



**Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre**

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**Submission to the Department of Justice on the Integration Strategy**

**Introduction**

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**Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre**

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre has been working to challenge racism and promote Traveller and Roma inclusion in Ireland since 1985. The organisation works from a community development perspective and promotes the realisation of human rights and equality for Travellers and Roma in Ireland. The group is comprised of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority population, who work together in partnership to address the needs of Travellers and Roma as minority groups experiencing exclusion, marginalisation and racism. Pavee Point welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Department of Justice on the Integration Strategy.

**Travellers in Ireland**

It is generally agreed that Travellers are one of the most marginalised and excluded groups in Irish society.

- 84% of Travellers are unemployed in comparison to an overall figure of 14%. (Census 2011)
- 7.6% of Travellers, or 2,753 Traveller men women and children do not have access to running water. (AITHS 2010)<sup>1</sup>
- Traveller mortality rates are three times the national average; life expectancy for Traveller men is 15 years less and for Traveller women 12 years less than the national population; suicide rates are over six times the national average.
- Census 2011 shows that 55% of Travellers leave school before the age of 15. Less than 1% of Travellers go on to third level education.

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<sup>1</sup> The All-Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010 (also known as "Our Geels") was commissioned by the Department of Health and undertaken by University College Dublin in partnership with Traveller groups and the Health Service Executive.

## Roma in Ireland

There is an estimated 5,000 Roma living in Ireland, however, there is no official Government data in relation to the population of Roma in Ireland. Many Roma in Ireland are living in poverty due to a lack of access to work and restrictive social welfare measures. Many Roma find it difficult to gain employment due to factors including racism, discrimination and lack of training and formal education. There is a lack of vocational training options for Roma in Ireland and no clear strategy to facilitate Roma participation in mainstream training programmes. For those who are unable to find employment or access supports, options include reliance on charities and family or 'voluntary repatriation' to country of origin.

## Traveller and Roma Inclusion in the Integration Strategy

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Given the high levels of exclusion and marginalisation faced by Travellers and Roma, it is imperative that they are explicitly included in the development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the new integration strategy. This follows the precedent by government with the establishment of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, which sought to ensure the inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and Travellers and Roma. The State is required to include information about Travellers and Roma in its next periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. Travellers are also explicitly included in equality legislation and the Race directive therefore it is coherent to include them in this new integration strategy.

Travellers and Roma are identified as one of the most vulnerable groups by EU institutions and are targeted under various EU strategies, including Europe 2020 and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. This creates obligations for the Irish State to explicitly include Travellers and Roma in all relevant strategies, which address the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as migrants and minority ethnic groups. Including Travellers and Roma in the integration strategy would also ensure that it dovetails with Local Government reforms and the proposed six year Local Economic and Community Plans being developed by local authorities to 2020.

The recommendations put forward in this submission refer directly to the need to improve data collection disaggregated by ethnicity; address anti-Roma and anti-Traveller racism and discrimination; and the inclusion of Roma and Travellers in employment and training, education, housing, health services, social protection, and civic engagement. These areas of inclusion need to be realised in line with relevant human rights standards, as well obligations under the European Union institutions by the Irish State. The recommendations take into consideration additional factors for vulnerability to exclusion, including gender, sexuality, disability and age.

## Data and Research

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### Recommendation

**Introduce an ethnic identifier across all administrative systems in order to develop responsive and adequate inclusion policies, and to monitor and assess their impact on Traveller and Roma communities. The application of an ethnic identifier needs to take place within a human rights framework.**

In order for this integration strategy to be truly effective it should be based on reliable and comprehensive data. Currently there is little adequate and comprehensive data in relation to

Roma and Traveller inclusion in Irish society due to a lack of data disaggregated by ethnicity. Without adequate data it is impossible to monitor and assess the effectiveness of any measures taken to address Traveller and Roma inclusion. The lack of disaggregated data also hampers the recording and monitoring of anti-Roma and anti-Traveller racism and discrimination. In order to successfully insure the inclusion of Travellers and Roma, an ethnic identifier must be introduced across all relevant administrative systems.

