



Civil society monitoring report  
on implementation of the national Roma  
integration strategies  
in Italy

*Focusing on structural and horizontal  
preconditions for successful  
implementation of the strategy*

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of the national Roma integration strategy  
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANCI	National Association of Italian Municipalities
ASGI	Association for Legal Studies on Immigration
CoE	Council of Europe
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ECSR	European Committee on Social Rights
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERIAC	European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
ERRC	European Roma Right Centre
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
FRA	EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
ISTAT	National Institute of Statistics
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MIUR	Ministry of University and Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRIS	National Roma, Sinti and <i>Caminati</i> Integration Strategy
OSCAD	Observatory for security against acts of discrimination
PON	National Operational Program
RSC	Roma, Sinti and <i>Caminanti</i>
UNAR	National Office against racial discrimination
UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
UPI	Union of Italian Provinces

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Italy there are no accurate figures on the current number of Roma, Sinti and *Caminanti* (RSC), even if the estimation provided by the EC indicates the number of 110,000 to 180,000 individuals, which represents around 0.23 to 0.25 per cent of the total population. The lack of knowledge about RSC Communities, accompanied by a high level of prejudice and discrimination, has exacerbated the idea that this population would be nomadic, hostile to sedentary life and, therefore in need of specific and temporary housing solutions. Still today, even if *Opera Nomadi* (the historical Italian association helping Roma and Sinti) estimates that around 60-80 per cent of the RSC in Italy live in houses, these camps continue to be designed and built by local authorities. Around 30,000 to 40,000 of RSC live in "nomad camps", in a condition of severe housing precariousness and social marginalization. It is within this framework that the Italian Government approved the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (NRIS), which was drafted by the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) in collaboration with several stakeholders, civil society organization and Roma representatives. The Strategy has been evaluated positively by different key actors at national and European level because it has marked an important break with the past, abandoning the concept of nomadism and adopting a broader approach to promote RSC inclusion. However, six years after its approval, several delays in its implementation have been registered, as the national government has not implemented any concrete programme to eradicate RSC housing exclusion and most of the local authorities are very far from reaching the expected results.

### Governance and overall policy framework

Despite isolated progress in some regions, such as Emilia Romagna, many problems still persist the NRIS implementation, and it appears difficult to remove them without a radical change of direction in respect to what has been done so far. The limited powers that UNAR has to ensure the implementation of the NRIS at local level, together with the poor capacity to coordinate actions among the different institutional levels, has negatively impacted on the development of Local Action Plans for RSC inclusion. In fact, according to the current legislation, at local level everything is left to the discretion of the local institutions, that have powers to decide whether and how to adopt it. As a result of that, only 11 Regions out of 20 have set up the consultative meetings aimed at agreeing how to implement the NRIS at local level, but only Emilia Romagna Region has promoted and approved a regional law aimed at closing the Roma municipal camps, and actions aimed at supporting RSC inclusion. Moreover, there are several regional and local authorities that not only do not implement the NRIS, but even deny it, keeping on maintaining – or even opening – new mono-ethnic residential areas and camps. Moreover, the delay in the implementation of the NRIS in the two regions in which RSC presence and exclusion is higher, such as Lazio and Lombardy, is particularly significant. In Lazio, the regional consultations started only in 2015, while in Lombardy it has not even been organized yet.

### Anti-discrimination

Anti-discrimination against RSC still suffers for the permanence of many stereotypes that have not been defeated, and which keep on influencing local and national policies. Nowadays, the situation of Roma in Italy is similar to six years ago, and the fight against the discrimination of the Roma population has unfortunately not yet produced significant changes in the lives of RSC Communities. The lack of funds to develop actions aimed at implementing the NRIS, together with the lack of measures ruling the coordination between the national and local level, determined a very timid response from local authorities. The last funds allocated during the "nomad emergency" decree were used for the construction of new nomad camps, and led to the rise of RSC's marginalization. Therefore, the problem related to RSC access to services and education remained the



same of previous decade, as the NRIS has not yet shown itself capable of changing the situation positively.

### Addressing antigypsyism

In Italy it is not possible to talk about a specific framework to tackle antigypsyism at institutional level, with ad hoc regulation, public actors and programs specially created to defeat it. Nowadays, antigypsyism is fought through the general legal framework which protects citizens from racism and discriminations, as it is not acknowledged as a particular juridical case. A study published in 2015 by the Pew Research Center reported that 86 per cent of the respondents in Italy held a negative opinion about Roma.<sup>1</sup> In the last few years the proliferation of antigypsyism has increased, the producers of racist content have spread and diversified: traditional media still have their importance in the matter, but local political actors, local news websites, self-produced "unofficial information" blogs, Facebook groups and even private pages on social networks have started to contribute to the spread on anti-Roma speeches. This situation has three main dangerous consequences and acts as a powerful hindering factor in preventing Roma inclusion possibilities, as: a) it has a direct and blatant impact in terms of daily discrimination on the lives of those targeted; b) it acts as a powerful deterrent means for the administrators in charge to design and implement inclusion policies addressing Roma and Sinti; c) it gradually allows explicit racist rhetoric against Roma and Sinti to be increasingly accepted by the public opinion, paving the way to occasional violent drifts.

<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center. *Chapter 4. Views of Roma, Muslims, Jews - Global Attitude Survey* (Washington: 2015).



## INTRODUCTION

In October 2000, The European Roma Right Centre (ERRC) published a detailed file on the living conditions of Roma and Sinti in Italy. Italy country was defined as “*Campland*”,<sup>2</sup> and accused of an institutionalized segregation against Roma and Sinti communities through the construction of nomad municipal camps. In Italy, in fact, the construction of authorized camps is the only action that the Italian government has implemented to address the Roma’s housing exclusion. The very few policies developed in the last 30 years for promoting the housing inclusion of Roma and of Roma migrants in Italy were inspired by the “nomadic theory”, which is based on the idea that this population is nomad, hostile to sedentary life and therefore in need of specific housing solutions. This idea, shared by the vast majority of the Italians,<sup>3</sup> has been incorporated in the first and the only framework of regional laws produced in 1985 to define the situation of the Roma minority in Italy. As the Roma and the Roma migrants were perceived as nomads, the main intervention promoted by these laws was the construction of exclusive areas for the temporary settlement of Roma people. Initially the realization of authorized camps was intended to be a way to protect the peculiarities of these minorities. However, the results have been extremely critical in terms of special segregation and social marginalization. This situation was further worsened by the criminalizing approach adopted by the “Nomad Emergency”, proclaimed by the Italian Government in 2008 and ended in 2011,<sup>4</sup> when the Council of the State declared its illegitimacy. It is in this critical framework that in 2012 the Italian Authorities committed to overcome Roma’s discriminatory segregation and sub-standard housing conditions with the approval of the National Roma, Sinti and *Caminanti* (RSC) Integration Strategy (NRIS). The Strategy constitutes an excellent reference for intervening on issues such as anti-discrimination, social and housing inclusion, education, and health. However, the 2020 deadline set for its impact evaluation is likely to be achieved without having reached significant results on the matter. In fact, even though it has been drafted and ratified by the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) established under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in collaboration with several institutional stakeholders and representatives of RSC communities, it is evident that after six years from its adoption a series of background problems persist in its implementation. As underlined by the Jo Cox Report presented at the Chamber of Deputies in 2017, the Strategy “*ends up to be an ineffective tool, because of the inactivity of local authorities, but also for the lack of an adequate central coordination system*”.<sup>5</sup> Too many RSC still live in a condition of social and housing marginalization and, as pointed out in a resolution of the Extraordinary Commission of the Senate of the Republic in 2015, it is urgent to promote effective interventions aimed at the overcoming of segregation of RSC

<sup>2</sup> European Roma Right Centre, *Campland, Racial Segregation of Roma in Italy* (Budapest: 2000).

<sup>3</sup> As many as 84 per cent of Italians, according to Paola Arrigoni, and Tommaso Vitale, “Quale legalità? Rom e gagi a confronto”, *Aggiornamenti Sociali*, 3, 2008, 184.

<sup>4</sup> On 21 May 2008, the Italian Government issued the Decree on the Nomad Emergency to be applied in the regions of Lazio, Campania and Lombardy (later extended to Piedmont and Veneto in May 2009). This emergency legislation included extraordinary measures, such as collecting fingerprints (even of minors) and a census of all the people living in nomad camps. The decree was renewed in 2010 and 2011. This juridical measure is marked by an emergency approach. The preamble to the decree states: “The situation cannot be tackled with the instruments of ordinary legislation.” On the basis of three Presidential Orders, issued on 30 May 2008, the Prefects of Naples, Rome and Milan were appointed Special Commissioners for the Nomad Emergency, obtaining greater powers of intervention both in the legal camps and the illegal settlements. The main feature however was the continuous social criminalization of the populations who were the target of the interventions. The end of the State of Emergency took place because of a petition of a Roma family settled in Rome together with the European Roma Rights Centre: with decision 6050 of 16 November 2011, the Italian Council of State declared the State of Emergency illegitimate. For further details see: <http://sfi.usc.edu/education/roma-sinti/en/questioni-aperte/identita-e-cittadinanza/una-minoranza-italiana.php>.

<sup>5</sup> Commissione Jo Cox, *Relazione finale*, p. 93.

communities in the municipal housing camps. Moreover, it is important to promote annual monitoring activities and reports that, using the same analysis parameters, could study and show the development of the actions that should be undertaken by the national and local authorities. In fact, even though in Italy there is a conspicuous production of reports, realized by European institutions or civil society organizations, a constant, comparable, annual monitoring is still lacking.

This report intends to present integrative and alternative information to those submitted by the Italian state on the implementation of the NRIS, channelling the local knowledge and of civil society organizations on the real social impact of government measures. To this aim, a preliminary mapping and description of the actors and the actions in charge of planning has been made since no centralized information is still available. Based on this mapping, monitoring activities were carried out by a group of organizations.

The methodology of the report relies on a qualitative approach which included analysis of international, national and local documents, such as policy documents, research reports, articles and essays. An in-depth analysis of the NRIS local implementation has been done in 13 regions, to examine the achievements and the obstacles concerning the development of policies at local level. Interviews with Roma representatives, Roma and civil society NGOs, Roma and Sinti people living in camps to provide a wider and inclusive perspective to the research findings.

## GOVERNANCE AND OVERALL POLICY FRAMEWORK

### Representing the interests of Roma in the parliament

In Italy, Roma, Sinti and *Caminanti* (RSC)<sup>6</sup> are not officially recognized as a minority by law which recognised “historical language minorities” in 1999.<sup>7</sup> Even if the populations speaking *Romani* language represent the third largest minority in Italy,<sup>8</sup> and are present on the national territory since 1400, they have been deliberately excluded during the parliamentary debate that led to the approval of the law.<sup>9</sup>

Roma and Sinti interests are not specifically represented in the Italian Parliament, and RSC living conditions have been ignored for a long time by Italian institutions. Only in October 2009 the Extraordinary Commission for the protection and promotion of human rights of the Senate, launched a survey on the life condition of RSC, that was concluded in 2011,<sup>10</sup> and has underlined the precarious situation in which a great part of this minority lives. This delay was linked to the lack of mainstream political interest in Roma and Sinti inclusion policies and to the fact that in the Italian Parliament, the RSC are not specifically represented by any political party. Therefore, the only instances that RSC have been discussed were in fact related to the recognition of RSC population as a linguistic and/or historical-cultural-linguistic minority.

Among the political parties represented in Parliament, Lega Nord is the one that has produced the most radical antigypsyist programmes.<sup>11</sup> On several occasions, members of Lega Nord were convicted of crimes related to incitement to racial hatred; amongst others the conviction of Giancarlo Gentilini, the party’s candidate for mayor of Treviso, who declared during a meeting in 2013 that he “*wanted to eliminate all Gypsy children*”. This case was particularly significant at a national level.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The terms “Rom, Sinti and *Caminanti* (RSC)” and “Roma Sinti and *Caminanti* populations (RSC populations)” are used to refer to the Romani communities as a whole: *Rom, Sinti, Kale, Manouche, Romanichelsalle*, not for a definitive purpose but only because this denomination is that used by the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and *Caminanti* approved in Italy.

<sup>7</sup> The article 2 of the law n. 482/1999 says that “the Republic protects the language and culture of the Albanian, Catalan, Germanic, Greek, Slovenian and Croatian populations and of those speaking French, Franco-Provençal, Friulan, Ladino, Occitan and Sardinian”.

<sup>8</sup> RSC are estimated to be between 110.000 and 180.000 individuals. The majority of the RSC population present in Italy are Italian citizen. The first presences of Roma in Italy have been recorded since 1400. The RSC of non-Italian citizenship arrive in Italy in two precise periods. A first group has arrived between 1980 and 1990, and come from former Yugoslavia Countries and Kosovo. If the reason of this migration was mainly economical in the 80s, in the 90s they become related to the wars that have covered with blood the Balkans for the whole decade. These group of Roma have to be therefore considered refugees, even though the label of being nomad has never permitted to acknowledge them so. This has forced them to a forced nomadism or of a life within the municipal nomad camps. For more information see Nando Sigona, “*I confini del 'problema zingari'. Le politiche dei campi nomadi in Italia*”, in *Migrazioni globali, integrazioni locali*, ed. Tiziana Caponio and Asher Colombo (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005, 267-293). A second group of Roma started to arrive in Italy from Romania and Bulgaria in the early years of 2000, thanks to the entrance of these countries in Eu.

<sup>9</sup> First draft of the law proposal also mentioned Roma and Sinti, these groups were subsequently eliminated under pressure from different parties as Lega Nord and Alleanza Nazionale.

<sup>10</sup> See:

<http://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/commissioni/dirittiumani16/Rapporto%20conclusivo%20indagine%20rom,%20sinti%20e%20caminanti.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> See the position of *21 Luglio Associazione* after the publication of the “Government agreement” between the parties *Lega Nord* and *Movimento 5 Stelle*: <http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/contratto-governo-preoccupa-rom-rischio-discriminazione/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://permessodisoggiorno.org/giancarlo-gentilini-lega-nord-e-condannato-per-istigazione-allodio-razziale/>

There have been no cases in recent years of RCS representative holding significant political positions, although there have been candidates who claimed their ethnicity, without being elected. Some of them are well-known activists: Djiana Pavlovic was several times candidate to municipal council in Milan, and to the Italian and European Parliaments, or Nazzareno Guarnieri was candidate for the municipal council of Pescara in 2008. Candidates in the last local elections, among others included: Angela Bosco, Miguel Fiorello Lebbiati, Concetta Sarachella, Marina Braidic, with left wing parties. In 2014 Amelia Guarnieri stood as a candidate at Pescara with the *Forza Italia* political party. She was not elected but obtained a good result, also thanks to the Politeia campaign promoted by *Fondazione Romani Italia*.

