

The European Child Guarantee and Roma Children: Between Commitment and Practice

A Review of the Biennial Reports

Summary



Eurochild



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European Network on
Roma Equality under EU Funds

This joint report by Eurochild and the EURoma Network assesses the consideration of Roma children in the implementation of the European Child Guarantee in 15 Member States¹ by looking at the Biennial reports from 2023-2025. Roma children have been identified as one of the priority target groups of the Child Guarantee. Still, there are concerns as to whether they are benefiting from investments carried out under this policy framework which aims to overcome child poverty in the European Union.

¹ This report covers an analysis of 15 Member States that are partners of the EURoma Network.

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List of Abbreviations

AT – Austria	AROPE – At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion
BE – Belgium	ECG – European Child Guarantee
BG – Bulgaria	ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care
CZ – Czechia	ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
EL – Greece	ESF+ – European Social Fund Plus
ES – Spain	EU – European Union
FI – Finland	FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
HR – Croatia	HRDOP – Human Resources Development Operational Programme (Hungary)
HU – Hungary	HUF – Hungarian Forint
IT – Italy	LEPS – Essential Levels of Social Services (Italy)
PL – Poland	MRC – Marginalised Roma Communities
PT – Portugal	MS – Member States
RO – Romania	NAP – National Action Plan
SE – Sweden	NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation
SK – Slovakia	NRCP – National Roma Contact Point
	NRSF – National Roma Strategic Framework
	P.I.P.P.I. – Programme of Intervention for Prevention of Institutionalisation (Italy)
	PNRR – National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Italy)
	ROMPO – National Roma Policy (Finland)
	RRF – Recovery and Resilience Facility
	RSC – Roma, Sinti and Caminanti
	UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Acknowledgments

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The establishment of the European Child Guarantee framework marks a significant milestone in the EU's commitment to combating child poverty and social exclusion, particularly among children in need, including Roma children.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the **15 Member State partners** of the EURoma Network who provided essential data, insights, and expertise that formed the foundation of this comprehensive analysis. Their dedication to monitoring and implementing the European Child Guarantee at the national level has been instrumental in identifying both progress and gaps in serving Roma children.

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This report represents a collective effort to bridge the gap between policy commitments and practical implementation for some of Europe's most vulnerable children. We hope it serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, practitioners, and advocates working to ensure that the European Child Guarantee truly reaches and benefits all children, including Roma children across the European Union.

The views and findings presented in this report reflect the collaborative analysis of the EURoma Network and Eurochild and do not necessarily represent the official positions of all contributing organisations or institutions.

Introduction

In the face of persistent child poverty and social exclusion across Europe, the European Child Guarantee (ECG) represents a landmark initiative proposed² by the European Commission (EC) on 24 March 2021³ and adopted by the Council on 14 June 2021. This initiative aims to guarantee children's effective access to five key essential services: free early childhood education and care, free education (including school-based activities and at least one healthy meal each school day), free healthcare, healthy nutrition, and adequate housing.

The Child Guarantee directly supports several rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)⁴, and the implementation of Principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights.⁵ By ensuring that every child in need has access to essential services, it aims to help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and social exclusion, potentially creating long-term positive impacts for the approximately 20 million children (24.8%⁶) in the European Union (EU) who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

According to the Child Guarantee, 'children in need' are defined as persons under 18 who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE). Among these, six priority target groups were identified, based on the specific disadvantages they experience: homeless children or those in severe housing deprivation; children with disabilities; children with mental health conditions; **children with a migrant background or minority ethnic origin (particularly Roma)**; children in alternative care; and children in precarious family situations.⁷

The explicit mention of Roma children in an EU policy instrument is a very important step forward, as it acknowledges the particular levels of inequality and disadvantage they face across the EU, and the need for a specific commitment and targeted interventions.

Following the adoption of the Child Guarantee, EU Member States have drafted and adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement the Child Guarantee, and have submitted their first Biennial progress reports, which were due on 15 March 2024. The considerable variation in the timing of the publication of the Biennial reports hinders data comparisons. Despite the formal designation of Roma children as a priority target group requiring particular attention, there are varying degrees of resource allocation and intervention design across Member States. Several Member States have taken a universal approach, which may be administratively efficient but potentially undermines the specific focus needed to address the unique barriers faced by Roma children.

Against this background, Eurochild and the EURoma Network decided to look, together, at how the Biennial reports were specifically reporting on Roma children in the 15 Member States that participate in the EURoma Network. These are: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Czechia (CZ), Finland (FI), Greece (EL), Hungary (HU), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK), Spain (ES), and Sweden (SE). These Member States submitted their reports during 2023–2025, and this analysis seeks to understand

2 European Commission, [Proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee \(COM\(2021\) 137 final\)](#). EUR-Lex, 2021.

3 Council of the European Union, [Council Recommendation \(EU\) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee](#). Official Journal of the European Union, L 223, 14–23, 2021.

4 United Nations, [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), Treaty Series, 1577, 3, 1989.

5 European Commission. (n.d.). [European Pillar of Social Rights – Building a fairer and more inclusive European Union](#). Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

6 Eurostat. (n.d.) [Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion](#). Statistics Explained. Retrieved 18 April 2025

7 Council of the European Union, [Council Recommendation \(EU\) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee](#), (EU) 2021/1004.



if and how Roma children are being addressed in the implementation of the Child Guarantee in these countries.

Why is the Child Guarantee important for Roma children?

Roma children belong to Europe's biggest ethnic minority of approximately 10 to 12 million Roma people, with around two-thirds residing in Central and Eastern European countries.⁸ Roma children face significantly higher rates of economic hardship compared to their peers, with 83%⁹ living in households at risk of poverty - a stark disproportionality when contrasted with the general child population, where this vulnerability affects only one in five children (20%).¹⁰ Nearly one-third (29%)¹¹ of Roma children live in households where hunger is a regular reality, with at least one family member going to bed hungry at least once a month.¹²

The housing conditions of Roma families remain particularly challenging, characterised by inadequate and segregated living environments. Nearly half of all Roma individuals experience housing deprivation - almost three times the rate seen in the general population (17%).¹³ Even more concerning, 82%¹⁴ of Roma people live in overcrowded households, compared to just 18%¹⁵ of the general population.

A comparison of reports by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) from 2016¹⁶ to 2021¹⁷ reveals some modest improvements. While

early childhood education attendance showed a slight improvement (increasing from 42% to 44% between 2016 and 2021), other indicators highlight critical systemic issues:

- Compulsory education attendance among Roma children declined from 90% to 88% during this five-year period.
- Over 70% of Roma youth prematurely exit the educational system.
- Only 27% of Roma youth aged 20-24 complete upper secondary education.
- Educational segregation has intensified, with 52% of Roma children now attending schools that are predominantly populated by Roma pupils.

These systematic disparities highlight the urgent need for comprehensive and targeted interventions to promote the inclusion and empowerment of Roma children.

In addition, the Child Guarantee has similar objectives to the **EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020-2030**,¹⁸ including reducing poverty rates among Roma children, increasing educational attainment, addressing housing deprivation, and improving access to social and health services, among other issues.

The overlapping scope of the two EU policy instruments could be a great opportunity to reinforce their shared aim: to reduce the inequalities experienced by Roma children

8 European Roma Rights Centre (n.d.) [Factsheet on Romani children in Europe](#).

9 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [Roma in 10 European countries: Main results - Roma survey 2021](#). Publications Office of the European Union, p.26, 2022.

10 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [Roma survey 2021](#), 2022.

11 *ibid*

12 *ibid*

13 *ibid*

14 *ibid*

15 *ibid*

16 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [Rights, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Roma - Selected findings](#), Publications Office of the European Union, 2016.

17 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, [Roma survey 2021](#), 2022.

18 European Commission, [The new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation \(full package\)](#), 7 October 2020.



across the EU. Both policy instruments should therefore reinforce one another and contribute to the acceleration of progress on their common objectives.

This report aims to highlight these challenges and propose strategic recommendations to improve Roma children's access to services.

About the Child Guarantee: implementation and monitoring

To implement the Child Guarantee, Member States were required to appoint national Child Guarantee Coordinators¹⁹ and to prepare National Action Plans²⁰ (NAPs) covering the period up to 2030. The NAPs are intended to identify the children in need and the barriers they face in accessing and taking-up the services covered by the Child Guarantee, and to outline the key services and actions that governments are focusing on. These plans are crucial for addressing the specific challenges faced by children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in each country, and for understanding planned interventions, funding allocations, stakeholder engagement and monitoring and evaluation.

During the preparation and adoption of the NAPs, the EURoma Network released a reference document²¹ on critical aspects to consider in order to ensure that the plans are effective in tackling Roma children's poverty and inequality. Once the NAPs were published, Eurochild released quick overviews²² of the plans, highlighting the key services and actions governments are planning to focus on.

Funding

As established in the Recommendation for the Child Guarantee, **EU Funds play a crucial role in supporting its implementation.** The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as well as REACT-EU, INVEST-EU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, are particularly relevant.

The **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** is a key financing instrument that supports the implementation of the Child Guarantee. Under the ESF+ Regulation²³ for 2021–2027, EU Member States with rates of child poverty and social exclusion above the EU average of 23.4% (based on data from 2017 to 2019) are mandated to allocate at least 5% of their ESF+ resources under shared management to support targeted actions and structural reforms to combat child poverty. All other EU Member States must allocate an appropriate amount to address this challenge. This requirement aims to ensure targeted investment in regions where children are most at risk of poverty and exclusion.

Measures that contribute to this goal can be programmed under the ESF+ Specific Objectives (f), (h), (i), (j), (k) and (l).²⁴ This means that measures related to Roma children's equality and inclusion can be programmed under Specific Objective (j) 'promoting the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, such as Roma people', and Specific Objective (i) related to third-country nationals, including migrants, but also under other Specific Objectives.

According to Eurostat data from 2019²⁵, several Member States had child poverty rates exceeding the EU average, with the top 5 being **Romania**

19 European Commission, *Child Guarantee Coordinators*. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2024.

20 European Commission (n.d.), *European Child Guarantee*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

21 EURoma Network, *How to guarantee that the European Child Guarantee efficiently tackles Roma children's poverty and inequality gap?*, 18 June 2022.

22 Eurochild, *Child Guarantee National Action Plans at a glance*, 5 September 2022.

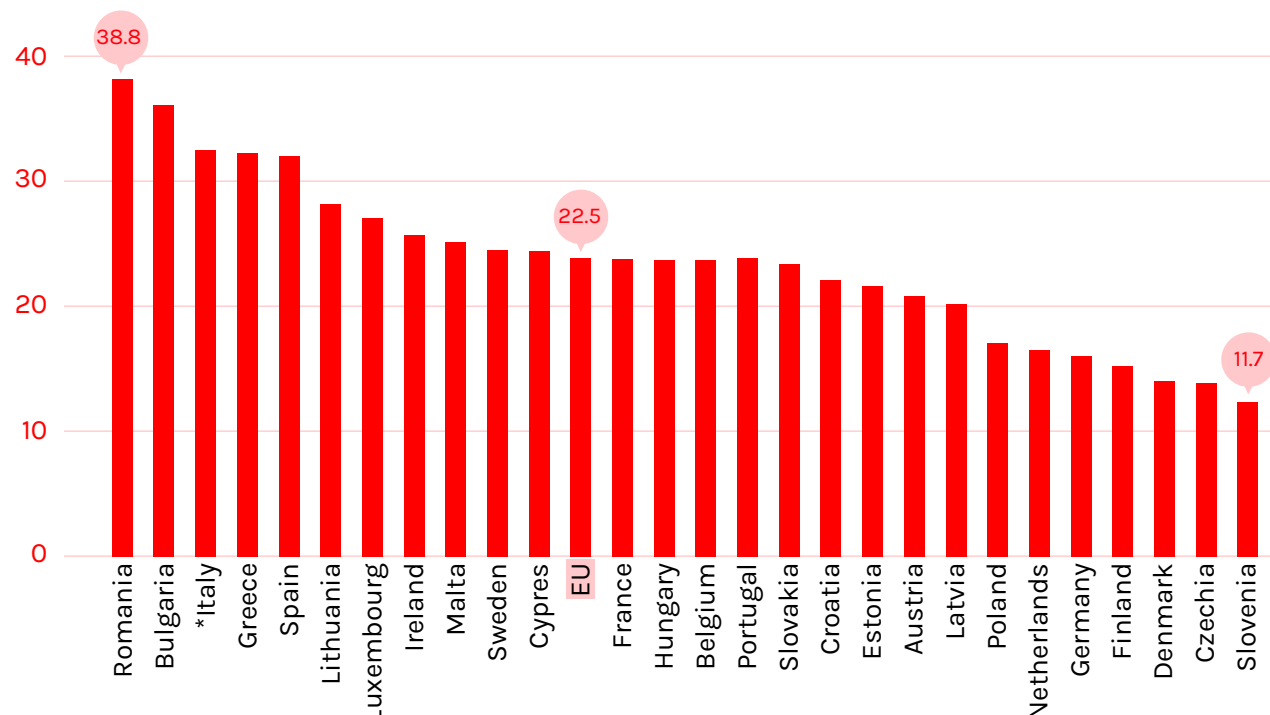
23 *European Social Fund Plus – ESF+ (2021–2027)* | EUR-Lex

24 ibid

25 Eurostat, *EU children at risk of poverty or social exclusion*, 5 March 2020.

Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

(% of population aged less than 18 years, 2019)



*Data for 2018

Table 1: Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2019. Source: Eurostat

(approximately 38.8% of children at risk), **Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain**. These countries are therefore required to dedicate a minimum of 5% of their ESF+ allocations to initiatives aimed at reducing child poverty and promoting social inclusion. A total of 11 Member States are required to allocate 5% of their ESF+ resources to combat child poverty, while the remaining countries must allocate an appropriate amount.

