

**Guidelines for  
National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF)  
for the period 2020-2030  
in the Western Balkans and Turkey**

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# 1. Overview of the process of development of National Roma Strategic Frameworks

## 1.1 Principles of the development of NRSF

Since 2005 many governments in Europe, including gradually the governments of Western Balkans and Turkey, have recognized the socio-economic gap between Roma<sup>1</sup> and the rest of the society, and hence adopt public policies to tackle this challenge. The public policies have different names across the region and in time. Hereby the term National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF) is used in accordance with the European Union's terminology, which previously used the term National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS).

A *National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF)* deals with the challenges that Roma face in social inclusion and in exercising human rights. The purpose of *NRSF* is to reduce, with a view to eliminate the socio-economic gap between Roma and the rest of the society, primarily by reducing poverty, combating discrimination and antigipsysm and promoting equality, and ensuring full participation of Roma in the society, including in the NRSF as a public policy.

According to the *EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020 – 2030*,<sup>2</sup> (EU Roma Framework) development of NRSF as national policies for Roma inclusion should be based on the following principles:

- *Strengthen focus on equality to complement the inclusion approach:* addressing the four policy areas (**education, employment, healthcare and housing**) through an **integrated approach** remains key for Roma inclusion, but there is also a need for a clear focus on equality. In particular, the **fight against discrimination and antigipsysm** should be a **key (stand-alone) objective and cross-cutting priority in each policy area**, complementing the inclusion approach. This joint focus should ensure that Roma have effective access to economic and social justice and equal opportunities ;
- *Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust:* Meaningful Roma participation must be ensured in all stages of policy-making. Roma political, economic and cultural engagement should be promoted with a sense of belonging as full members of society. Empowerment and capacity-building of Roma, civil society and public authorities must be ensured, as well as building cooperation and trust between stakeholders and between Roma and non-Roma communities;
- *Reflect diversity among Roma:* a Strategic framework should cover all Roma on the territory and reflect the needs of diverse groups through an intersectional approach. They should bear in mind how different aspects of identity can combine to exacerbate discrimination. They should set quantitative and/or qualitative targets to ensure that diversity in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation, mobility and other personal characteristics is reflected;
- *Combine mainstreaming and explicit, but not exclusive Roma targeting:* National Roma strategic frameworks should combine mainstreaming and explicit but not exclusive targeting, ensuring that mainstream services are inclusive and providing additional targeted support to promote effective equal access for Roma to rights and services. They should serve as planning instruments for using national and EU funds for Roma-targeted action and inclusive mainstream reform;

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<sup>1</sup> The umbrella-term 'Roma' encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.). EU policy documents and discussions commonly employ this terminology, thus the Regional Cooperation Council's Roma Integration also employs the same terminology.

<sup>2</sup> The full package of the EU policy on Roma inclusion can be found at the following link:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_en)

- *Improve target-setting, data collection, monitoring and reporting:* Working towards achievement quantitative and/or qualitative national targets can trigger real progress towards Roma equality, inclusion and participation. Data should be collected regularly to feed into reporting and monitoring, improve transparency and accountability, and promote policy transfer and learning.

In addition to tackling antigypsyism, fighting multigenerational poverty, promoting Roma participation, reflecting diversity, combining mainstream and targeted approach, and improving monitoring and reporting, according to the EU guidelines for planning NRSFs,<sup>3</sup> they should also strive to:

- Upscale measures to prevent/mitigate the disproportionate impact of crisis on Roma (including pandemic, flooding, earthquakes, etc.);
- Ensure digital inclusion;
- Deliver environmental justice and include Roma in the green agenda<sup>4</sup>;
- Promote (awareness of) Roma arts, history and culture;
- Promote social innovation and policy experimentation.

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), with a Working Group consisted of relevant representatives from the governments of the Member States and the FRA observing members<sup>5</sup> from the enlargement region, has developed a Portfolio of Indicators<sup>6</sup> for monitoring the impact of the Roma inclusion policies that is part of the EU Roma Framework package, and should be used by the Western Balkans and Turkey governments. The Roma Survey implemented by the Fundamental Rights Agency should also inform the monitoring system to be established by each government.

It should be noted that throughout the Western Balkans, the issue of civil registration is also singled out as a priority, since it is a precondition for exercising other socio-economic rights.

In addition to the guiding principles of the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020 – 2030, the Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration Within the EU Enlargement Process<sup>7</sup> (Poznan Declaration) is also a commitment in the region. This Declaration establishes common targets that the Prime Ministers in the region pledge to achieve as a minimum by the time the respective economies join the EU. These targets will be highlighted below within the guidelines for the objectives. The Declaration also obliges the governments to:

- Establish robust monitoring mechanism, including collecting statistical data;
- Strengthen the coordination mechanism and the role of the National Roma Contact Points;
- Implement Roma responsive budgeting;<sup>8</sup> and
- Ensure participation of local governments and Roma communities.

The Ministers from the Western Balkans governing the Roma inclusion portfolio, at a follow up ministerial meeting on the Poznan Declaration, agreed to establish proper monitoring and reporting

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<sup>3</sup> Annex 1 to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/guidelines\\_for\\_planning\\_and\\_implementing\\_national\\_roma\\_strategic\\_frameworks\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/guidelines_for_planning_and_implementing_national_roma_strategic_frameworks_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> More information on the green agenda for the Western Balkans can be found at: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/science-update/eu-support-decarbonising-western-balkans> and <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0223>

<sup>5</sup> Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia are currently FRA's observing members.

