PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre Briefing:
European Commission's Progress Report on the Implementation of Member States' National Roma Strategic Frameworks

Introduction

The European Commission's 2026 Report on progress made in the Implementation of the National Roma Strategic Frameworks assesses the advancements made towards Traveller and Roma[1] equality, inclusion and participation across the European Union.[2] Covering the period from 1 June 2023 to 31 March 2025, the report forms part of the EU's biennial monitoring cycle under the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2020-2030 and the Council Recommendation on Roma Equality, Inclusion and participation.[3] It is the third implementation report on the EU Roma Strategic Framework. The report is informed by a range of sources, including:

- National reports submitted by Member States;
- Findings from the 2024 Traveller and Roma Survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA);
- Consultations with Travellers, Roma and Traveller and Roma organisations across Europe; and
- An implementation dialogue with the Commissioner for Equality Hadja Lahbib in 2025.

[1] The term "Roma" is used within EU institutions as an umbrella term encompassing groups of people who share similar cultural characteristics, such as the Roma, Irish Travellers, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, in addition to Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.).
[2] European Commission, *Report on the Progress Made in the Implementation of the National Roma Strategic Frameworks*, 3.11.2026, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/589cc7e7-8086-4163-82e4-4e820432f4fc_en?filename=2026%20Roma%20Implementation%20report.pdf.
[3] The 10 Common Basic Principles on Traveller and Roma Inclusion as adopted by the European Commission: Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies; explicit but not exclusive targeting; intercultural approach; aiming for the mainstream; awareness of the gender dimension; transfer of evidence-based policies; use of EU instruments; involvement of regional and local authorities; involvement of civil society; active participation of Travellers and Roma.

The report provides an overview of national progress since the last assessment period and report (2022) and in comparison with findings from the previous FRA survey in 2016, persistent challenges and areas for improvement. The findings were complemented by individual country factsheets. The Framework adopts a common but differentiated approach: Member States carry responsibility for developing and implementing National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs) tailored to their specific circumstances and aligned with the 7 overarching EU Roma Strategic Framework targets for 2030.

EU Roma Strategic Framework Objectives for 2030

1. Fight and prevent antigypsyism (anti-Traveller and Roma racism in Irl. context) and discrimination;
2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion;
3. Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust;
4. Increase effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education;
5. Increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment;
6. Improve Roma health and increase effective equal access to quality healthcare and social services;
7. Increase effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services.

Positive developments identified

Some positive developments are identified in the report: 20 Member States regularly monitor the implementation of their NRSFs and have defined at least 1 quantitative and qualitative target. Furthermore, 10/16 indicators show improvements compared to 2016 figures. However, **progress remains uneven** and the report documents the continued need for stronger implementation, monitoring and accountability to ensure that EU and national commitments translate into tangible improvements in the realities of Travellers and Roma.

General comments from the Commission

The Commission acknowledges the significant progress made among the Member States in progressing Traveller and Roma equality and inclusion since the last assessment of the NRSFs in 2022. However, the new assessment reports on persistent gaps between policy commitments and structural change addressing the reality of Travellers and Roma on the ground. Significant improvements have been made among the Member States in **monitoring** their NRSFs. 16 Member States, including Ireland, report that steps have been taken to strengthen the functioning of their National Roma Contact Points (NRCPs). While the Commission recognises these structures as important mechanisms for collaboration between Traveller/Roma organisations and public authorities, the Commission warns that consultation has a frequent tendency to remain tokenistic and does not necessarily translate into real influence over policymaking. In general, substantial inequalities remain across the Member States, and the persistent inequalities experienced by Travellers/Roma across the EU demonstrate that commitments alone are insufficient.

Identified challenges:

- **Persistent Anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism and discrimination:** Discrimination remains widespread across the EU, with 31% of Traveller/Roma respondents reporting discrimination based on their ethnic background in 2024. This is compounded by low levels of trust in public institutions, with 49% expressing trust in the police and 40% in their national legal systems.

