

## EUROMA CONTRIBUTION to the Council Recommendation on housing exclusion

### The upcoming Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion must address the most severely excluded housing contexts like segregated settlements and substandard housing where Roma live

The recently approved EU Affordable Housing Plan<sup>1</sup> foresees the drafting of a Council recommendation on housing exclusion as a tool to support vulnerable people in precarious housing situations and prevent homelessness/housing exclusion. Such Recommendation is framed as part of the Plan's fourth pillar *on protecting the most affected*, which focuses on people in the most vulnerable housing situations.

In this context, EURoma Network claims that **the upcoming Council recommendation on housing exclusion, should explicitly recognise the most severe forms of housing deprivation such as the existence of segregated settlements across the EU where many Roma live in, including a high percentage of Roma children**. This is particularly relevant since no explicit references in this regard have been made in the EU Affordable Housing Plan.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2024 survey<sup>2</sup> provide valuable comparative data on the housing situation of Roma and the general population, including key aspects such as environmental quality and exposure to energy poverty:

- 83 % of Roma live in **overcrowded dwellings**, compared with 17–18 % of the general population;
- **housing deprivation** is also widespread: 47 % of Roma experience at least one serious problem, including leaking roofs, damp or rot (23 %) or insufficient natural light (16 %), and lack of access to tap water inside the home (17 %);
- the situation is **especially alarming for children**, as 93 % of Roma children live in overcrowded households, 52 % experience housing deprivation, and 22 % live in homes without running water;

<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The European Affordable Housing Plan. [https://housing.ec.europa.eu/document/756915b5-d1b1-4bde-ac82-03532d2d3d90\\_en](https://housing.ec.europa.eu/document/756915b5-d1b1-4bde-ac82-03532d2d3d90_en)

<sup>2</sup> FRA survey on Roma and Travellers (2024): <https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2024/roma-survey-2024>. Covers 10 EU Member States (Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain) and three accession countries (Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia), touching upon the same areas of life as the previous Roma Survey 2021.

- **housing insecurity** remains significant, with 10 % of Roma having experienced eviction or forced relocation in recent years;
- In addition, according to the FRA's EU-Midis 2016<sup>3</sup>, Roma face **persistent residential segregation**, as 67 % live in neighbourhoods where most residents share the same ethnic background;

Taking into consideration EURoma Network proposals<sup>4</sup> on how to tackle the unequal housing situation of Roma, **the future Council recommendation on housing exclusion should set as a priority objective the eradication of segregated settlements and slums. It should also aim to improving the substandard housing situation of many socially excluded neighbourhoods where marginalised groups live**, including Roma. In the prioritisation of most excluded housing situations **there is the need to specifically mention Roma as they are overrepresented in these severely socially excluded contexts.**

The future EU Recommendation should aim at tackling these realities by:

## **1. Explicit recognition of Roma as a vulnerable group facing severe housing exclusion**

The recommendation should explicitly identify Roma and other vulnerable groups as priority beneficiaries in policies addressing housing exclusion and spatial segregation, given their disproportionately high levels of inadequate housing, presence in informal settlements, and material deprivation. This is particularly urgent, as these conditions affect a large share of Roma children, violating their fundamental rights as children and further perpetuating intergenerational cycles of poverty and exclusion.

## **2. Non-segregation and the right to non-segregated housing**

The recommendation should require the design of housing policies that avoid the concentration of poverty pockets and the creation of segregated neighbourhoods, ensuring access to non-segregated housing. This is in line and coherence, among other EU instruments, with Council of the EU conclusions on measures to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and non-segregated housing and addressing segregated settlements in 2023<sup>5</sup> that already called on the European Commission and Member States to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and desegregated housing, and to address segregated settlements.

