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**CAHROM THEMATIC VISIT ON ROMA INTEGRATION, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION PRACTICES  
IN COUNTRIES WITH A SMALL ROMA POPULATION  
Riga - Jelgava - Jurmala, Latvia, 3-5 October 2018**

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**THEMATIC REPORT**

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

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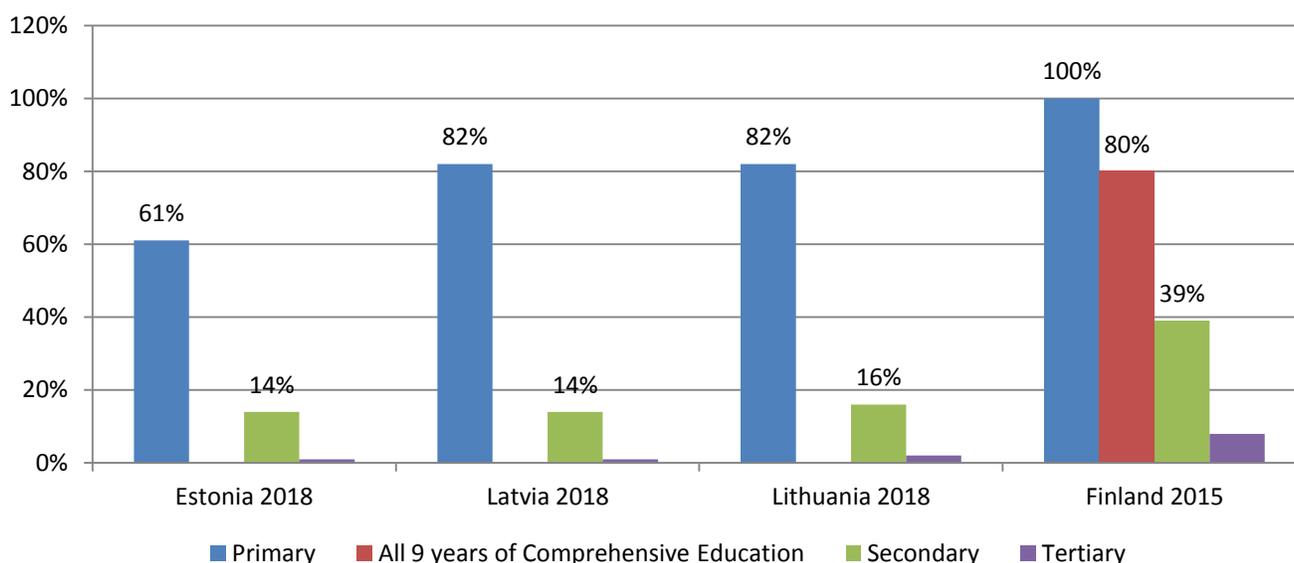
## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context of the thematic report and visit

The situation of Roma communities has been a matter of serious concern for at least three decades and actions have been taken at the international and national levels. Generally, the attention of the international community focuses on countries with a large Roma community, while countries with smaller Roma communities do not attract enough attention with regard to the situation of Roma and/or the effectiveness of Roma-related policies, although – despite their small number – problems faced by Roma in those countries are the same: marginalisation and lack of social integration, which results from a low level of education, absence on the labour market and dependency on social benefits as well as a discriminatory attitude from the majority population.

The level of education in Roma communities is a significant factor of their marginalisation and hinders their full integration; data from censuses in the countries participating in the visit illustrating the level of education can be found below (Georgia, Norway and Slovenia do not collect data on education of ethnic minorities):

*Graph 1: Education level (%) of Roma communities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the basis of censuses (in case of Estonia and Latvia missing percentage to the 100 % means “no data”). Finnish data is based on separate surveys.*



It should be underlined that years of experience on Roma policies and conception of national Action Plans or National Roma Integration Strategies have had twofold results: on the one hand – diagnoses of the situation of Roma in respective countries, strategic documents and budgeting, legal and organisational/institutional frameworks and specific tools; on the other hand – lists of existing gaps, structural, formal and cultural barriers that hinder the Roma access to public services and/or their participation in public life on equal footing.

These lessons learned should be used by all countries with Roma communities, including those countries with a relatively small number of Roma inhabitants which should benefit from that experience even further. The cost of Roma integration actions and policies can be relatively lower compared to countries where Roma constitute

hundreds of thousands of excluded and marginalised persons. But depending on the situation they might sometimes be also relatively higher due to Roma living in very small and scattered, rural or peripheric communities.

Among the structural tools several should be mentioned as the most efficient:

- political will to introduce Roma-related policy (or policy related to vulnerable groups, including Roma)
- accurate diagnosis of the situation, including mapping based on available data
- adequate prioritisation of the area of intervention tailored to the local circumstances
- legal framework
- strategic documents with adequate financial and human resources for their implementation, if possible both on the regional and local levels
- involving relevant stakeholders, including local level authorities, non-governmental organisations and governmental entities.

Concrete methods are being implemented with promising results in many countries, first and foremost through the system of Roma mediators such as school mediators, community mediators, labour market mediators and health mediators. Mediation is so far one of the most cost efficient and effective practices helping Roma to make most of the mainstreamed services. However, the benefits stemming from the work of mediators are well undervalued: the number of mediators working in the participating countries is far from ideal levels considering the generally low educational level of the Roma. This also creates inefficiency within the mainstream services.

The number of Roma mediators in the participating countries compared to the approximated number of Roma living in the country is one indicator of the accessibility of Roma mediation services and investment on Roma integration:

Finland 42 mediators/ app. 11000 Roma

Slovenia 26 mediators/ app. 8500 Roma

Norway 6 mediators/ app. 10 000 Roma

Latvia 9 mediators/ app. 5000-7000 Roma

Lithuania 13 mediators / app. 3000 Roma

Among other significant mechanisms contributing to the structural improvement of the situation of Roma, the following should be indicated: pre-school education; inclusive education; scholarships system for all levels of education; system of support teachers, tutors and mentors; informal education especially for Roma children and youth; promotion of vocational education for Roma youth; targeting parental and educational support for Roma women; involving the Roma representatives (NGO, mediators, local leaders, etc.) in the implementation of the actions taken through consultation, decision making processes and mediation; professional activation of Roma youth and adults through training, classes, internships, apprenticeships etc.

Roma communities' weak socio-economic status demands interrelated activities as there is a clear correlation between education and employment, employment and housing and housing and health. A specific approach is needed to empower Roma women, as their position within very traditional communities is often subordinate

to men and other members of the family. Therefore, the area of state interventions and activities supporting Roma integration should be wide. The table overleaf gives an overview of possible domains where the support of the state is needed, including information about the scope of interventions in countries participating the thematic visit.

	Education	Health	Housing	Employment	Anti-discrimination	Women	Youth	Participation	Social rights	Justice	ID	Media	Culture	Other topics/ Remarks	
EST	Mainstreamed													Estonian Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion "Integrating Estonia 2020". The Strategy notes: "In terms of linguistic-cultural communities, special attention should be paid to Roma, whose integration with society should be supported".	
FIN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	LOCAL AND REGIONAL implementation. ROMA WOMEN: included in revised strategy; violence against Roma women is mainstreamed JUSTICE: related to Roma prisoners.	
	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed		+Mainstreamed		+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed		
GEO	Mainstreamed														
LVA	Y	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	Y	+Mainstreamed	Y	Y	+Mainstreamed	+Mainstreamed	N	+Mainstreamed	Y	Coordination of the policy; support and consultation providing to Roma NGO; ROMA WOMEN: included in Latvian Roma Platform project.	
	+Mainstreamed				+Mainstreamed										
LTU	Y	M	M	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	M	M	M	M	Y		
NOR	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y		
SVN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	+Mainstreamed	Y	Y	Y	N	N	+Mainstreamed	Y	Coordination of policies and responsible national or local institutions; data collection/analysis in the field of housing; focus on local implementation; monitoring and evaluation. This is a targeted programme approach, but combined with the Law on Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia, the sectorial laws that cover a certain area (e.g. pre-school and primary school education, culture, media, self-government (local political participation); regional development, etc.), and different programme documents or strategies in certain areas (e.g. gender equality, youth, social security, culture, language policies, etc.).	
Y – Yes, area included into the National Roma Inclusion Strategy						N – No, area not included into the National Roma Inclusion Strategy						Not relevant – the problem does not exist in the country		Mainstreamed – activities incorporated into mainstreamed activities	

