



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

*Identifying blind spots
in Roma inclusion policy*

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January 2020



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*

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Identifying blind spots in Roma inclusion policy

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

PDF ISBN 978-92-76-19948-9 doi:10.2838/166854 Catalogue number DS-01-20-373-EN-N

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This report was prepared by Ms. Simona Nicoleta Barbu as an independent researcher.

It was 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 the 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.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COE	Council of Europe
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategy
RCM	Roma Civil Monitor
RCM Y1	Roma Civil Monitor Year 1
RCM Y2	Roma Civil Monitor Year 2
RCM Y3	Roma Civil Monitor Year 3
UN	United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the third one prepared within the Roma Civil Monitor project, on the monitoring of Roma inclusion in Denmark.¹ Its purpose is to analyse the blind spots of the Roma inclusion policy, looking at the issues that are not mentioned or not addressed sufficiently in the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS). As already mentioned in the previous two monitoring reports, the Danish NRIS is rather a set of integrated policy measures that do not include Roma-targeted initiatives, and it is not a strategy that explicitly targets the Roma population. The Danish authorities follow the principle that all citizens in Denmark are equal and should have equal access to public services. It is considered by the Danish state, thus, that Danish citizens of Roma origin should be included automatically, and they should have equal access to the general initiatives for integration. In this context, the state does not allocate funding/budget specifically for Roma, nor does it develop Roma-targeted initiatives. This report aims to offer an overview of the situation of Roma in Denmark, both Danish citizens as well as EU citizens of Roma origin who travel to Denmark from other EU countries.

Lack of information on Danish Roma

The first section of the report underlines the need of gathering more data regarding the Danish citizens of Roma origin living in Denmark, with a focus on their social situation and identifying thematic areas of possible needed intervention. At the present moment, there is a lack of information on this subject, as Denmark does not collect data based on ethnicity.

EU-mobile Roma in Denmark

The second part of the report approaches the situation of destitute EU citizens of Roma origin who live in homelessness in the streets of Denmark. Examples of discrimination, hate-speech and violence against EU citizens of Roma origin are presented. The report formulates the concern that, in the past years, antigypsyist attitudes have increased among the Danish population. It is shown how this leads to increased aggressivity toward the EU citizens of Roma origin who live and work in Denmark. The issue of access to the labour market for EU citizens of Roma origin is addressed in this section, as well: concerns over the scarce access to jobs is underlined, as well as regarding the risk of exploitation of the EU citizens of Roma origin in the Danish labour market. Increased harassment from the Police is underlined, in the context of destitution and resorting to rough sleeping. Particular attention within the EU citizens' group is given in this report to minors and women of Roma origin. Information about the Roma women and minors who travel to Denmark is scarce and there are no focused policies or programmes targeting them.

Recommendations

The report concludes with recommendations for both authorities and institutions at national and EU level to investigate through an independent qualitative study the experiences of the national Roma population within the fields of employment, housing, health and education. A recommendation is made to the European bodies to work with the Danish authorities for strengthening the national strategy in Denmark.

¹ The first annual cycle of the Roma Civil Monitor was focused on the horizontal precondition of the Roma inclusion – governance, fight against antigypsyism and anti-discrimination. The second cycle concerned the four key policy fields – education, employment, healthcare and housing. All reports are available at: <https://cps.ceu.edu/roma-civil-monitor-reports>

INTRODUCTION

Following the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted by the European Commission (EC) and the European Council in 2011, Denmark presented the National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS) in December 2012. The Danish NRIS is not a strategy as such, rather, it is an integrated set of policy measures, but since the Danish Government and the EC refer to the document as the NRIS, this terminology will also be adopted for this report.² The Danish NRIS does not include specific programmes or measures for Roma in Denmark, but states that Roma are included into broader national integration policies. Consequently, after the adoption of the NRIS, no Roma-targeted initiatives have been developed at governmental or municipal level.