<sup>6</sup> The document is available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/portfolio\\_of\\_indicators\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/portfolio_of_indicators_en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> The Poznan Declaration is available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/docs/105/the-poznan-declaration>

<sup>8</sup> The regionally adopted Guidelines for Roma Responsive Budgeting are available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/docs/96/guidelines-for-roma-responsive-budgeting>

mechanism on the progress on Roma integration, including the targets set with the Poznan Declaration, using as an example the pilot project led by the Government of North Macedonia, who entrusted the national statistical office with the design and regular implementation of a national Roma Survey. The design of the national survey is consistent with the Roma Survey implemented by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), as entrusted by the European Union. Similar processes to establish robust monitoring systems, where possible benefitting from the expertise and input of the FRA, should follow in all the economies of the region. The Ministers also agreed to further explore approaches in order to systematise the Roma responsive budgeting principles in the legislation and practices at central and local level.

It should also be stressed here that the Roma inclusion issue in the Western Balkans is closely linked with the EU integration process and represents one of the priority areas within the political criteria for accession, and particularly the respect for human and minority rights. As such, this issue is reflected in the annual monitoring report on the preparedness for EU integration, the subcommittees' meetings, the negotiations related action plans on various chapters, particularly rule of law, fundamental rights, employment, etc. The governments in the region, in cooperation with the EU are organising so called Roma Seminars every second year, whereby Operational Conclusions listing the governments' commitments on Roma integration for the next two years are adopted. The EU integration aspect of the Roma inclusion must, therefore also be taken into account.

The NRSFs must link with the national mainstream strategies and action plans in relevant areas, particularly in equality/non-discrimination, poverty reduction, civil society development and cooperation, education, employment, housing, health and civil registration, as well as any other relevant policies, such as, for instance, the Economic Reform Programme, Employment and Social Reform Programme, policies regarding housing legalisation, dealing with undeclared work, education reform, and many others. The NRSF should make use of the measures undertaken within these policies to further the objectives regarding Roma inclusion, and thus should ensure that these mainstream policies include relevant targets regarding Roma inclusion. The Roma Responsive Budgeting Guidelines<sup>9</sup> may be used to ensure budgetary, but also achievement-based compliance among the mainstream and the Roma inclusion policies.

Finally, the NRSFs must be in line with the positive national regulations on strategies and plans. In the economies of the Western Balkans and Turkey there are different level of regulations and provisions regarding strategic planning. The common denominator for the strategic planning in all the economies must be aligned with the Government's priorities and the EU integration priorities. In Albania, there is an Integrated Planning System,<sup>10</sup> and a governmental decision<sup>11</sup> regarding this planning system, listing the information that should be contained in the strategic documents, which is in line with these guidelines. Strategic planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina is regulated at the level of mid-term planning of the Council of Ministers.<sup>12</sup> Inclusion of Roma should be one of the priorities in the mid-term plans of the Council of Ministers and further developed in a strategic framework as a public policy, using these guidelines. In Kosovo\* there is a governmental decision<sup>13</sup> on planning and drafting strategic documents

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<sup>9</sup> The guidelines is available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/docs/96/guidelines-for-roma-responsive-budgeting>

<sup>10</sup> Website: <http://ips.gov.al/en/>

<sup>11</sup> Decision No. 290, of 11.04.2020 Establishing the Basic Data of the Institutional Information and Planning System (SIPI/IPSIS), available at:

<http://planifikimi.gov.al/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=5035&token=28f921b937eb6b6ce4d0db65a2fa30f08c79e190>

<sup>12</sup> More information, including decision, guidelines and methodology for mid-term planning, available at:

[http://www.mft.gov.ba/bos/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=836&Itemid=100041](http://www.mft.gov.ba/bos/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=836&Itemid=100041)

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>13</sup> Available at: <https://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/UDH%C3%8BZIMI-ADMINISTRATIV-QRK-NR.-07-2018-P%C3%8BR-PLANIFIKIMIN-DHE-HARTIMIN-E-DOKUMENTEVE-STRATEGJIKE-DHE-PLANEVE-T%C3%8B-VEPRIMIT-28-03-2018.pdf>

and action plans, accompanied by a Manual<sup>14</sup> for planning, developing and monitoring strategic documents and their action plans. The structure and content for a strategic document is given in the Annex 1 of the decision, and it is overlapping with the guidelines proposed here, with a note that the strategic framework should have an executive summary, and the introduction should also contain the methodology of the strategy. Montenegro has a Regulation on the Way and Procedure of Drafting, Harmonising and Implementing Strategic Documents.<sup>15</sup> These guidelines are in line with this Regulation. Based on the Regulation a Methodology on Strategic Documents<sup>16</sup> has been developed, and it provides more detail on the strategic planning, format, structure and content, which is also in line with the guidelines provided in this document. In the Republic of North Macedonia there is a document Guidelines for Strategic Planning,<sup>17</sup> which is completely in line with this guidelines. Serbia has a Law on the Planning System,<sup>18</sup> regulating a range of planning documents, including strategies, and a Regulation on the methodology of public policy management,<sup>19</sup> containing details on the process and content of the planning documents. These regulations contain more extensive requirements for the planning than described in these guidelines. The actual strategic planning process should involve all the elements of the regulations, but the final document should strive to be short and focused as described in these guidelines. Additional information can be annexed to the strategy, or if the strategy must be long and comprehensive, there should be a brief document communicating the key content of the strategy, particularly the goals, indicators, targets and baseline data as minimum. In Turkey, the Public Financial Management and Control Law (No. 5018)<sup>20</sup> proscribes the necessity of defining strategic plans and briefly describes their content, in line with the guidelines formulated with this document.