The collection of disaggregated data has been identified as a key factor in improving outcomes for Travellers and Roma and in developing effective social policies. The European Commission took up the matter of data collection in its Green Paper on Equality and Non-discrimination;

*The lack of mechanisms to collect data and to monitor trends and progress in Member states currently makes it difficult to assess the real extent of the challenges that exist and to measure the effectiveness of legislation and policies to tackle discrimination...greater availability of quantitative and qualitative data could help to support the development of anti-discrimination policies by establishing baseline positions, identifying where results of inequalities lie and analysing their dimensions. It would also be useful to obtain data in order to track the impact of policy and funding.<sup>2</sup>*

The UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination in its general recommendation on Roma asked State parties to...include in their periodic reports, in an appropriate form, data about Roma communities within their jurisdiction, including statistical data about Roma participation in political life and about their economic, social and cultural situation, including from a gender perspective.

Furthermore, it is key that a public campaign is conducted to inform people of the reasons of why such data is collected and affirm a commitment to human rights principles and ethical use of such data. Traveller organisations, Travellers and Roma must be central to this process.

## Employment

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### **Recommendation**

**Develop long-term, sustainable strategies to improve Traveller and Roma training and employment opportunities.**

**Develop a Traveller and Roma specific employment strategy.**

**Ensure and support positive action measures on the part of employers to employ Travellers and Roma in public service, mainstream employment and the community sector.**

**Utilise the Youth Guarantee and structural funds for targeted measures for Traveller and Roma inclusion in employment initiatives.**

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<sup>2</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Equality and non-discrimination in an enlarged European Union*. Green Paper. Brussels, 2004.

Unemployment rates among Roma and Travellers are high due to widespread racism and discrimination. This contributes to low levels of training, formal educational credentials and employment opportunities. According to the Census 2011, 84.3% of Travellers were unemployed. Remarkably this was not a dramatic increase from the 2006 Census, which found that 74.9% of Travellers were unemployed. Due to lack of access to work, many Roma and Travellers live below national poverty lines and some live in extreme poverty.

Despite these figures, there has been no specific Traveller and Roma employment strategy developed, nor any clear strategy to ensure Roma and Traveller participation in vocational training or mainstream training programmes. Roma and Travellers will continue to be further distanced from employment opportunities without dedicated and targeted initiatives, opportunities and supports to improve their employment prospects.

Positive action measures have proven successful in the inclusion of Travellers and Roma in public service, mainstream and community sector employment. The civil service Traveller internship programme 2006-2007 exemplifies this. The placement of Traveller interns in posts in 12 different Government departments was very successful; despite this the programme was subsequently cut.

## **Racism and Xenophobia**

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Travellers and Roma experience racism at both individual and institutional levels. Examples include being subjected to racism when accessing goods and services, racist abuse on streets, and being told to 'go home' when trying to access a support service. A high profile example occurred in Donegal earlier this year where a house allocated to a Traveller family was burnt in an arson attack in order to prevent the family from moving in. This followed anti-Traveller statements made by local councillors in the area. In June 2013, Roma families in Tallaght experienced a number of attacks on their houses, including windows being broken and threats being made. In the past year alone, numerous anti-Roma and Traveller statements have been made by judges and politicians. There has been **no** accountability for these actions.

## **Independent Advisory Body on Racism**

### **Recommendation**

**Re-establish an independent advisory body on racism, similar to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism.**

The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) was closed down in December 2008. A number of initiatives undertaken by the NCCRI were key to tackling and challenging racism. The NCCRI took a very pro-active approach in working with Travellers, Roma and other minority ethnic groups. It was intended that its functions would be transferred to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration. This has not happened and has had the effect of excluding Travellers from the remit of anti-racism and intercultural initiatives, as this office does not include Travellers in its remit. The particular experience of Roma is not adequately addressed by the Traveller Policy Division or the Office for Integration.

## **National Action Plan against Racism**

### **Recommendation**

**Renew/introduce a new National Action Plan against Racism and establish a national oversight committee with an independent Chairperson and representative of statutory and NGO sectors to implement the National Action Plan against Racism.**

The National Action Plan Against Racism (2005-2008) has not been renewed. Despite this the National Action Plan was referenced as part of Ireland's commitment to human rights as a member of the Human Rights Council in 2012.<sup>3</sup>

The failure to renew the National Action Plan has been noted as a concern by the ECRI in its 2013 report on Ireland. In 2011, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted the importance of the State giving effect to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action through the National Action Plan and Ireland will be required to include specific information on this in its next periodic report.

## Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity

### Recommendation

**Officially recognise Travellers as a minority ethnic group, which experience racism and discrimination based on their ethnicity.**

Despite the recommendations of several UN treaty monitoring bodies (CERD; CEDAW; Children; Human Rights Committee), the European institutions (ECRI, FCPNM; Council of Europe), and equality and human rights bodies within Ireland, the Government continues to refuse to acknowledge Traveller ethnicity. Various other countries have made recommendations for recognition during the UPR process in 2011. All national Traveller organisations in Ireland are also calling on the government to recognise Travellers as a minority ethnic group.

The lack of recognition of Travellers as a minority ethnic group has been accompanied by a denial of the racism that Travellers experience. Racism is at the heart of the exclusion facing Travellers, to say otherwise is to deny the lived experiences of Travellers and only serves to further marginalise Travellers. As a result of this situation, Travellers are not automatically included in initiatives to address racism. Recognition of Traveller ethnicity is of great symbolic and practical importance for Traveller inclusion in Ireland.

## Education

The absence of mechanisms to monitor and support the inclusion of Roma children in the Irish education system leaves Roma children vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. The current lack of adequate and comprehensive national framework for Roma inclusion in education contributes to the State's failure to adhere to relevant human rights commitments and EU Roma inclusion objectives.<sup>4</sup> Roma access to education in Ireland is curtailed by

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<sup>3</sup> Letter dated 13 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

<sup>4</sup> Under the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, all EU Member States are obliged to develop and implement National Roma Integration Strategies. Ireland's current National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy contains no strategies, goals, timeframes or funding and monitoring mechanisms for Roma inclusion in education. The European Commission's assessment of Ireland's strategy highlights how Ireland is failing to meet its obligations towards Roma inclusion. For more information, see European

poverty; struggle to fulfil basic needs for food and shelter, and barriers in accessing employment, social protection and health services. Poor educational outcomes perpetuate a cycle of educational disadvantage, further marginalise Roma communities and prevent social mobility.

In recent years, the Department of Education has noted an improvement in the educational achievements of Travellers. A 2006 survey found that almost all Traveller children were enrolling in primary school. However, in comparison to their settled peers Traveller students continue to fare poorly within the education system.

- The majority of Travellers fail to complete senior cycle post-primary education, with 55% of Travellers completing their full time education by the age of 15 (Census 2011).
- The Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS (2011) found that the educational attainment of Travellers remains significantly lower than that of their settled peers in both reading and mathematics. The magnitude of the difference between the scores of the two groups is large in every case.
- Currently, less than 1% of Travellers go on to third level education (Census 2011).
- The 2012 State of the Nation's Children report found that Traveller children, immigrant children and children with a disability are more likely to report being bullied at school.

In March 2011, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its concluding observations on Ireland recommended that *'The State party should ensure that concrete measures are undertaken to improve the livelihoods of the Traveller community by focusing on improving students' enrolment and retention in schools.'*

## Intercultural and Diversity Training

### Recommendation

**Introduce compulsory intercultural and diversity training at both pre and in-service levels.**

Comprehensive training modules on equality and diversity must be included in initial teacher training courses and in-service training. This would effectively challenge bias and prejudice, and equip teachers to address discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. Teachers need to be equipped with an awareness of prejudice and stereotypes and empowered with tools to reflect on them in order to avoid negative perceptions being transferred to young students.

## Positive Action Measures

### Recommendation

**Introduce positive action measures to ensure the inclusion of Travellers and Roma in the delivery of education across all levels of education.**

There is a need for positive action measures in order to include Travellers and Roma in the delivery of education at all levels. Travellers and Roma should be encouraged and supported to pursue careers in education as teachers and teaching assistants at preschool, primary, post primary, and third levels.



Having members of the Traveller and Roma community involved in the education system would have a multitude of benefits, including providing positive role models for young Roma and Travellers; challenging prejudice and stereotypes in the education system; building trust between Traveller/Roma parents and the education system; and providing much needed employment for young Travellers and Roma. A range of academic articles have highlighted the importance and benefits of including role models from minority groups in the education system.