The Roma population in Denmark consists of the national Roma and other EU citizens of Roma origin. As there is no official data collection regarding ethnicity in Denmark,³ only estimations of the population size have been possible, which range for the Danish Roma between 1,500 and 10,000.⁴ The number of EU citizens of Roma origin living in Denmark is also known only through estimations – between 140 and 200.⁵ There are currently no active Roma NGOs in Denmark, and the national organisations and institutions that work with human rights and the social inclusion of minorities currently do not implement Roma-specific activities.⁶

The previous monitoring reports elaborated for the Roma Civil Monitor (RCM) project during 2017 and 2018 have approached issues regarding both national Roma and other EU citizens of Roma origin living in Denmark. [RCM Y1 \(2017\) report](#) discusses the inclusion of the Danish Roma at national level, showing that this is not mainstreamed as a specific issue across the ministries and that there are no Roma-targeted initiatives concerning anti-discrimination.⁷ The Y1 report also addresses antigypsyist rhetoric against EU citizens of Roma origin by Danish politicians. The report raises concerns regarding a possible ethnic profiling of Romanian nationals and of Romanian Roma in particular, when applying legislation on prohibition of camping in public spaces and begging activities.⁸ [RCM Y2 \(2018\) report](#) analyses the Danish approach to Roma inclusion (both Danish nationals and EU citizens) within the four thematic areas of employment, housing, education and health in response to the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.⁹

² See information on the Danish NRIS available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-and-eu/roma-integration-eu-country/roma-integration-denmark_en (accessed 08.01.2017) and Danish government's presentation to the EC of Denmark's NRIS available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/roma_denmark_strategy_en.pdf (accessed 10.10.2019).

³ Danish legislation concerning personal data collection available at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/r0710.aspx?id=828> (accessed 10.10.2019).

⁴ DIHR report 2012:4; Committee on Legal Affairs 2002:Appendix 1; Danish website about Roma developed by Biljana Muncan and Johannes Laursen: http://romnet.dk/spg.html#_antal (accessed 01.11.2019).

⁵ Rostas, 2017 and Djuve, Friberg, Tyldum and Zhang, 2015.

⁶ Several minor activities have been carried out over the years, including photo exhibitions (see e.g. <https://globalnyt.dk/content/fotoudstilling-be-beautiful-gypsy>). Amnesty International in Denmark had a Roma campaign in 2013 see: <https://amnesty.dk/nyhedsliste/arkiv-2014/europas-ledere-svigter-romaerne>. In 2018, the Danish National TV organized a Roma cultural event on the international Roma day (8 April 2018), see: <https://drkoncerthuset.dk/event/verdensemusikariet-roma-musikfestival/>

⁷ Ravnbøl, 2018, RCM Y1 monitoring report.

⁸ For more details on the ethnic profiling and antigypsyism among EU citizens of Roma origin, please check Ravnbøl, 2018, RCM Y1 monitoring report.

⁹ Ravnbøl, 2019, RCM Y2 monitoring report.

The present report (RCM Y3) approaches the topic of the lack of information concerning Danish Roma and underlines the need to gather qualitative data about their situation. Regarding the EU citizens of Roma origin, the RCM Y3 report touches on issues that have been raised as significant during the data collection realised for the purpose of this report, by respondents: discrimination, hate-speech and violence experienced in their everyday life, or the need to increase the access to the labour market. The section on Roma women and Roma minors who travel to Denmark has been included because there is a lack of information about these two groups and because of their absence in the public debates in Denmark.

The methodology of the Y3 report encompasses desk research, data collection from the field and consultations with Ms. Camilla Ida Ravnboel, the author of the RCM Y1 and Y2 reports. Consultations were also carried with the Social Services 24/7 (*Sociale Døgnvagt*)¹⁰ regarding the section on minors/young adults. The report has also been sent for consultations to the National Roma Contact Point within the Ministry of Immigration and Integration. During the desk research, data from existing surveys, civil society documents and mass media was consulted, as listed in the bibliography. Field work was conducted between August and September 2019 within the streets of Copenhagen for data collection. During this period, semi-structured interviews with EU citizens of Roma origin, women and men, were held. Additionally, participant observation with the EU citizens of Roma origin living in the streets of Copenhagen was also realised. The section on EU citizens of Roma origin includes quotes from Roma women and men who participated in interviews or informal conversations, for the purpose of this report. It is also important to mention that the field work was realised in Copenhagen and many of the EU citizens approached were self-declared Roma, mostly Romanian citizens.

Considering the issue of lack of data collection on ethnicity in Denmark, the RCM Y3 report presents several methodological and analytical limitations, emerging from the unavailability of information. One important limitation is that the interviews and data collected from participant observation are at the basis of the analysis, without any comparative data available to triangulate the information. For this reason, the report does not claim to be representative for the entire Roma population in Denmark (national or EU citizens). Despite this limitation, RCM Y3 report aims at being a starting point for opening up a discussion regarding the topics approached. The report aims to raise awareness on the importance of these topics, as they are missing from current policies in Denmark.