## 1.2 Common objectives for the NRSF

In the *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030*, the European Commission sets **seven objectives** at the EU level for the period up to 2030. The same objectives are relevant for the Western Balkans and Turkey, with an additional objective on civil registration. The **targets** set at the EU level **should be adjusted for each economy** to reflect the national context and the **targets set by the Poznan Declaration as a minimum**. The baseline data, similarly to the listed targets in each objective below refer to the EU level, while the baseline data for the Western Balkans and Turkey should be established, preferably from the 2017 Regional Roma Survey and any relevant official statistics.

*Three of these objectives are horizontal*, in the areas of **equality, inclusion and participation**. *The other four are sectoral objectives* in the areas of **education, employment, housing and health**, and in the case of the Western Balkans and Turkey the fifth area of **civil registration**.

*NRSFs* should provide support for decision making, including decisions related to each of the strategic sectors/areas for Roma integration, allocation of funds and creation of framework that will enable improvement of the situation of Roma population.

### *Horizontal objectives*

#### **1. Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination**

The objectives that the EU Roma Framework sets are the following:

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<sup>14</sup> Available at: <https://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Manual-for-Planning-Developing-and-Monitoring-Strategic-Documents-and-their-Action-Plans...pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Available at: <https://mju.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rId=329420&rType=2>

<sup>16</sup> Available at: <http://www.gsv.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rId=357599&rType=2>

<sup>17</sup> Available at: [https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u10/Priracnik\\_za\\_stratesko\\_planiranje.pdf](https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/u10/Priracnik_za_stratesko_planiranje.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Available at: <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Law-on-Planning-System.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Available at: <https://rsjp.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/Regulation-on-the-methodology-of-public-policy-management-with-Annex.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Available at: <https://ms.hmb.gov.tr/uploads/2019/01/Public-Financial-Management-and-Control-Law-No.-5018.pdf>

- Cut the proportion of Roma with discrimination experience by at least half by 2030, to less than 13% of Roma experiencing discrimination (latest data on discrimination experience of Roma: 26% (past 12 months), 41% (past 5 years))
- Decrease the proportion of general population who feel uncomfortable having Roma neighbours by at least a third by 2030, to less than 30% of the persons feeling uncomfortable having Roma neighbours (latest data on proportion of general population who feel uncomfortable having Roma neighbours: 46%)

NRSFs should include a **stand-alone focus on the fight against antigypsyism**, in order to:

- recognise antigypsyism and the responsibility to act against it;
- raise awareness of the mutual benefits of diversity and inclusion; construct positive narratives; foster role models; support inter-community encounters and inter-cultural learning to fight stereotypes and misinformation about Roma in education, the media, the arts, culture and history;
- fight discrimination as a manifestation of antigypsyism;
- combat hate speech and hate crime as manifestations of antigypsyism and encourage the reporting of bias-motivated crime, harassment and violence;
- promote access to justice for victims of antigypsyism and discrimination;
- raise awareness among Roma of their rights; and
- dismantle and prevent systemic/institutional/structural discrimination experienced by Roma.

NRSFs should stipulate the prevention of and fight against **antigypsyism as a cross-cutting (horizontal) priority in all sectoral policy areas**. Proposed priorities for antigypsyism and discrimination in each sectoral goal are:

**Education:** fight segregation, bullying and harassment; sensitise school staff;

**Employment:** fight discrimination in (access to) employment and sensitise employers;

**Healthcare:** fight discrimination in access to good-quality healthcare; eliminate parallel, segregated services; prevent human rights violations (e.g. forced abortion and forced sterilisation); sensitise healthcare workers;

**Housing:** fight spatial segregation; prevent forced evictions, ensure alternative housing when eviction is justified and inevitable; sensitise authorities.

In this area, NRSF should also envisage regular collection of data related to equality (data on experiences of discrimination; data from equality bodies on incidents of discrimination).

In the area of antidiscrimination the Poznan Declaration, rather than setting a target, calls the governments to strengthen their structures to protect against discrimination and establish a specific sub-division for non-discrimination of Roma within the formal non-discrimination bodies to process complaints by Roma, provide legal support to alleged victims and identify discrimination schemes, including institutional and hidden discrimination.

## **2. Reduce poverty and social exclusion to close the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population**

The objectives that the EU Roma Framework sets are the following:

- Cut poverty gap between Roma and general population by at least half by 2030 (latest data on 'at risk of poverty' rate: Roma 80%; general population 16.8% (gap 63.2 pps))

- Cut poverty gap between Roma children and other children by at least half by 2030 (latest data on ‘at risk of poverty’ rate: Roma children: 85%; children in general: 19.6% (gap: 65.4 pps))

In the area of poverty reduction and social exclusion, *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030* provides numerous priorities that could be included in sectoral goals as horizontal issues.

