



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2022)0343

Situation of Roma people living in settlements in the EU

European Parliament resolution of 5 October 2022 on the situation of Roma people living in settlements in the EU (2022/2662(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the European Social Charter,
- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the Council of Europe legal framework for minority protection, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, particularly on manifestly discriminatory practices of segregating Roma children in education, and the case law of the Court of Justice,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin¹ (the Racial Equality Directive),
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation²,
- having regard to Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives³ (the Waste Framework Directive),
- having regard to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law⁴,

¹ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

² OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

³ OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3.

⁴ OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 55.

- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Commission communication of 4 March 2021 on the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (COM(2021)0102),
- having regard to its resolution of 18 February 2011 on an EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 December 2013 on gender aspects of the European Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies²,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 February 2019 on the need for a strengthened post-2020 Strategic EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies and stepping up the fight against anti-Gypsyism³,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 June 2020 on the European Disability Strategy post-2020⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2020 entitled ‘The implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: combating negative attitudes towards people with Romani background in Europe’⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2021 on children’s rights in view of the EU Strategy on the rights of the child⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 April 2022 on the EU’s protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine⁸,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 December 2018 entitled ‘Report on the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020’ (COM(2018)0785),
- having regard to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II),
- having regard to the FRA monitoring framework for an EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation,

¹ OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 112.

² OJ C 468, 15.12.2016, p. 36.

³ OJ C 449, 23.12.2020, p. 2.

⁴ OJ C 362, 8.9.2021, p. 8.

⁵ OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 104.

⁶ OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 145.

⁷ OJ C 474, 24.11.2021, p. 146.

⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0120.

- having regard to the FRA bulletin of 29 September 2020 entitled ‘Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Impact on Roma and Travellers’,
- having regard to the FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) statement of 26 October 2020 entitled ‘The Housing Situation for Roma in the EU Remains Difficult’,
- having regard to the European Network on Statelessness briefing of 10 March 2022 entitled ‘Stateless people and people at risk of statelessness forcibly displaced from Ukraine’,
- having regard to the Unicef position paper of June 2012 entitled ‘The Right of Roma Children to Education’,
- having regard to Special Report No 14/2016 of the European Court of Auditors of 28 June 2016 entitled ‘EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade, but additional efforts needed on the ground’,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 September 2020 entitled ‘A Union of equality: EU anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0565),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 7 October 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation’ (COM(2020)0620),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 November 2020 entitled ‘Action plan on Integration and Inclusion’ (COM(2020)0758),
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 March 2021 entitled ‘EU strategy on the rights of the child’ (COM(2021)0142),
- having regard to Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee²,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0152),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2021 entitled ‘Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030’ (COM(2021)0101),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426),

¹ OJ C 93, 19.3.2021, p. 1.

² OJ L 223, 22.6.2021, p. 14.

- having regard to Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof¹ (the Temporary Protection Directive),
 - having regard to the questions to the Council and to the Commission on the situation of Roma people living in settlements in the EU (O-000022/2022 – B9-0018/2022 and O-000023/2022 – B9-0019/2022),
 - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
- A. whereas EU values prevail in a society which respects diversity, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and gender equality; whereas the Member States have a particular responsibility to guarantee these values for all, including Roma people;
 - B. whereas ‘Roma’ is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of different people of Romani origin such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels and Boyash/Rudari; whereas it also encompasses groups such as Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as traveller populations, including ethnic Travellers or those designated under the administrative term *gens du voyage*, and people who identify as Gypsies, Tsiganes or Tziganes, without denying their specificities;
 - C. whereas Roma people are Europe’s largest ethnic minority; whereas an unacceptably high number of Roma people in Europe still live in poverty and are socially excluded, enduring extremely precarious, unsafe and overcrowded living conditions in segregated rural and urban areas; whereas the issue of Roma people living in settlements is not limited to one country and is therefore a European problem and needs to be addressed as such; whereas spatial segregation represents a key cause of and mutually reinforces unequal access to healthcare, early childcare and education, employment and basic services, including road access, water supplies, sanitation and sewage facilities, electricity and waste collection; whereas it not only has physical and economic consequences, but also psychological and sociological ones, both for individuals and communities; whereas intergenerational poverty in Roma settlements is of a socioeconomic nature, with serious ramifications for Roma people’s physical and mental health and well-being, life opportunities and enjoyment of their fundamental human rights;
 - D. whereas Roma face higher rates of low work intensity, job insecurity and unemployment, and are often in atypical or precarious employment situations, hindering their access to unemployment schemes and pension entitlements; whereas Roma lack employment networks and suffer discrimination in access to employment and in the workplace, and are also concentrated in socio-economically disadvantaged regions; whereas the 6 million Roma people residing in the EU represent a significant and

¹ OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12.

growing part of its population and have enormous potential, which it will only be possible to realise if their employment and social inclusion situations are improved;

