



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

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

Prepared by:
Trajosko Drom
Roma International
April 2018



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
Directorate D — Equality and Union Citizenship
Unit D1 Non Discrimination and Roma Coordination

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

**Civil society monitoring report
on implementation of the
national Roma integration strategy
in Sweden**

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

***EUROPE DIRECT is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union***

Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you)

LEGAL NOTICE

"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018

Print	ISBN 978-92-79-97706-0	doi:10.2838/642134	Catalogue number DS-07-18-027-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-79-97707-7	doi:10.2838/697704	Catalogue number DS-07-18-027-EN-N

© European Union, 2018

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

The report has been prepared by NGOs Trajosko Drom and Roma International.

Trajosko Drom prepared the chapters on anti-discrimination and addressing antigypsyism, and the section on Roma women, children and youth in the chapter on governance. Roma International prepared the chapter on governance except the section on Roma women, children and youth.

The report has been prepared as part of the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, 'Capacity-building for Roma civil society and strengthening its involvement in the monitoring of National Roma Integration Strategies'. The pilot project is carried out for the European Commission, DG Justice and Consumers. It is coordinated by the Center for Policy Studies of Central European University (CEU CPS), in partnership with the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and the Roma Education Fund (REF), and implemented with around 90 NGOs and experts from up to 27 member states.

Although the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, as part of which the report was prepared, is coordinated by CEU, the report represents the findings of the author and it does not necessarily reflect the views of CEU. CEU cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
INTRODUCTION	9
GOVERNANCE AND OVERALL POLICY FRAMEWORK	11
Mainstreaming Roma inclusion across ministries and other national level public authorities	11
Mainstreaming Roma inclusion across local authorities.....	13
Guarantees for the effectiveness of programmes with the largest budgets.....	16
Policies and measures addressing specific needs of Roma women, children and youth ..	17
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	19
Implementing the Racial Equality Directive.....	19
Educational and residential segregation	20
Discriminatory behaviour by police, misconduct by prosecutors or courts	21
Right to Free Movement	23
ADDRESSING ANTIGYPSYISM	24
Institutional settings for fighting discrimination and addressing antigypsyism	24
Countering hate crime and hate speech against Roma, and antigypsyist rhetoric of politicians, public figures and media	25
Analysing and forming narratives and attitudes towards Roma	27
RECOMMENDATIONS	28
BIBLIOGRAPHY	30

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Swedish Public Employment Service
<i>Boverket</i>	National Board of Housing, Building and Planning
CABS	County Administrative Board in Stockholm County
CoE	Council of Europe
DO	Swedish Equality Ombudsman (<i>Diskrimineringsombudsmannen</i>)
GO	The Government Offices
MUCF	Swedish Agency for Youth and Society
NBHW	The National Board of Health and Welfare
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategy
SAC	The Swedish Arts Council
SKL	Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SNAE	Swedish National Agency for Education
SOFI	Institute for Language and Folklore
SR	Swedish public radio
STV	Swedish public television
UR	Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been a positive development in the past decade in Sweden with an overall ambition to start the journey to bring the Roma to an equal footing with the rest of society. This includes the areas of political participation, co-influence and cultural acknowledgment as well as direct efforts in social areas that affect the living conditions of the group. These efforts, however, are still mainly paper tigers that lack structured implementation, sufficient funding and follow through. Decisions are usually already made before the Roma are consulted, thus consulted Roma representatives end up having more of a symbolic presence. Municipalities are mainly self-governed in many vital social areas and interest for Roma inclusion is random, dependent on individual officials and lack government supervision.

A parallel process has been for the Swedish government to come to terms with society's long history of antigypsyism and abuse against the Roma. Important steps like the establishment of a Commission Against Antigypsyism and the issue of a White Paper have been taken, but few concrete strategies for elevating this plague from society have been developed so this still permeates a lot of the interactions taking place in different fields and levels of society. Mutual lack of trust, a credibility gap, is still one of the major barriers for social progress for the Roma.

Swedish society also has a deeply rooted tradition of working in and supporting civil society organising in associations. Therefore there is quite a lot of available funding and support to be claimed for Roma associations, but this requires certain knowledge, know-how and social platforms that instead pose a barrier for the possibility for the Roma to access these resources.

Governance and overall policy framework

Although Sweden has a very aspiring national plan for Roma inclusion, there is an uneven level of success in its implementation. Many Roma find many parts of it to be a top-down pre-formatted action plan that does not allow for the target group to influence the content and participate in monitoring of implementation of the NRIS. Moreover, Roma NGOs perceive barriers in access to and a lack of transparency of the grant-making procedures and Roma consultancy efforts. Finally, Roma civil society representatives point out weaknesses in the government's accountability in their Roma-targeted programmes/programs and their funding, as evaluations are being done by the same authorities that oversee the programs instead of by impartial external parties.

Governmental Inquiries have found a considerable need for more awareness of the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages among government agencies, municipalities and county councils, and it is also an issue that no effective remedy is available if a municipality does not comply with the obligations of the minorities act.

Nevertheless, on the local level several examples of successful municipal Roma inclusion initiatives were identified, including consultations with Roma, Roma "bridge builders" and specifically a rights-based approach in the Roma inclusion policy. As a result of the experience with this approach, a specialized consulting firm was commissioned by the government in 2016 to support municipalities with education and methodological support to apply the rights-based approach.

Other positive examples of successful efforts in the Roma strategy include Roma 'bridgebuilders', children's books in *Romani Chib* as well as the mother tongue support in pre-school, municipal Roma councils, pilot employment positions and above all a human rights-based methodology in the work with Roma inclusion which was an important success factor in some of the previous pilot municipalities' work on Roma inclusion.

Anti-discrimination

Swedish society, even though ambitious in policy and regulatory documents regarding non-discrimination of different categories, mostly misses the mark where the Roma is concerned. The special social disadvantage and vulnerability stemming from historical abuse of the group leaves the Roma out of full access to most of society's services and requires special programs to rectify the situation so that the growing generation will have the same opportunities as the rest of society. Mutual lack of trust and understanding cause misinterpretations and ill treatment which widens the gap, and more Roma need to be employed in positions of bridge builders in the public sector to help overcome this divide. Roma civil society also has an important role to play with an inside perspective on how to best move forward for social development, but struggle because of difficulties with accessing support.

The major stumbling block for the Roma is that however eloquent the national strategies sound and good will is displayed on a higher level, the lack of implementation in the municipalities is costly. The municipalities are responsible for most of the areas that affect everyday life including those that cause hardship for the Roma minority such as education and social services, but govern themselves on many levels which leaves the project of Roma inclusion at the arbitrary hands of local civil officials and politicians.

Addressing antigypsyism

The Roma minority suffers from long ingrained stigmatizing stereotypes and historic persecution still resulting in an oppressive exclusion from different public, official and commercial arenas. Because of a need to resort to survival strategies, individuals often feel forced to hide their Roma identity and keep a low profile as to not be the target of racism and risk losing job and housing opportunities etc.

Both officials and staff of the public sector as well as civil society need to be made more aware of conscious and unconscious racial bias and discrimination of Roma, and this could especially be remedied through increased mainstreaming into schools and education programs, as well as public campaigns. Being a formally recognized national minority, schools are obliged to include this perspective, but implementation is faulty because of the lack of sufficient knowledge throughout the education system in combination with not enough state supervision of local programs.

Roma rarely report incidents of antigypsyism, hate crime and discrimination and most of it remain unrecorded. Roma organizations report that such circumstances are one of the things that they have to tackle on a daily basis, both on an organizational level and through complaints from the members. Apart from the hassle of moving around in public including commercial facilities such as hotels, restaurants and shops (if they are easily recognized as Roma), the social services and the Police are two public sectors where many experience fear because of encroachments in their lives that they feel are the result of antigypsyism. The Equality Body, *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen*, and the Police need to be more proactive in reaching out to the Roma community to make individuals feel it is safe and meaningful to report hate crime and discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

The Roma have been part of the population in Sweden since at least the 16th century. From early on they suffered persecution, expulsions and stigmatizing stereotypes. As the Swedish nation developed into a modern society, the Roma underwent a process of exclusion and marginalization which forced them to form a parallel society with its own social structure in order to survive. Even as late as the second half of the 20th century, the Roma were not allowed to settle or access schools, health care and jobs, and Roma women suffered from forced sterilizations. When the first efforts were made to include the Roma into Swedish society, the project aimed at extinguishing the Roma culture and force them to be assimilated into the majority society. With a new awareness rising in the new millennium and a new political agenda focusing on minority rights as part of human rights, the official policy started its shift towards the concept of inclusion instead. This political shift correlated with the launch of the *EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020* in May 2011, which acts as a foundation for the Swedish National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) entitled "*En samordnad och långsiktig strategi för romsk inkludering under 2012-2032*" [A coordinated and long-term strategy for Roma inclusion in 2012-2032] that was adopted by the government in February 2012.¹

In 1999, the Roma received the official status of National minority in Sweden which grants particular rights regarding use and preservation of language and the right to maintain and develop your own culture. The status comes with extra resources for national programmes revolving around language and culture, and extra leverage when civil society is to be consulted for different policies and actions. The Roma minority is officially made up of five loosely defined subgroups who have different background as to when they arrived in Sweden and some language and cultural variations but share a common experience of exclusion.