- *mobilise relevant expertise at all levels of governance to formulate child protection measures* - allocate adequate resources to early childhood education and care (e.g. scholarships, mentorships, after-school support), nutrition, personal development and work with families; encourage participation in early childhood education and care.
- *protect women, children and youth through strategies to fight crimes such as trafficking, including all forms of exploitation* - (sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging and the exploitation of criminal activities for forced and exploitative sham marriages), and enable their access to assistance, support and protection;
- *improve access to community - and family - based services for people with disabilities and children deprived of parental care* - strengthen measures to prevent institutionalisation through support for families in precarious situations and people with disabilities;
- *ensure the long-term sustainability of support measures for children and their families*, so as to improve conditions for the next generation;
- *base the planning of financial support and investment on accurate analysis of the root causes of marginalisation (socio-economic exclusion and discrimination)* - collect more granular evidence through systematic evaluations and analysis of the types of national, regional and local intervention that (do not) work and why, to deepen understanding of the obstacles to inclusion; involve all stakeholders (local authorities, civil society, Roma/non-Roma stakeholders with possibly diverging views) in analytical work;
- *analyse the use of EU funds in cooperation with managing authorities* – if monitoring reports find that funds have not been used effectively to achieve inclusion goals, engage with local/managing authorities and stakeholders to understand why and address any obstacles that are identified;
- *establish close links between NRCPs and the authorities responsible for monitoring EU funds* - ensure that the use of EU funds for Roma creates real opportunities for participation and has the intended day-to-day impact for them, rather than benefiting other interests.

### **3. Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust**

The objectives that the EU Roma Framework sets are the following:

- Capacitate and engage at least 90 NGOs in EU-wide coordinated Roma civil society monitoring (NGOs currently involved in Roma Civil Monitoring project: 85)
- Ensure participation of Roma NGOs as full members in national monitoring committees for all programmes addressing needs of Roma communities
- Double the proportion of Roma who file a report when they experience discrimination by 2030 to at least 30% of Roma victims reporting discrimination (latest data on proportion who reported last incident of discrimination they experienced (in any area) in last 5 years: 16%)
- Encourage participation of Roma in political life at local, regional, national and EU levels to ensure they register as voters, vote, run as candidates

In the area of participation, *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030* provides the following list of potential priorities:

- *create opportunities for Roma communities’ empowerment at the local level to enable community ownership and action aimed explicitly at bringing about social and political change* - mobilising



communities should be seen as a deliberate inclusive and participatory process involving Roma people, local authorities and organisations;

- *ensure that Roma are represented in all their diversity (including nationals and non-nationals, marginalised and integrated, women, children and young people) in policy and consultation processes;*
- *improve local action by engaging more Roma professionals to act as mediators and help overcome the persistent lack of trust between Roma and majority communities;*
- *promote civil society cooperation between Roma-focused and mainstream organisations - especially those targeting children's, young people's and women's rights;*
- *use EU and other funds to provide regular capacity-building support;*
- *address the gender dimension in all areas, especially education, employment, healthcare, child support and fighting (multiple) discrimination, including (domestic) violence and exploitation - promote participation and ensure that measures are gender-responsive;*
- *support Roma women's access to justice to prevent/overcome domestic violence and other human rights violations;*
- *engage in transnational cooperation to tackle the challenges and opportunities arising from transnational mobility of Roma more effectively, ensuring access to education, employment, housing, healthcare and other social services;*
- *end statelessness among Roma by ensuring universal birth registration and access to identity documents, formal statelessness determination procedures and universal access to services.*
- *spell out how the specific targeted measures (safeguards) address the barriers that prevent Roma from accessing and benefiting from mainstream policies, and how public policies are made more inclusive of Roma;*
- *promote access to rights and mainstream services for Roma with additional targeted support, but without creating permanent parallel structures;*
- *target intervention territorially to ensure that it takes account of local conditions; combine territorial and social group targeting in broad interventions (e.g. to tackle extreme poverty) and ensure that they reach the Roma population.*

While the Western Balkans governments do not set a target in the area of participation of Roma with the Poznan Declaration, they commit to establish formal channels and mechanisms for joint involvement of the local governments and the Roma communities in the formulation of policy, decision making, implementation and monitoring of the efforts undertaken to achieve the objectives of the Declaration. It also obliges the governments to strengthen and support the National Roma Contact Points as a comprehensive mechanism for coordination and implementation of the NRSF and for ensuring synergies among line ministries responsible for Roma integration and other stakeholders, including, in particular, Roma.

