Health	No	Discrimination	No	Yes
Latvia	No	No	No	No	Yes (Participation)

COUNTRY	GENDER MENTIONED IN AREAS	GENDER MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED AREAS	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	EMPOWERMENT AS CONCEPT AND APPROACH MENTIONED
Lithuania	Health	No	No	No	Yes (Participation)
Luxembourg	No	No	No	No	No
Malta⁸³	No	No	No	No	No
Netherlands	Education	No	No	No	No
Poland	Education, Employment, Health	No	No	No	Yes (Participation)
Portugal	Education, Employment, Health	Yes	Employment, Gender Equality	Yes	Yes
Romania	Education, Employment, Health	No	No	No	No

⁸³ In Malta there is no Roma population, therefore the NRIS deals with the commitment to address the situation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

COUNTRY	GENDER MENTIONED IN AREAS	GENDER MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED AREAS	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MENTIONED IN POLICY MAKING PROCESS PHASES	EMPOWERMENT AS CONCEPT AND APPROACH MENTIONED
Slovakia	Education, Employment, Health	Yes	Discrimination	No	Yes
Slovenia	Education, Employment, Health	Yes	No	No	Yes
Spain	Education, Employment, Health	No	No	No	Yes
Sweden	Education, Employment, Health	Yes	Gender Equality	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	Health	No	No	No	Yes

3.2.3. Romani women's empowerment in the NRIS

Romani women's empowerment is **explicitly mentioned** in 6 NRISs: **Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden.**

Croatia's NRIS stresses the need for a **more active participation of Roma**, especially of Romani women **in all phases of the policy process**. It aims at promoting gender equality in public life with a specific focus on political representation, increasing Romani women's presence in public life at the national, regional, and local levels through the participation of Romani experts, activists, and consultation with Romani population. Objectives and measures in the strategy deal with 'elements tied to the promotion of the human rights of women and gender equality, equal employment opportunities, gender-sensitive education, equality in decision-making processes in political and public life and elimination of violence against women' (P.36).

Germany's NRIS focuses on Romani women's empowerment presenting a project that was in the planning stage when the strategy was submitted in 2011. The **project 'Social and Economic Empowerment of Roma Women' (SEERW)** aims to 'support the socio-economic integration of Roma women into society, inter alia through their **acquisition of better qualifications** for the labour market. The broadly conceived project also includes opportunities for **support in the area of health**, including medical advice on reproductive health, the health of children, personal hygiene and nutritional habits.' (Annex 4, Health, p.3). Empowerment of Roma as well of immigrants is part of the underlying principle of the strategy which specifically mentions the **important role of migration advisory services**, which control and track the integration process and offer their services within a restricted timeframe of a maximum of three years: 'Through the provision of professional advice tailored to the individual, which as a rule takes place shortly after their entry into the country, immigrants are empowered to **act independently within their new living environment**' (p. 24). The service providers 'seek to empower the immigrants to act independently within their new living environment and limit their dependency on state welfare benefits to the minimum amount necessary' (p.25). Romani women's empowerment is therefore **part of the employment objectives**.

Greece's NRIS contains an objective specifically targeted at Romani women: 'Development of actions to empower Roma women' and envisaged some actions integrated with other measures (p.23). However, **details of the actions are not presented** and the relationship with the area of health and social care is not deeply discussed.

Italy's NRIS specifically claims that it is not only necessary to **solve the situation of double discrimination** experience by women outside and inside their communities but also that women's empowerment is '**instrumental to the improvement of the condition of the person and also of the family structure, as a whole**' (p.21). The approach to Romani women's empowerment in the present study is developed in relation to anti-discrimination policies.

Portugal's NRIS considers Romani women's empowerment in priority 8: '**Recognising Roma family values in a framework of respect for and dialogue with the fundamental values of Portuguese society**' and claims that 'remedies will therefore have to be found for the needs of Roma families, in particular by creating conditions which ensure that they acquire the **basic competences required to develop autonomy, skills acquisition** and the **empowerment of women, in favourable family and community contexts**' (p.23). Moreover, in Priority 9, the focus on Romani women's empowerment is central: 'Investing in mediation and the formation of **women's associations** as vehicles for participation by **Roma women** and a necessary condition for their empowerment'. The Portuguese NRIS highlights that 'greater participation by women in the various spheres of social life fosters **development of their self-esteem, autonomy, knowledge of and relationships with institutions, motivation and the skills to perform an occupation,**

etc., **necessary conditions for their empowerment within the Roma community and society**, whereby they develop **additional skills** to those they call upon in their traditional functions.' (p.23). This statement is followed by some overall objectives that envisage: to **train 20 female Roma socio-cultural mediators by 2020**; to increase the awareness of gender issues by male and female Roma mediators by 2020; and **incentivise the formation of Roma women's associations up to 2020**. Investing in mediation and the formation of women's associations is considered a fundamental vehicle for participation by Roma women and a necessary condition for their empowerment (pp. 55-6). Romani women's empowerment is considered within the areas of **employment and equal opportunity policy**.

Slovakia's NRIS states that 'the status of women in marginalized Roma communities with a traditional model of family organization, where the mother takes care of a large family and the household, low level of education of women and their low economic activity impact significantly not only their quality of lives, but also the quality of lives of their children, thus continuing the cycle of poverty. Empowering women and respecting their human rights (including reproduction rights) and equality constitutes one of the base attributes of human development; therefore, it is necessary to **pay special attention to eliminating prejudices and inequality of women within marginalized Roma communities'** (p.44) and identifies the following objective: 'focus on **eliminating multiple discrimination of women and on bridging gender inequality both in private and public lives of marginalized Roma communities**; support economic independence of Roma women through **education on gender equality in collaboration with NGOs active in the field of gender equality'** (p.44). Romani women's empowerment is part of the anti-discrimination objective.

Sweden's NRIS focuses on Romani women's empowerment in the context of a broader attention to empowerment and participation of Roma to the strategy: 'the **whole implementation of the strategy should be characterised by Roma participation and Roma influence**, focusing on enhancing and continuously monitoring Roma **access to human rights** at the local, regional and national level' (p.9). Romani women's empowerment is **part of the gender mainstreaming approach** developed in the NRIS and it is discussed in relation to **gender equality** issue. In the rest of the NRISs, Romani women's empowerment is not explicitly mentioned.

3.2.4. Empowerment as processor or as an outcome of measures

Empowerment as a processor and as an outcome is **mentioned in most of the NRISs**: 20 out of 28 deal with empowerment. In the analysis of the NRIS we consider as empowerment also the strong emphasis on participation as a part of the empowerment approach.

Austria's NRIS supports cultural projects 'to preserve the Roma's culture and identity therefore also to **empower the Roma as a European 'ethnic group'** (p.29).

Belgium's NRIS considers empowerment within the main general objectives: 'Objective 1: to encourage participation and to increase empowerment of the Roma community within society' (p. 25). Moreover, **detailed measures** are supported: 1) a Roma & Travellers' Support Centre that 'offers personalised support on Roma & Traveller-related issues, in an effort to reinforce the empowerment and integration process through education and training, to social service providers, official bodies, schools and local authorities on the one hand (information, advice, mediation, training, development of links) and to Roma & Travellers on the other (mediation, information, awareness raising, support)'. P.19

Bulgaria's NRIS mentions empowerment as **general framework** in the NRIS: 'Encouraging Roma community to **participate actively in the cultural life** of the society'. (P.17) and deals with it in defining the 'mechanisms for implementation of the integration

policy: the Government is pursuing a policy of **promoting investment in human development** and citizen's active participation in overcoming the existing challenges' (p.19).

Cyprus's NRIS introduces empowerment as a **general statement** in the description of multicultural programme targeted to minority children: '**creating opportunities for active participation in the decision-making process**' (p.4). Moreover in the section on education is explicitly stated that Roma have been and will continue to be involved in the 'designing and monitoring relevant policies' and that '**close cooperation is encouraged between school personnel and the parents** of Roma children in designing actions to address the specific needs of the children' (p.5).

The Czech Republic's NRIS considers empowerment as **general approach** in contrast with passive integration measures: 'When implementing Roma integration, the Government will give preference to measures targeted at empowering members of Roma communities over measures based on the passive receipt of assistance. The government's Roma integration policy therefore also entails **involving the Roma in its drafting and implementation**' (Principle No 9 of the long-term strategy for Roma integration to 2025, annex).

Denmark's NRIS, in line with its welfare policy, stresses active inclusion as a **goal** (p.4), the promotion of active **active citizenship** and **combating discrimination** (p.6), being an active citizen (p.8) and **active employment policies** (p.8).

Finland's NRIS focuses on **Roma political participation**: 'The task of the steering and monitoring group is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the National Policy on Roma together with different ministries, local authorities, Roma organisations and other significant cooperation partners. The basic principle is that the Roma population, **through their organisations**, is given the opportunity to **influence and participate** in the implementation and follow-up of the Policy' (p.2).

Hungary's NRIS dedicates one part of the strategy to **discuss the involvement of civil organisations and other stakeholders** and presents some general statements: 'the process of social inclusion, by virtue of the meaning of the concept, may only be based on a dialogue with the communities affected by inclusion, including the Roma, and their **active participation**. This is not just mere consultation but the **empowerment of those living in poverty** and the Roma community and its members in order to enable them to **shape society through the active exercise of equal opportunities** ... The promotion of the active participation, empowerment and commitment of the Roma involves fundamental tasks which must also be fulfilled at national, regional and local levels (as well as at EU level) in the course of decision-making, implementation and monitoring. It is desirable to carefully **consider in the case of each measure how these fundamental goals may be achieved most effectively**. As part of the process, it is particularly important to enhance the role of the Roma civil society and to encourage the civil and political involvement of the Roma through the **capacity building of civil organisations**, the national, regional and local **reinforcement of public administration capacity**, the involvement of the Roma in every area of political life and the enhancement of their representation in institutions as well as in the local, national and EU-level elected bodies. An **institutionalised dialogue** with the representatives of the Roma, too, is a tool which, in addition to reinforcing civil society, also promotes their involvement in and responsibility for policy-making. ... It would be beneficial for the effective targeting of funds, the reduction of administrative burdens and the prevention of the financial collapse of positive initiatives if civil organisations, in particular, Roma civil organisations and minority self-governments, were involved not only in the implementation of measures and tenders but also in their **planning and monitoring as well as in the preparatory phases.**' (p.96-97).

Latvia's NRIS does not explicitly mention empowerment but deals with 'Fostering civic participation. Despite the fact that 12 Roma NGOs were registered in Latvia in 2011, representing the regional interests of the Roma community, **the majority of these organisations are not sufficiently active in developing civic participation.** Only certain representatives of the Roma community are involved and take part in various state authority consultative mechanisms. The majority of Roma NGOs lack administrative capacity and information in order to apply for project competitions and receive assistance in implementing projects, and they also lack the experience to enable them to implement projects fully according to the criteria that have been laid down. The following challenges have been put forward during the expert meeting and consultations in order to foster civic participation by Roma: 1) To develop cooperation between Roma and non-Roma NGOs, local authorities and state authorities. 2) To ensure the participation of Roma NGO representatives and experts in state authority consultative mechanisms. For example, to ensure representation of the Roma community interests of in the work of consultative board on issues of minority education of the Ministry of Education and Science. 3) To foster Roma NGO capacity building and participation in integration projects. 4) To encourage a discussion on more active inclusion of Roma integration issues in the uptake of the Structural Funds' (p.7).

