

EUROMA CONTRIBUTION

Ensuring that the strengthened Child Guarantee truly reaches Roma children: strategic priorities and recommendations

The European Commission, through its policy guidelines for 2024–2029, has announced a **strengthening of the European Child Guarantee (ECG)** as a cornerstone of the EU's first Strategy against Poverty. The central aim is to help **eradicate poverty by 2050**, using a robust Child Guarantee to protect children from exclusion.

This initiative, by means of a Communication, aims to address the fact that, despite the targets set, the number of children living in poverty has recently risen, reaching over 19.5 million by 2024. To achieve this, the initiative envisages:

- **Ensuring effective and free access** to key services: early childhood education and care, education (including school activities and a healthy daily meal), healthcare, healthy nutrition and adequate housing.
- **Investments and reforms** in areas with high social and economic returns, such as school meal programmes and schemes to support basic skills.
- **Targeted measures for vulnerable groups**, explicitly mentioning children from racial or ethnic minority backgrounds, including **Roma children**.
- **Horizontal enablers**: strengthening national governance frameworks and the integrated delivery of services, involving local authorities and civil society.

Following the recent FRA's Roma Survey¹, 77 % of Roma children live at risk of poverty, and 40 % of Roma children live in households in severe material deprivation. These figures illustrate the gravity and urgency of the situation.

As already pointed out at EU Roma Network², although the Child Guarantee explicitly mentions Roma children as a priority group, its current implementation has not proven to be as effective as it should have been in achieving real impact in the reduction of inequality and poverty rates of Roma children. Some of the elements preventing progress are the following:

- **The risk of dilution**: there is a danger that actions for Roma children become diluted within general measures for all 'children in need', losing the specificity required to address their unique barriers.
- **Universal vs. targeted approach**: many Member States adopt a universal approach, which undermines the targeted approach that has proven necessary for Roma children.

¹ Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European countries - Perspectives from the Roma Survey 2024.

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2025/roma-survey-2024>

² EU Roma Reference Document: How to guarantee that the European Child Guarantee efficiently tackles Roma children's poverty and inequality gap? (2022) https://www.euromanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/FINALL_EURoma_-Child-Guarantee-Roma-childrens-poverty-inequality-gap.doc.pdf

- **Lack of disaggregated data:** the absence of specific indicators by ethnic origin renders the actual situation of Roma children ‘invisible’ within monitoring frameworks.
- **Policy misalignment:** there is a lack of coherence and synergies between the Child Guarantee National Action Plans and the National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs).

For the Child Guarantee to be effective for Roma children, it must:

- **Explicitly recognise the specific vulnerability** of Roma children, including those in segregated settlements and mobile Roma children within the EU.
- **Combine income support measures with activation measures**, understanding poverty as a multidimensional process.
- **Strategic use of ESF+ and ERDF:** Member States must use ESF+ and ERDF specifically for Roma children, ensuring that investments actually reach the most excluded communities and that funding supports integrated and sustainable interventions.
- **Fully alignment with the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030**, coordinating assessments, budgets and indicators to avoid duplication and ensure that policies reinforce one another in favour of Roma children.
- **Participation of Roma and organisations**, to ensure that measures respond to the real needs of families and communities.
- **Territorial and community-based approach:** interventions must prioritise the most vulnerable areas, addressing housing, education and basic services jointly to transform living conditions in segregated or marginalised Roma.

Taking this analysis into account and in line with the joint report by EURoma and Eurochild on the Child Guarantee and Roma children³ (which examines the implementation of the Child Guarantee in the biennial reports) we propose strategic recommendations to ensure that the Child Guarantee genuinely benefits Roma children by 2030 to be integrated in the upcoming Communication:

Strengthen and expand targeted interventions:

- **Tailored design:** develop specific interventions for education (reducing school segregation and drop-out), healthcare, and housing.
- **Focus on segregated settlements:** prioritise ‘pockets of extreme poverty’ and segregated settlements where Roma children are over-represented and conditions are significantly worse than the general population.

Enhance financial transparency and strategic EU funding:

- **Dedicated budget lines:** establish clear budget lines for Roma-focused initiatives within national financial reporting, paired with tracking mechanisms to measure impact.

³ The European Child Guarantee and Roma Children: Between Commitment and Practice. Joint Report by Eurochild and the EURoma Network. A Review of the Biennial Reports. https://www.euromanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Joint-EURoma_Eurochild-Report-Child-Guarantee-Roma-Children.pdf

- **Synergy of EU funds:** Move beyond the minimum 5 % ESF+ allocation for child poverty by leveraging synergies between ESF+ (for social services) and ERDF (for infrastructure and housing) to disrupt poverty cycles.

Improve governance and policy coherence:

- **Alignment of NAPs and NRSFs:** National Action Plans (NAPs) for the Child Guarantee must be closely aligned with National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs) to ensure shared objectives and complementary measures.
- **Institutional cooperation:** enhance collaboration between National Child Guarantee Coordinators and National Roma Contact Points.
- **Strengthen governance mechanisms** between national public authorities and regional or local administrations in Member States.
- **Participatory governance:** formally include the voices of Roma children and Roma-led NGOs in the design and monitoring of policies.
- **European Semester integration:** address Roma child poverty as a priority within the European Semester framework, using specific monitoring indicators.

Robust data and monitoring frameworks:

- **Ethnic data collection:** promote the collection of anonymised, disaggregated data by ethnicity in full compliance with EU regulations to improve the visibility of Roma children.
- **Standardised methodologies for ethnic data collection across regions and Member States,** ensuring data accuracy and reliability.
- **Comprehensive monitoring systems** based on clear, outcome-focused indicators to assess the effectiveness of measures targeting Roma children.
- **Specific monitoring indicators:** the European Commission should integrate **specific indicators on Roma children** into the ECG Joint Monitoring Framework through 2030.
- **FRA support:** utilise the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to refine indicators and provide guidance on ethical data standards.

The upcoming Communication is a renew opportunity to make the most of the Child Guarantee for Roma children, overrepresented in all social and economic indicators. Specific focus and monitoring mechanism become essential to give account of existing investments on Roma children under the umbrella of the Child Guarantee. By 2030, it will be a must to confirm the usefulness of having a European instrument to increase equality of Roma children across the EU.

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 Roma⁴ 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 upcoming EC Communication on strengthening of the European Child Guarantee to ensure that it genuinely benefits Roma children by 2030. These proposals are based on the *EURoma Reference Document: How to guarantee that the European Child Guarantee efficiently tackles Roma children's poverty and inequality gap?* and the Joint Report by Eurochild and the EURoma Network *The European Child Guarantee and Roma Children: Between Commitment and Practice*.

Technical Secretariat:



Funded by:



⁴ 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.