Furthermore, all Member States should allocate at least 3% of their ESF+ resources under the shared management strand to address material

deprivation, including providing food or basic material assistance to the most deprived, especially children.

In the EC Proposal for a Council Recommendation Establishing a European Child Guarantee²⁶, it was also envisaged that the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**²⁷ would contribute to the implementation of the Child Guarantee by supporting long-term and integrated investments (independently or in combination with the ESF+). ERDF funding can support the reduction and prevention of poverty and exclusion among Roma

²⁶ [EUR-Lex - 52021DC0137 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

²⁷ [Regulation - 2021/1058 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

children and their families, and help to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty among Roma children by ensuring:

- Equal access to inclusive and quality education in order to reduce the existing gap between Roma children and their non-Roma peers
- Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, including Roma and children with a migrant background
- Equal access to healthcare, in particular primary care services
- Transition from institutional to family- and community-based care
- Investment in housing for low-income households, people with special needs and vulnerable groups

The EURoma reference document on the Child Guarantee²⁸ provides detailed information on the options for using the ESF+ and the ERDF for programmes to implement the Child Guarantee.

Monitoring

The Recommendation establishing the Child Guarantee established monitoring mechanisms at both the EU and national levels. Member States are required to submit Biennial progress reports on their implementation.

The reports, guided by the EU monitoring framework²⁹ introduced in December 2023, represent an important milestone in tracking the Child Guarantee's progress. The indicators in this framework include: addressing financial barriers and material deprivation, tracking housing challenges, monitoring school participation, considering access to nutritious food, and guaranteeing healthy nutrition standards.

For children in alternative care, the indicators are drawn from the DataCare project³⁰, a joint initiative by Eurochild and UNICEF.

The progress reports³¹ are intended to provide crucial insights on the Child Guarantee's progress, the target groups, the provision of services, and contextual factors. They also contain information on indicators, funding, and key learning from implementation. However, the indicators included in the current monitoring framework do not sufficiently capture the specific circumstances of particularly disadvantaged children. This indicates a lack of alignment between the overarching objectives of the Child Guarantee policy framework – which underscores the importance of targeted support for the most vulnerable children across the EU – and the operational design of the monitoring mechanism intended to track progress.

While Eurochild has provided a general overview³² of the available Biennial reports (as of May 2025), two Member States – Latvia and Luxembourg – have still not submitted their reports (despite the European Commission's deadline of 15 March 2024). This inconsistent submission timeline undermines comparative analysis, as reports reflect different national circumstances, political priorities, and stages of implementation.

28 EURoma Network, [How to guarantee that the European Child Guarantee efficiently tackles Roma children's poverty and inequality gap?](#), 18 June 2022.

29 Social Protection Committee's Indicators' Sub-Group & European Commission, [First version of the joint monitoring framework for the European Child Guarantee, 2023](#).

30 Eurochild, [DataCare](#), 12 November 2020.

31 European Commission (n.d.), [National action plans and progress reports – European Child Guarantee](#). Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

32 Eurochild, [Biennial reports on the implementation of the European Child Guarantee](#), 10 June 2024.



Alignment with the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030

On 7 October 2020, prior to the adoption of the Child Guarantee Recommendation, the EC adopted a comprehensive 10-year plan aimed at supporting Roma communities across the EU: **The EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030**.³³ The framework outlines seven key EU-level objectives to address long-standing inequalities and discrimination faced by Roma communities, especially children.

It calls on Member States to develop strong **National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs)** and monitor progress using defined indicators and targets.

The following objectives and indicators are particularly relevant:

- Reduce poverty and social exclusion by 2030, ensuring that the majority of Roma children escape poverty - as measured by the share of those under 18 at risk of poverty or living in severe material deprivation.
- Ensure that at least 70% of Roma children attend pre-school, that most Roma youth complete upper secondary education, and that fewer than one in five Roma children attend segregated schools - with progress tracked through indicators on early childhood education participation, upper secondary completion rates among 20–24-year-olds, and school de-segregation.
- Improve health outcomes by reducing the life expectancy gap between Roma and the general population - measured by life expectancy at birth.

- Ensure that the majority of Roma do not face housing deprivation or live in overcrowded households - with indicators including rates of housing deprivation, overcrowding, and lack of tap water in dwellings, in selected countries.

There is a clear overlap between the objectives of the Child Guarantee and the NRSFs. The concurrent implementation of these two EU policy instruments presents a valuable opportunity to reinforce their shared aim of reducing inequalities faced by Roma children across the EU. To maximise their effectiveness, both instruments should be aligned to complement and strengthen one another, thereby accelerating progress toward the most urgent and necessary objectives.

About this joint report: approach, questions, and limitations

This review of the Biennial reports was carried out with a systematic approach to identify common themes and assess how Member States address the situation of Roma children. The review is only focused on the 15 Member States that are partners of the EURoma Network - namely Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

The review was guided by a main overarching question: *How are Roma children considered in the Biennial reports, and what types of measures are being developed to support them?* To answer this, five key criteria were applied:

a. Addressing the Situation of Roma Children

Do Member States include targeted measures for Roma children, or are Roma children addressed within broader measures and policies for all children in need?

³³ European Commission, [Union of Equality: New 10-year plan to support Roma in the EU](#), European Commission - Press corner, 7 October 2020.

b. Policy Alignment with National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs)

Do the measures align with NRSFs and are these strategies referenced or integrated into the Child Guarantee Biennial reports?

c. Use of Specific Indicators

Are specific indicators used to track progress for Roma children? How relevant and effective are these indicators in measuring outcomes?

d. Key Investments and Measures

What services or investments are reported for Roma children? Are these services targeted specifically at Roma children, or are they part of broader initiatives?

e. Use of EU and Other Funding Mechanisms

Do the reports reference EU funds (e.g. ESF+, ERDF) or national funding specifically allocated for Roma children?

The analysis aims to differentiate between general measures targeting all children in need (sometimes referred to as a ‘universal’ approach), where Roma children might benefit, and targeted interventions designed to address the unique challenges faced by Roma children.

Our analysis faced several challenges worth noting. Firstly, different submission timelines, mentioned earlier, undermine comparability.

Secondly, there was significant variation in scope and ambition across reports, with some Member States addressing Roma children’s inequalities in detail while others provided limited information on their implementation plans or lacked specific investment strategies.

Thirdly, differences in terminology complicated our analysis, as the Child Guarantee’s standardised definitions (such as ‘children in need’) often differed from national interpretations (e.g. some Member States refer to vulnerable children instead of children in need), affecting data comparability and interpretation across Member States.

Comparative Analysis: Roma Children in the European Child Guarantee

1. Recognition and Targeting of Roma Children

Across the EU countries analysed, there is significant variation in how Roma children are recognised and targeted in Child Guarantee NAPs, and in the subsequent Biennial reports. Of the 15 countries analysed, 11 list Roma children as a target group in their NAPs – **Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain**. This recognition demonstrates a general acknowledgement of Roma children’s vulnerability across Europe.

In some cases, however, this is done indirectly, under a wider category. **Hungary** lists Roma children under their first category ‘Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)’. **Bulgaria** doesn’t explicitly refer to Roma children as a separate target but lists them under a few of the target categories such as children experiencing

severe housing deprivation, children from an ethnic minority background, and children in precarious family situations.

On the other hand, 3 countries (**Austria, Belgium, Sweden**) take a different approach. **Austria** does not consider Roma children as a target group, but mentions Roma under ‘particularly vulnerable groups’ only with regards to healthcare. **Belgium** too has a more universal approach, focused broadly on ‘children at risk of poverty or social exclusion’ rather than identifying specific ethnic groups. **Sweden**, while not directly naming Roma children in the NAP, does reference them in the Biennial report, within the framework of ‘children belonging to national minorities’.

Recognising Roma children as a target group in a country’s NAP, however, does not mean that targeted measures are adopted. Out of the 11 countries that targeted Roma children only 8

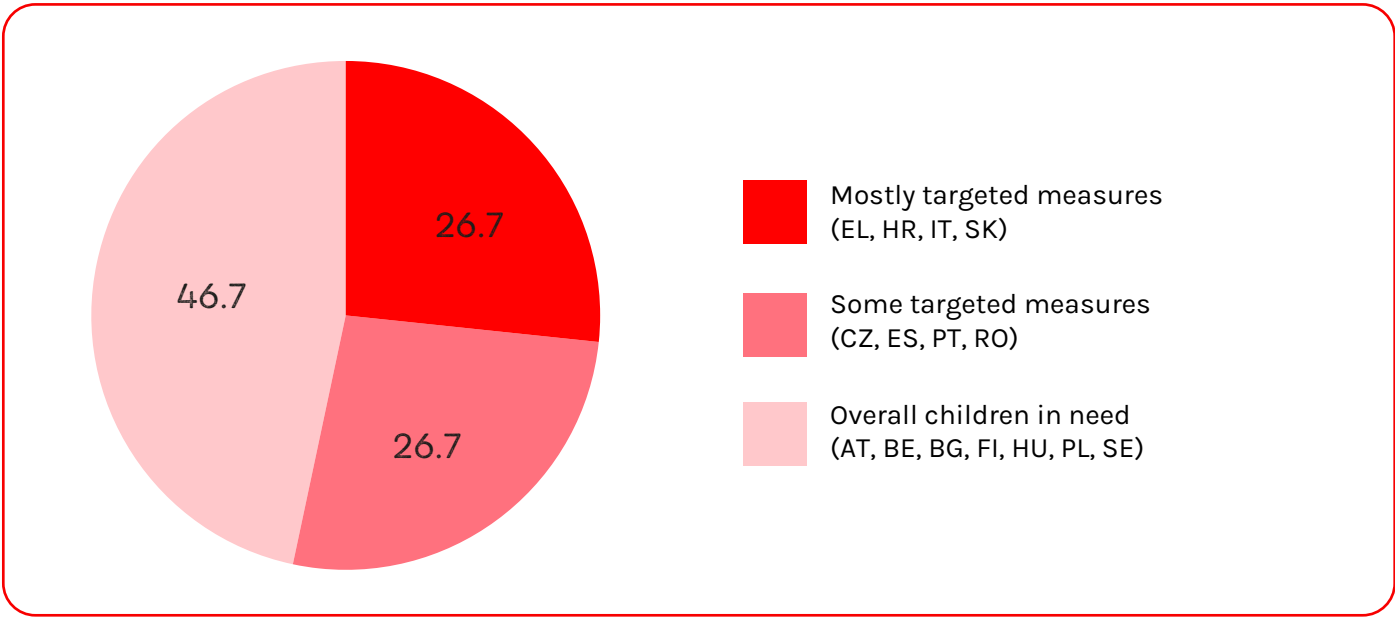


Table 2: MS approach in addressing Roma children



followed their commitment to Roma children into some targeted measures. 4 countries (**Croatia, Greece, Italy, Slovakia**) applied mostly targeted measures, and 4 countries (**Czechia, Portugal, Romania and Spain**) used some targeted measures alongside general ones. In contrast, the remaining 7 - **Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Poland and Sweden** - addressed Roma children only through general measures for children in need.

2. Alignment with National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs)

From the analysis of the Biennial reports, the degree to which Child Guarantee NAPs align with pre-existing NRSFs varies significantly across countries, revealing different approaches to policy coordination and coherence. 46.7% make explicit references, demonstrating that they have taken some steps towards meaningful alignment with their NRSFs; 33% of them only cite them at some point in their reports, naming the existence of NRSFs; and 3 Member States do not refer at all to their specific Roma policy instrument.

As illustrated in the graph below, over half of the Member States analysed have taken steps towards aligning their NAPs with their NRSFs.

