



# The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States

Survey results at a glance



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## Survey results at a glance



## Preface

Roma – Europe’s largest minority of 10-12 million people – are victims of racism, discrimination and social exclusion. Of those surveyed in this report, one in three is unemployed, 20 % are not covered by health insurance, and 90 % are living below the poverty. Many face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They are marginalised and mostly live in extremely poor socio-economic conditions. This undermines social cohesion and sustainable human development, hampers competitiveness and generates costs for society as a whole. Moreover, such discrimination is incompatible with the values upon which the EU is founded.

The European institutions and EU countries must work together to improve the social inclusion and integration of Roma people by using all the respective instruments and policies at local, regional, national and European levels for which they are responsible. Unfortunately, strong and proportionate measures are still not in place to tackle the deep-rooted problems facing a large proportion of the EU’s Roma population. This is why, on 5 April 2011, the European Commission adopted an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) unanimously backed the Framework on 19 May 2011. The European Council of 24-25 June 2011 also endorsed the Strategy committing the Member States to paving the way towards a more socially cohesive Europe by preparing and implementing their national Roma integration strategies. They have also underlined that the protection of fundamental rights, notably by combating discrimination and segregation, was essential for improving the situation of Roma people. The Roma Pilot Projects under cohesion policy improve the education of young Roma at risk, the Roma entrepreneurs’ access to finance and raise awareness in the Roma community.

Adequate and efficient measures in the field of social and economic inclusion require accurate and up-to-date information. The current research, undertaken jointly by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the European Commission, is of paramount importance: it provides policy makers with a snapshot of the situation of Roma people at risk, and provides Member States with the evidence they need to prepare actions on the ground.

And make no mistake, this is our goal: to translate ambitions into action. We are all aware of the enormous challenges facing Roma communities. All EU countries have recently submitted plans to fight discrimination and exclusion in education, employment, housing and health. We now need to see concrete deliverables, quantified targets and clear, ambitious deadlines for action. The information in this report is sobering. It should thus prompt Member States, the EU institutions and bodies, international organisations and civil society to make Roma integration a reality.

### **Viviane Reding**

*Vice-President of the European Commission  
Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship*

### **Johannes Hahn**

*Commissioner for Regional Policy*

### **László Andor**

*Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion*



## Foreword

For some years, reports by international and European Union (EU) organisations have raised the alarm about the conditions of life and violations of the fundamental rights of Roma, one of Europe's largest ethnic minorities. In 2003, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report *Avoiding the dependency trap* provided for the first time robust statistical evidence showing that a significant number of Roma in the EU face severe challenges in terms of illiteracy, infant mortality and malnutrition. In 2009, the *Data in focus report on 'The Roma'* by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) supplied statistical data showing that a substantial proportion of Roma are affected by what they perceive as very high levels of discrimination. These findings raise key questions about both fundamental rights protection and the real impact of social policies concerning Roma in employment, housing, healthcare, social services and education.

The evidence shows that the nature of the challenges many Roma are facing in the EU requires policy responses which articulate development efforts within a rights-based approach. Such policy responses must tackle the socio-economic barriers that Roma face while also ensuring that their fundamental rights are respected.

In this light, the European Parliament increased efforts for an EU Roma strategy that would speed up Roma integration in the EU. Maintaining the momentum, the European Commission created in September 2010 its own internal Roma Task Force with the participation of the FRA to coordinate work on Roma integration issues. On 5 April 2011, it released its landmark Communication on *An EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020* linking the need to tackle poverty and exclusion, while protecting and promoting fundamental rights. The Council conclusions of 19 May 2011 confirmed and strengthened this approach, by highlighting that "socio-economic aspects and territorial aspects where relevant, should serve as the main basis for designing Roma inclusion policies [...] in accordance with a human rights perspective".

In parallel, during 2011 the FRA, the UNDP and the World Bank coordinated their work and contributed to this process by providing data, analysis and evidence-based advice. The three organisations, funded partly by DG Regional Policy of the European Commission and partly through their own resources and others, coordinated their expertise to undertake survey work in 11 EU Member States and in neighbouring European countries – a unique example of international multi-agency cooperation. The surveys, which share core components, yield robust and comparative data on the socio-economic status of Roma alongside data on the enjoyment of their rights in practice.

The results are shocking in many respects. Although governments and societies have been aware of Roma exclusion and deprivation, the magnitude and the similarity of exclusion patterns across EU Member States is striking and leaves no excuse for delaying swift, effective action to improve the situation. The renewed efforts for Roma integration, however, will only bring sustainable results if they engage with the local communities, Roma and non-Roma, building trust, developing social cohesion, and combating prejudice and discrimination.

The real challenge lies ahead: to ensure that the implementation of Roma integration policies produces tangible and measurable results 'on the ground' reaching the targets set for Europe 2020. In this regard, the FRA, the UNDP and the World Bank will continue in the context of their respective mandates to support the efforts of EU institutions and Member States to improve the situation of the Roma.

**Morten Kjaerum**  
*Director of the FRA*





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## Background

In 2003, the UNDP report *Avoiding the dependency trap*<sup>1</sup> provided for the first time robust statistical evidence showing that a significant number of Roma in the EU face severe challenges in terms of illiteracy, infant mortality and malnutrition. The report argued for an integrated 'human development' approach, linking development opportunities to the realisation of human rights. It also proposed that the human rights paradigm should be complemented with one that focuses on development opportunities for the Roma. In 2004, UNDP conducted another survey on the status of Roma and the general population living in close proximity in central and southeastern Europe. In February 2005, eight European countries, today twelve, including EU Member States,<sup>2</sup> with significant Roma minorities signed the Declaration of the Decade of Roma Inclusion<sup>3</sup> 2005–2015 – a political commitment to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma involving governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as Romani civil society. The Decade used the type of data generated by the UNDP on the status of households and individuals to set a baseline for measuring progress. This was a major step towards results-oriented, accountable policies and interventions that can be monitored.

The UNDP work highlighted that the nature of the challenges many Roma in the EU are facing requires development responses which, in logical synergy, complement rights-based approaches dominating the Roma inclusion paradigm since the 1990s. In 2005, the World Bank report *Roma in an expanding Europe: Breaking the poverty cycle*<sup>4</sup> strengthened the argument suggesting that an emphasis on inclusion policies would complement rights-based approaches by tackling both the economic and social barriers that Roma face.

The FRA started its work on the Roma in 2003, under its previous institutional set-up as the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), releasing a joint report<sup>5</sup> with the Council of Europe on Romani women and health. Another report on Roma and Travellers in public education<sup>6</sup> followed in 2006. In late 2009, the FRA published two further reports on the housing situation

of Roma and Travellers<sup>7</sup> and on the situation of Roma EU citizens moving to and settling in other EU Member States.<sup>8</sup>

The agency's most important contribution to date in regard to the Roma came in 2009 when it published its *Data in focus report* on 'The Roma'.<sup>9</sup> This report was based on the findings of the FRA European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS). This survey was the first of its kind to produce comparative EU-wide data on different ethnic minority and immigrant groups' experiences of discrimination and criminal victimisation in everyday life, including their rights. Using a random sampling approach, the survey interviewed 23,500 respondents across the 27 EU Member States – including 3,500 Roma respondents in seven EU Member States and, for the purpose of comparison, further 5,000 people from the majority population in 10 EU Member States. The first in a series of *Data in focus* reports from this survey presented research results concerning Roma interviewees, who emerged from the survey as the group reporting the highest overall levels of perceived discrimination, compared with other groups such as North Africans and sub-Saharan Africans. The EU-MIDIS survey raised key questions about both fundamental rights protection and the real impact of social policies in areas such as employment, housing, healthcare, social services and education.

In March 2009, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market.<sup>10</sup> The resolution requested a coordinated approach to improving the complex working and living conditions of the Roma, including three objectives, namely to: increase economic opportunities, build human capital, and strengthen social capital and community development. The European Parliament also focused on access to quality education and vocational training; it considered that unqualified and unskilled labour mobility exacerbated discrimination and stressed in this respect the gender dimension. The resolution called on the European Commission to provide better analysis and enhanced cooperation with all stakeholders including international organisations, and to improve availability of funding for Roma inclusion.

Concerning the availability of funding, the European Parliament provided the European Commission with

1 UNDP (2003) *Avoiding the dependency trap*, Bratislava, UNDP, <http://europeandcis.UNDP/WB/EC.org/home/show/62BBCD48-F203-1EE9-BC5BD7359460A968>.

2 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain.

3 For more information, see [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org).

4 The World Bank, Ringold, D., Orenstein, M.A. and Wilkens, E. (2005) *Roma in an expanding Europe: Breaking the poverty cycle*, Washington D.C., The World Bank, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/roma\\_in\\_expanding\\_europe.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/roma_in_expanding_europe.pdf).

5 EUMC (2003) *Breaking the barriers – Romani women and access to public health care*, Vienna, EUMC, <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/ROMA-HC-EN.pdf>.

6 EUMC (2006) *Roma and Travellers in public education*, Vienna, EUMC, [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/roma\\_report.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/roma_report.pdf).

7 FRA (2009) *Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the European Union*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/ROMA-Housing-Comparative-Report\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/ROMA-Housing-Comparative-Report_en.pdf).

8 FRA (2009) *The situation of Roma EU citizens moving to and settling in other EU Member States*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/ROMA-Movement-Comparative-report\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/ROMA-Movement-Comparative-report_en.pdf).

9 FRA (2009) 'The Roma', *Data in focus report*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU-MIDIS\\_ROMA\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU-MIDIS_ROMA_EN.pdf).

10 European Parliament Resolution of 11 March 2009 on the social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU (2008/2137(INI)), [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P6-TA-2009-117](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P6-TA-2009-117).

€5 million for a pilot project on the 'Pan-European coordination of Roma integration methods'.<sup>11</sup> The pilot project comprised four fields of intervention: early childhood education and care, micro-credit and self-employment, information and awareness raising, and tools and methods for evaluation and data collection as basis for evidence-based policy. In managing this project, it became apparent that there was a need for better data on the situation of Roma.

DG Regional Policy of the European Commission therefore made an extra €1 million available from technical assistance for a survey of marginalised Roma, building on the technical expertise of the UNDP and the World Bank. Moreover, since the FRA was also preparing a similar survey covering different countries, it was agreed to combine the surveys, with all four institutions working together in close cooperation.

## Stepping up efforts for Roma integration in the EU

Taken together the reports by the UNDP, the World Bank and the FRA provided new robust and valuable evidence both about the socio-economic and the human rights situation of the Roma. This evidence has contributed to the efforts of the European Commission's Roma Task Force (RTF) created in September 2010, in which the FRA participates. The European Commission set up this internal task force following its 7 April 2010 Communication on the Roma,<sup>12</sup> which was adopted just before the Second Roma Summit in Cordoba in Spain. The Communication highlighted the complexity and interdependence of the problems that Roma face in terms of discrimination, poverty, low educational achievement, labour market barriers, housing segregation and poor health. The first task of the RTF was to investigate the use of EU funds for Roma integration and identify ways to improve the funds' effectiveness.<sup>13</sup> In December 2010, the RTF announced its first findings<sup>14</sup> highlighting that EU Member States do not yet properly use EU funds for the purpose of an effective social and economic integration of Roma. The RTF identified weaknesses in the development of appropriate strategies as well as specific measures to address the problems faced by Roma, including implementation problems at national level due to a lack of know-how and administrative capacity to absorb EU funds. The RTF report also determined problems in providing national co-financing, as well as a lack of involvement by civil society and Roma communities themselves.