¹⁰ Mariann Villadsen and Marie Skovgaard, social workers within Copenhagen Municipality, Social Services 24/7 office.

LACK OF INFORMATION ON DANISH ROMA

Definition of the problem

In Denmark, there is no official statistical data regarding the number of Danish citizens of Roma background and no clear information at national level on the situation of Danish Roma and their specific needs for inclusion. The number of Danish citizens of Roma origin living in Denmark it is known only through estimations, and the numbers discussed have been between 2,000,¹¹ and 10,000.¹² These numbers have been possible to obtain at the initiatives of the few Danish Roma organisations or other independent NGOs who were working in the field of social inclusion. In general, there is no data collection on ethnic minorities, as Danish authorities and institutions do not gather this type of information.¹³ Roma are not recognised as a national minority, consequently, there are no policies targeting Roma specifically, in Denmark.

The issue of data collection has been addressed in the NRIS, by mentioning that data collection on ethnicity will continue not to be done, and explaining that this applies to all minorities in Denmark. Furthermore, the NRIS explains that collecting such information would be in opposition with The National Danish Civil Registration System, therefore the authorities have not considered addressing this issue any further.¹⁴

Background and cause of the problem

The general approach in Denmark is based on the idea that *"the Danish welfare system is founded on principles of universal and equal access to health, education, housing, employment, and social services for all persons legally residing in Denmark irrespective of their ethnic background"*.¹⁵ This principle is used to explain the lack of data collection on ethnicity and the lack of targeted programmes.

Additionally, to this explanation, the Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration in Denmark presents two other arguments for not collecting official data on the number of Roma. First, the Roma communities in Denmark are considered not to have historically continuous presence in the country, they are considerably small and concentrated in several cities in the country. Following the EU Framework for NRIS, the Danish approach is considered to be in *"proportion to the size and specific situation of their respective Roma populations."*¹⁶ Second, it is considered that the principle *"explicitly, but not exclusively"*¹⁷ has failed in creating inclusion mechanisms for the Danish Roma when previously implemented, therefore this is not pursued anymore by authorities. The example of Elsinore municipality is used, where special classes for Roma students in primary school were organised;¹⁸ the Job Centre from Elsinore is also an example, where they had assigned special employees

¹¹ The European Union and Roma – Factsheet Denmark, 2014.

¹² www.romnet.dk, Danish Broadcasting Corporation P1.

¹³ Danish legislation concerning personal data collection available at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/r0710.aspx?id=828>.

¹⁴ NRIS Denmark, 2011.

¹⁵ NRIS Denmark, 2011.

¹⁶ NRIS Denmark, 2011.

¹⁷ The principle "Explicit, but not exclusive" is one of the 10 principles developed by the Council of Ministers and recommended to the European Commission and the Member States to consider when implementing initiatives meant to improve Roma inclusion. For more information, please consult the "Vademecum. The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion", European Commission Publications Office.

¹⁸ Jensen 1995; and: <http://romnet.dk/romaklasser.html>

to work with the ethnic Roma.¹⁹ After external involvement where international bodies such as ECRI described this type of practices as being discriminatory, these initiatives were deemed unlawful and have been removed from practice.²⁰ As a result, Danish authorities do not take into consideration implementing this type of measures regarding the inclusion of Roma.

Policy answer to the problem

As explained above, there is no policy or initiative to address this issue, as this is a *no action* situation where the authorities do not consider intervening. Apart from particular cases where initiatives targeted at Roma specifically were implemented in the past at the municipality level, such as the one of Elsinore, no other data gathering regarding Roma was realised in Denmark. However, the need to investigate the situation of Danish citizens with Roma background and for identifying thematic areas of concern/action has been raised by different national and international bodies.