Lithuania's NRIS introduces **part of the empowerment concept** in the general aim of the Action Plan for Roma Integration that aims 'at promoting participation of Roma in public life, reducing social exclusion, enhancing consciousness within the Roma community as well as increasing public tolerance' (p.1).

Poland's NRIS discusses the limit in the experiences of Roma involvement in project planning and states that '**increasing the share of the Roma representatives in the process of planning, implementation and evaluation of projects** designed by the self-governments and non-Roma non-governmental organisations can be one of the key Programme challenges for the forthcoming years' (annex 8 evaluation report 2010, p 9 - 10).

Slovenia's NRIS focuses on empowerment in the introduction of the NRIS: 'encouraging political participation of the Roma in the local community, which undoubtedly contributes to better social and cultural integration of the Roma community in the majority environment in Slovenia' (p.4). Moreover it promotes 'active participation of the Roma in activities aimed at improving their living conditions from various aspects (different forms of education in terms of spatial planning, which will **enable Roma councillors to play an active role in the process of planning**, construction and maintenance of their settlements in compliance with relevant regulations)' (p.11). **The empowerment approach is present in the employment priority area.** The NSIR intends to increase the 'participation of Roma in the drafting of such development programmes' (p.19); with regard to the health priority area. it points to four specific targets, among which: encouraging participation of the Roma community in addressing health issues by transferring responsibility' (p.25). Specific attention is dedicated to the political participation of Roma: "Experience in working with the Roma population indicates that efforts of national authorities and municipalities do not produce good results if Roma are not actively included in these activities. **The Roma themselves thus become more and more aware of the fact that without their active participation and better organisation it will be impossible to improve their status.** The Government Office for Nationalities has continuously participated in activities aimed at the inclusion of Roma councillors in local self-government and provided funds for training and education programmes for those Roma representatives who participated in elections to municipal councils and were actually elected, and for Roma activists' (p.35). For this reason, **specific trainings** are envisaged 'to enhance the capacity of Roma community representatives to actively participate in local self-managed community councils and enable prominent Roma representatives (representatives of associations and other organisations – Roma activists) **to play a more active role in promoting the interests of the Roma population** in all areas relevant to the community' (p.37-38).

Spain's NRIS promotes 'participation, with special attention to: The intervention of Roma and their bodies of representation in all stages of the political cycle (planning, execution, follow-up and review).- **Strengthening Roma confidence in institutions.**- Comprehensive focus on conceiving social policies and measures with Roma (between administrative levels, various departments and associations, social agents and the Administration)' (p.32).

United Kingdom's NRIS states that 'giving young Gypsies and Travellers a chance to contribute in this way will give them a **sense of ownership and empowerment** that they seldom have' (Annex 1: welsh plan. p.42)

3.2.5. Gender equality and discrimination

Romani women are considered as one of the most vulnerable groups in many NRIS. Gender equality in most of the NRIS is mentioned in the general approach concerning **equal treatment** as in the case of **Germany**: 'the principle of equal treatment requires that people are not disadvantaged or favoured on account of their sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith, religious or political opinions or a disability with regard to access to education' (p.30).

Gender as a discrimination ground is considered in most of the NRIS with regard to **multiple discrimination** that Romani women face. **Belgium's** NRIS, for example, states that 'Roma, particularly Roma women, have to contend with two types of discrimination: not only are they the victims of stereotyping by their own community but they also have to contend with pigeonholing by the society in the country in which they are living. There are a great many obstacles that hamper the social integration of the Roma' (p. 12)

The gender perspective is also applied in references to women's rights, often associated with children rights, as in the case of **Bulgaria**: 'Operational objective: Guaranteeing citizen rights, with an **emphasis on the rights of women and children**, protecting public order, prevention and combating any manifestations of intolerance and hate speech. Creating the mindset of **recognition of the equality of the Roma women**. Encouraging their full individual, social and economic participation in social Life' (p16).

Denmark in the NRIS explicitly mentions gender equality: 'Gender equality between women and men is an **overall objective** of Danish policy. Consecutive Danish governments have continuously worked to review and improve the quality of legislation and other legally binding rules to achieve gender equality between women and men. Gender equality is regarded as a **prerequisite for economic growth, democracy and welfare**, and also as the basis for the **full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms** in political, economic, social, cultural and civil spheres of life. Today, women and men in Denmark share the same formal rights, obligations and opportunities in society. However, Denmark aims at **securing de facto gender equality as well de jure**. This is clearly stated in section 1 of the Danish Act on Gender Equality, which states that "The purpose of this Act is to promote gender equality, including equal integration, equal influence and equal opportunities in all functions in society on the basis of women's and men's equal status.'" (p.12-13).

Other NRISs adopt a **gender neutral approach**, never explicitly mentioning differences between men and women as in the case of **France**.

3.2.6. Gender differences in education

Gender differences in educational levels are considered in **all the NRISs** and are **related to Romani women's early marriage and early motherhood**. **Denmark's** NRIS stresses that 'traditionally, people with a Roma background marry early, but in Denmark many have

abandoned this tradition, perhaps because of the adverse effects on especially the girls' possibilities for getting an education' (p.3).

The **Czech** NRISs envisages specifically targeted measures stressing the necessity to **"Connect the implementation of educational activities with the provision of child care services** so that Roma women can take part in these activities; because of their maternal responsibilities, they are often separated from further education opportunities for a long period." (p. 27).

Germany states that **special courses for women immigrants** are the **'principal means** adopted by the Federal Government to support the **integration** policy. In addition to the 600-hour to 900-hour language course, immigrants are taught about the country, its history and social order in Germany as part of the 45-hour orientation course' (p. 23). In the land of Berlin, the project 'Educational opportunities for adults'⁸⁴ organized German language beginner courses addressed to mothers of migrant children attending school.

3.2.7. Gender differences in employment

All NRISs highlight gender differences in employment. Estonia mentions that **'Women are mostly blue-collar workers**, e.g. sell goods at the market, do simple cleaning or kitchen works, or tell someone's fortune. **Fortune telling** is used for earning a living by women with children who under the general unemployment situation often have no other possibility of maintaining their family. - Sources of income for spouses of Roma women often include the **gathering of scrap metal, ancillary farm work and ancillary work in workshops'** (p.6).

Germany draws up some measures specifically targeted at Romani women to improve their contribution to the labour market: 'The Federal Government shares in principle the view that **micro-credit** can make an important contribution to integration into the labour market, and therefore as early as the end of 2009 set up the 'Mikrokreditfonds Deutschland' ['German Micro-credit Fund'] as a guarantee fund. Loans of up to EUR 20 000 are to be provided to small and young enterprises who are unable to get credit from their account-holding bank, in particular undertakings run by women and people from migrant backgrounds. The volume of the Fund stands at EUR 100 million' (p.43).

Poland's NRIS highlights that 'More Roma women declare the willingness to find employment and feeling responsible for their families. This is a **shift from the traditional family model** where a husband works' (Annex 8 evaluation report 2010, p. 13).

The Netherlands adopt a different approach, stating that **'If you can work, you must work**; this applies to everyone, regardless of age, ethnic origin or gender' (p.4).

3.2.8. Gender differences in health

All the NRISs specifically deal with Romani women's health conditions mainly **focusing on maternal health**. In some of the Eastern countries, this topic is explicitly discussed in relation to **forced sterilization** of Romani women such as in **Slovakia**. **Health mediators** are considered crucial in most of the NRIS. **Bulgaria** stresses that to reduce child mortality, 'Mediators shall actively assist the general practitioners in detecting and registering pregnant women at an early stage (up to the 4th month of pregnancy), ensuring consultations with a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology and timely hospitalization for birth: conducting prenatal diagnostics of pregnant women at risk; (...) Improving the awareness about healthy nutrition of newborns and young children; (...)

⁸⁴ 'Deutsch als zweite Fremdsprache' ['German as a second foreign language'] P.17

Delivering lectures and disseminating information materials, organizing training for women engaged in rearing young children' (P.18-20).

Lithuania, to improve Romani women's health, intends 'to organise a **cycle of lectures** for Roma women and girls **on sanitation and hygiene**' (p.5-6).

Poland discusses Romani women's health conditions stressing that 'the Roma people's health problems appear as a result of **bad, and in many cases catastrophic social situations**: no water-supply, no sewage system, no heating in the homesteads, disastrous technical conditions of the heating systems, no money for the heating, poor diet, limited access to the health benefits as well as no prophylaxis and lack of habit of monitoring Roma women's pregnancies; these neglects often cause congenital defects' (p.8); moreover it envisages the '**employment of nurses of Roma origin** who could significantly more easily convince the Roma women to regular medical check-ups' to increase the frequency of the Roma women's doctor appointments.

In **Hungary**, 'Roma women constitute a particular target group; they should be targeted primarily with campaigns concerned with **conscious family planning**, teenage pregnancy and preparation for a **healthy pregnancy**' (p.89). Moreover, 'In the interest of reducing the higher-than-average number of abortions observed amongst disadvantaged families/women, we must devise a plan for providing personalised access to various contraceptive devices on a needs basis, free of charge or at a discount price. For the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of these devices, the individuals concerned should in every instance be given advice on family planning and contraception.' (p. 89)

In some EU Member States Romani women face barriers in accessing health services because of the **lack of health insurance** such as in **Hungary**.

Human trafficking is not considered in all the NRISs. **Denmark** highlights that there are no data on victims of human trafficking based on ethnicity but only on nationality. Nevertheless, the 'Danish Centre against Human Trafficking estimates that **half of the prostitutes in the streets of Copenhagen from Romania are Roma**. Prostitutes with a Roma background are also present at massage parlors outside Copenhagen. 19 women from Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been identified as victims of trafficking. Social workers found varying degrees of indicators of human trafficking present in 10 cases involving minors with a Roma background from Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. (p.4).

Nevertheless, there are at least two **NRISs** that are worth mentioning because of their attention to **other aspects of women's health** apart from maternal health. **Belgium's** NRIS mentions **psychological and psychiatric support** of refugees and asylum seekers as well as '**art therapy** group for women in vulnerable circumstances (p.36).

Bulgaria's NRIS highlights that 'one third of the male Roma population and two fifths of the female population in the age bracket 45-60 have already **lost partially or in full their work capacity due to poor health status**' (p.9).

3.3. Roma women in the CSWDs on the Country Strategies for the Inclusion of the Roma in Member States

3.3.1. The analysis of NRIS in the CSWDs

All Member States have developed or updated their National Strategies in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The NRIS were analysed by the European Commission according to the issues highlighted in the EU Framework under the four key priorities areas.