To address these issues, the European Commission published on 5 April 2011 a Communication on an EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020 – asking EU Member States to present by the end of 2011 national Roma integration strategies that would include “EU Roma integration goals, with targeted actions and sufficient funding” and a “robust monitoring mechanism to ensure concrete results for Roma”.<sup>15</sup> At its extraordinary meeting dedicated to Roma integration on 19 May 2011, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)<sup>16</sup> welcomed the Commission Communication. On 24 June 2011, the European Council<sup>17</sup> endorsed the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies, “noting its major importance [and] called for the rapid implementation of the Council's conclusions of 19 May 2011”.

Roma integration is thus explicitly situated within the Europe 2020 growth strategy framework. The political commitment of EU Member States to improve the situation of Roma is stronger than ever before. A critical mass of actors, including important civil society organisations, is fully engaged and these concerted efforts should yield tangible results.

Based on the EU Framework, the national Roma integration strategies are expected to elaborate specific actions at regional and local levels to improve the situation of Roma. These actions should be taken within a broader conceptual and programmatic framework that integrates the respect, protection and fulfilment of fundamental rights and development opportunities. These two complementary aspects constitute the essence of a rights-based approach to development which is the sustainable way of practically fulfilling rights 'on the ground'.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the EU Framework, national strategies and any baseline data that the surveys provide are only a precondition for the future development of specific, targeted national and local implementation plans outlining specific interventions. These plans, following the 10 'Common basic principles on Roma inclusion' of the Council of the European Union, must ensure the direct engagement of communities at local level, including both Roma and non-Roma communities. Building trust, developing social cohesion and combating in practice prejudice and discrimination will constitute the necessary ingredient of success to achieve the key objective, which, as the April 2011 European Commission

11 For more information, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/activity/roma/pilot\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/activity/roma/pilot_en.cfm).

12 European Commission, (2010) *The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe*, COM(2010) 133 final, Brussels, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0133:FIN:EN:HTML>.

13 For more information, see European Commission press release: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1097>.

14 For more information, see European Commission press release: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/701&type=HTML>

15 European Commission (2011) *An EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020*, COM(2011) 173 final, Brussels, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com\\_2011\\_173\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf).

16 EPSCO, Council conclusions on an EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, 3089th meeting, Brussels, 19 May 2011, [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122100.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122100.pdf).

17 European Council (2011) Conclusions 23/24 June 2011, Brussels, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st00/st00023.en11.pdf>.

Communication aptly states, is to “make a tangible difference to Roma people’s lives”.

The surveys document the situation on the ground. They provide policy makers with the necessary evidence for designing policy responses and taking action. Although limitations always exist in relation to survey data, particularly when targeting populations as diverse as the Roma, the key findings summarised in this publication provide sufficiently robust statistical evidence to assist the European Commission and the EU Member States. The results inform policy makers about the priorities and the magnitude of the tasks to be addressed, by providing a comprehensive baseline regarding socio-economic condition and enjoyment of fundamental rights against which to measure the progress of national strategies.

## The surveys in a nutshell

This report presents the first results of the surveys based on an analysis of only part of the available data, which will be published later in several thematic reports. In this sense, the results presented are a first step in addressing the severe lack of data on the socio-economic situation of Roma in the EU and the fulfilment of their rights.

### Which countries were covered?

- The FRA Roma pilot survey covered Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain.
- The UNDP, World Bank and European Commission (UNDP/World Bank/EC) regional Roma survey also covered five of these, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and, in addition, six non-EU countries in the western Balkans and Moldova.

### Who was interviewed?

- Across the 11 EU Member States, the two surveys interviewed 22,203 Roma and non-Roma<sup>18</sup> providing information on 84,287 household members.
- Interviews were carried out face-to-face in Roma and non-Roma respondents’ homes.
- People self-identified as Roma. In France, these were people who self-identified as *gens du voyage* living in caravans on halting sites. Roma EU citizens from Romania were also interviewed; the results for this group living in France will be presented in a subsequent report.
- The general population living in the same area as or in the closest neighbourhood to the Roma interviewed. In the report, this group is referred to as non-Roma.

<sup>18</sup> The term ‘non-Roma’ refers to the general population living closest to the Roma covered in these surveys.

### What did the surveys ask?

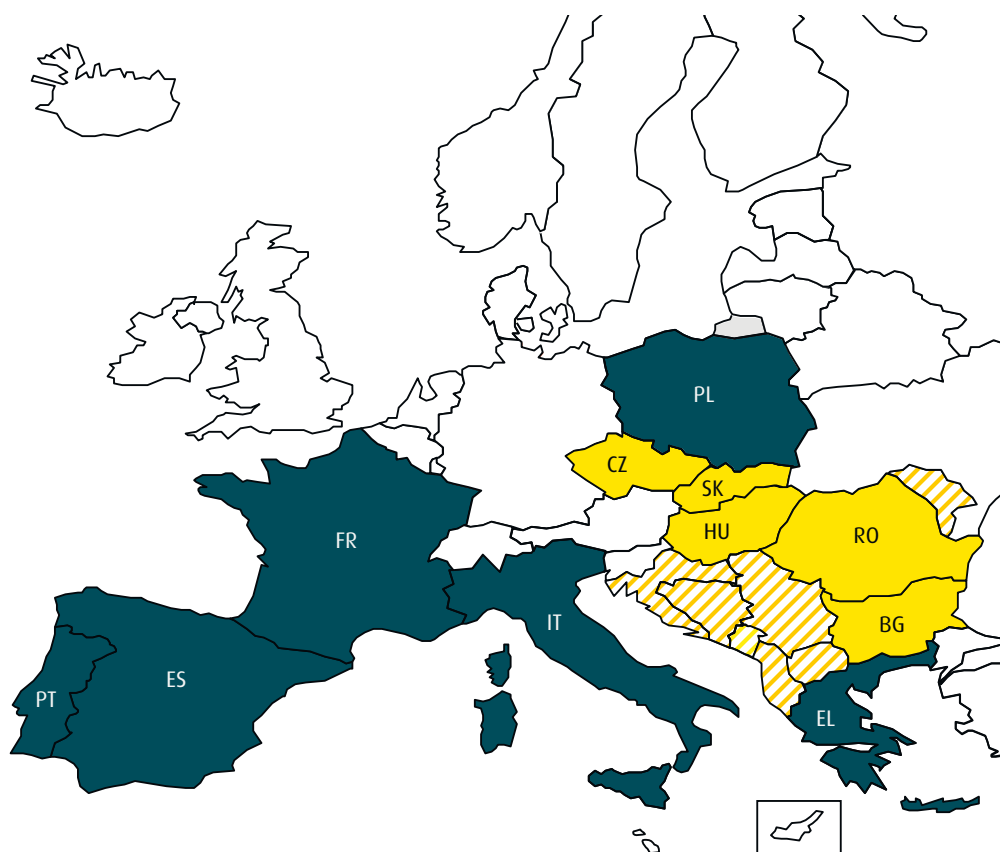
- Questions about the basic socio-demographic characteristics of all household members
- Questions about their situation in employment, education, health and housing
- Questions about the neighbourhood and its infrastructure
- Questions about integration, discrimination, rights awareness and citizenship issues
- Questions about mobility and migration

### How representative are the results?

- The results are representative for Roma living in areas in a higher than national average density.
- The results for the non-Roma are not representative for the majority population, but serve as a benchmark for the Roma since the non-Roma interviewed share the same environment, labour market and social infrastructure.

The results presented in this introductory publication highlight the need for effective national Roma integration strategies. More data will be analysed and presented in detail in a series of publications that will be rolled out gradually in due course, which will include a greater focus on gender and age differences.

Figure 1: Country coverage of Roma pilot surveys, 2011



- EU Member States covered by FRA
- EU Member States covered by UNDP and FRA
- ▨ Non-EU countries covered by UNDP

EU Member State	Country code
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IT	Italy
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SK	Slovakia

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011.

## What do the results show

The survey results confirm the concerns expressed by the European Commission in its April 2011 Communication<sup>19</sup> that many Roma face discrimination and social exclusion living in marginalised and very poor socio-economic conditions.

The indicators presented show that **in the 11 EU Member States covered by the surveys** the socio-economic situation of the Roma in the four key areas of employment, education, housing and health is not satisfactory and is worse, on average, than the situation of the non-Roma living in close proximity. They also show that Roma continue to experience discrimination and are not sufficiently aware of their rights guaranteed by EU law, such as the Racial Equality Directive.<sup>20</sup>

### In education:

- on average, only one out of two Roma children surveyed attend pre-school or kindergarten;
- during compulsory school age, with the exception of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, nine out of 10 Roma children aged 7 to 15 are reported to be in school;
- participation in education drops considerably after compulsory school: only 15 % of young Roma adults surveyed complete upper-secondary general or vocational education.

### In employment:

- on average, fewer than one out of three Roma are reported to be in paid employment;
- one out of three Roma respondents said that they are unemployed;
- others said that they are homemakers, retired, not able to work or self-employed.

### In health:

- one out of three Roma respondents aged 35 to 54 report health problems limiting their daily activities;
- on average, about 20 % of Roma respondents are not covered by medical insurance or do not know if they are covered.

### In housing:

- on average, in the Roma households surveyed more than two persons live in one room;
- about 45 % of the Roma live in households that lack at least one of the following basic housing amenities, namely indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower or bath and electricity.

### Poverty:

- on average, about 90 % of the Roma surveyed live in households with an equivalised income below national poverty lines;
- on average, around 40 % of Roma live in households where somebody had to go to bed hungry at least once in the last month since they could not afford to buy food.

### Discrimination and rights awareness

- about half of the Roma surveyed said that they have experienced discrimination in the past 12 months because of their ethnic background;
- around 40 % of the Roma surveyed are aware of laws forbidding discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job.

## Education

Education determines future life chances, and is crucial for finding stable and decently paid employment. The results of the surveys confirm that largely Roma children lag behind in educational achievement. Nevertheless, the right to education is a fundamental human right protected under Article 28 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ratified by all EU Member States and under Article 14 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights. EU Member States have thus a duty to ensure that all children enjoy equal access to education, in particular to compulsory education. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),<sup>21</sup> those who do not complete at least compulsory education face high risks of living in poverty and have limited chances to develop learning skills and reach their full potential.

19 European Commission (2011) *An EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020*, COM(2011) 173 final, Brussels.

20 Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:en:HTML>.