There is a paradox in Italy concerning the participation of RSC in public life: on the one hand, RSC are not officially recognised as a minority, as there are no shared classification criteria to establish who can or cannot be considered RSC. On the other hand, participation in political life and active involvement in consultations on policies for Roma inclusion are conceived to involve individuals and associations belonging to a minority which is not recognised as such. Of course, the question which arises is how RSC legitimate representation should be shaped: *Who should represent who? Based on which criteria? Who speaks on behalf of whom?* In a context of administrative disregard which has not supported the active participation of the RSC populations for a long time, urgent and “filling” measures had to be taken by Italian authorities, and in the past this has led in many cases to forms of welfarism and pressure on the RSC minority.<sup>13</sup> In time, this approach has been overcome by the growing awareness of the importance of an effective RSC participation.<sup>14</sup> To avoid the mistakes of the past, rather than strengthening leadership actions, it would be useful to work on motivating an active, conscious and non-exclusive participation of RSC, aiming at sharing democratic and transparent pathways of meeting and recognition.<sup>15</sup> As far as the National Strategy is concerned, the result reached was a mostly formal RSC involvement, which showed (all) the problematic nature of the relationship between participation and empowerment among Roma and Sinti minorities.<sup>16</sup>

## Mainstreaming Roma inclusion across ministries and other national level public authorities

UNAR, set up within the Department for Equal Opportunities under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in 2003,<sup>17</sup> is the National Roma Contact Point, and has the mandate to coordinate the institutional and associative actors in supporting the development of inclusion policies for RSC communities. In 2011 UNAR was given the task to develop a National Strategy for the inclusion of RSC, that was approved in 2012 by the Italian Government. The Strategy was implemented through an *Inter-ministerial Coordination Room*, a governing body which included representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the

<sup>13</sup> Fondazione Ismu, *Ventunesimo rapporto sulle migrazioni 2015 (Twenty-first report on migrations 2015)*, (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*.

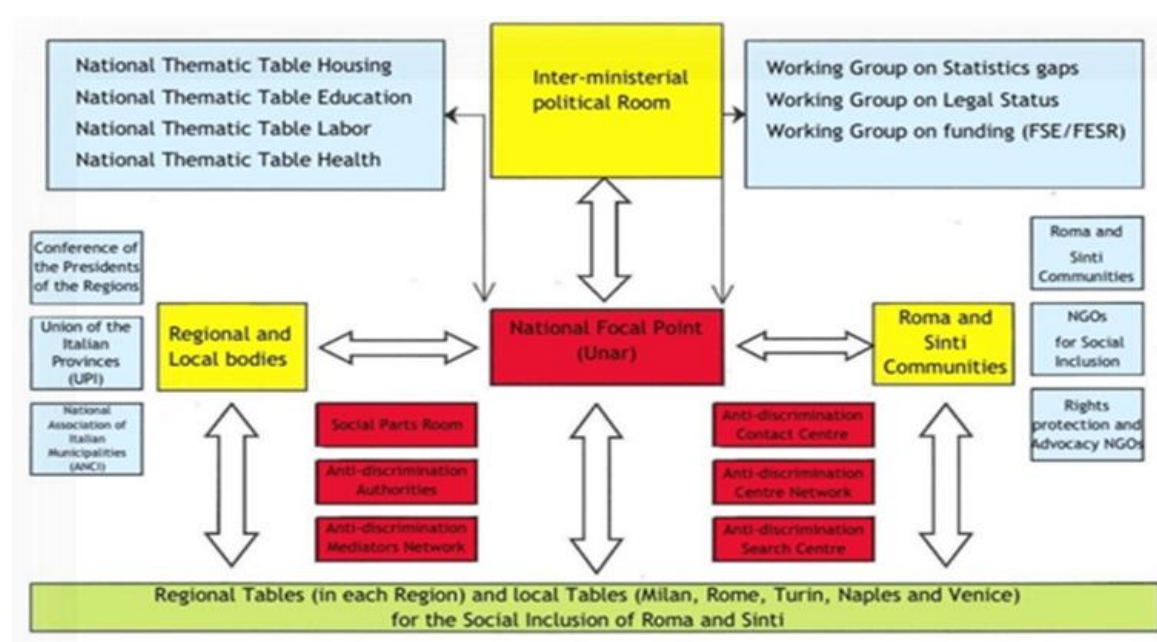
<sup>15</sup> The literature on the subject underlines the importance of the participation of all those directly involved, not only the beneficiaries of the interventions, but also those citizens who are linked to them. See T. Vitale, *Sociologia dei conflitti locali contro i rom e i sinti in Italia. Pluralità di contesti e varietà di policy instruments in “Jura Gentium. Rivista di filosofia del diritto internazionale e della politica globale”* (Sociology of local conflicts against Roma and Sinti in Italy. Plurality of contexts and variety of policy instruments in “Jura Gentium. Journal of Philosophy of International Law and Global Politics”). Available at: <http://www.juragentium.org/forum/rom/it/vitale.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Fondazione Ismu, *Ventunesimo rapporto sulle migrazioni 2015 (Twenty-first report on migrations 2015)*, (Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> The decision to place UNAR within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, instead of establishing an Office as an independent Authority, contributes to weakening its credibility and action, particularly in cases involving the Public Administration. Furthermore, UNAR acts only through informal conciliation activities, but has no legitimacy to act in court.

Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Conference of Presidents of Regions, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), and the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI).<sup>18</sup> Together with the Inter-ministerial Room, four national thematic working-groups were set up for the elaboration and implementation of the National Strategy on Labour, Education, Housing and Health issues, which have contributed in the elaboration of the Strategy and have produced some documents over time.<sup>19</sup> To involve RSC groups in the consultations regarding Roma and Sinti inclusion policies, UNAR established a National Platform, that connects all the NGOs concerned on the issue, and created a Forum of RSC associations, that meets periodically. It is also worth mentioning that there are two working groups which are currently still active: one, working to overcome the information gap and missing statistics on the presence and living conditions of RSC communities in Italy,<sup>20</sup> the other working on the complex legal situation of the "stateless *de facto*" Roma. To manage the relations with local bodies, a governance system has been set up, as shown in the table below:

### National Strategy Governance scheme



The governance scheme also foresees the involvement of the RSC communities, of the NGOs operating in the field of Roma's human rights and social inclusion, and the RSC Community Forum.

The NRIS implementation has been slow and has been subjected to frequent interruptions, for two reasons: the lack of coercive powers of UNAR, not yet compliant with the principle of independence of equality bodies, and the difficult communication between the different institutional levels. Several factors had a negative impact on the possibilities of its concrete implementation at regional and local level: the absence of a specific budget for the implementation of the NRIS, the fragmentation in the management of the structural funds, the lack of clear indications on the monitoring activities to be implemented at a local level,

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?p=1923>

<sup>19</sup> The Table for Health, coordinated by the Directorate General for Health Prevention of the Ministry of Health defined the "Piano d'Azione Salute per e con le comunità RSC" [Health Action Plan for and with the RSC communities] (2015). Available at: [http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_pubblicazioni\\_2451\\_allegato.pdf](http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_2451_allegato.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> It involves the central government offices interested in the RSC topic, the National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), ANCI and two representatives of RSC associations.



and a total absence of process and result indicators. The extreme paucity of resources was exacerbated by the institutional and financial crisis, and by the absence of UNAR director, position that was left uncovered for long time in the past years (15 days break in July 2012, from October 2015 to January 2016, from February 2017 to March 2018).<sup>21</sup>

## Mainstreaming Roma inclusion across local authorities

Acknowledging the central role of the territorial authorities in the inclusion of the RSC, the NRIS established the creation of *Regional Working Groups*, that had to be organised and coordinated by competent regional institutions,<sup>22</sup> and include regional and local authorities entitled to deal with Roma inclusion issues, and the NGOs involved in the advocacy of Roma's interests at different levels. The working groups were aimed at raising the awareness of municipal and provincial authorities about the NRIS goals and commitments, creating fora for different stakeholders for drafting local action plans for Roma inclusion, and monitoring the NRIS implementation at the local level.

Six years after the launch of the Strategy, the commitment of local and regional authorities is still inadequate, and this makes more difficult to convert the strategy recommendations into concrete actions. Suffice it to say that only 11 out of 20 regions have set up the regional working groups,<sup>23</sup> as there are no constraints and no formal obligations for the regions to implement the NRIS actions. Moreover, where they have been set up, the working groups merely represented formal participants, who are not active in the promotion of concrete actions aimed at Roma inclusion. Even in the territories in which the local implementation of the NRIS was launched, the activities carried out by the working groups mostly consisted in convening and organising meetings with local stakeholders, for promoting the discussion on Roma and Sinti situation at a territorial level and identifying possible projects and actions to be implemented. However, no concrete commitment in terms of funds and timing was agreed upon. For this reason, many differences persist on the implementation of the policies for RSC inclusion at regional and local level. Currently, only half of the Italian regions and the autonomous province of Trento have specific laws for the protection of RSC populations and their cultural identity. The main obstacle to the implementation of these laws is the fact that RSC people have been indiscriminately identified as "nomadic" subjects. There is only one region, Emilia Romagna, which took initiatives coherent with the NRIS objectives on the access to housing, and that has adopted a special regional law to support and finance housing transitions of Roma citizens living in camps to homes integrated in urban areas<sup>24</sup> and/or to *micro-residential areas*.<sup>25</sup> A part from Emilia Romagna, the only other Italian region promoting Roma housing inclusion is Tuscany, where several plans to overcome "nomad" camps have been implemented, starting from the insertion in social housing in Lucca to self-construction in San Giuliano Terme.

<sup>21</sup> Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (2018) Manconi Coordinatore dell'UNAR: <http://www.governo.it/articolo/manconi-coordinatore-dell-unar/8901>.

<sup>22</sup> The features of the competent persons are not clearly defined nor specified. Such individuals are generally selected among the members of the Council or its executives.

<sup>23</sup> Marche, Molise, Umbria, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Piedmont, Calabria, Emilia Romagna, Puglia Region Table was convened but was not established by any resolution.

<sup>24</sup> An example of this is the experimentation of the Municipality of Bologna. More details in the Regional Report: <http://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/esclusione-sociale-e-poverta/rapporto-sulla-popolazione-sinta-e-rom-in-emilia-romagna-anno-2012>.

<sup>25</sup> A "micro area" is a small plot of land, located in a non-marginalized area, reasonably close to urban areas and with access to public services. This structure provides resting areas for mobile units and is connected to water, gas, electricity and sewage services. It is an area inhabited by a single extended family where each single family has a private space and suitable services. Micro areas are entrusted to the responsibility of those occupying them on the basis of a regular lease agreement or contract for use or contract for the related services. See: <http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/notizie/2017/febbraio/chiudono-i-grandi-campi-via-libera-alle-micro-aree-per-le-comunita-rom-e-sinti-7-i-progetti-finanziati-dalla-regione>.



Finally, it should be noted that up to the 2016, only three municipalities (Naples, Pavia and Bari) have approved the implementation of Local Action Plans promoting the integration of RSC groups within the ROMACT.<sup>26</sup>

### Promoting empowerment and participation of Roma

For the significant part of RSC communities that continue to live in conditions of social exclusion (the estimates indicate that about 30,000 to 40,000, or a fifth of the total of RSC living in camps),<sup>27</sup> conscious participation as a way of expressing active citizenship in public life, reaching the highest levels of education and having access to work is still an unsolved issue. Although the NRIS requests the adoption of measures to support the empowerment of vulnerable subjects, it must be noted that, up to now, no effective action has been taken in this respect.

Among the projects that in recent years have directly and/or indirectly supported forms of RSC empowerment the following should be highlighted:

- Housing first e sviluppo di comunità: progetto di community welfare [Housing first and community development: community welfare project] for Roma families living in the city of Faenza, launched in 2015 by the social services of the Municipality, in collaboration with the Fondazione Romani.<sup>28</sup>
- The COM.IN.ROM project, realised within the National Operational Program (PON) Security for Development 2007-2013, aimed at creating an operational and cultural network among public authorities and operators belonging to the institutions of the third sector (the network is still partially operating).<sup>29</sup>
- The experimental project (2009/2010) *Valore Lavoro: Participatory planning towards labour integration of Roma and Sinti*. The project aimed at addressing social exclusion and unemployment and at promoting labour market integration of Roma and Sinti individuals through their active involvement in different projects. The *Valore Lavoro* project was financed by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and promoted by the Lombardy Region, together with the National Observatory for Integration and Multiethnicity (ORIM) and the Ismu Foundation.<sup>30</sup>
- Romed 1 (2011) was a programme launched by the Council of Europe (CoE) in several European countries, including Italy. The primary aim of Romed 1 was to promote training of cultural mediators to reduce the communication gap between Roma communities and public institutions, with a view to facilitate Roma people's access not only to school and healthcare services, but also to local and regional authorities. Besides focusing on specific mediation activities, and the training of Roma mediators. Romed 1 fostered an active participation of Roma people, thus contributing to their empowerment. In Italy, 36 representatives from several municipalities took part in the programme training sessions, and 32 of them became official mediators (Bari, Bolzano, Bologna, Cosenza, Eboli, Gorizia, Lamezia Terme, Montesilvano, Napoli, Pescara, Roma, Salerno, Teramo, Torino, Vicenza).

<sup>26</sup> ROMACT is a programme launched by the Council of Europe which aims to improve interaction and responsibility of local authorities, particularly policymakers and municipal staff, towards marginalized Roma communities. For more details see paragraph 4.