Participants recognised several barriers or challenges for Roma people's social integration and mutually satisfactory co-operation with the states and municipalities:

**CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE STATES, REGIONAL AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, BASIC SERVICE PROVIDERS AND OTHER NON-ROMA STAKEHOLDERS**

- lack of putting Roma integration on the political agenda (partly due to the low number of Roma)
- lack of appropriate legislation or its execution and evaluation
- lack of inter- ministerial coordination, cooperation and commitment from the part of different ministries, national and local agencies, authorities and municipalities (partly due to the fact, that the implementation of measures often depends on the availability of external donors or pressure created by international monitoring bodies and their initiatives and feedback)
- lack of well-planned monitoring and evaluation processes and Roma integration indicators at national level
- lack of equality analysis practices aimed at equalising access and quality of different basic services in different parts of the country or city; especially in the case of mainstreamed services and activities (according to participants of Estonia, Georgia, Norway) which means that it is impossible to estimate the amount of financial resources and services that actually reach the Roma beneficiaries
- lack of basic data and social mapping relating to the situation of Roma
- lack of understanding concerning the price of inequality and accumulative cost of Roma poverty
- lack of sufficient financial resources and stable, sustainable state and municipal budgeting and combining the two with the use of EU Cohesion funds in order to underline the state responsibility towards its citizens and the municipalities' responsibility for the sustainable development of its inhabitants' socio-economic wellbeing
- lack of continuity and short-sightedness characteristic to "from project to project- approach"
- lack of stable support for municipalities with Roma inhabitants as key stakeholders of Roma integration
- lack of knowledge concerning cost effective and well-tested good practices in Roma integration such as utilising Roma mediators
- lack of trust and for example existing social tensions, hostility and conflicts between the Roma and non-Roma
- lack of understanding on Roma reality such as living conditions, poverty, culture, history and experiences that sometimes determine Roma situation and traditional customs
- lack of professional qualification of staff working with people from different cultural backgrounds
- lack of grass-root participatory processes and methodology on engaging Roma and Roma NGOs to different forms of participation and/or commitment to project partnership, consultation and decision-making processes
- lack of other than socio-economic integration dimension in the national strategies- only the Finnish approach includes also the culture-oriented approach with a deeper understanding of the term "culture": culture is not limited to things like folk festivals, clothing and regional cuisine, but includes also issues of cultural sustainability and identity with a focus on linguistic identity and language preservation

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE ROMA STAKEHOLDERS

- lack of basic education and vocational training (see Graph 1, page 3) due to high level of absenteeism and drop-out from school resulting in poor educational achievement and badly paid employment
- negative media coverage due to social problems and criminals resulting in negative generalisations, collective stigmatisation and very few positive role models receiving proper attention
- some tendencies to passiveness, self-isolation and limited readiness to integration
- in some countries relatively strict “caste” stratification or feuding among Roma families, which may negatively influence intra-and inter- group relations and Roma people’s ability for constructive national cooperation,
- prevalence of early marriages and restrictive gender roles hindering especially the vocational and tertiary education of women
- lack of relatively well or very well-educated Roma activists, especially among youth and women, results in deficiencies in policy and project implementation and evaluation, especially from equality and gender perspectives
- lack of vision, participation and commitment of the local Roma and Roma NGOs to project partnership, consultation and decision-making processes
- the lack of genuine leaders that are in power to motivate the local Roma communities,
- lack of Youth activism and role models for it
- unstable and insecure professional position of Roma mediators and lack of institutionalisation of this position
- Roma people’s own activeness is often limited to cultural projects and events like dancing group performances, festivals, traditional kitchen presentations etc. that might fuel very stereotyped images of Roma
- lack of understanding that the success of Roma integration measures depends also on the on positive attitude, readiness and activeness of Roma themselves – state can only create the adequate political, legal, financially and socio-culturally empowering organisational framework for promoting Roma integration. It is the duty of the Roma themselves to make most of it.

The comparative overview of Roma policy coordination in the participating countries has been presented in chapter II of this Report.

### 1.2 Composition of the thematic group of experts

CAHROM experts participating in the visit represented a wide range of entities dealing with Roma issues at different levels: institutions responsible for national minorities and/or persons responsible for implementation of the inclusion strategies.

Latvian representatives presented: Department of Society Integration of the Ministry of Culture, Public Health Department, Ministry of Health, Job Search Support Unit of the State Employment Agency, Youth International Programs Agency, representatives of different municipalities, like: General Education School Division of the Education, Culture and Sport Department of the Riga Municipality, Dobeles County Council, Social Services Department of the Tukums Regional Municipality Agency "Tukums Region Social Service", Lādezers Primary

School, Folk School of Rujiena District, Roma day centre of the city of Jurmala, Department for the Society Integration, City Council of Jelgava, Jekabpils City Social Service Support Unit for Families with Children, and Roma mediators from: Riga, Ventspils, Valmiera and Jelgava, as well as Roma activist from those municipalities and representative of Latvian NGO: Latvian Centre for Human Rights. The list of experts participating in the thematic group can be found in *Appendix 1*.

### **1.3 Programme of the thematic visit and main issues addressed**

The agenda (*Appendix 2*) included an exchange with international experts and discussions with experts from the Network of Regional Experts on Roma Integration Issues and several relevant ministries and state agencies, although only two Latvian state agencies were present, they were the Ministry of Health and State Agency for Employment. The absence of representatives of relevant Latvian ministries such as the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Welfare indicates a lack of efficient cooperation in Latvia between the responsible governmental institutions and/or lack of commitment to Roma Integration.

During the second day, field visits to the municipalities of Jurmala and Jelgava were conducted, enabling direct contact with staff working with the Roma community, Roma mediators and Roma beneficiaries. Both municipalities have been long active with Roma related activities, but support is still needed. A good example of the municipalities' engagement into the activities is the co-financing of the position of Roma school mediators working as teachers' assistants.

On the third day, there was a visit of the Roma Museum in Riga. A debriefing session between the experts of the thematic group was organised afterwards to conclude the results of the visit.

**Jelgava** is a multicultural city of 59,000 of inhabitants: 60% Latvian, 25% Russian, 5% Byelorussians, 2.5% Ukrainians and 0.8 % Roma (app. 350 persons). Seven local NGOS meet monthly to discuss recent developments and needs. Several concerts and cultural events have been organised on the yearly basis by different nationalities and ethnicities, including Roma. The Roma specific events are related to Roma memorial days and holidays such as 8 April or 5 November, or Mothers' day, Christmas.

The municipality conducts a survey on how minorities feel in the city. The experts think it would be interesting to survey the majority population of the city on their perceptions on minorities and compare these results. The level of unemployment of the local Roma is high and there is a need for closer cooperation with local entrepreneurs. Those few Roma who work are employed in cafés, one in the police, at schools, in kindergarten. There is only one Roma NGO. Events concerning the promotion of healthy lifestyles have been organised. One of the most important ones is a summer camp for approximately 20 Roma children with a lot of activities, such as educational activities (Latvian language lessons) and an excursion for Roma children.

There is good cooperation with municipal Board of Education and many Roma children are included in the integration activities through sports. Out of app. 350 of Jelgava Roma, 300 are involved in different activities which involve also very young children. One specific low- threshold service for all families is The Toy Library – a common room for children. The Toy Library has been open since January 2018, engaging 99 children from 69 different families of which 13 are Roma families (19% of the families). A Roma school mediator works with 26

Roma families and 29 Roma pupils. Roma pupils have good results in arts and sport, but do not do so well in science. According to the data, half of the local adult Roma have not completed primary school. The most pressing problems are that 56 children do not attend school and early marriages remain a significant obstacle to women's education and employment outside the homes.