Czechia’s NAP builds on the 2021–2030 Social Inclusion Strategy, which serves as the country’s de facto Roma inclusion framework, indicating alignment through the implementation of strategic objectives targeting Roma communities within its Child Guarantee NAP. **Finland** reports alignment between its NAP and its NRSF (ROMPO) 2023–2030. The integration seems substantive, with findings from studies on Roma children’s wellbeing directly incorporated into ROMPO’s measures. This approach aims to ensure that Roma children’s needs are addressed coherently across policy frameworks. **Italy’s** National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti, and Caminanti 2021–2030 is integrated into the measures of the NAP, focusing on the social and educational inclusion of these groups. **Portugal** integrated its National Roma Strategy 2013–2022 into the NAP, focusing on education, housing, and healthcare for Roma children. **Romania’s** NAP incorporates elements from its National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027, particularly in education (through school mediators) and

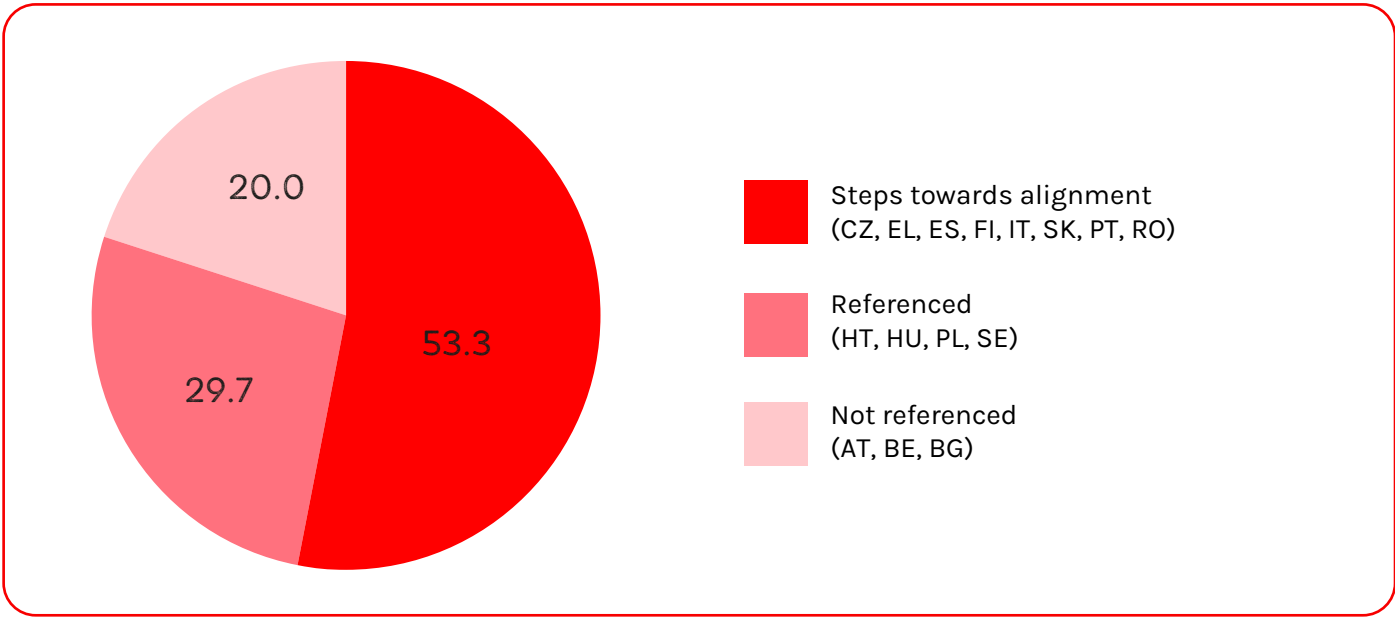


Table 3: Level of alignment between the NRSF and the Biennial report from the MS

housing initiatives like the *Social Housing for Roma Communities* programme. **Slovakia's** NAP references the NRSF and the alignment appears substantial, with shared objectives and complementary measures, particularly in education, housing, and healthcare. **Spain** makes references to the integration of elements of its 2021-2030 NRSF into its Child Guarantee NAP.

Other countries like **Greece** reference their National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2021-2030, with field visits by Regional Task Forces collecting qualitative data on barriers to school attendance for Roma children. However, the report does not provide details on how the two strategies are connected. The NRSF is also mentioned in the report from **Hungary**, namely the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030, based on measures such as community spaces (e.g. the '*Municipal Complex Children's Programmes - Community Spaces for Inclusion*' scheme), demonstrates some alignment between the two approaches. **Croatia** acknowledges the existence of the National Roma Inclusion Plan and its priorities in its NAP, but it does not provide detailed evidence of coordinated measures or specific actions directly linking the two plans. **Poland** mentions the 'government social integration strategy' without any detail of the contents, actions, funding sources and their alignment with the Child Guarantee.

Sweden stands out with its 20-year strategy (2012-2032) for Roma inclusion, a long-term commitment that reflects Sweden's emphasis on generational change and structural transformation rather than short-term interventions. However, it does so without recognising Roma children as a target group in its NAP and with limited evidence on the alignment.

While the above-mentioned Member States report limited and varying levels of alignment, a few others – such as **Austria, Belgium and Bulgaria** – do not explicitly reference NRSFs in their reports at all.

Moreover, in cases where Member States do mention the existence of NRSF in more detail, it is not clear whether some of the measures reported for Roma children under the Child Guarantee actually represent any additionality in terms of mobilisation of new resources or new/improved legislation or policies, or if they just report information on existing Roma children-related investments carried out under other policy frameworks, such as the NRSF.

With regard to cooperation between the Child Guarantee **Coordinators and the National Roma Contact Points (NRCPs)**, some Member States (**Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain**) refer to contacts between the two bodies. However, the setting up of cooperation mechanisms between them does not seem to be a common practice, with exceptions such as Greece, where there is a legally established mechanism for cooperation between the National Coordinator for the Child Guarantee and the competent authority responsible for the NRSF. It is unclear whether cooperation is just not reported since Member States were not requested to do so, or whether it is due to other reasons (such as a lack of an institutional decision in this regard or to the fact that the Child Guarantee is in the early stages of implementation in Member States). Policy alignment between two complimentary policy frameworks that deal with similar and shared objectives, namely addressing inequality experienced by Roma children, should be fundamental to guarantee coherence, synergies and efficiency in achieving social impact. The scarce reported alignment between the two policy instruments in Biennial reports points to possible structural weaknesses in the effective implementation of measures aimed at reducing Roma children's vulnerabilities across Member States.

Implications of scarce policy alignment for policy development and implementation

The limited alignment between NAPs and NRSFs can create a number of significant policy coherence challenges, such as:

1. **Coordination fragmentation:** countries with limited alignment may face challenges in coordinating efforts across different policy frameworks.
2. **Resource inefficiency:** poorly aligned systems often duplicate efforts, whereas strong alignment allows governments to optimise resource allocation and avoid wasteful overlap.
3. **Missed opportunities for a comprehensive approach:** countries with strong alignment are better positioned to address Roma children's needs holistically across different policy domains rather than through disconnected, isolated interventions.

3. Data Collection and Monitoring

The availability and quality of data on Roma children vary significantly across countries, revealing gaps in monitoring and evaluation systems.

In relation to data, our analysis considered two issues: 'data on Roma children' and 'specific data indicators focusing on Roma children'. The two reflect different approaches to understanding the situation of Roma children in Member States.

The first, 'data on Roma children', takes a broad view, capturing any references to Roma children - whether qualitative insights, general mentions or information. This includes narratives about their experiences, social context, or inclusion in broader vulnerable groups. In contrast, 'specific indicators on Roma children' focuses more narrowly on quantifiable, trackable data points - such as pre-school attendance rates, poverty levels, or access to services - that are explicitly disaggregated for Roma children. This approach enables more precise monitoring and evaluation of policy impact over time.

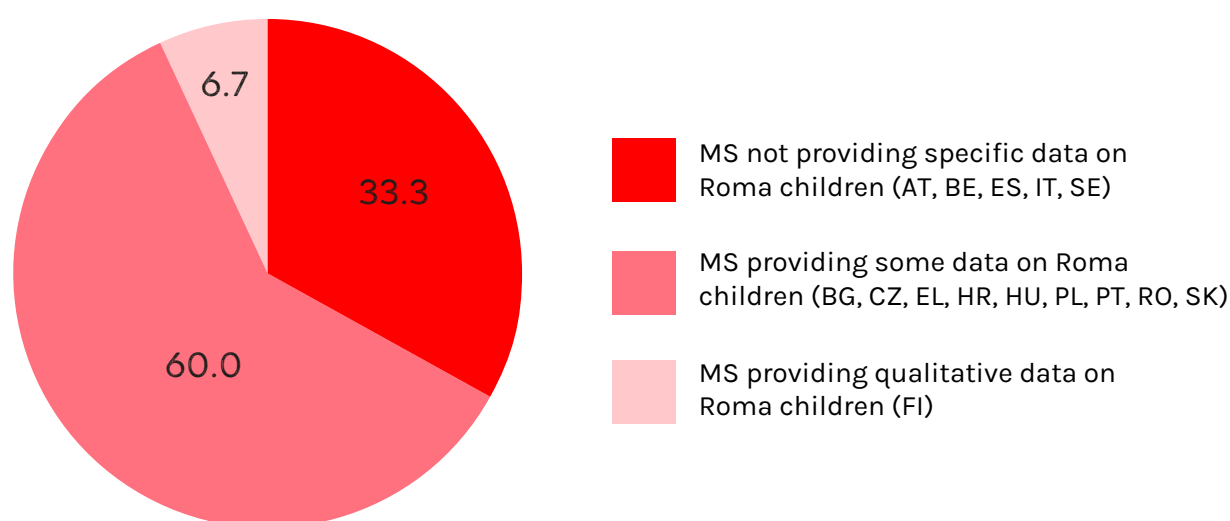


Table 4: MS providing data on Roma children in the Biennial reports

Data on Roma Children in the Biennial reports

The analysis of the data provided by Member States in their Biennial reports reveals a fragmented and inconsistent landscape when it comes to documenting the situation of Roma children. Only a few countries offer any substantive data, and even then, the depth and scope of information vary greatly.

Biennial reports by **Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Romania** and **Slovakia** provide detailed and specific data on Roma children, focusing on their socio-economic conditions, education, healthcare, and housing. **Portugal** and **Hungary** offer some data, touching on areas such as education and early childhood development. **Bulgaria’s** report offers specific data but it is mostly general demographic information, lacking detailed thematic insights. **Finland’s** data is qualitative, offering narrative insights rather than measurable indicators.

Conversely, **Austria, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Spain** and **Sweden** generally do not report specific or disaggregated data on Roma children. Where data

is mentioned, it tends to be vague or broad, lacking the necessary detail to inform policy decisions. **Poland** provides limited data on Roma children in Poland, focusing primarily on their educational participation and geographical distribution. **Austria** highlights the lack of reliable data on Roma pupils in education, attributing it to under-reporting and concerns about discrimination - a challenge also noted in similar wording in the reports from **Belgium** and **Spain**.

Thematically, the most frequently addressed category - when data is present - is **education**, followed by general demographic information such as population estimates. **Health, housing, and child protection** are rarely addressed in detail, if at all. Mentions of **poverty** and **social integration** occur sporadically but are not supported by concrete indicators or systematic monitoring.

This inconsistency underscores a major gap in data collection practices across the EU, with only a handful of states taking steps toward meaningful data disaggregation that could support targeted interventions for Roma children.

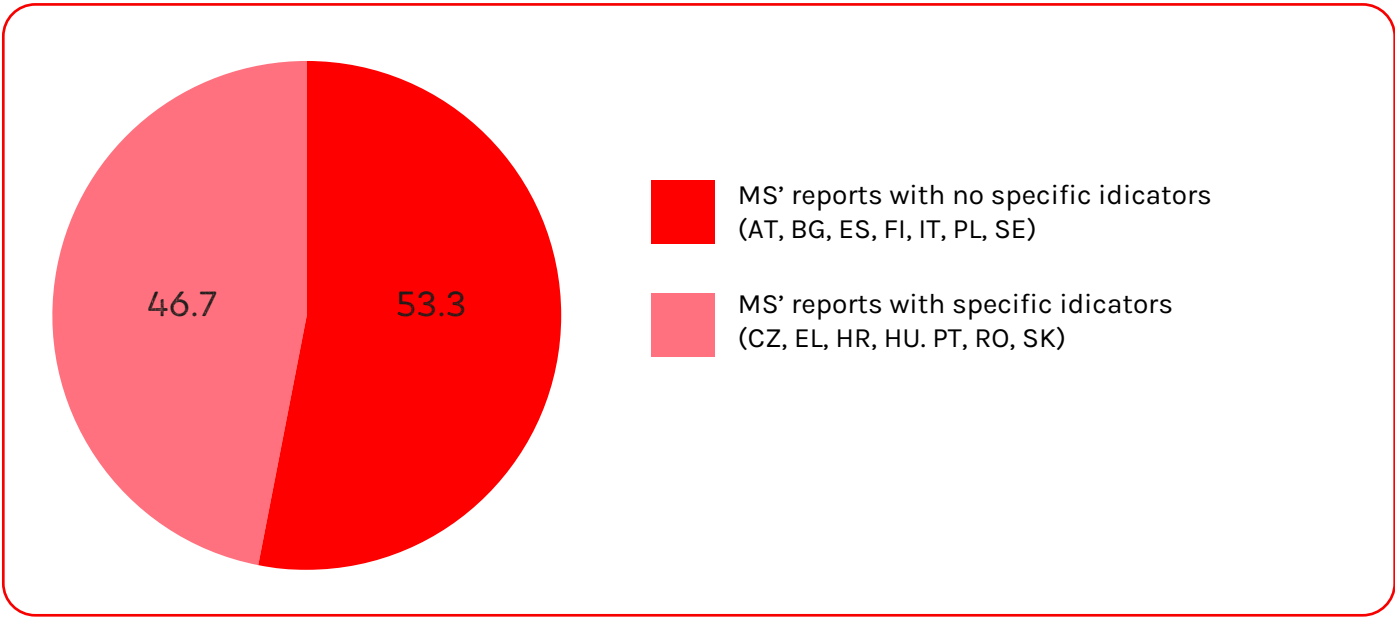


Table 5: MS that provide (or not) specific indicators on Roma children

Indicators on Roma children

Among the Member States reviewed, several have included specific **data indicators** for Roma children in their national reports, while others have not provided targeted metrics.

Countries like **Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia** stand out for incorporating quantitative indicators that reflect the situation of Roma children in areas such as education, poverty, housing, and social inclusion.