21 UNESCO (2010) *Education for all Global Monitoring Report 2010. Reaching the marginalized*, Paris, UNESCO, p. 155.



**Figure 2: Children aged 4 to starting age of compulsory education attending preschool or kindergarten (pooled data) (%)**



Notes: \* In Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Poland, compulsory education starts at the age of 7; in the other EU Member States at the age of 6.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

This section examines school participation, attendance and completion rates comparing Roma and non-Roma. The results confirm the findings of past research<sup>22</sup> that Roma children lag behind in educational achievement.

### Participation in pre-school and kindergarten

Early childhood education is crucial for subsequent successful school participation. In its 2011 Communication on early childhood education and care, the European Commission highlighted that “early childhood is the stage where education can most effectively influence the development of children and help reverse disadvantage”.<sup>23</sup> In this light, the European Commission Communication on an EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies asked EU Member States specifically to “widen access to quality early childhood education and care”<sup>24</sup> for the Roma. The results show that this is indeed a significant priority.

In nine of the 11 EU Member States surveyed, the results show a considerable gap between Roma and non-Roma children attending pre-school and kindergarten (see Figure 2). However, significant differences exist between EU Member States: in Hungary and Spain, for instance, at least seven out of 10 Roma and non-Roma children surveyed are reported to attend pre-school or kindergarten. In stark contrast, in Greece, less than 10 % of Roma children are reported to be in pre-school or kindergarten compared with less than 50 % of non-Roma children. The lowest participation rates in pre-school and kindergarten education for both Roma and non-Roma children are reported in Greece and Slovakia. The results do not show any significant gender differences overall.

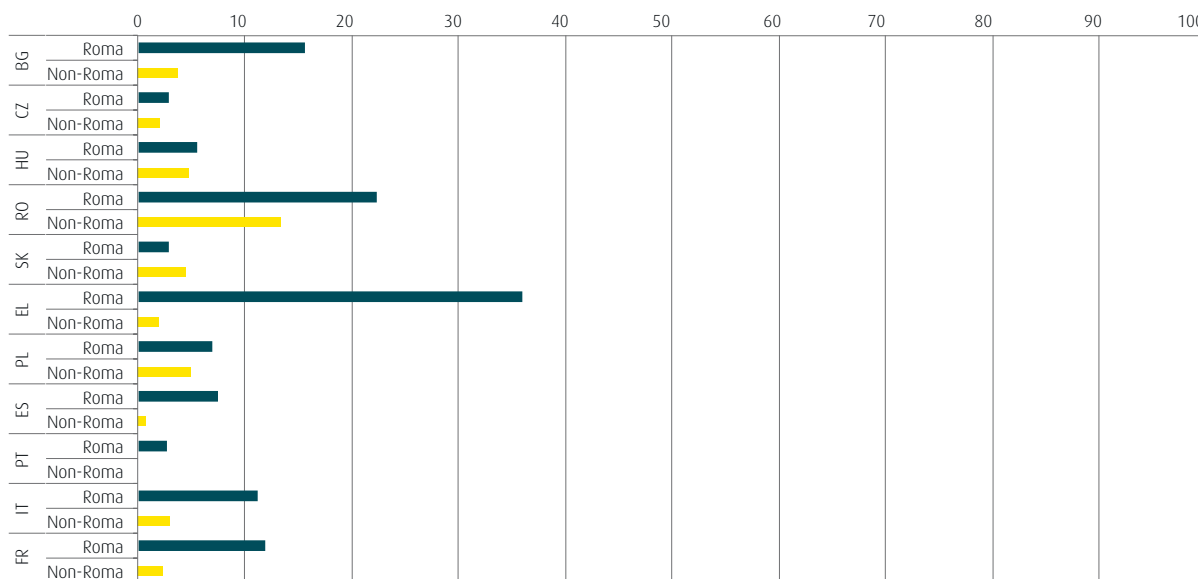
22 EUMC (2006) *Roma and Travellers in public education*, Vienna, EUMC; Ivanov, A., Collins, M., Grosu, C., Kling, J., Milcher, S., O’Higgins, N., Slay, B. and Zhelyazkova, A. (2006) *At risk: Roma and the displaced in Southeast Europe*, Bratislava, UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS; Revenga, A., Ringold, D. and Tracy, W.M. (2002) *Poverty and ethnicity. A cross-country study of Roma poverty in central Europe*, Washington D.C., The World Bank.

23 European Commission (2011) *Early childhood education and care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*, COM(2011) 66 final, Brussels, 17 February 2011, p. 3, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf).

24 European Commission COM(2011) 173 final, 5 April 2011, p. 6.



Figure 3: Children aged 7 to 15 not in school (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

### School attendance of children of compulsory school age

The completion of compulsory education is a precondition for decent employment and access to further and higher education. The percentage of children who are not in school at the age of 7 to 15<sup>25</sup> is not only an indicator for the future chances of this generation, but also a warning sign for the education systems. It should be noted that these results do not distinguish between different school types, for example, schools intended for children with mental or physical disabilities, which exist in certain EU Member States and to which Roma children are often assigned, according to previous research.<sup>26</sup>

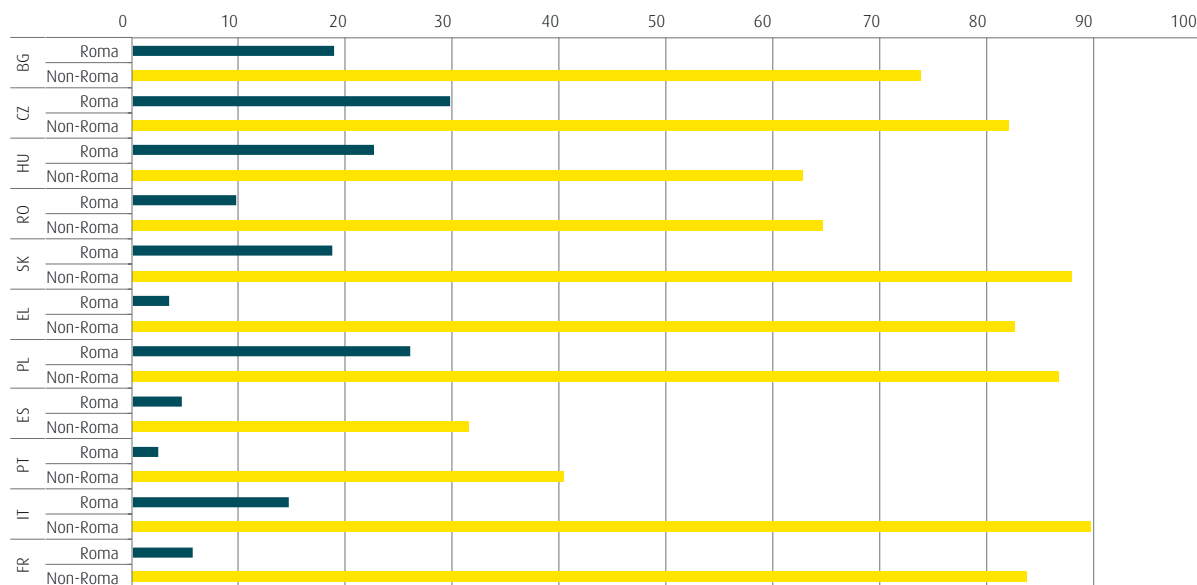
The results show important differences in school attendance between Roma and non-Roma children (see Figure 3). The situation, however, differs considerably between EU Member States. At least 10 % of Roma children aged 7 to 15 in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, France and Italy are identified in the FRA survey as not attending school, meaning that they are either still in preschool, not yet in education, skipped the year, stopped school completely or are already working. This proportion is highest in Greece with more than 35 % of Roma children not attending school.

25 In Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania, many children enter primary education at the age of 7, elsewhere at 6. In the Czech Republic and Greece, compulsory school ends at the age of 15, elsewhere at a later age.

26 EUMC (2006) *Roma and Travellers in public education*, Vienna, EUMC.



**Figure 4: Household members aged 20 to 24 with at least completed general or vocational upper-secondary education (pooled data) (%)**



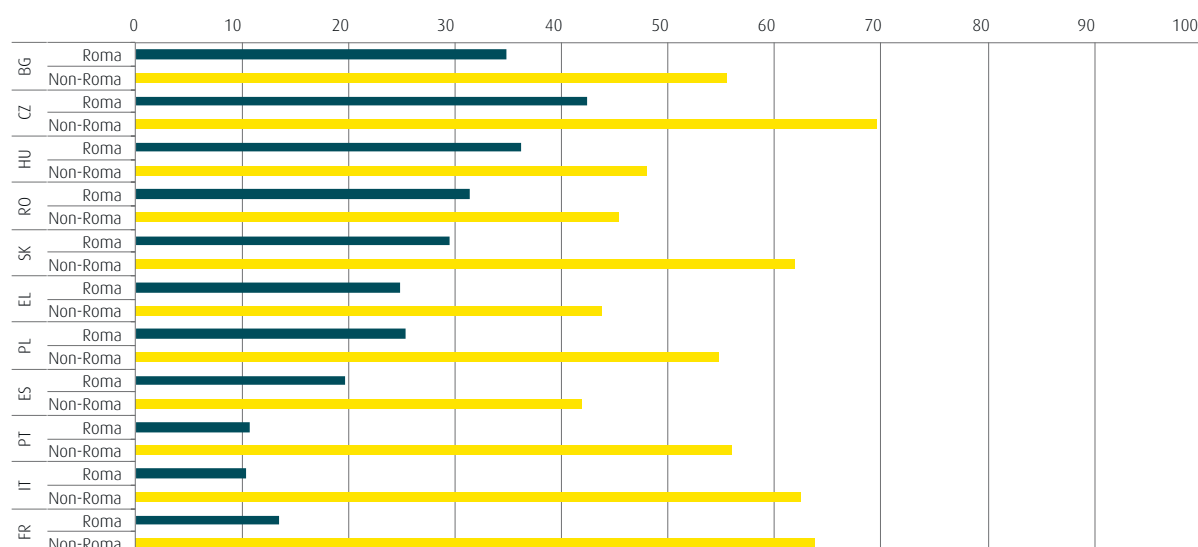
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

### Completed general and vocational upper-secondary education

Completing any type of upper-secondary general or vocational education is a prerequisite for skilled employment and access to higher education. The higher the education level attained, the greater the chances to access secure, decent and well-paid employment. Results for young adults aged 20 to 24, who are entering the labour market, show significant differences between Roma and non-Roma in all EU Member States (see Figure 4). In five out of 11 EU Member States, Portugal, Greece, Spain, France and Romania, fewer than one out of 10 Roma is reported to have completed upper-secondary education. In the Czech Republic and Poland, the results are better but still fewer than one out of three young Roma is reported to have completed this level of education.

In Portugal and Spain, the proportion of non-Roma who are reported to have completed upper-secondary education is much lower than in other EU Member States, possibly reflecting local or regional structural disadvantages that affect both groups living in close proximity. The results showed small gender differences among Roma for this level of education, except in Poland where Roma women more often than Roma men report to have completed upper secondary education.