In **Jurmala** a day centre for Roma exists. It is situated on the grounds shared by a mental health hospital and a retirement home. The districts of Sloka and Kaugari have the largest Roma population, but – unlike in Jelgava - there is no data on the number of local Roma. Roma from Jurmala travel abroad for seasonal work so the low number of active Roma remaining permanently in the city make it difficult to find active partners for the co-operation and community development. Those who can be considered as “successful” often refuse to participate in projects on a voluntary basis. Out of those 169 Roma who are registered in the centre about one fifth is present on the daily basis (between 30 and 35 Roma). As in many localities, Roma women are much more active. The centre offers creative workshops for children, music, dancing activities, sports, etc. The centre also made an interesting research on what Roma would like to become in future. Roma people's answers included different professions such as singer, beauty salon owner, hairdresser and math teacher. The problem signalled by the Latvian participants is the problem of wide-spread drug addiction in the community. The participants of the thematic visit agreed that the issue of addiction, especially from drugs, should be addressed separately within the thematic visit.

## II. ROMA INTEGRATION POLICIES – LEGISLATION, POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND COORDINATION PRACTICES

LEGAL STATUS OF THE ROMA (acknowledged minority status or not) Name of the main governmental agency responsible for Roma policy	Official n° and % of total population	Estimate n° and % of total population	N° of registered Roma NGOs
<b>LATVIA:</b> National minority  <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> The Ministry of Culture	7,193 (reg. Roma in 2018); 5,191 (reg. Roma live in LV, source Central Statistical Bureau 2018); 0.3% of total population	App. 10,000 Roma 0.4% of total population	20 registered (2016); within: 7 active Roma NGO
<b>ESTONIA:</b> All ethnic minorities have the same legislative status. The term "national minorities" understood as: "those citizens of Estonia who reside on the territory of Estonia; maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with Estonia; are distinct from Estonians on the basis of their ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics; are motivated by a concern to preserve together their cultural traditions, their religion or their language, which constitute the basis of their common identity." <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> The Ministry of Culture	655 persons; 0.05% of total population	App. 1,000 persons, 0.07% of total population	3 registered Roma organisations
<b>FINLAND:</b> The Finnish Roma are a national minority and have Constitutional right to pursue their own language and culture (since 1994 constitution reform)  <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	No census because ethnicity is sensitive data and protected by Personal Data Act	App. 11,000 persons 0.21% of total population	National umbrella organisation Romani Forum (FRF, est. 2007, 30 member organisations), 3 national Roma NGOs: Romano Missio (est. 1906), Finland's Roma Association (est. 1967), Elämä ja Valo (est. 1964) app. 20 local Roma Action groups
<b>GEORGIA:</b> Roma considered under the minority group but the representatives of minorities in legal terms are not holders of specific status <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> Office of the State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality (SMR)	604 persons (0.016%)	App. 1,500-2,500 0.04% of total population	Samgori Roma Women Union, Gachiani Roma Union, Adjarian Roma Union, Kakhetian Roma Union
<b>LITHUANIA:</b> National minority  <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania	2,115 (0.07%)	App. 3,000, number of Roma is decreasing due to migration, 0.08% of total population	There are more than 10 registered Roma NGOs. 5 of them are involved in different projects and activities
<b>NORWAY:</b> Two national minority groups: Roma and Romani/Tater  <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation	N/A	Roma 500-700 (0.009%-0.013% of total population), Romani/Tater: 4,000-10,000, 0.08%-0.2% of total population	12 organisations of which 2 receive government funding
<b>SLOVENIA:</b> Slovenian Constitution (Art. 6 and 65) defines Roma as belonging to the Slovenian and European area, <b>Main responsibility of the NRI:</b> Government Office for National Minorities	N/A	App. 8,500, 0.42% of the total population	Roma Union of Slovenia, Romano Vozo Velenje, 2 Roma media organisations: Radio Romc (radio) and Romano Them/Roma World (print)

TITLE OF THE NRIS / or other Roma related strategy and its implementation timeframe Thematic chapters of the NRIS/ other Roma relevant policy	POLICY BUDGET for NRIS and other Roma related projects per year (€ equivalent)	App. n° of projects/ year within NRIS or different state agencies	Other state agencies regularly or occasionally dealing with Roma issues
<p><b>LATVIA: National set of the policy measures on Roma integration</b>, included in the <i>Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy for 2012–2018</i></p> <p><b>Thematic chapters of the NRIS:</b> Education, Culture; Strengthening Roma civil society; Improving dialogues and cooperation between all stakeholders of Roma integration policy</p> <p>There is also a significant number of implemented mainstream measures in which Roma are included as one of the target groups</p>	<p>€203,586 (national budget 2017); €177,000 (ESIFs European Structural and Investment Funds, 2017); €202,073 (EU Program "Rights, Equality and Citizenship 2014-2020"; European Union the Program "Europe for Citizens"). These sums have been allocated to the Roma targeted measures</p> <p>The allocated funding for the mainstreamed integration measures has not been mentioned here</p>	<p>12 projects: 10 targeted, 2 mainstreamed (Roma as one of the target groups)</p>	<p>Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Welfare; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Economy; Ombudsman; also, different state agencies (Employment State Agency; Agency for International Programs for Youth) and local authorities</p>
<p><b>ESTONIA The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion 2020</b> (mainstream policy, for all groups, Estonians included; it serves as a basis for the implementation and budgeting of action plans).</p> <p><b>Thematic chapters:</b> education, non-discrimination, socio-economic conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the awareness of a common information space and of cultural diversity (media activities supporting increased social cohesion)</li> <li>Supporting everyday contacts, communication and involvement in society</li> <li>Supporting the native language and culture of ethnic minorities</li> <li>Creating opportunities for less integrated Estonian permanent residents with a foreign background for increasing their social activity and supporting their integration (practical competence in Estonian language and culture)</li> <li>Supporting the integration on a legal and political basis</li> <li>Promotion of equal treatment on the labour market</li> <li>Offering adaptation training programmes and developing support services and adaptation training targeted at new arrivals</li> </ul> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities for more tolerant society, establishing open attitudes that encourage integration</li> <li>Supporting less integrated permanent residents</li> <li>Flexible activities promoting adaption targeted at new arrivals</li> </ul> <p>EN text :<a href="https://www.kul.rik.ee/sites/kulminn/files/23748_en_proofreading_le2020_eng.pdf">https://www.kul.rik.ee/sites/kulminn/files/23748_en_proofreading_le2020_eng.pdf</a></p>	<p>€5,000 (national budget)</p> <p>€50,200 EU Commission REC-Program "Rights, Equality and Citizenship 2014-2020"</p> <p>These sums have been allocated to the Roma targeted measures</p>	<p>Few, but growing</p>	<p>Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner</p>
<p><b>FINLAND:</b> Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO2) 2018-2022, previous ROMPO1 for 2009-2017</p>	<p>App. €3M (2017) grand total of which €1.8M for Roma 16 NGOs from the STEA</p>	<p>2017: 16 Roma NGO-projects and 5 ESF-</p>	<p>National Board of Education, National Institute for Health and</p>