Several countries - such as **Croatia, Greece, and Czechia** - are providing quantitative data on **early childhood and pre-school education**, often paired with targets or observed trends in participation. In addition to education access, **Greece and Hungary** include information on complementary support measures, such as school meals, housing programmes, or early childhood development initiatives, reflecting a broader understanding of the social determinants affecting education outcomes.

A number of countries are also beginning to track educational progression beyond primary school. **Hungary**, for instance, presents time-series data on Roma youth participation in higher education and sets modest future targets, while **Portugal** reports on scholarship support aimed at reducing secondary school drop-out rates.

Meanwhile, countries like **Romania and Slovakia** focus more broadly on structural and contextual indicators, providing insights into poverty, segregation, access to services, and the deployment of mediators or health assistants. This reflects a systemic approach to Roma inclusion, beyond isolated education metrics. **Czechia** stands out for its reporting on school segregation, offering specific figures on schools with high concentrations of Roma students.

In contrast, the remaining Member States (**Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Spain, and**

Sweden) do not provide specific data indicators focused exclusively on Roma children. While some of these countries acknowledge Roma inclusion in broader strategies or mention vulnerable groups in general, they fall short of offering measurable, disaggregated data that can be used to monitor progress or tailor interventions for Roma children specifically.

Overall, while approaches vary in scope and depth, most Member States prioritise reporting in the domains of early childhood education, participation in education, and targeted support measures - though relatively few provide robust data on long-term outcomes or systemic inequalities.

Data Collection Challenges

The Biennial reports reveal several common challenges in relation to data collection on Roma children. For different reasons, many countries struggle with identifying Roma children in administrative data systems, creating significant methodological difficulties in tracking their needs and outcomes. Some countries cite privacy concerns and the risk of stigmatisation as barriers to ethnic data collection, reflecting ethical considerations that complicate data gathering efforts. Under-reporting due to fear of discrimination affects data reliability, as many Roma families may be reluctant to self-identify in official records. Data collection often occurs across multiple agencies without standardised approaches, leading to fragmented responsibility and inconsistent methodologies. Even countries with good general child welfare data often fail to disaggregate by ethnicity, limiting the visibility of Roma children's specific situations within broader statistical frameworks.

Implications for Policy Development

The data gaps identified have significant implications for effective policy development. Without reliable data it becomes difficult to



design targeted interventions based on evidence, potentially resulting in policies that fail to address the actual needs of Roma children.

Limited data hampers the ability to track progress and adjust strategies accordingly, meaning that ineffective approaches may continue without proper evaluation or improvement. Data gaps may lead to inefficient resource allocation that doesn't match actual needs, resulting in wasted investments or neglected priority areas.

Weak monitoring systems reduce accountability for improving outcomes for Roma children. Without clear metrics it is more challenging to hold authorities responsible for delivering meaningful change in Roma children's lives.

4. Key Services and Interventions

The analysis reveals varying approaches to the services or investment for Roma children across different categories, as envisaged in the Child Guarantee Recommendation, with significant differences in the scope, depth, and targeting of interventions.

As mentioned above, 11 out of 15 countries recognise Roma children as one of the target groups in their NAPs. However, the picture looks different when looking at the targeted investments in key areas. There is an imbalance between overall and targeted measures. While many countries are investing broadly in children's services, only a few have prioritised targeted actions for vulnerable groups. There are also areas (notably healthcare and housing) that are under targeted relative to their

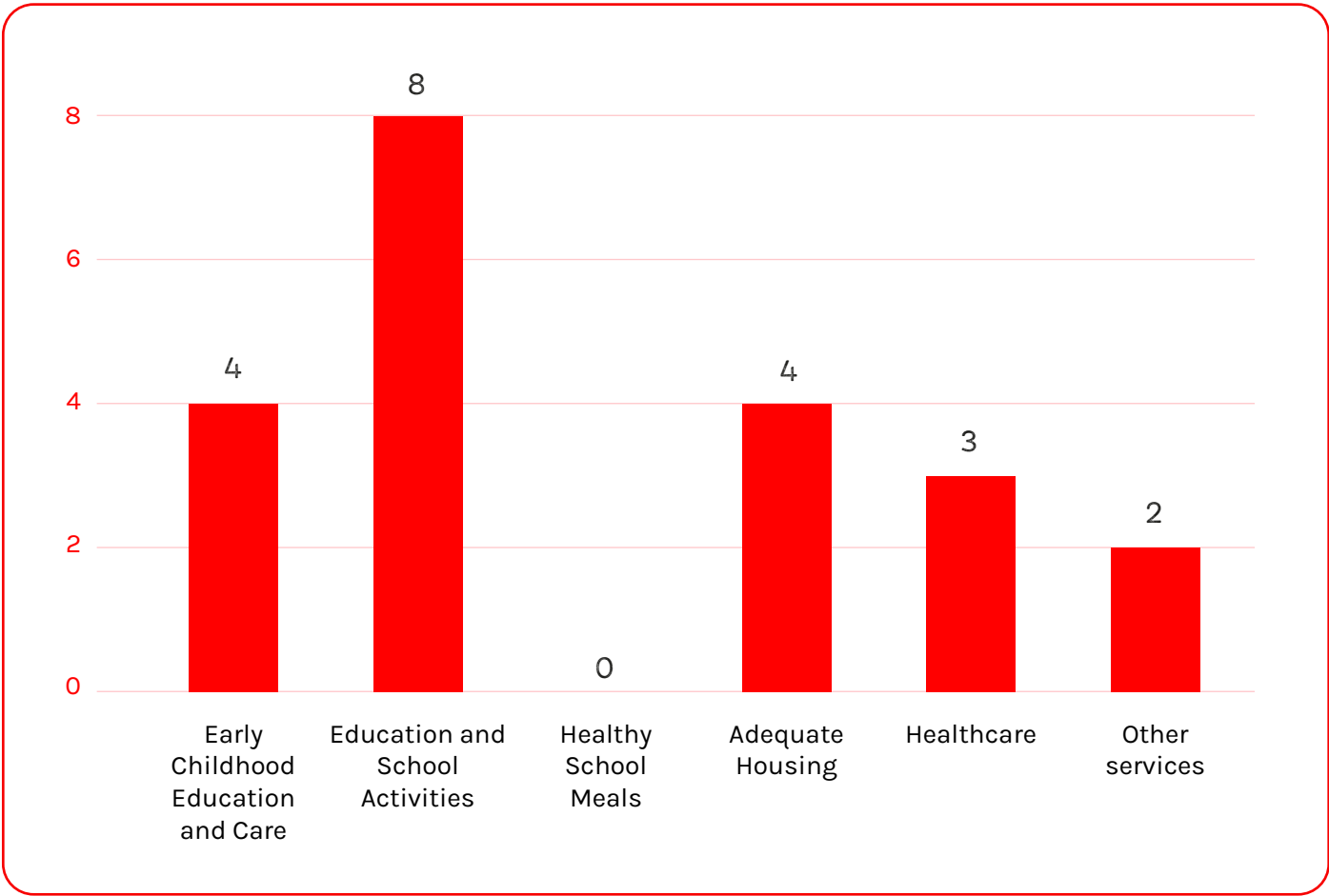


Table 6a: Investment targeted at Roma children in key areas (all 15 MS)

overall coverage, and others that have not been targeted at all. For example, out of the 15 countries analysed in this report, no country has made healthy school meals a targeted investment.

Croatia, Greece, Italy and **Slovakia** consistently appear across multiple targeted categories, indicating a stronger focus on addressing disadvantaged children or communities. Education and School Activities are the most common targeted areas in 8 countries (**Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia** and **Spain**). The targeted investment in this area suggests strong recognition of education as a lever to fight child poverty and reduce early school drop-out. This aligns with education being a priority in both overall and targeted strategies, reflecting broad EU alignment on the importance of inclusive education.

Several countries like **Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary**, and **Poland** appear prominently in overall investments, suggesting they have opted to consider Roma children within broader, universal measures rather than through a targeted approach, potentially overlooking the need for tailored interventions. Based on the information presented, there may also be a missed opportunity for **synergies between targeted measures and overall investments**. For example, countries targeting early childhood education often do not simultaneously target healthcare or adequate housing, despite these sectors being interlinked in breaking the cycle of poverty in children's early years. While many countries are investing broadly in children's services, only a few have prioritised targeted actions for vulnerable groups. This may weaken the impact of EU initiatives like the Child Guarantee, which specifically aims to support the most disadvantaged children, such as Roma.

TARGETED: Key area of investment	Number of countries	Countries
Early Childhood Education and Care	4	EL, HR, IT, SK
Education and School Activities	8	CZ, ES, EL, HR, IT, PT, RO, SK
Healthy School Meals	0	
Adequate Housing	4	EL, HR, IT, SK
Healthcare	3	CZ, RO, SK
Other services	2	EL, IT

Table 6b: Distribution of investment targeted at Roma children in key areas (by MS)

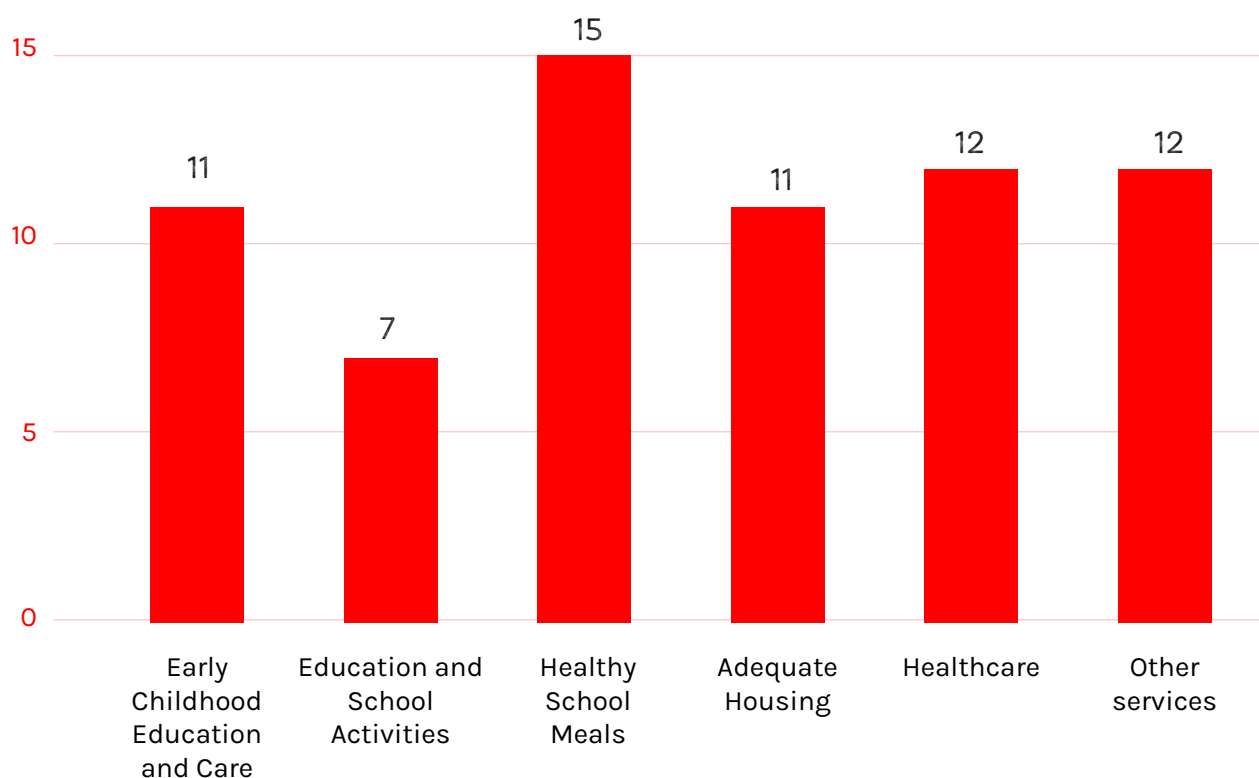


Table 7a: Investment in ‘children in need’ (may include Roma children) in key areas (all 15 MS)

TARGETED: Key area of investment	Number of countries	Countries
Early Childhood Education and Care	11	AT, BE, BG, CZ, ES, FI, HU, PL, PT, RO, SE
Education and School Activities	7	AT, BE, BG, CZ, HU, PL, SE
Healthy School Meals	15	AT, BE, BG, CZ, ES, FI, EL, HR, HU, IT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK
Adequate Housing	11	AT, BE, BG, CZ, FI, EL, HU, IT, PL, RO, SE
Healthcare	12	AT, BE, BG, ES, FI, EL, HR, HU, IT, PL, PT, SE
Other services	12	AT, BE, BG, CZ, FI, EL, HR, HU, IT, PL, PT, SE

Table 7b: Distribution of ‘overall children in need’ investment in key areas (by MS)

Below, we will look at each of the key focus areas of the Child Guarantee.

Access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

In **Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)**, several countries have implemented targeted interventions specifically for Roma children.

Croatia has established clear targets for increasing Roma children in pre-school programmes, from 1,010 in 2021 to 1,500 by 2030. **Greece** implements ‘Supportive actions for attendance in two-year compulsory pre-school education’, specifically designed for Roma infants. **Slovakia** has developed a grant scheme to support early care and early intervention for children aged 0-6 years, especially from marginalised Roma communities. This involves 158 members of development teams focused on early care and the promotion of parenting skills, with an emphasis on health and prevention, and 140 assistants working with families on developing parenting skills.