At national level, Roma activists have talked about the need of obtaining the national minority status and consequently receiving the opportunity to implement explicitly targeted programmes for the Roma.²¹ Internationally, the recommendations from the United Nations (UN)²² and the European Commission²³ have consistently been to collect data on the number of Roma living in Denmark and on their situation, with the purpose of "*evaluat[ing] the social and economic effects of the policy measures taken*".²⁴ Additionally, more information on the experiences of Danish Roma is needed, considering the consistent signs at national level that discrimination against Roma persists. The stereotypical representation of the national Roma in Danish mass-media continues to contribute to creating anti-Roma feelings²⁵ by connecting criminality to ethnicity,²⁶ while a survey from 2015 showed that 72 per cent of the Danes had a negative impression about Roma.²⁷ In this context, it is important to collect independently qualitative information about Roma that can be used to fight discrimination and implement initiatives that will lead to a real inclusion of the minority in Denmark. Furthermore, the data collection can be used to attract specific funding for programmes aimed at Roma inclusion.

¹⁹ ERTF Briefing paper on "The Situation of Roma and Travellers in Denmark".

²⁰ NRIS Denmark, 2011.

²¹ Ravnbøl, 2018.

²² [UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\)](#), List of themes in relation to the combined twentieth and twenty-first periodic reports of Denmark (CERD/C/DNK/20-21), 2015.

²³ The European Commission, 2014, ECRI Report 2017.

²⁴ The European Commission, 2014.

²⁵ See Facebook page named "Kick the Levakovic family out of Denmark" where the criminality of the family in cause is tied to their Roma ethnicity: <https://www.facebook.com/Kontroversiel-humor-Smid-Levakovic-familien-ud-af-Danmark-201065379928846/>

²⁶ An article in the Ekstrabladet newspaper called "*EU: Integration of Danish gypsies failed*" is illustrated by a photo of three Roma men standing in front of a luxurious car with the description "*Here are the members of Denmark's most criminal family. From left is the head of the family Gimi Levakovic – centre Stefano who was expelled last month for home robbery and to the right – Jimmi Levakovic*": <https://ekstrabladet.dk/nyheder/samfund/eu-integration-af-danske-sigoejnere-mislykket/4967686>

²⁷ YouGov Survey Results, 2015.

EU-MOBILE ROMA IN DENMARK

The situation of the EU citizens of Roma background has been approached in the previous two monitoring reports on Denmark, as it has been a reason of concern in regard to the breach of the free movement right that Roma exercise within Europe. As shown in the [Y1](#) and [Y2](#) reports, the areas of concern are multiple, starting with discrimination in the public space and continuing with the access to the labour market, housing, health and public educational services. More recently, the 5th Advisory Committee Opinion on Denmark has also pointed out to a worrying over representation of foreign citizens among those who are arrested under amendments made to the public order code in Denmark, “with a high proportion of them being reported as having a Roma ethnic background”.²⁸

Similar to the previous two monitoring cycles, this section of the third report investigates in depth the situation of the destitute EU citizens of Roma origin, many of whom come from poor parts of Romania, and live in homelessness in Denmark. Romanians, as shown in RCM reports Y1 and Y2, and also by organisations working in the field, represent a big part of the homeless EU citizens living in destitution in the streets of Denmark.²⁹

This section focuses on three particular topics regarding EU citizens of Roma origin that have not been addressed so far within the NRIS:

- Antigypsyism: discrimination, hate-speech and violence against EU citizens of Roma origin.
- Access to the labour market.
- The situation of EU citizens of Roma origin: women and minors/young adults.

The situation of the EU citizens of Roma background is not addressed in the Danish NRIS in general, therefore neither are any of these topics selected for analysis in following pages of this report. Consequently, they fall into all three categories of interest of the RCM’s third monitoring cycle: *no mention, no action, no result* – the problems are not acknowledged nor discussed, there are no policies aimed at improving the situation of those affected by these matters, and consequently, there is no change in their situation.

The number of those who are affected by these issues is not known with accuracy, as there is no official counting of the EU citizens of Roma origin who live in destitution in the streets of Denmark. However, a report by a team of Roma researchers from Central European University (CEU)³⁰ accounted meeting 140 Roma in the streets of Copenhagen in 2017, while a research from 2015 mentions around 200 self-declared Roma.³¹

EU citizens of Roma origin who travel to Denmark are very often among those who end up sleeping in the streets, not having enough resources to access housing. They lack access to the labour market and more often than not, their main source of income is informal work, such as recycling empty beverage containers or collecting old scrap and selling magazines for the homeless.³² Mobility in the case of EU citizens of Roma origin living in Denmark can be of different types: there are individuals or couples who travel for

²⁸ COE report on Denmark 2020, pg. 12.

²⁹ According to the NGO Kompasset Kirkens Korshaer, for the year 2018, from 781 visitors, 63% were Romanians, 3% Polish and 2% Spanish migrants, in Barbu and Ciuraru, 2019.