<p><b>Thematic chapters of the NRIS:</b> The highest priorities of the ROMPO2- programme are in measures supporting the <u>employment and non-discrimination</u> of the Roma. ROMPO2- programme aims also at increasing the amount, effectiveness and planning of <u>cooperation in Roma issues at the local and regional levels</u> in particular. One way of reaching these objectives and monitoring progress made is to create county-specific Roma programmes (MAARO Programmes) that support the implementation of the Counties Act that is currently being drafted.</p> <p>In addition, the new policy programme takes into account matters relating to education, housing, Roma empowerment and participation, mainstreamed basic services, health and welfare, information provision and the preservation of Romani language, art and cultural heritage. Along with the needs of Finland's traditional Roma population, the National Roma Policy also covers the needs of foreign and non-sedentary Roma living in Finland temporarily or on a long-term basis. Programme also has a well defined component concerning the governments aims at international Roma work.</p> <p>Full text FI, abstract in English: <a href="http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-3916-5">http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-3916-5</a></p>	<p>under Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and €1M ESF funding for labour market and education projects and €270,000 other/private funding of which €50,000 European Commission funding for the strengthening the national Roma platform and developing national cooperation in gender equality.</p> <p><b>App. €3.8M (2018)</b> grand total of which €2.3M (2018) STEA/ Ministry of Social Affairs and Health funding for 23 Roma NGOs. €250,000 other state funding for the National Roma Contact point and regional Roma Advisory boards in different counties. €1M ESF funding for labour market and education projects and €300,000 other/private funding of which €70,000 European Commission funding for the strengthening the regional aspect of national Roma platform cooperation and developing national cooperation in Youth participation, gender equality. <b>All sums allocated to Roma targeted measures.</b></p>	<p>projects.</p> <p>2018: 23 Roma NGO-projects and 5 ESF-projects</p>	<p>Welfare, Equality Ombudsman, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education and Culture</p>
<p><b>GEORGIA:</b> State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration <b>Thematic chapters:</b> <b>Equal and full-fledged participation in civic and political life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supporting small and vulnerable ethnic minorities</li> <li>•Gender mainstreaming</li> <li>•Increasing access to state administration and law-enforcement agencies and mechanisms for ethnic minority representatives</li> <li>•Encouraging ethnic minority representatives' participation in the political decision-making process</li> <li>•Improving access to media and information for representatives of ethnic minorities</li> <li>•Raising public awareness about ethnic minority rights</li> <li>•Creating equal social and economic conditions and opportunities</li> <li>•Social and regional mobility</li> <li>•Providing vocational and adult education</li> </ul> <p><b>Improving access to quality education and increasing state language knowledge</b></p>	<p>no contribution of information for this part</p>	<p>European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) Caucasus small initiatives and in 2012 Roma Integration Project in Georgia (duration months)</p>	<p>Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, LEPL Public Service Development Agency under the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Office of Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia, Committee on Human Rights Protection and Civil Integration of Parliament of Georgia, The Council of National Minorities of the Public Defender</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Increasing access to pre-school education</li> <li>•Increasing access to basic quality education both in state and native languages</li> <li>•Increasing access to higher education</li> </ul> <p><b>Preservation of culture of ethnic minorities and establishment of tolerant environment</b></p>			(Ombudsman) of Georgia
<p><b>LITHUANIA:</b> <i>Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian society for 2015-2020</i></p> <p><b>Thematic chapters:</b> Education, Health care, Employment, Empowerment of Roma women, Housing, Promotion of intercultural dialogue, Roma culture.</p>	<p>Mainstream and targeted measures of the Action Plan are financed from the budget of each ministry and agency responsible for the implementation of the measure.</p> <p>Funding in year 2017:</p> <p><b>National public funding:</b> €281,178</p> <p><b>ESIFs European Structural and Investment Funds (e.g. ESF, ERDF, EARDF):</b> €132,105</p> <p><b>Other (international or private):</b> €65,000</p> <p><b>Total amount:</b> €478,283</p>	<p><b>2 projects:</b> “Let us work together with Roma – new job opportunities and challenges” (€868,860);</p> <p>“Lithuanian Roma platform going local”, budget €68,000, finished in July, 2018)</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Education and Science, Education Development Fund, Equal opportunities Ombudsmen’s Office</p>
<p><b>NORWAY:</b> The Action Plan to Improve Living Conditions for Roma in Oslo (2018-)</p>	<p>2018: €250,000 (2.5M NOK) was allocated to the <b>mentoring project for Roma pupils in Oslo municipality;</b></p> <p><b>Romano Kher – Roma Culture and Resource Center</b> - app. €1M (10.3M NOK);</p> <p>€200,000 (2.1M NOK) was specifically <b>allocated to the mediator services</b></p>	<p><b>3-5 projects</b></p>	<p>Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Ministry of Children and Equality, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, The Language Council of Norway Arts Council Norway, The Equality and Anti-discrimination ombudsman</p>
<p><b>SLOVENIA:</b> Slovenia’s National Roma Strategy 2010</p> <p><b>Thematic chapters:</b> Child welfare, Education, Employment, Healthcare, Housing.</p> <p>The strategy aims to eliminate poverty and social exclusion of marginalised Roma communities. The involvement of the Roma themselves is crucial, as well as raising general</p>	<p>For the 2014-2020 period, Slovenia will receive a total of €3 billion in EU funds, out of which €2.1 billion will come from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). At least 29.3% of this amount will be spent on the ESF, with at least 20% of</p>		

<p>awareness and fighting discrimination. Slovenia wants to involve Roma children in the educational process as early as possible (pre-schools) with the help of Roma assistants and mediators. The plan also covers legalising settlements and a pilot project for better healthcare.</p>	<p>that going towards the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty</p> <p><b>The latter amount COULD also finance Roma-related measures</b></p>		
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#### COORDINATION AND MONITORING MECHANISMS OF THE NRIS IMPLEMENTATION

**LATVIA** Mechanisms for cross-sectorial coordination:

- 1) **The Council Supervising the Implementation of Roma Integration Policy Measures** (see: item on Roma representative body) - minimum 2 meetings per year;
- 2) **The Network of regional experts on Roma integration issues**, set in October 2014 by The Ministry of Culture, aimed at the fostering regular exchange of best practices, experience and sharing information, as well as at the development cooperation between experts of local governments, representatives of Roma communities and National Roma contact point (the Ministry of Culture) in order to make the implementation and designing of the Roma integration policy more effective. One of the objectives of the Network is the providing consultations and informative support to the local government in order to use the programs of National and EU structure funds appropriately. There are 18 representatives from 18 local government's institutions who are involved in the Network as experts and contact points on Roma integration;
- 3) Regular field visits at the local level and advocacy for Roma NGOs and Roma representatives are provided by the Ministry of Culture (at least 3 times per year);
- 4) In addition, there are a regular monitoring of Roma situation in main areas (education and unemployment level; school attendance) and the annual report conducted by the Ministry of Culture (NRCP), based on statistical data provided by different governmental, local governmental institutions and Roma NGOs and non-Roma NGOs. All reports available on the Ministry's website <https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/integracija-un-sabiedriba/romi/dokumenti>;
- 5) The implementation of project "Latvian Roma Platform" by The Ministry of Culture in order to involve all stakeholders responsible and co-responsible of Roma integration issues (especially, education, employment, healthcare and culture issues) at the local, regional and national level. For example, there are regular regional (municipal) expert meetings and best practices field visits organised in the framework of the project. Detailed information on the project activities is available on the Ministry's website <https://www.km.gov.lv/en/integration-and-society/roma/projects/latvian-roma-platform> and <https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/integracija-un-sabiedriba/romi/projekti-un-pasakumi/latvijas-romu-platforma>

More monitoring information on the Roma situation in Latvia can be found from Latvian Centre for Human Rights 2012 study: FRANET National Focal Point Social Thematic Study The situation of Roma 2012 Source: <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-lv.pdf>

**ESTONIA** The **National Roma Integration Council** meets at least twice a year. The Council operates as a consultative body.

The **Integration Foundation**, responsible for implementation of the Strategy, is an executive agency to carry out activities and organise procurements and competitions to implement the activities stated in implementation plan of the Strategy. The Foundation was established by the Government, and its founders' rights are exercised by the Ministry of Culture. The purpose of the Foundation is to initiate and support activities that promote the integration process. So far there have been only few activities carried out solely for Roma. These were organised directly by the Ministry of Culture (for example the creation of Roma Platform in 2017/2018).

More monitoring information on the Roma situation in Estonia can be found from Institute of Baltic Studies 2012 study: FRANET National Focal Point Social Thematic Study The situation of Roma 2012 Source: <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-ee.pdf>

**FINLAND** The coordination and monitoring processes include the national and our regional Advisory boards of Roma Affairs, different ministries and large Roma NGOs who all have a role in the planning, implementing and evaluating the NRIS and evaluating its progress regarding the National Programme for Roma Inclusion. Finland reports on the yearly basis on finances and implementation of the NRIS to the European commission. Finland is included in the 2015 European Commission Communication on the implementation of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies. Also, national mid-term reviews of the programme's progress have been published (once for every programme) using a UN- based evaluation model concerning the stage

of implementation and combining it with the qualitative data. Since 2017 Finnish Roma NGOs participate also the international shadow reporting concerning the implementation of the NRIS. This creates an element of triangulation for the evaluation.