Other countries incorporate Roma children within broader ECEC initiatives without Roma-specific programming, potentially limiting their effectiveness for this population. **Hungary’s Emerging Settlements Programme** has contributed to improving care for approximately 9,600 children under age 3, many of whom are Roma.

Access to quality education

Education emerges as the most common area for interventions targeted at Roma children, reflecting the recognition of education as a critical pathway for breaking cycles of disadvantage.

Spain’s Kumpania Programme is ‘a socio-educational service specialising in Roma children, adolescents and young people and their family environment’, and stands out as a significant investment at €8.8 million in 2022. This socio-educational service specialises in supporting Roma

children, adolescents and young people within their family environment. Complementing this, Extremadura’s *Social Intervention Programme* addresses socio-educational needs of Roma children aged 0-16, while numerous Autonomous Communities, including Andalusia, Asturias, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Galicia and Murcia, offer tailored educational support for Roma students.

Slovakia has adopted a systematic approach to educational inclusion through comprehensive strategies that directly address structural barriers. Their initiatives focus on reducing segregation in schools attended by Roma children, supporting mother tongue education to help Roma children acquire proficiency in Slovak while preserving their cultural identity, and providing methodological guidance to prevent spatial and social segregation in educational settings.

Similarly, **Romania** has invested heavily in cultural mediation, employing 478 school mediators to facilitate the integration of Roma children into education systems. Their *Second Chance programme* offers educational opportunities for those who have interrupted their education, with 1,225 classes serving 20,062 students, alongside other support programmes including *Euro 200*, *High School Money*, school supplies, and scholarships.

Czechia supports Roma children’s education through a national funding call titled *Support for the Integration of the Roma Minority*, which targets children from socially excluded backgrounds. Projects under this initiative aim to increase pre-school attendance, support school readiness, foster family-school cooperation, and reduce early school leaving.

Adequate housing

Housing interventions specifically targeting Roma communities are evident in several countries. **Greece** implements the *Organised Temporary*



Relocation Places programme for Roma families living in irregular accommodation, with explicit recognition of Roma children's needs. **Romania's** efforts include the *Social Housing for Roma Communities pilot programme*, aimed at improving Roma communities' access to decent housing. This is implemented alongside the construction of up to 300 social housing units in the 8 development regions of Romania, and the regularisation of 200 informal settlements through the *Operational Programme for Inclusion and Social Dignity*, coordinated by the Ministry of Investments and European Projects.

Slovakia has developed particularly comprehensive housing programmes, conducting land settlement processes in 148 municipalities with marginalised Roma communities, improving housing infrastructure in 289 municipalities, and implementing projects that provide drinking water and sanitation to 18,954 Roma inhabitants.

Health

Several countries have implemented **healthcare** initiatives specifically for Roma communities.

Czechia has implemented the *Saste Roma* project, which provided health literacy education and preventive care to over 84,000 individuals in marginalised areas, including more than 400 Roma families. The project supported Roma families in securing paediatricians for their children, and disseminated educational materials through cultural events and digital tools. **Romania** coordinates an extensive network of 460 health mediators (446 state-funded) to facilitate healthcare access for Roma families, while developing 200 integrated community centres in areas with significant Roma populations. **Slovakia** has developed comprehensive health approaches, including health promotion assistants in Roma communities, systems monitoring health disparities, and targeted vaccination campaigns during European Immunisation Week, though only 53% of marginalised Roma have access to general

practitioners within 2 kilometres.

Other services

Additional measures targeting Roma children include **Greece's** large-scale training programmes on interculturalism, stereotyping, and discrimination, aiming to remove stereotypes and promote social integration. **Croatia** has established community resource centres in Roma settlements at Piškorovec and Podturen to provide integrated social services, including play hubs and toy libraries for over 300 Roma children lacking access to kindergartens.

Romania implements community responsibility programmes designed to integrate Roma children into local communities through tailored social inclusion activities, with Local Development Strategies including specific interventions for Roma communities in both urban and rural areas.

Slovakia employs community development teams working directly in marginalised Roma communities to promote social inclusion, with a focus on early care and promoting parenting skills, emphasising health and prevention. **Finland** focuses on combating discrimination through initiatives fostering joint encounters between Roma children and the general population, alongside efforts to increase knowledge about Roma culture among the wider society.

These additional services reflect a growing recognition of the need for holistic approaches that address social inclusion, discrimination and community development, alongside access to essential services, acknowledging that Roma children's needs extend beyond basic education, healthcare, and housing.

5. Funding and Resource Allocation

The analysis of funding and resource allocation for Roma children across EU Member States reveals a complex landscape with varying approaches, dimensions and a lack of sufficient, clear and detailed information about the specific funding sources being used. This diversity reflects different national, regional, and local strategic approaches in addressing the needs of Roma children within broader child welfare frameworks.

This analysis of the Biennial reports aimed to categorise reported investments based on whether they represent targeted interventions for Roma children or broader measures addressing children in need - either with or without explicit mention of Roma inclusion - and to identify the EU, national and regional level financial instruments used to fund them. The targeted interventions in the Biennial reports cover a range of measures with varying characteristics. There may also be additional targeted measures for Roma that are

not explicitly identified as such in the reports, and consequently not reflected in this analysis, but may effectively serve that purpose in practice. Furthermore, new initiatives may have been introduced after the submission of the reports.

In many cases, references to funding are made in general terms, such as unspecified mentions of EU funds, or to programmes or projects that are not clearly identified with a specific financial instrument. Additionally, while some investments for marginalised communities, vulnerable children or children at risk of poverty and exclusion can be interpreted as including Roma children, explicit references are not always made.

Consequently, classification has been challenging due to inconsistencies in the format, content, and clarity of the information submitted by Member States. As a result, there may be some discrepancies between the reported data, the interpretation of such data, and the actual investment approaches.

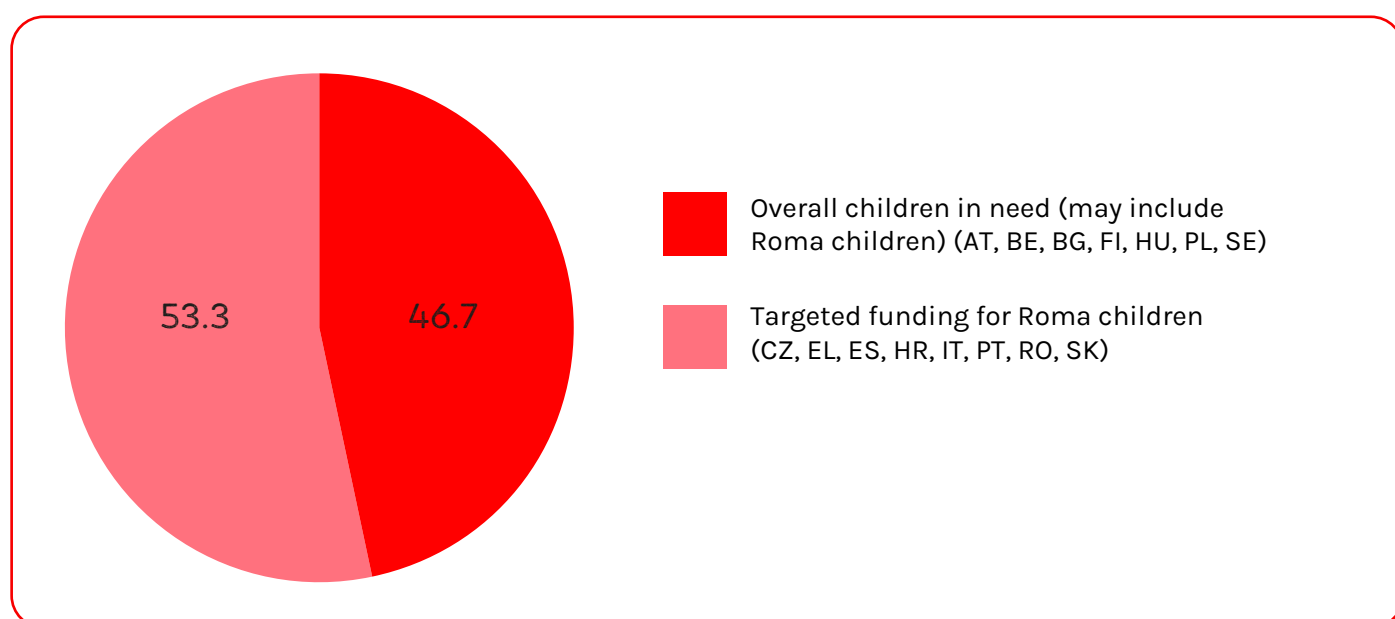


Table 8: Funding of measures - overall children in need (may include Roma children or not) vs targeted funding for Roma children (All 15 MS)

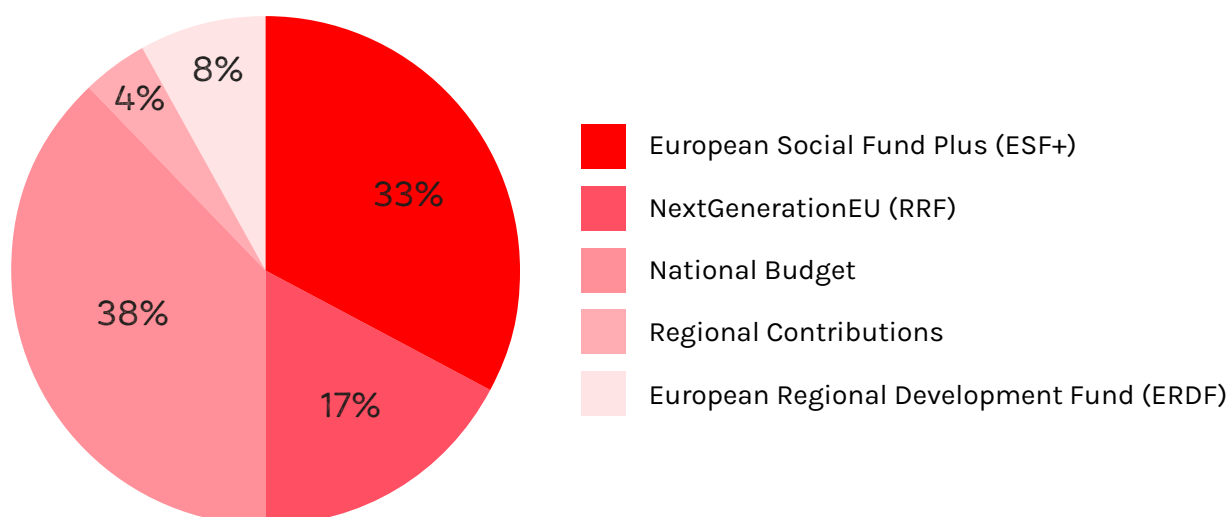


Table 9a: The financial instruments used by those MS who use targeted measures for Roma children

Source of funding for targeted measures for Roma children in MS	Number of countries	Countries
European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)	6	EL, ES, IT, PT, RO, SK
NextGenerationEU (Recovery and Resilience Facility - RRF)	4	EL, ES, RO, SK
National budget	8	EL, HR, IT, PL, PT, RO, SK, CZ
Regional contribution	1	ES
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	2	RO, SK

Table 9b: Source of finance for targeted measures for Roma children in the 15 MS

Type of funding

73% of Member States report having resources specifically allocated for Roma children under the Child Guarantee – **Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia** – combining various types of funding. The majority of these allocations are funded through EU instruments – primarily the ESF+ – and to a lesser extent the NextGenerationEU (Recovery and Resilience Facility) and the ERDF, while nearly 40% of financing comes from national sources. Investments reported for measures aimed at the overall category of ‘children in need’ have also been taken into account in the analysis of the use of different funding sources.

National funding

As regards national funding, all the 15 Member States’ Biennial reports refer to it as the one of the sources for implementing the Child Guarantee in their respective countries. Moreover, the majority of them (**Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia**) use national funding for implementing targeted measures for Roma children, mainly in education, housing and healthcare (in some cases, this is combined with interventions for overall children in need).

Croatia also allocates national funding for measures to improve the housing conditions of Roma families, for the provision of educational material and equipment in schools with a large number of Roma pupils, for the provision of social services for vulnerable groups including the Roma, and particularly for early intervention services targeting isolated communities such as Roma settlements.

Czechia reports national funding allocations for school meals.

Finland reports funding allocations for Roma children in several areas: provision of support

during transition phases in education (such as starting school, changing schools, starting hobbies, selecting upper secondary education), combating discrimination, and promoting cultural pride.

Greece focuses its national funding to support actions for school attendance in compulsory education, and to facilitate access to pre-school education for Roma children and other vulnerable groups. It also provides temporary relocation for Roma families living in irregular or temporary accommodation.

Italy focuses on specific programmes targeting Roma, Sinti, and Caminanti (RSC) children to promote their social and educational inclusion, and also on improving living conditions for vulnerable families, including Roma communities (providing temporary relocation of specific social groups living in temporary or irregular accommodation to suitable places).

Portugal also uses national funding for education, including scholarships for Roma students, to support attendance and completion of the 3rd cycle of basic education and secondary education, and for social inclusion measures (reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion among vulnerable groups, including Roma children).

Romania makes use of national funding for several key investments for Roma families: improving housing conditions through social housing, and facilitating access to healthcare for marginalised communities, including Roma populations, with health mediators.