Figure 5: Household members aged 20 to 64 in paid employment (pooled data) (%) – excluding self-employment



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

## Employment

According to Eurostat figures, the paid employment rate<sup>27</sup> in the EU for those aged 20 to 64 amounted, on average, to 68.6% in 2010; the Europe 2020 strategy sets a headline target of 75%. In the context of the economic crisis, however, it is reasonable to assume that competition for jobs, especially low-skilled jobs, will increasingly put many Roma at a disadvantaged position when competing for employment. This is not only due to their lack of adequate education and marketable skills, but also because they are often discriminated against: in 2009, EU-MIDIS data showed that one in five of the Roma surveyed reported discriminatory experiences when looking for work.

### Paid employment rate

The term ‘paid employment’<sup>28</sup> includes paid work (full time, part time and ad hoc) as well as paid parental leave, while excluding self-employment. In certain EU Member States, the self-employment rate is quite high, as explained below. It should also be noted that the non-Roma surveyed are not representative of the general population; the results for this group will therefore differ from data on general population statistics, such as the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Overall, the results show that the headline target of Europe 2020 poses a considerable challenge. In this regard, the EU Framework target for “cutting the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population” will require substantial efforts by EU Member States.

The surveys found important differences between the Roma and non-Roma surveyed in France, Italy and Portugal, where only about one out of 10 Roma aged 20 to 64 is reported as being in paid employment (see Figure 5). This is in stark contrast to the non-Roma surveyed, who report much higher employment rates. These low employment rates of Roma require further investigation as several explanations for these findings are possible: it may, for example, be related to the varying extent of self-employment across the countries surveyed – about 20% of the Roma surveyed in France, but also in Greece, and about 25% in Italy said that they are self-employed. In this regard, the European Commission Communication on an EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies asks EU Member States to grant Roma people full access in a non-discriminatory way to self-employment tools and initiatives, as well as access to micro-credit.

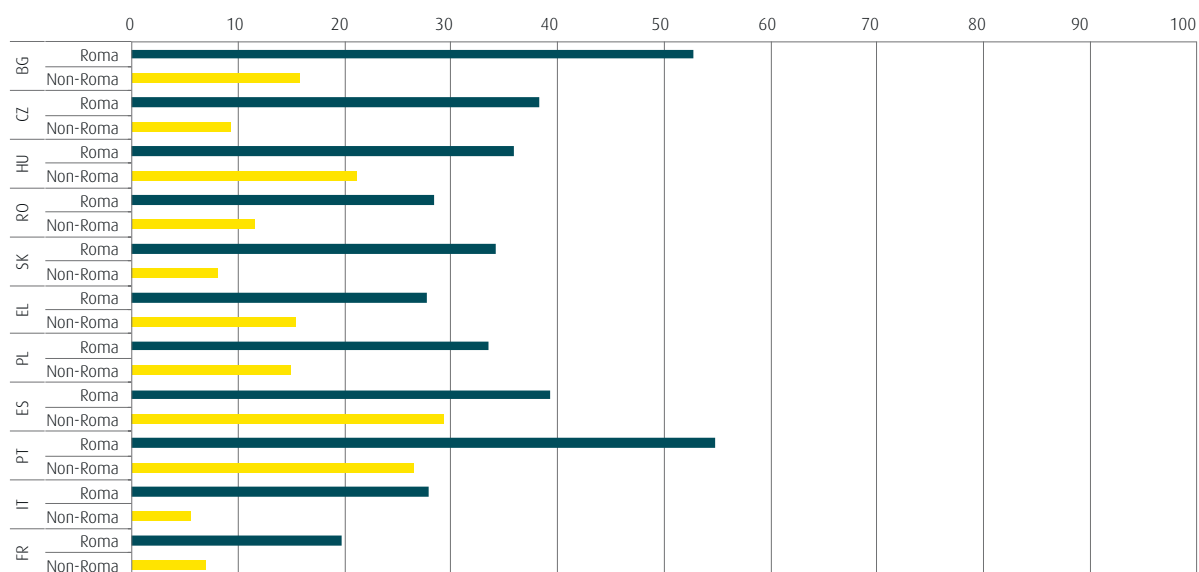
The highest rates in paid employment for both Roma and non-Roma are reported in the Czech Republic, while the smallest differences in employment rates between Roma and non-Roma are reported in Hungary.

The employment rates, which were calculated based on the UNDP/World Bank/EC data using the LFS methodology, show a similar picture, while also revealing additional important details in the five EU Member States – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia – covered by both surveys. For both Roma and non-Roma, employment rates for women are lower than for men, in particular for Roma.

27 This indicator is not directly comparable with the results of the surveys since it is based on a different definition. For Eurostat data, see: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_10](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_10)

28 The surveys asked respondents to identify the work situation of each household member.

Figure 6: Respondents\* aged 20 to 64 who considered themselves as unemployed (%)



Notes: \* Respondents were asked to answer this question only for themselves and not for all household members. The two surveys asked questions on unemployment differently and therefore the data for this indicator could not be pooled.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

## Self-reported unemployment

Measuring unemployment in surveys is complex as respondents may interpret their situation differently. For example, persons who work only occasionally or in the informal economy may prefer to classify themselves in a survey as unemployed. With this in mind, the findings under the indicator 'self-reported unemployment'<sup>29</sup> should be read in connection with other indicators, such as paid employment presented in the previous section.

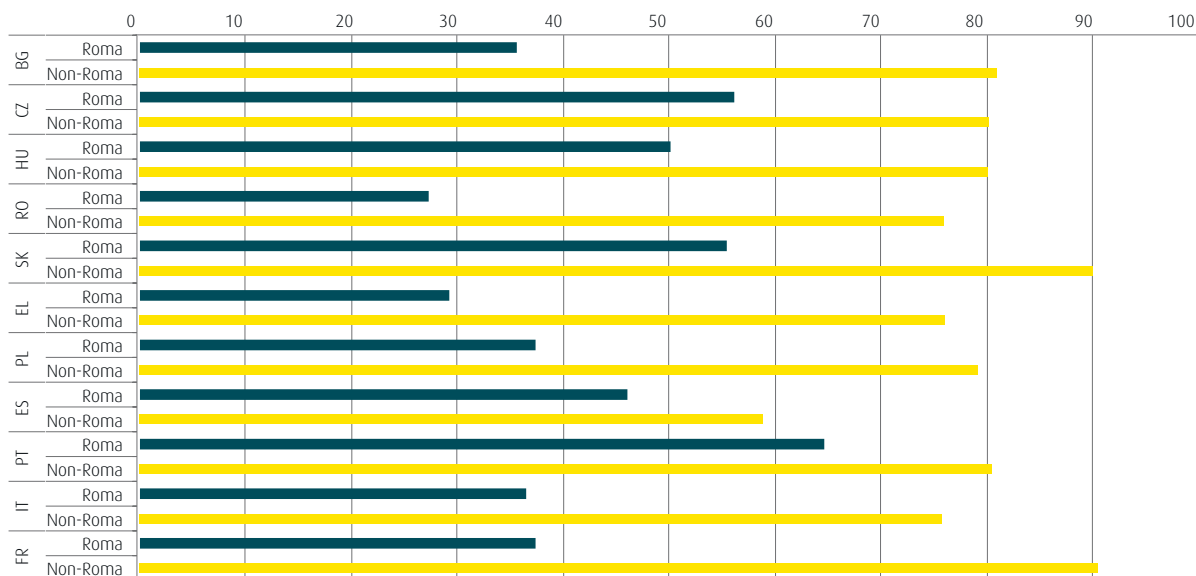
The survey finds high unemployment rates for the Roma across all EU Member States where they were surveyed (see Figure 6). In most Member States, the number of Roma saying that they are unemployed is at least double than the number of non-Roma; in Italy, the Czech Republic

and Slovakia, up to 4 to 5 times more Roma than non-Roma said they are unemployed.

UNDP/World Bank/EC data on unemployment calculated using the LFS methodology show a similar picture and reveal additional important details in the five Member States covered by both surveys in regard to gender and age. For instance, the unemployment rates reported for Roma women is on average one third higher than those for Roma men, while in the case of non-Roma the gap between female and male unemployment rates is much lower. In addition, of those young Roma aged 15 to 24, who said that they are unemployed, a worrying share – ranging from about 58 % in Hungary to 77 % in the Czech Republic – have no previous work experience.

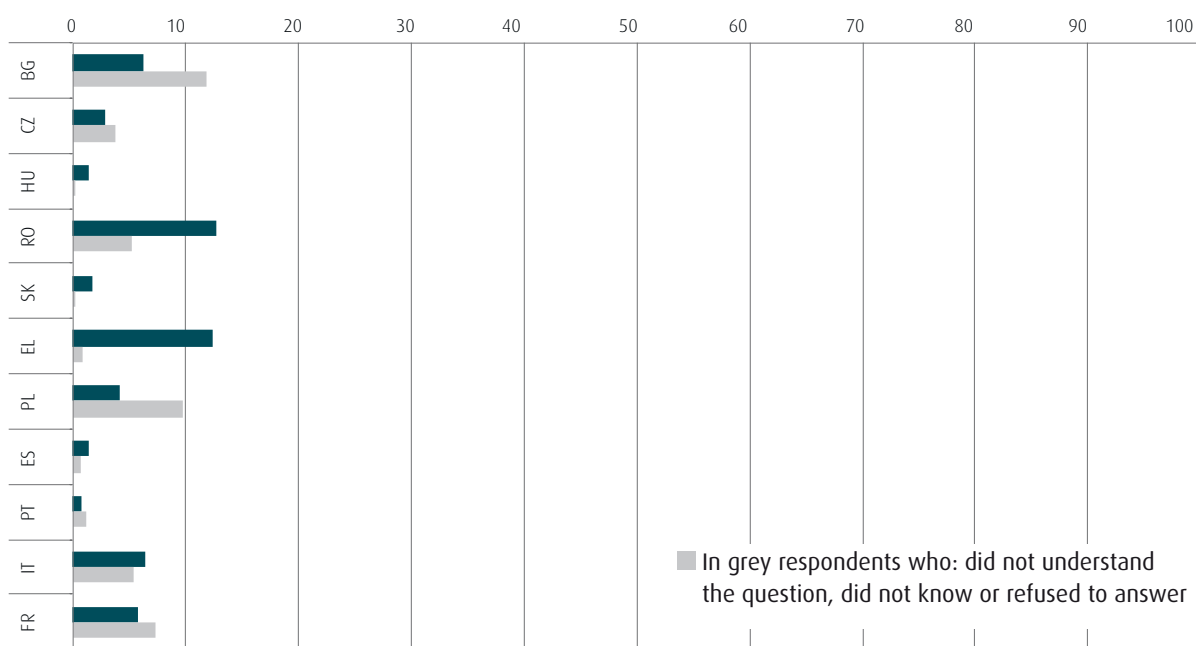
29 This indicator is not comparable to the LFS indicators for unemployment, which defines unemployed persons as those without work during a reference week but currently available for work, and who were either actively seeking work in the past four weeks or who had already found a job to start within the next three months. The FRA Roma pilot survey, unlike the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey, did not limit the definition to any specific time period, reference week or availability and/or willingness to work in order to capture also those persons who may have been unemployed for longer periods and were not actively seeking work.