The assessment also considered the approach to Roma inclusion since the aim of the EU Framework is to **promote a change** from scattered, project-based and unrelated interventions **to a comprehensive approach** embracing all four key areas through an integrated and coordinated effort.

Moreover, the assessment considers the structural requirements specified in the EU Framework such as **involvement of all important national stakeholders**, creation of a robust **monitoring system**, the appointment of a **national contact point**, ensuring the **protection of fundamental rights** and monitoring. Funds and sustainability were also reviewed.

Therefore, the Commission Staff Working Documents (CSWDs) analysed each NRIS with a focus on the 4 key areas of education, employment, health, and housing as well as on structural requirements and funds.⁸⁵ For each of the 27 NRIS, the Commission elaborated a synthetic table of comments stressing the key elements and the identified gaps.

3.3.2. Roma women empowerment in the CSWDs

This analysis investigates to what extent the CSWDs pays attention to the dimension of Romani women's empowerment when reviewing the NRIS.

Methodology

The analysis focuses on the 27 CSWDs. Three variables were considered:

1. The focus on **Romani women's empowerment**;
2. The focus on **empowerment as strategy or outcome** in the CSWDs;
3. The focus on **gender differences in the four key areas**: education, employment, health, and housing.

Moreover, the three variables were considered both in the '**key elements**' and in the '**identified gaps**'. The 'key elements' of the CSWDs highlight crucial elements of the strategy, while the 'identified gaps' suggest those aspects that would need more focus and consideration.

The results from the analysis

Results from the analysis are shown in Table 2 and described in the following sections below.

⁸⁵ European Commission (21 May 2012 b).

Table 2: Gender differences and empowerment in the NRISs according to the CSWDs

COUNTRY	GENDER DIFFERENCES		EMPOWERMENT		ROMANI WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	
	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS
AUSTRIA	No	No	No	No	No	No
BELGIUM	No	Employment	No	No	No	No
BULGARIA	No	No	No	No	No	No
CYPRUS	No	No	No	No	No	No
CZECH REPUBLIC	No	No	No	No	No	No
DENMARK	No	No	No	No	No	No
ESTONIA	No	No	No	No	No	No
FINLAND	No	No	No	No	No	No
FRANCE	Health	No	No	No	No	No
GERMANY	No	No	No	No	No	No
GREECE	Health	No	No	No	No	No

COUNTRY	GENDER DIFFERENCES		EMPOWERMENT		ROMANI WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	
	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS
HUNGARY	Health	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
IRELAND	No	No	No	No	No	No
ITALY	Education Employment Health	No	No	No	No	No
LATVIA	No	No	No	No	No	No
LITHUANIA	Health	Employment	No	No	No	No
LUXEMBOURG	Health	No	No	No	No	No
MALTA	No	No	No	No	No	No
NETHELANDS	No	No	No	No	No	No
POLAND	No	Education	No	No	No	No
PORTUGAL	No	No	No	No	No	No
ROMANIA	Employment	Employment	No	No	No	No

COUNTRY	GENDER DIFFERENCES		EMPOWERMENT		ROMANI WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	
	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS	KEY ELEMENTS	IDENTIFIED GAPS
SLOVAKIA	No	No	No	No	No	No
SLOVENIA	Health Employment	No	No	No	No	No
SPAIN	Education Health	No	No	No	No	No
SWEDEN	Health	Yes	Structural Requirements	No	No	No
UNITED KINGDOM	No	No	Structural Requirements	No	No	No

Romani women empowerment

In the 27 CSWDs, Romani women's empowerment **has never been explicitly mentioned**, neither in the key elements nor in the identified gaps.

Only in the NRIS of **Sweden** and the **UK**, empowerment is explicitly mentioned in the key elements a **development approach**. In the case of **Sweden**, empowerment is related to the **civil society**, while in the **UK**, it is a **key aspect** of all the **UK** strategies⁸⁶.

The analysis showed that in **10 out of 27 NRIS**, gender equality is mentioned as a part of the **key elements** identified in the assessment of the EC.

Gender differences in the policy area of health

Gender differences with a specific attention to women's health are mentioned mostly with regard to health policy. A specific focus on health measures targeted at Romani women is present in **France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden**. Despite the common focus on Romani women's health, the specifically targeted measures differ according to the contents and the approach. More specifically:

- **France** and **Luxembourg** focus on supporting **access to health care** for Romani women.
- **Italy** shows a strong attention on **monitoring Romani women's health needs**.
- **Lithuania** envisages '**Training** for Roma women and girls on hygiene'.
- **Slovenia** presents '**general measures** aiming to improving health of the Roma, especially women and children'.
- **Hungary** stresses the **attention** for the needs of Romani women and children.
- **Spain** envisages measures to **intervene on very concrete situations** (i.e. traffic accidents, obesity, smoking etc. with a specific focus on Roma women.)

Gender differences in the policy area of education

Attention to Romani women is also present with regard to education in Italy and Spain. Italy focuses on education of young mothers to support the completion of compulsory education. Spain aims to increase the proportion of Roma girls and boys that have attended pre-school prior to their compulsory schooling and increase school completion of Roma girls and boys in primary education.

Gender differences in the policy area of employment

Italy, Romania and **Slovenia** deal with employment of Romani women with the aim to increase their **employability**. Moreover, **Italy** promotes active labour market policies to include Roma women in the labour market.

Gender differences in the policy area of housing

Gender aspects not mentioned in the housing area, neither in the key elements nor in the identified gaps.

⁸⁶ The Swedish CSWDS states: 'the 20-year strategy covers all 4 key areas, as well as culture/language and the empowerment of civil society', while the UK one says that: 'the fight against discrimination and empowering Roma and Travellers is a key aspect of all UK strategies'.

Gender differences in "Identified gaps"

The CSWDs identify specific gaps related to the gender equality approach in **employment** for the NRISs of **Belgium, Lithuania, and Romania**; only for **Poland**, the CSWD identified gaps from a gender equality perspective in the area of **education**.

4. STAKEHOLDERS MAPPING AT NATIONAL LEVEL

KEY FINDINGS

- NGOs identified in **Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, and Spain** as **Romani women's NGOs**.
- NGOs identified for the **other EU Member States** are **Romani NGOs that are active on women's issues**.

In **Annex A**, national stakeholders are presented.

5. GOOD PRACTICES IN ROMA WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

KEY FINDINGS

- **Good practices** were selected and analysed according to the **EIGE definition** of good practices in **gender mainstreaming** and the **theoretical elaboration** on the specific issue of the present study.
- **'Empowering Romani parents to support upbringing and education of their children'** is a Croatian good practice in education which aims to increase the **well-being and the successful development and learning** of children by supporting and developing the capacity of parents and school and the cooperation between families and schools. Romani women were the large majority of the beneficiaries of the project.
- **'Valore Lavoro'** is an Italian good practice in employment, aiming at **improving and facilitating the labour market integration of Roma women** through their **involvement in decision-making processes**.
- **'Empow-air: Empowering women against intimate partnership violence in Roma communities'** is a good practice in health, involving **Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania**, which sought to expand the research regarding violence in intimate partnerships and to promote empowerment of Roma women to address situations of gender-based violence as well as to raise awareness.
- The **'Hungarian Women's Lobby and European Women's Lobby mentor program for future Romani and migrant women politicians'** is an Hungarian good practice in Romani women's political empowerment which aims at increasing the political participation of **Romani** and migrant women who are already involved in political life and who are interested in **running for the European Parliament Elections** in May 2014.

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter the methodology for the assessment of good practices for the empowerment of Roma women is discussed and then the collected good practices are presented. Good practices cover **three of the four areas of intervention** envisaged by the national strategies for Roma inclusion: Education, Employment, and Health. As regards Housing, it has not been possible to find enough information on the assessment of existing initiatives from a women empowerment perspective. In addition to these good practices, an initiative promoted by the European Women's Lobby in Hungary is discussed as a very good example of women's empowerment. Detailed information on the selected good practices are available in Annex B.

5.2. Assessing the Good Practices: the EIGE framework applied in the context of Roma women empowerment

5.2.1. Introduction

The assessment criteria adopted to select and analyse the good practices for the present study draw on the definition provided by EIGE on good practices in gender mainstreaming

on the one hand and on the theoretical elaborations on the specific issue of the present study, the empowerment of Romani women, on the other. As a result, the assessment criteria are study-tailored.

5.2.2. Study-tailored assessment criteria

To identify good practices in gender mainstreaming, EIGE has elaborated a methodology embedded in the definition of gender mainstreaming presented by the **Council of Europe** (1998) according to which:

'Gender mainstreaming is 'the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking'⁸⁷.

EIGE specifies that 'gender mainstreaming is **not a goal in itself but a strategy**⁸⁸ to achieve equality between women and men. It is also a process of change/transformation which implies that all actors involved in policymaking integrate gender equality concerns – meaning the systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of women and men, of the relations existing between them, and of the impact of policies on the concrete situation of women or men – in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies, programmes and activities so that both sexes can influence, participate in, and benefit equitably from all interventions. The main goal of gender mainstreaming is that both sexes may enjoy equal visibility, empowerment and participation in all spheres of public and private life' (EIGE, 2011)⁸⁹.

As a consequence EIGE defines a '**good practice in gender mainstreaming**' as 'any experience/initiative displaying techniques, methods or approaches which function in a way, and produce effects and results coherent with the definition of gender mainstreaming, which are considered to be particularly effective in delivering gender mainstreaming as a transformative strategy, and, therefore, deserving to be disseminated and proposed to other organisational contexts' (EIGE, 2011)⁹⁰. Therefore, **good practices are not per se a tool for gender mainstreaming** but they can be **used in tools** for gender mainstreaming to show that, **in similar situations, greater gender equality is possible**.

As regards the identification of good practices, EIGE suggests the following **three assessment criteria**:

- It works well;
- Transferability; and
- Learning potential.

Drawing on these three judgement criteria, it is possible to apply them to the specific context under scrutiny obtaining the new definitions contained in Table 1:

⁸⁷ COE (1998).

⁸⁸ From this point of view also positive actions should be regarded as part of the gender mainstreaming strategy, because they are one policy tool that allow to make up for the lack of gender equality.

⁸⁹ EIGE (2011)

The document is the result of the contribution provided by EIGE's thematic network on Gender Mainstreaming and Expert's Forum members, EIGE's staff as well as from the findings of the Second Ex-Ante Evaluation of EIGE and the "Study on the use of "good practice" as a tool for mainstreaming gender into the policies and programmes of the Institutions of European Union and EU Member States", commissioned to the Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (FGB). EIGE's work on collection and dissemination.

⁹⁰ EIGE (2011).

Table 3: Judgement criteria

EIGE JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	DEFINITION OF JUDGEMENT CRITERIA FOR THE PRESENT STUDY
'It works well'	The good practice makes women and girls main actors of their own lives: Romani women empowerment
Transferability	The good practice shows the potential of reproducing its working-well features that are the empowering effects on Romani women, in other contexts.
Learning potential	There are general lessons that can be drawn from the application of the empowering good practice, beyond its particular context. So, the good practice of empowerment is good for learning how to empower women's and girls'.