More monitoring information on the Roma situation in Finland can be found from Finnish league for Human Rights 2012 study: FRANET National Focal Point Social Thematic Study The situation of Roma 2012 Source: <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-fi.pdf>

**GEORGIA** Within the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration for 2015-2020 and its Action Plans activities to be carried out in the context of Roma registration and integration are coordinated with relevant responsible state agencies prior adopting annual action plans. The State Minister of Georgia on for Reconciliation and Civic Equality coordinates with other state agencies, local governmental and non-governmental bodies. The monitoring mechanism for assessing and evaluating implementation of specific activities falls under the competence of inter-ministerial commission which develops annual reports. Another institution involved in monitoring the performance of state agencies and fulfilment of responsibilities undertaken by them through strategic documents is the Office of Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia which also publishes annual reports and elaborates recommendations.

More monitoring information on the Roma situation in Georgia can be found from European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) Caucasus policy papers from 2008 and 2009 outlining the history and contemporary life of the Roma in Georgia. They assessed the situation of the Roma population with a detailed demographic and geographic overview. Based on this assessment, ECMI initiated small interventions as part of existing programmes aimed at supporting the Roma community in Georgia.

**LITHUANIA** The implementation of the Action Plan is coordinated by the Department of National Minorities Under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The monitoring of the measures of the Action Plan is carried out by a **standing Inter-Institutional Working Group (IIWG)** formed by the order of the Director of Department of National Minorities. IIWG convenes at least twice per year. It analyses the implementation of the measures included in the Action Plan, evaluates achievement of the criteria and makes proposals for an adjustment of the Action Plan. IIWG consists of representatives of the state and municipal institutions implementing the measures of the Action Plan, academic community and Roma and organisations working with Roma. The measures of the Action Plan may be revised according to recommendations of the IIWG. Annex No 3 to the Action Plan sets 26 criteria for evaluation of the progress of Roma integration. The monitoring of the progress includes general indicators of the country's population, available data on Roma group, indicators in Roma group in 2015, and target indicators in the Roma group in 2020.

More monitoring information on the Roma situation in Lithuania can be found from Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Institute for Ethnic Studies 2012 study: FRANET National Focal Point Social Thematic Study The situation of Roma 2012 Source: <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-lt.pdf>

**NORWAY** Contact Forum mentioned above exists. In addition to the Contact Forum, the ministries have meetings when required, both with national minority organisations, and in some cases with individuals from the minority groups.

**SLOVENIA** The European Commission has made assessments of the Slovenia's national Roma strategy in 2014 and 2012. Slovenia is included in the 2015 European Commission Communication on the implementation of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies. More monitoring information on the Roma situation in Slovenia can be found from Mirovni Inštitut's 2012 study: FRANET National Focal Point Social Thematic Study The situation of Roma 2012 Source: <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/situation-of-roma-2012-si.pdf>

## USE OF UE Funds

(amount for Roma-related projects, purpose, type of activities and projects financed by EU funds linked to the NRIS priorities)

**LATVIA €177,000** (ESIFs European Structural and Investment Funds, 2017);**€202,073** (The European Union Program "Rights, Equality and Citizenship 2014-2020"; European Union the Program "Europe for Citizens");

- **"Roma History remembrance project: Living Memory"**; devoted to remembrance of Roma victims of Holocaust; detailed information available on NGO's web site <http://www.livingmemory.lv/> and in attachment;
- **Latvian Roma Platform I "Dialogue, cooperation and involvement"**; more information about the project available on website of the Ministry of Culture <https://www.km.gov.lv/en/integration-and-society/roma/projects/latvian-roma-platform> and in attachment;
- **Latvian Roma Platform II "Dialogue, participation and mutual learning"** was implemented by the Ministry of Culture in 2017/2018, focusing on Roma mediation practice development, Roma youth participation, better dialogue between Roma and employers. More information about the project available on Web site of the Ministry of Culture <https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/integracija-un-sabiedriba/romi/projekti-un-pasakumi/latvijas-romu-platforma-ii>
- **Active employment measures:** Training measures (including occupational trainings; non-formal education measures; competitively promotion measures) are implemented by the Employment State Agency (EU funding). Details in attachment;
- **"Support for the development of individual competences of students"** in the framework of ESF project - support for Roma teacher assistances in Daugavpils. Details in attachment;
- **"Promotion of Diversity and Combating Discrimination"** - the aim of the project is to promote the employment and socioeconomic inclusion of persons subject to risks of social exclusion and discrimination (persons subject to the risk of discrimination to their ethnicity - including Roma people and other ethnic minorities - are included as one of target groups), at the same time fostering the increase of the level of information and understanding in the society as a whole on the issues of prevention of discrimination and of inclusive society.

**ESTONIA** In 2017-2018 a project "Activation and empowerment of Roma integration stakeholders in Estonia" was carried out, the actual costs financed by European Commission Directorate General Justice and Consumers: €46,804.41 - 95% of the **total budget of €49,144.63**.

**FINLAND** In 2017-2018 a large population study, "Roma wellbeing study" was carried out as part of ESF- labour market and education- projects "Nevo Tiiija" and "Tsetanes naal".

In 2017: 16 Roma NGO- projects and 5 ESF- projects (TOTAL €1M/year).

In 2018: 23 Roma NGO- projects and 5 ESF- projects (TOTAL €1M/year).

2016-2017 European Commission REC- programme "Strengthening National Roma Platform- From Words to Action" €50,000 and in 2018-2019 European Commission REC- programme "Upscaling National Roma Platform" €70,000.

**GEORGIA UNHCR**

**LITHUANIA** Currently four-year project (2016-2020) **"Let us work together with Roma – new job opportunities and challenges"** (€868,860) which is financed from EU funds, is being implemented. The tasks of the project: 1) to enable Roma to get involved in the labour market 2) to promote Roma motivation to work 3) to help Roma acquire and improve their qualification 4) to mediate for Roma in the employment and finding business partners 5) to change the employer-employee relationship in the employment market of Roma 6) Eliminate negative stereotypes in the society and the Roma community. Project trainings: Lithuanian language course; English language course; Computer literacy courses; Category B driving courses; Vocational guidance, counselling sessions; Training for the leaders; Classes for improvement of qualification of Roma musicians.

During the project 300 Roma will receive the following services: legal advice, sports activities; organisation of traditional Roma youth music festival; training on gender equality.

The project, **"Lithuanian Roma platform - going local"** was implemented during 01/07/2017 - 01/07/2018 (EC grant). The project aimed to promote cooperation between Roma communities and local municipalities, and to ensure mutual dialogue in solving issues relevant to the Roma minority in the areas of social inclusion, education, healthcare and culture. During the project, there were round table discussions held in different municipalities. Trainings were organised for Roma leaders, Roma women and youth. Seminars on practical work aspects with Roma children were held for teachers and social workers. Local Roma platform coordinators (mediators) helped Roma people with preparation of documentation to different public administration institutions, delivered accompany support, helped families to solve issues related to children and adult education in five municipalities: Vilnius City municipality, Panevėžys municipality, Jonava municipality, Vilkaviškis municipality (Kybartai town), Šalčininkai municipality (Eišiškės).