## Curriculum

### Recommendation

**Include Traveller and Roma culture in the formal curriculum.**

For many students, the first time that they encounter the Traveller community in the education system is when they study Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) in post primary school. Traveller students often report feeling ashamed and embarrassed at this point, which is understandable given that they may never have been asked to discuss their culture in front of their peers in an education setting before. In the majority of educational setting Roma culture is never included in the school curriculum.

The long term implications of failing to incorporate Traveller/Roma culture across the curriculum are twofold. Firstly, it prevents students from the majority population from understanding and appreciating the contributions made by the Traveller and Roma communities to the wider Irish society and European culture. Secondly, it results in Traveller/Roma students feeling that their culture is neither valued nor welcomed in the education system, contributing to a lower sense of self-worth and isolation within the school community.

## Adult and Further Education

### Recommendation

**Set clear targets to ensure Traveller and Roma inclusion in Adult and Further education.**

Following the closure of the Senior Traveller Training Centres it is crucial that Travellers and Roma are supported and facilitated to participate in mainstream adult and further education. To ensure this, clear targets should be set and any new measures introduced should be examined in terms of their impact on Traveller and Roma participation.

As a result of changes to the BTEI guidelines, Travellers who were participating in education and training programmes are no longer eligible to receive a training allowance. These changes have had a significant and detrimental impact on the number of Travellers participating in BTEI schemes.

The cuts were particularly frustrating as affected groups were given very little notice. This rendered them unable to explore alternative funding streams. For example, the Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project had 30 women undertaking an adult literacy programme, which was due to recommence on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2013. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August they were notified

that participants would no longer be eligible to receive a pro rata training allowance. In light of this, only 3 of the original 30 participants continued in the programme.

Given that Travellers are identified in the Government's activation agenda as a 'target group' it is very disappointing that the impact these changes would have on Travellers was not considered before they were implemented.

## Social Inclusion

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The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 identifies Travellers and other minority ethnic groups as one of the most vulnerable groups in Ireland. The European Union institutions have long emphasised gaps in relation to Roma inclusion in European societies and the need to develop adequate integration strategies. EU Member States have a joint responsibility with the European institutions to combat the exclusion and marginalisation of Roma and Travellers.

### Ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion

#### Recommendation

**Apply the Ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion in the development and implementation of the integration strategy.**

Endorsed by the Council of Ministers and adopted by the European Commission, the Ten Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion provide guidelines for Member States when developing and implementing strategies for Roma and Traveller inclusion.<sup>5</sup> Any integration strategy should therefore explicitly include Travellers and Roma, and be underpinned by the Ten Common Principles, including;

- **Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies:** Such policies are relevant and appropriate to the situation on the ground. This means that the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and services should not be based on preconceptions.
- **Explicit but not exclusive targeting** refers to the incorporation of Roma and Traveller focused interventions in broader policy initiatives. As a result, Travellers and Roma should be recognised as one of the vulnerable and marginalised groups in Irish society, and explicitly included in the integration strategy.
- **Aiming for the mainstream:** despite policies and initiatives being designed to promote inclusion, the long-term impact can result in strengthening segregation. Policies deemed as 'neutral' can lead to indirect discrimination of Travellers and Roma when they impose additional barriers for Travellers and Roma because of their situation. The ultimate aim of policies should be the inclusion of Travellers and Roma in mainstream society.

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<sup>5</sup>Council of Europe (nd) The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, [online] Available from: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2011\\_10\\_Common\\_Basic\\_Principles\\_Roma\\_Inclusion.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2011_10_Common_Basic_Principles_Roma_Inclusion.pdf).



- **Awareness of gender dimension** emphasises the need to recognise the socio-economically and politically disadvantaged position of Traveller and Roma women in comparison to Traveller/Roma men and non-Roma women. Traveller and Roma women have a crucial role in the promotion of their own inclusion and tackling issues related to multiple discrimination based on their gender and ethnicity.
- **Transfer of evidence-based policies** emphasises the importance of collecting socio-economic data to feed into the development, implementation and monitoring of Roma and Traveller inclusion policies.
- **Use of European Union instruments:** there are a number of European Union instruments for Member States to use in ensuring Traveller and Roma inclusion. These consist of legal, financial and coordination instruments, including the Racial Equality Directive, Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, European Social Fund, and European Regional Development Fund.
- **Involvement of civil society:** Traveller and Roma inclusion policies need to be developed, implemented and evaluated in close cooperation with civil society, including researchers, NGO sector, and social and community partners. This enables the dissemination of knowledge and expertise, and allows for the generation of public debate and accountability in policy process.
- **Active participation of Roma:** Roma and Traveller participation at all stages of policy development, implementation, and evaluation is required in order enhance the quality and effectiveness of policies.