The ambition to have a new approach to the situation of Roma in Sweden led to the instalment of the Delegation on Roma Issues in 2006 which included Roma experts, and which produced the Government official report in 2011 that was the foundation for the development of the NRIS.

Apart from their own national council with Roma representatives and assignments for the different governmental bodies, the government has initiated and co-funded projects where a number of municipalities have been able to try out different strategies as pilots regarding Roma inclusion.

The methodology used in the production of this report is a combination of desk research, which included study of diverse existing studies and databases available at internet pages of governmental authorities and other relevant sources. As well, through reviewing of annual and cyclical reports from authorities responsible for following up on the implementation of the Roma strategy such as the annual report from the County Administrative Board of Stockholm County and "The Fourth Opinion on Sweden" published by the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe (CoE) in 2017.² Further information was gathered through conducting informal interviews and focus groups with members of Swedish Roma NGOs, both national and local, representing all regions (NGOs' names as translated): Roma Federation, Travel People's Union, Roma Institute, Roma and Travel Delegation, Roma International, Roma Youth Delegation, Roma Anti-Discrimination Center, Roma and

¹ Webpage dedicated to the Swedish NRIS: <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/regeringens-strategi-for-romsk-inkludering/>. A factsheet on the Swedish NRIS in English is available at: <https://www.government.se/4ac87e/contentassets/ac46c34c5ee94d1b8cd1ea26f7c04e52/a-strategy-for-roma-inclusion>

² Available at: <http://minoritet.se/4760>

Travel Union and Trajosko Drom. The consultations with these NGOs were organized through a snowball sampling of 42 interviewees with whom focus groups and informal interviews were done. Interviewees representing an even section of society regarding gender and age groups.

GOVERNANCE AND OVERALL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Mainstreaming Roma inclusion across ministries and other national level public authorities

The Swedish NRIS has as its long-term goal that every Roma person who turns 20 in the year of 2032 will have equal opportunities in life as one who is not Roma, and has allocated approximately 5.62 million EUR (58 million SEK) for its implementation through measures that authorities and municipalities will be taking spanning the years 2016-2019.

The Government Offices (GO) are tasked with producing propositions for resolutions that the government decides on. In the NRIS, the GO Department of Culture assigned the County Administrative Board in Stockholm County (CABS) to coordinate the work and to provide support to other involved authorities. The GO also have overall responsibility for coordinating and following up the NRIS. The GO will monitor how Roma rights are met at local, regional and national level. The NRIS is reported annually to the Parliament in the budget proposal presented each autumn. The GO and authorities implement or enforce government decisions. In the NRIS, several agencies have been commissioned, including the Swedish Public Employment Service (AF), National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (*Boverket*), the Swedish Arts Council (SAC), the Institute for Language and Folklore (SOFI), the Swedish Agency for Youth and Society (MUCF), the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) and the Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE).

Two entities are responsible for following up the way in which national minority policies are implemented and how the minority law is being complied with: the *Sámi* Parliament in relation to the *Sámi* indigenous people, and the CABS in relation to other minorities in Sweden, including Roma (the others minorities include also the Jews, Sweden Fins and the Tornedalings).³ Within its mandate related to the implementation the minority laws, the CABS and the *Sámi* Parliament report to the GO; each year in April they prepare an annual report on the achieved progress. CABS together with the Sami Parliament has also the responsibility to coordinate the follow-up to the NRIS.⁴ This responsibility includes producing a status report of Roma's access to rights every four years with involvement of other authorities and Roma representatives. The next report, which is the second during the span of the current 20-year strategy is to be presented during 2018. The criteria for choosing Roma representatives for consultations however is unclear as it is often mentioned in the different reports, but the actual process is rarely specifically described, if at all.

According to the Swedish NRIS, *"the whole implementation of the strategy should be characterized by Roma participation and Roma influence, focusing on enhancing and continuously monitoring Roma access to human rights at the local, regional and national level."* The perceptions on this work varies and one Roma interviewee stated: *"Looking at the entirety of what we today term the Roma strategy, almost all planning and implementation takes place from a top to bottom perspective where Roma participation and the ability to influence or be included in an equal manner is limited."*⁵ Even though there are officially appointed Roma councils and consultations from governmental to municipal level, Roma representatives experience these as having more of a function of only exchanging information, and that important decisions are already

³ <https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholm/om-lansstyrelsen-stockholm/kontakta-oss/nationella-minoriteter.html>

⁴ <https://www.sametinget.se/21849>

⁵ Roma interviewee, active in one of the advisory councils.

made before council and that the Roma perspective is not included in the actual decision process.

Ministry of Culture established a national Roma Council and aims at including Roma representatives from as diverse backgrounds as possible; with different professional backgrounds and expertises, from all range of ages, genders and competences.⁶ However, some Roma representatives question the selection process from the point of view of transparency. Several Roma interviewees state that there is a lack of clear procedures in which the Roma consultations could be inclusively carried out.⁷ The consequence is most often that the consultation is performed in a setting that is in a pre-made authority based basic form, oftentimes in a top-down formation where there is rarely space for the target group civil society organizations to influence the content of the consultation. This concern is highlighted by the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe (CoE), which in its opinion on Sweden from 2017 states that "representatives of some national minorities, in particular the Roma, are mostly concerned about the inclusiveness of consultative structures. A general perception shared by representatives of different national minorities is that issues they brought up in the framework of consultation procedures were formally taken note of, but not followed up with any action."⁸

Even though separate measures have been taken to strengthen the ability of the Roma to influence the policy-making, among other things through attempts to hold consultations with representatives of government and Roma organisations, there is still a lot to do to get functioning methods and structures where consultation and participation can be seen as satisfactory.

In 2017 a Government Official Inquiry to find out what the next steps should be regarding minority policy (*En stärkt minoritetspolitik* [A strengthened minority policy]),⁹ states that one key reason why Roma should have the opportunity to influence decisions that concern them, is that the Roma themselves are the most informed about their own needs and wishes. Therefore, it is essential to establish a dialogue between authorities at various levels and the Roma when deciding on issues affecting the Roma. The Government concedes that it is important that the Roma are given the opportunity to influence actions regarding themselves.¹⁰ This is also emphasised by the following statement from the inquiry: "The Inquiry notes that consultation takes place on the public authorities' terms and much too infrequently, and that the national minorities do not have adequate conditions to be equal parties. Therefore, the Minorities Act should more clearly state what the obligation of administrative authorities to consult with national minorities involve. The Inquiry proposes that certain government agencies should be tasked with strengthening

⁶ Government Offices of Sweden. (2016) Regeringens strategi för romsk inkludering; hälsa social omsorg och trygghet [The government strategy for roma inclusion; health, social care and security Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/regeringens-strategi-for-romsk-inkludering/halsa-social-omsorg-och-trygghet/>

⁷ Roma interviewees, active on advisory councils. Interviews on 15/9/17, 7/10/17, 25/11/17.

⁸ Council of Europe (2017) *Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe. The Fourth Opinion on Sweden – Adopted on 22 June 2017*, p. 32. Available at: <http://minoritet.se/4760>.

⁹ See: <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2018/03/prop.-201718199/>

¹⁰ Government Offices of Sweden. (2017). *Nästa steg? Förslag för en stärkt minoritetspolitik* [Next steps? Suggestions for a stronger politics for minorities]. Available at: http://www.sou.gov.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/SOU-2017_60_webb.pdf. Summary in English available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/4a8d12/contentassets/f869b8aae642474db1528c4da4d2b19a/sammanfattningen-pa-engelska-och-de-nationella-minoritetspraken>, p. 11.

the minorities organisations' prospects of exercising influence through education and other knowledge-enhancing measures."¹¹

Mainstreaming Roma inclusion across local authorities

Municipalities in Sweden are self-governed to a large extent in crucial areas such as education, social services, housing and health care. The inclusion efforts aimed at Roma included a pilot project from 2012-2015 with five municipalities (Luleå, Malmö, Helsingborg, Linköping and Gothenburg) in collaboration with central authorities such as the AF and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL). These municipalities were meant to develop methods and work routines to improve Roma inclusion in the different areas of the Roma strategy and making sure that Roma are involved in the development of the strategy. The pilot municipalities were provided with funding from the government but planned and implemented the project according to their own priorities and considerations. The purpose of the pilot project operations was to build a structure or equivalent long-term solution in municipal administration to improve Roma inclusion, in particular in the areas of education, work, health and social care. This pilot project ended in 2015 in those first five municipalities, while the inclusion efforts continued. In 2016 there was a new call where five new municipalities were chosen (Borås, Gävle, Haninge, Stockholm and Uppsala) to receive government funding for two years to participate in a development program on Roma inclusion.

