

Civil Society Monitoring Reports on the Implementation of the Bulgarian National Roma Integration Strategy

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Main findings

- As in previous years, the period of 2016-2018 **does not mark significant advance** in the implementation of the NRIS.
- **Improvements** have been observed in:
 - - **the usage of EU funds for Roma inclusion**: especially ESF and partly ERDF funds, while the engagement of the EAFRD remains problematic) and
 - - **education**: especially in reducing early school leaving and increasing participation in different levels of education, although segregation remains a problem.
- **Deterioration** is obvious in the fields of **governance** (especially regarding the legitimacy of the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) and the consultative process with civil society), **housing** and **antigypsyism** (with a significant rise in anti-Roma rhetoric, publications and even actions).
- Serious challenges, however, remain in all fields.

Advance in education

- **The field of education marks the area of the most significant advance in NRIS implementation.** Coincidence of:
 - - existing know-how;
 - - active schools, municipalities, NGOs;
 - - public consensus about the importance of educational integration;
 - - political attention on ensuring full attendance in pre-school and primary school education which became a top-priority for the current government;
 - - the objective development of Roma community that increases the share of well-educated Roma

Controversies in education

- 1. A significant **advance regarding the enrolment of Roma in primary school** and reducing the dropout rate:
 - - The multi-institutional framework for full enrolment established in 2017 brings certain positive results;
 - - The new model of financing the school system provides better targeting of resources for rural areas schools;
 - - Since 2018 the state budget provides additional funds for work with students from vulnerable groups: for appointing school mediators, keeping motivated teachers, etc.
- 2. Nevertheless, significant **challenges remain in promoting ethnically- mixed, inclusive education and desegregation**;
- 3. **More measures are necessary to increase the number of Roma in pre-school education and secondary education**

Weaknesses: Administrative and consultative framework

- The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues and its Secretariat (which is NCP for the NRIS) do not function effectively and are out of legitimacy.
- No real coordination among state institutions and no real cooperation with the civil society: except ESIF Monitoring Committees
- In 2013 a huge number of Roma organisations proposed a new administrative and consultative framework for Roma integration. It includes establishing a structure with managing competences (a state agency or other structure) and forming a new Consultative Council with genuine participation by Roma NGOs.
- *Profound reform is needed*

Weaknesses: Housing and segregated Roma neighborhoods

- Housing is the field of less or even no advance regarding Roma integration. Segregated Roma neighborhoods often are linked with criminal conflicts that easily grow up in ethnic ones.
- - Limited know-how;
- - Lack of public support: it prevented the ERDF initiatives for social housing;
- - There are no significant political initiatives for improving the living conditions of Roma and leading politicians often abuse the problems around Roma ghettos.

Weaknesses: Housing and segregated Roma neighborhoods

- Legislative change in two directions should be adopted:
 - 1) legalization of buildings with a sustainable construction for residential purposes that are an owner's only housing, and differentiation of the rules for handling illegally-constructed buildings for residential and non-residential purposes; and
 - 2) incorporation of the international legal protection against forced demolitions of and/or evictions from a person's sole residence.
- In addition, restriction of the problem with illegal housing, improving the situation in the Roma neighborhoods and providing possibilities for accessible legal housing outside them is needed.

Conclusions

- Advance in NRIS is possible and in some fields exists. It is needed coincidence of know-how, funding, active / empowered stakeholders, public support, political will;
- Coincidence between mainstreaming and targeting is also crucial;
- At present Bulgarian NRIS contributes mainly for systematizing the existing know-how but not for the other elements;
- ESIF contributes for other elements but can not provide public support, political will and mainstreaming
- The new NRIS and new ESIF should target better the missing elements in every field as well as to contribute for inclusive mainstreaming

State of Roma integration

Fields	Know-how	ESIF	BG budget	Active SH	Public	Polit. will	Mainstr
EDU	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
HEALTH	+	-	/	+	+	-	-
EMPL	-	+	/	-	+	-	/
HOUSING	-	+	-	/	-	-	-
CULTURE	/	-	-	/	/	-	-

Thank you for your attention!

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- The report is available at:
- <https://cps.ceu.edu/roma-civil-monitor-reports>