## National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy

### Recommendation

**Develop a progressive National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy – in line with the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion.**

Ireland has developed a National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy on foot of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. The EU Framework sets out a structure to address the exclusion of Roma in areas of education, health, accommodation and employment.

Currently, the Irish Strategy contains no goals, timeframes, funding or monitoring mechanisms for Roma and Traveller inclusion. It fails to ensure the participation and consultation of members of Traveller and Roma communities and organisations in the development of the Strategy; address the inclusion of Roma in particular; and address anti-Traveller and Roma racism.

The European Commission has confirmed the inadequacy of Ireland's NTRIS.<sup>6</sup> With the release of the Commission's assessment of Ireland's NTRIS, the assessment highlights that currently the Strategy will make little difference to the lives of Travellers and Roma. As out of 22 criteria that are used to assess strategies, Ireland is deemed to have met only four. There is an urgent need to change this situation in order for the Government to meet its obligations in this regard. The European Council has adopted a Recommendation on

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission, *The European Union and Roma- Country Factsheet: Ireland*, Brussels: European Commission, June 2013.

effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, which is the first EU legal instrument to hold Member States to account for Traveller and Roma inclusion.

### **Habitual Residence Condition (HRC)**

#### **Recommendation**

**Traveller and Roma proof all legislation and policy.**

**Invest resources and conduct an impact assessment of the Habitual Residence Condition, in particular in relation to ethnicity and gender.**

**Amend / repeal legislation and policy with has a disproportionately negative impact on Travellers and Roma – in particular the Habitual Residence Condition.**

Application of the HRC has placed migrants, Travellers (who move across jurisdictions, generally from the UK to Ireland) and Roma in very vulnerable positions. Many Roma in particular are not meeting HRC, which poses a set of criteria that social welfare claimants need to meet to show a connection with the Irish State. Roma can face difficulties with proving a place of residence in cases where they live with an extended family. Endemic discrimination in education and employment makes it difficult to prove a strong pattern of employment. Low literacy levels and language barriers make it difficult to respond to the Department of Social Protection in a timely manner, and may mean that some applicants do not have all the documentation needed. As a result, many Roma are unable to meet the criteria of the Condition.

The implementation of this policy has a hugely negative and disproportionate impact on Roma and is a major cause of poverty and acts as a barrier to accessing adequate accommodation, education and healthcare. This is causing huge suffering within the Roma community, and has a particular gendered effect. Women who experience domestic and sexual violence are unable to flee situations of violence without being recognised as habitually resident.

There is no safety net for people waiting on a decision with regard to the HRC. Although an urgent needs payment may be issued, this is a discretionary payment. It is considered as an unsustainable solution for people waiting significant periods of time for decisions in relation to their applications.

The ECRI has recommended for the Irish authorities to review the impact of the HRC, but this has still not taken place. Concerns have also been raised by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. She states that,

*This requirement can pose a significant threat to the access to essential services and thus enjoyment of human rights by members of vulnerable groups, particularly people experiencing homelessness, Travellers, asylum-seekers, migrant workers*

*and returning Irish migrants. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government to review the impact of the condition as a matter of priority.<sup>7</sup>*

## **Accommodation**

### **Recommendation**

**Amend / repeal legislation and policy with has a disproportionately negative impact on Travellers and Roma – in particular Section 24 of the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2002).**

**Ensure the implementation of the five year Traveller accommodation plans by Local Authorities.**

**The budget allocated for Traveller accommodation should be reinstated to previous levels, drawn down and spent.**

The 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act placed an obligation on local authorities to produce accommodation plans. However, the lack of political will and the lack of incentives or sanctions in the legislation have resulted in local authorities failing to provide adequate accommodation for Travellers. To exacerbate these difficulties, Traveller families often face discrimination, harassment and racist attacks by people who do not want them to live in their area.

