Roma children in Greece and multidimensional poverty –
The National Strategy and Action Plan
for Roma Social Inclusion 2021 – 2030

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The role of General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight against Poverty
Executive body for planning and operational implementation of NRIS 2021 - 2030

- Coordinate and monitor Roma social inclusion policies at national level (PD 84/2019, PD 134/2017)
- Greek NRCP - National Contact Point for Roma issues
- Participate in the European Roma Platform
- Participate in FRA Roma working party for the development of indicators for monitoring the New European Framework for Social Inclusion, Equality and Roma Participation 2020-2030
- Participate in the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travelers Issues (ADI-ROM).
- Member of the EUROMA network, the European Network for the Social Inclusion of Roma through the European Structural Funds
- Liaise with the municipal authorities to promote interventions on housing, relocation and improvement of living conditions (infrastructure) at local level.
- Carry out systematic visits in Roma settlements and camps
- Enhance cooperation with Roma organizations and representatives.
Roma in Greece

- They are historically an integral part of the Greek population as **Greek citizens**.
- They enjoy all the individual, social and political rights guaranteed to Greek citizens by the Greek Constitution.
- They are recognised as a **vulnerable social group** with particular cultural characteristics, or as a **marginalized social group** with specific socio-economic characteristics.
- The spatial criterion (e.g. type/location of residence) and/or the criterion of self-determination is applied to identify/reach Roma in various acts of co-financed programs for vulnerable social groups.
# Living conditions of Roma in Greece

## Areas of residency Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I: “Degraded settlements”</td>
<td>Huts, shelters and lacking basic infrastructure facilities. Settlements consisting of self-made shacks and shelters in isolated and/or environmentally hazardous areas, often next to industrial toxic waste and wasting dumps without access to basic infrastructure facilities, including water, electricity, sewage, as well as access to garbage disposal and public transport services.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II: “Mixed areas”</td>
<td>Blended houses with short –term facilities (huts and shacks, tents, pre fabricated containers) often used on a permanent basis and partial infrastructure (water supply, electricity, roads), usually in the vicinity of a built –up area.</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>59,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III: “Neighborhood”</td>
<td>“Neighborhoods” often in impoverished/ disadvantaged areas of the urban fabric (mainly houses, building- apartment flats or detached houses and some containers).</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>36,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>354</td>
<td>104,210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roma children: at risk of being trapped in the vicious cycle of multiple deprivation and systemic exclusion

**Roma families**
- Low income households, below the poverty line (poverty rate 96% compared to 22% of the general population).
- Poor living conditions - Lack of basic infrastructure (electricity, drinking water, in-house toilet with shower or bath)
- Settlements or camps in rural/remote areas outside the urban fabric - in hazardous environments
- Low access to basic social services (housing, education, health care, social services etc)
- Poor health, chronic health issues, and lower life expectancy (-10 years lower compared to the general population).
- High adult illiteracy rate (especially at older ages)
- Low Greek language literacy
- Occasional employment/occupational activities outside the typical labour market
- Child marriages – heightened risk of gender based violence GBV and Roma women’s marginalisation
- Problems of statelessness/citizenship and lack of personal documents (i.e. birth and marriage certificates, ID cards, VAT and Social Security Number)

**Roma children**
- Low participation in education.
- Insufficient/interrupted school attendance.
- High student dropout rates and non-completion of compulsory education.
- Difficulties in access to distance leaning.
- Low high school attendance (upper secondary education).
- Low access to tertiary education.
- High percentage of young Roma not in education, training and employment (NEETs).
- Low social interaction and participation at local communities.
- Low access to lifelong learning and career opportunities.
The vision of the National Strategy for Roma Social Inclusion 2021 - 2030

✓ A holistic (intersectoral) approach to Roma socio-economic poverty and improvement of Roma living conditions.
✓ Promote Roma active participation in social, economic and political life.
✓ Addressing social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination.
✓ Effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
✓ Systematic evaluation and assessment of policy interventions and results.

- Embraces priorities and goals of the new EU Strategic Framework & recommendations for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation.


- Applies the principle of specialized, but not exclusive, targeting of a particular vulnerable social group.

- Includes targeted and mainstream actions in all fields of intervention.

- Follows both a sectoral and regional approach.
New Strategy’s strong points

- Promotes **systematic mapping of Roma in Greece** in line with the national census procedures in cooperation with the national statistical authority - ELSTAT.