<sup>27</sup> Monia Giovannetti, Nicolò Marchesini, and Emiliana Baldoni, *Gli Insediamenti Rom, Sinti e Caminanti in Italia* (2016).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.fondazioneromani.eu/attivita/progetti/192-il-corpo-estraneo-prove-di-comunita>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/EsperienzeSulTerritorio/altre-esperienze/Pagine/Com-In-Rom-Italia.aspx>

<sup>30</sup> More details available at: <http://www.ismu.org/2017/01/valore-lavoro/>

- Project *Empow-Air: Empowering Women against intimate partnership violence in Roma communities* (2012), co-funded by the EC in the framework of the Daphne II programme aimed at combating violence against children, young people and women (2007-2013), developed a toolkit “Measures to combat violence against Roma women – Recommendations for prevention, detection and intervention”. This manual is intended for use by workers in the sector who deal with violence against women and/or work with Roma communities, especially social service providers, local authorities, police and civil society organisations, active locally and nationally.<sup>31</sup>
- Romact (2013-2017) was a follow-up of the previous CoE initiative implemented in 57 European municipalities, eight of which in Italy: Agropoli, Bari, Garbagnate Milanese, Pavia, Prato, Trento, Milano and Napoli. Three of these municipalities have adopted an Action Plan for Roma inclusion.
- *Marry When You Are Ready* (2017) was a European project addressing the phenomenon of early marriage in Roma communities. This project was realized in Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Austria and Italy. The purpose of the project was twofold: firstly, to work within the communities to provide information, listen to problems, raise awareness and identify the most suitable measures to improve future prospects for young women; and secondly, to develop recommendations to European and national institutions.<sup>32</sup>
- *Luoghi Comuni* (2017) was a project coordinated by *Associazione Bambini in Romania Onlus* (Children in Romania Onlus) and carried out in Bari, Milan and Roma, together with *Il Nuovo Fantarca*, *UPRE Roma* and *Associazione Spirit Romanesc* over a period of 18 months starting in March 2016. The initiative aimed at promoting the inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti students in educational pathways, to promote their right to access to quality education.<sup>33</sup>
- Newly established European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERiAC) was presented on 14 February 2018 to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The ERiAC, supported by the CoE, the Open Society Foundations and the Alliance for the European Roma Institute, is an independent organisation with the mission of increasing the self-esteem of Roma, and decreasing negative prejudice and discrimination against Roma through arts, culture, history and media. Furthermore, the organisation is striving to promote Roma’s contribution to European talent, culture, success and achievement, and to document the historical experience of Roma and Sinti people in Europe.

In regard to the activities carried out to promote Roma activism, two projects launched in 2013 could be reported: *Course for Roma and Sinti activists*,<sup>34</sup> promoted by *Associazione 21 Luglio*, and *Fuochi Attivi*, an educational path for promoting active *Romani* citizenship.

In May 2017 a new association *Alleanza Romani* was created by the following organisations: *Keren o Romano Tekanipe: Federazione FederArteRom*, *Upre Roma*, *New Romalen*, *Isernia in Rete*, *Romano Drom*, *Museo del Viaggio Fabrizio De Andrè*, *Accademia Europea D’Arte Romani*, *Romano Glaso*, *Associazione Nazionale Them Romano Onlus*, *FutuRom*, *Django Reinhardt*, *Cittadinanza e Minoranze*. This new association aims at supporting the development of awareness and the political and cultural growth of the

<sup>31</sup> More details available at: [http://www.surt.org/empow-air/docs/Guia\\_ITAL.pdf](http://www.surt.org/empow-air/docs/Guia_ITAL.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> More details available at:  
[http://www.ternibori.org/daphneoffice/office\\_doc/\\_0doc/43Scheda\\_MWYAR\\_Italia.pdf](http://www.ternibori.org/daphneoffice/office_doc/_0doc/43Scheda_MWYAR_Italia.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> More details available at: <http://www.luoghicomuni.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Linee-guida-per-la-scolarizzazione-e-empowerment-studenti-rom-min.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> More details available at: <http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/corso-formazione-attivisti-rom-sinti/>

*Romani* community, to strengthen its distinctive identity and self-determination, to improve relations and interaction with local and national institutions, and to encourage political participation to positively influence decisions affecting their communities. *Alleanza Romani* is striving to obtain recognition of the status of historical-linguistic minority for Roma and Sinti and the creation of a *Consulta Romani* (Romani Council) with the purpose to cooperate in the implementation of NRIS.

With regards to the initiatives to combat antigypsyism, apart from initiatives undertaken locally by local NGOs (rarely supported by public institutions), it should be mentioned that a *National Observatory on Antiziganism* was set up in 2017. The Observatory's aim is to constantly monitor and study the various forms of antigypsyist prejudice and incidents in Italy. The Observatory is located at the University of Verona.<sup>35</sup>

The main form of involvement of Roma associations at national level is represented by the National Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Platform, that has been promoted by UNAR within the NRIS.<sup>36</sup> It is a derivation of the European Roma Platform, and aims at being an operational tool for UNAR, local authorities, RSC and NGOs.<sup>37</sup> However, the procedures to make the Platform concretely operational have only been launched in June 2017, through a notice of interest open to Roma and non-Roma NGOs, with documented experience in the sector.<sup>38</sup> It has involved over 50 associations and activists from all over the country, and led to the selection of national representatives for the participation in the working groups foreseen by the NRIS. After the first call of July 2017, a meeting was organized in September 2017, with the aim of electing the representatives of the NGOs who had to participate in the thematic working groups. It is worth underlining that a certain criticism was raised by several Roma associations, reporting the prevalence of prominent public figures and vested interests in the identification and election of many candidates who, according to these organizations, had no basic requisites or skills to participate. It must also be taken into consideration that a large part of the RSC community in Italy still seems very far from playing an active role in the decision-making processes concerning the NRIS, and that only rarely those Roma citizens with high educational qualifications and/or specific professional skills are involved in the empowerment procedures of their communities. This is due to a weak representation of the RSC populations at all levels, that is exacerbated by the high level of social marginalization, job and housing insecurity, and the high level of discrimination that many communities are victim of, especially in large cities.

### Guarantees for the effectiveness of programmes with the largest budgets

Several national Operational Programmes<sup>39</sup> – although not specific and exclusively intended for the RSC – can be used to finance activities aimed at the inclusion of the RSC. The National Operational Programme (PON) "Legality", focusing on the less developed regions – Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicily – also represents an opportunity for the NRIS implementation, as social inclusion is its second goal (provision of services to immigrants, support for social enterprises and fight against discrimination and poverty).

The inclusion of RSC populations is also considered among the priorities of the PON Inclusion, which supports interventions to combat poverty and to promote, through actions

<sup>35</sup> <http://profs.formazione.univr.it/creaa/osservatorio-nazionale-sullantiziganismo>

<sup>36</sup> The Roma associations were also involved institutionally for the preparation of the NRIS since 2011 only through three national federations, already participating at UNAR activities: *Federazione Romani*, *Federazione Rom e Sinti Insieme* and the UNIRSI Association.

<sup>37</sup> It is an advisory tool within UNAR set up for the purpose of involving RSC associations and RSC supporting associations to develop proposals and offer active participation.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?p=8437>

<sup>39</sup> "Education", "Employment", "Inclusion", "Metropolitan Cities", "Governance, networks, special projects and technical support" and "Youth Employment Initiative".

and pilot projects, innovative models of social intervention.<sup>40</sup> Through these operational programmes, the Italian government seeks to propose actions, methodologies and tools capable of triggering stable changes in the social protection and in the labour and educational system of the RSC populations, in particular about minors. The programme was tested by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Innocents in Florence, through the *Project for the inclusion and integration of RSC children*.<sup>41</sup> This project aims at schooling insertion, socialization in the living contexts and to the protection of health, has been active from 2013 to 2016. The general purposes of the project were the reduction of extreme marginalization of RSC Communities, and the support of social inclusion and the promotion of educational, inclusion of their children and youths.<sup>42</sup>

The PON Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020, which contains a specific reference to the “socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma”, supported a project *Reti per l’inclusione socio-lavorativa di RSC* [Networks for socio-employment inclusion of RSC] planned for a period from 2016 to 2020). The project, tailor-made on the needs of a city like Reggio Calabria, which has one of the highest percentages of Roma in Italy, aimed at the development of private/public networks and social interventions to promote projects for the active citizenship, social inclusion and job placement of Roma.<sup>43</sup>

In the southern city of Palermo, a project *Percorsi di accompagnamento alla casa e di integrazione delle comunità emarginate (RSC)* (2017-2020) [Accompaniment Pathways to the housing and integration of marginalized communities], supported by the same PON Metropolitan Cities, aims at the social reintegration of individuals and families belonging to the most marginalized communities through an integrated approach, aimed at the development of different actions for promoting their exit from an emergency housing situation and, in particular, from the life in the camps.<sup>44</sup>

The *A.L.I. (Abitare Lavoro Inclusione) RSC Service* project (2017-2020) involves the municipality of Naples and promotes the creation of a services for social integration, work inclusion, access to healthcare and housing for the Roma population. The project is carried out at *Centro di Accoglienza ex plesso Deledda* (where Romanian Roma reside), where a pathway towards reception and integration is planned. Other projects are being developed in Mestre,<sup>45</sup> Messina<sup>46</sup> and Rome<sup>47</sup> aiming at the inclusion of Roma individuals and families within the urban environment. As regards NRIS’s “Health” priority axis, it could be

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/europa-e-fondi-europei/focus-on/pon-Inclusione/Documents/PON-Inclusione-2014-2020.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> See: <https://www.minori.it/it/progetti-sperimentali-285/il-progetto-rsc>

<sup>42</sup> Within PON framework, the three-year project includes work in the main Italian metropolitan cities, mainly focused on three areas: the local services network, the school and the housing contexts. The governance of the project is articulated through a multilevel structure aimed at facilitating the sharing and management/supervision of the general design lines at national and local level. For more details: <https://www.minori.it/it/progetti-sperimentali-285/il-progetto-rsc>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.ponmetro.it/home/ecosistema/viaggio-nei-cantieri-pon-metro/pon-metro-reggio-calabria/progetti-reggio-calabria/reti-inclusione-socio-lavorativa-rom-sinti-camminanti/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://ponmetro.comune.palermo.it/pon-asseprogetto.php?id=4&asse=4&progetto=34>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.ponmetro.it/home/ecosistema/viaggio-nei-cantieri-pon-metro/pon-metro-venezia/progetti-venezia/accompagnamento-sociale-rom-sinti-camminanti/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.ponmetro.it/home/ecosistema/viaggio-nei-cantieri-pon-metro/pon-metro-messina/progetti-messina/rom-mempowerment/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.ponmetro.it/home/ecosistema/viaggio-nei-cantieri-pon-metro/pon-metro-roma/progetti-roma/strade-rom/>

mentioned that the TROVARSI<sup>48</sup> project was concluded in 2014. This project had the aim of increasing Roma children's level of protection against vaccine-preventable diseases through an improved awareness in RSC communities (in particular among mothers) and a positive experience of interaction with public health offices

In general, all these projects do not provide independent monitoring and evaluation to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness and to analyse the impact of the project actions on the intervention context. The monitoring and evaluation methods are in fact generally based on indicators and criteria developed within the project itself.

Despite the activation of these projects, to date, the system of actions UNAR planned by UNAR to achieve the objectives set by NRIS are largely disregarded.<sup>49</sup>

### Civil society's access to funding for Roma inclusion activities

In Italy, the funds used by civil society actors for supporting the processes of inclusion of the RSC populations include mainly European funds. There are no specific national funds allocated for promoting Roma inclusion. The Funds that Roma NGOs and other civil society actors may have access to are prevalently the following:

- The European Social Fund (ESF), whose effectiveness has been improved by speeding up the monitoring and evaluation of Roma projects and spreading measures that have proved particularly effective throughout Europe.
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), whose new regulation, adopted in 2009, makes it possible to extend funding to housing projects for communities living in extreme levels of poverty and marginalization, including many Roma communities.
- The PROGRESS Program, which includes the information campaign *Yes to diversity. No to discrimination* and sponsors awareness-raising activities.
- Equality and Citizenship Rights Program. Call for "grants to support national and global projects on non-discrimination and integration of Roma communities".

Overall, Italy had access to 32 billion EUR in ESIF (ESF and ERDF), which are available for the 2014-2020 period. This significant source of funding is the already mentioned PON Metropolitan Cities 2014-2020<sup>50</sup>, which includes specific budget for investments aimed at the social inclusion of RSC. It is implemented in twelve metropolitan areas, including those cities in which the most numerous Roma communities live. Considering the ways in which the Italian metropolitan cities have managed in recent years the costs related to policies and interventions targeting RSC Communities, there is a risk that PON Metro funds intended for Roma inclusion will not be used correctly, but will, instead, go to reinforce the policies of segregation or forced evictions.<sup>51</sup>

### Availability of reliable data on the situation of Roma

Italy does not have official ethnically disaggregated data for RSC citizens. The absence of data and information relating to the presence and living conditions of RSC, is perceived by the NRIS as a fundamental problem. For this purpose, on 21 June 2017, the RSC National

<sup>48</sup> As shown in the Health Action Plan for the RSC communities, a series of projects, funded by the Ministry and INMP, have been executed over the years, but have not been implemented anymore: [http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_pubblicazioni\\_2451\\_allegato.pdf](http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_2451_allegato.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> UNAR had indicated four axes of intervention: housing, employment, education and health.

<sup>50</sup> National Operational Program for Metropolitan Cities.

<sup>51</sup> See report *Segregare costa*, by Berenice-Lunaria-Compare-Osservazione. Available at: [http://www.lunaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/segregare.costa\\_.pdf](http://www.lunaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/segregare.costa_.pdf)

Statistical Table, coordinated by the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), was set up, involving the participation of concerned ministries, ANCI, and Roma representatives with the aim of overcoming the information gap on the condition of the RSC communities. The RSC National Statistical Table has the following objectives:

1. Getting to a common definition of the RSC population and generate a conceptual framework for identifying indicators aimed at detecting and monitoring the inclusion of RSC populations compared to the four axes of the strategy;
2. providing the institutions and bodies involved in Roma inclusion guidelines for the collection and processing of data concerning RSC populations;
3. achieving the systematization of data sources and the harmonization of existing data;
4. building an integrated platform for the exchange of data and information, shared by the members of the Table which, in the long term, will lead to the establishment of an integrated information system on the RSC;
5. creating a website to access the statistical information on RSC that has quality requirements certified by the working group.