³⁰ Rostas, 2017. This was a project realised in partnership with Copenhagen Municipality and it involved a two-day field visit during spring 2017 when discussions and interviews were carried with Roma women and men in Copenhagen.

³¹ Djuve, Friberg, Tyldum and Zhang, 2015.

³² For a detailed description on the life of Roma Romanian migrants in the Danish streets, please consult Ravnbøl 2015 and Ravnbøl 2018.

the more lucrative seasons of the year when they can earn money abroad (e.g.: in the summer, there are more beverage recipients to collect during the music festivals) after which they return home to their family for the rest of the year; the people who come to seek for jobs can spend a longer period of time in Denmark, while they reach out to employers and submit job applications; there are also individuals who travel back and forth between their home country, Denmark, as well as other Scandinavian countries, engaging in what has been defined as circular migration.³³

People are exercising their right to free movement according to the EU Directive 2004/38/EC, co-adopted by Denmark as a member state. Their residency status is however limited by their financial possibilities, as they cannot be self-supportive. Many come from previous conditions of poverty and are low-skilled with a lack of official prior employment record. The strict conditions of the Danish labour market together with the expensive housing market further increase the barriers that many destitute EU citizens experience when trying to establish themselves in Denmark. Consequently, many destitute citizens coming from EU member states to Denmark, Roma included, resort to rough sleeping in parks or other public places. The conditions required by the state for obtaining the national registration number (CPR number)³⁴ and consequently, access to social assistance and housing, are difficult to meet by the destitute citizens from other EU countries. In the same manner, their access to the labour market is limited.

As mentioned in the introduction and in the previous RCM reports, the data presented here are not representative for all the EU citizens of Roma origin who might live and work in Denmark. This report intends to shed light on the lives of those living in destitution and who cannot fulfil the conditions to register within the civil registration system, therefore cannot access social rights.

Antigypsyism: discrimination, hate-speech and violence against EU citizens of Roma origin

Definition of the problem

The data collected from participant observation and through informal conversations have shown that harassment from police and security employees is an issue that has increasingly affected EU citizens of Roma origin who work and live in Denmark, in the past years. People have talked about being treated violently because of their ethnicity, and experiencing harassment in the streets, even in relation with the Danish homeless, as it is sometimes also reported by media.³⁵

Messages illustrating anti-Roma feelings have appeared on the walls of buildings, such as the one in Copenhagen where it said "*Roma go home*"³⁶ or warnings were made by Danish Police on social media where Roma were specifically mentioned as being dangerous.³⁷ Furthermore, people have declared that they were harassed and abused at the big festivals where they usually work with collecting recyclable beverage containers. Cases where they were not allowed to enter the festival sites for collection of bottles have been registered,

³³ Ravnbøl 2018; Kastanje and Hoff, 2017.

³⁴ For more information on the conditions and the process of obtaining the CPR registration see [RCM Y1 report](#) by Ravnbøl, 2018 and the Danish State Administration: <https://www.statsforvaltningen.dk/site.aspx?p=6116>.

³⁵ <https://ekstrabladet.dk/112/romaer-og-hjemloese-i-voldsomt-masseslagsmaal/6687251>

³⁶ The message was written in the year 2016, on the wall of a hotel in the area where EU citizens of Roma origin hanged out most of the time while they were in Copenhagen. It has since been removed, but a photo and notes have been taken by the author of this report.

³⁷ Copenhagen Police, Twitter account, November 2016, newspaper article available at <http://nyheder.tv2.dk/krimi/2016-11-15-koebenhavns-politi-fortryder-nyt-sigoejner-tweet-det-er-meget-beklageligt>

such as it happened at one of the biggest rock festivals in Copenhagen, called *Copenhell*. One of the NGOs working on human rights has raised the issue of ethnic discrimination in this instance.³⁸ Moreover, this type of action that specifically excluded certain groups has contributed to people being pushed or hit by the security guards and sent away from the festival: "We were told 'Roma are not allowed here' so we had to leave."³⁹ The aggression cases reported to the police are very few. Most of the time the hate-speech and violence experienced by people it is not registered because people do not make official complaints. According to the Roma consulted for this report, the situation has worsened in the past few years and they can feel a change of attitudes within the Danish society. A recent report from an NGO working in the field has formulated the same opinion regarding the rise of the anti-Roma feelings in the past years in Copenhagen.⁴⁰ This is explained by an increase in the number of the EU citizens living in destitution in Denmark and by changes in the Danish legislation that have contributed to criminalizing homelessness.⁴¹