- E. whereas according to the EU-MIDIS II, only one in four Roma aged 16 years or older reported being employed or self-employed as their main activity and whereas Roma women reported much lower employment rates than Roma men – 16 % compared with 34 %; whereas the situation of young people was particularly worrying with, on average, a Roma NEET (not in education, employment or training) rate of 63 % compared with the EU average of 12 %; whereas, for this age group, the results also showed a considerable gender gap, with 72 % of young Roma women being classed as NEET compared with 55 % of young Roma men; whereas this is in stark contrast with the rest of the population (35 %); whereas as many as 80 % of Roma people were reported as living below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold; whereas every third Roma person lived in housing without tap water and 1 in 10 people lived in housing without electricity; whereas every third Roma child experienced one of their family members going to bed hungry at least once a month and almost half of Roma aged 6-24 did not attend school;
- F. whereas the lack of significant policy measures or investment, limited availability and low quality of social housing, discrimination in the housing market and segregation keep the gap in accessing housing between Roma and non-Roma almost unchanged¹;
- G. whereas Roma people living in settlements should have access to decent housing that is accessible, affordable, environmentally safe, healthy and desegregated;
- H. whereas deep-rooted structural and institutional anti-Gypsyism continues to exist at all levels of EU society and is a major barrier to Roma people fully enjoying their fundamental rights as EU citizens in all spheres of life, including employment, housing, education, healthcare, care, social protection and other key public services; whereas 41 % of Roma in the nine EU Member States surveyed for the EU-MIDIS II felt discriminated against because of their Roma background in at least one area of daily life, such as looking for work, work, housing, health and education; whereas the integration of Roma requires sensitivity to local contexts, to intra-Roma ethnic and socioeconomic diversity and social mobility barriers and to intersecting forms of discrimination, particularly with regard to gender, age and disability; whereas gender equality and the situation of Roma children and young people are two key areas of intervention for the social inclusion of Roma that are insufficiently addressed both at EU and national level;
- I. whereas the situation in Roma settlements is in violation of human and fundamental rights as enshrined in the EU Treaties, the European Convention on Human Rights, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Social Charter, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as of the principles recognised in the European Pillar of Social Rights; whereas it is alarming that these rights are not being respected in practice with regard to Roma people living in settlements;

¹ FEANTSA statement entitled 'The Housing Situation for Roma in the EU Remains Difficult'.

- J. whereas the vicious circle of intergenerational poverty in marginalised Roma settlements is a complex phenomenon that needs to be addressed horizontally across different interconnected policy areas, in a comprehensive manner and with the close cooperation of all relevant stakeholders; whereas effective solutions require full engagement at the EU, national, regional and local levels in cooperation with civil society initiatives, including charitable and church-based organisations, social partners and private actors, learning from best practices and innovative solutions across Member States and replicating them on a wider scale;
- K. whereas many local and regional authorities and representatives of civil society have been actively working with Roma people living in settlements over time with proven and innovative approaches and projects, but often do not make use of available European structural and investment funds (ESIF) because the processes are highly burdensome and complex; whereas the most common barriers to access to ESIF identified are the absence of a partnership approach; late reimbursement of payment requests; payment of ESIF to the beneficiary based on a reimbursement system being the most frequent option, making the beneficiary dependent on own resources; lengthy and repeated public procurement checks; lack of consistency between the findings of the checks, resulting in beneficiaries being blamed for mistakes which can require the return of funding, thus risking the reallocation of resources from other areas or even insolvency; poor involvement and cooperation with beneficiaries by controllers from managing or intermediate authorities during the procurement process; and the setting of arbitrary limits and requirements for different aspects of projects;
- L. whereas Roma face disproportionate barriers in accessing health services, which are exacerbated by a lack of insurance or personal identification documents, discrimination by health professionals and segregation in healthcare facilities; whereas persisting health inequalities, including the specific impact of spatial segregation and overcrowded housing on health, puts Roma in a vulnerable position;
- M. whereas all 27 Member States have committed to work towards ending homelessness by 2030 by signing the Lisbon Declaration of June 2020 and setting up the European Platform on Combating Homelessness, which aims to promote policies based on a person-centred, housing-led and integrated approach;
- N. whereas the EU provides significant financial support for social inclusion measures, including for measures promoting the inclusion of Roma, especially the most deprived; whereas the Member States' planning documents indicate that EUR 1,5 billion was earmarked for the socioeconomic integration of vulnerable groups of individuals during the 2014-2020 programming period¹;
- O. whereas there is a persisting gap between Roma and non-Roma populations at all levels of education; whereas in 2018, only 53 % of Roma children aged 4-6 participated in early childhood education according to the EU-MIDIS II; whereas there is widespread segregation of Roma students in schools despite the legal prohibition of such practices and their incompatibility with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights; whereas such educational segregation usually takes three different forms: attendance by disproportionate numbers of Roma children of 'special' schools for children with intellectual disabilities, segregated classes or sections for Roma pupils within 'mixed'

¹ European Court of Auditors special report No 14/2016.

schools and the prevalence of ‘ghetto schools’; whereas Roma children face additional obstacles to equal participation in education, including failure to cover the costs associated with education (including early childhood education and care), spatial segregation, lack of childcare facilities nearby or unequal or no access to online and/or distance learning; whereas poverty and lack of access to basic services has a considerable impact on children’s physical, mental and emotional development, and increases their chances of lagging behind in all aspects of their adult life;