With reference to the publications available on data sources, it should be noted that ISTAT published a volume "*Sources of data on the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti population. A pilot survey in four Italian municipalities*".<sup>52</sup> The project involved a detailed survey data in four municipalities of convergence objective regions such as Naples, Bari, Catania and Lamezia Terme to provide local, regional, national authorities and policy makers with an essential tool to support the planning of policies for the overcoming of RCS settlements.<sup>53</sup> Another source of national information is a publication "*The Roma, Sinti and Caminanti settlements in Italy*" from 2016.<sup>54</sup>

Among the few surveys available that collect and analyse data on a national scale:

- *EU INCLUSIVE. National Report on labour and social inclusion of Roma people in Italy*.<sup>55</sup> This report based on findings of a survey financed from the ESF (2007-2013) provides information on RSC's housing conditions, residential segregation, literacy and work conditions (including informal employment) and sectors of work, as well as identified the main barriers to the integration, such as lack of personal documents.
- *Beyond social-housing separatism*,<sup>56</sup> study compiling diverse sources (administrative, interviews with public authorities, civil society organisations, previous reports and information from media) to provide information on the history of RSC's presence in covered regions, aimed at promoting the governance of policies and instruments for social inclusion and the fight against discrimination against Roma, Sinti and *Caminanti* communities.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/196456>.

<sup>53</sup> The survey aims is to provide local, regional, national authorities and policy makers with an essential tool to support the planning of policies for the overcoming of RCS settlements. Data have been collected as follows.

<sup>54</sup> The report, by M. Giovannetti, N. Marchesini, E. Baldoni, is available at:  
[http://www.cittalia.it/images/Gli\\_insedimenti\\_Rom\\_Sinti\\_e\\_Caminanti\\_in\\_Italia\\_.pdf](http://www.cittalia.it/images/Gli_insedimenti_Rom_Sinti_e_Caminanti_in_Italia_.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> [www.casadellacarita.org/eu-inclusive/rapporto.html](http://www.casadellacarita.org/eu-inclusive/rapporto.html)

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.irefricerche.it/File/File/REPORT/Oltre%20il%20separatismo%20socio-abitativo%20SINTESI%20new%20logos.pdf>



- *Associazione 21 Luglio* Annual Report 2016.<sup>57</sup> The report provides information on situation in emergency housing sites, camp, informal shanty towns, micro-residential areas and other types of concentrations of RSC with more than 100 inhabitants.
- *Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma. A Study of National Policies (Italy)*, by Filippo Strati (Studio Ricerche Sociali SRS).<sup>58</sup> This study on social inclusion policies includes a statistical annex with estimates of Roma population – both segregated in substandard and standard housing – in various Italian regions, using secondary data.

## Policies and measures addressing specific needs of Roma women, children and youth

As shown by several European studies, in general, Roma women record significant lower social inclusion rates than those recorded by men, especially if compared to the non-Roma population.<sup>59</sup> In regard to the Italian situation, these data are confirmed by the survey *EU INCLUSIVE. National report on the employment and social inclusion of Roma in Italy*. Roma women are more unemployed than men in every age group and for every national profile; the rate of literacy of women is lower than that of men. Divorces and separations are not very common among the RSC groups, and the level of social autonomy of Roma women is even more undermined if they live in municipal camps, and especially in those camps that are distant or poorly connected to urban centres.

Beside Roma women, also Roma children and youths often live in vulnerable conditions. Minors continue to suffer the most obvious consequences of forced evictions, in terms of impact on schooling and integration into the social networks and services. As underlined by FRA survey,<sup>60</sup> despite the several *ad hoc* schooling projects carried out by Italian local authorities over the years, 20 per cent of Roma children never started school, while 23 per cent did not complete the primary education cycle. Although the NRIS proposes a specific gender approach that pays particular attention to the condition of women, envisages a tutorship and other actions for minors and calls for their empowerment processes, there are no structural public interventions capable to guarantee fulfilment of these objectives and address the vulnerability experienced specifically by Roma women and minors. Moreover, there is no specific forms of involvement for women and Roma children in the organizations that promote their participation and consultation to elaborate and/or monitor specific interventions to support women, youth and RSC children.

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RAPPORTO-ANNUALE\\_2016\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RAPPORTO-ANNUALE_2016_WEB.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> [http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11\\_07\\_it\\_strati\\_promoting\\_the\\_social\\_inclusion\\_of\\_roma.pdf](http://www.cestim.it/argomenti/03rom-sinti/11_07_it_strati_promoting_the_social_inclusion_of_roma.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> See *Roma Inclusion Index 2015*, published by Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, available at: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/files/user/docs/Roma%20Inclusion%20Index%202015.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> EU-FRA, Roma Pilot Survey, 2011: <http://fra.europa.eu/DVS/DVT/roma.php>.

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

### Implementing the Racial Equality Directive

In Italy, over 20 per cent of the Roma population live in *nomad municipal camps*.<sup>61</sup> Even if the majority of RSC communities do not lead a nomadic lifestyle, these camps continue to be designed and built by local authorities, especially in the big towns where the reference to the “nomadic Gypsy” is still widespread. Sometimes, these authorised municipal areas are called “Equipped Villages”, even though they remain characterised by a high level of housing precariousness, segregation and marginalization. These Roma camps have acted for decades as a catalyst of prejudice, often determining the rise of the level of marginalization experienced by the Roma and the spread of hate speech. In consequence, the widespread of negative prejudices against Roma have led many Roma who live in houses to hide their identity, in order not to become targets of discrimination. This situation has furthermore increased discrimination against Roma, in two ways. On the one hand, it created a “differentiate” perception on the Roma housing needs and rights among the majority of the population and, on the other hand, it promoted the idea in many RSC communities that the housing discrimination they are victims of should not be denounced, but rather tolerated as a standard condition. The socially spread effect of the stereotype of the “nomadic Gypsy” is still closely linked to the idea of the “nomad camp” as a housing solution for them, and produces pervasive discrimination that affects both those subjects who live in those camps and those who live outside, resulting in implicit or obvious antigypsyism. This situation of segregation leads to a generalised discrimination that crosses many areas of the life of Roma and Sinti communities: Roma communities have difficult access to justice and often manage to get equality of treatment only if supported by the legal action of NGOs. For this reason Italy has received multiple recommendations to implement policies to overcome Roma discrimination in their access to housing, work and education, but the situation of segregation and lack of rights has not been resolved yet.<sup>62</sup>

The NRIS has not produced any change in the political attitude towards Roma communities. It must be underlined that, while adopting the NRIS, the Italian government was also arguing before courts about the validity of the Roma Emergency Decree of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (21 May 2008),<sup>63</sup> that had declared the emergency in relation to the settlements of “nomad communities”. This decree allowed to invest millions of EUR in new camps. The issue was only definitively settled on 26 April 2013, when the Court of Cassation declared the nomad camps a form of ethnic segregation. The funds that Italy had allocated for Roma since 2008, however, have been spent largely for evictions and for the construction of new camps, rather than for actions aimed at the inclusion of RSC communities.

UNAR is the national contact point entitled to promote actions to fight discrimination, and has for this reason established regional territorial units, even if their impact is still limited.<sup>64</sup> Very often, in fact, advocacy actions are and can be taken only if RSC people have the opportunity to receive the assistance of NGOs able to support their legal action. This political context directly affected the abilities of UNAR to act, since UNAR is a direct emanation of the government.

<sup>61</sup> [http://www.osservazione.org/it/4\\_15/film-documentario--fuori-campo-storie-di-rom-nellitalia-di-oggi.htm](http://www.osservazione.org/it/4_15/film-documentario--fuori-campo-storie-di-rom-nellitalia-di-oggi.htm)

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/country-by-country/italy/ita-cbc-v-2016-019-eng.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/public/decreto.del.presidente.del.consiglio.dei.ministri.21.maggio.2008.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> Stefano Pasta, “L’inclusione delle politiche per i rom: una novità ancora da assimilare,” *Aggiornamenti Sociali* 2017(11), 739–753.



## Educational and residential segregation

### **Educational segregation**

It is very difficult to consider reliable data on the presence of Roma and Sinti at school, because until 2016 the Ministry of Education used to measure the presence of these communities in school by referring to a survey on “nomadic pupils” which makes the data an example of stereotyping rather than correct sampling. This type of reporting evaluation produces incorrect, or at least partial data, because it ends up just providing data on those students who are living in the “nomad camps”, putting an emphasis, on an emergency approach to this theme.

The research, concluded in 2003 within the European project *The education of the Gypsy childhood in Europe*,<sup>65</sup> confirmed that in the country there is a remarkable correlation between being recognized as a Roma beneficiary of an *ad hoc training* project, and the failure of the educational path of that student; on the contrary, the more the child is not “stigmatized” under the “Roma/Gypsy/Nomad” concept, the greater are his chances of succeeding at school. This type of assessment must be related to the history of schooling: between the 1960s and the 1980s, Italy included Roma and Sinti within differential classes reserved for “Gypsies”. It was a strategy of inclusion closely linked to the idea that the populations of the “nomad camps” should be re-educated to be able to enter society.

Those experiences have been characterized using a low-level pedagogy, that was based on the idea that Roma and Sinti populations had a lower intelligence than average. The results were completely unsatisfactory; if anything, they succeeded in increasing the level of marginalization and discrimination.<sup>66</sup>

This national context produces actions of marginalization in the school at local level and ethnic segregation. According the *FRA Roma pilot survey* (2011), the data on the schools or classes attended by non-Roma children living nearby show an ethnically homogeneous school environment: in Italy, 85 per cent of non-Roma children attended classes without or with only some Roma children.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, according the same survey, Italy was one the country in which the worst results about “perceived experiences of discrimination” are recorded.<sup>68</sup> This study shows that around the 16 per cent of Roma aged 16 and above who had contact with educational institutions experienced discrimination in education in the last year in Italy,<sup>69</sup> while the Roma respondents reporting the most recent incident of perceived discrimination in education in the past 12 months was 45 per cent in total.<sup>70</sup>

Regarding the scholastic context, discrimination leads to cases of children misdiagnosed with learning disorders, but also to the use of exclusion practices that come back to the old model of segregated classes: at the beginning of the school year 2016/2017, the first

<sup>65</sup> Ana Giménez Adelantado, Leonardo Piasere, and Jean Pierre Liegeois, *The Education of Gypsy Childhood in Europe, Opere Roma Project*. Available at: [https://cordis.europa.eu/docs/publications/8260/82608111-6\\_en.pdf](https://cordis.europa.eu/docs/publications/8260/82608111-6_en.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Other European countries: Poland 96%, Greece 91%, Czech Republic 78%, Slovakia 76%, Portugal 77%; in Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, 32 % to 49 % of non-Roma children living nearby Roma said that they studied in ethnically mixed classes. Source: FRA, *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, 2014, pp. 46-47, available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1_en.pdf).

<sup>68</sup> The survey asked whether respondents had felt discriminated against by school staff because of their ethnic origin at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. Both students aged 16 and above and their parents could express their experiences of perceived unequal treatment in the survey.

<sup>69</sup> Czech Republic 20%; 18% France; 11% Hungary; 9% Greece, Romania; 7% Portugal, Spain, Poland; 5% Slovakia; 4% Bulgaria. Source: FRA, *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, 2014, p. 49, available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1_en.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> Czech Republic 28%; Hungary 18%, Spain 6%. Source: FRA, *Roma survey – Data in focus. Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*, 2014, p. 49, available at: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1_en.pdf).

class of a school in Pescara was “reserved” for Roma pupils only; so, last August 2017, 13 Roma pupils all attended the same class. The school head, called upon to motivate the creation of a class on ethnicity basis, presented that choice as “*the development of an innovative teaching process*”.<sup>71</sup> This condition shows how, despite the attempts to overcome discrimination through general anti-discrimination legislation, the negative stereotype on Roma is so widespread at social level that it provokes hypervisibility and results in concrete discrimination on an ethnic basis.

### **Residential segregation**

Since 1984 some Italian regions, also as a consequence of a lack of a national legislation on Roma inclusion, started to adopt their own regional laws aimed at the “*protection of nomadic cultures*”.<sup>72</sup> These laws were underpinned by the erroneous conviction that Roma and Sinti are “nomads”, with the double effect to strengthen the perception of Roma and Sinti as “nomads”, and to lead to the official construction and management of segregated living spaces. All these laws have a common thread: they foresee the design and construction of “authorised” settlements (so-called “Roma camps”) specially tailored for Roma and Sinti communities, thus promoting and justifying residentially segregating policies. Even if initially the realization of “authorised” settlements was not intended to be a mean of segregation but a way to protect the perceived peculiarities of these minorities, the results have been extremely critical in terms of spatial segregation and social marginalization. Italy has been repeatedly urged by a number of human rights monitoring bodies to put an end to the discriminatory practices and policies affecting Roma living within its territory.<sup>73</sup> The Italian authorities have repeatedly failed to meet these international obligations and recommendations, as they continue to build and manage “authorised” settlements, and to provide housing units inside them to the Roma and Sinti families. These municipal camps or settlements are designed and managed to constitute a parallel and permanent housing system specifically designed for Roma and Sinti, as an alternative to ordinary housing solutions as, for example, the social housing system. In many Italian municipalities an *ad-hoc* “Roma Office” is in charge of the management of the settlements and of the assignation of the housing units. On 30 May 2015 the Civil Court of Rome ruled the discriminatory nature of institutional segregation inside a Roma-only “authorised” settlement, with regard to the *La Barbuta* settlement in Rome. In April 2012 the NGOs ASGI (Association for Legal Studies on Immigration) and *Associazione 21 Luglio* took legal action against the City of Rome to stop the construction of *La Barbuta* Roma-only settlement. As argued in the complaint, the Court stated that the construction of the “village” *La Barbuta* was discriminatory in its nature, and therefore unlawful by the mere fact that a specific ethnic group was being segregated from the local population through the provision of housing from the municipality.<sup>74</sup> Placing Roma in Roma-only municipal settlements, shelters or any other mono-ethnic housing solution fosters social exclusion, and is contrary to a range of international obligations and to the Race Equality Directive 2000/43, that prohibits discrimination in housing. The Italian authorities committed to overcome discriminatory segregation and sub-standard housing conditions in “authorised” settlements with the approval of the NRIS (p.7-11), which includes the following goals in its Axis 4 related to housing:

*“Increasing the access to a wide range of housing solutions for the RSC people, with a participatory approach, in order to definitively overcome emergency approaches and large-*

<sup>71</sup> Article by Riccardo Noury, communication manager of Amnesty International Italy: <http://lepersoneeladignita.corriere.it/2017/12/07/a-pescara-una-classe-monoetnica-per-soli-rom/>

<sup>72</sup> Luca Bravi, Nando Sigona, *Educazione e rieducazione nei campi per nomadi. Una storia.* [http://www.romsintimemory.it/assets/files/storia\\_memoria/memoria-negata/ALLEGATO%2014%20Sigona-Bravi,%20ABSTRACT%20EN.pdf](http://www.romsintimemory.it/assets/files/storia_memoria/memoria-negata/ALLEGATO%2014%20Sigona-Bravi,%20ABSTRACT%20EN.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> ECRI - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2016), “ECRI Report on Italy (fifth monitoring cycle)”, Council of Europe, 18 March 2016.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Ordinanza-La-Barbuta.pdf>

sized mono-ethnic settlements, while paying due regard to local opportunities, family reunification and a strategy to be based upon the principle of equal distribution:

1. Promoting integrated policies for inter-institutional cooperation in the field of housing supply for the RSC people;
2. Promoting housing solutions which meet the requirements and specific needs of the RSC families;
3. Raising awareness about the economic resources, the administrative arrangements available under the housing policies, and the real estate opportunities for the RSC families".