Background and cause of the problem

A background of discrimination against Roma in Denmark has been underlined by previous studies.⁴² A more recent analysis of the Danish newspapers⁴³ concluded that discrimination, dis-empowerment and "*profound stigmatization*" of the Danish Roma were constantly taking place in the mass media.⁴⁴ This is the background that EU citizens of Roma origin found in Denmark, to which it was added a wave of hate-speech from politicians, as shown in the previous RCM monitoring reports. This increases during the summer season, when there are more people arriving to Denmark for the big festivals where they can collect bottles to earn money.

Policy answer to the problem

This issue has not been addressed by any official policy, therefore there is still a need to recognise the problem. So far, it has been signalled as an increasing problem by few small NGOs that work against the criminalisation of homelessness, but no specific action where Roma were mentioned has taken place.

Access to the labour market for EU citizens of Roma origin

Definition of the problem

According to the EU Directive 2004/38/EC, equal access is offered to rights and services for EU citizens while they reside in Denmark. This is however conditioned to fulfilling certain criteria related to employment, housing, educational and financial status. EU citizens are required to provide authorities with a work contract and an address in Denmark, in order for them to obtain the Danish personal identification number, which is part of the civil registration system (CPR number).⁴⁵ EU citizens of Roma origin who arrive to Denmark are included, as they have the legal right to travel and seek for jobs in the

³⁸ https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=COPENHELL%20romaer&epa=SEARCH_BOX

³⁹ Roma man consulted for the purpose of this report.

⁴⁰ Barbu and Cioraru, 2019.

⁴¹ For a detailed description of the amendments brought to the Danish Code of Public Order starting with 2017, please check RCM report from year 1, Ravnbøl 2018.

⁴² Fenger-Grøndahl, C.; Fenger-Grøndahl, M., 2006.

⁴³ Lassen Olesen and Eklund Karlsson, 2018. A total of 43 articles published between the period from 1st of January 2009 until 31st of December 2012 were included in the analysis.

⁴⁴ Lassen Olesen and Eklund Karlsson, 2018

⁴⁵ A detailed discussion on the criteria to fulfil for obtaining a Danish social security number is provided in the RCM reports for [year 1](#) and [year 2](#), based on which the analysis in this section is elaborated (Ravnbøl 2018; 2019).

EU. However, in the case of those who arrive from conditions of poverty and who are low-skilled with a lack of official prior employment record, these conditions are difficult to meet. The barriers that many of the destitute EU citizens face have to do with the expensive housing market, the regulated labour market, and the strict requirements needed to obtain CPR registration in Denmark. Consequently, EU citizens' access to the labour market is significantly diminished as they lack the resources and skills to support themselves and they resort to sleeping rough and accepting any small informal jobs to earn money.

Though the pursue of a job has been one of the main reasons why, for example, Roma in Romania declare they travel abroad,⁴⁶ their expectation is not met in any way in Denmark because of difficulties related to access to the labour market. This leads to the situation where Roma EU citizens engage in work such as collecting scrap and beverage recipients, or they engage with informal daily jobs. These jobs offer them no form of social protection. Very often, they end up in exploitation since the employer refuses to pay their salary and there is no form of coercion for them to do so, since there is no work contract. One of the Roma men who have been interviewed in connection to this report talks about his experience: *"It's stressful if you work here two months, there two months and you don't get paid. You plan to do something good and..."*. EU citizens of Roma origin that have been consulted regarding this report are exposed to exploitation in the Danish labour market more than the other EU citizens, as they have less resources for seeking jobs (e.g., they have a lower level of education or their formal work experience is limited).

