



## February 2014

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 document sets out a framework for addressing inequality faced by Roma (Roma in the Irish context refers to Irish Travellers and Roma) in the areas of education, health, accommodation and employment.

The most recent assessment (2013) of Ireland's National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy, by the European Commission has been very critical. **Out of 22 criteria, Ireland is deemed to have met just 4.** This leaves Ireland in the bottom third in Europe. (See chart below)

The pressure to develop a strategy in line with the EU Framework document and the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion will increase, as the European Commission are clear that they will continue strict monitoring of the situation. In December 2013, the European Council has adopted a Recommendation on Effective Roma Integration Measures in the Member States, which is the first EU legal instrument to hold Member States to account for Roma inclusion.

## Pavee Point Recommendations

Pavee Point feels that the current strategy is the first stage in the process, rather than the final deliverable. Pavee Point remains committed to working with the Government and other stakeholders to further develop the strategy so that it can make a tangible difference to the lives of Travellers and Roma. The Commission is also clear that national strategies are to be developed in line with the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, which include involvement of civil society and active participation of Roma. In this context Pavee Point recommends the following:

- Using the current document as a starting point, the Irish Government should revise the National Traveller / Roma Integration Strategy, with the involvement of Travellers, Roma and civil society organizations.
- **A steering group with an independent chair to lead the process – consisting of representatives from relevant departments, agencies and civil society organisations.**
- The strategy should set achievable national goals with targets for Roma integration. These goals should address, as a minimum, the four EU Roma integration goals relating to access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.
- The strategy also needs to explicitly address racism towards Roma and Travellers and include measures to address gender inequality and multiple discrimination faced by women.
- The strategy should include time frames, funding mechanisms and strong inclusive monitoring and evaluation methods.

## **Ireland's National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy: Background.**

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 aims to urgently tackle the marginalisation and poor socio-economic conditions experienced by the Roma in Europe through coordinated action at a national and EU level.<sup>1</sup> Each member state was required to draw up a national Roma integration strategy by the end of 2011. This includes setting national targets in the areas of education, employment, health and housing and allowing for sufficient funding to deliver them.

### **How should a National Strategy be developed?**

Travellers, Roma and representative organisations have a key role to play in this national strategy, as identified by the European Commission in their Framework document. They state that,

“[National Strategies should] Be designed, implemented and monitored in close cooperation and continuous dialogue with Roma civil society, regional and local authorities.”

### **Progress to Date**

The Irish Government submitted a document entitled 'Ireland's National Traveller/Roma Integration Strategy' to the European Commission.

- This document mainly sets out the strategies already in place for the Traveller Community in the areas of Education, Accommodation, Healthcare and Employment.
- The document contains no goals, targets, indicators or related timeframes, funding mechanisms or monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- No consultation or facilitation of active participation of Travellers and Roma has taken place.
- Roma are largely excluded from this document.

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<sup>1</sup> National Roma Integration Strategies are intended to include Travellers. At an EU level, the term “Roma” is used as an umbrella term which includes groups of people who have some similar cultural characteristics, such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or nomadic.

3. Progress in implementing the National Roma Integration Strategy (European Commission 2013 report)

Involving local and Regional Authorities		Working closely with civil society		Allocating financial resources		Monitoring and evaluation		Measures to fight discrimination		Measures to enable the National Roma Contact Points to work efficiently	
Dialogue Set Up	✓	Dialogue with Civil Society at National Level	✗	Addressing all four key areas (education, employment, health, housing) when allocating financial resources	✗	Mapping of the situation of Roma	✗	Enforcing anti-discrimination legislation at local level	✗	Enforcing anti-discrimination legislation at local level	✗
Supporting the exchange of experience and cooperation among local authorities	✗	Involvement of civil society and Roma at local level	✗	Territorial approach when allocating financial resources	✗	Monitoring the results and impacts of the national strategy	✗	Raising awareness (including in public administrations)	✗	Coordination between central and local government	✓

Allocation of resources to local and regional authorities	✓	Financial support for developing the capacity of civil society	✗	Involvement of local/regional authorities and civil society in planning the use of EU funds	✗	Identification of areas with extremely poor Roma communities	✗	Increasing awareness among Roma of their rights	✗	Involvement of the National Roma Contact Points in planning the use of EU funds	✓
						Involvement of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation	✗	Tackling multiple forms of discrimination against Roma women	✗		
						Cooperation with National Statistical Offices	✗				
						Planned regular reporting and evaluation	✗				

**Further information:**

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To get more information on the assessment see the European Commission's press pack - [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/discrimination/news/130626\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/discrimination/news/130626_en.htm)