These three judgement criteria of good practices from a gender mainstreaming standpoint can be operationalized by further elaborating and articulating them on the basis of what emerged from the data collection.

5.3. The assessment criteria: from theory to practice

The three assessment criteria introduced in the previous section are operationalised in the present section. They are also listed in the Assessment criteria grid in **Annex B**. The grid has been applied for **presenting the good practices in Annex C**.

5.3.1. It works well

The good practice presents the capacity of improving the situation of Romani women and girls, if:

- it is **effective**: in the context of the present study, the measure has shown empowering effects on Romani women and girls by redressing the multi-dimensional disparity (gender and/or ethnic), in other words if the initiative accounts for both **gender equality** (i.e.: gender equality as an objective has been considered in the planning, in the implementation, in the evaluation, please detail) and **empowerment**;
- it is **adequate**: the measure tackles the **most relevant issues** of the conditions of Romani women and girls in a given context by empowering them;
- in addition, a further criterion has been applied to **define the working-well feature** in this study: **mainstreaming empowerment**. It is evaluated, whether the measure aimed at one specific area of intervention has **indirect empowering effects** on at least one of the other three areas, or more general positive impacts on Romani women's and girls' empowerment.

The consequent step-by-step approach to measure whether the good practice of empowerment works well or not from a gender mainstreaming perspective

1. To be **effective**, a good practice should really empower Romani women and girls. Therefore, the main conditions to make a good practice effective are the **empowerment** and the **gender equality** criteria.

2. Once the effectiveness of the good practice is assessed, the **adequateness** to the context is verified. The good practice works well if it really tackles the most relevant issues as regards Romani women and girls empowerment in the context where it is applied.
3. Finally, the good practice should be able to **mainstream** Romani women's and girls' **empowerment** by indirectly affecting other spheres of Romani women's and girls' lives. In the context of the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion, the measure should address one of the relevant fields of intervention (education, employment, health, or housing), with effects in at least one of the other fields, i.e. has indirect empowering effects.

5.3.2. Transferability

The good practice can be considered to be transferable when there are different positive cases/examples of its application so that the **key success factors** can be **identified and made available in other contexts**. By comparing the positive examples of implementation, it is possible to understand under which conditions the practice works well (i.e. is effective). So, to assess transferability, it is necessary to **sketch out the conditions that contributed to its success**. Additionally, the condition of being easily adaptable to another context is related to the amount of **resources** that are needed to implement the practice in another context. More clearly, transferability is related to:

- the **context analysis**: specific conditions that contribute to the success of the initiative in the specific context;
- **adaptability**: the extent to which the initiative can be adapted to other contexts, examined following the assessment of the results of the context analysis.

5.3.3. Learning potential

A good practice of empowerment has a learning potential if there are **general lessons** that can be drawn from its application beyond its particular context. So, the good practice of empowerment is good for learning **how to tackle** the issue of Romani women's and girls' **empowerment**.

5.3.4. The assessment criteria grid

The assessment criteria grid presented in **Annex B** is composed of **three columns**: the first column contains the original EIGE three criteria; the second presents their operationalisation for the present study, while the third will include the assessment conducted for each of the operationalised criteria on each good practice.

5.4. The good practices for Romani women's empowerment⁹¹

5.4.1. Good practice for empowerment in education

'Empowering Romani parents to support upbringing and education of their children'

The initiative has been drawn up and implemented by the Open Public Academy 'Step by Step', an NGO funded by the **Open Society Foundation** in Croatia.

⁹¹ A more detailed analysis of the good practices here presented is available in Annex C.

The project carried out training and workshops for teachers and parents, involving mainly women (190 women out of 300 participants). **Romani women** were the **large majority** of the beneficiaries of the project: while they were not involved in the design and implementation, they participated in the evaluation. Their point of view on the benefits of the projects was considered at that step.

Objective

The overall goal of the project was to **increase well-being and successful development and learning of children** by supporting and developing capacity of parents and school and the cooperation between families and schools⁹².

It worked well

The good practice worked well because in this initiative Romani women went through a process of **significant empowerment** in terms of: (a) better parenting; (b) quality support to their children once they enrol in elementary school; (c) social skills and relation with non-Roma⁹³; (d) the process of education, which helped increase their literacy (having in mind that a great number of Romani women are without elementary education); (e) awareness of Romani women about aspirations for their children 's (including daughters') education.

The participation of Romani women/mothers in workshops for empowerment in parenting has not significantly changed their level of education but has contributed to **increase their aspirations regarding the education of their children** (girls in particular) that is where the change starts.

5.4.2. The good practice for empowerment in employment job quality and good working conditions

'Valore Lavoro'

This initiative was financed by the **Italian** Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and promoted by the **Lombardy Region** Family, Social Solidarity and Voluntary Sector Department and implemented by Comunità di Sant'Egidio (a charity, and ISMU Foundation), the project leader, with other CSOs. It was implemented between May 2009-November 2010 (18 months). The beneficiaries were the Romani population in vulnerable conditions (women, young people) in the cities of Milan, Rho and Mantua (Lombardy region). The majority of the 60 beneficiaries of Valore Lavoro initiative were women. The project, however, involved also young people and men.

Objective

The overall goal of the project was the **labour integration through a participatory approach** that involved Roma in defining and implementing social policies addressing them. Valore Lavoro was aimed at improving and facilitating the labour integration of Roma through their involvement in decision-making processes. It was articulated in different but integrated actions: 1) vocational training; 2) promotion and support of already existing

⁹² The project had two specific objectives: 1) to contribute to the cooperation between school and parents in order to better support children's learning and development; 2) to contribute to the empowerment of Roma parents in supporting their children's development and education. It was also available for non-Roma parents of children aged between 5 and 7 years. It lasted 20 months and finished in June 2013. It was implemented in Municipalities of Drzimurec Strelec/Mala Subotica, Macinec, Orehovica in Medjimurje County, and in the City of Kutina in Sisak-Moslavina County.

⁹³ Since they attended the workshops together with a number of non-Roma parents and children, they were placed in an intercultural environment that was beneficial for the development and the improvement of their social skills.

working activities (i.e. cooperatives); 3) hiring of Roma as employees; 4) encouragement of self-employment; 5) improvement of Roma autonomy in accessing public services (empowerment); 6) promotion of the capability and sensitivity of public services in assessing and meeting Roma-specific needs.

It worked well

It worked well because it achieved the overall objective and its specific objectives. Romani vulnerable people including women have been positively affected by the initiative, with **direct effects of finding a job** and **indirect effects of empowerment**. The Romani people who benefitted from the project (the majority of them are women) have been involved through active participation. **Gender equality as an objective has been considered in the planning, in the implementation, in the monitoring and evaluation**, of the initiative.

Through participatory mechanisms during the trainings and self-employment activities, they took decisions on how to design, implement and monitor the project. Increased general experience and awareness, work experience, improvement of socio-economic position through legal employment can be noted as **results**. The project's activities had a great impact on women's life, in terms of **increased autonomy** and **improved family management**. This approach led to Roma empowerment, emancipating Roma from reliance on passive measures of social protection.

Mainstreaming of empowerment and transferability

An indirect effect of labour integration on citizenship rights could be identified: the possession of a **regular job** stimulated the Roma people involved in the project and without Italian citizenship to obtain **permanent residence documents** in Italy. This initiative can be adapted and replicated in other contexts.

5.4.3. The good practice for empowerment in health

Empow-air: Empowering women against intimate partnership violence in Roma communities

This initiative was coordinated by *SURT: Fundació de dones. Fundació privada*, based in **Barcelona, Spain**, with the following partnerships: *International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (Bulgaria)*, Giacomo Brodolini Foundation (**Italy**), Gypsy Women Association for Our Children (**Romania**) and Fundación Secretariado Gitano (**Spain**).

The project involved 120 women and 40 men from Roma communities in **Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania**, with the direct involvement of Romani women's CSOs in all the phases of the project, concluded in March 2013.

Objective

The initiative was aimed at **expanding research** on male violence against women in intimate partnerships within Roma communities in order to **generate tools which help professionals in dealing with violence detection and prevention**. Additionally, it intended to promote empowerment of Roma women by **addressing gender-based violence** situations and **raising awareness on the existence of violence** against women within the Roma communities among decision makers, professionals working with the Roma population, and the Roma population itself.

Romani women empowerment was the main objective of the project and **gender equality was pivotal** in the design, implementation, and evaluation. The project investigated

intimate partnership violence in Roma communities which represent one of the most evident manifestations of the unequal distribution of power between men and women in Roma communities.

Mainstreaming of empowerment and transferability

The initiative can be adapted and replicated in other communities. Despite differences between Roma communities in the EU, patriarchal family systems are a common element subordinating women to men and limiting access to women's basic human rights. This aspect is a crucial challenge in Romani women's empowerment process. This initiative is therefore particularly valuable because, although the initiative focused on intimate partnership violence within Roma communities, it is rather likely that it will **positively influence other areas of life**.

5.4.4. The good practice for empowerment in housing

It has not been possible to find enough information to present and assess a good practice in housing aimed at empowering women. It should be stressed that **good practices in housing often have positive impacts on women** but was not subject of the initiatives collected for this study.

5.4.5. Good practice for Romani women's political empowerment

Hungarian Women's Lobby and European Women's Lobby mentor program for future Romani and migrant women politicians

While no relevant initiative has been conducted by public authorities for Romani women's political empowerment, the **Hungarian Women's Lobby**, with support of the **European Women's Lobby**, is implementing an **initiative** for the empowerment of Romani women that **fosters their political participation**. The project aims at increasing the political participation of Romani and migrant women **who are already involved in political life and who are interested in running for the European Parliament Elections in May 2014**.

Objective

Nevertheless, it aims at **increasing the number of Romani women in the European Parliament**. The project clearly supports Romani women empowerment and could be implemented in other countries with regard also to local and national political life.

Results

The project has not been concluded, therefore an ultimate evaluation of its **working-well** feature cannot be presented. However, the project has involved **8-12 women** of foreign origin or ethnic minority background for whom **taking part to a training for political participation** is already a step forward in **political empowerment**.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Background

Discrimination traps Romani communities in a vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion. There are more than 90% of Romani people in Europe living in poverty. Despite the efforts of EU institutions and national governments throughout the last decade, their living conditions are still dramatic. Romani women are most vulnerable due to the fact that they experience multiple forms of discrimination inflicted not only by society at large but also within their own communities.

6.2. Innovative approach: empowerment

Romani women's empowerment represents an innovative approach to support the improvement of Romani women's living conditions. Women's empowerment has been **widely used in development strategies** by international development organizations since the 1980s because of its **great potentiality to break the vicious circle** of poverty and of gender inequality in communities. Women's empowerment approach considers human rights as a crucial starting point to tackle gender and multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women within their communities.