#### **4. Sectoral objectives**

##### **4.1. Education**

The EU Roma Framework proposes increasing effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education by:

- Cut gap in participation in early childhood education and care by at least half by 2030, to at least 70% of Roma children participating in pre-school early childhood education and care participation (3+) (latest data on participation rate: Roma 42%; general population 92.2% (gap 50.2 pps))
- Reduce gap in upper secondary completion by at least one third by 2030, so the majority of Roma youth complete at least upper secondary education (latest data on completed upper secondary or above: Roma 28%; general population 83.5% (gap 55.5 pps))

- Work towards eliminating segregation by cutting at least in half the proportion of Roma children attending segregated primary schools by 2030, so less than one in five Roma child attend schools where most or all children are Roma (latest data on Roma children attending schools where most or all children are Roma: 44%)

The Poznan Declaration sets the following targets that has to be incorporated as a minimum in the NRSFs in the region:

- Increase the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in primary education to (at least) 90 per cent and  
Increase the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in secondary education to (at least) 50 per cent;

#### 4.2. *Employment*

The EU Roma Framework proposes increasing effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment by:

- Cut employment gap by at least half by 2030, so at least 60% of Roma are in paid work (latest data on rate in paid employment: Roma 43%; general population 73.1% (gap 30.1 pps))
- Cut gender employment gap for Roma by at least half by 2030, so at least 45% of Roma women are in paid work (latest data on gender employment gap - Roma: 27pps (women: 29%, men: 56%); general population gap: 11.7pps (women: 67.2%, men: 78.9%))
- Cut gap in youth NEET rate by at least half by 2030, so that less than one in three Roma youth is not in education, employment or training (latest data on NEET rate (16-24 years): Roma 62%; general population 10.1% (gap 51.9 pps))

The Poznan Declaration sets the following targets that have to be incorporated as a minimum in the NRSFs in the region:

- Increase the employment rate of Roma in the public sector to the rate proportional of the participation of Roma in the overall population; and
- Increase the employment rate among Roma to at least 25 per cent.

Particularly important in the area of employment in the Western Balkans and Turkey is the transformation of the undeclared work among Roma, which is the most efficient way to increase the employment rate.

#### 4.3. *Health*

The EU Roma Framework proposes improving Roma health and increase effective equal access to quality healthcare and social care by:

- Cut life expectancy gap by at least half by 2030, so that Roma women and men have 5 years longer life expectancy gap at birth (latest data on the gap of the life expectancy at birth (general population vs Roma): Roma women 10.4 years; Roma men 10.2 years)

Additional indicators in this area are also considered, such as material and social deprivation, access to health and social services.

The Poznan Declaration sets the following targets that has to be incorporated as a minimum in the NRSFs in the region:

- Ensure universal health insurance coverage among Roma of at least 95 per cent or to the rate equal to the rest of the population.

#### 4.4. *Housing*

The EU Roma Framework proposes increasing effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services by:

- Reduce gap in housing deprivation by at least one third by 2030, so the majority of Roma do not face housing deprivation (latest data on housing deprivation: Roma 61%; general population 17.9% (gap: 43.1 pps))
- Cut gap in overcrowding by at least half by 2030, so the majority of Roma no longer live in overcrowded households (latest data on overcrowding: Roma 78%; general population 17.1% (gap 60.9 pps))
- Ensure that at least 95% of Roma have access to tap water in dwelling (latest data on access to tap water: Roma 70%, general population: 97.7%)

Housing segregation is also an area that should be looked at with the NRSFs.

The Poznan Declaration sets the following targets that has to be incorporated as a minimum in the NRSFs in the region:

- Wherever possible, legalize all informal settlements where Roma live; or
- Provide permanent, decent, affordable and desegregated housing for Roma currently living in informal settlements that cannot be legalized for justified reasons.

In the area of housing the legalisation is particularly important in the region. Data on legalisation status should be collected using the regional methodology.<sup>21</sup> The relevant ministers from the region agreed on completing the collection of data on the housing situation on the whole territory of their jurisdiction, using the regional methodology, by the end of 2021.

#### 4.5. Civil registration

While the EU Roma Framework does not set a specific objective in the area of civil registration for the EU Member States, this area is relevant for the Western Balkans and Turkey, as significant number of Roma are still at risk or are *de facto* stateless. The Poznan Declaration calls on the governments to ensure civil registration to every Roma living on their territory, and the governments have made pledges within the UNHCR to effectively eliminate statelessness by 2024. The relevant Ministers governing the Roma inclusion portfolio agreed to work on Roadmaps towards Ending Statelessness of Roma that have already been drafted with a view to adopt this document beginning of 2021 and start implementing, so that the target for 2024 is achieved.

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<sup>21</sup> The methodology is available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/docs/126/regional-methodology-on-mapping-of-roma-housing>.

## 2. Main stages in the process of development of NRSFs

The development of NRSFs is a process which involves deep research and impartial analysis of existing data, based on which main problems and topics for the Strategy should be identified, communicated with all the stakeholders, refined and finalized.

The process of development of NRSF should answer four main questions and have following stages:

- ***Where are we now?***

An analysis of the current situation regarding the state of Roma population, in general and per strategic area (nondiscrimination/antigypsyism, poverty reduction, participation, education, employment, healthcare and housing). Analysis should start with broad focus, collecting general data and information regarding the state of Roma, and in the later stage of the process focus on the most urgent and priority issues, researching them in more detail.

**Deliverable of Stage 1: *Analysis of the existing situation with main problems***

- ***Where do we want to be?***

This stage relates to the definition of strategic goal(s) of the NRSF for the period to which it is developed (most often 10 years). Goals should be broad enough to cover main problems and issues Roma population face, but also should be realistic in relation to the given period for which the Strategy is adopted, as well as existing financial, institutional and other resources. Strategic goals should also be adjusted to the goals from already existing sectoral strategies, and in line with relevant national laws and regulations and international documents.