An important success factor in some of the previous pilot municipalities' work on Roma inclusion has been a human rights-based approach. In 2016, the Swedish government has commissioned the CABS to spread knowledge and experiences from the work with Roma inclusion, in which is included to implement efforts to raise awareness of how a rights-based approach can be used in local inclusion activities.¹² CABS therefore commissioned a consulting firm (Emerga) to support the new *development municipalities* (as the participating municipalities after the pilot ended are called) with training in the rights-based approach.¹³

The human rights-based approach in the work with Roma inclusion is mainly to ensure that the activities do not exclude anyone and everyone has equal access to them. The approach uses two key concepts, rights holders (*rättighetsbärare*) and duty bearers (*skyldighetsbärare*), and focuses on empowerment and capacity development. The application of this approach builds on an analysis and assessment of activities'/policies' impact on rights, answering the following questions:

- Which human rights are related to the activities?
- What responsibility does the public sector have?
- What obstacles and problems are there to be addressed and why?

Moreover, the analysis of the activities'/policies' target groups examines questions such as:

- What consequences the public authorities' actions will have for specific groups and individuals?
- How the public authority will communicate to ensure that the entire audience is reached and the activity is available?
- Which Roma will be reached immediately and who further should be reached?
- How and where will the residents find out about the activities?

¹¹

<http://www.regeringen.se/4a8d12/contentassets/f869b8aae642474db1528c4da4d2b19a/sammanfattningen-pa-engelska-och-de-nationella-minoritetspraken>, p. 13.

¹² <https://www.regeringen.se/4a53a7/contentassets/ae9afabcbc354a44861f0f0369b4e989/uppdrag-till-lansstyrelsen-i-stockholm-om-spridning-av-kunskap-och-erfarenheter.pdf>

¹³ See: <http://www.regeringen.se/48e36d/contentassets/4418490de630476391461c5f476b819f/arbetet-med-regeringens-strategi-for-romsk-inkludering-20122032>

- Will the target groups understand the information they receive?

A common obstacle to Roma is discrimination. An important part of the rights-based approach is thus to analyse which groups are exposed to discrimination and what obstacles to equal access they face. The right-based approach also aims at increasing Roma's participation and improving awareness about their rights. If Roma are not aware about them, they are not able to demand anything from the municipality.¹⁴

According to the principle of municipal self-determination, the municipalities of Sweden decide on their own activities and have their own political processes. The Swedish NRIS requires that in order to achieve its expected results, all authorities and municipalities should actively take responsibility to pay attention to and ensure Roma's access to their rights in their standard operations. However, there has been shortcomings in implementing the national policy on the local level; a 2017 report of the CoE's Advisory Committee states: "The 290 municipalities enjoy a high degree of autonomy as regards the provision of social services and education [...] the wide margin of appreciation given in some provisions of the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages poses challenges for their effective implementation at local level. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee is concerned that no effective remedy is available if a municipality does not comply with the obligations of the act. Moreover, minority representatives criticise a lack of supervision and a narrow interpretation of its task by the Stockholm County Administrative Board, which has been tasked to coordinate and to followup on the government's minority policy throughout the country."¹⁵

The 2017 Government Official Inquiry on Sweden's minorities policy, *En stärkt minoritetspolitik*, reviewing the Minorities Act, noted that "minorities policy has almost completely failed in terms of guaranteeing the fundamental rights that all five national minorities should enjoy in all municipalities in this country. More than seven years after the entry into force of the Minorities Act, it remains the case that a large majority of this country's municipalities are barely or not at all affected by the Act's requirements concerning support to the five national minorities and their rights. The majority in society still have extremely inadequate knowledge of the national minorities and the minority languages, and of their place in Sweden today and historically."¹⁶ Similarly, the CoE's Advisory Committee observes that, while deficits in the implementation of minority rights exist within the administrative areas, the situation is even less satisfactory in the municipalities outside these areas where employees of municipalities and county council administrative boards often lack knowledge about national minorities and their rights. The government recognises that there is a considerable need for more awareness of the Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages among government agencies, municipalities and county councils."¹⁷

The above-mentioned pilot municipalities and several different government authorities were involved in development of a report on good practices. They included for example the Roma 'bridgebuilders' – persons with knowledge of Roma language or cultural skills that can serve as a link between Roma and different societal actors. The 'bridgebuilder' helps to reduce the gap in mutual trust that may exist between Roma and majority society. During pilot project operations, there were a number of 'bridgebuilders' employed in the

¹⁴ *Rättighetsbaserat arbete stärker romsk inkludering [Rights based work strengthens Roma inclusion]* (2017) Translated information from <http://www.minoritet.se/4707> in Swedish.

¹⁵ Council of Europe (2017), p. 10.

¹⁶ *En stärkt minoritetspolitik*, [Strengthened minority politics] reviewing the Minorities Act (2017) http://www.regeringen.se/4a8d12/contentassets/f869b8aae642474db1528c4da4d2b19a/sammanfattningen-pa-engelska-och-de-nationella-minoritetspraken_page_11-12 in English and <http://minoritet.se/4760> page 10 in English.

¹⁷ Council of Europe (2017), p. 10.

pilot municipalities. Their work was an important prerequisite for achieving success, whether they were employed in school, social services or employment services. Other good practices identified in the report concerned publication of childrens books in *Romani chib*, first-language support in pre-school, establishment of municipal Roma councils, pilot employment positions and above all human rights-based methodology described previously.¹⁸

Promoting empowerment and participation of Roma

The national minority Roma is officially divided into five loosely defined sub-groups which speak different varieties of Romani: *Kalderash* spoken by Swedish Roma; *Kaale* spoken by Finnish Roma; *Lovari* spoken by Roma from outside Scandinavia; *Arli* spoken by newcoming/Balkan Roma (some of which speak *Gurbeti*) and *Travel Romani* spoken by Traveling Roma.

One Roma interviewee commented that one problem with the Roma inclusion projects is that only one group of Roma is represented in the consultation within their municipality. While others (such as Borås municipality in the pilot project) have been more successful with a more inclusive and transparent selection process which has managed to have Roma representatives from all of the different Roma groups.¹⁹ The CoE's Advisory Committee states that despite "reference was made to a multitude of consultative councils, reference groups, hearings and other events aimed at involving persons belonging to national minorities in decision making, [and] all municipalities whose representatives the Advisory Committee met during the visit have one or several consultation groups with minority representatives which meet up to four times a year, [...] national minority representatives are; to a large extent; dissatisfied with the extent of influence they have on matters that concern them."²⁰

Today there are around eleven national Roma associations in Sweden who cooperate on several issues. However, the Roma civil society perceives weaknesses in access to and distribution of information relevant for Roma. They claim they need a better access and presence in media. In 2017, the CoE's Advisory Committee stated that broadcasting in minority languages is ensured by the public broadcasters Sverigeradio (SR), Swedish Television (SVT) and the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company (UR) and that the requirements regarding programming in minority languages in the current licensing period (2014-19) have tightened compared with the previous period. However, the rules allow public broadcasters to divide the responsibilities for broadcasting in minority languages among diverse public media unevenly. This leads to the fact, for example, that there is little broadcasting on SVT in Romani languages, which is mainly covered by SR and UR.²¹ Also "structural reforms within Sveriges radio in 2015 stirred criticism from both the Finnish and the Roma minorities. The editorial departments for Finnish and Romani were merged; some Finnish language programmes were moved from the P4 channel to the less popular P2 channel and some from prime time to less popular time slots. [...] This might have been avoided through a more proactive involvement in the reform of national minority representatives."²²

¹⁸ *Romsk inkludering, fem pilotkommuner, goda exempel. [Roma inclusion, five pilot municipalities, good examples]* <https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/stockholm/tjanster/publikationer/2016/romsk-inkludering.-fem-pilotkommuner---goda-exempel.html> in English.

¹⁹ Interviewee interviewed on 25/11/17.