Despite this commitment, the national Government has not implemented any concrete measure to eradicate housing segregation. The persistence of segregated housing policies addressed towards Roma and Sinti throughout Italy continues to attract criticisms from a number of human rights monitoring bodies. Among these, in particular, Amnesty International, which has been reporting the segregation of the Roma in its campaigns since 2008.<sup>75</sup> According to a mapping performed by *Associazione 21 Luglio*, Italy currently manages 149 "authorised" Roma-only settlements throughout Italy.<sup>76</sup> These data put in evidence that the housing segregation of Roma communities is a widespread and systematic issue, as it is not just limited to the main Italian cities, but also in many medium-sized municipalities that manage Roma-only settlements, where a large amount of public fund is used to reiterate Roma housing exclusion.

The following short list provides information about the typology, the annual cost for the ordinary functioning of settlements, and the place of the last Roma municipal settlements financed by local authorities in the last five years:

- 2012: Roma-only settlement *La Barbuta* (approximately 10 million EUR), approximately 600 persons, Rome.
- 2012: Roma-only reception facility (temporary place created following an eviction and destined to be dismantled within a few months) *Best House Rom* (yearly management: 2.6 million EUR; costs for the refurbishment of the building: N/A), approximately 320 persons, Rome.
- 2012: Roma-only reception facility *Centro Grazia Deledda* (1.7 million EUR), approximately 100 persons, Napoli.
- 2013: Roma-only settlement *Masseria del Pozzo* (0.38 million EUR), approximately 370 persons, Giugliano (NA).
- 2014: 2 Roma-only settlements *Ex scuola Cortile* and *Magazzino ex colombofila* (94,400 EUR, the housing units are of property of the Roma families and have been moved from the previous settlement), 71 persons, Carpi (MO).
- 2014: Roma-only settlement *Villaggio Martirano* (2.3 million EUR), 90 persons, Milan.
- 2014: Roma-only settlement *Nuovo Panareo* (596,331 EUR), approximately 120 persons, Lecce.
- 2015: Roma-only temporary tent settlement *Tendopoli Rom Cosenza* (415,000 EUR), approximately 450 persons, Cosenza.
- 2016: Roma-only settlement *Via del Riposo* (549,688 EUR), 168 persons, Naples.

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.amnesty.it/insediamenti-rom-infrazone-italia/>

<sup>76</sup> Associazione 21 Luglio, *Rapporto annuale 2016*. Available at: [http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RAPPORTO-ANNUALE\\_2016\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/RAPPORTO-ANNUALE_2016_WEB.pdf)

Little has been done at the national level aside from allocating funds to manage existing facilities.

Compared to the period of the “Nomad emergency” we are witnessing a gradual change of approach in the policies aimed at Roma inclusion, and the adoption of the NRIS and the first efforts towards its implementation are a clear indicator of this path. An increasing consensus on the urgency to implement effective inclusion policies for Roma, and particularly on the necessity to overcome segregating housing solutions, can be traced among some decision makers at the national and regional level. Nevertheless, the translation of commitments into concrete measures is intermittent and in considerable delay, resulting in no substantial improvement of the living conditions of Roma and Sinti families on the ground so far. A considerable discrepancy between the orientation of national authorities and the one of local authorities can be noted, a factor which hinders the transposition of the NRIS into concrete measures at the local level. The high degree of discrepancy, the territorial non-homogeneous implementation and the considerable delays recorded are all critical factors currently jeopardizing the potential positive impact of the NRIS. The lack of impact of the NRIS has been acknowledged also by the European Committee on Social Rights (ECSR) of the CoE, who assessed Italy’s situation in its “Follow-up to Decisions on the Merits of Collective Complaints – Findings 2015”.<sup>77</sup> Italy was found in breach of the European Social Charter with regard to housing segregation and forced evictions of Roma communities twice, in 2005 and in 2010.<sup>78</sup> Concerning both cases, the request for information by ECSR in order to assess whether Italy took action in order to bring the situation into conformity with the Charter was met by Italian authorities with one essential argument: the implementation of the NRIS. The ECSR concluded that, despite small progress in some areas, the measures undertaken were insufficient to bring the situation into conformity with the Charter.

It is also important to consider the impact that this situation had on Roma and Sinti self-perception about discriminatory living conditions that they have been experiencing during the years, and the possibility that they have to undertake actions aimed at overcoming them. In 2017, the NGO *Arci Solidarietà* has carried out several interviews that revealed the condition of the inhabitants of the camps with respect to the perception of relations with the outside world: the interviewed people describe the condition of the camps, particularly in Rome, as a problem for poor hygiene conditions and frequent flooding after the rains; this housing condition causes a sense of abandonment and exclusion and makes relations with the outside world and with the institutions even more difficult.

## Forced evictions

The decree of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (21 May 2008), which called for a state of emergency in relation to the settlements of “nomad communities” in some Italian regions, produced numerous evictions without suitable alternative solutions, mainly in Milan and the use of social inclusion funding to build new camps, especially in Rome. The decree has triggered an unjustified alarm condition with respect to the presence of Roma and Sinti in Italy; the decree has described a fake relationship between the presence of Roma in Italy and crime. Local administrations have chosen to resort to evictions instead of activating educational, occupational and housing inclusion policies. In this way the Roma and Sinti have been segregated again within the nomad camps on the outskirts of the cities and the condition of exclusion of these communities has worsened.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/16805939f5>

<sup>78</sup> FRA, *Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe*. Available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2011/housing-conditions-roma-and-travellers-european-union-comparative-report>

<sup>79</sup> Carlo Stasolla, *Sulla pelle dei Rom: il piano nomadi della giunta Alemanno* (Roma: Alegre, 2012).

When collectively evicting Roma and Sinti families, the Italian authorities hardly ever apply all the procedural protections expected by international laws.<sup>80</sup> In most of the documented cases, evictions are carried out in absence of formal eviction orders and without a formal notice, ruling out the possibility to have access to a legal remedy. Moreover, they are carried out without an adequate advance notification, in absence of any kind of consultation and without taking into consideration the individual circumstances of each family. Very often no alternative housing possibilities are provided to the families evicted, making them homeless. In the very rare cases in which alternative housing is offered, either it causes the division of households, as only mothers with children are welcomed in temporary housing-emergency, or it consists in a sub-standard and inadequate housing unit in a segregated Roma-only municipal camp or reception facility. This shows how forced evictions, in the absence of shared and alternative housing solutions, cause an aggravation of marginalization and never represent a solution that produces inclusion. The evicted communities plunge into an increasingly serious situation of unease, increasing the vulnerability and exacerbating the living conditions of those affected.

Recent examples highlight the systematic use of forced evictions carried out by Italian authorities throughout Italy, mainly in the cities of Rome, Milan and Florence. The data collected by the observatory made by *Associazione 21 Luglio* are alarming.<sup>81</sup> In 2015-2016 there have been 250 forced evictions: 100 in Northern Italy, 90 in Central Italy, and 60 in Southern Italy.

Only in the city of Rome, from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2016 a total of 196 documented forced evictions were carried out, affecting roughly 4,890 Roma overall:<sup>82</sup>

Year	Number of forced evictions	Number of evicted Roma	Costs for eviction
2013	54	1.230	1,545,058 EUR
2014	34	1.135	1,315,000 EUR
2015	80	1.500	1,842,340 EUR
2016	28	960	1,260,020 EUR
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>4.890</b>	<b>5,962,418 EUR</b>

It must be stressed that reliable estimations attest the total Roma population residing in spontaneous settlements in Rome at about 2,200-2,500 individuals, 0.09 per cent of the overall population. This shows that in recent years a large amount of public money has been used for evicting the same people several times, forcing them to move from one precarious situation to another, and reproducing housing exclusion.

### Discriminatory behaviour by police, misconduct by prosecutors or courts

The years following the launch of the national strategy did not register an improvement in the fight against discriminatory behavior against RSC. In fact, there are numerous reports by ERRC and UNHCR on violations:

On 14 July 2015, the Turin Criminal Court convicted at first instance six people finding them guilty of a violent assault on a Roma camp in Turin known as *La Continassa*. The informal camp was destroyed in December 2011 by a violent mob which set fire to shacks, caravans, and cars, following a march in reaction to a false and unfounded allegation of rape against two Romani men. The arson attack on the camp completely destroyed the homes and property of 46 Roma. The court recognised that the attack was racially

<sup>80</sup> NAGA, *Nomadi per forza* (Milano: 2015).

<sup>81</sup> Associazione 21 Luglio, *Rapporto annuale 2016*.

<sup>82</sup> Articolo 3 Osservatorio sulle discriminazioni, *Rapporti annuali* (Mantova, 2014). Available at: <http://www.articolo3.org/categoria/rapporti>

motivated and referred to several factors such as insults, verbal racist abuse, and threats of violence against Roma that clearly proved hate bias. The court found that the authorities failed to protect the victims from the attack, underestimated the risks and dangers to which Roma living in *La Continassa* were exposed, and found that the small number of officers present actually emboldened the mob to engage in extreme anti-Roma violence. No procedures have been initiated against law enforcement officials responsible for the failure in protecting this vulnerable community.

In Turin, on 29 September 2015 three local police officers went to *Lungo Stura Lazio* informal camp to evict a Roma family who had just returned from Romania and occupied a shack. One family member who tried to resist the eviction was pepper-sprayed, handcuffed, and forced to the ground by police officers. Another police officer drew his gun and pointed it at onlookers. According to available evidence, the police reaction was disproportionate. There has been no investigation into police conduct but the Romani man was charged and found guilty on 17 February 2016 with assault and causing injury to the three police officers.

On 15 December 2013, in Turin, a police officer shot a Roma who was running away following a theft. The Roma was hit in the back and disabled. Three years later the court sentenced the police officer to nine months imprisonment and fined him 60,000 EUR.

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## ADDRESSING ANTIGYPSYISM

### Institutional settings for fighting discrimination and addressing antigypsyism

The NRIS recognises the existence of antigypsyism and, above all, explicitly links the inclusion of RSC population “to a more comprehensive process of cultural growth, which involves the society as a whole” and which has the task “to eliminate the racial discrimination germs from the European and national mentality, which historically have taken the form of the so-called anti-gitanism”. Antigypsyism is in fact defined as a “complex cultural and historical phenomenon, fraught with serious negative effects on the living conditions of the Roma and Sinti communities, which caused in the twentieth century the tragedy of Porrajmos”.<sup>83</sup> Emphasizing this cultural meaning, UNAR, responsible for the direction of the Strategy, agreed to carry out preventative and repressive actions against antigypsyism on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 27 January,<sup>84</sup> and the Week of Action against Racism, starting on 21 March.<sup>85</sup>

Through the Ministry of Education the Italian authorities also clearly identifies antigypsyism in another general document, “The Italian way for the intercultural school and the integration of foreign students”.<sup>86</sup> This document states the principles and actions which define the “national model” for the reception and integration of children having different cultural backgrounds, including RSC groups; this model shows the opportunity to promote actions against prejudice and discrimination and states that “antigypsyism can be considered as a form of racism that intercultural education must combat, through the knowledge of the history of the Roma and Sinti population”.<sup>87</sup>

In the Annual Report on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment and the effectiveness of the protection methods that UNAR presents each year to the Italian Parliament,<sup>88</sup> RSC groups are included as subject to racism and discrimination. Also The Jo Cox Committee on hate, intolerance, xenophobia and racism established on 10 May 2016 by the Chamber of Deputies, dedicated a chapter on antigypsyism in the final Report of July 2017.<sup>89</sup> This subject has been mentioned also in the Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the outskirts of the Chamber (December 2017).<sup>90</sup> The Extraordinary Human Rights Commission of the Senate, the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance No Hate of the Council

<sup>83</sup> Italian version: UNAR, *Strategia Nazionale d’Inclusione dei Rom, dei Sinti, e dei Caminanti 2012/2020. Attuazione Comunicazione Commissione Europea n. 173/2011* (Roma: UNAR, 2012), 25. English version: UNAR, *National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities. European Commission Communication No. 173/2011* (Roma: UNAR, 2012).

<sup>84</sup> According to the Italian Law 211/2000, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January) is celebrated every year but the Genocide of Roma and Sinti is not explicitly mentioned.

<sup>85</sup> According to UN, it is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, but the antigypsyism is not explicitly mentioned.

<sup>86</sup> Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l’integrazione degli alunni stranieri* (Roma: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2007).

<sup>87</sup> Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l’integrazione degli alunni stranieri* (Roma: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 2007), p. 16.

<sup>88</sup> One of the institutional tasks of UNAR is to inform the Parliament and the the Government through two *Annual Reports on the effective application of the principle of equal treatment and on the effectiveness of the protection mechanisms, as well as on the progress and obstacles of the anti-discrimination actions in Italy.*

However, since 2015, the two reports have not been published any longer, due to the difficulties UNAR experienced in carrying out its activity, as explained at other places of this report.

<sup>89</sup> Commissione Jo Cox sull’intolleranza, la xenofobia, il razzismo e i fenomeni d’odio, *Relazione finale* (Roma: Camera dei deputati, 2017).