**SLOVENIA** For the 2014-2020 period, Slovenia will receive a total of €3 billion in EU funds, out of which €2.1 billion will come from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). At least 29.3% of this amount will be spent on the ESF, with at least 20% of that going towards the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty. **The latter amount COULD also finance Roma-related targeted or mainstreamed measures.**

### OTHER DONORS/FINANCIAL SOURCES AVAILABLE FOR ROMA-RELATED ACTIVITIES

<b>LATVIA</b> No other financial resources available at the moment. There is a new program of EEA and Norway Grants for next period elaborated in 2018.
<b>ESTONIA</b> In addition to the Ministry of Culture and the Integration Foundation, the cultural and educational activities of national minorities are supported by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Estonian Folk Culture Centre, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, the Council of the Gambling Tax, the National Foundation of Civil Society, and local governments.
<b>FINLAND</b> Private foundations and university of Helsinki fund Roma related research, Roma museum and archives development with the yearly sum of €200,000-€300,000, Centre of Arts (TAIKE) and Finnish National Board of Antiquities fund Roma arts and collection of the tangible and intangible Roma cultural heritage.
<b>GEORGIA</b> United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) funding
<b>LITHUANIA</b> Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania finances cultural project of Roma NGOs; American Embassy supports Roma cultural projects. There no extra funding for projects linked to the Action Plan.
<b>NORWAY</b> Since 2013, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security has managed a grant scheme called "The Norwegian Government's Assistance Programme for humanitarian aid to migrating EEA-citizens who come to Norway to make a living by begging". The purpose of the scheme is to improve humanitarian conditions for EEA nationals (including migrant Roma) who come to Norway to beg. The total amount for distribution in 2018 is 22.9M NOK (app. €2.3M). NGOs are the main grant recipients.
<b>SLOVENIA</b> No contribution

### ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NRIS (formal or informal network, exchange, meetings, cooperation with governmental agencies, etc.)

#### LATVIA

The Network of regional experts on Roma integration issues was set in October 2014 by The Ministry of Culture, aimed at fostering regular exchange of best practices, experience and sharing information, as well as to develop cooperation between experts of local governments, representatives of Roma communities and NRCP (the Ministry of Culture) in order to make the implementation and designing of the Roma integration policy more effective. One of the objectives of the Network is the providing consultations and informative support to the local government in order to use the programs of National and EU structure funds effectively.

There are 18 representatives from 18 local government's institutions who are involved in the Network as experts and contact points on Roma integration.

There are many activities in the framework of the project "Latvian Roma Platform" regarding fostering municipalities to be more involved in the implementation of the set of policy measures on Roma integration (expert meeting, best practices field visits, trainings, informative seminars, exhibitions etc.).

#### ESTONIA

The role of local self-governments in Roma integration is crucial. The Roma Integration Council involves besides to different ministries and representatives of Roma organisations also representatives of interested local governments.

In 2018 the Council held two on-site meetings in municipalities with larger number of Roma inhabitants, in Valga and Tartu, where local stakeholders (including Roma) participated. The meetings in municipalities will continue in 2019.

#### FINLAND

Finland is undergoing a reform of the municipal governance and health and social services. The role of the municipalities in pursuing Roma integration will be included in the legislation concerning the reform. Approximately 20 local, official and municipally run Roma action groups and approximately 30 local NGOs function in different parts of the country. Finland is publishing in August 2019 a special manual for local and regional implementation of the Romani-political programme in order to encourage and help municipalities to take a more active and structured approach in NRI.

**GEORGIA**

In the implementation of State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2015-2020 and its annual action plans municipalities and local governments are important actors. The process of policy making and elaborating future aims as well as specific programs includes close cooperation, constant communication and meetings with local governments within formal and informal environment. Depending on the subject matter the meetings/workshops are done with governmental bodies or also with minority representatives in the regions and non-governmental actors together with municipalities.

**LITHUANIA**

Municipalities do not participate in the implementation of Action Plan.

Vilnius city municipality in 2016 approved the *Programme for integration of Vilnius Kirtimai settlement community in to society for 2016-2019*. The objectives of the Programme:

1. To promote Roma integrations into educational system;
2. To increase availability of health services;
3. To strive for reduction of social exclusion;
4. To improve Roma living conditions;
5. To expand openness of Roma cultural distinction.

In 2017 €160,678 were allocated to the implementation of the measures of the programme.

**NORWAY**

Municipality of Oslo conducts Roma related activities mentioned in this document.

*Appendix 5* presents more information on Roma situation in the participating countries, what comes to social mapping of the Roma communities and their living conditions, country specific listing of the main challenges with implementing NRIS in small Roma populations, Roma mediation mechanisms, countries' Roma relevant legislation, whether Roma have been defined as a vulnerable group and if they benefit from any affirmative action and a list of permanent representative bodies of the Roma.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS, GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED AND ENVISAGED FOLLOW-UP

#### 3.1 General conclusions on the topic

As a general conclusion it must be noted that despite at least two decades of Roma related activities in CoE member States in the case of most countries with small number of Roma, their insignificant numerical count makes them in practice “invisible” to the policy makers. This is clear in all participating countries with exception of Finland and Slovenia. One might expect that in the light of existing international standards, elaborated tools and existing knowledge on integration measures that have already taken place in small and dispersed Roma communities, they should be excellent examples of the perseverance of the Roma activists and committed politicians, positive engagement of the state and effectiveness of Roma integration policies. However, the political will to address Roma integration issues on the state and municipal levels is insufficient in Baltic States, Georgia and Norway.

In practice, the majority of activities taking place in small Roma countries are carried out solely using EU grants. If there is no simultaneous commitment for Roma Integration within different ministries and overall in the national budget, it is very difficult to support Roma Integration in a sustainable manner. This lack of sustainable state financing for Roma targeted measures through the general national budget and dependency on EU funding is visible in most of the participating countries, with the exception of Finland.

**Conclusion:** the need for **engagement of national and municipal budget** to Roma related activities and continuing investing **EU Cohesion funds** from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) into promoting social inclusion of the Roma and combatting Roma poverty.

It is not possible to outs- source the responsibility of Roma integration, Roma Rights and Equality into any individual ministry or national agency. Depending on the country specific challenges there have been some attempts to do so and name Ministry of Social affairs and Health, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Justice or Ministry of Labour as the only responsible ministry on Roma Affairs. Based on the common experiences and analysis of the participating countries the cooperation between relevant state stakeholders is insufficient in most small Roma countries, with only very few exceptions such as Finland and Slovenia. Nevertheless, in order to address adequately the needs of all vulnerable communities, including Roma, the efficient cooperation of several ministries is needed, namely those responsible for: education, housing, health, employment, social service, administration, etc.

**Conclusion:** the need for **cross- sectoral engagement of many different ministries and governmental agencies** during the NRIS implementation, otherwise it is impossible to coordinate the implementation properly and meet the needs of the Roma

The national experts’ presentations provoked a discussion among participants on the possibility to take alternative approaches towards integration and – in cases of countries with small number of Roma - to focus on practical and tailored activities at the municipal level. To some extent, the

approach chosen by the city of Oslo is one example of such a practice. However, since there is no national Roma-related strategy in Norway, the municipality conducts projects addressed only to the Roma inhabitants of Oslo, focusing on school mediators and mentoring project for Roma pupils.

**Conclusion:** the need for **multi-functional and multi-purpose approach on local level** as in some cases there is no “national strategy”. The experts suggest focussing on practical solutions in municipalities, according to the locally defined needs of Roma **communities, like: day cares, school mediators, trainings for local social welfare officers, police services, teachers, NGO, Roma empowerment, etc. and to switch from a “national strategy” towards an “individual approach”.**

This recommendation should lead to the wider empowerment and engagement of representatives of local Roma communities, with a focus on Roma youth and Roma women.

**Conclusion:** the need for **Roma participatory approach**. Roma **women and Youth-** as drivers of changes - should be empowered and engaged wider into the local policy planning, implementing and monitoring processes.

The availability of reliable Roma integration related statistics, based on state and municipal registers and/or the data collected by interview-based surveys, are of great importance for policy making and allocation of funds. This is the case especially in countries with small and scattered Roma population where the differences in education, employment, living standard and participation in civil society of Roma and non-Roma population easily remains overlooked. The need for data collecting is crucial also for the proper recognition of Roma needs and progress achieved. As states do not very often collect data on an ethnic basis – in some cases alternative data sources can be utilised. One useful source of information can be for example the national rate of school drop-outs in situations when several research indicators point out that the majority of these pupils are of Roma ethnicity.