Figure 7: Respondents aged 18 and above stating that they are or will be entitled to private or state pension (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

Figure 8: Roma children aged 7 to 15 who work outside the home (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

## Pension

The FRA survey also asked respondents whether they are or will be entitled to a private or state pension.<sup>30</sup> In all EU Member States, fewer Roma than non-Roma respondents said that they are or will be eligible for such pension (see Figure 7). Nevertheless, more than half of the Roma surveyed said they are or will be entitled to a pension in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, and two out of three Roma indicated this in Portugal. The results show small gender differences overall; in Greece and Spain, however, Roma men indicated more often than Roma women that they are or will be entitled to a pension.

## Child labour

The proportion of children aged 7 to 15 who are reported as working outside the home is very low in most EU Member States (see Figure 8); for non-Roma children, it is almost non-existent.

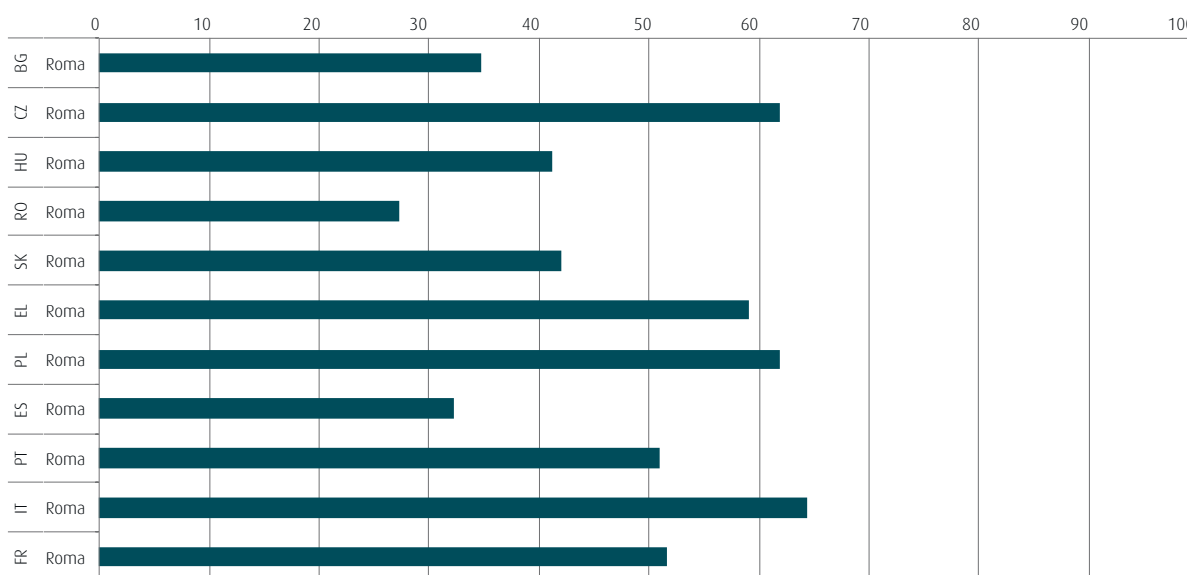
However, in Greece and Romania more than one out of 10 Roma children are reported to be working outside the home, while in Italy, France and Bulgaria the proportion is about 6 %. When asked which type of work children do outside the home, respondents said either that they are collecting objects for reselling or recycling, or they are begging on the street for money. Other activities of Roma children working outside the home include working in a shop, on a farm, in a market or selling things in the streets, running errands or guarding cars.

A significant number of respondents said that they do not understand the question, do not know or refuse to answer, which possibly indicates their reluctance to say that the children are working, or because the children's work did not fit any of the above categories.

## Discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin when looking for work

The survey results of perceived experiences of discrimination when looking for work in the past five years largely corroborate the findings of the EU-MIDIS survey in 2009. Eleven years after the adoption of the EU's Racial Equality Directive, more than half of the Roma respondents looking for work said that they have experienced discrimination because they are Roma (see Figure 9). The largest shares of discrimination experiences are among Roma in Italy and the Czech Republic. However, discrimination experiences are reported less in Bulgaria and Romania confirming earlier EU-MIDIS findings.

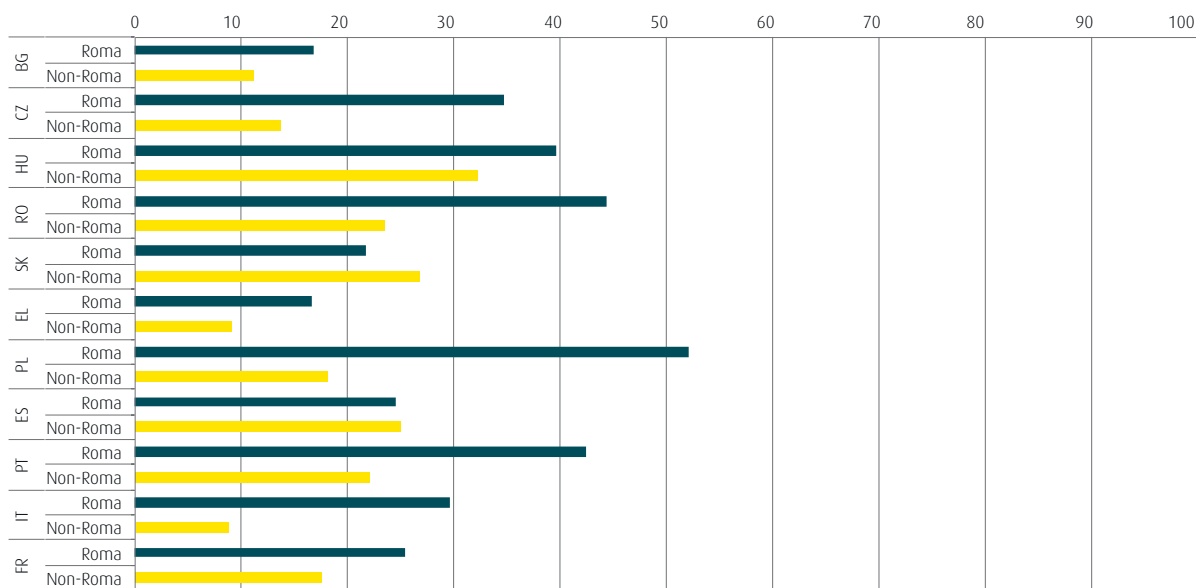
**Figure 9: Roma respondents aged 16 and above looking for work in the past 5 years, who said that they experienced discrimination because of their Roma background (pooled data) (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

30 This question was not included in the common core questionnaire or the UNDP questionnaire.

Figure 10: Respondents aged 35 to 54 with health problems that limit their daily activities (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

Figure 11: Respondents aged 18 and above with medical insurance (pooled data) (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

## Health

### Limitations in daily activities because of health problems

The respondents were asked whether they have any complaints, diseases or injuries that limited them in their daily activities, such as working, shopping or keeping in contact with other people. Limitations in daily activities due to health problems increase with age. Therefore, in order to avoid age differences in the composition of the population sample<sup>31</sup> influencing the results, a particular age group of Roma and non-Roma (35–54 years) was selected. This age group usually has the highest activity rates. It is therefore reasonable to assume that being limited in daily activities might affect the possibilities to find or be in paid work.

Except in Slovakia and Spain, more Roma than non-Roma said that they are limited in their daily activities. In Poland, more than half of the Roma respondents said they encounter such problems, while in Bulgaria and Greece the proportion of Roma having these problems is less than 20 %. In Spain, no discernible differences emerge in the responses of Roma and non-Roma. In contrast, in Italy, seven times more Roma than non-Roma report limitations in daily activities due to health; the differences between Roma and non-Roma are also high in the Czech Republic (see Figure 10).

When looking at gender differences across all EU Member States, more Roma and non-Roma women than men said that their daily activities are limited because of health problems.

### Medical insurance

Respondents aged 18 years and above were asked if they have any form of medical insurance in their country (with the main national insurance scheme names suggested by the interviewer). The question examined the awareness of having medical insurance cover and not the actual healthcare provided when a need arises. Such awareness is important because people who think that they are not insured may not take advantage of medical services they are entitled to, such as preventative healthcare and pre-screening examinations.

In Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Spain, Portugal and France, medical insurance coverage of around 90 % or more is reported by both Roma and non-Roma respondents. In Italy, about 20 % of both Roma and non-Roma said that they do not have any medical insurance.

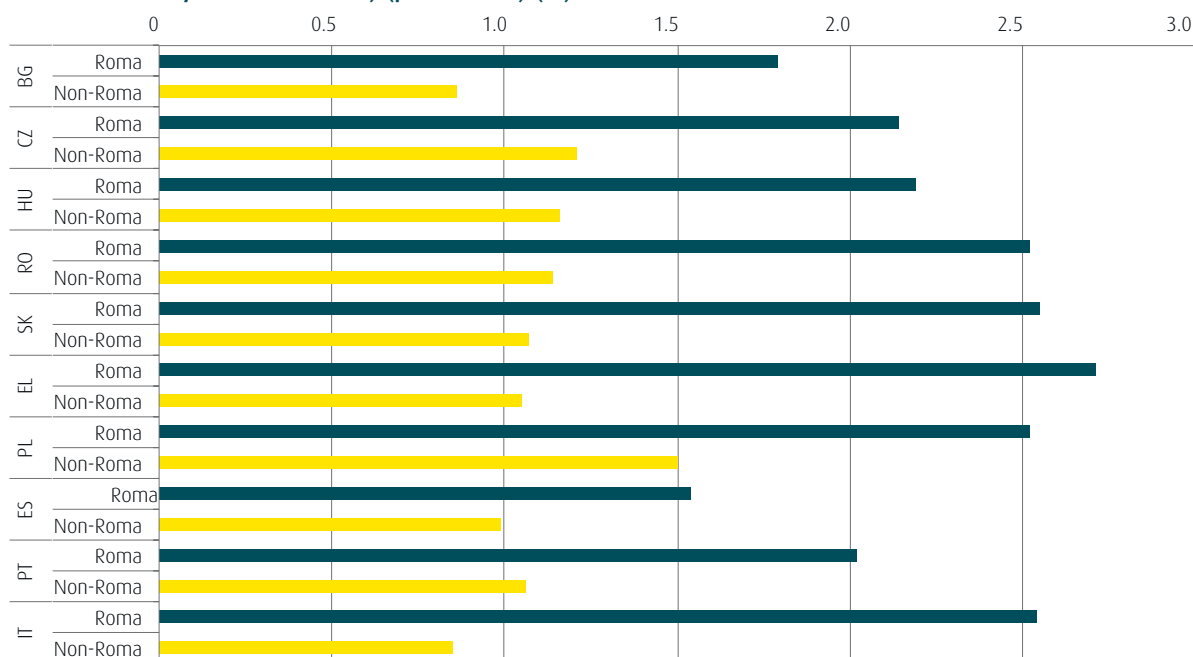
There are noticeable differences when comparing Roma and non-Roma responses in Greece, Romania and Bulgaria in particular, where only around 45 % of the Roma said they have medical insurance in contrast to around 85 % for the non-Roma. A small number of the Roma surveyed

in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic (around 6 %) said that they do not know or that they could not understand the question (see Figure 11).