<sup>90</sup> Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sulle condizioni di sicurezza e sullo stato di degrado delle città e delle loro periferie, *Relazione sull’attività svolta (25 novembre 2016 – 14 dicembre 2017)* (Roma: Camera dei deputati, 2017).

of Europe, UNAR itself and other public institutions also took positions recognizing antigypsyism, too. However, these authorities only have advisory and monitoring powers, and are not very effective in terms of action. It cannot be said that there is no awareness, at least in some institutions, of the existence of racist feelings against RSC population. However, at institutional level, we cannot say that there is an adequate awareness of its level of pervasiveness in the Italian society. Moreover, it cannot be said that fighting antigypsyism is a priority of the State, but rather a sporadic and fragmentary activity. It should also be considered that antigypsyism is interpreted – from the NRIS itself – as a cultural and historical phenomenon, to be fought through campaigns and dedicated events, but it is not treated as a specific legal issue. From this point of view, therefore, it is fought through the same tools usually applied to other forms of racism, and not through a system of ad hoc restrictions.

This choice is also related to two gaps present in the Italian legislative framework. Firstly, the RSC population has not as yet been acknowledged as a minority as, according to Art. 6 of the Italian Constitution, this definition only applies to a group of people, living in an identifiable area, and having its own linguistic specification. Even if Law n. 482 of 1999 protects twelve minorities,<sup>91</sup> in many cases numerically less significant than Roma and Sinti, the Roma minority was not acknowledged as such, as in the evaluation of their case the principle of territoriality prevailed on the linguistic one.<sup>92</sup>

In the following Legislatures, several law proposals for recognizing the RSC population as a minority have been suggested in Parliament, but none have been successful. In 2012, the Roma and Sinti *Insieme Federation*, together with 43 Sinti and Roma associations, academics, political and trade union training and national associations, proposed a popular legislative initiative (PLI) "For the protection and equal opportunities of the historical-linguistic minority of Rom and Sinti",<sup>93</sup> while *Fondazione Romani Italia* presented its proposal in collaboration with the University of Teramo,<sup>94</sup> but neither of these attempts was successful.

Secondly, there is no reference to the genocide of Roma and Sinti in the institutional law of International Holocaust Remembrance Day (n. 11 of 2000), which instead refers only to "the extermination and persecution of the Jewish people and of the Italian military and political deportees in the Nazi camps".<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the proposal of law to include the reference to the extermination of Roma and Sinti that was presented in the last Legislature was not approved.<sup>96</sup> Although several conferences on *Porrajmos* tragedy have taken place during institutional venues organized in the Senate of the Republic and in the Presidency

<sup>91</sup> [www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/99482l.htm](http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/99482l.htm).

<sup>92</sup> Ed. Paolo Bonetti, Alessandro Simoni, and Tommaso Vitale, *La condizione giuridica di Rom e Sinti in Italia: atti del convegno internazionale*; Università degli studi di Milano-Bicocca, 16-18 giugno 2010 (Milano: Giuffrè, 2011).

<sup>93</sup> Paolo Bonetti, Alessandro Simoni and Tommaso Vitale, "Norme per la tutela e le pari opportunità della minoranza dei Rom e dei Sinti", in *La condizione giuridica di Rom e Sinti in Italia*, ed. Bonetti, Simoni, and Vitale, 1281-1362.

See also the Civil Society position papers: "‘Anche tenendo conto di eventuali specifiche esigenze’ OsservAzione e il dibattito sul riconoscimento del romanes e della minoranza rom e sinta", OsservAzione, 12 ottobre 2015 Available at: [http://www.osservazione.org/it/2\\_91/anche-tenendo-conto-di-eventuali-specifiche-esigenze.htm](http://www.osservazione.org/it/2_91/anche-tenendo-conto-di-eventuali-specifiche-esigenze.htm). "Riconoscimento, la risposta di Sucar Drom ad OsservAzione", U Velto. Available at: <http://sucardrom.blogspot.it/2015/12/riconoscimento-la-risposta-di-sucar.html>.

<sup>94</sup> Fondazione Romani, "Proposta di legge statale per il riconoscimento della lingua romani come minoranza linguistica storica". Available at: <http://sucardrom.blogspot.it/2015/12/riconoscimento-la-risposta-di-sucar.html>.

<sup>95</sup> "Istituzione del 'Giorno della Memoria' in ricordo dello sterminio e delle persecuzioni del popolo ebraico e dei deportati militari e politici italiani nei campi nazisti", Legge 20 luglio 2000, n. 211. Available at: <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/00211l.htm>.

<sup>96</sup> "Modifiche alla legge 20 luglio 2000, n. 211, in materia di estensione del Giorno della Memoria al popolo dei rom e dei sinti", Disegno di legge del 22 gennaio 2015. Available at: <http://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/17/DDLPRES/901868/index.html?stampa=si&spart=si&toc=no>



of the Council of Ministers, the cultural awareness of the genocide of Roma and Sinti is almost non-existent in the national collective consciousness. The term *Porrajmos* remains unknown, as the names of the main Italian concentration camps for Roma and Sinti. We are far from the inclusion in the school calendar of *Porrajmos*, as required by the NRIS.

The recent report issued by Jo Cox Committee in 2017 confirms that antigypsyism is an "historical topic in the Italian society and it has strengthened over the past decade".<sup>97</sup> In the last few years, the polycentric proliferation of antigypsyism has increased, i.e. the producers of racist content have spread and diversified: traditional media still have their importance in the matter, but local political actors, local news websites, self-produced "unofficial information" blogs, Facebook groups and even private pages on social networks have started to contribute to the spread on anti-Roma speeches. This situation has three main dangerous consequences and acts as a powerful hindering factor in preventing Roma inclusion possibilities, as:

1. it has a direct and blatant impact in terms of daily discrimination on the lives of those targeted;
2. it acts as a powerful deterrent means for the administrators in charge to design and implement inclusion policies addressing Roma and Sinti;
3. it gradually allows explicit racist rhetoric against Roma and Sinti to be increasingly accepted by the public opinion, paving the way to occasional violent drifts.

The antigypsyism matter has "standardised", meaning that it has been minced and widespread, becoming ever more pervasive and omnipresent. This current situation is well represented by an episode which happened in February 2017, and which had a wide media echo: two supermarket employees in the province of Grosseto trapped two Roma women in a trash bin, having surprised them during a rummage, then filmed a video of their racist insults, which became viral on YouTube and Facebook.<sup>98</sup> When these aggressors were fired, the Mayor of the city expressed regret and the secretary of the *Lega Nord*, Matteo Salvini, offered legal support to the two employees and launched a boycott campaign against the supermarket company. This case highlights how it is not only considered normal to lock up two Roma women in a cage, frighten and offend them, but also to show off this behaviour among friends, and it is exactly the kind of situation that exemplifies very well the cultural background in which antigypsyism arises.<sup>99</sup>

The analysis of antigypsyism and the development of long-term strategies to combat it are entrusted to the UNAR. In recent years The Office created *Focal Points*, a territorial network at regional, provincial and municipal level, for interception and combating cases of discrimination. Every year, UNAR sends a report about its activities to the Government and Parliament: unfortunately, it does not provide data concerning the monitored cases, nor the cases of antigypsyism reported to the Contact Centre and the data are included in the ethnic-national discrimination cluster.

In recent years, UNAR activities stopped, due to internal reorganization (currently there is still no Director), the reduction of funding, and the attacks suffered by some parties and cultural movements. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) highlights that the activities carried out by UNAR have a weak impact for its limited power of action: it is in fact a body that is under governmental control and it is not authorized to

<sup>97</sup> Commissione Jo Cox, *Relazione finale*, 90.

<sup>98</sup> The Public Prosecutor's office of Grosseto has opened criminal proceedings in respect of this act.

<sup>99</sup> The video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iToARdN23go>; "Follonica, licenziati i dipendenti che imprigionarono le rom. Salvini: 'Boicottate la Lidl'", in *la Repubblica*, 29 aprile 2017.

See also: Anna Dotti, "Follonica: la gabbia del disprezzo", in *Cronache di ordinario razzismo. Quarto Libro bianco sul razzismo in Italia*, ed. Lunaria (Roma: Lunaria, 2017), 190-93.

open legal actions.<sup>100</sup> The Jo Cox Committee underlined also that, the fight against the discrimination and racism faced by Roma is not part of structural policies or programs at national, regional and local level. It must be reported some attempts have been done at local level, by some authorities like Emilia Romagna Region and The Municipality of Milan.

In Emilia Romagna, in addition to monitoring activities, *"generic preventative measures are planned to sensitize and inform the society, and encourage a direct confrontation and the development of a positive relationship between minority and majority communities (and vice versa), with the purpose of promoting a confident approach and change of both parties"*.<sup>101</sup> The Guidelines of the Municipality of Milan also aim *"to oppose and overcome forms of discrimination against the RSC populations and of denial of the human dignity"*.<sup>102</sup> However, the lack of application of the NRIS at regional level leads to the general lack of local initiatives and the absence of monitoring of the cases which is proclaimed in the policy documents.

There are no government programmes aimed at promoting positive discrimination for the RSC populations, such as to increase their presence in the public administration, in the Police, or in prosecutors' offices and courts. These policies are rarely applied in Italy, and particularly negated in case of RSC population. In response to the 2017/2038 motion "On fundamental rights aspects in Roma people integration in the EU: fighting antigypsyism", in which the States are asked to *"set up within the Police forces, units which, educated on antigypsyism, know how to effectively fight hate crimes"* and *"to encourage the recruitment of Roma people within the same Police forces"*,<sup>103</sup> we want to point out the reaction of Consap – one of the main Italian police unions – which defined the recommendation *"a delirious priority"*. The statement, dated 27 of October 2017 says: *"The concept of Roma integration is a contradiction, as their culture has always been to live on the margins of society to boost their parasitism. Using a Disney metaphor, as someone already said, the risk would be of asking the Beagle Boys to watch Scrooge McDuck's money bin"*.<sup>104</sup>

Also, regarding the funds, there are no structural plans, so NGOs can only have access to the European Funds allocated for the fight against antigypsyism, such as the EC's Rights Equality and Citizenship Program 2014-2020. In November 2016, UNAR published the Notice for the promotion of positive actions with one of the areas dedicated to the RSC population (budget of 200,000 EUR). Four proposals have been approved for RSC populations, but up to date the funds have not been transferred to the NGOs yet. On the other hand, it has never been questioned whether political parties and media that become protagonists of incitement speeches to antigypsyism can benefit from public funds, even in the event of convictions.

## The strengths and gaps in countering hate crime and hate speech against Roma, and the antigypsyist rhetoric of politicians, public figures and media

In Italy there is no specific legislative framework to counter hate speech and hate crime against Roma and Sinti, so their defence fit into the wider anti-discrimination scenery. In fact, there is no specific penal law contrasting hate speech and hate crime in general. The legal gap is filled by the application of the laws relating to offences of incitement to racial hatred, propaganda of ideas based on superiority and racial hatred, insults, libel and threats. Cases adopting explicit and racist rhetoric fall therefore within the provisions set

<sup>100</sup> ECRI, "Conclusions on Implementation of the Recommendations in respect of Italy. Subject to interim follow-up", adopted on 9 December 2014, published on 24 February 2015.

<sup>101</sup> Regione Emilia Romagna, "Strategia regionale per l'inclusione di rom e sinti" (Bologna, 2014), 61.

<sup>102</sup> Comune di Milano, "Linee guida Rom, Sinti e Caminanti del Comune di Milano" (Milano, 2012), 3.

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2017-0294+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>104</sup> Press release Consap available at: <https://st.ilfattoquotidiano.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Comunicato-stampa-Rom-in-Polizia-1-1.doc>.

by the Law No. 205/1993 (Mancino Law).<sup>105</sup> In those cases adopting a more indirect and subtle expression of bias, the current Italian anti-discrimination framework does not provide effective means – other than criminal law – to address and discourage them, leaving antigypsyism and its promoters enough space to fuel anti-Roma sentiments with blatant, and dangerous effects. The legal gap is even worse on the Internet, and on social networks especially, where it becomes even more difficult to define the borders of hate speech and the relevant legislations. In this case, there are no proper laws for the online environment, but the Mancino Law and the Directive 31/2000/EC on e-commerce are applied. However, the law is not being respected.

On 30 November 2017 the Minister of Justice Andrea Orlando announced the birth of an independent body to fight the propaganda of hatred on the Internet. The Court of Cassation Case law has extended protection procedures against hate speech by recognizing that the crime of propaganda is to be applied to all forms of traditional and “differential racism” even though not explicitly or “externally” expressed, such as based on racial prejudice. In case of political offense, sanctions are provided only when the offense led to discriminatory or violent reactions, namely when it is considered as a concrete and illicit danger for peaceful coexistence. This in order to avoid the sanctioning of a mere ideological principle.<sup>106</sup>

The principal authorities that intercede in the event of hate speech are two: UNAR and the Observatory for security against acts of discrimination (OSCAD).<sup>107</sup> OSCAD was established in September 2011 with the aim of protecting the victims of hate crimes. OSCAD is operated by the State Police and the Carabinieri and is within the Department of Public Security – Central Directorate of Criminal Police. Since September 2010 to 15 October 2014, OSCAD have received 1,127 reports, 585 of which considered to have criminal relevance, 87 per cent of which of a race and ethnic basis.<sup>108</sup> In 2009, UNAR created a Contact Centre for collecting complaints,<sup>109</sup> providing immediate and psychological support, and help victims in the legal procedures; in November 2015 the Media & Internet Observatory was also established.<sup>110</sup> While some episodes are detected and directly monitored by UNAR experts, individual citizens and associations can report alleged discriminations on the site, by email, or through a free toll-free telephone service. The cases processed were 1,283 in 2012, 1,142 in 2013, 1,337 in 2014, 1,814 in 2015; respectively 51.5 per cent, 66.8 per cent, 74 per cent and 70.6 per cent are classified as “ethnic-racial ground” (UNAR does not provide the data concerning the RSC population).<sup>111</sup> The experts of the Office decide whether to close the case, contact the author or the manager sites or, in the most serious cases, report to Postal Police. In the meantime, the racist content spreads online as it usually takes several months before it is removed. Moreover, UNAR action is considerably limited due to the lack of repressive and deterrent means to discourage episodes of this kind, as the only direct action UNAR can undertake is in practice limited to sending a “moral suasion”.