- Supports **evidence based policy** based on the identification of Roma needs at local level so as to coordinate the development of specific, tailor made, local and data-driven interventions for Roma social inclusion.

- Establishes **strategic partnerships and synergies** with key actors in specific Roma issues (e.g. Unicef Greece).

- Emphasizes on the **empowerment, participation and upskilling of Roma children and youth**.

- Highlights the **gender dimension**, putting particular focus on strengthening Roma girls’ and women’ civic competence and engagement.

- **Ensures systematic consultation** with stakeholders, Roma representatives and civil society organizations, **including Roma youth representatives and organizations** at all levels of planning, implementation and monitoring.

- Invests on the development of a **system of indicators to enable NRIS systematic monitoring, evaluation and continuous adaptation to Roma needs**.
Beneficiaries and Strategic goals of NRIS 2021 - 2030:

- Every Roma must have **access to basic goods and services**.
- Every Roma should have **access to public programs of income support**.
- Every Roma child should have access to pre-school and compulsory education.
- Every young Roma should be supported in order to obtain **vocational education and training as well as higher education**.
- Every Roma should be supported in accessing **employment** and engaging in economic activities.
- Every Roma should have equal access to quality **health and social care services**.
- Every Roma should have equal access to adequate and sustainable **housing** through public social housing policies.
- Every Roma should have **access to basic housing services** (water, electricity, sewage disposal).
- Every Roma should be supported regarding the procedures for claiming **their rights** in cases of discrimination against him / her.
- Every Roma should have access to **consultation and participation processes** in matters of interest to him / her.
4 Pillars of NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030

PILLAR I:
"Prevention and fight against Roma poverty and social exclusion"

PILLAR II:
"Enhancing equal access of Roma to basic social services “
   Education - Social care -
   Housing – Employment – Health

PILLAR III:
"Preventing and combating stereotypes and discrimination against Roma"

PILLAR IV:
"Promoting the active participation of Roma in social, economic and political life"
NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030
Operating levels and mechanisms

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT & COORDINATION
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

CENTRAL LEVEL
TEMPORARY RELOCATION COMMITTEE
NRIS CROSS-SECTORAL COMMITTEE
NRIS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NRIS OBSERVATORY
ROMA FORUM

REGIONAL LEVEL
REGIONAL ACTION GROUPS
REGIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT

LOCAL LEVEL
A’ GRADE OTA NETWORK
ROMA BRANCHES/COMMUNITY CENTERS
NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030
Indicative actions by pillar benefiting Roma Children

PILLAR I: "Prevention and fight against Roma poverty and social exclusion"

- Implementation of a Minimum Guaranteed Income (MGI) (including Roma beneficiaries) - financial support (first pillar), additional social services (for families and children) in community centers (second pillar) and labour market integration services by PES-OAED (third pillar).

- "Housing First" program: actions for the development of social housing for vulnerable groups, in order to promote their social inclusion

- "School Meals" Program- Provision of school meals to Primary Education students

- Harmonization of family and professional life program - Support the inclusion of children in preschool education (particularly vulnerable children) - in line with the Child Guarantee
NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030

Indicative actions by pillar benefiting Roma Children

PILLAR II: "Enhancing equal access of Roma to basic social services“ - Education

- Support educational Interventions in Roma communities to enhance children’s access to education and reduce early drop-outs – National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the University of Patras, the University of Thessaly and the Democritus University of Thrace

- Scholarships / awards for Roma students in secondary education – Ministry of Education / National Scholarships Foundation

- Reception classes and recruitment of psychologists and social workers in schools to support the integration of students from vulnerable social groups (including Roma) - Ministry of Education

- Teachers’ trainings for inclusive education based on bottleneck analysis (in the framework of Child Guarantee - UNICEF & University of Thessaly & National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

- Support the transportation of students attending public schools /Special Education Units at regional level

- Creation / Upgrading of educational material to support the acquisition of skills for vulnerable students, e.g. Roma, refugees, immigrants – Institute of Educational Policy / Ministry of Education

- Pilot Implementation of Romani language teaching programme in primary school based on a proposal of the Council of Europe (implicating Roma primary school students, teachers and the Roma parents, guardians, facilitators, and the wider community, etc.) – Institute of Educational Policy / Ministry of Education

- Support social integration in the digital transformation of education through the Voucher Program "Digital Care“ - 200 euros voucher for students and youngsters aged 4 to 24 years for the purchase of technological equipment (tablet, laptop, desktop).