²⁰ Council of Europe (2017), p. 32.

²¹ *Idem*, p. 22.

²² *Idem*, p. 23.

Guarantees for the effectiveness of programmes with the largest budgets

The CABS has been appointed both to coordinate the work, provide support to municipalities and other government agencies and to evaluate the work that has been done to fulfil the NRIS.²³

Most often, it is the officials of the relevant responsible authorities who conduct evaluations of governmental programmes aimed at Roma inclusion internally without Roma consultation, Roma participation or any feedback provided. For example the Annual report from CABS is based on the reports from municipalities and other government agencies with appointed responsibilities, none of its annual report is based on feedback from the Roma Civil Society or any other Roma representatives.²⁴ This lack of independent evaluation of the governmental Roma inclusion policies or involvement of the Roma civil society is perceived as a weaknesses in the government's accountability. Moreover, according to several interviewees, the access to evaluation reports is difficult and they have to search through a myriad of government websites and documents to find the evaluation reports and information on lessons learnt.²⁵

One suggestion that came up in interviews was that there could be an appointed person or organisation that the Roma trust, which would be responsible for ensuring the information flow and feedback on the NRIS between the Roma civil society and government authorities. They also claim limited access to information which negatively impacts on participation. Moreover, participation in consultations or other forms of Roma civil society input is hindered even further by receiving information just days before meetings or deadlines.²⁶

The commonality of this type of responses to direct attempts of Roma NGOs to further their participation in the Roma inclusion activities reproduces a feeling of exclusion and not being listened.

Civil society's access to funding for Roma inclusion activities

Even though the Swedish government is investing large sums of money towards the further inclusion of Roma in Sweden, most of that money goes toward funding the work and projects of agencies and municipalities involved in the implementation of the NRIS. For instance, a joint project of the National Board of Health and Welfare (NBHW) and the Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE) aimed at education of employed Roma bridgebuilders in 2012 and 2014, costed more than other comparable education programmes; in part because of the low number of students, but also because that the government funded the bridgebuilders salaries, and finally because that the course was new.²⁷

The Roma civil society can apply for public funding for their activities from a competitive grant scheme run by the MUCF. The grants are provided on an annual basis and Roma NGOs consider the allocation as relatively small and difficult to access for less experienced

²³ http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/SiteCollectionDocuments/Sv/publikationer/2017/R2017-09-romsk_inkludering-WEBB.pdf

²⁴ http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/Stockholm/SiteCollectionDocuments/Sv/publikationer/2017/R2017-09-romsk_inkludering-WEBB.pdf in Swedish

²⁵ Roma interviewee, head of a national NGO interviewed on 7/10/17.

²⁶ Roma NGO interviewees and information backed up by a number of e-mail correspondences with government authorities shown to the report writers by the interviewees. Interviews on 15/9/17, 7/10/17, 25/11/17.

²⁷ *Utvärdering av brobygggarverksamheten inom strategin för romsk inkludering [Evaluation of the bridge builder operations within the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion]*, Statskontoret. Available at: <http://www.statskontoret.se/globalassets/publikationer/2016/201603.pdf> in Swedish, p. 33.

organisations. The applications appear overly bureaucratic in their language and rejections come back without clear explication as to why the application was rejected.

As it stands, mostly every Roma civil society organization cannot hire experienced staff which would help them to apply for funding of their activities, as their work is still mostly based on volunteering.

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

Swedish society is comparatively progressive in the area of gender equality and it is the norm to take this aspect in to account in official policies and actions. In the same way, the angle of women's perspective and special needs and the issue of equal representation is usually something that is being checked when Roma are consulted on a governmental level. Both regarding whom to consult, and what issues to focus on. Funding for civil society also reflect this aspect with targeted funding for supporting Roma women.²⁸

Even though there is an outspoken ambition on a national level, and some targeted missions for a few agencies on this theme, the problems usually arise on a local hands-on level. There are more cemented roles and still people in positions of power who act as though they are threatened by a more progressive equality approach and use existing hierarchies and power structures to counter act Roma women. Such non-Roma public officials, sometimes in leading positions, often refer to themselves as Roma experts who know best what the Roma need and claim to own the Roma issue; but the same is sometimes also applicable to local Roma leaders who have traditional positions of interacting with authorities.²⁹ The relationships between local public officials and other authorities is usually well established and hard to bypass. As a *young Roma woman* expressed, intersectionality is at play providing a threefold disadvantage: "This was a crucial point for a unanimous Roma community that I was representing at the local government. I was in an official capacity supposed to guarantee true influence over decisions that affect the Roma by the municipality. But the civil official wanted another outcome and when no one heard, he told me that the Roma should just obey".

The Swedish NRIS takes the situation of the growing Roma generation as a starting point. The main aim of the strategy states that a Roma child born in 2012 should have the same opportunity as the rest of society at the age of 20 in 2032, and the most crucial areas for development have been identified.³⁰ It is highly relevant to work with the overall socio-economic status of the families to create better conditions for the children, but too little emphasis and budget is directed towards supporting Roma children in school and the main relationship between the social services and the Roma families. The historic and ongoing persecution leaves the Roma families with a deeply rooted suspicion and often fear of what agenda authorities have for their children; this is an ongoing and acute situation where a concrete action plan has to be initiated from the authorities.

A few initiatives have been made to listen to and empower Roma youth by the MUCF.³¹ Swedish society has a long tradition of supporting and funding youth initiatives and activities in general and focus on strengthening democracy through endorsing youth participation and perspective. Young Roma need much more support, funding and directed

²⁸ <http://www.regeringen.se/49f197/contentassets/ea5c01fc9d3e47569d98171b2cf2be32/uppdrag-till-mucf-om-stod-till-romska-organisationer.pdf> Government mandate, 2016.

²⁹ Interview with representatives from a local Roma council, 10/10/17.

³⁰ Swedish Government Report, SOU 2010:55 Roma rights: A strategy for Roma in Sweden, report from the Delegation for Roma Issues, Stockholm.
www.government.se/4ac87e/contentassets/ac46c34c5ee94d1b8cd1ea26f7c04e52/a-strategy-for-roma-inclusion

³¹ See the Agency's webpage: <https://eng.mucof.se/>

actions to be able to access such initiatives and believe they have the same right to take part in society: "I did not think this was my arena, that as a Roma I would be able to join in with the others".³² One of the major threats to the future of Roma youth is their experience of not having access to what society has to offer which leaves them with fewer dreams and little hope for the future.

³² Roma interviewee, teenager, 18/11/17.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Implementing the Racial Equality Directive

Sweden has a progressive ambition regarding discrimination on different grounds in the labour market and other social and commercial arenas. A national law against ethnic discrimination was introduced in 1992 which in 2009 was replaced by the comprehensive *Diskrimineringslagen*, and the Racial Equality Directive was one of the more influential international documents in the formation of the new law and is a continued reference for strengthening its practise.³³ EU-law requires member states to ensure individuals effective legal protection and the Swedish Equality Ombudsman, *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen* (DO), is the government agency assigned to represent plaintiffs, promote equal opportunities and combat discrimination, and has a good reputation among Swedish citizens for its role in aiding in taking individual complaints to court. However, those who actually do turn to DO are often disappointed because of the strategic policy to only pursue individual cases they estimate would have a chance of winning a court case. Other complaints are important for reports and statistics but do not help the individual victim. One factor that is often pointed to is that the Equality Body does not have a sufficient budget for handling enough cases.³⁴ Approximately 2,000 cases of discrimination per year are reported to the DO, 600 concerning ethnicity and around 30 of those by Roma. Overall ten per cent of reported cases are processed by DO through court or by reaching a settlement with the parties involved. Most frequently Roma report discrimination in commercial establishments like shops, hotels and on the housing market and quite a few of these cases have been processed successfully, whereas the other major area of complaint, the social services – in particular where children are involved, have not been adequately investigated. This social area is more complex and requires a more thorough understanding of Roma history and social situation as well as more sophisticated methods of analysis which could benefit by using competence from other parts of the DO organisation.³⁵

There are several official bodies who focus on countering discrimination and promoting equal opportunities on national, regional and communal level. As the focus, however, lies on general ethnic bias, the structural barriers who hinder the Roma from accessing equal rights make up a blind-spot and are often overlooked. Long-term social exclusion has deeply impacted the Roma regarding education, health and living conditions to a degree where strong measures for e.g. affirmative action in the labour market and education is crucial. The accessibility of all areas of society needs to be analysed with regard to the special situation of Roma in Sweden historically and to date. Apart from socio-economic conditions and the structural disadvantages of living in deprived areas, the Roma has a barrier particular for them that concerns mutual mistrust brought on by hundreds of years of exclusion and having to build a parallel society to survive.³⁶ Since Roma are still perceived as foreigners in Sweden despite being national citizens for half a millennia and the status of national minority, there is a lumping together in various official actions with new coming immigrants. The Roma and various newer groups in Sweden may in some cases have general similar needs and difficulties but differ on a more profound level. "The labour office put me in a training group with immigrant women who did not speak Swedish