31% **Experienced discrimination** Based on ethnic background	**49%** **Trust the police** Approximately half	**40%** **Trust legal systems** Approximately two-fifths

Discrimination and trust in public systems among Traveller/Roma communities in EU (FRA 2024)

- **Poverty and socioeconomic exclusion:** Traveller/Roma communities continue to experience disproportionately high levels of poverty and material deprivation. In 2024, 77% of Traveller/Roma children were at risk of poverty, four times the rate of children in the general EU population, while 40% of Traveller/Roma respondents experienced severe material deprivation,[4] compared to 7% of the general population.

77% **Children at risk of poverty** Traveller/Roma children *4x higher than general population*	**40%** **Experiencing severe material deprivation** An improvement from 66% in 2016 *Significantly higher than general population (7%)*

Travellers and Roma experiencing poverty and severe material deprivation across the EU (FRA 2024)

- **Meaningful participation and representation:** Despite increased awareness of institutional support structures (**46% in 2024, compared to 29% in 2016**) and the expansion of formal participation mechanisms, Traveller/Roma involvement in decision-making and monitoring processes remains limited, and at times, tokenistic.
- **Persistent educational inequalities and segregation:** Despite improvements in early childhood education participation (42% in 2016 to 53% in 2024), significant disparities remain compared to the EU average of 95%. Only approximately 1/3 of Traveller/Roma young people complete upper secondary education, compared to over 4/5 of the general population, while nearly 50% of Roma children attend schools where most or all of their classmates are Roma.

42% **Early education** T/R Participation in 2016	**53%** **Early education** T/R Participation in 2024	**95%** **EU Average** Early education participation

[4] Severe material deprivation is defined as a household's inability to afford at least 4/9 essential items or expenses, including adequate heating, regular nutritious meals and unexpected expenses.

1/3 **Traveller/Roma** Complete upper secondary education	**4/5+** **General population** Complete upper secondary education	**NEARLY 50%** **School segregation** Of Roma children attend schools where most/all classmates are Roma

Educational inequalities among Traveller/Roma communities in EU (FRA 2024)

- **Unequal access to sustainable employment:** Positively, the report states that nearly all EU Roma strategic framework employment targets can be reached by 2030**.** Although employment among **Travellers/Roma increased from 43% in 2016 to 54% in 2024**, it remains below the general population rate of 75%. The percentage of young Travellers/Roma neither in employment, education or training (NEET) **has decreased** from **62% in 2016 to 47% in 2024**, remaining significantly higher than the general population rate of 9%. The report further highlights a persistent gender gap between Roma men and women, with 38% of Roma women report being in paid work compared to 69% of Roma men.

43% **Paid employment** Traveller/Roma employment 2016	**54%** **Paid employment** Traveller/Roma employment 2024	**75%** **General population** Employment rate 2024
47% **Traveller/Roma (young people)** Neither in training, education, employment		**9%** **General population (young people)** Neither in training, education, employment
38% **Roma women** In paid employment		**69%** **Roma men** In paid employment

Employment among Travellers and Roma across the EU 2016 vs 2024 (FRA 2024)

- **Health inequalities and lower life expectancy:** Travellers/Roma continue to experience poorer health outcomes and significantly lower life expectancy than the general population. In particular, Traveller/Roma **men live an average of 8 years fewer**, while Traveller/Roma **women live 7.4 years fewer** than their general population counterparts. To address this, the report emphasises that Member States have to address the social determinants of health in general, the importance of States resourcing and working with peer workers and projects, as well as a stronger focus on maternal health and mental health.

7.4 years **Life expectancy disadvantage** Traveller/Roma women compared to general population	**8 years** **Life expectancy disadvantage** Traveller/Roma men compared to general population

Life expectancy disadvantage experienced by Traveller and Roma men and women compared to their general population counterparts (FRA 2024)

- **Inadequate access to adequate and desegregated housing and essential services:** Despite improvements in housing deprivation (decreasing from 61% in 2016 to 47% in 2024), Traveller/Roma communities continue to experience significant housing inequalities compared to the general population (18% in 2023). Furthermore, 83% of Traveller/Roma respondents reported living in overcrowded spaces, with forced evictions, insecure tenure, residential segregation and discrimination in housing markets remaining persistent barriers.