**Deliverable of Stage 2: *Main Strategic Goal and Sectoral (Specific) Goals***

- ***How to reach the goals?***

The result of this stage should be an Action Plan, which should provide exact measures and activities necessary to achieve defined strategic and specific goals, together with precise timeframe, resources necessary for each activity and sources of provision of those resources. It is of key importance that the Action Plan is agreed upon by all the stakeholders and decision makers, and that it offers the best and most suitable way to achieve goals. The Action Plan can be developed for the whole period of the NRSF, or for shorter period, which is more usual procedure (e.g. for the first two years of implementation of NRSF), and developed or revised again in later stage. Shorter period of Action Plan enables that activities and resources are planned more precisely, in accordance to the changing context and circumstances. The Action Plan is necessary supporting document to the Strategy, but is not integral part of the Strategy.

**Deliverable of Stage 3: *Action Plan***

- ***How do we know we are on the right way?***

Monitoring and reporting of the Action Plan progress is vital in ensuring that the process of improvement of Roma situation is coordinated and coherent. It is therefore important to determine how the monitoring will be done. Monitoring usually focus on the first year or two, and includes only those institutions and actors that implement particular activities from the Action Plan. Although it may include statistics on beneficiaries, reporting on activities is still process monitoring, and needs to be extended to impact monitoring, which would gather general statistical data on indicators such as employment/unemployment rates, rate of legal/illegal housing, rate of school completion at different levels and coverage with health insurance, as a minimum. Additionally, the indicators related to the Poznan Declaration targets and the EU Roma Framework should be monitored. It is recommended that impact monitoring is done each 2-3 years by the official statistical institution in the economy. Having monitoring and evaluation

mechanisms in place, as well as regular reporting, ensures that the Action Plan is realistic and implementable in the given time frame and with available resources.

**Deliverable of Stage 4: *Monitoring and Reporting Instruments***

**2.1 Timeframe**

The process of development of NRSF should take into account national decision-making procedures, especially budget planning timeframe. It may also be necessary to take into consideration the implementation of other plans and strategies that can influence NRSF.

These Guidelines focus only on the first two stages, analysis of existing situation and definition of strategic goals. Action Plan and development of monitoring instruments should follow these stages as they must be based on an adopted NRSF.

Approximate duration of the development of NRSF is 2 months:

Analysis of the existing situation	4 to 6 weeks
Definition of main strategic goals	2 to 4 weeks

### **3. Main stakeholders in the process of development of NRSF**

Target groups and other stakeholders who are most affected by the change and its elements are identified, as well as the distribution of positive and negative effects between the target groups and other stakeholders. Stakeholders that should be included while creating the NRSF are the Government and relevant Ministries, International and Civil society organizations, as well as representatives of Roma national minority.

#### **3.1 Government and relevant Ministries**

Ministries in charge for specific areas of Roma inclusion will be the key stakeholders in the process of development of NRSF, such as:

- Ministry in charge of education;
- Ministry in charge of health;
- Ministry in charge of labour and employment;
- Ministry in charge of construction, urban planning, infrastructure and housing;
- Ministry in charge of social affairs
- Ministry in charge of civil registration;
- Ministry in charge of justice / rule of law

Besides these crucial institutions, other relevant Ministries and Government agencies, organizations and bodies should be involved, including:

- Ministry in charge of local government;
- Ministry in charge of finances (budget);
- Ministry in charge of economy;
- Ministry/institution in charge of EU integration / IPA funding;
- Ministry in charge of environment;
- Equality bodies and other institutions responsible for non-discrimination / antigypsyism;
- Institutions responsible for gender equality and child protection;
- Institutions responsible for poverty reduction;
- Central level institutions of local governments (such as association);
- Institutions in charge for other issues relevant for the context in the specific economy (such as culture, environment, etc.)
- Central statistical agency.

#### **3.2 International Organizations**

Various international organizations could be interested to participate in the process of formulation of NRSF, especially those that work on specific issues related to Roma integration. Possible partner organizations are:

- Regional Cooperation Council;
- European Union institutions;
- Council of Europe;

- OSCE;
- Different UN agencies (UNDP, UNOPS, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, etc.).

### **3.3 Other possible stakeholders**

Additional stakeholders should primarily be representatives of the Roma population, such as civil society organisations of Roma and official bodies/representatives of Roma (in specific councils, in the Parliament or other relevant representatives). Civil Society Organizations that work on Roma integration issues, such as pro-Roma and mainstream women and human rights organisations, should be invited to participate and provide insights and suggestions, which include relevant mainstream civil society organisations besides those of Roma. Particularly, the Roma Education Fund, the European Institute for Roma Arts and Culture and the national Open Society Foundation should be involved.

### **3.4 Organizational framework for the development of NRSF**

The Government should decide on developing or revising the NRSF and establish a working group to work on the development of the NRSF. The working group may be an existing body dealing with Roma issues or a particular ad-hoc body established for the purpose of developing the NRSF. The working group should involve representatives of the institutions listed above. The participation of Roma should be properly ensured, including by making sure of reflecting the diversity within the Roma community.

The Regional Cooperation Council shall provide technical assistance for the facilitation of the participatory process of preparing the NRSF.