³³ Swedish Government Bill: *Ett starkare skydd mot diskriminering* ID-nummer: Prop. 2007/08:95. <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2008/03/prop.-20070895/>

³⁴ <http://www.regeringen.se/4af295/contentassets/b42c019548304be987083fb37f73d74f/battre-skydd-mot-diskriminering-sou-201687>

³⁵ DO, *Roma rights - Discrimination, paths of redress and how the law can improve the situation of Roma* <http://www.do.se/other-languages/english-engelska/reports-in-english/roma-rights> 2010 (2017)

³⁶ Swedish Government Report, SOU 2010:55 (2010), *Roma rights: A strategy for Roma in Sweden*. Report from the Delegation for Roma Issues, Stockholm.

even though my family has lived in Sweden for many generations".³⁷ Sometimes in strategic documents the term *ethnic* is exchanged for *foreign background* which leads to an unconscious exclusion of the Swedish Roma minority.

There have been a few initiatives to open up for employment in particular positions for the Roma within different authorities. As often these positions, however, are connected to being a Roma expert or *bridge builder* they are often project short-term based and perceived as "token actions" where the Roma employee has a more symbolic value but do not get to influence actual decisions, disregarding the special expertise and competence of this resource person: "They were most happy when I was quiet in my room and to display me for politicians etc., but when any real decisions were made, my perspective, building on deep knowledge and connection with the target group, had no weight and so official actions remained as ineffective as before for the Roma I was employed to help", a Roma interviewee, employed as expert in the public sector said.³⁸ Another confirms that: "The decisions were already made and I was just there for show, as the Roma alibi".³⁹ Actual participation requires the majority society to let go of some power in benefit of the minority perspective which would be a requirement for actual change but appears to pose a threat to existing structure and is therefore consciously or unconsciously thwarted. Often the structural barriers in these positions are the requirements for formal education that the Roma do not have and other more intrinsic barriers that hinder the Roma person from equal partaking in the work place, for example academic or authoritative language and work place culture. The informal competence of Roma experts often lacks proper acknowledgment.

Educational and residential segregation

The Roma in Sweden often live in deprived areas with low socio-economic status. The reason for this is long standing social exclusion which position the Roma in the predicament of other social groups/classes with the same lack of possibilities to have their needs met and their human rights fulfilled. This circumstance places Roma children in schools where the conditions are worse and the educational and social needs of their children are not met.⁴⁰ The Roma children live in a social context with challenges that stem from hundreds of years of exclusion and persecution in Sweden, but go to schools where there are a vast majority of newer immigrants who have other needs – for example regarding learning to speak Swedish – which leaves the Roma children without proper pedagogical attention. Because of the Roma of earlier generations not having access to school education the Roma family needs more guidance to be able to both trust school authorities with their children and to be able to support their children academically. Also, many parents suffer under the consequences of anti-gypsyism and discrimination in everyday life, and fear there is no place for their children in the majority society, which sometimes causes them to assess formal education as pointless as a means of providing a secure future for their children.

There have been a few initiatives from the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, *Boverket*, to investigate how to eliminate discrimination by Roma on the housing market and they target the fact that many Roma have difficulties getting an apartment at all due to racial discrimination and prejudice.⁴¹ The fact that many Roma look for places to live close to other Roma is due to the fact that discriminatory structures in society still hinders equal access to societal services which leave them in a situation where they need

³⁷ Roma interviewee, woman looking for a job, 28/10/17.

³⁸ Roma interviewee, woman employed at a municipal office, 03/11/17.

³⁹ Roma interviewee, man employed at a municipal office, 22/10/17.

⁴⁰ Government Offices of Sweden. 2010. *Romers rätt – en strategi för romer i Sverige [Roma rights: A strategy for Roma in Sweden]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2010/07/sou-201055/>

⁴¹ National Board of Housing, Building and Planning 2016, <https://www.boverket.se/sv/samhallsplanering/uppdrag/motverka-diskriminering-av-romer-pa-bostadsmarknaden/>

to help each other in informal networks who make up a parallel society. Sweden has an elaborate and generous social welfare system with a generally well-developed safety net for the needs and fulfilment of the citizen's rights but the Roma mostly still "fall between the cracks" and have to depend on each other.

Since Roma children do not get access to high quality pedagogical measures that are adapted to their needs, and because of a lack of cultural understanding, focus tends to fall on perceived cognitive disabilities where Roma to a disproportional degree end up with a diagnosis. "They said my niece had a cognitive disability when in fact she has difficulties in school because her parents are functionally illiterate."⁴²

In the last decade, social segregation has taken a turn for the worse due to political decisions regarding for example how schools are funded and chosen in general, combined with a vast number of interacting complex social and political circumstances, and this development has had a negative effect on among others the school situation of the Roma population.⁴³

Discriminatory behaviour by police, misconduct by prosecutors or courts

The relationship between the Roma community and the police has a long history of mutual distrust. In Sweden up until only a few decades ago there were laws prohibiting Swedish Roma from, for example, settling in one place and a few years before that there were harsher practises of persecution with the Roma being without any rights. Often the institution obliged to carry out such repercussions was the police.⁴⁴

Today, many Roma witness about their personal experiences where they claim that if a person is known to be Roma by the police, through name or other information, they are at large risk of being treated differently than the rest of society. Individual officers often display prejudice and some operate according to an older culture where a Roma person is automatically treated as a suspect, and may be target of *ethnic profiling*.⁴⁵ Individual officers who have this disposition and who work in deprived areas are perceived to take advantage of the knowledge that the Roma do not report transgressions (out of caution from a history of this leading to further repercussions) but instead keep a very low profile towards authorities, and that they do not have connections to other parts of society who could find out about the interaction, or that they know their rights as a citizen.⁴⁶

Over-policing and under-policing of Roma:

NGOs participating in development of this report, which provide counselling to Roma, have documented cases of both over-policing and under-policing of their Roma clients:

An example of over-policing:

Two police officers entered the home of a Roma woman with a 4-year-old daughter because they claimed that a criminal man be in the apartment. They tore through her and her daughter's things and finally separated mother and daughter in different rooms asking both of them questions (what is not allowed in Sweden). The mother became extremely upset and said that she would report them. They told her that if she files a complain against them, that they would report her to the social authorities as a retribution. (Roma parents are afraid of the Swedish social authorities taking their children from families.) She

⁴² Roma interviewee, woman aged 43, 12/11/17.

⁴³ Social resource management <http://www.socialhallbarhet.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Delrapport2014.pdf>

⁴⁴ Government Offices of Sweden. 2010. *Romers rätt – en strategi för romer i Sverige [Roma rights: A strategy for Roma in Sweden]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2010/07/sou-201055/>

⁴⁵ Civil Rights Defenders 2017. Available at: <https://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/news/svenska-etnisk-profilering-vardaglig-erfarenhet-for-minoritetsgrupper/>

⁴⁶ Focus group with Roma citizens living in a Gothenburg suburb.

reported them afterwards but since it was only her word against that of two officers, the charges against the policemen were dropped. The policemen reported her to the social services what fortunately was eventually not a problem for her as she was well known in person in that department through her own professional work as an employee of the local municipality.⁴⁷

If, on the other hand, a person is a Roma and victim of a crime s/he may experience that the police do not rush to protect him/her in an ongoing situation or that they are inclined to believe that the Roma person is rather the perpetrator of the crime and not the victim. The perceived reluctance to heed emergency calls for help are also in some cases due to the fact that most Roma live in areas where the police are perceived as less attentive in responding to calls for help.