In relation to gender, no significant differences are detected overall. In most EU Member States, there are also no differences in regard to age. In Bulgaria, Romania and Italy, however, a slightly larger number of older (aged over 50 years) than younger respondents said that they have medical insurance cover, particularly among the Roma population.

<sup>31</sup> The age distribution of the population surveyed shows marked differences between Roma and non-Roma: in all EU Member States the Roma population surveyed was on average younger than the non-Roma population surveyed.

**Figure 12: Average number of persons per room (excluding kitchen, corridor, toilet, bathroom and any room rented out) (pooled data) (%)**



*Notes: Roma households living in mobile or makeshift accommodation were excluded from this calculation. These were the Roma (gens du voyage) surveyed in France all living in caravans on halting sites; about half of the Roma surveyed in Italy and about 10 % of the Roma surveyed in Greece and Portugal.*

*Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011*

## Housing

### Availability of space

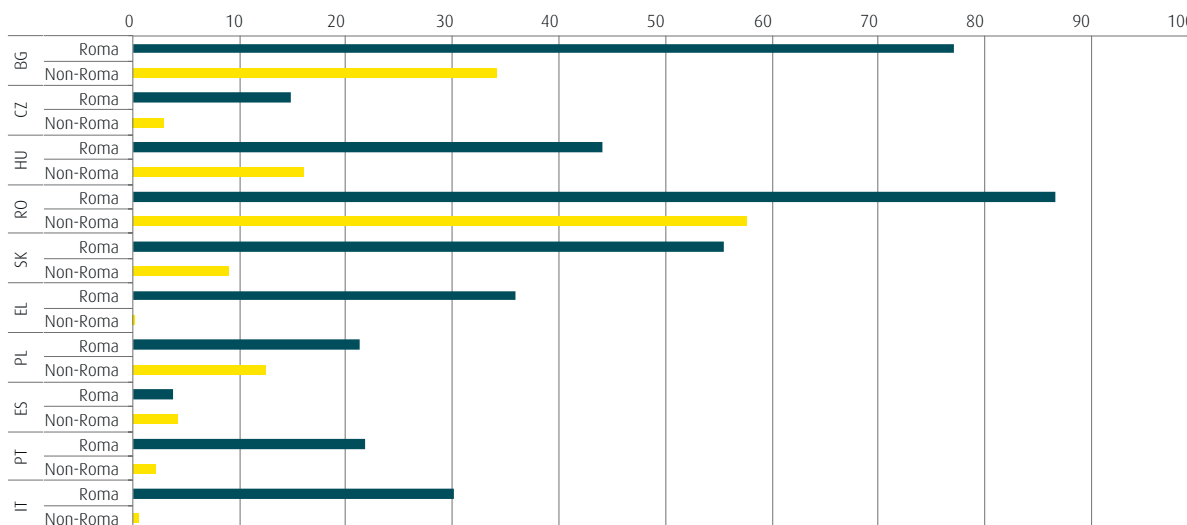
The availability of sufficient personal space in a household is a key indicator of housing quality. The FRA and UNDP/World Bank/EC Roma surveys measured it by the number of persons per room, excluding kitchen, corridor, bathroom and any rooms rented out.

The results show considerable differences between Roma and non-Roma households (see Figure 12). Across all EU Member States, more persons share, on average, one room in Roma households than in non-Roma households. In non-Roma households, the average is one person per room in most Member States, with the exception of Poland where for both Roma and non-Roma households the average was 1.5 persons per room.

In contrast, the average number of persons per room in Roma households ranges from 1.5 in Spain to more than 2.5 in Romania, Slovakia, Greece, Poland and Italy. In these EU Member States, the differences between Roma and non-Roma are high, particularly in Greece.



**Figure 13: Persons living in households without at least one of the following basic amenities: indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower/bath, electricity (pooled data) (%)**



*Notes: Roma households living in mobile or makeshift accommodation were excluded from this calculation. These were the Roma (gens du voyage) surveyed in France all living in caravans on halting sites; about half of the Roma surveyed in Italy and about 10 % of the Roma surveyed in Greece and Portugal.*

*Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma survey 2011*

### Lack of key amenities

Another key indicator of housing quality used by the surveys is the availability of any of the following four basic amenities: indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower or bath and electricity. The results show important differences between the EU Member States in the proportion of Roma and non-Roma living in households where at least one of these amenities is lacking (see Figure 13). Spain is an exception in this regard with the overwhelming majority of both Roma and non-Roma households having these basic amenities. The survey did not record the type of amenities that households have in terms of quality or age.

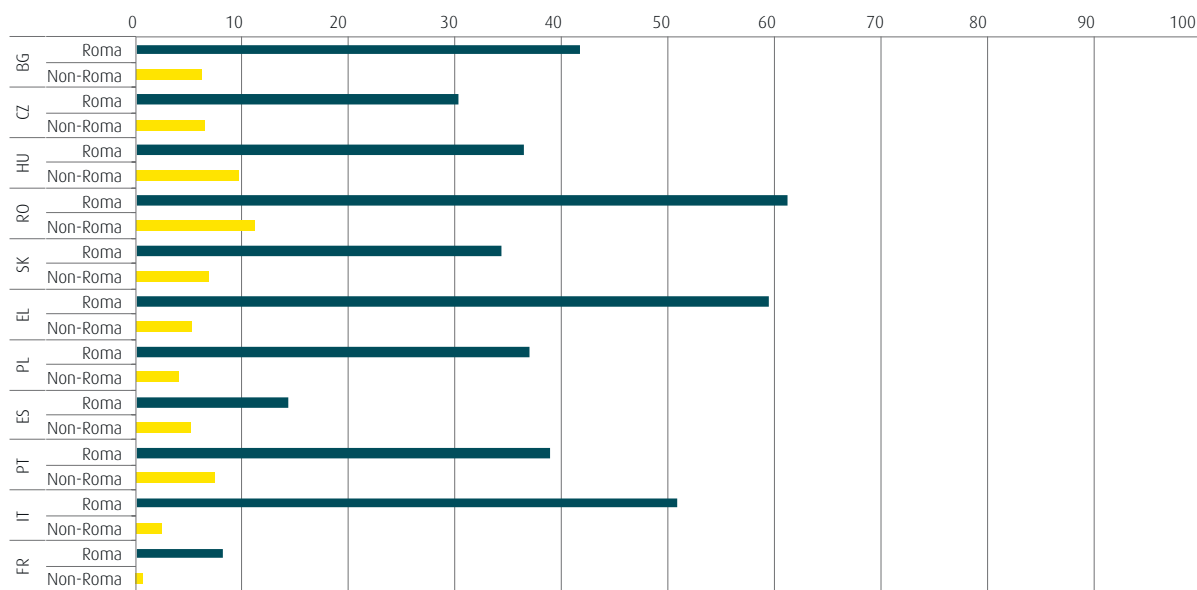
On the other hand, in Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia the majority of the Roma surveyed live in households that do not have at least one of these basic amenities, in contrast to the non-Roma households surveyed. It should be noted that in Bulgaria and even more in Romania many of the non-Roma households also lack at least one of these basic amenities. Differences between the Roma and non-Roma households are most pronounced in Italy and Greece.

Figure 14: Persons living in households at risk of poverty (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

Figure 15: Persons living in households in which someone went to bed hungry at least once in the past month (pooled data) (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

## Poverty

This section focuses specifically on income poverty measured in relation to the distribution of income within each country. However, poverty or the lack of what is essential for a minimum standard of life is a wider concept than monetary poverty. It also includes access to essential social resources, such as education and healthcare. The situation regarding the four key areas, namely employment, education, health and housing described in the previous sections, thus forms an essential part of a broader understanding of the deprivation levels of the Roma and non-Roma household members surveyed.

### 'At-risk-of-poverty'

Households 'at-risk-of-poverty' are those with an equivalised<sup>32</sup> income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income. The FRA Roma pilot survey results show that in all EU Member States covered significant differences exist in the proportion of Roma and non-Roma living in households that are at-risk-of-poverty, according to the household income reported by the respondents. In all EU Member States, at least eight out of 10 of the Roma surveyed are at risk of poverty with the highest levels reported in Portugal, Italy and France (see Figure 14).

The differences between Roma and non-Roma are more pronounced in France and in Italy, where the proportion of Roma living in households at risk of poverty is more than twice as high as for the non-Roma.

When analysing the results of the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey, it is interesting to note income inequalities within both the Roma and the non-Roma surveyed. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, for instance, such inequalities are small. However, in the case of Romania and Bulgaria for example, the average income of the richest 20 % of the Roma surveyed was reported to be respectively 13 and 12 times higher than the income reported by the poorest 20 % of Roma. These differences point to the complex composition of the populations surveyed and underscore the need for more in-depth qualitative research to better understand the nature and consequences of these differences.

32 Equivalised income is a measure of household income that takes account of the differences in a household's size and composition. For more information, see [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Glossary:Equivalised\\_income](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Equivalised_income)

## Households that could not always afford to buy food

The 2003 UNDP report *Avoiding the dependency trap* highlighted that many Roma endure severe challenges in terms of illiteracy, infant mortality and malnutrition. The surveys tried to assess again the validity of this claim by asking respondents whether they or somebody else in their household "went to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money to buy food".

In all EU Member States, Roma and non-Roma respondents said that they have experienced a situation where at least once during the previous month somebody went to bed hungry because they could not afford to buy food (see Figure 15). With the exception of France and Spain, where around one in 10 Roma respondents experience this level of deprivation, in the other Member States this proportion rises markedly from around 30 % in the Czech Republic to around 60 % in Greece and Romania. While the percentages of households in which someone went to bed hungry at least once in the past month are high for the Roma, it is noteworthy that hunger constitutes also a factor in the lives of some persons in non-Roma households.