**Conclusion:** the need for **data collecting** (number of Roma children at schools, drop-out rate, etc.)

**In most of the participating countries there is a need for improvement and institutionalisation of Roma mediators.** So far only Finland and Slovenia have developed comprehensive and stable models of Roma mediation. In practice this means, that mediator’s profession has been institutionalised through the establishment and development of generally certified professional degrees (both basic and specialist degrees) and long-term employment can be somehow secured through permanent posts or other funding. In Estonia and Georgia there are no Roma mediators, while in Lithuania, Latvia and Norway few mediators work on the project-basis. Nonetheless, the engagement of the Latvian Jelgava municipality into the employment of Roma school mediators in the role of teachers’ assistants and the devotion of Roma mediators themselves should be underlined as a good practice. **In Latvia, as in Estonia,** the funds are allocated to schools and schools decide what kind of support staff and teacher assistants they need most. It is also noteworthy to mention, that according to different Roma mediation projects and studies mediator’s personal devotion, Roma-background and professional qualities seem to be important success factors of the mediation.

**Conclusion:** the need for **an improved Roma mediators' system**, using the experience of other countries and methodology elaborated within the Council of Europe ROMED project (concerning school mediators, employment mediators, health mediators or community mediators), **creating and developing the network of mediators and institutionalising the mediator positions.**

### 3.2. Country specific conclusions of the thematic group of experts

#### On Latvia:

National and municipal budgetary resources should be engaged on the stable basis into the Roma-related strategy. The EU grants should play only an auxiliary role, in line with the EU principle of subsidiarity (art. 5 of the Treaty on European Union)

Some problems concerning the effective collaboration between different ministries were identified. Ministry of Culture, responsible for the development and implementation of the national Roma Integration policy, has faced difficulties with coordination practices what comes to the measures related to other than the issues of culture. Some problematic issues requiring inter-ministerial coordination are for example education and housing. Although the local stakeholders appreciate the engagement of persons responsible for Roma related policies, it is noteworthy that, the national policy should not rely on good relations of single Ministry, individual devoted workers and Roma activists. Of course, these individuals are very important, but instead of relying on individuals a more durable and systemic integration mechanism should be introduced in every country. According to the Latvian experiences Roma women and Youth are more active what comes to the Roma integration measures and they should be especially empowered. However, NRIS should also take into account the gender equality issues from the male perspective.

Improvements on the national Roma policy should take into account the Latvian Centre for Human Rights 2017 recent report on Roma image in Latvian media (covering the period 2013-2014, see: Addendum) and the recommendations of the 2015 Roma in Latvia research report.

Latvia should incorporate measures concerning the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) Round Table in Latvia and its monitoring reports concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Latvia (ECRI 2019 and 2015) into its Roma integration strategy and measures.

#### On Georgia:

So far, Georgia is a country with relatively limited experience on Roma related policies. CAHROM thematic visit to Georgia in 2017<sup>2</sup> should be one impulse for Georgian authorities to address the challenges faced by one of the most vulnerable groups in the country and to follow several activities presented during the visit. one of the most efficient practices related to Roma is the system of Roma mediators that should be implemented, using the good practices presented during the visit in Jelgava, Latvia as well as conclusions of the CAHROM *Thematic report on Roma mediation (with a*

<sup>2</sup> CAHROM thematic visit on the situation of eastern Roma groups (Roma, Lom / Bosh / Posha / Dom / Garachi / Karachi / Abdal, etc.) and possible policy responses, held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 21-23 June 2017, with participation of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Turkey.

*focus on school mediators/assistants*)<sup>3</sup>. The above mentioned CAHROM visit that Georgia hosted in 2017 and experiences of visit in Latvia should serve to depth analysis of Roma situation in the country and preparation of nationwide strategy/action; the problem deserving for special attention and immediate action is the lack of ID documents, including birth certificates which is an obstacle in access to any public service, including education and formal diploma obtaining. This latter problem was also the subject of CAHROM thematic visit in Albania, 2018<sup>4</sup> and conclusions of that visit can be considered by Georgia as well in this regard.

Georgia should incorporate measures concerning the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) conclusions and its monitoring reports concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Georgia (ECRI 2019 and 2016) into its Roma integration strategy and measures.

### **On Estonia:**

In Estonia the situation is very similar to Latvia and even the same Roma groups live in these two countries. First of all, there is a clear need for building Roma people's confidence towards different institutions. Some trainings, already arranged for Roma in Estonia, were highly appreciated by the Roma community. Most importantly cooperation among different state stakeholders should be improved although there is some cooperation between the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs, 4 municipalities and Roma within the established Advisory Council. Some problems (such as absence from schools) occur because of the Roma mobility between Latvia and Estonia and therefore closer cooperation between these two countries is recommendable. This kind of bilateral cooperation could revolve for example around introducing the Estonia's current model of Roma day centres and their activities. Additionally, all Baltic States could nurture Roma participation through the utilisation of the Finnish Roma Youth Council- model. This would require some study visits between the representatives of the Baltic States in Helsinki.

The efficient Roma policy and co-ordination greatly depend on local conditions. In Estonia, 650 Roma live in 38 different municipalities and only in 10 of them the number of Roma exceeds 10 persons. Moreover, there is only one municipality in which there are more than 100 Roma (209). In Estonia, there are only 55 children whose mother tongue is Romani. They study in 18 different schools. These figures explain why the mainstreamed integration measures, accompanied by some Roma targeted measures, are ultimately the best and actually the only possible solution for NRIS. As integration is horizontal by nature and involves several policy areas in the budget strategy of the state, integration strategies are most effective together with implementation plans setting measurable goals and allocating resources.

In countries like Estonia, in which Roma population is geographically very scattered and does not form a united community or one target group, it is advisable to approach different Roma groups directly, to build confidence group by group and to involve the Roma more closely to policy making and coordination through consultative measures. The risk that integration measures do not reach

<sup>3</sup> Report following the thematic visit to Vilnius and Panažėvis, Lithuania, 25-27 April 2017.

<sup>4</sup> CAHROM thematic visit on solving the lack of identity documents of roma and their statelessness, held in Tirana, Albania, 14-16 November 2018; report should be endorsed by CAHROM in June 2019.

the groups who need them most, decreases through direct local contacts and this kind of more individual approach helps to change the attitude of the (self) isolated Roma towards social integration.

Estonia should incorporate measures concerning the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) conclusions and monitoring reports concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Estonia (ECRI 2018 and 2015) into its Roma integration strategy and measures.

#### **On Lithuania:**

As there are only 2 Roma day care centres in Lithuania, there is a clear need to expand this practice to other municipalities inhabited by Roma. The existing Roma mediator- system should be improved and expanded, using social media as the forum for exchange and contacts among the mediators. Lithuanian representatives considered the idea of creating a network among the schools with Roma pupils in order to create a forum of mutual exchange of experience, daily contacts etc. The same need for networking applies to Roma mediators. Interesting practice in Lithuania is organising three times a year study visits for mediators in different localities in order to exchange and develop good practices. Also, the need for collecting data on specific target groups, such as Roma school drop-outs exists.

Lithuania should incorporate measures concerning the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) conclusions and monitoring reports concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Lithuania (ECRI 2016 and 2019) into its Roma integration strategy and measures.

#### **On Finland:**

National Institute of Health representatives underlined the need for special attention to be paid on the Roma Youth and women as the representation of the young Roma and women has been traditionally weak in different governmental Roma bodies. Integration measures taken should be precisely adapted to the needs and problems expressed by the local Roma and based on study results such as the results of the Roosa-Roma Health and Well-being study. The healthy lifestyle should be promoted among Roma communities and this requires utilising NGO networks and different kinds of participatory approaches in basic services and their development both on municipal and regional levels.

As the educational level of the Finnish Roma is continuously rising the most significant new barrier for integration can be identified in the labour market discrimination. Another challenge in the Finnish context is strengthening work against hate speech and existing discrimination in public and private services. Finland should incorporate the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) monitoring report concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Finland (ECRI 2016 and 2013).

Finland's exceptional focus on NRIS on Roma culture, art and language revitalisation should be followed also by other countries.