An example of under-policing:

A Roma woman with small children has a drug addict stalking her and abusing her in her neighbourhood. In an acute situation when he is chasing them she contacts the police who, hearing her name and address, instead of coming to her rescue, questions her if this is a Roma family feud and that they should work it out by themselves. Once she gets the police to the scene – hours after the acute situation – and they have been to the hospital, the police instead treat them as suspects and starts asking about other minor things even though there is a dangerous man on the loose nearby. The situation continues over a span of months without the police acting on behalf of the family and continues a year after when the man has been released from jail from another offence. He is not brought in by the police despite more physical abuse, smashed windows etc. because the Roma family is not believed by the police.⁴⁸

In 2013 it was revealed that the Police authority in Southern Sweden had an active register of 4,000-5,000 Roma who were registered through family and social ties. It is illegal in Sweden to keep records of ethnicity and illegal to keep police records of people not suspected of a crime. This was a big public scandal and something that damaged the relationship and trust between the Roma minority and Swedish authorities and risked causing a setback of recent progress with Roma inclusion. New-borns in other parts of Sweden were in this register which scared many Roma people wondering how the Police got their intelligence. There was an initial damage ruled by a Swedish court to be paid for all individuals in the register and after Civil Rights Defenders pursued the case further in 2017 there was a ruling by The Chancellor of Justice for an even higher compensation which will make the Police authority pay a total of 15.79 million EUR (163 million SEK) in damages.⁴⁹ More than the economic compensation this has shown good intentions from the state which has helped repair some of the damage done by the original register. But it still impedes Roma participants in programmes since there is still no answer from the Police what they used the register for.

Throughout the legal system and process, Roma people report experiencing discrimination due to stigmatizing stereotypes. Interviews with legal professionals confirm this problem, and many of them emphasise that the Roma client risks being subconsciously pre-judged in people's minds. This sometimes results in a more questioning or condescending attitude where the Roma client is perceived as less credible. There are data which show a tendency for Roma to be subjected to a higher degree of arrests, a circumstance which is then corrected through due legal process so that this discrimination does not continue to effect

⁴⁷ Roma client of social and legal counseling, 2016, Stockholm.

⁴⁸ Roma client of social and legal counseling, 2016-2017, Gothenburg.

⁴⁹ *Nearly 5,000 Roma people to receive state compensation.* Swedish Radio, 24 May 2017, available at: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6703595>

actual sentence of guilt or acquittal. However, there are indications of Roma in general being sentenced to more severe sanctions than non-Roma for similar offences.⁵⁰

Right to Free Movement

During the past ten years, there has been a new group of Roma who travel to Sweden to make a living in accordance with the right to free movement as EU citizens. These temporary migrants mainly come from Romania and Bulgaria and stay for around three months at a time in accordance with the right to free movement. Coming to Sweden they look for temporary jobs but usually have to support themselves, and their families at home, through begging in the streets. Living conditions for this group are grim as they also live as homeless people finding temporary shelter and sometimes camping together on fields on the outskirts of towns. Local municipalities in Sweden have a very varied approach as to how much official support is available for this group. Some cities like for example Gothenburg cooperate with NGOs and churches, including financial support to make living conditions better and to respect and help fulfil the human rights of these persons while staying in the municipality.⁵¹ The options for schooling for children, health care etc. are dependent upon the random mercy of individual public officials and initiatives (which differs from the way the Swedish welfare system usually works, firmly based on regulations and rule-of-law). But the resources allocated for this are few and random. In September 2017, several municipalities, including Vellinge, Skanör and Höllviken, imposed bans on begging, which is the primary livelihood of many Roma travelling from other EU countries. This ban was lifted by the Skåne County government a month later, because it deemed that the collection of money did not cause public order disturbances. The municipality appealed this decision to the Administrative Court in Malmö, which instead ruled in favour of the County government.⁵²

In one area, however, there has been a recent movement towards a more restrictive legislation and practise, and that concerns forced evictions where the Swedish parliament recently passed a law that will make it easier for the Police to break up temporary camps.⁵³

⁵⁰ Brottsförebygganderådet 2008:4, *Diskriminering i rättsprocessen*, report available at: https://www.bra.se/download/18.cba82f7130f475a2f180007887/1371914724514/2008_4_diskriminering_i_rattsprocessen.pdf

⁵¹ *Action plan of action for socially vulnerable EU citizens*, City of Gothenburg, available at: <http://goteborg.se/wps/portal?uri=gbqlnk%3a2015811161230809>

⁵² *Inget förbud mot tiggeri i Vellinge kommun [No ban on begging in Vellinge municipality]*. Förvaltningsrätten i Malmö, 8 February 2018. Available at: <http://www.forvaltningsrattenimalmo.domstol.se/Om-forvaltningsratten/RSS-nyheter-och-pressmeddelanden/Inget-forbud-mot-tiggeri-i-Vellinge-kommun1/>

⁵³ *Avlägsnande – en ny form av särskild handräckning [Removal – a new form of special assistance]*. Ministry of Justice, available at: <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliqa-dokument/proposition/2017/03/prop.-201617159/>

ADDRESSING ANTIGYPSYISM

Institutional settings for fighting discrimination and addressing antigypsyism

Sweden in modern times has long functioned out of a self-image of being the country in the world with the most egalitarian society devoid of any racism, and the Swedish state has a progressive agenda towards other countries in need of social development and political liberation. Therefore, it has been a process in recent years to come to acknowledge racist norms and practises that has been a blind-spot in regard to general awareness. This is particularly relevant of the treatment of the Swedish state towards national minorities such as the Roma and the Sami (indigenous people of the North of Sweden). However, there has been a shift in awareness in recent years regarding the effects of antigypsyism to Swedish policy and overall awareness of racism in Swedish society.⁵⁴

The Commission Against Antigypsyism, a committee appointed by the government which finished its commission in 2016 with the issue of the Government official report "*Joined Forces Against Antigypsyism*"⁵⁵ has together with the *White Paper on abuses and rights violations against Roma in the 20th century*⁵⁶ been important state initiatives to acknowledge historic and current abuse of the Roma people. As a result of suggestions from the commission there is now a governmental official inquiry about founding a national institute for Roma issues which would have as one of its aims to combat antigypsyism on a national level and support local authorities.⁵⁷ The official inquiry investigators have a large number of ongoing consultations with Roma civil society but the majority of Roma organisations have concerns about if there are ulterior motives to have a state centre "checking up on the Roma", if the centre will "hijack" ownership from the civil Roma organizations and how the centre will balance official policy regulations and control from above with actual influence by the Roma who will work at the institute on different positions. The investigators from the responsible ministry, *Ministry of Culture*, however, emphasize that from their perspective the institute will be run in close council with Roma representatives. The result of the investigation in 2018 will show to what degree this may be the case. If the state takes a position and decides on a course of action without actually taking the perspective of the majority of Roma organisations into account this could be interpreted as patronizing antigypsyism in the form of "the Roma not knowing what is best for them". This is already how the process is being perceived by many Roma representatives.⁵⁸

In addition, the Commission Against Antigypsyism was tasked by the Government with producing and distributing material based on the White Paper and they fulfilled this by producing and distributing the textbook *Antiziganism in Sweden – about the abuses and violations of Roma during the 1900s and today* and an associated teacher's guide.⁵⁹ The material is well made but lacks proper distribution or introduction to mandatory school curriculum. One of the most effective ways to change public perception on the Roma minority in Sweden and combat antigypsyism would be to ensure that all school children

⁵⁴ Government Offices of Sweden. 2017. *A comprehensive approach to combat racism and hate crime – National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/492382/contentassets/173251a50a5e4798bcafc15ba871a411/a-comprehensive-approach-to-combat-racism-and-hate-crime>

⁵⁵ <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2016/06/sou-201644/>

⁵⁶ <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/departementsserien-och-promemorior/2014/03/ds-20148/>

⁵⁷ Ministry of culture 2017 <http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/06/utredning-om-inrattande-av-ett-nationellt-center-for-romska-fragor/>

⁵⁸ Roma NGO interviewees, 23/11/17.

⁵⁹ <https://www.so-rummet.se/lektioner-och-lararmaterial/lararhandledning/skolboken-antiziganismen-i-sverige-om-overgrepp-och-krankningar-av-romer-under>

are educated on this part of Swedish history as well as on the lives of Roma people today. The major obstacle lies with the teacher education programme that is not equally up to date with national minority issues.⁶⁰

In the third city of Sweden, Malmö, there is a Roma unit within the municipality, *Romskt informations-och kunskapscenter*, and the second city, Gothenburg, has started developing a similar institution (even though a formal Roma advisory council has been installed in Gothenburg since 2011).⁶¹ Such departments sometimes experience difficulties with credibility and legitimacy within their own administrations and lack of support and action from higher executive levels. Many of the experiences are very familiar to the Roma staff from their own personal lives, for example a new department having difficulties in finding a locality for its office since even publicly funded landlords refuse the new unit at the point in the process of contracting where they realize they work with Roma issues. Refusals are usually made with other excuses, and other municipal officials in charge of Roma departments hesitate to acknowledge this discrimination and try and make excuses for this behaviour to the frustration of Roma representatives.⁶²

There are still many civil servants in the municipalities who have a patronizing attitude towards the Roma and some of them on executive positions. Some have a long history of working with Roma, minority and human rights issues and function out of older societal norms where the Roma are subordinate and inferior and are perceived by Roma staff or council representatives to have a hidden agenda of keeping actual Roma influence on their own issues to a minimum. The key to solution often lies with bypassing such barriers by directly contacting the politicians responsible for that department or forming alliances with more progressive officials. This is straining work for the Roma representatives and they often express a wish for a more formal official responsibility for this frequent dilemma as this force them to a position of constant power struggle instead of being able to focus on actual concrete work tasks for social development.⁶³

Countering hate crime and hate speech against Roma, and antigypsyist rhetoric of politicians, public figures and media

Since the police and the justice system are themselves perceived by many Roma as racist and prejudiced against them, the Roma rarely report offences such as hate crime because they fear further abuse by the judicial system itself.⁶⁴ The Roma have had to learn a strategy of keeping a low profile so as not to be targeted. There is also the issue of fear of being registered as Roma which is perceived as something that could lead to abuse and discrimination. Roma representatives emphasise the need to include education on the Roma minority for future officers and lawyers, and that this education should preferably be conducted by the Roma themselves.