Slovakia has allocated national funding for health interventions such as the employment of health promotion assistants in communities with significant Roma populations, and in housing, through the provision of affordable rented housing with accompanying measures for vulnerable groups, including Roma families.

On the other hand, there are Member States (**Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden**) that use an overall approach when using national funds.

Austria reports on general funding for reducing child poverty and social exclusion among vulnerable groups, including Roma children (e.g. providing free meals in all-day schools).

Belgium also reports the allocation of national (and regional) resources for combating child poverty.

Bulgaria also reports funding allocations for vulnerable groups, which include Roma children, primarily for health issues (free healthcare, improving maternal and child health services), education (pre-school and school education, including free school meals and inclusive education), social services, and financial support for families with children from vulnerable groups.

Portugal combines both a targeted and universal approach.

Spain reports allocating national funding for 11.74% of the total investments planned for the implementation of the Child Guarantee, and emphasises the role (albeit limited and uneven) of local and regional public finance.

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The ESF+ emerges as the primary EU funding source for reported initiatives specifically targeting Roma children across multiple countries, accounting for 33% of the total budget allocation for targeted measures for Roma children (**Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain**).

Out of the remaining Member States, **Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Portugal, Spain and Sweden**, refer to ESF+ investments as part of a broader approach targeting all children.

Some Member States (e.g. **Portugal, Czechia**) refer to the use of both approaches. It remains unclear whether these general ESF+ investments are effectively reaching and benefiting Roma children. Finally, two countries (**Finland and Poland**) do not report on the use of ESF+ for implementing the Child Guarantee.

Among the Member States using a targeted approach for Roma children when using ESF+, most of them do so in relation to education.

Czechia reports the use of ESF+ under the Specific Objective (j) for specific targeted activities for Roma children.

Greece uses the ESF+ on education - ensuring equal access to education for children from disadvantaged groups, including Roma (inclusive education) - and also on specific large-scale training programmes on interculturalism, to address stereotypes and promote inclusion of Roma communities.

In **Italy**, support to Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (RSC) children is envisaged under a national programme, where projects for inclusion and integration can be submitted. These are aimed at strengthening the social inclusion and integration of RSC children and young people and their families, through individual and group support measures, awareness-raising, guidance and training, and increasing the skills of professionals, educators and teachers.

Romania also uses ESF+ funds for education (scholarships, school supplies, and educational support for disadvantaged students, including Roma children), and supports local action groups in developing strategies with specific interventions for Roma communities.

In **Slovakia** ESF+ funding has been earmarked for the development and delivery of flexible education programmes - both formal and non-formal - including preventive and second-chance initiatives,



with a focus on pupils from marginalised Roma communities. **Spain** also reports investments around education (such as a regional socio-educational service specialising in Roma children and their families).

In those Member States using general approaches for children in need, the scope of action is focused on material deprivation, inclusion and education.

Spain, under the umbrella of an ESF+ programme to combat material deprivation, aims to provide food and basic material assistance to vulnerable children, including Roma children.

Sweden refers to funding initiatives which aim to combat the risk, and mitigate the consequences, of child poverty, focusing on socio-demographic areas where Roma live.

Czechia has focused on expanding community services for vulnerable children (food and material assistance) and on education (preventing early school leaving with an emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged children).

Bulgaria uses the ESF+ in areas such as health prevention, education (early childhood development, inclusive education, school desegregation, intercultural education, personal development support), anti-discrimination, care and social services for children and young people and, overall, for improving children's living conditions.

Croatia had a pilot programme to develop integrated child protection services and early intervention programmes targeting Roma children, and currently invests in improving social services in the country.

Austria targets material deprivation in education, providing school supplies and financial support for disadvantaged children, which may include Roma children.

Hungary reports interventions on inclusion for vulnerable children, where Roma children may benefit, including programmes at the municipal level. The scheme targets children and young adults under the age of 24, who receive the regular child protection benefits and/or are subject to child protection or care measures.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

ERDF investments can play a crucial role in supporting infrastructure improvements in education, healthcare, and housing. However, only 9% of MS (**Romania and Slovakia**) refer to the use of the ERDF for investments specifically aimed at Roma children. Three Member States (**Bulgaria, Spain and Italy**) report using the ERDF to support measures for children in need under the Child Guarantee, while the majority of Member States (**Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Poland and Sweden**) do not report using the ERDF for this purpose.

Romania reports the use of the ERDF (and ESF+ funds) to improve living conditions for Roma communities and other vulnerable children. This includes interventions to legalise and upgrade informal settlements (not to dismantle settlements) and investments in the construction or rehabilitation of multifunctional centres providing services to children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Slovakia also devotes ERDF resources for affordable housing for vulnerable groups, including Roma communities.

Among the Member States reporting the use of ERDF for general approaches for children in need, Italy reports funding to support the development of educational infrastructure that indirectly benefits Roma children by improving access to quality education.



Bulgaria focuses on measures related to education, health, social infrastructure, and improving housing conditions for marginalised groups, including Roma.

NextGenerationEU funds (The Recovery and Resilience Facility, RRF)

RRF funds have also been used to support targeted initiatives for Roma children (**Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain**) and is also referred to for interventions for overall children in need, where Roma may or not be included (**Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, Hungary, Italy and Romania**). 5 Member States (**Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Portugal and Sweden**) do not report using the RRF.

With RRF financing, Member States with targeted interventions for Roma children have implemented measures related to early childhood education:

Greece is carrying out a project to increase places in new early childhood care centres, indirectly benefiting Roma children.

Romania is using the RRF to construct nurseries and enhance early education services for vulnerable children, and for the construction and rehabilitation of centres providing healthcare and social services in areas with significant Roma populations.

Slovakia is focusing on early care programmes for children aged 0–6 from marginalised Roma communities, focusing on cognitive and emotional development. It also has a programme aimed at desegregating schools attended by Roma children.

Other Member States using the RRF for overall children in need, also focus on education and early support services. Italy aims to prevent institutionalisation by supporting families in vulnerable situations, where Roma could be included.

Austria utilised RRF funding to improving access to health services. While not specifically targeted at Roma children, vulnerable groups, including Roma, may benefit indirectly.

Challenges

Despite these reported investments, monitoring the specific allocation and impact of funds for Roma children remains challenging due to several factors. The use of integrated approaches that do not disaggregate funding by target group, makes it difficult to assess the precise benefit to Roma children. Inconsistent reporting mechanisms across countries and funding streams further complicate the tracking of allocations. The involvement of multiple funding sources in single initiatives, and a widespread low level of clarity and detail on funding allocation and their use, present further challenges.

Moreover, the absence of Roma-specific budget lines in many countries' financial reporting makes it difficult to isolate and evaluate the effectiveness of resources dedicated to this vulnerable group.

The potential of EU funds for targeted and efficient investment in Roma children remains largely untapped. Greater use of both the ESF+ and the under-utilised ERDF could significantly support efforts to address poverty and exclusion among Roma children.

Expanding the use of regional funding instruments for Roma children also represents a key challenge that needs to be addressed.

This complex funding landscape underscores the need for more standardised reporting mechanisms and greater transparency in resource allocation, to ensure that Roma children receive adequate support and that the impact of these investments can be effectively measured and improved over time. Monitoring actual investments in Roma children should be carried out as an ongoing exercise to that end.

Recommendations

The Child Guarantee was established to address the needs of vulnerable children across Europe, with Roma children explicitly recognised as a priority target group. Member States are requested to provide Biennial implementation reports on progress, target groups, service provision, and contextual factors.

The analysis of the Biennial reports of 15 Member States reveals insufficient information and

inadequate data to confirm whether the Child Guarantee is effectively benefiting Roma children. Implementation of the Child Guarantee may have progressed further since the Biennial reports were drafted, with possible new positive developments. However, the findings of this analysis reveal that there are several critical gaps that continue to hinder the achievement of the initiative's objectives.

Main challenges regarding Roma children in the implementation of the Child Guarantee:

Lack of Strategic Focus on Roma Children: In many countries, the focus on Roma children is diluted by including them under broader categories of children in need or disadvantaged groups, reducing the specificity of targeted investments.

Lack of Clarity in Resource Allocation: It is not clear whether reported investments represent additional resources or existing programmes. The inability to distinguish between newly allocated resources and re-packaged, pre-existing programmes, and the insufficient disaggregation of Roma-specific spending within broader budget allocations remain a challenge.

EU Funding Concerns: There is a lack of clarity on whether and how EU funds (ESF+/ERDF) are being utilised to their full potential, and whether they are genuinely mobilising new resources together with national/regional funding.

Governance and Coordination Challenges: Fragmented institutional structures create implementation barriers at multiple levels, characterised by the inadequate involvement of National Roma Contact Points in Child Guarantee processes, and there is poor vertical coordination between national policies and regional/local implementation authorities.

Data Gaps in the Monitoring System: The absence of Roma-specific data and robust monitoring frameworks - hindered by methodological barriers including fears of discrimination and privacy concerns - undermines evidence-based decision-making, resource allocation, outcome tracking, and accountability mechanisms needed to translate commitments into measurable improvements for Roma children.

How to ensure the Child Guarantee becomes a useful instrument for overcoming Roma child poverty, inequality and social exclusion?

Overall, there is a need to recall the ‘Roma component’ of the Child Guarantee. Given the limited information on whether there are explicit investments to tackle Roma children’s poverty and social exclusion, there is a need to re-emphasise that Roma children are a priority target group in the mandate of the Child Guarantee.

Given the challenges identified through this analysis of 15 Member States’ Biennial reports, below we present a series of recommendations to strengthen the use of the Child Guarantee to overcome child poverty and social exclusion among Roma children by 2030.

1) Strengthen and Expand Targeted Interventions for Roma Children

Design Tailored Interventions: Address the specific challenges faced by Roma children in areas such as education (e.g. reducing school segregation and drop-out from compulsory education), healthcare, housing (e.g. dismantling settlements and providing decent housing), and early childhood development.

Focus on Segregated Settlements and Pockets of Extreme Poverty: These are one of the most tangible manifestations of extreme poverty, where Roma children are over-represented. Segregated settlements represent the concentration of urgent basic needs. As described in 2023 EU Council Conclusions: “segregated settlements are slums and substandard housing settlements of an informal and stable nature, with physical, functional and/or social isolation, where the objective conditions related to housing, poverty and access to rights and public services are significantly

worse as compared to the rest of the population”.³⁴ By focusing on situations of such deprivation, investments under the Child Guarantee would ensure a specific focus on Roma children, and facilitate the tracking and monitoring of funding allocations.

2) Enhance Financial Transparency and Strategic Mobilisation of EU Funding

Establish clear budget lines within national financial reporting systems dedicated to Roma-focused initiatives, paired with standardised tracking mechanisms to measure investment impact on child outcomes.

Increase strategic deployment of EU funding instruments, moving beyond the minimum 5% ESF+ allocation for child poverty to leverage the full potential of both ESF+ and ERDF in combination.

Expand the role of the ERDF to address territorial disparities affecting Roma communities, particularly in segregated settlements where extreme deprivation persists.

This combined funding approach creates powerful synergies that can disrupt intergenerational poverty cycles through integrated interventions that address both social and infrastructure needs. Member States must maximise these funding instruments during the current programming period, establishing transparent frameworks that distinguish new investments from existing programmes and demonstrate measurable impact on Roma children’s lives.

3) Improve Governance Mechanisms and Policy Coherence

Measures for Roma children in the NAPs should be more closely aligned with NRSFs to

³⁴ Council of the European Union, [Council conclusions on measures to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and desegregated housing, and to address segregated settlements](#) (ST 13517/23), p. 2, 9 October 2023.

effectively address the multifaceted needs of Roma communities and enhance impacts on poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. This includes setting shared objectives and introducing complementary measures - such as filling policy gaps, reinforcing under-supported areas, or scaling up effective initiatives - within an integrated, cross-sector implementation framework.

Enhance cooperation between National Roma Contact Points and National Coordinators of the Child Guarantee at Member States level, to improve the design, implementation and monitoring of investments, ensuring more effective dialogue and collaboration between these key stakeholders.

Strengthen governance mechanisms between national public authorities and regional or local administrations in Member States with a decentralised structure, where key competences for reducing child poverty are held at the sub-national level.

Ensure participatory governance in the Child Guarantee by including the voices of those with lived experience - such as Roma children and Roma-led NGOs - in the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies, to enhance relevance, accountability, and impact.

Integrate Roma child poverty into the European Semester framework, ensuring that poverty and social exclusion are addressed as a priority in Member States. This should include the development of specific monitoring indicators, reinforcing the Semester's role as a key mechanism to drive tangible progress and commitment, at both EU and national levels, in tackling Roma children's inequality.

4) Strengthen Data Collection Systems and Develop Robust Monitoring Frameworks

Promote the consistent collection and use of anonymised, disaggregated child welfare data by ethnicity, in full compliance with EU data protection and non-discrimination regulations. This is essential to monitor implementation, assess outcomes, and improve the visibility and inclusion of Roma children in both targeted and mainstream policies.

Establish standardised methodologies for ethnic data collection across regions and Member States, supported by collaboration among national statistical offices, local authorities, and civil society organisations to ensure data accuracy and reliability.

Develop comprehensive monitoring systems based on clear, outcome-focused indicators to assess the effectiveness of measures targeting Roma children. Regular national and EU-level assessments should guide strategy refinement and more efficient resource allocation.