#### **On Slovenia:**

Slovenia has aimed at a comprehensive approach in Roma Integration. Attention has been paid to the need for active employment policy measures and more individually tailored approach as well as for the need for cooperation between education system and local employers. Nevertheless, passivity of Roma is considered a serious obstacle for Roma integration. The small number of active Roma NGOs reflects this problem and therefore Roma should be empowered and activated throughout the NRIS implementation.

Slovenia should incorporate measures concerning the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) conclusions and monitoring reports concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Slovenia (ECRI 2019 and 2017) into its Roma integration strategy and measures.

#### **On Norway:**

Norway is the only country with a completely mainstreamed approach towards Roma. This is mainly due to the wide distances between Roma communities and relevant offices.

Finnish model of Roma Youth Council could also be a suitable model for Norway as they face similar challenges with Roma Youth. Other challenges include broader involvement of municipalities on Roma issues and the empowerment of Roma mediators through better networking.

Norway should incorporate measures concerning the conclusions of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) conclusions and monitoring reports concerning the implementation of its recommendations in Norway (ECRI 2018 and 2015) into its national and Oslo-area Roma integration measures.

### **3.3 Good practices identified**

#### **Latvia**

- 2015 survey on the situation of Roma (report available in English in Appendix 5: other documents on Latvia, "Roma in Latvia")
- regional network of experts, meeting regularly at least twice a year; the part of those meeting are the field visits for experts in municipalities that are implementing promising practices.

#### **Finland**

- Regional Advisory Boards on Roma Affairs functioning in 4 different main areas of Finland and having full-time permanent workers paid by the Regional State Agencies and the development of the regional and municipal Roma integration planning tools/publication
- Annual report and mid-term reviews on the implementation of the national Roma Integration Strategy by different ministries, NGOs and municipalities on situation of Roma

- Roma Youth Council- model
- The role of the National Agency for Health and Welfare, its Roma Health and Welfare Research-project (Roosa) and the development of the participatory and ethno-sensitive research methodology within Roma community
- Finland's hate crime laws which consist of a general penalty-enhancement provision. Reported and fully digital police data include discrimination and defamation offences, and these can be disaggregated. Data on the numbers of prosecutions and sentenced cases are only reported for discrimination cases. Hate crime data are collected by the Police University College of Finland's Research Department, the Interior Ministry, the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Justice and Statistics Finland. Finland conducts regular victimization surveys to measure unreported hate crime. Since year 2017 Roma hate crime cases have been also analysed and reported separately.

### Lithuania

- Roma Holocaust commemorations, including translation from Polish language the book, *Esu Karolis*" ("I am Karolis"<sup>5</sup>), which is a story of Roma boy – the prisoner of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. This kind of books are especially important because there are still very few children's and Youth books on Roma Holocaust,
- Distance learning system, available also for adults,
- Employment trainings

### Norway

- Roma and non-Roma working in teams as teacher's assistants
- Norwegian - Romani dictionary- application for the mobile phones
- Oslo- city level activism and planning

### Slovenia

- Full participation of representatives of Roma communities in planning, implementing and monitoring processes in Roma-related policy
- Roma representatives' participation in municipal councils
- "Academic clubs" for Roma students that empower the Roma youth

## 3.4. Envisaged follow-up

### Latvia

- Translation and distribution of the thematic visit report among the relevant stakeholders work meetings with the relevant Ministries as well as with the members of the Latvian Parliament in order to establish better coordination schemes
- Improving the cooperation with the Ministry of Health (addressing, among other things, the drug addiction problems) and participating in the forthcoming CAHROM thematic visit in Finland on health-related issues including reproductive health and vaccinations (planned for the autumn 2019)

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<sup>5</sup> The original edition: Natalia Gancarz, Diana Karpowicz, *Mietek na wojnie*, Muzeum Okręgowe Tarnów, 2013, <http://muzeum.tarnow.pl/> or [natalia@muzeum.tarnow.pl](mailto:natalia@muzeum.tarnow.pl). There is also the German edition: *Rudi Im Krieg*; English one is planned for 2020.

- Next Roma Platform-project is planned with the engagement of the Latvian Ministry of Welfare, state Employment Agency and municipalities to secure the responsibility of key stakeholders
- Preparation for Roma youth visit in the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau Former German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp in order to improve their history knowledge and Roma Holocaust during WWII
- Better use of social media among Roma youth
- Bilateral cooperation with Estonian authorities regarding the problems concerning Latvian Roma, residing in Estonia (for example concerning the registration of their children within education system)
- Bilateral cooperation with Finland regarding the Hirundo Day Centre- model in Helsinki in order to engaged and activate some Latvian Roma on the labour market (including Jurmala municipality)

Problem of drug addiction within the Roma communities should be partly address during forthcoming thematic visit on health issues (planned 2019 in Helsinki, Finland) or separate thematic meeting should be devoted to this phenomenon.

### **Estonia**

- Engagement of the Roma mediators in area where Roma people live. However, as only a very small number of Roma live dispersed all over Estonia, employment of specific Roma mediator would be reasonable only in very few municipalities.
- All educational and social services are provided on an individual basis in Estonia. Generally, the Roma are well aware of available social benefits, but awareness of the existing services which, in essence, are more sustainable than the system of social benefits, is rather limited. Thus, raising Roma awareness of the available integration, educational, social, health and labour market services, as well as fostering understanding of the fundamental meaning of the importance of personal initiative and commitment to these services.
- The role of Roma community leaders and Roma NGOs cannot be underestimated. As Roma civil society in Estonia is extremely weak and the few existing Roma organisations include only the smallest group of Roma, identification and empowerment of future advocates/spokespersons from different Roma groups must be supported. Empowerment of Roma organisations can be supported through free trainings to Roma activists. The topics included could be the following: how to manage NGOs and design projects, communication and negotiation skills, teamwork skills etc. The existing system of umbrella organisations of national minority organisations can be better engaged to rise the administrative capacity of Roma organisations. The umbrella organisations having at least 5 member organisations can get basic financing from the special programme implemented by Estonian Integration Foundation (an executive agency whose founders' rights are exercised by the Ministry of Culture). The umbrella organisation provides support and services to member organisations concerning project planning and reporting, providing premises free of charge etc. Also, many of the NGO- activities can be supported with the existing basic financing. In order to raise the administrative capacity of national minority organisations the Integration Foundation regularly provides free trainings (accounting, marketing, communication, etc.) for umbrella organisations. Co-operation skills of the Roma

advocates should be supported to ensure smooth cooperation with other national minority organisations.

As a “joint” follow-up to the visit it was agreed between the representative of Latvia and Estonia to organise two joint events – one on Roma women rights and other for Roma youth.

#### **Lithuania**

- More efforts should be put in cooperation with municipalities
- The possibility of establishing more day centres for Roma children should be considered
- The collection of statistics on Roma in education should be discussed with Ministry of Education and Science
- The cooperation between three Baltic States on Roma integration issues should be enhanced on governmental level and between Roma communities

#### **Finland**

- Arranging national and local awareness raising activities for the Health care professionals and Roma communities on the study results such as the results of the Roosa-Roma Health and Well-being study and promoting healthy lifestyle among Roma communities as part of the NGO work and Roma events
- Keeping up the yearly analysis of hate crimes and existing discrimination in public and private services and expanding follow-up on labour market discrimination together with the Equality Ombudsman’s Office and Ministry of Justice and the Finnish Home Secretary
- As part of the follow-up for the NRIS implementation follow- up on the utilisation of the Roma integration strategy implementation toolkit for regional and municipal actors
- The cooperation between three Baltic States on Roma integration issues should be enhanced on governmental level and between Roma communities
- As part of the follow-up for the NRIS implementation follow- up on measures and financial support for Roma culture, art and language revitalisation

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1: [Programme of the CAHROM thematic visit in Latvia](#)

Appendix 2: [List of experts and participants in the thematic visit](#)

Appendix 3: [European and international standards and reference texts](#)

Appendix 4: [Size, composition, language, lifestyle and situation of the groups covered by the thematic visit](#)

Appendix 5: [Roma integration policies – legislation, policy developments and coordination practices](#)