- Cultural mediation program support in schools in combination with employability programs for Roma youth - in the framework of Child Guarantee –UNICEF & OAED
nRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030
Indicative actions by pillar benefiting Roma Children

PILLAR II: "Enhancing equal access of Roma to basic social services “ - Social Inclusion & Care

- Roma Branches of Community Centers - Support and strengthen Roma mediation in Municipalities hosting concentrated Roma populations
- Development of regional interventions to strengthen the participation of pre-school and school children / Roma adolescents in experiential workshops (e.g. mother-child workshop), children's camps and kindergartens

Roma Branches in numbers

- 62 Roma Branches operating today
- Staff includes Roma Mediators (20,29%), Educators (18,84%), Social Workers (14%)
- More than 60,000 Roma served in 2017 - 2020
- 45% of Roma served at least once
- 18,95% of those served were Roma children and youth under 18 years old
- 34.83% actions on health issues and vaccinations of children
- 21,35% educational activities
- 15.73% animation activities for children (storytelling, museum visits, celebrations)
NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030
Indicative actions by pillar benefiting Roma Children

PILLAR III:
"Preventing and combating stereotypes and discrimination against Roma"

- Promoting positive Roma role models with the participation of Roma organizations and young Roma

  e.g. A video developed in cooperation with Unicef Greece featuring a conversation with the 27 year old Marianna from Roma Women's Association of Dendropotamos
NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030
Indicative actions by pillar benefiting Roma Children

PILLAR IV:
"Promoting the active participation of Roma in social, economic and political life"

- Local actions to promote Roma empowerment - mainly Roma youth and women
- Roma to Roma (peer to peer) support models for Roma women and families at-risk grounded on a combination of evidence-based information and empirical family-situated knowledge on different topics in the domains of nutrition/health and parenting within communities (including topics such as child rearing/protection, gender and GBV, reproductive health and the risks of early pregnancies/marriages, mental health and substance abuse) - UNICEF Actions on Youth and Women Empowerment & Solidarity Now
- Enhance representation and active participation of Roma youth (e.g. in the Child Guarantee Steering Committee and in the Generation Unlimited Programme organized by UNICEF)
- Southeastern Europe (SEE) Roma Platform – promote joint cooperation and exchange of good practices among 10 SEE countries including Roma youth representatives and organizations on critical aspects of Roma children inclusion e.g. child poverty, early school leaving, early marriages etc. - UNICEF Office in Greece with the support of the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.
NRIS Action Plan 2021 – 2030
Indicative actions benefiting Roma Children

EEA Grants Programme 2014-2021 "Inclusion and Empowerment of Roma" – A model Roma relocation and housing program in the Municipality of Katerini / total budget 5.000.000 https://eeagrants-roma.gr

- Establishment of a Task Force (consists of 25 experts, including 5 Roma Mediators) in four Regions with large concentrations of Roma (Attica, Central Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia-Thrace and Western Greece) to support their social inclusion and empowerment.
- An integrated social housing pilot project aiming at the temporary relocation of Roma Pelekas Settlement in the Municipality of Katerini", for 56 Roma families (approx. 330 persons).
- Installation of basic housing equipment - household appliances
- Complementary activities supporting the physical relocation of the 56 families to the newly constructed housing units
- Regular consultation sessions with Roma families
- Accompanied social services: the establishment of a Study Center for primary school pupils, the organization of cultural, athletic and other social activities, according to the needs of the Roma community.
- Three small grant programs related to actions (a) empowerment of Roma youth and women, (b) participation of Roma children in children's camps and (c) small-scale local interventions.
Based on the portfolio of indicators proposed by FRA

Ongoing development of the system: in cooperation with stakeholder ministries, bodies and Roma representatives

The system sets:

- Structural indicators (community and national legal frameworks)
- Process - Progress indicators related to specific interventions and actions (e.g. programs, plans, measures)
- Outcome indicators: related to the situation in the field and any changes in socio-economic data and access to Roma fundamental rights.

Data gathering: drawn from existing systems (indicative EU, FRA, ELSTAT, Roma Observatory information system, information systems of Ministries involved, recording data from implemented interventions, etc.), or collected through special surveys, feeding simultaneously the base values of the indicators.
“No Roma child left behind”... a difficult goal worth trying....

Thank you.
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