As the Roma groups living in Sweden have adopted this strategy of protection and often hide by referring to themselves as being an immigrant from another country (which is thought of as being much safer) or adopting Swedish names, this is also a question of internalised problems with identity and self-confidence which is passed on to the children.⁶⁵ "Coming out of the closet" as being a Roma sometimes gives people bad experiences like

⁶⁰ Sisuradio, 2017. History teachers skip education on national minorities – in spite it being mandatory, 2017-04-26. <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=185&artikel=6678406>

⁶¹ Roma inclusion, City of Gothenburg <http://goteborg.se/wps/portal?uri=gbglnk%3a20140527-141325>

⁶² Roma interviewee, civil servant, 01/12/17.

⁶³ Roma interviewees, civil servants and council members, 30/09/17.

⁶⁴ Government Offices of Sweden. 2010. *Romers rätt – en strategi för romer i Sverige [Roma rights: A strategy for Roma in Sweden]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2010/07/sou-201055/>

⁶⁵ Government Offices of Sweden. 2016. *Kraftsamling mot antiziganism [Joining forces against antigypsyism]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2016/06/sou-201644/>

loss of jobs and homes etc.. Instead, while hiding your identity, you may have to listen to racist slurs about Roma at your work place and other social arenas.⁶⁶ A Roma woman employed in a clothes shop explains her situation: "I got the job because I did not reveal my Roma identity. When my family or friends are in the shopping mall they know that I do not want them to come in to the shop from fear of revealing what I am. I need the job, but it also makes me feel bad because my colleagues talk about Roma people as criminals and that they should not be allowed to enter the mall."

A group that do not have the possibility to hide their Roma identity in public is Finnish-Roma women who wear their traditional dress. The hassle they experience from moving around in society is a good measure on the temperature of racist prejudice against Roma in Sweden today.

For a very long time in Sweden it has been unthinkable for public figures, politicians and the media to voice racist opinions. However, as with the rest of Europe and the US, the climate has been changing in the last decade and there are now openly nationalistic politicians in the Swedish parliament. The tolerance level has been raised for near racist remarks and even though they may raise objections, few lose their positions because of this. Almost all of these incidents, "however", target Muslims and this has increased since the refugee crisis in 2015.⁶⁷ Explicit racism is still not tolerated, punishable by law and usually leads to dismissal.

As racist tendencies grow in society, most of the overt racism is played out on social media where legislation is lagging behind which leaves individuals and groups at the hands of hate groups.⁶⁸

It is a crime in Sweden to disseminate threats or messages expressing contempt for a national, ethnic or other such group with allusion to race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin and such crimes go by the name of *Hets mot folkgrupp - Agitation against a national or ethnic group* and are handled by the Police. Crimes related to the freedom of press and expression, cases of unlawful statements in printed publications, radio and TV programmes are supervised by the The Chancellor of Justice who is the sole public prosecutor for these crimes.

The Swedish National Council on Crime prevention, *Brottsförebygganderådet – Brå*, records and publishes an annual report on hate crimes in Sweden. In 2016 there were 240 reports with an anti-Roma motive as a principal offence, which make up 3.4 per cent of the total of 6,920 reported hate crimes. Unlawful threats and harassment represent 40 per cent of all reported anti-Roma hate crimes, which makes this the most common crime category. Defamation 20 per cent and unlawful discrimination 15 per cent were the next most common types of crime. Hate speech was less common with 9 per cent.⁶⁹

Since 2016 there is a promising initiative from the Swedish Police authority with creating special units in the three major regions for combating hate crimes, *Polisens Demokrati- och hatbrottsgrupper*. These units are building expertise in the field and reaching out and forming councils with minority groups who are targets of these crimes, including the Roma minority.⁷⁰ This promising initiative has the potential to build bridges between the Roma community and the Police, and offers a chance to educate the Police on Roma issues and

⁶⁶ Focus group discussions with Roma, 13/10/17, 15/11/17.

⁶⁷ The United Nations Association of Sweden. 2014. *Joint submission for Sweden's second Universal Periodic Review in 2015*. Available at: <https://fn.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Joint-Submission-UPR-2014.pdf>

⁶⁸ Kaati, Lisa et al. 2017. *Det vita hatet: radikal nationalism i digitala miljöer. [White hatred: Radical nationalism in digital environments]*. Available at: <https://www.foi.se/rapportsammanfattning?reportNo=FOI-R--4463--SE>

⁶⁹ <https://www.bra.se/brott-och-statistik/statistiska-undersokningar/hatbrottsstatistik.html>

⁷⁰ https://polisen.se/Vastra_Gotaland/Aktuellt/Nyheter/Vastra-Gotaland/juli-sept/Polisens-rad-fangar-upp-hatbrottsfragor/

could lead to more Roma coming forward and reporting such crimes. One problem, however, is that with many of the hate crimes the Roma experience, they name the Police as the perpetrators.⁷¹ This does not fall under the definition and objectives of these units but should be handled by the police own internal investigation and this poses a barrier for Roma who report such incidents.

The Roma who travel to Sweden as temporary EU-migrants are occasionally targeted through violence on the streets, verbal abuse, spitting and other demeaning behaviour and there have been attacks of arson on temporary dwellings. In the cases of direct individual attacks in the streets these have been firmly dealt with by the Swedish authorities: the Police, health care and court system. Regarding the attacks and threats on dwellings there are reports that indicate that this is not sufficiently addressed by the authorities.⁷² The view that the Roma who beg in the streets are actually criminals and should be banned from the streets has recently been brought forward by high level politicians in power without any consequences or very much debate on the subject.

Analysing and forming narratives and attitudes towards Roma

Even though there is an outspoken willingness of national state agencies to include Roma culture in to the narrative of the Swedish nation, the national culture inheritance, there is a lack of actual structured programmes and concrete strategies. The national cultural institutions have a responsibility to include the Roma as a national minority and this often takes the form of media appearances in the different varieties of Romani, for example on national radio, television and a few written media. The target group, and often the producers of these activities, are the Roma themselves.⁷³ Few initiatives actually target the majority society and their perception of the Roma, and there is a similar lack of investigation of public attitudes towards the minority.

One initiative that has had a wider impact is the museum exhibition and subsequent national tour and book "*Rom San – We Are Roma: Meet The People Behind The Myth*" which was jointly financed by Gothenburg City and the European Social Fund and has been visited by over a quarter of a million Swedes including targeted educational tours for professionals and school children.⁷⁴ Another institution focusing on public attitudes and knowledge is *The Living History Forum* which is a public authority that takes its starting point in the Holocaust – or *Porajmos* in Romani – to raise awareness on minority rights and racism.⁷⁵

A major dilemma is found in the fact that even though there is some funding available for civil society projects to counter antigypsyism, it leaves most of the work to the Roma NGOs who are underfunded and where activists tend to burn out, instead of sufficiently funded programmes run by the resources of the public sector.

⁷¹ Roma interviewees, focus group on judicial system, 17/11/17.

⁷² *Vi måste lösa frågan om tiggarnas övernattningar*, SVT Opinion, 14 april 2016. Thomas Hammarberg <https://www.svt.se/opinion/hammarberg-om-eu-medborgare>

⁷³ <http://sverigesradio.se/radioromano>

⁷⁴ <http://goteborgsstadsmuseum.se/node/2335>

⁷⁵ <http://www.levandehistoria.se/english>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Governance and overall policy framework

The Minorities Act should more clearly state what the obligation of administrative authorities to consult with national minorities involves. To aid Roma empowerment and stakeholder ownership, consultations should be co-organized, where the authority representatives that are overseeing the consultation collect content suggestions from as many Roma civil society organizations as possible in an open call which should be widely spread to reach the most stakeholder groups nationwide as possible, enabling Roma participation on equal terms. Involving the Roma civil society organizations in forming action could contribute to significantly more effective results, as there is broad knowledge and experience in the areas concerned that are not effectively utilized.