It is recommended that the institution proposing the NRSF is the Government or one of the key ministries responsible for the implementation of the Strategy. The NRSF should be adopted by a decision by the Government, according to the positive legislation in the economy on strategic planning.

#### **4. Proposed contents of NRSF**

NRSF should be a 25-30 pages document, containing four main parts: analysis of the current situation of Roma population and definition of strategic goals. Additionally, the document should have an action plan and monitoring and evaluation instruments annexed, not exciding 15 pages.

##### **4.1 Introduction (up to 5 pages)**

Introduction should be up to 5 pages, and contain:

- legal basis stating the jurisdiction for adoption;
- reasons for adoption, which include answers to questions:
  - (1) Why was the document drafted? What are the indications that there is a need for public intervention?
  - (2) On whose initiative was the document drafted? Which institution is the proposer of the NRSF? Which institutions are involved in its implementation, coordination and monitoring?
  - (3) Is the public policy document in that area adopted for the first time, due to the expiration of a valid document or is a revised document?
  - (4) If it is adopted due to the expiration of a valid document, brief information on the results of the implementation of the measures from the previous document shall be provided.
- Brief information on the institutions involved in the development of this strategy.

##### **4.2 Overview of relevant planning documents and legal framework (up to 5 pages)**

An explanation of the relationship with the planning document in accordance with which it is adopted (if such a document exists), as well as the relationship of that document with other relevant valid planning documents and legal framework, both domestic and international, including the EU Roma Framework and the Poznan Declaration.

##### **4.3 Analysis of the current situation (up to 10)**

Before creating the document of the strategy, it is important to analyse the current situation, in order to identify the changes that need to be made, conditions needed for those changes and potential risks. Problem identification includes a detailed and precise description of the problem, and problem analysis includes analysis of the cause and effect of the problem, its nature and scope. The analysis of the problem must show how the problem has developed so far alongside with how it would develop in the future without any intervention in that area. The analysis should include the latest data as baseline data, or at least the best estimations, along with the sources of information, including the data used by the EU to follow the progress in the region – the data from the Regional Roma Survey in 2017.

Strategy should include 7 main topics defined by the *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030*. Any additional topics and policy areas that seem relevant should preferably be made part of one of the 7 topics. In the case when it is not possible to do so, there can be a limited number of new topics created (desirably 1-2 additional topics).

Analysing the current situation implies:

- Identification of basic indicators that are monitored in that area, with an explanation why those indicators were chosen to monitor the situation in that area, as well as an assessment of the situation in that area in relation to those indicators;
- Analysis of the achieved results of the implementation of the previous strategy which includes determining which expected effects were absent and which results were not achieved as they were planned;



- Identification of valid public policy documents and regulations that have a direct impact on the situation in a given area; convey analysis of that impact in order to act in a coordinated manner in that area;
- Identification of problems in these areas, their scope and nature, as well as the causes that led to their occurrence and the consequences they cause in practice.

Result of this analysis should be a *definition of main problems that Roma population face with regards to social integration* in these main strategic areas (topics).

### 1. Vision and principles (up to 1 page)

Vision outlines what the government would like to ultimately achieve and gives purpose to the existence of the NRSF. A good vision statement should be short, simple, specifically related to the subject of the strategy, leave nothing open to interpretation. Keep it simple enough for people both inside and outside the Working Group to understand. No technical jargon, no metaphors. It needs to be in correlation with the national values and priorities of the government.

### 2. Strategic goals (up to 5 pages)

This is the final part of the NRSF. Strategic goals should be stated as clear and straightforward answer to main problems identified in the analysis of existing situation.

*The General goal* is determined as a projection of the desired situation in a certain area of planning and implementation of public policies.

*Specific goals* are projections of the desired situation that contribute to the achievement of the general goal, and are achieved by implementing measures or groups of measures contained in the public policy document, linked to a specific goal.

When setting goals, it is necessary to *limit their number*, taking into account that they are based on already established priorities in a specific area of planning and implementation of public policies. It is recommended to have up to 3 specific goals for each policy area. As a general rule, a Strategy should have one main strategic goal, and up to three specific goals that contribute to the achievement of a main strategic goal.

*General and specific goals need to be created using the SMART criteria*, which implies that goals have to be:

- **Specific** – well defined, clear and unambiguous;
- **Measurable** – to contain specific criteria based on which the progress in achieving the goal can be measured;
- **Achievable** – realistic, possible to achieve in a given context, within the timeframe of the Strategy and with available resources (human, institutional, financial, etc.);
- **Relevant** - to correspond to real problems and challenges, and to really work towards the purpose of the Strategy (improvement of the situation of Roma population and main problems identified in the Analysis);
- **Time-bound** – with a clearly defined timeline for the achievement of a goal, including a starting date and target date.

### 3. Measures (up to 5 pages)

Each Specific goal should be followed by a set of measures, preferably up to 5, that will lead to its achievement. The measures defined in the Strategy should be principle policy measures to be undertaken, and not step-by-step or extensive lists of all the lower level measures to be undertaken.