<sup>105</sup> Previously, Act no. 654 of 13 October 1975 (The Reale Act) which ratified the International Convention on the elimination of all form of racial discrimination (1965), had foreseen that “all those who spread “ ideas rooted in racial superiority or hatred” or instigate to commit acts of discrimination or violence towards citizens belonging to racial, ethnic or national groups (art. 3) shall be liable of imprisonment.

<sup>106</sup> Corte di Cassazione, Sez. III penale, sentenza n. 36906/2015; Corte di Cassazione, Sez. V penale, sentenza n. 43488/2015; Corte di Cassazione, Sez. I penale, sentenza n. 42727/2015; Corte di Cassazione, Sez. I penale, sentenza n. 47894/2012.

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/22017/>.

<sup>108</sup> Stefano Pasta, *Prejudice 2.0. Forms of intolerance in contemporary youth cultural. Theoretical models and educational practices, doctoral thesis in Education*, Catholic University of Milan, 2016, 31. See also: Stefano Pasta, *Razzismo 2.0. Un’analisi socio-educativa dell’odio online* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2018).

<sup>109</sup> This service was selected through European public tender.

<sup>110</sup> [http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?page\\_id=7794](http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?page_id=7794).

<sup>111</sup> Stefano Pasta, *Prejudice 2.0*, 33.

Antigypsyism has also been monitored by civil society organizations, including the monitoring of newspapers carried out by *Article 3-Observatory on discrimination* from 2009 to 2014,<sup>112</sup> (then terminated due to lack of funds), the White Books of Lunaria,<sup>113</sup> the annual reports of the *Associazione Carta di Roma*,<sup>114</sup> the monitoring conducted by the Naga on newspapers from June 2012 to March 2013.<sup>115</sup>

The data collected by *Associazione 21 Luglio*, through their National Observatory on Hate Speech against Roma, confirm that hate speech targeting Roma is a deep-rooted and endemic phenomenon in Italy, mainly fuelled by the political discourse at local level.<sup>116</sup> In nearly four years of activity (2013-2016) the Observatory recorded total of 1,296 hate speech episodes against Roma and Sinti, 794 of whom deemed of particular gravity.<sup>117</sup> This results in a daily average of 3.5 episodes, or 2.2 limiting the analysis to the grave episodes. It is too early to assess the decrease in episodes occurred in 2015 and in 2016 as an indicator of a substantial change, sustainable in time, within the Italian society, as during the same period the political and public debate moved much of its attention towards the so-called "refugees issue", resulting in the scapegoating of other vulnerable groups.<sup>118</sup> There is no shortage of acts of hate crimes: the *Associazione 21 Luglio* has registered 25 cases concerning RSC population in 2015-2016.<sup>119</sup> We report the most significant ones: on 25 April 2016, two members of the *Lega Nord* of Milan, on the occasion of the Liberation Day, devastated the homes of the Italian Roma camp in Via Idro – closed a month before by the Municipality – using hammers to break down the walls, throwing stones and spreading everything through social networks;<sup>120</sup> on 3 April 2016, after the end of a football match, a group of hooligans attempted to attack a nearby spontaneous Roma settlement (Police protected the inhabitants);<sup>121</sup> on 28 April 2016 in Rome, during the night, three paper bombs targeted a spontaneous Roma settlement in north Rome, the attackers fled the scene in a car.<sup>122</sup>

Generally – though rarely – there are investigations in which it is highlighted the racist motivation as aggravating factor, but it is difficult to get convictions and often the investigations are filed. For instance, the above-mentioned case of via Idro was followed by: a) a report to UNAR made by a citizen; b) the lawsuit against the perpetrators by some

<sup>112</sup> See: [www.articolo3.org](http://www.articolo3.org).

<sup>113</sup> Ed. Lunaria, *Cronache di ordinario razzismo. Terzo Libro bianco sul razzismo in Italia* (Roma: Lunaria, 2014); ed. Lunaria, *Cronache di ordinario razzismo. Quarto Libro bianco sul razzismo in Italia* (Roma: Lunaria, 2017).

<sup>114</sup> Associazione Carta di Roma, *Notizie di confine. Terzo rapporto Carta di Roma 2015*; Associazione Carta di Roma, *Notizie oltre i muri. Quarto rapporto Carta di Roma 2016*; Associazione Carta di Roma, *Notizie da paura. Quinto rapporto Carta di Roma 2017*.

<sup>115</sup> Naga, *Se dico rom... Indagine sulla rappresentazione dei cittadini rom e sinti nella stampa italiana* (Milano: Naga, 2013).

<sup>116</sup> The Observatory daily monitors around 120 sources and focuses on hate speech episodes promoted by politicians, elected officials, State officials, private citizens with a certain degree of formal organization (e.g. Committees, Unions, Corporations, etc.).

See: [www.21luglio.org/21luglio/osservatorio/](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/osservatorio/)

<sup>117</sup> Data disaggregated per year: 2013 456 episodes, of which 255 categorized as grave; 2014 400, of which 191 categorized as grave; 2015 265 episodes, of which 146 categorized as grave; 2016 175 episodes, of which 57 categorized as grave. See: [www.21luglio.org/21luglio/osservatorio/](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/osservatorio/).

<sup>118</sup> Tuttavia, in alcuni casi, i discorsi xenofobi colpiscono anche i rom e sinti. Può anche capitare che l'invito razzista a "tornare a casa vostra" sia rivolto verso rom e sinti di nazionalità italiana.

<sup>119</sup> 21 Luglio Associazione, *Rapporto annuale 2016* (Roma, 2017); 21 Luglio Associazione, *Submission on hate crime cases to Osce-Odihr*, 2017. Hate crimes have not always been punished or condemned.

<sup>120</sup> See: [www.milanotoday.it/politica/lega-campo-rom-via-idro.html](http://www.milanotoday.it/politica/lega-campo-rom-via-idro.html), [http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/04/25/foto/milano\\_via\\_idro-138421765/1/#1](http://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/04/25/foto/milano_via_idro-138421765/1/#1).

<sup>121</sup> See: [http://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/16\\_aprile\\_03/corteo-rione-poi-tentato-assalto-campo-rom-abusivo-9d1631e8-f9ce-11e5-91c9-425ed3b43648.shtml](http://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/16_aprile_03/corteo-rione-poi-tentato-assalto-campo-rom-abusivo-9d1631e8-f9ce-11e5-91c9-425ed3b43648.shtml)

<sup>122</sup> See: [www.romatoday.it/cronaca/bombe-carta-viadotto-gronchi-insediamento-abusivo.html](http://www.romatoday.it/cronaca/bombe-carta-viadotto-gronchi-insediamento-abusivo.html) and [www.romatoday.it/cronaca/petardi-viadotto-gronchi-denunciato.html](http://www.romatoday.it/cronaca/petardi-viadotto-gronchi-denunciato.html)

inhabitants of the Via Idro camp, presented to the local Police; c) the complaint, presented to the Public Prosecutor, by three representatives of pro-Roma associations. After 20 months, nothing has happened yet.<sup>123</sup> The Jo Cox Committee of the Chamber reports that "judicial remedies such as [...] the conviction of the Criminal Court of Turin for aggression aggravated by racial hatred against six individuals who in 2011 attacked and set fire to a "Roma camp" in Turin, are evidently ineffective from the point of view of deterrence".<sup>124</sup>

Media and politics are areas in which the presence of hate speech is particularly strong. Attacks on RSC population happen on a regular basis. According to the National Observatory on the incitement to discrimination and racial hatred of the *Associazione 21 Luglio*, in 2013-2014, 79 per cent of hate speeches are attributed to declarations of political exponents; of which, 70 per cent belong to right-wing parties, with a 28 per cent referred exclusively to the *Lega Nord*. On the other hand, only serious incidents are reported, in 72 per cent of cases hate speeches are pronounced by politicians, while in 18 per cent the authors are journalists. Electoral campaigns are occasions in which antigypsyism ideas spreads too.<sup>125</sup> On 2 March 2015, during the television broadcast Piazza Pulita (which was attended by the Roma activist Dijana Pavlovic), the MEP Gianluca Buonanno of *Lega Nord* accused Roma people of being "the scum of humankind", making the word "scum" a trend topic of hate speech in social networks. The incident was followed by two legal procedures: an appeal for discriminatory harassment based on Article 3, c. 2 of the Legislative Decree 215/2003 was presented to the Civil Court of Milan by ASGI and Naga on 3 July 2015; a complaint to the Public Prosecutor of Rome was filed by *Arci*, ASGI, *Associazione 21 Luglio*, *Lunaria*, and Roma and Sinti Insieme on 24 May 2015 for violation of Art. 3 of Law 654/1975 which punishes "the propaganda of ideas based on superiority or ethnic or racial hatred".<sup>126</sup> On 19 April 2016 the Court of Milan, civil division, acknowledged the "discriminatory value", of the act, not recognizing the immunity for parliamentary functions.<sup>127</sup> The Court of Rome,<sup>128</sup> on the other hand, dismissed the proceeding as a crime of defamation, (and not of racist propaganda), considering impossible to "identify a specific recipient of the offense".<sup>129</sup> It should also be remembered that in November 2016 Paolo Cagna Ninchi, president of *Upre Roma* and husband of the activist Dijana Pavlovic,

<sup>123</sup> Source: Roma family who lived in via Idro camp; Amici di Via Idro Association, Casa della Carità Foundation.

<sup>124</sup> Commissione Jo Cox, *Relazione finale*, 91-92.

"The Cascina Continassa pogrom" (Turin, 11 December 2011): a non-Roma boy surprised his 16-year-old sister still half-dressed after having had sex with her boyfriend. Out of shame, the girl falsely declared she had been gang-raped by Roma people. While the Carabinieri were investigating, the girl's brother also falsely claimed: "I chased them, and they ran away". Turin's leading daily newspaper, *La Stampa*, reported the incident with the headline, "Boy chases two Roma individuals after they raped his sister", The brother said: Two Gypsies did it". The following night, local inhabitants organized a candle-lit march, which degenerated into a fully-fledged attack on a Roma camp on the outskirts of Turin. The settlement, at Cascina Continassa, was raided by people armed with clubs, who chased the Roma dwellers away and set fire to their shanties. Meanwhile, the girl confessed that she had lied to avoid having to admit having had sex with her boyfriend: the gang rape never happened. But it was too late to stop the violent attack — this time a real one — on the Roma people and their camp. See: <http://sfi.usc.edu/education/roma-sinti/en/questioni-aperte/intercultura/la-guerra-ai-rom-conflitto-sociale/alcuni-casi-italiani.php>.

<sup>125</sup> Associazione 21 Luglio, *Antiziganismo 2.0. Rapporto Osservatorio 21 luglio (2013 – 2014)* (Roma, 2014).

<sup>126</sup> Legge 13 ottobre 1975, n. 654, "Ratifica ed esecuzione della convenzione internazionale sull'eliminazione di tutte le forme di discriminazione razziale, aperta alla firma a New York il 7 marzo 1966". Available at: [http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/atto/serie\\_generale/caricaDettaglioAtto/originario;jsessionid=p8nY2OgFVsgKp54-ymrJDg\\_.ntc-as4-guri2a?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=1975-12-23&atto.codiceRedazionale=075U0654&elenco30giorni=false](http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/atto/serie_generale/caricaDettaglioAtto/originario;jsessionid=p8nY2OgFVsgKp54-ymrJDg_.ntc-as4-guri2a?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=1975-12-23&atto.codiceRedazionale=075U0654&elenco30giorni=false)

<sup>127</sup> See: Court of Milan, Civil Section, Order of 19 April 2016. The sentence is available at: [www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Tribunale-di-Milano-Buonanno.pdf](http://www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Tribunale-di-Milano-Buonanno.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.asgi.it/notizie/associazioni-presentano-esposto-contro-leuroparlamentare-buonanno-e-le-dichiarazioni-contro-la-comunita-rom/>.

<sup>129</sup> Grazia Naletto, "Piazza Pulita: la ricerca di audience apre la strada al razzismo", in *Cronache di ordinario razzismo. Quarto Libro bianco sul razzismo in Italia*, ed. Lunaria (Roma: Lunaria, 2017), 86-91.



denounced having been beaten by a stranger because his wife "is the gypsy who goes on television".<sup>130</sup>

As for the press, there are some "pilot" procedures for antigypsyism opened by professional NGOs (Lunaria 2017). Following a complaint by Naga and the *Associazione 21 Luglio*, in 2016 the Journalists' Associations in Lombardy sanctioned the editor of the newspaper *Libero*, Maurizio Belpietro, and the columnist Mario Giordana, director of the news bulletin Tg4, for an article in which Roma people were criminalized.<sup>131</sup> The Association *Carta di Roma*, created to monitor the application of the journalist code, has often denounced similar situations, as in November 2014 during the debate following some episodes of the well-known radio programme *La Zanzara*.<sup>132</sup> Indeed *La Zanzara*, a mainstream broadcasting of Radio 24, the radio owned by the General Confederation of Italian Industry (*Confindustria*), hosted genocidal theses on Roma, praising Hitler, expressed both by listeners and by politicians. When the magazine *Famiglia Cristiana* criticized the choice, the hosts of *La Zanzara* launched a campaign against the magazine and the journalist Stefano Pasta.<sup>133</sup> What emerges is a picture of serious ineffectiveness and almost total impunity, due to different reasons: lack of adequate legislation, slowness of the intervention, little information on the possibility of reporting (few people know about UNAR and OSCAD existence), discouragement in the possibility to report because of the spread of impunity, the length of justice time, the costs of legal action.

Moreover, there is no adequate awareness of the characteristics of antigypsyism among law enforcement agencies, where discriminatory positions are also usual, such as the Consap press release mentioned in the previous paragraph. In April 2015, OSCAD carried out a week of hate crime training for the 500 pupils of the schools of the State Police of Alessandria and Brescia, together with experts from UNAR, Amnesty International and the Lenford Network.<sup>134</sup> Among the projects not specifically targeting the RSC, the European project "Together!" tried to increase the competences of law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations to make hate crimes visible.<sup>135</sup>

## The programmes and initiatives that have been implemented for analysing and forming narratives and attitudes towards Roma

The 2008 Eurobarometer survey showed that almost one EU citizen out of four declared that having a Roma neighbour would have caused discomfort; in Italy this percentage rose to 47 per cent of the sample; only 7 per cent of Italians declared to be open to have Roma friends.<sup>136</sup> Those outcomes are also presented in the Eurobarometer survey "Discrimination in the EU in 2012", that underlines that, even if 74 per cent Italians believed Roma people were at risk of discrimination, only 33 per cent of Italians believed that the society could benefit from Roma integration.<sup>137</sup> According to the 2015 Eurobarometer survey, 43 per cent of Italians, compared to a European percentage of 20 per cent, would feel

<sup>130</sup> Milano, aggressione razzista in strada: "Urlava tua moglie è una zingara che va in tv", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKJwrgraqx0>

<sup>131</sup> "L'ordine dei giornalisti condanna Belpietro e Giordana", in *Famiglia Cristiana*, 20 maggio 2016, <http://www.famigliacristiana.it/articolo/l-ordine-dei-giornalisti-condanna-belpietro-e-giordano-intento-xenofobo-e-razzista.aspx>

<sup>132</sup> Associazione Carta di Roma, *Notizie alla deriva. Secondo rapporto Carta di Roma 2014*, 6-7.