47% **Experiencing housing deprivation** Traveller and Roma respondents (2024)	**18%** **General EU average** Eurostat 2023	**83%** **Overcrowded spaces** T/R respondents (2024)

Housing deprivation among Traveller/Roma compared to the EU average (Eurostat 2023, FRA 2024)

Assessment of Ireland

The report makes both positive and critical references to Ireland's implementation of its NRSF. The Department of Justice's programme *Civil Service Traveller and Roma Placement Programme* is highlighted as a promising practice for improving Traveller/Roma access to quality and sustainable employment. Ireland is also among 10 Member States reporting employment initiatives targeting Traveller/Roma women, which is significant given the persistent gender gap in paid work. Ireland is listed alongside Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia as having Traveller representation in parliament. Ireland is also mentioned among 24 Member States that took steps to make education systems more inclusive and improve Traveller/Roma children's access to quality education but is not mentioned as a specific example of good practice.

The report notes that multiple Member States, including Ireland, have taken steps to strengthen the functioning of their NRCPs. Ireland is recognised among 16 Member States that have increased institutional capacity to combat anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism, and among 14 that have strengthened victim support services through measures like improved complaint mechanisms, legal aid, and outreach services. While Ireland is not included among Member States reporting wider recognition of Roma Holocaust Memorial Day and International Roma Day, both occasions have been marked yearly by organisations working with Roma in Ireland since well before, and during, the reporting period.[5] Despite some positive developments, a key challenge for Ireland remains to move beyond policy commitments alone towards effective implementation and structural change. This requires sustained action to dismantle the structural barriers that perpetuate anti-Traveller and anti-Roma racism and discrimination, poverty and exclusion, while recognising the

[5] Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, "Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Roma Genocide", 2 August 2024, https://www.paveepoint.ie/commemorating-the-80th-anniversary-of-the-roma-genocide/

intersectional inequalities experienced across the communities. The Commission's recommendations should guide the actions included in the upcoming second phase and action plan of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2027-2029). Continuous and sustainable funding has to be an integrated priority and recent suggestions to cut the current budget plan 2028-2034 by 8%, including a 30% cut to AgoraEU, directly threatens the funding lines supporting and protecting Europe's most marginalised groups, including Travellers and Roma.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Traveller and Roma equality, inclusion and participation remain significant challenges for the European Union. The Commission's report identifies progress in employment, education, housing, recognition of anti-Traveller/anti-Roma racism, and progress within policy. Substantial inequalities nevertheless persist, highlighting the critical gap between policy commitments and their practical implementation. Insufficient institutional capacity, fragmented governance, short-term funding and limited opportunities for meaningful Traveller/Roma participation continue to undermine the effectiveness of NRSFs. The persistent inequalities experienced by Travellers/Roma across the Union demonstrate that commitments alone are insufficient. With the exception of target 5 (employment) and despite positive progress, Member States are not set to meet the targets of the EU Roma Strategic Framework by 2030. Achieving all 7 targets by 2030 requires a shift towards coordinated, sustainable policy action.

In Ireland, these priorities align with existing national policy frameworks, particularly the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II (NTRIS II) 2024-2028, the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES) 2024/2030, and the National Traveller Health Action Plan (NTHAP) 2022-2027. Progress towards the 2030 targets requires translating these commitments into measurable outcomes through:

- ensuring national policies related to Travellers/Roma have sustained and ring-fenced funding;
- clear responsibilities and measurable targets;
- integrating universal ethnic equality data monitoring;
- and maintaining investment into Traveller-specific health initiatives and implementing a Roma-specific health action plan.

The upcoming EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034 presents an important opportunity to translate priorities into long-term investment and measurable outcomes. Reaching the 2030 targets and improving the lived experiences of Travellers and Roma across Ireland and in the EU, needs political commitment, enforcement, systemic reform and long-term, sustainable funding.