6.3. Empowerment: a complex process and an outcome

Romani women's empowerment is a complex process and at the same time an outcome that involves simultaneously **three dimensions: personal, relational, collective**. It includes political structures, cooperative actions, at local or institutional level.

Romani women's involvement in all phases of all policy process is essential. Moreover, the analysis of NRIS shows that Roma women's empowerment needs an **integrated approach** between policy areas: education, empowerment, health, and housing.

6.4. Romani women's empowerment in the NRISs

The analysis of the 28 NRISs concerning the attention for Romani women's empowerment shows that it has been **explicitly mentioned in 6 out of 28 NRIS**, however its meaning in the NRIS greatly varies. For instance, **Italy** considers Romani women's empowerment as an approach to be introduced and developed as a principle of intervention. In **Sweden**, Romani women's empowerment is part of the process to draw up, implement, and evaluate the whole NRIS, as it is in the Welsh NRIS (**UK**). Romani women's empowerment is the focus of a project in **Germany**, supporting women employment through micro credit actions. In **Croatia**, it is a part of the mainstreaming approach in most of the document with a special attention to Romani women's empowerment in the public life.

6.5. Preconditions of empowerment of Romani women: health policies as a negative example

In most of the NRISs and also in EU documents, women are mainly considered vulnerable subjects (as are children) and deserve protection. Where the empowerment approach is discussed, it does not adequately consider gender differences. Recognizing the condition of Romani women's higher **vulnerability** is a crucial starting point; nevertheless, this approach needs to be further developed to draw-up policy that is **evidence based** and aiming to advance Romani women's empowerment.

There is the need to overcome the **risk of a top-down and paternalistic approach** that could exclude Romani women from the decision and policy-making processes. Actions addressing women's health issues in the maternal area which consider **women as passive**

beneficiaries of services are examples of an approach that does not consider Romani women as active protagonist of their policy. The focus on maternal health of Romani women characterizes a top-down approach that in most of the cases does not consider Romani women's health in the context of socio-economic conditions and tends to apply a victim-blaming approach ignoring the relevant literature on health inequalities.

6.6. Housing policies have a high potential of indirect positive effects (mainstreaming empowerment)

Housing segregation as well as inadequate social housing policy strongly hampers education, increases segregation, and limits access to the labour market and health conditions. **Tackling housing segregation is a crucial starting point to promote Romani women's empowerment.**

6.7. Gender mainstreaming of the NRISs: good practices

Promoting Romani women's empowerment is to promote a gender equality development approach based on gender mainstreaming. In the 28 NRISs, gender differences have been explored in most of the cases through a **gender-disaggregated analysis** of the situation in education, employment and health. Nevertheless, only **few NRIS have applied a gender mainstreaming approach** when drafting, implementing, and evaluating policy.

Croatia represents a good example of an **explicit gender mainstreaming approach** in most of the policy areas. **Sweden** has to be considered a good practice with regard to the structural approach to Romani women's empowerment in the policy making process through both involving Romani women's CSOs and applying an equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming approach throughout the NRIS. **Germany's** project on Romani women's employment is a good concrete example of actions to support Romani women's empowerment.

The CSWDs have highlighted key elements and identified gaps but have applied a **gender-blind approach**, while they have stressed the positive attention for empowerment in the Swedish and UK NRIS.

6.8. The role of public authorities

As experienced in **Sweden, Wales (UK)** and in **Croatia** the involvement of Romani women's CSOs on the initiative of public authorities is a crucial aspect to draw up efficient policy and collect concrete experiences of Romani women's empowerment. The support of public authorities to Romani women's CSOs is a key starting point.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Romani women's empowerment needs an integrated approach that involves different levels of governance.

7.1. Recommendations for National Governments

1. **Assume an evidence-based policy approach, grounded** on the analysis of **gender disaggregated** data concerning outputs and outcomes of policy.
2. Make the actual **policy participatory approach operational** by involving all stakeholders throughout the policy-making process. **Romani women have to be involved** in the analysis of their needs, in planning policy and related services, implementing actions, in monitoring and evaluating the outputs and the outcome of the services and of the policies. The active **participation of Romani women's CSOs at local, national, and European level**, as well as of **gender equality bodies and women's rights organizations**, is indispensable.

Specifically with regard to the five key policy areas:

3. Promote Romani women's **political participation** by introducing **Romani women's quotas** at all governmental levels.
4. **Housing policy**: improve housing conditions and desegregation of Roma communities by means of supporting active participation of Romani women's CSOs;
5. **Employment policy**: enhance access to the labour market with measures countering Romani women's horizontal (glass box) and vertical (glass ceiling) segregation;
6. **Education policy**: guarantee access to high quality educational programs for Romani women and girls;
7. **Health policy**: Support active participation of Romani women's CSOs in the drawing-up, implementation and evaluation of health policy concerning Romani women;

7.2. Recommendations to the European Parliament

The European Parliament should:

1. Promote the adoption of **an integrated - gender mainstreamed - evidence-based – participatory** policy approach in the National Roma Inclusion Strategy focused on Romani women's human rights.
2. Raise the conditions of **Romani women in discussions with national parliaments** so that Member States are encouraged **to include** their **empowerment** as a key element in the national strategies to improve the overall condition of all Roma communities;
3. Call upon the Commission to observe that **Romani women's rights** are reflected as a crucial dimension in the national strategies and that gender mainstreaming as a tool supports the reduction of gender inequality and discrimination against Romani women within the Roma communities and in the society.

4. Cooperate with the Council and the Commission to develop more **assertive and binding tools** to promote Roma inclusion in EU Member States, for example by including appropriate objectives in the European Semester process as the situation of Roma minorities influences the economic and social performance of Member States.

7.3. Recommendations for the European Commission

1. Implement an integrated - **gender mainstreamed - life course – evidence-based – participatory** policy approach focused on Romani women's human rights in the National Roma Inclusion strategies with in particular:
 - a. Specific attention to the **interrelation between the four key areas** (education, employment, health, housing) with a special attention on housing as starting point because of the influence that housing conditions and segregation have on education, employment and health. Moreover, integration implies also a strong relationship to gender equality policies.
 - b. Specific attention in policy making to **the life-course** of Romani women as their needs are different according to their age and because previous life experiences affect all the subsequent living conditions. The empowering approach has to address Romani women's needs in different moments of their lives, through their young, adult, and older age.
2. Request **Roma inclusion in EU Member States in a more sensitive and assertive way.**
3. Foster **specific tools targeted at Romani women's empowerment** in the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion.
4. Foster **gender equality** as a **key objective** to contrast the discrimination Romani women experience within their communities and as a part of the Romani women's empowerment strategy in the National Strategies for Roma Inclusion.
5. Define a clear **step by step EU Roma inclusion process**, linking each local and national initiative to the fulfilment of EU community goals, and establish a clear definition of the procedures concerning the involvement of stakeholders; draw up objectives, implementation processes, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments and allocate resources through the EU budget.
6. Propose measures to eliminate **health inequalities** for Romani women as a prerequisite for Romani women's empowerment.
7. Promote **mutual learning processes** among EU Member States with regard to EU good practices in Romani women's empowerment.
8. Include specific objectives to **tackle trafficking of Romani women in the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion.**

7.4. Recommendations for the European Council

1. **Invite Member States** to adopt a **policy approach** focused on **Romani women's human rights and empowerment** within the framework of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy by reminding that **all the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion** should be **equally taken into consideration** when designing, implementing and evaluating policies aimed at promoting Roma inclusion. More particularly, Member States should be invited to consider the following:

“awareness of the gender dimension”, “involvement of civil society” and “active participation of the Roma”.

2. Encourage **better cooperation among Member States** in the framework of the **open method of coordination** for health and social inclusion for the **exchange of good practices** for Roma inclusion with special attention to **Roma women’s empowerment** in the **four areas of intervention** and with the aim of assuming an integrated approach between the different areas.
3. **Invite Member States** to assume, besides targeted actions, also a **mainstreaming approach** in the fields of education, employment, housing, and healthcare, towards Romani people and in particular towards **Romani women’s empowerment** with a view to effectively promote their social inclusion.

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Annex 1 Equal participation for Sinti and Roma in Germany Position paper on the European Union framework to improve the situation of Roma in Europe

Annex 2 Access to education – Examples of projects

Annex 3 Access to employment – Examples of projects

Annex 4 Access to healthcare – Examples of projects

Annex 5 Access to housing – Examples of projects

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Annex 2 NATIONAL SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY–EXTREME POVERTY, CHILD POVERTY, THE ROMA – (2011 –2020) FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT Between the Government of Hungary and the National Roma Self – Government 20/05/2011

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Annex 2: Italian normative context

Annex 3: Regional and provincial regulatory framework

Annex 4: Good/best practices

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- Luxembourg: Le Gouvernement Du Grand-Duche De Luxembourg, 14/01/2012, Mesures générales d'intégration au Luxembourg

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Malta: implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy by Malta.

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- The Netherlands: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations the Netherlands www.rijksoverheid.nl Date December 16, 2011 Policy measures in the Netherlands for the social inclusion of Roma.

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Portugal: Government of Portugal, Deputy Secretary Of State to the Minister attached to the Prime Minister, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, I.P. National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities (2012)350 - 02/01/2012.

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Slovenia: Republika Slovenija/Vlada Republike Slovenije Working Translation Ljubljana 11 March 2010 National Programme of Measures for Roma of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Period 2010–2015

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Slovakia: The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities submits this Strategy of the Slovak Republic for the integration of Roma up to 2020.

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Poland:

Republic of Poland Minister of Administration and Digitization Michał Boni Warsaw, 28 December 2011 National Roma Integration Strategy.

Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Programme for the Roma community in Poland, Warsaw, August 2003

Annex 1 – The population and distribution

Annex 2 – The Roma organizations in Poland

Annex 4 – The monitoring

Annex 5 – The Report of the National Minorities Affairs Malopolski Governor's Attorney which talks about the execution of the Pilot government programme for the Roma community in the Malopolska province for the years 2001 – 2003 in years 2001 – 2002

Annex 6 – The Roma in Poland – description of the situation

The report comprises the implementation method of the Programme for the Roma Community in Poland in 2004-2010

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Romania:

STRATEGY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE ROMANIAN CITIZENS BELONGING TO ROMA MINORITY FOR THE PERIOD 2012 – 2020

Annex 1. Plans of sectoral measures: A Education, B Employment, C Health, D Housing, E Culture, F Social infrastructure.

Annex 2 to the Strategy: Types of general performance indicators for the priorities of the Government Strategy.

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- Sweden:

A coordinated long-term strategy for Roma Skr.inclusion 2012–2032 2011/12:56The Government hereby submits this communication to the Riksdag. Stockholm, 16 February 2012

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

- United Kingdom:

Council Conclusions on an EU Framework Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Annex 1 'Travelling to a Better Future' Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Pan Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers.

Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

ANNEX A: STAKEHOLDERS MAPPING AT EU 27 MEMBER STATES' LEVEL

COUNTRY	Roma Women NGO	Contacts	Address	Internet site	Contact person
Austria	Verein Roma, Oberwart, Burgenland	Phone: +43-(0) 3352-330 59, Fax: +43- (0) 3352-330 59-4 Email: office@verein-roma.at	A-7400 Oberwart, Evangelical Church Lane 3	http://www.verein-roma.at/	
Belgium	ERGO Network for European Roma	Phone: +32 (0)2 893 10 49 Email: info@ergonetw ork.org	Rue d'Edimbourg 26 1050 Brussels (B)	http://www.ergonetwork.org/ergo-network/other-items/contact/	
Bulgaria	Roma women NGO "Carmen"	phone: 0898609383; Email: simona26@mail.l.bg	Razgrad		Tsvetanka Marinova
Czech Republic	IQ Roma servis	Phone: +420 543 213 310 Fax: +420 543 214 809 Email: iqrs@iqrs.cz	Cejl 49, 602 00 Brno Czech Republic	http://www.iqrs.cz/verze/en/search.php?rsvelikost=sab&rstext=all-phpRS-all&rstema=43	Katarina Klamkova
Cyprus	Dom Research Center	Email: drc@domresearchcenter.com		http://www.domresearchcenter.com	
Croatia	Udruga žena Romkinja Hrvatske "Bolja buducnost" Association of Roma Women of Croatia "Better Future"	Tel: +385 1 6110 311 E-mail: uzrh.boljabuducnost@yahoo.com ramiza.memedi@zg.t-com.hr	Avenija Marina Drzica 4 10000 Zagreb, Croatia	http://www.uzrh-bb.hr http://www.romni.net	Ms. Ramiza Memedi, President of the organization

COUNTRY	Roma Women NGO	Contacts	Address	Internet site	Contact person
Denmark	Romana Kulturako Centri, Kopenhagen	Phone: 38 81 07 08 Fax:20 922 068	Ruten 167.3.3,2700 Brønshøj Danmark	http://www.euroma.dk/	
Estonia	North-Estonian Roma Association, Põhja-Eesti Romade Ühing	Phone:+372 6380652 Fax:+372 55626601 Email:romalex@hotmail.ee	Lighthouse 11-29, 11411 Tallinn	http://www.estblul.ee/EST/Liikmed/pe_rooma.html	
Finland	Romano Missio/ The Romany Mission (And) Christian Romani Women's Association, Kromana	Phone: (09) 351 1366 Fax: (09) 345 2517 Email:toimisto@romanomissio.fi	Vilppulantie 2 C 4 00700 HELSINKI	www.romanomissio.fi	
France	The voice of Roma	Email: Barbara.tiefenbacher@gmx.at		http://lesrroms.blogg.org/	Barbara Tiefenbacher
Germany	Roma Women - Sinti und Roma-Frauen in Deutschland			http://www.romawomen.org/	
Greece	Solidarity Center of Roma Women				

COUNTRY	Roma Women NGO	Contacts	Address	Internet site	Contact person
Hungary	Színes Egyesület Colourful Association Gyöngyök Pearls	Tel: +36 72/210-142 Email: info@szinesgyongyok.hu	7632 Pécs, Littke J. u. 5. Hungary	www.szinesgyongyok.hu	Kelemen Zoltanne, President
Ireland	Pavee Point	Phone: 353 18780255 Fax: 353 1 874 2626 Email: pavee@iol.ie	Travellers' Centre 46 North Great Charles Street Dublin 1 Ireland	http://www.paveepoint.ie	Colette Murray murraycolette@yahoo.co.uk
Italy	Sucardrom	Phone: +39 0376 360643 Fax: +39 0376 318839 E-mail: ics@sucardrom.eu	Via don E. Tazzoli, 14 46100 MANTOVA, Italia	http://www.sucardrom.eu/	
Latvia	Latvijas čigānu nacionālās kultūras biedrība (Society of national culture of Roma people in Latvia)	Phone: +371 67613638, Fax: +371 67613618 Email: normunds.rudevics@delfi.lv	Slokas 37, Rīga, LV-1048 Pudiķu 6, Rīga, LV-1082	http://lnkba.wordpress.com/societies/latvijas-ciganu-nacionalas-kulturas-biedriba/	Normunds Rudēvičs (+371 26438646)
Lithuania	Gypsy Fire and the Roma Community Centre	Email: matluiza@gmail.com			Josif Tyčina
Luxembourg					
Malta					

COUNTRY	Roma Women NGO	Contacts	Address	Internet site	Contact person
Netherlands	Art.1	Phone:0031-(0)10-201 02 01 Fax:0031-(0)10- 201 02 22	Grotekerkplein 5 3011 GC Rotterdam The Netherlands	www.art1.nl	
Poland	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)	Phone: +47 46 84 88 50 Email: hrh@humanrightshouse.org	ul. Zgoda 11 00-018 Warsaw Poland	http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/5426.html	
Portugal	Numena	Phone: +351 21 424 01 70 Fax: +351 21 424 01 69 Email:direccao@numena.org.pt	Númena - Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas Parque de Ciência e Tecnologia Núcleo Central, 379 2740-122 Porto Salvo	http://www.numena.org.pt/entrada.asp?lingua=ENG	
Romania	Roma Women's Association In Romania	Phone:+40311054259 Fax: +40311054258 Email: office@incluziuneafemeilrome.ro violeta@dnt.ro	Sos. Colentina, nr 43, Bl. R-13, sc. B, ap. 83, district 2, Zip code 023141, Bucharest	http://www.incluziuneafemeilrome.ro	Ms. Violeta Dumitru
Slovakia	Rómsky institute (Roma Institute)	Phone: 02/55563015 Email:info@romainstitute.sk	Rómsky inštitút - Roma Institute, n.o.Klariská 14811 03 Bratislava	http://www.romainstitute.sk/	

COUNTRY	Roma Women NGO	Contacts	Address	Internet site	Contact person
Slovenia	Mirovni Institute	Phone: +386 1 230 65 80 Fax: +386 1 230 65 85 Email: buca@siol.net	Buča knjigotrštvo d.o.o. Kolarjeva 47 1000 Ljubljana Slovenia	http://www.mirovni-institut.si/	Ana Grča
Spain	Roma Association Women Drom Kotar Mestipen	Email: info@dromkotar.org	Via Laietana, 41, 1º 1ª 08033	www.dromkotar.org	Ivan Ivanov
Sweden	Centrum Mot Rasism	Phone: 08 - 66 11 464 Fax: 08 - 31 08 60 Email: info@cmr.nu	Hallonbergsplan 5, Stockholm Box 7065 174 07 Sundbyberg Pg 26 15 91-2	http://www.errc.org/join-us	
United Kingdom	Equality	Phone:+44 (0)20 3239 6605 Email:alan@equality.uk.com	19 The Malt House, The Drays, Long Melford, Suffolk, CO10 9TP.	http://equality.uk.com/Welcome.html	

Source: Present study data collection

ANNEX B: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA GRID

Assessment criteria grid

CRITERIA	OPERATIONALISATION	GOOD PRACTICE ASSESSMENT
It works well	Effectiveness: a measure is operationalised in terms of empowerment and gender equality , if Romani women and girls involved in the initiative are the main actors of their own choices.	
	Adequateness: a measure is adequate if the initiative tackles the most relevant issues for Romani women and girls in the context where it is applied by empowering them.	
	Indirect positive effects (mainstreaming empowerment): If the initiative aims at one of the four areas of intervention and has indirect empowering effects on at least one of the other three areas or more generally positive impacts on Romani women's and girls' empowerment.	
Transferability	Specific conditions contributing to the success of the initiative in the specific context .	
	Result of the analysis regarding the extent to which the initiative can be adapted to other contexts.	
Learning potential	General lessons that can be drawn for Romani women's and girls' empowerment.	

ANNEX C: GOOD PRACTICES ASSESSMENT FICHES

Empowering Romani parents to support upbringing and education of their children

Section 1: the descriptive/analytical section	
Requested information	Provided information
Name of the initiative:	Empowering Romani parents to support upbringing and education of their children
Country:	Croatia
Organisation/ Institution:	Open Public Academy "Step by Step"
Type of organisation/ Institution:	Non-governmental organization
Area:	Education
Total budget and source of funding:	USD 150,000.00 (approx. 111,000 Eur), Open Society Foundations
Where it has been implemented:	Croatia, Medjimurje County (Municipalities of Drzimurec Strelec/Mala Subotica, Macinec, Orehovica) and Sisak-Moslavina County, (the City of Kutina)
Overall objective of the initiative:	The overall goal of the project is well-being and successful development and learning of children by means of supporting and developing the capacity of parents and schools, the two sides that influence children's lives the most.
Specific objectives:	To contribute to the cooperation between school and parents in order to better support children's learning and development; To contribute to the empowerment of Romani parents in supporting their children's development and education.
Target group:	The focus is on Romani parents, but also non-Romani parents of children between 5 and 7 years of age
Timeline:	20 months: 01/11/2011. – 31/06/2013
Description of the logic of the intervention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education of teachers, principals, associates, Romani assistants in teaching, parents and the local community (Roma and majority) on social justice (through experiential exercises to raise awareness on prejudices and stereotypes and on how they affect success in school and in life) in lasting of three-days. The training was actually anti-bias training focused on all kinds of stereotypes, including sexism. - Production of materials for parents and children to help parents to develop children's pre-mathematical and pre-readers skills through play, at home; - Training of trainers/facilitators to lead workshops for parents; - Workshops for parents once a week for about 1.5 hours. Workshops are attended by children, too. Parents receive materials to work with children and take them home to continue this work;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education of the entire teaching staff on the partnership between schools and families; - During two school years the initiative included around 320 parents and family members, out of which around 300 Romani parents and family members (out of which around 190 Romani women), and 150 children out of which 130 Romani children; - Romani women (mothers) included in the project were not a particular target population of the project, but benefitted from it in various ways; - 108 persons (teachers, principals, associates, Romani assistants in the teaching, parents and the representatives of local community, both Roma and majority) participated in education for social justice (against prejudice and stereotypes). According to a survey conducted before and after training, the education has achieved a significant shift in attitudes towards the education of Romani children; - Schools participating in the project opened the door to welcome parents to the "stimulating parenting" workshops. Schools are developing various forms of cooperation with parents and are encouraging discussion on the problems in rising of children; - Through workshops organized in schools once a week parents get associated with the school and teachers and receive support from them, and realize that they can help their children in the learning process. Further on, they share experiences and consider educational topics they wish to discuss.
<p>Involvement of Romani women in the design, implementation or evaluation of the initiative:</p>	<p>Romani women were not involved in the design and implementation of the initiative as initiators. They were beneficiaries of the project. Romani women participated in evaluation of the initiative by providing their opinion about benefits they gained as beneficiaries.</p>
<p>Difficulties or obstacles and limitations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The difficulties related to implementation of workshops for parents occurred in the City of Kutina, as in that community it was difficult to motivate parents to attend. That happened because the City government of Kutina in 2011 decided to enrol Romani children to other primary schools in Kutina, instead of one particular primary school where Romani parents expected their children to enrol. Therefore, Romani parents stopped coming to workshops. - Parents felt that the duration of the workshops (1.5 hours) was too short because they felt that they did not manage to complete some of the tasks or activities. - Periods of lower attendance, especially in the time of spring and summer, due to the work opportunities available to parents in those periods. Other important remark related to the attendance was the challenge of creating a new habit of continuous participation in a new type of school activity. - It was difficult to stimulate participation of the part of the Romani parents who do not consider themselves as Roma and foster discriminatory attitudes towards Roma.