Background and cause of the problem

EU citizens of Roma origin who seek for jobs in Denmark have to learn how to navigate within a difficult legislative setting which is most of the times in a language that they do not understand. There is little support/training for them to learn how to seek for jobs in the Danish system. The poverty conditions they live in are also a cause that contributes to the lack of access to jobs, since people cannot prepare properly and be physically fit for a job search. One of the Roma men interviewed has explained his situation: *"I would like to get a job back home, to go to work and then come back to my own bed. I wouldn't have to be so stressed and run around all the time, like I do here, hiding from the police. You can't even sleep a lot because they give you stress, you are always thinking <They will come now, let's get up!>"*. As it was explained also in [the first RCM monitoring report](#), the EU citizens of Roma origin who live in destitution in Copenhagen recur most of the time to sleeping outside in parks or in the streets, which makes it very difficult for people to be in a shape where they can pursue a job. Additionally, they become targets for the police in the context of the implementation of the amendments made to the code on public order.⁴⁷

Policy answer to the problem

The issue of access to the labour market for EU citizens of Roma origin has not been addressed so far in any public policy and authorities do not engage with the idea of creating specific initiatives to increase chances to training or to employment for people. At a small scale, one NGO who works with street minorities in Copenhagen has managed to create an initiative that benefits many of the EU citizens living in destitution.⁴⁸ The project called "Strada" is offering an opportunity to poor EU citizens to work with selling magazines published especially for the homeless people. Many of the EU citizens of Roma origin are part of this project and they sell the "Strada" magazine all over Denmark, activity which provides them with a small income. If such initiatives would be adopted by the state and

⁴⁶ Duminica and Ivasiuc, 2013.

⁴⁷ For a more detailed description on the criminalization of homelessness and the concerns about ethnic profiling in the implementation of legislation against rough sleeping please consult the Roma Civil Monitor Y 1 report and COE 2020.

⁴⁸ Minoritet.dk and <https://www.facebook.com/gademagasinetstrada/>

implemented at a larger scale, the inclusion of the EU citizens of Roma origin in the Danish labour market would have more chances to become reality.

The situation of EU citizens of Roma origin: women and minors/young adults

Definition of the problem

The need for tailored measures and programmes for women and minors/young adults of Roma origin who exercise their right to free movement within the EU is an issue that is missing completely from public policies. EU citizens who are Roma women, and especially who are Roma young adults, are often invisible in the street environment in Denmark. But this does not mean that they do not exist, on the contrary: organisations working in the field have seen an increase in the number of women they have met in the streets.⁴⁹

Regarding minors/young adults, specifically, Denmark has a very restrictive legislation concerning their presence in the street and living in destitution. However, young EU citizens of Roma origin were noticed in the streets alone or under the responsibility of a relative/friend. In 2017, representatives of the police and the social services estimated that a number of 35 EU citizens who were minors/young people were living in homelessness in Copenhagen, many belonging to the Roma minority.⁵⁰ Considering the limitations of this report, it has not been possible to approach minors for in-depth discussions. However, there are clear signs of their presence in the streets and further investigations should be considered on their life conditions as underage EU citizens living in destitution/homelessness in Denmark.

The situation of EU citizens who are women is also worthy of concern, as they are exposed to a harsh life in the street and they are more vulnerable to attacks. One Roma woman who travelled to Denmark confessed: “[We need] a shelter to sleep. When you come here as a woman alone, it’s difficult. It was very good when we had the shelter for women.”⁵¹

Background and cause of the problem

Women and young adults of Roma origin are often among those who travel abroad, and Denmark is among one of their destination countries.⁵² The restrictive Danish laws regarding citizens who are underage determine the young adults to remain under the radar. As the legislation provides, minors in this situation would be removed by authorities and placed into a state facility.⁵³ Furthermore, there are no services addressed to EU citizens who are minors, since authorities do not have programmes or policies in place to support them, other than the placement in a minors’ house. The young Roma who travel to Denmark cannot use the day shelters for homeless either, as they do not accept minors inside their establishments.⁵⁴ Similarly, to this, no targeted services have been developed for EU citizens Roma women for the period when they live in Denmark. On the contrary,

⁴⁹ Barbu and Cioraru, 2019.

⁵⁰ Nørby and Paulsen, 2017.

⁵¹ Interview with a Roma woman for the purpose of this report.

⁵² The police and the social services estimated a number of 35 EU citizens who were children/young people living in homelessness in Copenhagen in 2017, while a research from 2015 showed that 13 per cent of a sample population of 385 destitute EU citizens interviewed in Copenhagen were women (Djuve, Friberg, Tyldum and Zhang, 2015).

⁵³ The Minister for Social Affairs and the Interior, Law No. 798 of 07/08/2019 – Social Service Law (*ServiceLOVEN*) paragraph 66, in corroboration with the Aliens Act (*Udlændingeloven*) of the Ministry of Immigration and Integration, No. 1022 of 02/10/2019, paragraphs 42 and 62.