The European Commission should integrate specific indicators on Roma children into the Joint Monitoring Framework of the European Child Guarantee, starting with the next reporting cycle and continuing through 2030, in line with their designation as children in need.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) should support this process by refining monitoring indicators, conducting targeted research (e.g. Roma Surveys), and providing guidance to both Member States and the European Commission. FRA's role should include guidance on ensuring ethical standards, protecting privacy, and aligning monitoring efforts with the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020-2030.

Conclusion

This analysis highlights both the progress made and the persistent challenges in implementing the Child Guarantee for Roma children. The future success of the Child Guarantee depends on its ability to systematically address these challenges through coordinated efforts at local, regional, national and EU levels, with a clear focus on the needs of particularly vulnerable groups - especially Roma children.

The EU and Member States have a powerful instrument to address the acute needs of marginalised children, including Roma, across Europe. For the Child Guarantee to fulfil its promise of ensuring that no child is left behind, further commitment and collaboration towards Roma children is needed. Achieving the EU-wide goal of reducing child poverty and social exclusion depends on effectively addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by Roma children.

Key messages:

- The Roma component of the Child Guarantee needs greater **visibility** and **investment**, as Roma children remain a key target group facing persistent poverty and exclusion. Member States should explicitly reflect this in policy design, governance, and monitoring - **using disaggregated data and Roma-specific indicators**.
- Member States must enhance governance through **active involvement of National Roma Contact Points** and **stronger coordination** between the governance of the Child Guarantee, including National Child Guarantee Coordinators, and **people with lived experience, including Roma children and Roma-led organisations**.
- Stronger alignment with Roma National Strategic Frameworks is essential to **build synergies, and EU funds, particularly the ESF+ and ERDF**, should be better utilised for **targeted interventions**.
- **New and expanded measures are needed**, not just a rebranding of existing ones. Investments should focus on key areas such as **education, healthcare, housing, early childhood, and social protection**, while addressing the structural causes of poverty, including discrimination and intergenerational disadvantage.
- The European Commission should promote this component **by integrating Roma-related indicators into the Child Guarantee's monitoring framework through 2030** and by supporting improved data systems at national level.

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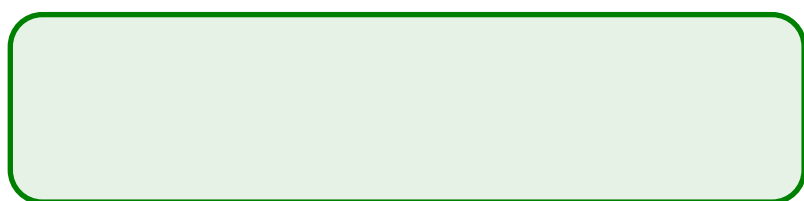
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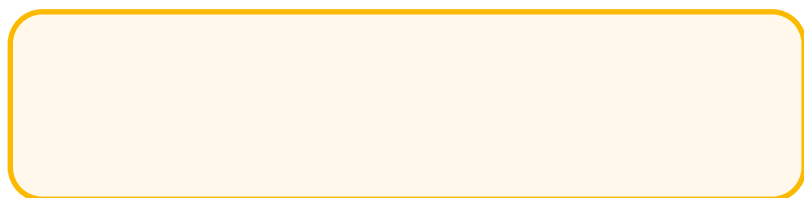
Annex: 15 Member States Country Fiches

Key Categories Identified in Member States Biennial Reports on the European Child Guarantee for Roma Children

These categories are based on the analysis of the information reported by Member States in their Biennial Reports on the European Child Guarantee by Eurochild and EURoma Network.



- Direct action to support Roma children



- Indirect action to support Roma children



- No action identified to support Roma children

2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines several key services targeted at vulnerable children, including Roma children.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Expansion of early childhood education and care facilities, with specific funding aimed at increasing access for children under three years old and extending opening hours to accommodate working parents.
- Free education offers in several regions to reduce financial barriers and ensure equitable access to early education.

Education and School Activities

- Programmes aimed at reducing school segregation and drop-out rates, including the involvement of Roma mediators to improve integration and educational outcomes.
- Additional resources for language promotion and inclusive education.

Healthy School Meals

- Provision of free or subsidised healthy meals in schools targeting socio-economically disadvantaged families, including Roma.


Adequate Housing

- Initiatives like *Housing First* and *WOHNSCHIRM* focus on preventing homelessness and providing stable housing solutions for vulnerable families.

Healthcare

- Expansion of mental health services and early intervention for children experiencing psychological distress.
- Programmes such as *Frühe Hilfen* provide tailored support for families in challenging situations.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 

Overall children in need 

Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Roma children are considered under 'overall children in need'.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

No explicit reference in report. 




Data on Roma children:


No specific disaggregated data. 

Specific Roma Indicators:

No specific indicators. 

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF   

National, Regional  

2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

- The report does not identify any key services directly targeted at Roma children. Services are broadly aimed at vulnerable groups, including those at risk of poverty or social exclusion.
- Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children is not included in the Report or in Appendix No. 1 and 2.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



Roma children are not mentioned, a general approach targeting 'children at risk of poverty or social exclusion' is used.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



No explicit reference in report.

Data on Roma children:



No, the report refers to various groups of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion but does not provide specific data on, or references to, Roma children.

Specific Roma Indicators: No



Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National, Regional



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

Roma children may indirectly benefit from the following key services aimed at children in need:

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Fee exemption for kindergartens and nurseries: Since April 2022, parents do not pay fees for children to attend kindergartens and nurseries, which removes financial barriers for vulnerable groups, including Roma children.
- Integrated Early Childhood Development Services aim to provide a multicultural and inclusive environment to support children's transition from family to kindergarten.

Education and School Activities

- The *Education Programme 2021–2027* includes measures, at municipal level, for school desegregation, and anti-discrimination.
- Activities promoting intercultural education through culture, science, and sports to foster inclusion.

Healthy School Meals

- Vouchers/cards are provided for children aged 10 months to 3 years from vulnerable groups to access healthy meals.

Adequate Housing

- The *Regional Development Programme 2021–2027* finances housing improvement projects targeting marginalised groups, including Roma families.

Healthcare

- Health mediators work in Roma communities to raise awareness about health services and promote access.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



Roma children are mentioned under different categories: children experiencing severe housing deprivation, children from ethnic minority backgrounds, and children in precarious family situations.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



No explicit reference in report.

Data on Roma children:



Only data on material deprivation: In 2022, 76.2% of Roma children experienced material deprivation, compared to 23% of the Bulgarian ethnic group, 33% of the Turkish ethnic group, and 33.2% of other ethnic groups.

Specific Roma Indicators: No



Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines key services targeted for Roma children.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Programmes include day care and extracurricular classes aimed at educational and social integration, particularly for Roma children.

Education and School Activities

- Ensuring a greater number of out-of-school activities with more participation of children and youth at risk of poverty and social exclusion of the Roma national minority.
- Efforts to increase the percentage of young Roma completing four- or five-year high school programmes, with a target of $\geq 10\%$ by 2030.

Healthy School Meals

- Although not exclusively for Roma children, the free school meal programmes provided under the National Action Plan include them among all children at risk.

Adequate Housing

- Roma families benefit from programmes under the *Annual Programme for Housing and Improving Living Conditions*, which provide infrastructure improvements such as carpentry, bathroom furnishing, and household appliances.

Healthcare

- Preventive workshops on key health problems are planned for Roma settlements, targeting 150-300 Roma children.
- A systematic review of Roma children's health is planned within the 'Health Image of Roma' study, covering 750 Roma children.
- The National Strategic Plan for Early Intervention includes the setting up of integrated health systems for early detection and support, particularly targeting isolated and rural communities, including Roma settlements.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Yes, 'Children of the Roma national minority'.



Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

Croatia's National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021-2027 is explicitly referenced, however, there is no detailed evidence of coordinated measures.



Data on Roma children:

- Number of children of the Roma national minority included in pre-school programmes: 2021: 1010; 2022: 1185; 2023: 1234. Target value in 2030: 1500.
- Coverage of children of the Roma national minority aged 3-6 with pre-school education: 2018: 23%. Target value in 2030: 54%.
- In Međimurje County, the number of Roma children included in early intervention services decreased from 67 in 2021 to 46 in 2023.
- Approximately 90% of Roma individuals live below the poverty threshold, and about 70% of Roma families experience poverty.
- Most Roma households below the poverty risk threshold are concentrated in regions such as Central Croatia (97.5%) and Međimurje (96.4%).



Specific Roma Indicators:

Roma pre-school enrolment, coverage rates for ages 3-6, early intervention in Međimurje, individual and family poverty rates, and regional poverty concentration.



Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines some key services targeted at Roma children and also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- The National Recovery and Resilience Plan is supporting the inclusion of socially disadvantaged children in kindergartens.
- Support for the education of Roma children and pupils in pre-school education, cooperation between families and schools.

Education and School Activities

- Standardisation of diagnostic tools for Roma children.
- The Support for the Integration of the Roma Minority, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic programme aims to ensure the development of inclusive education and to contribute to the successful education of pupils at primary school.
- Comprehensive support for schools in municipalities with a higher share of pupils at risk of social exclusion, reduction of segregation.

Healthy School Meals

- The non-profit organisation Women for Women launched the project W4W: SOS to Kindergarten in March 2023, which provides food to children in kindergartens (two snacks and one lunch per day).


Adequate Housing

- Social and affordable housing projects based on Housing First and Housing Led principles.

Healthcare


- The Saste Roma Project – Developing Health in Excluded Localities. Support of over 400 clients from the Roma community in raising awareness of serious illnesses.

Approach to Roma children:


Specifically targeted 

Overall children in need 


Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Yes, children living in a Roma community identified as a target group. 

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):


Czechia's NAP builds on the 2021–2030 Social Inclusion Strategy, which serves as the country's de facto Roma inclusion framework, indicating alignment through the implementation of strategic objectives targeting Roma communities. 

Data on Roma children:




Yes, the Report provides several pieces of data on Roma children: 

- About 262,000 Roma live in the Czech Republic.
- 21,691 people declared Roma nationality.
- Low participation of Roma children in pre-school education, where children from the general Czech population attend pre-school (beyond the compulsory year) 2.5 times more often than Roma children.
- Early school leaving among Roma pupils reaches up to 57%.
- There remain about 130 segregated schools in the Czech Republic where Roma make up at least one-third of the pupils.
- Roma pupils represent one-fifth of students in special classes in mainstream schools, even though they make up only 3% of the overall pupil population

Specific Roma Indicators:

1. Pre-school attendance rate: Relative pre-school attendance rate of Roma children vs. general population 
2. Early school leaving: Rate of early school leaving among Roma children
3. Segregation in schools: Number of segregated schools with high Roma representation; Disproportionate representation of Roma in special education
4. Census-based self-identification: Official census self-identification of Roma nationality

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF   

National 

2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines key services targeted for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Roma children are supported during key transition phases such as starting school and engaging in early childhood education.

Education and School Activities

- Measures aim to promote pride in Roma culture and provide opportunities to learn the Roma language.
- Initiatives include fostering encounters between Roma children and the general population to reduce bullying and improve understanding.

Healthy School Meals

- Free school meals provided daily from pre-primary education to upper secondary level.
- Development Programme for School Meals to improve meal quality and encourage healthy eating habits.

Adequate Housing

- National programme to eliminate long-term homelessness, including supported housing units for young people.

Healthcare

- Child health clinic services are statutory and free of charge health services for children below school age and their families.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



Yes, listed in the Action Plan Roma children and young people

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



Yes, Finland's National Roma Policy (ROMPO) 2023–2030 is referenced as part of the measures aimed at improving the wellbeing and rights of Roma children.

Data on Roma children:



The report cites a qualitative study on the wellbeing and rights of Roma children by the Ombudsman for Children, but not measurable data.

Specific Roma Indicators:



Pre-school attendance, compulsory education participation, and involvement in school meals and housing programmes, alongside qualitative insights from field visits.

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines key services targeted for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Facilitating access and systematic attendance of Roma children in kindergarten and ensure their smooth transition to primary school.

Education and School Activities

- Supportive interventions in Roma communities to increase access to education and reduce school drop-out among Roma children and adolescents.

Healthy School Meals

- Provision of free daily meals to students in primary schools located in areas with high poverty rates.

Adequate Housing

- Providing temporary relocation of Roma families living in irregular or temporary accommodation to suitable organised places.


Healthcare

- Free access to public health facilities and vaccinations under the national vaccination programme for all children, including those in vulnerable groups.

Other Services

- Implementation of large-scale training programmes on interculturalism, stereotyping and Roma anti-discrimination.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 

Overall children in need 

Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Listed under 'Children with a migrant background, refugee children and Roma children'

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

The National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2021–2030 is referenced. However, details on how the connection between the two strategies happens are not reported.




Data on Roma children:

- Percentage of Roma children receiving formal pre-school education and care at ages up to 3 years is 9%, while for ages above 3 years it increases to 32%.
- 81% of Roma children aged 5 to 17 attended compulsory education in 2021, 64% (ages 4 to 15) in the case of those living in settlements, of which only 16% completed upper secondary education, compared to 95.7% of the total population.