Section 24 of the Housing Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2002) continues to criminalise nomadism and disproportionately impacts upon Travellers. This makes trespass on land with an 'object' such as a caravan, a criminal offence, despite the lack of provision of transient site by local authorities. This means nomadic Travellers are prevented from travelling. This is a form of institutionalised racism. This section of the legislation needs to be repealed.

## **Civic Engagement**

### **Recommendation**

**Implement positive action measures to include Traveller and Roma representatives in the Dáil, Seanad and local councils.**

**Ensure active participation and consultation of Travellers and Roma in the development, implementation and evaluation of relevant strategies and policies.**

**Protect the Traveller infrastructure under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 at national and local levels.**

Travellers and Roma are largely excluded from any decision making and the wider political process. The lack of Traveller and Roma representation in political decision making has been recognised by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). In 2005 and 2011 CERD put forward a recommendation for Ireland to adopt positive action initiatives in an effort to improve the representation of Travellers and Roma in political institutions.

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<sup>7</sup>Carmona, Magdalena Sepúlveda, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, 2012.

The former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has also recommended that Traveller and Roma communities should be adequately represented in local councils<sup>8</sup>, and suggested a possibility of reserving a specific seat for a community representative in the Irish parliament. There have been positive developments in relation to this approach in other European countries in relation to Roma. There is an opportunity to implement such recommendations given the commitments to political reform

Roma participation at all stages of policy development, implementation, and evaluation enhances the quality and effectiveness of policies and services and has a positive effect on the inclusion of Roma communities. The involvement of Roma in the development and implementation of effective policies, strategies and initiatives is widely recognised within the EU institutions. The active participation of Roma in the elaboration and implementation of policies has been recognised as essential in ensuring Roma attainment to human rights. This contributes to more responsive and effective policies and practices, which have a positive effect on the whole community.

## International Human Rights Obligations

### Recommendation

**Ensure that all strategies are compliant with relevant human rights instruments that Ireland has signed and ratified.**

Human rights standards, which Ireland has signed and ratified, must be ensured through their inclusion in all relevant strategies. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;<sup>9</sup> the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;<sup>10</sup> the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966);<sup>11</sup> the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981);<sup>12</sup> and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969).<sup>13</sup> These instruments make specific provisions in relation to the inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable people in socio-economic, political and civic life.

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<sup>8</sup> Council of Europe (2008) *Report by the Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Thomas Hammarberg on his Visit to Ireland*, November 2007.

<sup>9</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3aa0.html> [accessed 8 May 2014]

<sup>10</sup> See Article 24, 28 and 29 in UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html> [accessed 29 March 2014].

<sup>11</sup> See Articles 13 and 14, UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 16 December 1966, Treaty Series, vol. 993, p. 3, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36c0.html> [accessed 29 March 2014].

<sup>12</sup> See Article 24, 28 and 29 in UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html> [accessed 29 March 2014].

<sup>13</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 18 December 1979, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html> [accessed 29 March 2014].

<sup>14</sup> United Nations, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, 21 December 1965, Treaty Series, vol. 660, p. 195, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3940.html> [accessed 29 March 2014].

## Health

### **Recommendation**

**Re-establish the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee in the Department of Health with an independent Chairperson and representation from the five Health Directorates, National Traveller organisations as well as Traveller Health Units.**

**Develop a new National Traveller Health Strategy/Action Implementation Plan to address the findings of the AITHS.**

**Traveller health funding be ring-fenced and protected in the context of health service reforms.**

**Ensure equality of access and outcome for Roma in health care services by introducing a clear strategy for Roma inclusion in health and amending restrictions to medical cards imposed by the Habitual Residence Condition.**

Given the appalling health statistics evidenced in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study, there is an urgent need to address the exclusion of Travellers from equal access and outcome in health care. The standard of Traveller health scores significantly lower than that of the majority population. Traveller mortality rates are three times the national average; life expectancy for Traveller men is 15 years less and for Traveller women 12 years less than the national population; and suicide rates are over six times the national average.

Roma in Ireland experience similar health inequalities as Travellers. Barriers to accessing employment and social protection shape access and outcomes in health services for many Roma in Ireland. The current restrictions imposed by the Habitual Residence Condition constitutes one of the main obstacles to access health care for Roma, who are unable to qualify as habitually resident. With limited or no access to income and social protection, they are unable to pay for appointments and treatments and access medical cards. This contributes to a significant violation of Roma right to health care in Ireland.

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