⁵⁴ Nørby and Paulsen, 2017.

the only night shelter where they had access (managed by a non-profit organisation) has been shut down. The options for these groups are limited and not adapted to their needs.

Policy answer to the problem

Concerns over the presence and the situation of minors living in homelessness in Copenhagen have been formulated by the Social Service 24/7 (*Sociale Døgnvagt*) of the municipality responsible of working with children.⁵⁵ The service has met minors in several occasions and have tried to engage with them, but very soon after they concluded that the possibilities for helping them were limited. Currently, there is no clear legal procedure on how to support the EU underage citizens: most of them do not want to be placed in a state institution and beyond this help, there is not much to offer. The social service workers could only provide basic things to the minors (shower, food or clothes) as the encounters with them are usually brief. There is also a problem of communication and trust: since the youngsters and the social service workers do not speak the same language, the communication takes place through interpretation on the phone. No other authorities expressed interest in the situation of the young EU citizens while the system and the politicians have dismissed the issue by explaining: "*this is how these people live*".⁵⁶ *Sociale Døgnvagt*, however, underlines the lack of knowledge about the living conditions of the young EU citizens in Denmark, many belonging to the Roma community, and the need for intervention through targeted policies and initiatives.

The situation of EU citizens of Roma origin who are women has not been investigated in depth either. Their access to social services is limited, as it happens for example with the night shelters: they cannot fulfil the conditions to be accepted for sleeping in the shelters dedicated to women in Copenhagen, as these shelters receive exclusively women who have either the national registration number or/and specific social problems (additionally to being poor and homeless).

⁵⁵ Københavns Kommunes Sociale Døgnvagt, <https://dognvagten.kk.dk/>

⁵⁶ Nørby and Paulsen, 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Lack of information on the Danish Roma

To the Ministry for Social Affairs and the Interior

1. Contract an independent institution or entity and, with the active involvement of Roma researchers, carry out a comprehensive qualitative study on the experiences of the national Danish Roma population within the fields of employment, housing, health and education.

To the European Commission

2. To advocate with Danish authorities for strengthening the NRIS by designing targeted programs for the Danish citizens of Roma origin and allocating specific funding.

EU-mobile Roma in Denmark

Antigypsyism: discrimination, hate-speech and violence against EU citizens of Roma origin

To Danish human rights organisations, civil society bodies

3. To conduct a study on the situation of EU citizens of Roma origin, together with people who have been affected by discrimination, hate-speech and violence.
4. Using the study conducted, to raise awareness and create dialogue with responsible authorities regarding discrimination, hate-speech and violence targeted at the EU citizens of Roma origin.

To the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior/Danish Police

5. To organise training activities for police staff on the topics of Roma culture and history, discrimination, antigypsyism, etc.

To the Danish Union of Journalists

6. To organise training activities for journalists on the topics of Roma culture and history, discrimination, antigypsyism, hate speech and their consequences on the members of the Roma minority.
7. To encourage reporting of positive stories on Roma (both Danish citizens and EU citizens) that will reflect their life conditions more adequately.

Access to the Labour Market

To the Ministry of Employment/Board of Labour Market and Recruitment

8. To study the good practices from neighbouring countries implemented for improving access to labour for EU citizens of Roma origin and use the results for promoting this type of initiatives, including at the level of the authorities.
9. To consider creating initiatives for supporting EU citizens coming from disadvantaged positions (with a focus on Roma minority) in integrating in the labour market, such as: recruitment and placement into jobs, offering language and qualification training simultaneously with work opportunities.

Situation of EU citizens women and minors/young adults of Roma origin

To Copenhagen Municipality (Social Services, Children and Youth Administration)

10. To commission a study by an independent entity or researcher group on the life experiences of Roma children who travel to Denmark (Copenhagen) and their living conditions.
11. To implement concrete targeted policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the young adults of Roma origin who travel to Copenhagen, such as: training social staff in creating relations with minors who travel abroad (e.g.: cultural and language issues, hiring human resources belonging to the same community, etc.).

To Copenhagen Municipality (Social Services)

12. To commission a study by an independent entity or researcher group on the life experiences of Roma women who travel to Denmark (Copenhagen) and their living conditions.
13. Adopt policies and initiatives for supporting Roma women who travel to Denmark, according to their needs (one example could be to provide with accommodation in shelters targeted at women or families).

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