According to the *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030*, NRSF should:

- **set targets and measures for specific groups** (Roma children, women, young people, older Roma or those with disabilities) to reflect diversity among Roma, including gender-responsive and child/age-sensitive measures;
- **define measures to tackle antigypsyism and discrimination** (e.g. through national anti-racism action plans);
- **define measures to ensure the socio-economic inclusion of marginalized Roma**, in particular in the areas of education, employment, health and housing;
- **define a combination of targeted and mainstream measures taking account of specific local challenges and explicitly addressing the barriers** that deprive Roma of equal access to mainstream policies;
- **define a dedicated budget for implementation and monitoring**, in order to make the full use of social innovation and private capital.
- **plan effective data collection and monitoring of socio-economic impacts** (by age, sex and medical need) to ensure effective and tailored policy measures that respond to the existing/future pandemics;
- **take account of short-, medium- and long-term needs** and involve those concerned in developing and implementing measures;
- **support local authorities' efforts to address the most immediate needs of Roma communities** (e.g. access to shelter, including food and water, access to free health services and financial support for Roma families in precarious economic situations).

#### 4.4 Action plan (10-15 pages)

Since it is very complicated to coordinate and engage all the partners in detailed and coordinated activities, the Action Plan serves as a tool for programming the implementation of the Strategy. It follows same lines as Strategic and Specific goals, but contains detailed activities developed under each goal or specific goal. However, while the Strategy will be developed for the 10-year period, Action plan should be limited to shorter period of time (e.g. mandate of current Government and the Ministries in charge for implementation, or shorter).

Activities within the Action Plan should be presented with following elements:

- Title of an activity with short description;
- Strategic goal under which activity is implemented;
- Detailed description of activity (necessary for implementation);
- Timeline for the implementation of activity;
- Implementation arrangements (partners, monitoring, etc);
- Relation to other relevant national strategies and plans, if exist;
- Work program on realization of activity;
- Budget allocation from National budget and other sources, using the Roma Responsive Budgeting principles of formulating the budget.

#### 4.5 Monitoring and Reporting

After implementing planned measures, it is important to do an evaluation of adopted public policies and regulations, in order to review and improve these public policies and regulations.

Performance indicators should be *precise, measurable, acceptable, realistic and timed*.

Performance indicators should be *quantifiable*. Only exceptionally, when it is not possible to formulate quantitative performance indicators, qualitative performance indicators should be formulated.

For each of the identified and defined performance indicators, it is necessary to define a *source of verification* or data on the basis of which the efficiency and effectiveness of public policy implementation will be measured.

For the application of performance indicators, it is necessary to determine: *base (existing) value* in the last period for which data exist (base year), *target values* for the period in which the realization of a specific goal is completed, as well as the *source of verification*. Target values are determined on the basis of the existing situation (base values) and a realistic assessment of what can be achieved in a given period, having in mind the available resources.

The objectives defined with the EU Roma Framework and the Poznan Declaration implicit the indicators that must be included.

The NRSF should not include process indicators, which are indicators for monitoring of the implementation of each individual measure. These are so called process indicators and reflect the actions undertaken by the various implementing agents. Such indicators should be included in the Action Plan and also may be quantitative or qualitative as any other indicator. The reporting on the Action Plan should include values of monitored process indicators over time. However, the NRSF should contain impact (or performance) indicators that show the change achieved in the society, which include more general statistical rates. For example, number of secondary school students that have received school books free of charge is a process indicators that measures the implementation of an activity, while the rate of completion of secondary school is an impact indicator.

Reporting must be done periodically, as a regular exercise by the government. It is recommended that reporting is done annually on the basis of the Action Plan. It should include information on all the implemented measures and data for all the set process indicators. Each 2 or 3 years, in addition to the regular annual report on the Action Plan, a report on the NRSF should be added, analysing the level of achievement of the strategic goals, by presenting statistical data on the impact indicators set with the strategy.

The Western Balkans and Turkey already have agreed on an *annual reporting mechanism*<sup>22</sup> within the Roma Integration 2020 action. The reporting format obliges the governments to report on each implemented activity/measure by including information on the number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by ethnicity and sex) and information on the budget planned and spent. This is the part where process indicators are included for each activity/measures that is being implemented, which is in fact expressed with the number of beneficiaries. The reporting format also requires governments to report on the impact of the Roma integration policy. Statistics on the impact indicators are required for certain indicators that were agreed by the Western Balkans and Turkey. The reporting template and consequently also the list of indicators shall be updated to follow the requirements of the Poznan Declaration and the EU Roma Framework requirements set by the FRA proposed portfolio of indicators<sup>23</sup>.

#### 4.6. Other information

The strategy may contain additional parts, such as short description of the institutional arrangements responsible for coordination, formulation, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the strategy; budgetary estimates for the whole strategy; short description of adoption and revision procedures; or any other additional information as prescribed by the official guidelines on strategic planning. However, the governments should strive to keep the additional information under the proposed headings and as brief as possible, or provide it as an annex to the strategy. Alternatively, if the strategic document is very long and comprehensive, the government should opt for a brief presentation of the key content of the strategy in a shorter document aimed at outreaching and informing the relevant stakeholders, including Roma.

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<sup>22</sup> Reporting template available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/docs/4/template-for-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-roma-integration-public-policy>. Governments obliged to report for the past year by June the current year.

<sup>23</sup> Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/portfolio\\_of\\_indicators\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/portfolio_of_indicators_en.pdf)