



INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL & POLITICAL RIGHTS: IRELAND 135TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (27 JUNE-29 JULY 2022)

FACTSHEET: IRISH TRAVELLERS & ROMA

Travellers & Roma are one of the most marginalised & excluded groups in Ireland experiencing racism & discrimination.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK - RIGHT TO EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW, ARTICLE 26

01 NATIONAL TRAVELLER & ROMA INCLUSION STRATEGY 2017-2021 (NTRIS)

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure the review of the NTRIS 2017-2021 is meaningful & completed in a timely manner. Also ensure the now delayed development of the next NTRIS is commenced and completed with no further delay, and that it has a robust implementation and monitoring plan with clear targets, indicators, outcomes, timeframes and budget lines with actions being resourced and implemented by all relevant statutory agencies.

QUESTION: Can the State outline the process & timeline for completing the review of the NTRIS 2017-2021 and for the development & publication of the next NTRIS? Considering the NTRIS 2017-2021 lacked targets, indicators, outcomes & budget lines, can the State describe the budget & implementation & monitoring framework for the next NTRIS?

02 NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AGAINST RACISM

Among all surveyed groups, Irish Travellers (52%) have the third highest rate of hate-motivated harassment (FRA 2019); 81% of Roma report feeling discriminated against on the street/in public places.

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that the forthcoming National Action Plan Against Racism addresses the specific forms of anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism and discrimination; is adopted in a timely fashion; is afforded a sufficient budget and a clear implementation and monitoring framework; and is implemented in partnership with Traveller and Roma organisations.

QUESTION: The State is finalising the long waited National Action Plan against Racism - how will this Plan address the specific forms of anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism; when will the Plan be published; and what resources and implementation and monitoring framework will the Plan have?

03 LACK OF DISAGGREGATED DATA BY ETHNICITY-NATIONAL EQUALITY DATA STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION: Develop and fully implement the forthcoming National Equality Data Strategy, and as part of this Strategy ensure the full and effective development and implementation of ethnic data collection and ethnic equality monitoring (in line with human rights standards) across all relevant state departments and public bodies.

QUESTION: Lack of disaggregated data by ethnicity & gender means that the State is currently unable to ensure human rights compliant policies, programmes & budgeting. Will this Strategy see the full & effective development & implementation of ethnic equality monitoring? How is the State engaging with organisations representing minority ethnic groups in its development?

EQUAL RIGHT OF MEN & WOMEN - ARTICLE 3

04 TRAVELLER & ROMA WOMEN

RECOMMENDATION: Undertake special measures to address the intersectional racism and discrimination experienced by Traveller and Roma women, including regarding gender-based violence, and ensure such measures have clearly defined resources, timeframes, targets, indicators and outcomes.

QUESTION: What targets, indicators & resources will be afforded to address the human rights situation of Traveller & Roma women, in particular the protection from Gender Based Violence, and the over-representation of Traveller women in prison?

05 RIGHT TO TAKE PART IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS - ARTICLE 25

RECOMMENDATION: Undertake legislative and practical measures to ensure the inclusion of Travellers in political representation at local and national levels & Undertake special measures to promote the inclusion of Traveller and Roma interests (inclusive of women) in participative democracy, policies, programmes and initiatives undertaken by Local Authorities.

QUESTION: What measures, targets, resources and indicators will the State put in place to increase representation of Travellers in political institutions and decision making at local and national levels?

ETHNIC & LINGUISTIC MINORITIES, ARTICLE 27

06 TRAVELLER & ROMA EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & HEALTH

- *Approximately 30% of Travellers compared to 90% of the general population complete second level education*
- *Life expectancy of Traveller men is 15 years less than the general population, and 11.5 years less for Traveller women*
- *80.2% of Travellers & 83% of Roma are unemployed*

RECOMMENDATION: Urgently initiate the development of the 'National Traveller Education Strategy' and 'Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Strategy'. Publish and fully resource and implement the 'National Traveller Health Action Plan' and continue resourcing and supporting further development of special measures to address Roma health inequalities. Ensure all these Strategies have robust implementation and monitoring plans with clear targets, indicators, outcomes, timeframes, budget lines and consultative structures to drive their implementation

QUESTION: When will the State publish and resource the National Traveller Health Action Plan?

When will the State develop and implement, with Traveller participation, the 'National Traveller Education Strategy', 'Traveller & Roma Training & Employment Plan' & the National Traveller Mental Health Action Plan', as committed to in 2020? Can the State indicate the kind of resources & monitoring/implementation frameworks for these plans?

07 TRAVELLER & ROMA ACCOMMODATION & HOUSING CRISIS

- *For the first time since 2014, the full available Traveller accommodation budget was drawn down in 2020 and 2021 but no new accommodation/units were provided*
- *45.7% of Roma have been homeless at some stage*

RECOMMENDATION: Implement, via the Programme Implementation Board, all recommendations issued by the independent Expert Group on Traveller Accommodation with a time lined implementation plan, tangible targets, corresponding accountability measures and budget. Also Address the housing crisis among Roma by introducing clear actions and associated implementation plan and resources in the next National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy.

QUESTION: Can the State outline the timeline, supports and resources for fully implementing all the recommendations made by the Independent Expert Group on Traveller Accommodation? Considering the State has taken no action to address the housing crisis among Roma, what action, targets & resources does the State intend to take?

08 ROMA IN IRELAND- EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE 2004/38 & HABITUAL RESIDENCE CONDITION

- *48% of Roma who apply for social protection payments are unsuccessful*
- *Many Roma lack necessary documentation, proof of address and/or language and literacy skills to prove their connection to the State*

RECOMMENDATIONS: Review the legislative and policy restrictions which disproportionately impact Roma access to basic social protections & humanitarian supports. Also consider extending the current iteration of regularising the status of undocumented in order to regularise Roma EU citizens who have been living in the State on long-term basis.

QUESTIONS:

What steps has the State taken to ensure that Roma with difficulties to satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition /policy can access social supports? The State has undertaken a special measure to regularise the status of people living in Ireland long-term without papers – can the State consider undertaking a similar measure for EU citizens who have resided in the State for a number of years but do not have all the relevant documentation?

09 RIGHTS OF THE CHILD - ARTICLE 24

- *Nearly 1 in 2 Roma households with children are not receiving Child Benefit payments*
- *Infant mortality rate for Travellers is 3.7 times the national rate*
- *Traveller children make up 12% of those on the at-risk register for child protection and welfare concerns*

RECOMMENDATION: Set clear and timebound targets specific to poverty reduction among Traveller and Roma children in both targeted and mainstream policy measures. Ensure that all children residing in the State, including Roma children, can access Child Benefit payments regardless of the legal or administrative status of their parents. Also set targets and measures for preventative measures to address the over-representation of Traveller and Roma children in the State's child protection and welfare register, and to address accommodation and health inequalities faced by Traveller and Roma children.

QUESTION: What steps has the State taken to ensure that all children residing in Ireland have access to Child Benefit payment? What targets, resources and indicators has the State put in place to address the rates of Traveller & Roma child poverty, & over-representation of Traveller children in child protection & welfare register?