

EPHA Recommendations on how to promote meaningful Roma integration in Europe

One of the most universally disadvantaged communities living in Europe is the Roma. The great majority of the estimated 10-12 million Roma population is found at the very bottom of the socio-economic spectrum: they suffer worse health than the other populations in the countries due to their higher exposure to the range of unfavourable factors that influence health. Due to the multiplicity of their discrimination and social exclusion, the inequalities faced by the Roma population highlights the cause for combating the social determinants of health across the board.

•To devise evidence-based, targeted political action and to improve the quality and quantity of available data on Roma – Data evidence on health inequalities of Roma is available and shows a public health emergency which requires immediate political actions. However, data are often fragmentary and lacking in good quality information about Roma Health. While the devising of evidence-based, targeted political actions (e.g. medical caravans targeting the poor/Roma) are necessary to improve Roma health, systematic research and data collection are needed to fill the gap in the serious lack of information into their distinctive health needs and patterns of disease.

•To secure sustainability of employment of Roma Health Mediators (RHM) – RHMs are experts of equal opportunity, who in the course of mediation between Roma communities and various institutions facilitate the availability of public services – most especially in the areas of education, housing, health care, social services and the labour market – for the Roma. While the recognition of RHM as an official professional qualification is a precondition of their work, it is vital to secure the sustainability of RHM roles by providing appropriate working conditions.

•To ensure the full implementation of the EU legislation on Roma integration at member state level which should result in real improvement of the Roma in the field. – While recognising the special responsibility of Member States, the EU itself bear a considerable part of that joint responsibility. Therefore, both the EU and Members States must ensure:

- the active involvement of civil society in the preparation and assessment of national Roma integration strategies (NRIS).
- that Roma integration remains part of the European Semester and that there will be meaningful follow up actions when Member States receive Roma-related Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)
- the respect of EU legislation on the equal treatment of Roma; both the EU and Member States have to take all necessary measures to ensure that Member States comply with the Racial or Ethnic Discrimination Directive (2000/43/EC)¹ and the Equal Treatment Directive in Employment and Occupation 2000/78/EC.²

¹Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:en:HTML>

²Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>



– the adoption of the new Equal Treatment ('Article 19) Directive to provide Roma with higher levels of legal protection against discrimination.

•To include social rights into the mandate of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) –The FRA's mandate covers Roma integration and discrimination based on ethnic or social origin, but it does not have a mandate to monitor social rights, which would be essential for collecting better data in the field of Roma integration.

•To involve civil society in the funding process and provide financial support for local Roma NGOs

– The involvement of local civil society in the EU funding process intended to improve Roma integration is a prerequisite for the transparency and accountability of the EU funding programmes, in order to make sure that financial support actually reaches the Roma in need. It is essential to provide financial support for the operation of local Roma civil societies.

Download EPHA's full position paper at: <https://epha.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/roma-health-in-europe.pdf>