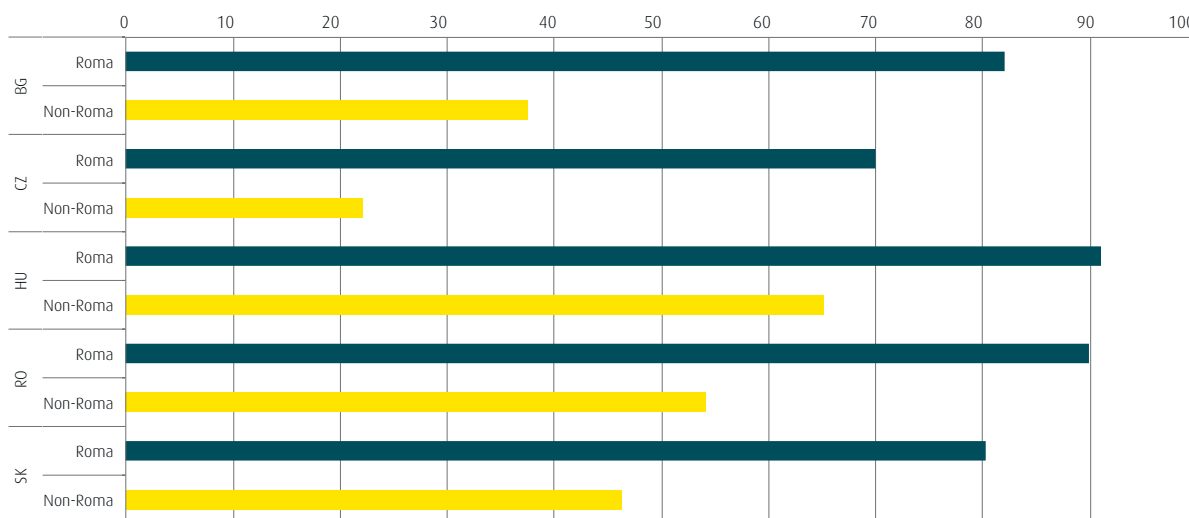
### Severe material deprivation

Severe material deprivation is one of the key indicators for Europe 2020. It is a composite indicator<sup>33</sup> incorporating housing and economic deprivation. According to Eurostat, deprivation covers indicators relating to economic strain, durables, housing and environment of the dwelling. Persons who are 'severely materially deprived' live under conditions constrained by a severe lack of resources, that is, they cannot afford at least four of the following items:

- to pay rent or utility bills;
- to keep their home adequately warm;
- to face unexpected expenses;
- to eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day;
- to have a week's holiday away from home;
- a car;
- a washing machine;
- a colour TV;
- a telephone.

33 For more information, see: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_53&plugin=1](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_53&plugin=1)

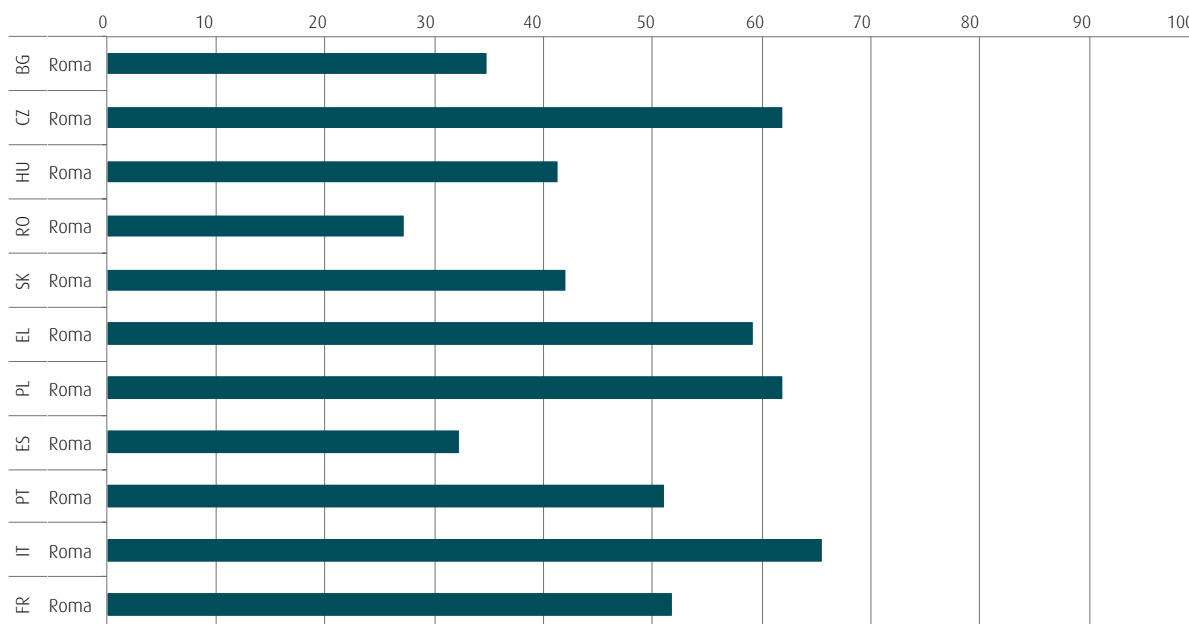
**Figure 16: Households with severe material deprivation (UNDP/World Bank/EC data) (%)**



Source: UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

According to the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey data, between 70 % and 90 % of the Roma surveyed report living in conditions of severe material deprivation. The proportion of non-Roma in such conditions is significantly lower with substantive differences between the EU Member States (see Figure 16).

**Figure 17: Roma respondents aged 16 and above who experienced discrimination because of their Roma background in the past 12 months (pooled data) (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

## Discrimination and rights awareness

The survey asked Roma respondents about their experiences of discriminatory treatment in employment, housing, health and education because of their ethnic origin. The results show high numbers of respondents indicating that they have experienced discrimination, as was also the case in the FRA EU-MIDIS survey.

### Discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin

In all EU Member States, a significant proportion of Roma respondents said that they have experienced discriminatory treatment because of their ethnic origin in the 12 months preceding the survey. The proportions range from more than 25 % in Romania to around 60 % in the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy and Poland (see Figure 17). In consistency with the findings of EU-MIDIS,<sup>34</sup> the levels of discrimination experiences in Romania and Bulgaria are relatively low compared with the other EU Member States.

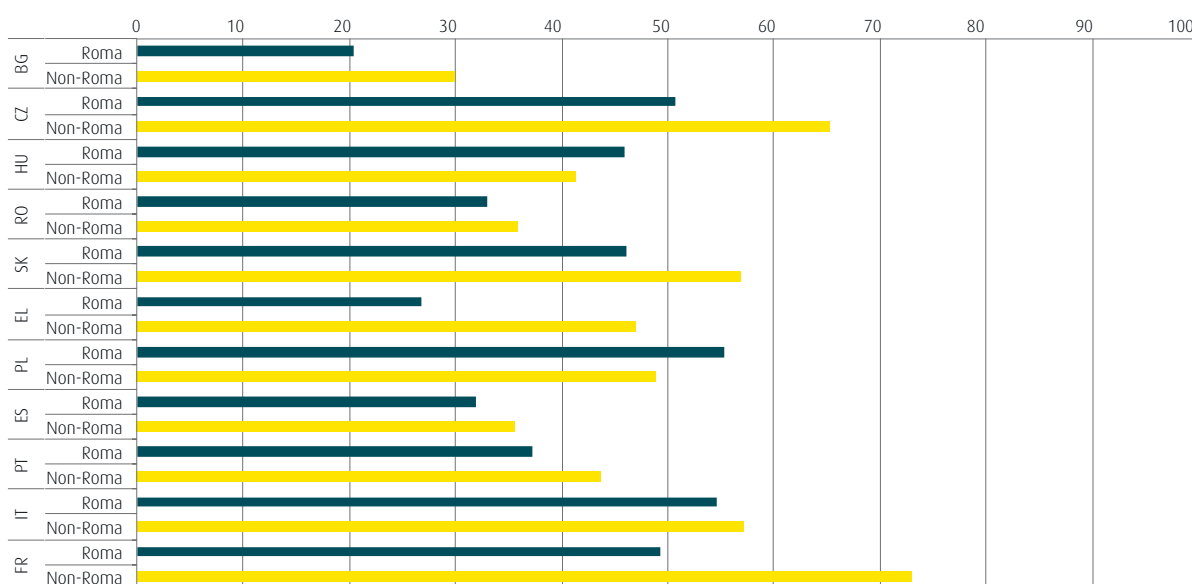
## Awareness of anti-discrimination legislation in employment

The respondents were asked if they knew of any law that forbids discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job. The results reveal important differences between EU Member States (see Figure 18). In general, a larger proportion of non-Roma is aware of such laws. Differences between Roma and non-Roma are highest in Greece, France and Bulgaria.

About half of the Roma respondents are aware of anti-discrimination legislation in Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, and France. The Member States showing the lowest awareness levels among Roma respondents are Bulgaria and Greece.

In all EU Member States, Roma men show greater awareness of anti-discrimination laws than Roma women, in particular in Italy and Poland.

Figure 18: Respondents aged 16 and above who know about a law forbidding discrimination against ethnic minority people when applying for a job (pooled data) (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

34 FRA (2009) 'The Roma', *Data in focus report*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, p. 12, [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU-MIDIS\\_ROMA\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/EU-MIDIS_ROMA_EN.pdf).

## How can the survey results be useful to policy makers?

The results present a grim picture of the situation of the Roma surveyed. The comparison with the non-Roma, who live in close proximity, show significant differences in their socio-economic situation; the situation of non-Roma respondents is nonetheless also often worrying. This evidence confirms the need identified in the European Commission Communication on an EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies for *“determined action, in active dialogue with the Roma, both at national and EU level”*.<sup>35</sup>

Policy makers can use this evidence as it points to some important considerations that should inform the further development, implementation and monitoring of national strategies and action plans for Roma integration:

- Is attention being paid to Roma children participation in early childhood education? Do they focus sufficiently on the transition from primary to secondary education? Do they pay attention to school completion rates of Roma at all education levels – particularly in regions and localities with a high concentration of Roma?
- When addressing Roma unemployment is attention paid to their education status and skills? Is training addressing deficits in that regard?
- Are those aspects of housing where the needs of Roma are more acute, such as availability of space and access to basic amenities (indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower/bath, electricity) taken into consideration?
- Is attention paid to the improvement of the health conditions of Roma and to ensuring equal access to medical insurance?
- Is poverty addressed comprehensively targeting Roma ‘explicitly, but not exclusively’ and taking into account the needs of both Roma and non-Roma?
- Is general attention paid to the need to combat discrimination and anti-gypsyism and to improve equal access to education, employment, housing and healthcare services?
- Is anti-discrimination, raising awareness on fundamental rights and redress mechanisms mainstreamed so as to provide an environment where people feel confident to report discriminatory treatment and fundamental rights abuses?

In order to reduce the gap between the situation of Roma and non-Roma, national strategies will need to be effectively implemented. In order to be able to monitor the efficiency of strategies and measure progress on the ground, strong monitoring tools should be developed,

based on: better targeting (such as taking into consideration the territorial approach), clear target setting, setting benchmarks and identifying gaps and drivers for change, as well as promising practice projects that feed in pragmatic results-oriented policies.

The FRA will repeat the survey twice at the mid-term point and at the end of the Europe 2020 process providing robust comparable data that will assist the EU institutions and EU Member States in measuring progress made. During this period, the FRA will work together with Member States and other key actors to develop monitoring methods which can provide a comparative analysis of the situation of Roma across the EU.

35 European Commission, COM(2011) 173 final, Brussels, p. 1.



## Methodology

### Defining and sampling Roma

The use of the term Roma in official EU documents follows generally the approach of the Council of Europe,<sup>36</sup> which uses the term to refer to “Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as “Gypsies”. The Council of Europe also notes that the term *gens du voyage* used in France is an administrative term which has been used since the 1970s to refer to both the Roma, Sinti/Manush and Gypsies/Gitans, and other non-Roma groups with a nomadic way of life. This term actually refers to French citizens, as opposed to the term Roma which at official level is improperly used to refer exclusively to the Roma immigrants from eastern Europe. In the context of the FRA and UNDP, World Bank/EC surveys, the term Roma is therefore used as an umbrella term within a policy context dealing primarily with issues of social exclusion and discrimination, and not with specific issues of cultural identity. However, this must not lead to the erroneous perception that all Roma live in conditions of social and territorial exclusion and marginalisation.