	<p>- Parents' scepticism towards certain activities at the beginning of the project, due to the assumption that the trainers/facilitators will mock at them for their 'incompetence'.</p>
Evaluation:	<p>Evaluation of the initiative is in progress as the project has ended just recently. The evaluation of the impact can be made only on the long-term basis and it will take several years to see the effects of this initiative on education of Romani children, in particular girls.</p>
Effectiveness of the initiative:	<p>The initiative was not focused on Romani women exclusively. It was focused on Romani parents in general. However, most of the Romani parents that took part in the project activities were mothers (approximately 80%). The Romani women/mothers were gathered around joint effort of empowerment in order to support their children in learning after they enrol elementary school.</p> <p>The Romani women/mothers were put in a situation where they actually learned together with their children during a series of workshops over a period of 10 months (which actually equals to 1 entire educational module in formal education – e.g. math or science). By involvement in this initiative they went through a process of significant empowerment in several ways: (a) they are empowered for better parenting; (b) they are empowered to be able to provide quality support to their children once they enrol elementary school; (c) since they attended the workshops together with a number of non-Romani parents and children, they were placed in an intercultural environment what was beneficial for development/improvement of their social skills; (d) they went through a process of education what helped increase their knowledge (having in mind that a great number of Romani women are without elementary education); (e) one of the most important effects was that Romani women/mothers involved in this initiative, in informal conversations expressed increased aspirations towards education of their children (including daughters).</p>
Weaknesses and aspects to improve:	<p>The weaknesses and aspects to improve will be determined after the evaluation of the initiative.</p>
Further comments:	<p>The value of this initiative can also be found in the fact that the workshops were attended by such a great percentage of Romani women/mothers. That means that the initiative did not induce resistance among men (families) in a way that women would be prevented from coming to the workshops. Moreover, the reports on the project reveal that in the 2nd year of implementation the number of parents (out of which approx. 80% were mothers) has increased, what further proves the effectiveness of the initiative.</p> <p>In addition, although some of the trainers/facilitators expected that illiteracy of some parents/mothers would be a possible obstacle, it appeared that illiteracy was not an obstacle at all.</p>

Section 2: the assessment section		
Criteria	Assessment	
EMPOWERMENT	Romani women were one of the target groups of the initiative. Their participation, however, was voluntary.	
GENDER EQUALITY	Gender equality was not the main objective of the initiative, however, subsequently, with further empowerment of Romani women/mothers a degree of gender equality might be achieved. When it comes to issue of gender equality the project team actually had in mind an increase of participation of men in the activities. One of the goals was to increase the number of fathers in order to raise their awareness on importance of education and in performing their fatherhood role and responsibilities. In the terms of gender equity, Romani men should actively assume their parenting role as women do, and the project team was satisfied with response from the side of male parents and their participation in the activities.	
ADEQUATENESS	The initiative tackles education as one of the most relevant issues in terms of gender equality. The context in which most of the Romani women live, including the communities targeted in this action, does not encourage women/girls for education and therefore many of them never complete elementary education. This initiative supported women in gaining various kinds of knowledge and skills – basic literacy and knowledge of math and science, as well as communication and social skills in a way that induces least resistance among women and the community and increases their skills in a more acceptable way.	
MAINSTREAMING EMPOWERMENT	ROMANI	WOMEN
	The initiative was focused on education; however, it is rather likely that it will positively influence other areas, such as health.	
CONTEXT ANALYSIS	The initiative was implemented in four Roma settlements/communities (Roma Bayash) which can be distinguished by the level of integration and connections with the wider community. Two of the settlements have better relations with the wider community and higher level of integration, and evidently better living conditions than the other two. The response of parents in the two settlements with better relations with the wider community was higher. In the community where parents felt that the authorities are introducing changes which they do not consider favourable, parents refused to participate. It is important to mention that the new National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013-2020 foresees suppression of all segregated Roma classes and schools by 2020. In that regards, the authorities are supposed to ensure that Romani children are attending integrated classes.	
ADAPTABILITY	The initiative can be adapted and replicated in other communities.	
GENERAL LESSONS TO BE DRAWN	There are 3 key factors for high attendance and participation of parents/mothers: (1) they need to feel good/successful; (2) they need to get some kind of reward (e.g. excursion); (3) they need	

	<p>to support each other (e.g. the generation that has participated in the previous year supports with their positive attitude this year's generation in participating in the workshop).</p> <p>Education of women in Roma communities is still an issue to which Roma community pays less attention. Although efforts made by various stakeholders towards education of Romani children and the improvements are visible in terms of number of children (both male and female), completion of elementary education and enrolment in secondary education is still at a low level. Less than 10% of Romani children continue education after completion of elementary school, and the percentage of girls enrolling in secondary education is even lower. The change will be possible only when the level of awareness about the importance of education, for both male and female children, increases among the Roma population. However, it is not an instantaneous change, but a process in which Romani parents (in particular mothers) have to be empowered and their awareness raised in order to make this change happen.</p> <p>Participation of Romani women/mothers in workshops for empowerment in parenting will not significantly change their level of education, but will contribute to increase of their aspirations for education of their children (girls in particular) and that is where the change starts. It is important to design initiatives in a way that the process of change will be least threatening and unpleasant for the targeted population.</p> <p>In addition, it is important to involve members of Roma community, in particular women who have the capacities of active participation, to participate in design and implementation of such initiatives.</p>
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Empowering Romani people beneficiaries of initiatives for labour integration through participation in active labour market measures design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation: the Italian initiative Valore Lavoro (Value labour).

Section 1: the descriptive/analytical section	
Requested information	Provided information
Name of the initiative:	Valore lavoro (Value labour)
Country:	Italy
Organisation/ Institution:	Financed by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and promoted by the Lombardy Region Family, Social Solidarity and Voluntary Sector Department and implemented by Comunità di Sant'Egidio (a charity, and ISMU Foundation), the project leader with other CSOs: Caritas Ambrosiana (Catholic charity organisation of the CEI Italian Catholic Church), Opera Nomadi Milano (a Romani association), Cooperativa IES (led by Casa della Carità, a charity), "Mengro Labatarpe" (Our Work – led by Sucar Drom, a Sinti association).
Type of organisation/ Institution:	Financed by a public actor at central national level, promoted by a public actor at regional level and implemented by CSOs, National (Comunità di Sant'Egidio and "Mengro Labatarpe-Our Work" – led by Sucar Drom, a Sinti association) and local (Caritas Ambrosiana, Opera Nomadi Milano, Cooperativa IES)
Area:	Employment
Total budget and source of funding:	498,000 Euro
Where it has been implemented:	Different cities in Lombardy region: Milan, Rho and Mantua.
Overall objective of the initiative:	<p>Labour integration through a participatory approach that involved Roma in defining and implementing social policies addressing them.</p> <p>Italy does not recognise the Romani and Sinti languages among the historical-linguistic minorities protected on the level of full equality by Act No. 482/1999.²⁰ This has led, as a consequence, to the failure to transpose EC regulation No. 2204/2002 into national legislation. This regulation identifies among disadvantaged workers any person belonging to an ethnic minority of a Member State who has to improve her/his language skills, her/his professional competence or her/his work experience to increase the chances of obtaining stable employment. As a consequence, Roma have been prevented from being included in paths towards protected occupations that are addressed to disadvantaged people as foreseen by the Italian labour legislation.</p> <p>For this reason there is the need to implement specific initiatives to encourage Romani people participation in the labour market.</p>
Specific objectives:	Valore Lavoro was aimed at improving and facilitating the labour integration of Roma through their involvement in decision-making processes. It was articulated in different but integrated actions: 1) vocational training; 2) promotion and support of already existing working activities (i.e. cooperatives); 3) hiring of Roma as employees; 4) encouragement of self-employment; 5) improvement of Roma autonomy in accessing public services (empowerment); 6) promotion of the capability and sensitivity of public services in assessing and meeting Roma-specific needs.
Target group:	Romani people in vulnerable conditions (women, young people). The majority of the 60 beneficiaries of Valore Lavoro initiatives

	were women. The project, however involved also young people and men.
Timeline:	18 months: May 2009-November 2010
Description of the logic of the intervention:	A bottom-up scheme of the involvement of recipients, has been set up. The starting point of the initiative was beneficiaries needs and their concrete conditions. Starting from the bottom also means identifying a starting point for inclusive measures among the traditional fields that define promotion of citizenship rights (housing, education, employment and health care), especially adopting an active approach, oriented towards empowerment. Specific attention to Romani women. Because they are exposed to the highest level of risks (multiple discriminations, health risks and so forth) but at the same time they can play a fundamental role as key catalysts of change in their own communities. The attention paid to the gender dimension in accordance with the 5th Principle of the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion.
Involvement of Roma women in the design, implementation or evaluation of the initiative:	Participatory planning involving Roma together with the public authorities and civil society in the definition of the project's actions, their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Managing of funds was also participatory.
Difficulties or obstacles and limitations:	The limitations are related to the financial resources for continuation of the initiative that even if successful has not been re-financed anymore.
Evaluation:	Internal monitoring and evaluation were conducted, this allowed the continuous involvement of all actors in the project.
Effectiveness of the initiative:	The initiative has achieved the overall objective and its specific objectives. Romani vulnerable people including women have been positively affected by the initiative. With direct effects of finding a job and indirect effects of empowerment. The Romani people who benefitted of the project (the majority of them are women) have been involved in mechanisms of active participation. This approach led to Roma empowerment, emancipating Roma from reliance on passive measures of social protection.
Weaknesses and aspects to improve:	The limitations of the initiative is its sustainability. It is related to the public funding. Although successful the initiative has not been re-financed.
Further comments:	A number of public initiatives have been undertaken during the project. They were intended not only to spread the results and outcomes of the project, but also to open a public debate on issues concerning minorities, discrimination and social exclusion. Moreover, a job services guidebook addressing public services, such as job centres, and the Roma themselves, has been published.
Section 2: the assessment section	
Criteria	Assessment
Empowerment	The Romani people who benefitted of the initiatives (the majority are women) were the main actors they were empowered through the participation in the initiative at different levels. In the participatory mechanisms as they had to take decisions on how to design, implement and monitor it. In the training and in setting up self-employment activities. Increased experience and awareness, work experience, improvement of socio-economic position through legal employment.

