

Roma

Roma constitute the largest minority ethnic group in Europe with an estimated 10-12 million across Europe living in many different countries including Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic and others.



Since Roma migrated westwards from Northern India from around the 11th century the community has experienced persecution, forced assimilation, slavery and discrimination. In parts of Romania, Roma were enslaved until the mid-nineteenth century. Roma were targeted during the Holocaust and an estimated 500,000 Roma died in concentration camps. Roma Genocide Remembrance Day is held on 2nd August each year.

ROMA IN IRELAND

In January 2018 Ireland's first Roma Needs Assessment was jointly published by Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre and the Department of Justice and Equality. This study was carried out by 18 trained Roma peer researchers.

According to the Needs Assessment approximately 5,000 Roma live in Ireland and among respondents:

- 63.3% of Roma children were born in Ireland
- 52.2% of children are Irish citizens
- 70% have been living in Ireland for five years or more and 14% for 15 years or more

DISCRIMINATION

Roma in Ireland reported high levels of discrimination particularly in the street/public setting (81.1%) and accessing accommodation (93.3%). Accessing Social Protection is another area where Roma feel discriminated against (84.3%). Of respondents who applied for social protection 48.1% were not successful.

Roma in Ireland often find it difficult to provide the necessary documentation to comply with Habitual Residence Condition and so cannot access social welfare payments, including child benefit. This forces some Roma families into desperate poverty and overcrowded living conditions.

POVERTY

According to the Needs Assessment, 20% of respondents experienced significant poverty:

- No kitchen (12.4%); No cooker (9.6%); No fridge (13.5%)
- Sometimes without food, gas, water and/or electricity
- Begging as a source of income (17.6%) and no income (14%)

The Roma Needs Assessment makes a series of recommendations including an enhanced humanitarian response for Roma in dire poverty, national Roma employment and training actions and effective measures to tackle anti-Roma discrimination and racism.