The difficulties in defining the ‘Roma’ affect the identification and sampling of respondents in surveys targeting this particular population group. To obtain representative population samples, surveys utilise census data and other official sources, such as population registers, when they are disaggregated by ethnic group. This type of background information concerning population characteristics, such as age structure, gender and geographical distribution, is not only used for mapping the localities where Roma live to build a sampling frame, but also to verify if the sample is representative for the target population in respect to these characteristics once the survey is completed.

However, even when such official data disaggregated by ethnic group are available, not everyone is willing to reveal his or her ethnic identity to state authorities. This means that minority ethnic groups may be underrepresented in censuses. One reason for this, particularly in the case of socially excluded minority groups, such as the Roma, is the centuries-long history of exclusion, prejudice, discrimination and persecution by state authorities which result in mistrust towards data collection activities, particularly those carried out by state authorities. In this context, identifying as “Roma” may carry unwanted negative connotations for an individual and the fear that this information might be used to harm her or him. Another reason for the underrepresentation of Roma in a census is the fluid nature of the term Roma itself, which transcends ethnic or national identities and can include

multiple cultural and socio-economic attributes. This can also influence the decision of a particular individual to identify as “Roma”. In addition, despite persisting stereotypes, sampling can be further complicated by the fact that not all Roma living in the EU live segregated from non-Roma or in conditions of extreme deprivation.

Nevertheless, the FRA and UNDP/World Bank/EC surveys, which provide the data for the indicators presented in this report, had to select a sample of Roma – and non-Roma living near by – representing, as much as possible, the diversity of these groups so that the results would adequately reflect their situation. Given the paucity of census data disaggregated by ethnic group in a number of EU Member States, the surveys used information from various sources to draw a population sample of the Roma and non-Roma communities. The sample had to be as representative as possible to yield robust data on the status of Roma and non-Roma living in close proximity, thus sharing similar socio-economic conditions in the 11 EU Member States. The samples were selected in areas where Roma live in sufficient concentration – above national average proportion – to allow random sampling at reasonable cost. Non-Roma respondents were selected on the basis of the proximity of their residence to Roma, which means that they share certain characteristics of the local environment. The results are therefore representative for the areas where the research was undertaken, while also serving as a proxy for Roma at risk of exclusion. In other words, the data do not claim to be representative of all Roma throughout the EU Member States surveyed; the surveys, however, do provide data that correspond to the priorities of the EU and its Member States concerning the Roma. These priorities are expressed in the policy target of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies as aiming to “*put an end to the exclusion of Roma*”. The results provide sufficiently robust and reliable data to set targets for Roma integration and to monitor future progress.

In turn, the results presented in this report about non-Roma respondents are not representative of the general population in an EU Member State. They are only representative of those living in the areas where the surveys were conducted. Therefore, the data presented here differ from statistical data about the general population.

<sup>36</sup> Council of Europe, Descriptive glossary of terms relating to Roma issues, version dated 16 November 2011, [www.coe.int/lportal/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=05511d8d-1dc9-4ce4-b36a-89fb37da5ff4&groupId=10227](http://www.coe.int/lportal/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=05511d8d-1dc9-4ce4-b36a-89fb37da5ff4&groupId=10227).

**Table 1: EU Member States and sample sizes**

Country	Roma		Non-Roma	
	Households	Household members	Households	Household members
BG	1,863	7,748	866	2,183
CZ	1,856	7,465	850	2,330
HU	1,853	8,068	854	2,165
RO	1,857	8,509	850	2,478
SK	1,856	8,870	850	2,788
EL	1,102	5,449	500	1,369
PL	670	2,558	505	1,397
ES	1,115	4,807	502	1,441
PT	1,102	4,502	501	1,453
IT	608	2,670	500	1,210
FR	714	2,377	500	1,210
FR_Mig*	329	1,240		
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,925</b>	<b>64,263</b>	<b>7,278</b>	<b>20,024</b>

Notes: Number of households and household members of the Roma and non-Roma sample by country – FRA and UNDP/World Bank/EC combined (shaded)

\*In France, apart from interviews with the gens du voyage, the FRA survey targeted explicitly Roma EU citizens, mostly from Romania, living in camps in and around Paris. The results from these interviews will be presented in a separate report at a later stage.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011

## Demographic profile of the samples

The **age distribution** of the samples surveyed shows marked differences between Roma and non-Roma: in all Member States the Roma population surveyed is generally younger and with fewer older persons – reflecting higher fertility rates but possibly also lower life expectancy at birth. The age structure may also be influenced by migration or movement to other areas.

The **country of birth**, compared with the current country of residence of a person is generally used as a migration background indicator. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Poland, almost all Roma and non-Roma included in the survey were born in their country of residence. In the Czech Republic, a higher number of Roma and non-Roma were not born in their country of residence, possibly due to the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993. In Greece, Spain, France and Portugal, almost all Roma surveyed were also born in the respective EU Member State, while the percentage of non-Roma born elsewhere was higher. A possible explanation is that in these Member States the areas where Roma live also attract persons with a migration background, because of the low cost of housing and/or because of experiences of discrimination when looking for accommodation in other areas. In Italy, about one out of three Roma living in a household covered

by the survey was born in a different country, and two out of five did not have Italian citizenship.

At least two out of three of the Roma households in the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Spain and Portugal were living in **urban areas**. Between two and three out of four of the Roma households in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia were living in **rural areas**. In Italy, half of the Roma households were situated in urban areas, the other half in encampments. In Greece, one out of three of the Roma households lived in encampments, while in France ‘gens du voyage’ were only interviewed at halting sites.

## Sampling methodology

The survey fieldwork was carried out by GALLUP Europe for the FRA and IPSOS Strategic Marketing for UNDP/World Bank/EC under the supervision of expert staff who participated in interviewer training sessions and observed the fieldwork. Both companies used the same sampling frame, which included all areas where Roma lived in higher concentration than the national average and reflected the rural/urban distribution of the Roma population in their selection. The primary sampling units were allocated in a way that ensured that the interviewers did not visit the same household. Households were selected through random route sampling. In addition, the FRA survey used, focused enumeration to reach Roma in more mixed areas that could not be reached through random route sampling with an equal chance to be selected. Up to 20 % of the respondents in each country were identified through this method.

Both surveys used a combination of external and self-identification for sampling Roma. The FRA selected randomly households from which one individual aged 16 years or more was chosen, also randomly, to reply to the questionnaire providing information on all members of the household, on the household as a whole, and on his/her individual situation and experiences. The UNDP/World Bank/EC survey used the same procedure of random route selection of households. The interviews were broken into three separate thematic components. Within each household the household head was primarily interviewed on the general status of the household and the profile of its members; the primary care taker was responding on the pre-school experiences of children below six years of age and the randomly selected person aged 16 and above responded in more detail on health status, as well as the “perceptions and values” module of the questionnaire.

In addition, non-Roma households living in the same areas as the Roma and sharing the same social and economic infrastructure were interviewed to allow for comparison of selected results. The results of the surveys are representative for the groups surveyed and for the areas included in the sampling frame. The data set is completely anonymous and no respondent can be identified.





## Questionnaire

The FRA and UNDP/World Bank/EC developed a common set of core questions within their questionnaires. The UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey used the same questionnaires in all countries for interviewing both Roma and non-Roma. The FRA Roma pilot survey used a shorter version of the questionnaire for the non-Roma households. In France, Roma EU citizens from Romania were asked additional questions about their experiences of moving to another EU Member State – these results will be presented in a separate report at a later stage.

## Pilot countries

In France, Italy, Portugal and Spain,<sup>37</sup> no large scale comparative quantitative survey on the socio-economic situation of the Roma has ever been conducted. In this regard, the FRA survey serves as a pilot for developing viable survey methods and instruments. In Portugal and Spain, sufficient data was available to construct the appropriate sampling frames. However, this proved a challenge in France and Italy. In France, a sampling frame based on halting sites was used for the *gens du voyage*. In Italy, given the paucity of relevant population data, a well-documented convenience sample was created showing that migrant and national Roma lived in the same locations. In Greece, those Roma that were interviewed in Thrace, who identified themselves as “Muslims”, were included in the Roma sample based on information by the local authorities and non-governmental organisations.

## Roma EU citizens from Romania living in and around Paris

In France, apart from interviews with the *gens du voyage*, the FRA survey targeted explicitly Roma EU citizens, mostly from Romania, living in camps in and around Paris; 329 of them were randomly selected and interviewed. The results from these interviews will be presented in a separate report at a later stage.

## Pooling data from the two surveys: benefits and limitations

The two surveys were administered in a coordinated manner following a similar approach with regard to sampling design, interviewer training and applying a common set of core questions. This is the first time such a comprehensive data collection exercise has been attempted through international inter-agency cooperation.

The FRA and UNDP/World Bank/EC Roma surveys applied sufficiently similar methodologies to allow data sets for a number of indicators to be pooled for the five EU Member States – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania – covered by both surveys in order to provide information from a larger sample. This pooling of data is an exercise breaking new ground raising a number of challenges and steps were taken to overcome issues of possible bias and distortion. A systematic quality assessment of the data showed that the results of both surveys point in the same direction, despite small variations in some specific questions and indicators. In some cases, where survey questions differ, the respective indicators presented draw from the FRA data set covering all 11 EU Member States – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. For certain aspects of the socio-economic situation, which were not part of the FRA survey questionnaire, but are nevertheless important for presenting key socio-economic aspects of the situation, the UNDP/World Bank/EC indicators and data are used for the five EU Member States covered by this survey.

Detailed information and description of the methodologies applied will be provided in the technical reports of the two surveys, which will be made publicly available in due course.

<sup>37</sup> The Fundación Secretariado Gitano coordinated in 2007 a survey on ‘Health and the Roma community’ covering Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. The report is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4309&langId=en>



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Survey results at a glance

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Roma – Europe’s largest minority of 10-12 million people – continue to experience discrimination and social exclusion; and they are not sufficiently aware of their rights guaranteed by EU law, such as the Racial Equality Directive. This report presents the first results of the FRA Roma pilot survey and the UNDP/World Bank/European Commission regional Roma survey carried out in 2011. The results are shocking in many respects: of those surveyed in this report, one in three is unemployed, 20 % are not covered by health insurance, and 90 % are living below national poverty lines. Although governments and societies have been aware of Roma exclusion and deprivation, the magnitude and the similarity of exclusion patterns across EU Member States is striking and leaves no excuse for delaying swift, effective action to improve the situation.

This report is only a first step in addressing the severe lack of data on the socio-economic situation of Roma in the EU and the fulfilment of their rights. The evidence shows that the nature of the challenges many Roma are facing in the EU requires policy responses which articulate development efforts within a rights-based approach. Such policy responses must tackle the socio-economic barriers that Roma face while also ensuring that their fundamental rights are respected.

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