	<p>The project's activities had a great impact on women's life, in terms of increased autonomy and improved family management. One of the Romani woman beneficiaries affirmed this: "I like my job, because I know that if I like something I can buy it, I am independent, I can go by myself. I do not need to ask somebody. And I like it."³⁷</p>
Gender equality	<p>Gender equality as an objective has been considered in the planning, in the implementation, in the monitoring and evaluation, of the initiative.</p>
Adequateness	<p>The initiative tackles the most relevant issues for Roma women and girls in the context where it is applied. It is aimed at including them in the labour market and activate their participation in decisions that regard them.</p>
Mainstreaming roma women empowerment	<p>The initiative aimed at Employment had indirect empowering effects on on Roma women's and girls' empowerment that come along with the affirmation and assuming active role in the society</p>
Context analysis	<p>The important factor for success of the Valore Lavoro project was the a close cooperation between regional authorities (Lombardy Region), civil society (charity organisations, social partners and researchers) and Roma (individuals and their associations) during the implementation of the project's actions but also their very design. Priorities and concrete interventions were planned in collaboration, and during their realisation regular meetings and monitoring actions guaranteed a unitary dimension of the different local projects.</p> <p>The coordinated funds management allowed an effective participation of Roma and of other non-profit organisations that took part in the project, not only in implementing the activities but also in managing funds</p>
Adaptability	<p>This initiative can be adapted and replicated in other contexts.</p>
General lessons to be drawn	<p>Roma women, who generally lack official education, particular skills, work experience, self-confidence and motivation for active job search have been provided with an opportunity to be trained and to actively create their job opportunities. The active participation of Roma in improving their social conditions, and, specifically, their labour integration, in the Valore Lavoro project has indirectly introduced a series of initiatives and mechanisms of active participation in the decision-making processes. It is noteworthy that the dressmaker's and laundry business is still open, and the social cooperative in Mantua, established with the support of Sucar Drom and the funding of the Valore Lavoro project, is still running its business. A virtuous circle between labour integration and citizenship rights can also be identified: the possession of a regular job stimulated within the Roma people involved in the project the activation of processes addressed at obtaining the legal entitlements to permanent residence in Italy for those who do not have Italian citizenship, a regular residence entitlement for Italian citizens and so forth.</p>

EMPOW-AIR Empowering women against intimate partnership violence in Roma communities

Section 1: the descriptive/analytical section	
Requested information	Provided information
Name of the initiative:	EMPOW-AIR Empowering women against intimate partnership violence in Roma communities
Country:	Spain, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy
Organisation/ Institution:	The Empow-Air project was coordinated by SURT. Fundació de dones. Fundació privada, based in Barcelona, and counted with the following partnership: International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (Bulgaria), Giacomo Brodolini Foundation (Italy), Gypsy Women Association for Our Children (Romania) and Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Spain).
Type of organisation/ Institution:	CSOs
Area:	Health: Intimate partnership violence against women
Total budget and source of funding:	358,600.
Where it has been implemented:	In Bulgaria, in the town of Samokov, inhabited by a large Roma people. In Italy: Roma. In Romania: the city of Timisoara. In Spain: two cities of the surroundings of Barcelona
Overall objective of the initiative:	The general goal of EMPOW-AIR is to expand research on male violence against women in intimate partnerships within Roma communities in order to generate tools which help professionals in dealing with violence detection and prevention. EMPOW-AIR additionally intends to promote empowerment of Roma women to address gender violence situations and raise awareness on the existence of violence against women within the Roma communities among decision makers, professionals working with the Roma population and the Roma population itself.
Specific objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To perform research on the prevalence and characteristics of male violence against women in intimate partnerships within the Roma communities. 2) To generate tools that assist professionals working with the Roma population in the detection and prevention of male violence against women. 3) To raise awareness on male violence against women in the Roma communities by disseminating knowledge generated by EMPOW-AIR, with a view to sensitise policy-makers about the need to promote actions in this area, as well as professionals working with the Roma population and the Roma population itself. 4) To promote the empowerment of Roma women as a tool to foster their protection from male violence against women.

Target group:	The target group of EMPOW-AIR is Roma women, who will not only be addressed directly in empowerment and sensitisation workshops, but will ultimately benefit from an increased awareness and knowledge of professionals and political actors, with a view to ensuring access to an appropriate protection against violence.
Timeline:	24 months: March 2011-march 2013
Description of the logic of intervention:	<p>1. Start-up of the project and qualitative research. Fieldwork in each country, consisting of: 2 discussion groups with Roma women; 2-5 qualitative interviews with Roma women; and one focus group with Roma and non-Roma professionals working with Roma.</p> <p>2. Elaboration of the toolkit and training to professionals: 1200 copies (300 in each language)</p> <p>3. Sensitization and prevention activities within the Roma communities and activities for the empowerment of Roma Women. In order to reach and sensitise the Roma communities regarding the issue of violence against women each partner will organise 2 workshops with Roma population: 1 with around 10 women, fostering their empowerment as a tool to maximise their protection from violence, and 1 workshop with around 10 men, aiming at increasing sensitisation of Roma men and promoting prevention of violence against women. As a result, Roma men will be more aware and sensitive regarding violence against women within their own communities, and Roma women empowered to deal with gender violence situations. These actions are expected to have a long term impact, with a view to fight against this brutal phenomenon.</p> <p>4. Awareness raising and lobbying activities: working and dissemination groups with 20 policy-makers and civil servants working in the areas of Roma, violence against women, social exclusion, ethnic minorities, etc. to transfer the results of the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - project, promote debate and raise awareness - Public Hearing in the European Parliament
Involvement of Romani women in the design, implementation or evaluation of the initiative:	Romani women were involved in designing, implementing and evaluation all the initiative.
Difficulties or obstacles and limitations:	The limitations are related to the exploratory dimension of the qualitative field research and to the number of Romani women involved in the process (about 120) and men (40).
Evaluation:	Evaluation of the project was conducted and all the objectives planned were reached. The long term impact of the project is not measurable at the moment.
Effectiveness of the initiative:	<p>The effectiveness of the project feeds into the empowerment of Romani women and men that were directly involved in the project.</p> <p>Moreover the project increased the attention and raised awareness among professionals working with Roma communities. Romani women were actively involved in all the phases of the project.</p>
Weaknesses and aspects to improve:	The limited number of Romani women and Roma men directly involved in the project in the four countries.

Further comments:	Empow-air was an innovative project specifically targeted to Romani women run also by Romani women CSOs.
Section 2: the assessment section	
Criteria	Assessment
Empowerment	Romani women empowerment was the main objective of the project.
Gender equality	Gender equality was a crucial aspect of the project.
Adequateness	The project investigated intimate partnership violence in Roma communities which represent one of the most evident manifestation of the unequal distribution of power between gender in Roma communities.
Mainstreaming romani women empowerment	The initiative was focused on intimate partnership violence within Roma communities; however, it is rather likely that it will positively influence all the other areas.
Context analysis	All the partner organisations involved in the EMPOW-AIR project are based in countries with Roma communities of a very significant size: Romania, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy. According to recent estimates (on the basis of the report of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ethnic minority and Roma women in Europe A case for gender equality?, 2009), Romania and Bulgaria are the Eastern European Member States with the largest Roma communities. In Bulgaria, the Roma account for between the 4.7% (370,908 people, according to official data) and the 10.13% (1 million people, according to estimations) of the total population. In Romania, the Roma account for approximately between 2.5% of the population (according to official data, 532,250 according to the 2002 census) and up to 13.64% (2.5 million people, according to highest estimations). In Western Europe, Spain is the country with the largest Roma population, which is within a range of 650,000-750,000 people, according to estimations (around 1.70% of the population). When comparing figures with the rest of Europe, this means that one out of ten European Roma lives in Spain. In Italy, no official data exist on the Roma population, but according to public authorities estimations and other estimations the Roma account for between 120,000 and 150,000.
Adaptability	The initiative can be adapted and replicated in other communities.
General lessons to be drawn	Despite differences between Roma communities in EU, patriarchal family system is a common element subordinating women to men power, limiting access to women basic human rights. This aspect is a crucial challenge to tackle in Romani women empowerment process.

Mentor program for future Romani and migrant women politicians**Section 1: the descriptive/analytical section**

Requested information	Provided information
Name of the initiative:	Hungarian Women's Lobby and EWL(European Women's Lobby) mentorprogram roma és migráns politikuskönek (EWL Mentor program for future Romani and migrant women politicians.)
Country:	Europewide including Hungary
Organisation/ Institution:	European Women's Lobby in cooperation with Hungarian Women's Lobby
Type of organisation/ Institution:	NGOs
Area:	Education and political participation
Total budget and source of funding:	undeclared
Where it has been implemented:	EU Countries including Hungary
Overall objective of the initiative:	Increase the participation and visibility of Romani and migrant women in the EU elections Increase the political participation of disadvantaged women
Specific objectives:	Help Romani women to run for political offices
Target group:	Romani and migrant women
Timeline:	Starting February 2013 until the European Elections in May 2014
Description of the logic of the intervention:	<p>Started in February 2013 until the European Elections in May 2014, the European Women's Lobby will coordinate a Political Mentoring Network connecting 8 to 12 women Members of the European Parliament from different political parties and countries with 8 to 12 women of foreign origin or ethnic minority background who are interested in running for the European Parliament Elections in May 2014. The Hungarian participants are facilitated by the Hungarian Women's Lobby.</p> <p>Mentors are current women MEPs who are willing to share their advice and experience with women from different political parties and countries.</p> <p>Mentees in EWL's European Political Mentoring Network are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women with migrant background or from an ethnic minority living in the European Union; • Already involved in politics at local, regional and/or national level; • Eligible and interested in running for the next European Elections in June 2014; • Committed to women's rights.
Involvement of Romani women in the design, implementation or evaluation of the initiative:	There is no indication on that.
Difficulties or obstacles and limitations:	This will involve a very low number of Romani women. These limited number of selected Romani women are already participating in the political life. The program limitation is that they explicitly focus only on those women who are already empowered.
Evaluation:	No evaluation or impact assessment yet

Effectiveness of the initiative:	The initiative has not yet achieved its overall objectives
Weaknesses and aspects to improve:	The main weakness of the program is that it does not reach the potential local and national candidate.
Further comments:	It would be important to mobilize politically active Romani women at grass-roots level too.
Section 2: the assessment section	
Criteria	Assessment
Empowerment	Supposedly, some romani women at the international level encouraged this initiative but it is not explicit in the project call.
Gender equality	Yes, gender equality is clearly articulated in the project description
Adequateness	The initiative tackles a very important issue, namely increasing the participation and visibility of romani women in the european politics
Mainstreaming romani women's empowerment	The project has an indirect effect on the education, employment, health and housing issues.
Context analysis	The specific project was inspired by conference "roma women in focus" held in budapest on the 7 th april, 2011. It was organized by the european women's lobby in cooperation with the hungarian women's lobby.
Adaptability	This project should be adopted at european, national and local level by some other women's ngos or even political party.
General lessons to be drawn	The political participation of romani women is essential to change policies and legislation which affect their lives.

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

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