To ensure strengthened accountability, from Roma-targeted programs and other government initiatives, and increase the Roma's trust toward authorities; evaluation processes and learned lessons should be made transparent to the public and done by either an impartial body, or in cooperation with representatives anchored within the larger Roma community.

The same body or Roma representatives should also be tasked with relaying reports and feedback to and from the Roma and government authorities, as well as other things regarding the Roma Strategy; such as surveys etc. that have previously been sent out to the Roma Civil Society sporadically and with short notice of the different actions' deadlines.

Government agencies should be tasked with strengthening the minorities organisations' prospects of exercising influence through education and other knowledge-enhancing measures. To increase the ability of the Roma stakeholder groups to organize and drive their own issues, financial support must be both increased, and made more available to them. Also efforts to ensure this should include reviewing the bureaucratic state grant application procedures and make them more transparent as well as increase their availability to Roma civil society organizations and their activities.

Anti-discrimination

Proper tools should be developed in order to analyse the accessibility of public sector services from a Roma perspective. For example, this could be accomplished using the Bacchi WPR policy analysis. The Swedish government should commission this task with the relevant ministries.

The number of positions for Roma acting as bridge builders within the different public sectors should be increased in order to facilitate trust, understanding and communication between the service providers and individuals from the Roma minority. The parliament should oversee legislation and the possibilities to order municipalities to install such positions within the relevant services.

The government should commission relevant agencies to increase their support to the capacity building of the Roma civil society organisations. This will strengthen the capabilities of Roma to participate on more equal terms with the rest of society and support ownership in activities from within the target group with inside knowledge of optional goals and methods.

The Swedish government, through relevant ministries, should guarantee there are concrete plans and process guidance as well as a regulatory agency responsible for the different authorities on state, regional and municipal level obliged to implement Roma inclusion and who have a responsibility that the rights if the Roma minority are fulfilled.

Addressing antigypsyism

The mismatch between the official school curriculum and the teacher education, concerning history and current situation of the Roma minority, impedes actual implementation in

schools. The Swedish National Agency for Education, *Skolverket*, and the Swedish Higher Education Authority, *UKÄ*, should see to it that teacher education includes knowledge on the Roma minority. The Ministry of Education and Research should ensure that current teachers as well receive this competence.

The government should initiate national campaigns that focus on raising awareness of history and current situation of the Roma minority in Sweden. Public prejudice affect everyday life of Roma and programmes and research are needed for raising awareness.

The Swedish Higher Education Authority, *UKÄ*, should review the programmes at the Police academy and Law schools to include human rights based education on the Roma minority to ensure that the Swedish judicial system operate in a way that consciously and actively strive for zero tolerance for antigypsyism within law enforcement.

Despite frequent occurrence, few Roma report hate crime and discrimination. The Equality Body and the Police should both actively work on reaching out to the Roma community and work on creating structures that help Roma report incidents. The government should allocate means to for example local antidiscrimination bureaus to strengthen their capacity to aid the Roma minority with their discrimination case.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brottsförebygganderådet. 2016. *Statistics on reported hate crimes*. Available at: <https://www.bra.se/bra-in-english/home/crime-and-statistics/crime-statistics/reported-hate-crimes.html>

City of Gothenburg. *Utsatta EU-medborgare*. [Action plan for socially vulnerable EU citizens]. Available at: <http://goteborg.se/wps/portal?uri=gbglnk%3a2015811161230809>

Civil Rights Defenders. 2017. *Slumpvis utvald [Randomly selected]*. Available at: <http://old.civilrightsdefenders.org/news/svenska-etnisk-profilering-vardaglig-erfarenhet-for-minoritetsgrupper/>

Commission against Antiziganism. 2014. *Third interim report*. Available at: <http://www.minoritet.se/user/motantiziganism/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Third-interim-report.pdf>

County Administrative Board. 2017. *Romsk inkludering. Årsrapport 2016 [Roma Inclusion. Annual Report 2016]*. Available at: <http://www.minoritet.se/4591>

Diskrimineringsombudsmannen. 2011. *Roma rights – Discrimination, paths of redress and how the law can improve the situation of Roma*. Available at: <https://www.do.se/contentassets/b7f4b55bcf8e4a40b5db846f7f45a2a3/report-roma-rights2.pdf>

Göteborgs Stadsmuseum. "ROM SAN – ÄR DU ROM?" Available at: <http://goteborgsstadsmuseum.se/node/2335>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2010. *Romers rätt – en strategi för romer i Sverige [Roma rights: A strategy for Roma in Sweden]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2010/07/sou-201055/>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2014. *White Paper on abuses and rights violations against Roma in the 20th century*. Available at: <http://www.government.se/information-material/2014/03/white-paper-on-abuses-and-rights-violations-of-roma-during-the-1900s/>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2016. *Bättre skydd mot diskriminering [Better protection against discrimination]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/4af295/contentassets/b42c019548304be987083fb37f73d74f/battre-skydd-mot-diskriminering-sou-201687>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2016. *Kraftsamling mot antiziganism [Joining forces against antigypsyism]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/rattsdokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2016/06/sou-201644/>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2016. *Regeringens strategi för romsk inkludering; hälsa och social omsorg och trygghet. [The government strategy for Roma inclusion; health and social welfare and security]*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/regeringens-strategi-for-romsk-inkludering/halsa-social-omsorg-och-trygghet/>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2017. *A comprehensive approach to combat racism and hate crime – National plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime*. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/492382/contentassets/173251a50a5e4798bcafc15ba871a411/a-comprehensive-approach-to-combat-racism-and-hate-crime>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2017. *Kulturdepartementet tillsätter utredning om inrättande av ett nationellt center för romska frågor* [Ministry of Culture appoints inquiry on the establishment of a national center for Roma issues]. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2017/06/utredning-om-inrattande-av-ett-nationellt-center-for-romska-fragor/>

Government Offices of Sweden. 2017. *Nästa steg? Förslag för en stärkt minoritetspolitik* [Next steps? Suggestions for a stronger politics for minorities]. Available at: http://www.sou.gov.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/SOU-2017_60_webb.pdf. An English summary available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/4a8d12/contentassets/f869b8aae642474db1528c4da4d2b19a/sammanfattningen-pa-engelska-och-de-nationella-minoritetspraken>

Kaati, Lisa et al. 2017. *Det vita hatet: radikal nationalism i digitala miljöer*. [White hatred: Radical nationalism in digital environments]. Available at: <https://www.foi.se/rapportsammanfattning?reportNo=FOI-R--4463--SE>

Kommissionen mot antiziganism, 2015. *Antiziganismen i Sverige - om övergrepp och kränkningar av romer under 1900-talet och i dag*. [Antiziganism in Sweden – about the abuses and violations of Roma during the 1900s and today] Available at: <http://www.minoritet.se/user/motantiziganism/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Antiziganismen-i-Sverige.pdf>

Minoritet.se 2017. *Rättighetsbaserat arbete stärker romsk inkludering* [Rights based work strengthens Roma inclusion]. Available at: <http://www.minoritet.se/4707>

Regeringens strategi för romsk inkludering [Government strategy for Roma Inclusion]. Available at: <http://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/regeringens-strategi-for-romsk-inkludering/>

Romano Radio: <http://sverigesradio.se/radoromano>

Selling, Jan et al. 2014. *Antiziganism: What's in a Word?* Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Statskontoret. 2016. *Utvärdering av brobygggarverksamheten inom strategin för romsk inkludering* [Evaluation of the bridge builder operations within the Strategy for Roma inclusion]. Available at: <http://www.statskontoret.se/globalassets/publikationer/2016/201603.pdf>

The Living History Forum: <http://www.levandehistoria.se/english>

The Swedish Agency for Youth and Society: <https://eng.mucof.se/>

The United Nations Association of Sweden. 2014. *Joint submission for Sweden's second Universal Periodic Review in 2015*. Available at: <https://fn.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Joint-Submission-UPR-2014.pdf>

Wigerfelt, Berit and Wigerfelt, Anders S. 2015. *Anti-Gypsism in Sweden: Roma's and Travellers Experiences of Bias-Motivated Crime*. Internet Journal of Criminology. Available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.834.6024&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:

- one copy:
via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:
from the European Union's representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm);
from the delegations in non-EU countries
(http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)
or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(*). The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>).