Specific Roma Indicators:

- Indicator: Percentage of Roma children receiving formal pre-school education and care.
 - Ages up to 3 years: 9%; Ages above 3 years: 32%
- Indicator: Percentage of Roma children aged 5–17 attending compulsory education.
 - 81% attendance rate in 2021.
- Indicator: Number of Roma children benefiting from housing programmes such as *Organised Temporary Relocation Places*.
 - The programme specifically targets Roma children living in temporary or irregular accommodation.
- Indicator: Qualitative data on barriers to school attendance for Roma children by age group, recorded during field visits by Regional Task Forces.

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF   

National 

2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines key services targeted at Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Programmes to improve the growth, development and care of children living in the most disadvantaged settlements.

Education and School Activities

- Scholarships and support programmes in higher education that include Roma students as beneficiaries.
- Efforts to increase the percentage of Roma students participating in higher education.

Healthy School Meals

- Disadvantaged children are entitled to benefits for school meals: they can apply to free meals in nurseries, kindergartens, and primary schools, and they can receive a 50% discount in high schools.

Adequate Housing

- Housing safety interventions to ensure safety of living conditions.

Healthcare

- Provision of timely access to appropriate paediatric eye care for children in emerging Roma settlements.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



Listed under 'Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)'

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



The Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 is referenced. However, limited detail is reported on the connection between the two strategies.

Data on Roma children:



- Participation of Roma students in higher education (from the Labour Force Survey of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office):
 - 2019: 2.2%
 - 2020: 1.3%
 - 2021: 1.0%
 - 2022: 0.9%
- The proportion of 15- to 24-year-old Roma students participating in higher education:
 - Initial percentage in 2019: 2.2%
 - Target for 2026: 3%
 - Target for 2030: 4%

Specific Roma Indicators:



- Proportion of Roma children at risk of poverty, children living in a quasi-unemployed household and Roma children living in severe material and social deprivation
- NEET rate among 15-24 year olds for Roma and non-Roma (+gap, Labour Force Survey)
- Proportion of Roma students aged 15-24 in secondary and higher education (+ gap; Labour Force Survey)
- Housing adequacy among Roma

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines some targeted key services for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Support for access to early childhood education and care for Roma children.
- Measures aim to promote the inclusion of Roma, Sinti, and Caminanti (RSC) children in early childhood education settings to improve their educational outcomes.

Education and School Activities

- Specific interventions to reduce school drop-out rates and promote educational participation among RSC children.

Healthy School Meals

- Programmes aimed at improving living conditions for RSC families to ensure adequate housing for children.

Adequate Housing

- Providing temporary relocation of Roma families living in irregular or temporary accommodation to suitable organised places.


Healthcare

- Free access to public health facilities and vaccinations under the national vaccination programme for all children, including those in vulnerable groups.

Other Services

- Training programmes on inclusion and interculturalism are part of broader initiatives aimed at addressing stereotypes, promoting social inclusion, and combating discrimination, specifically targeting Roma communities. These programmes are implemented within the framework of Italy's National Action Plan (NAP) for the European Child Guarantee and align with the objectives of the National Roma Strategy.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 

Overall children in need 

Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



'Roma, Sinti and Caminanti children' listed under children from migration background, unaccompanied minors and minorities.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



Yes, Italy's National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti, and Caminanti 2021-2030 is integrated into the measures of the NAP, focusing on the social and educational inclusion of these groups.

Data on Roma children:



No specific data on Roma children

Specific Roma Indicators:



It is noted that no tools are available to quantify the more specific targets related to minors from different target groups including children with a migrant or minority ethnic background, particularly Roma.

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines targeted key services for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- Financial support programmes for families to access nurseries and childcare centres, prioritising children from low-income families, including Roma children.

Education and School Activities

- Programmes aimed at increasing access and reducing barriers to school participation for children in temporarily difficult financial situations, including Roma children.

Healthy School Meals

- Free meals provided to children in schools and kindergartens, including those from vulnerable groups such as Roma families.

Adequate Housing

- TERMO programme aimed at improving housing conditions; Social Rental Agency (SAN) apartments combined with family support services, including support for foster care families.

Healthcare

- Free access to public health facilities and vaccinations under the national vaccination programme for all children, including those in vulnerable groups such as Roma children.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



Under children from migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds (in particular Roma) and children of Ukrainian refugees.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



It mentions the government social integration strategy for the Roma minority. However, the report does not provide detail of the contents, actions and funding sources.

Data on Roma children:



- The report provides limited data on Roma children in Poland, focusing primarily on their educational participation and geographical distribution:
 - Approximately 2,500 Roma children attended school in Poland in 2023.
 - The largest Roma communities, and therefore the highest concentration of Roma children, are located in the southern regions of Poland, particularly in the Dolnośląskie, Małopolskie, and Śląskie Voivodeships.

Specific Roma Indicators:



No specific indicators for Roma children.

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National



2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Assessing the inclusion of Roma children

Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines targeted key services for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- At least 30% of vacancies in free early childhood education and care (ECEC) facilities are reserved for children in need as outlined in the Child Guarantee and also those on the highest level of family benefit.
- ECEC policies aim to support families in reconciling personal, family, and professional lives while ensuring quality care for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Education and School Activities

- Scholarships are provided to support attendance and completion in the 3rd cycle of basic education and secondary education for students from the Portuguese Roma community.
- Development of specific projects for the social inclusion of children and young people, particularly from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds, including Roma children.
- Interventions include intercultural mediation to strengthen ties between schools and communities, benefiting children from ethnic minority backgrounds such as Roma.

Healthy School Meals

- Provides at least one healthy meal each school day to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, including Roma children.



Adequate Housing

- Programmes to improve housing conditions for vulnerable families, including Roma families.

Healthcare

- Ensuring free access to health services for all children in need, including those from ethnic minorities such as Roma.
- Creation of mental health facilities for children and adolescents, providing free access to these services for children in poverty, including Roma.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 
Overall children in need 


Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Yes, listed under 'children and young people from Roma communities'.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

Yes, the National Roma Integration Strategy 2013-2022 was integrated into the measures of the NAP, focusing on education, housing, and healthcare for Roma children.

Data on Roma children:




No specific data on Roma children 

Specific Roma Indicators:

To ensure effective equal access to essential services for children and young people with a migrant background or ethnic minority background, particularly the Portuguese Roma Community:

- Early school dropout rate by Roma children in the 2nd and 3rd study cycles.
- % of children and young people from Roma communities who attend public school and benefit from the highest level of socio-economic support (level A).

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF 
National 


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Early Childhood Education and Care

- Investments in nurseries and kindergartens to improve access to early education for vulnerable children.

Education and School Activities

- Early Warning Mechanism in Education system designed to identify and monitor students at risk of dropping out, which includes Roma children.
- School mediators are employed to facilitate the integration of Roma children into education systems and reduce school drop-out rates.
- Programmes such as *High School Money*, scholarships, and school supplies aim to support disadvantaged students, including Roma children.

Healthy School Meals

- The *National Healthy Meal Programme* provides free daily meals or food packages for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Adequate Housing

- The pilot programme *Social Housing for Roma Communities* aims to improve access to adequate housing for Roma families.
- Specific interventions target informal settlements with significant Roma populations to improve living conditions and provide legal housing solutions.



Healthcare

- Health mediators work within marginalised communities to facilitate access to healthcare services for Roma families.


Other Services

- Local Action Groups develop strategies that include specific interventions for Roma communities in urban and rural areas.
- Community Responsibility Programmes aim to integrate Roma children into local communities through tailored social inclusion activities.


Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 
Overall children in need 


Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Yes, listed as a target group. 


Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

Yes, elements from the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027 are incorporated, particularly in education (school mediators) and housing initiatives such as the Social Housing for Roma Communities. 



Data on Roma children:

- 79% of Roma children are at risk of poverty, a 1% increase compared to 2016. 
- The rate of severe material deprivation among Roma children decreased from 75% in 2016 to 55% in 2021.
- Only 27% of Roma children participated in early education in 2021, significantly below the national average of 79%.
- The percentage of Roma children learning in schools where the majority of classmates are Roma increased from 28% to 51%.
- The percentage of Roma individuals affected by housing deprivation decreased from 83% to 70%, but overcrowding worsened, increasing from 76% to 87%.
- The percentage of Roma individuals without access to tap water inside their household decreased by 28%, reaching 40%.
- The percentage of children willing to have a Roma classmate rose from 48.7% in 2013 to 61.8% in 2022.

Specific Roma Indicators:

Number of municipalities with informal communities benefiting from specific intervention measures to improve living conditions could be identified: 239 housing units built for Roma people. 

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF 
National 

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Early Childhood Education and Care

- Programmes targeting children aged 0–6 years from marginalised Roma communities to improve cognitive, emotional, and inter-personal skills.
- Members of development teams employed to promote early care and parenting skills in marginalised Roma communities.

Education and School Activities

- Implementation of inclusive education strategies to reduce segregation in schools attended by Roma children.
- Support measures introduced to help Roma children acquire proficiency in Slovak as a second language while preserving their mother tongue.
- Development of methodological guidance and tools to prevent spatial and social segregation in schools attended by Roma children.

Healthy School Meals

- Free daily meals provided for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, including Roma children.

Adequate Housing

- Programmes supporting municipalities with land settlement processes in areas with marginalised Roma communities.
- Projects focusing on access to drinking water, waste management, and sanitation in marginalised communities.



Healthcare

- Health promotion assistants employed in communities with significant Roma populations to facilitate access to healthcare services.
- Health promotion campaigns targeting vulnerable populations, including Roma communities, during European Immunisation Week.


Other Services

- Teams working directly in marginalised Roma communities to promote social inclusion and improve living conditions.


Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 
Overall children in need 

Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Yes, Roma children, particularly those from marginalised Roma communities (MRCs), explicitly listed. 


Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

Yes, alignment with the Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation Strategy 2023 appears substantial, with shared objectives and complementary measures, particularly in education, housing, and healthcare. 

Data on Roma children:

Yes, detailed and specific data on Roma children, focusing on their socio-economic conditions, the risk of poverty and social exclusion, education, healthcare, and housing, including:


- Only approximately 53% of MRC populations have access to an adult general practitioner within 2 km, and 44% have access to a paediatric outpatient clinic.
- 200 informal settlements are targeted for regulated legal status through interventions funded through Information and data support services (SIDP).





Specific Roma Indicators:

Several indicators related to Roma children and youth:

- Number of municipalities with MRCs involved in various projects
- Number of Roma mediators and assistants in schools
- Number of supported entities providing services to Roma communities
- Number of health promotion assistants working in communities with MRCs
- Number of health education activities implemented in MRCs



Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF 
National 

2024 Biennial report on the implementation of the Child Guarantee

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Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines some targeted key services for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- *Kumpania Programme*, a socio-educational service specialising in Roma children and their families to increase school attendance.
- Creation of new publicly funded places for early childhood education, prioritising areas with high poverty or social exclusion rates.

Education and School Activities

- Specific programmes across various Autonomous Communities to ensure educational continuity and success for Roma students.
- The *I+I Programme of the Community of Madrid* carries out educational reinforcement actions aimed at vulnerable students, including Roma.
- Social Intervention Programme in Extremadura targeted at Roma children aged 0–16 to address absenteeism, early school leaving, and socio-educational needs.

Healthy School Meals

- Free or subsidised meals provided to students from vulnerable families, including Roma children.

Adequate Housing

- Affordable rental housing provided to families living in unfit housing or slums.
- Social allowances provided to cover electricity, heating, and gas costs for households with children.



Healthcare

- Actions aimed at improving health outcomes for the Roma population through prevention and promotion initiatives.


Other services

- Initiatives promoting parenting skills among vulnerable families, including those with Roma children.


Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted 
Overall children in need 


Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):

Yes, Roma children are listed under specific categories of vulnerable children. 


Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):

Yes, the report refers to the inclusion of elements from the Spanish National Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation 2021–2030 into the NAP. 






Data on Roma children:

No specific data on Roma children, just mention of Roma children as a target group. 

Specific Roma Indicators:

No specific data indicators for Roma children are mentioned. 

Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF 
National, Regional 




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Roll out of key services for Roma children

The report outlines targeted key services for Roma children but also overall services for children in need.

Early Childhood Education and Care

- All children are entitled to 525 hours of free universal early childhood education per year from August of the year the child turns three.

Education and School Activities

- Two agencies have been assigned to create a training program for Roma-speaking mediators with cultural knowledge, to work in education, social services, and healthcare.

Healthy School Meals

- Free school meals and nutrition standards apply universally, ensuring that Roma children, as part of the overall population, have access to healthy meals.

Adequate Housing

- Measures aimed at ensuring adequate housing and social inclusion, through financial support for families, benefit all disadvantaged groups.

Healthcare

- Universal health services (e.g. national vaccination programmes, free outpatient care, dental care) benefit all children, including those from Roma backgrounds.

Other Services

- A leisure time card aims to give children and young people greater access to sport, culture, outdoor activities and participation in other club activities, particularly for children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged households.

Approach to Roma children:

Specifically targeted



Overall children in need



Roma children as target group identified in National Action Plan (NAP):



It refers only to children belonging to national minorities as a vulnerable group.

Alignment with National Roma Strategic Framework (NRSF):



Sweden's long-term strategy for Roma inclusion (2012–2032) is referenced but no evidence on alignment.

Data on Roma children:

No numerical data on Roma children.



Specific Roma Indicators:

No specific indicators on Roma children.



Use of EU and other funding targeted specifically for Roma children:

EU: ESF+, RRF, ERDF



National





Eurochild



European Network on
Roma Equality under EU Funds