<sup>133</sup> "Zanzara shock: 'Fare dei rom cibo per maiali'", in *Famiglia Cristiana*, 21 novembre 2014. Available at: <http://www.famigliacristiana.it/articolo/alla-zanzara-fare-dei-rom-cibo-per-maiali.aspx>

<sup>134</sup> [www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/formazione-contro-atti-discriminatori-500-agenti-polizia-stato](http://www.interno.gov.it/it/notizie/formazione-contro-atti-discriminatori-500-agenti-polizia-stato).

<sup>135</sup> [www.projecttogether.org](http://www.projecttogether.org).

<sup>136</sup> Eurobarometer, *European Value Survey*, 2008, 43-45.

<sup>137</sup> The Roma are a group of people at risk of discrimination. Italy results: 74% (totally agree), 19% (tend to agree), 7% (tend to disagree). Special Eurobarometer 393, *Discrimination in the EU in 2012* (Bruxelles: European Commission, 2012).

uncomfortable if one of his work colleagues was Roma.<sup>138</sup> According to the ISPO-Ministry of the Interior survey (2007) 81 per cent Italians do not like Roma people, but only 39 per cent out of 81 per cent express an equally strong opinion towards immigrants.<sup>139</sup> The Map of Intolerance of Vox-Italian Observatory on Rights (2015), created together with the Universities of Milan, Bari and Rome, showed that on Twitter the most used insult after “redneck” a common insult related to people coming from southern Italy was “Gypsy”.<sup>140,</sup>  
141

In the last decade, several studies on the majority population have shown that antigypsyism is a deep-seated phenomenon in Italy. However, it is urgently needed to improve the quality of the studies as well as the methods of analysis. There is a lack of periodic and repeated research, developed with same indicators and parameters, that can provide specific information on the evolution of the phenomenon. In this sense it should be underlined that the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) investigated possible data sources for RSC populations, and that the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), with the support of ISTAT, carried out a study on the housing conditions of RSC,<sup>142</sup> but never on antigypsyism.<sup>143</sup> Research carried out in the RSC communities on the effects of antigypsyism are even less frequent. Among these, an empirical survey on the experiences of stigmatization of Roma and Sinti, and one on the responses to these processes in the Roma Networks was carried out by the *Center d'Etudes Européennes* of Sciences Po.<sup>144</sup> In addition, there has been a decline in interest in the period following the hyper-visibility of the so called Roma Emergency (2008-2011). In the last decade some awareness-raising programs, campaigns and Citizenship education programs have been implemented, promoted by third sector bodies and RSC associations, even if a more critical analysis of the quality and effectiveness of these programs is urgently needed. Some relevant examples are:

- Projects for the training of Roma and Sinti moderators: the project “TRE ERRE Fuochi Attivi” realized by the *Romani Italia* Foundation;<sup>145</sup> the courses for Roma and Sinti activists promoted by *Associazione 21 Luglio*;<sup>146</sup> the theatre company Rom Faktor of Upre Roma.<sup>147</sup>
- Media campaigns: the campaign “Even words can kill” by Avvenire, Famiglia Cristiana, Armando Testa and Federazione italiana settimanali cattolici.
- School campaigns: in 2016-2017 MIUR financed the project “Together. From *Porrajmos* to the National Inclusion Strategy with Roma and Sinti”, realized by five

<sup>138</sup> Special Eurobarometer 437, Discrimination in the EU in 2015 (Bruxelles: European Commission, 2015).

<sup>139</sup> ISPO, *Italiani, Rom e Sinti a confronto. Una ricerca quali-quantitativa*; Paola Arrigoni, and Tommaso Vitale, “Quale legalità? Rom e gagi a confronto”, *Aggiornamenti Sociali*, 3, 2008, 182-194.

<sup>140</sup> Vox – Osservatorio italiano sui diritti, “Mappa dell’intolleranza”, available at: <http://www.voxdiritti.it/vox-lancia-la-prima-mappa-dellintolleranza/>; Commissione Jo Cox, *Relazione finale*, 91.

<sup>141</sup> See also: Nawart, and Political Capital, *National Study – Italy* (Roma: Nawart Press, 2017).

<sup>142</sup> Monia Giovannetti, Nicolò Marchesini, and Emiliana Baldoni, *Gli Insediamenti Rom, Sinti e Caminanti in Italia* (Cittalia Fondazione Anci Ricerche, UNAR, and Anci, 2016).

<sup>143</sup> A little exception: ISTAT, *Discriminazioni in base al genere, all’orientamento sessuale e all’appartenenza etnica* (Rome: ISTAT, 2011).

<sup>144</sup> Stefano Pasta, and Tommaso Vitale, “Mi guardano male, ma io non guardo’. Come i rom e i sinti in Italia reagiscono allo stigma”, in *Società, razzismi e discriminazioni. Studi e ricerche sull’Italia contemporanea*, ed. Alfredo Alietti (Milano: Mimesis, 2017), 217-241.

<sup>145</sup> [www.fondazioneromani.eu/archivio/57-fuochi-attivi](http://www.fondazioneromani.eu/archivio/57-fuochi-attivi).

<sup>146</sup> [www.21luglio.org/21luglio/corso-formazione-attivisti-rom-sinti/](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/corso-formazione-attivisti-rom-sinti/).

<sup>147</sup> [www.upreroma.eu/teatro](http://www.upreroma.eu/teatro).

Italian schools in collaboration with the University of Siena, the Tuscan Press Association, the Sucar Drom Association and the Hypothesis Theatre.<sup>148</sup>

- Cultural initiatives: UNAR published in 2017 a notice to promote positive actions for the 14<sup>th</sup> Week of Action against Racism.

One of UNAR's initiatives includes a training day for 20 Roma and Sinti youths (17 October 2016) at the Presidency of the Council,<sup>149</sup> and a training course for 20 other young activists (Roma and non-Roma) on the fight against antigypsyism and on hate speech online (13-15 November 2017), realized together with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe within the Rome Youth Action Plan.<sup>150</sup>

Among the institutional initiatives aimed at the acknowledgement of the genocide of Roma and Sinti must be pointed out the project, promoted by the Ministry of Education, University and Research of the Working Group for the training of teachers and school managers on issues related to the National Strategy (Decree 603 of 18 July 2014), which identified the web resource <http://www.romsintimemory.it> (English version: <http://sfi.usc.edu/education/roma-sinti/en/>) as a basis for educational initiatives in schools, carried out by the Center for Research on Intercultural Relations of the Catholic University of Milan and by USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education.<sup>151</sup>

Also it is to be mentioned "Memors", the first virtual museum about *Porrajmos* in Italy founded (or set up) by *Sucar Drom*, L. da Vinci University, Roma and Sinti Insieme Federation, Fossoli Foundation and Freedom Legality and Rights around Europe.<sup>152</sup>

Minister of Justice Andrea Orlando, announcing an independent authority for the fight against hate speech, stressed the need to encourage the creation of different narratives, as recommended also by the CoE.<sup>153</sup> Among the initiatives is to promote change in the narrative from that of casting Roma as outsiders who need to "fit in" to that of Roma integrally involved in European historical, political, economic and cultural developments, it is worth mentioning the videos of the campaign "Roma, citizens of the future Italy" realized by *Associazione 21 Luglio*,<sup>154</sup> the documentary "Fuori campo. Stories of Roma in today's Italy" by *OsservAzione*,<sup>155</sup> the movie about Salento Rom "Gitanistan" by Pierluigi De Donno and Claudio Giagnotti "Cavallo", Roma Mascarimiri musician and singer,<sup>156</sup> the "Dosta!" Campaign,<sup>157</sup> and the cultural activity of the activist Roma Santino Alexian Spinelli.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>148</sup> [www.unar.it/unar/portal/?p=8374](http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?p=8374).

<sup>149</sup> "Verso la Roma National Platform - Giovani Rom, Sinti e Caminanti: esperienze e percorsi a confronto", Roma, 17 ottobre 2016.

<sup>150</sup> "Training seminar on combating antigypsyism and online hate speech", Roma, 13-15 November 2017 [www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/training-seminar-on-combating-antigypsyism-and-online-hate-speech-seminario-di-formazione-sul-contrasto-all-antiziganismo-e-sull-hate-speech-online](http://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/training-seminar-on-combating-antigypsyism-and-online-hate-speech-seminario-di-formazione-sul-contrasto-all-antiziganismo-e-sull-hate-speech-online).

<sup>151</sup> Experts worked for free: See: [www.romsintimemory.it](http://www.romsintimemory.it).

<sup>152</sup> [www.porrajmos.it](http://www.porrajmos.it); [www.istruzione.it/allegati/2014/nota%2018400%20Porrajmos.pdf](http://www.istruzione.it/allegati/2014/nota%2018400%20Porrajmos.pdf)

<sup>153</sup> "Internet: Orlando, lavorare a soggetto vigilanza odio online", in *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 30 novembre 2017. Available at: <http://www.diritto24.ilssole24ore.com/art/guidaAlDiritto/dirittoPenale/2017-11-30/internet-orlando-lavorare-soggetto-vigilanza-odio-online-173420.php>

<sup>154</sup> [www.21luglio.org/21luglio/video-gallery-rom-cittadini-dellitalia-che-verra/](http://www.21luglio.org/21luglio/video-gallery-rom-cittadini-dellitalia-che-verra/).

<sup>155</sup> [http://www.osservazione.org/it/4\\_15/film-documentario%E2%80%94fuori-campo-storie-di-rom-nellitalia-di-oggi.htm](http://www.osservazione.org/it/4_15/film-documentario%E2%80%94fuori-campo-storie-di-rom-nellitalia-di-oggi.htm).

<sup>156</sup> [www.gitanistan.com](http://www.gitanistan.com).

<sup>157</sup> <http://dosta.org/it>.

<sup>158</sup> [http://www.alexian.it/intro\\_italiano.htm](http://www.alexian.it/intro_italiano.htm).



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Governance and overall policy framework

Strengthen the mandate of UNAR, the national Roma contact point (NRIS), which must be granted greater autonomy and recognised as an independent authority, as recommended by the ECRI. Provide UNAR with the resources it needs to be able to reach administrative and financial autonomy, along with the ability to impose sanctions against national or local agencies when failing to comply with the NRIS. The lack of this power is one of UNAR's greatest weaknesses, and one of the principal causes of the lack of implementation of the National Strategy for Roma inclusion.

Set a clear time schedule binding on all the regions where regional/local Operating Tables must be created. Define the methods of cooperation with local stakeholders in order to allow the involvement of the associations and organisations operating on the territory in promoting the social inclusion of RSC population.

Guarantee a democratic and transparent involvement of RSC in the interventions laid down by the NRIS. It would be useful to define, within the Roma communities, shared criteria of representativeness, including criteria for evaluating the effectiveness in the participation process, with respect to the achievement of specific and clearly defined objectives, and considering the framework of the critical issues and weaknesses related to this process.

Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for NRIS, identifying clear and measurable indicators for assessing the achievement of targets and unexpected negative/positive impacts and effects of NRIS implementation. This monitoring system should check the compliance with NRIS provisions at a national and territorial level.

Provide NRIS with adequate resources from the State budget, making information available to the public and giving priority, in the allocation of resources, to the regions with a higher number of RCS people. The activation of national programmes and the approval of projects concerning the inclusion of the RSC population is to be linked to the compliance with concrete conditions for their sustainability.

Promote the inclusion of RSC population in universalistic socio-political programmes against poverty and social exclusion. Public policies and debates are to promote a comprehensive intercultural approach with a particular focus on fostering dialogue and building constructive mutual relations between RSC groups and the rest of the population.

### Anti-discrimination

It is necessary that the Italian government, through UNAR, builds a local network of working groups, organized by the municipalities and regions with the participation of Roma and Sinti communities. The working groups must plan the actions shared with the communities intervening within the 4 axes identified by NRIS. This can allow the government to intervene on the causes of discrimination (housing, school, work) according to the specific needs in each territory. This method allows to build relationships between local authorities and local communities, an element that is fundamental for the success of the actions.

### Addressing antigypsyism

Adopt and recognize a legal definition of "hate speech", also on the basis of ECRI Recommendation no. 15 of 8 December 2015. Promote actions to encourage self-regulation of web platforms to remove online hate-speech and avoid fake news often attracting advertising revenue, according to the Code of Conduct stipulated with the European Commission in May 2016. Support the training of Roma and Sinti activists to combat Antigypsyism.

Develop initiatives to fully implement the Mancino Law and its aggravating factor, online and offline, by promoting training courses for police forces and magistrates.

Set up a Code of Conduct sanctioning political and public authorities that are promoting Antigypsyism. Sensitize national and local Associations of Journalists so that issues relating to Roma and Sinti people be reported in compliance with professional ethics and deontology. Envisage disciplinary measures in case of incitement to antigypsyism, as provided by the Association's Code of Conduct.

Invest in the promotion of Roma and Sinti culture, by focusing on long term counter-speech/counter-narrative campaigns, rather than temporary events, as suggested by the Council of Europe. This task cannot be accomplished solely by UNAR: a stronger involvement is required from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of University and Research (MIUR) and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism. MIUR, together with the publishing houses concerned, is requested to urgently review primary and secondary school textbooks to remove all anti-gypsy stereotypes and terms and promote the knowledge of Roma and Sinti culture. In this respect, Roma and Sinti genocide is also to be commemorated in the Holocaust Memorial Day (Law no. 11 of 2000) and MIUR should see to it that the Italian concentration camps and the *Porrajmos* be mentioned in official history and textbooks.

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