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<sup>3</sup> Second EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey Roma (EU-MIDIS II) (2016) <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey-roma-selected-findings>. Covers 9 EU Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

<sup>4</sup> EURoma Contribution: European Affordable Housing Plan Should Address the Most Deprived and Excluded Situations, affecting Vulnerable Groups such as Roma. <https://www.euromanet.eu/news/euroma-calls-for-the-eu-affordable-housing-plan-to-address-the-most-excluded-housing-situations/>

<sup>5</sup> EU Council Conclusions on measures to ensure equal access for Roma to adequate and non-segregated housing and addressing segregated settlements (2023). <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13517-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

### **3. Eradication of segregated settlements and slums**

The recommendation should include a priority objective to eradicate segregated settlements and slums, where many Roma live in, with specific baseline/result indicators (e.g., number of people in inadequate housing, reduction of informal settlements), recognising decent housing as the first step towards equal rights and social inclusion. Following EU Council conclusions on measures addressing segregated settlements, the recommendation should incorporate the agreed definition of segregated settlements as ‘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’.

Following the European Parliament 2022 resolution on the situation of marginalised Roma communities living in settlements in the EU<sup>6</sup>, the future recommendation should incorporate a clear commitment to eradicating segregated settlements by 2030, in line with the EP’s call for an EU action plan with concrete targets. The eradication of segregated settlements would represent a key step forward in guarantee a decent life and the protection of human rights in the EU for many Roma adults and children. This is a key decision that contributes to building a more cohesive and equal European society.

### **4. Rehousing in combination with social support**

The recommendation should call for integrated rehousing programmes that combine physical rehousing (social housing or adequate alternatives) with accompanied social support and tailored services. A combination of funds such as ERDF (for housing and infrastructure) and ESF+ (for social inclusion and family support) should be strengthened and better coordinated.

### **5. Integrated, cross-sectoral approach in coherence and synergies with other sectoral EU policies**

The recommendation should promote an integrated, cross-sectoral approach linking housing, employment, education, health and social services, in coherence with and support of the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020–2030<sup>7</sup> and national and regional inclusion strategies and plans. In doing so, the recommendation would reinforce and support the social-inclusion targets for Roma equality and inclusion established in this

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<sup>6</sup> European Parliament resolution on the situation of Roma people living in settlements in the EU (2022/2662(RSP)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0343\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0343_EN.html)

<sup>7</sup> EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030. [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/eu\\_roma\\_strategic\\_framework\\_for\\_equality\\_inclusion\\_and\\_participation\\_for\\_2020\\_-\\_2030\\_0.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/eu_roma_strategic_framework_for_equality_inclusion_and_participation_for_2020_-_2030_0.pdf)

sectoral framework, as well as the specific targets aimed at overcoming child poverty and inequality for Roma children under the EU Child Guarantee as well as targets of future EU Antipoverty strategy.

## 6. EU funding and anti-discrimination safeguards

The recommendation should recall that EU cohesion funds must be used to finance housing and infrastructure in the most deprived contexts, with a specific focus on segregated settlements. It should include monitoring mechanisms and anti-discrimination safeguards to ensure that housing-related funding serves this objective, guaranteeing equal access to social housing and giving priority to the most disadvantaged groups, such as Roma.

The [European Network on Roma Equality under EU Funds](#) (EURoma Network) has been working since 2007 to foster (through mutual learning, generation of knowledge and awareness-raising activities) an increased and effective use of European Cohesion Policy Funds (notably ESF/ESF+ and ERDF) to promote the social inclusion, equal opportunities and fight against discrimination of Roma<sup>8</sup> across the EU. To this end, it brings together public authorities responsible for Roma policies (i.e. National Roma Contact Points) and those in charge of European Cohesion Policy Funds from 15 EU Member States, as well as the European Commission. Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), in charge of the Network's Technical Secretariat, leads and coordinates the Network.

EURoma Network proposals presented aim to improve the future Council recommendation on housing exclusion and are based on the *EURoma Contribution: European Affordable Housing Plan Should Address the Most Deprived and Excluded Situations, affecting Vulnerable Groups such as Roma*

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<sup>8</sup> The umbrella-term 'Roma' encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.). EU policy documents and discussions commonly employ this terminology.