

MARCH 2015
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AMALIPE
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EU FUNDS FOR ROMA HEALTH INTEGRATION SPAIN

with the financial
support of



POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

In previous programming periods, EU Structural Funds have not directly contributed to Roma health integration in Spain, though an indirect impact may be assumed. However, several good initiatives promoted Roma health integration during previous financing periods and it is worth highlighting that all of them would have great potential to receive EU funding in the new financial programming period (2014-2020). The new European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) provide an enormous potential for applying these funds for Roma health integration in Spain

and hence, increasing their impact. These opportunities are strengthened by the fact that Spain already has an adequate policy framework that allows for the promotion of Roma health integration – the Strategy for Promoting Health and Prevention in the National Health System and the National Roma Integration Strategy form a solid policy basis. Furthermore, there are already existing experiences that have demonstrated positive results – these experiences can be found at national, regional and local level. Moreover, the Spanish Partnership Agreement provides several opportunities for investing in Roma health integration.

KEY CHALLENGES

In view of these settings, the **key challenge** for achieving a real impact on Roma health integration through EU-funds in Spain are now **the Operational Programmes (OPs)**. It would therefore be of utmost importance that:

1. National Roma Contact Points should engage more actively with key actors that are promoting or have the potential to promote Roma health integration:
 - 1.1. Key actors are e.g. the departments of health at national level and regional level.
 - 1.2. They could support the exchange and mutual learning between the different Spanish Regions on how ESIF could promote Roma health inclusion, e.g. through the Working Group with the Regions on Roma Health (see chapter 2.1.2.)
2. Programme documents of Regional OPs included activities related to Roma health integration;
 - 2.1. National Roma Contact Points could revise the ESIF OPs and propose specific activities that promote Roma health inclusion, before the programmes are adopted.
 - 2.2. The European Commission (i.e. Desk Officers) should verify whether the proposed activities under Thematic Objective 9 of the Spanish OPs tackle health inequalities experienced by Roma – either through mainstream projects or through targeted actions.

KEY CHALLENGES

3. Operational Programmes used outcome and process indicators to demonstrate investments in Roma health integration;

3.1. OPs that develop activities under Investment Priority 9.2 should provide information on the impact of investment on health equity and Roma health integration (outcome indicators).

3.2. OP that focus on Investment Priority 9.4 should demonstrate (a) how access to services is facilitated to socially excluded people, (b) measures undertaken to guarantee that Roma enjoy health services equally and (c) that specific actions are undertaken in order to remove barriers to access services and to guarantee equal opportunities (process indicators).

4. The European Commission (EC) monitored the implementation of activities related to Roma health integration funded by ESIF.

4.1. In the monitoring committees, the EC could request specific information on how regional and national OPs implementing activities under Investment Priorities 9.2 and 9.4 address Roma health inequalities and promote Roma health integration.

4.2. Annual Reports could report on specific actions and activities that focus on Roma health integration.

4.3. The Mid-Term Review could focus on Roma health integration as a thematic issue.

Concrete findings and recommendations

- Existing experiences and initiatives to that promote Roma health integration in Spain have demonstrated to have effective results;
- Putting in place initiatives that foster and promote a better coordination of initiatives related to health and Roma between the national, regional and local level improves the quality of the programmes and their effectiveness;
- It is important to foresee specific intervention measures (field actions) combined with support measures (e.g. researchers, guides, networks etc.);
- Framing the actions aimed at promoting health amongst Roma within the general health policies. This entails taking a target and mainstream approach that ensure that the measures undertaken are not disconnected from the general services;
- One of the challenges in the next programming period 2014-2020 is to scale up the current experiences and initiatives with the support of ESIF;
- The Spanish Partnership Agreement provides an adequate framework for promoting Roma health integration;
- The ESF Operational Programmes under Thematic Objective 9 “social inclusion” should developed health activities at two levels (national and regional) by scaling up exiting interventions which are perfectly eligible under the framework of the following investment priorities: “Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma” and “Access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest”.