



European Commission



# The European Union and Roma – Factsheet Bulgaria

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/roma-integration/bulgaria/>

4 April 2014

## 1. Key Information

Roma population	
Estimate in National Roma Integration Strategy	325 343 (January 2011 census), i.e. 4.9% of the population
Council of Europe Estimate	Approximately 750 000 (data from 2012) i.e. 9.94 % of the population

National Strategy	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/bulgaria/national-strategy/national_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/bulgaria/national-strategy/national_en.htm</a>
Funding	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/bulgaria/national-strategy/national_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/bulgaria/national-strategy/national_en.htm</a>

## 2. National Roma Integration – 2014 review

	Key steps taken since 2011	Identified Gaps
Education	<p>Two-year obligatory pre-schooling introduced with language training if needed.</p> <p>Gradual introduction of all-day school.</p> <p>In three years (2010–2013), a Bulgarian educational project has brought down the number of children who drop out of school by almost 80%.</p>	<p>Stronger efforts and engagement at local level are needed.</p> <p>Desegregation should be tackled.</p> <p>More efforts needed to ensure access to good quality early childhood education, by creating the necessary capacities and ensuring staff are qualified.</p> <p>Promising measures aimed at reducing early school leaving should be continued on a larger scale.</p>



<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>80-95 Roma mediators appointed in local employment offices.</p> <p>Community Development Centres (CDC) promoting the employment of young people and women in marginalised Roma communities were set up in 11 municipalities.</p> <p>Job fairs targeted at the most disadvantaged including Roma.</p>	<p>Roma employment in rural areas needs to be better addressed.</p> <p>Targeted active labour market policies for Roma should be planned. More action needed to fight discrimination in the labour market.</p>
<p><b>Health</b></p>	<p>Mobile medical units and mediators in areas where the majority lacks health insurance.</p> <p>X-ray, immunisation of children, medical and gynaecological exams, screenings and prevention of HIV and TB.</p> <p>Health education and awareness-raising campaigns.</p> <p>Increase in the number of Roma health mediators.</p>	<p>The main challenge remains of ensuring health insurance coverage for all.</p>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<p>Launch of an EU co-financed housing initiative to provide quality homes within an integrated approach (addressing also employment, education and health challenges simultaneously) for Roma people in 4 municipalities (Burgas, Dupinitza, Vidin, Devnya). The municipalities of Varna, Peshtera and Tundzha are also considering taking up this initiative.</p>	<p>Further efforts are needed to develop municipal action plans to improve housing conditions of Roma.</p>
<p><b>Anti-discrimination</b></p>	<p>Training for police forces on human rights and minority issues. Local actions include: legal support and information on rights; Encouraging Roma women to participate in public life and the protection of the rights of Roma children through improvement of parental capacity and care.</p>	<p>More work is needed to address discrimination, especially to combat anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech.</p> <p>Further efforts required to enforce the Act on the Protection Against Discrimination on the ground.</p>

<p><b>Funding</b></p>	<p>Roma inclusion supported through national and EU funds.</p> <p>Bulgaria has set up an inter-ministerial working group dedicated to mobilising EU funds for Roma integration. The group is chaired by the Ministry of EU Funds Management and comprises deputy ministers, experts from the managing authorities and operational programmes and representatives of Roma NGOs.</p> <p>The European Regional Development Fund for the pilot initiative on housing has foreseen € 8 million (so far € 5.3 million awarded to 3 municipalities).</p> <p>In the 2007-2013 financial period, Bulgaria has allocated 3.2 % (~€ 37 million) of its total European Social Fund (ESF) budget for integrating disadvantaged people.</p>	<p>Cooperation and coordination between the National Roma Contact Point and the authorities responsible for the management of EU Funds is necessary.</p> <p>As of now, Bulgaria should allocate at least 20% of its total ESF budget to fight social exclusion and poverty.</p>
<p><b>Priorities for the future (Commission recommendation)</b></p>	<p>Further reforms are needed in education, employment, health and housing policy to support Roma inclusion. Political leadership of the inter-ministerial working group on the use of EU funds for Roma integration should be reinforced. The overall mandate and resources allocated to the national Roma contact point should be reinforced. Anti-discrimination campaigns and communication activities on Roma integration should be developed, targeting the entire population.</p>	

### 3. Contacts

<p><b>Contact Points</b></p>	
<p><b>National Roma Contact Point</b></p>	<p>Administration of the Council of Ministers                  Secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues</p> <p><a href="http://www.nccedi.government.bg/index.php">http://www.nccedi.government.bg/index.php</a></p>

<p><b>Managing Authorities for ESF (European Social Fund) funded projects</b></p>	<p>EU Funds, International Programmes and Projects Directorate General                  Ministry of Labour and Social Policy                  Tel.: +359 2 8119 600                  E-mail: <a href="mailto:ophrd@mlsp.government.bg">ophrd@mlsp.government.bg</a>  <a href="http://ef.mlsp.government.bg">http://ef.mlsp.government.bg</a></p> <p>Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Directorate                  Ministry of Finance                  Tel.: +359 2 9859 55 00                  E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@opac.government.bg">info@opac.government.bg</a>  <a href="http://www.opac.government.bg">http://www.opac.government.bg</a>  <a href="http://www.minfin.bg">http://www.minfin.bg</a></p>
<p><b>Managing Authorities for ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) funded projects</b></p>	<p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&amp;pay=bg">http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&amp;pay=bg</a></p>
<p><b>Fundamental Rights Agency Country Report:</b></p>	<p><a href="http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/situation-roma-11-eu-member-states-survey-results-glance">http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/situation-roma-11-eu-member-states-survey-results-glance</a></p>

## 4. Promising practices

### *Investing in Roma education*

Since 2004 the municipality of Kavarna invested in infrastructure development, improved access for Roma children to quality early-childhood education and care, health education and cooperated with other cities and private employers to promote Roma employment. This has led to certain improvements such as an improved school attainment, decreased mortality rate and increased employment of Roma in both private and public sector. The European Structural and Investment Funds helped by providing EUR 3.1 million for investments in physical infrastructure and human capital.

The transnational project 'Colorful but Colorblind Transitions' works towards social integration of Roma and remedying anti-Roma stereotyping through the media in the target countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia) and internationally. The project focuses on media training, collaboration between Roma and non-Roma journalists and educational outreach to young people.

<http://roma.glocalstories.org/>