- P. whereas low pre-school attendance is a principal determinant of premature dropout rates among Roma, which are further exacerbated by starting school late and irregular school attendance; whereas early dropouts occur mostly at the point of transition between school types; whereas secondary education participation is obstructed by factors such as travel, segregation in housing and ill-functioning guidance services; whereas educational gaps are further aggravated by the growing digital divide between Roma and non-Roma children;
- Q. whereas during the pandemic, Roma people faced higher risks of contracting COVID-19 owing to entrenched health and social inequalities and were disproportionately affected by measures taken to contain the virus; whereas the negative social and economic consequences of the pandemic have been particularly detrimental for the Roma population in the EU owing to high shares of Roma being involved in the informal economy and seasonal work and the lack of measures adapted to their specific situations in policies for mitigating the consequences of the health crisis; whereas the pandemic gave rise to public scapegoating and hate speech against Roma; whereas the health emergency has once again revealed a critical discrepancy between the scale of local-level needs and the capacity to address them and has highlighted the need for immediate and long-term policy measures, particularly in the areas of employment, education and housing¹;
- R. whereas equality data collection refers to the collection of all types of disaggregated data used to assess the comparative situation of specific groups at risk of discrimination, design public policies that contribute to promoting equality and assess their implementation, based on evidence and not mere assumptions; whereas the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU and national measures for the social inclusion of Roma have been impeded by the lack of comprehensive quality data disaggregated by ethnicity;
- S. whereas many Roma people live in areas where they are disproportionately exposed to environmental degradation and pollution stemming from waste dumps and landfills or contaminated sites and deprived of access to basic environmental services and public utilities;
- T. whereas Roma women are subjected to multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination based on a combination of their ethnicity, gender and social status as well as to gender-based violence, which was particularly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas equality between women and men must be ensured and fostered in

¹ FRA bulletin entitled ‘Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Impact on Roma and Travellers’.

all areas, including labour market participation, employment conditions, including wages, education and training, and career changes and progression;

- U. whereas approximately 10-20 % of the estimated 400 000 Roma people living in Ukraine are stateless or at risk of statelessness¹; whereas Roma refugees fleeing war in Ukraine without documentation confirming their Ukrainian citizenship or their residence status are in a particularly vulnerable situation;

Need for action at national level

1. Deplores the fact that there are still people in the EU without access to safe and decent housing, clean drinking water, electricity, sanitation, sewage and waste treatment facilities, education, employment, healthcare and care services; is deeply concerned by the substantial gap between the declarations and commitments on a strong social Europe and the reality on the ground, also in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the lack of progress in improving access to basic infrastructure during the previous programming period; calls on the Commission and the Member States to urgently address the situation of Roma people living in settlements in a comprehensive and effective manner, with appropriate short- and long-term policies supported by sufficient EU and national funding, in order to ensure Roma in the EU and neighbouring countries are not left behind; highlights the fact that such catastrophic conditions, as well as the negative psychological and sociological impact of segregation, not only affect the people living within the settlements, but also impact the wider community;

Housing

2. Stresses that access to decent desegregated housing is key to breaking the vicious circle of intergenerational poverty and social exclusion; notes that access to housing is a precondition for human dignity and is closely linked to the full enjoyment of human rights; acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic showed that poor housing conditions represent a systemic risk for the public health system, placing a disproportionate burden on Roma people, especially Roma women; reiterates its call on the Member States to prevent and tackle homelessness and address housing exclusion through long-term solutions such as adequate social housing, affordable rental housing programmes and targeted housing allowances that are part of integrated national strategies with a focus on housing-led and ‘housing first’ approaches guaranteeing citizens’ effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services without discrimination; calls on the Member States to implement the concept of ‘adequate housing’ for all, including Roma people, as defined by the UN²; calls for priority to be given to desegregation approaches utilising or investing in integrated social housing, alongside funding of accessible quality social services and quality field social work involving the consultation and participation of members of the Roma community as a way for Roma to leave settlements; highlights the use of e-pay cards for receiving social welfare benefits accompanied by the necessary digital infrastructure as an additional tool for sound financial management for Roma people living in settlements, to ensure dignified living and the possibility to leverage such benefits to access financial resources, for example through microloans; calls on the Member States

¹ European Network on Statelessness briefing entitled ‘Stateless people and people at risk of statelessness forcibly displaced from Ukraine’.

² Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

to urgently explore their possible use; stresses that e-pay cards can be one of the solutions to address socio-economic problems related to usury, substance abuse and gambling in the settlements;

3. Acknowledges that many Roma settlements are located in unsafe, risky and illegally occupied land, which presents a major obstacle to finding an effective way to improve Roma living conditions and is a barrier to EU investments; calls on the Member States to address the problem on a centralised, national level while working in close cooperation with local and regional authorities through the implementation of housing-related policies, including social housing and innovative policies;

Education

4. Stresses the critical role of preschool education in success at further educational stages, in obtaining decent and quality employment and in breaking the cycle of disadvantage; notes the significant gap in preschool attendance between Roma and non-Roma children and the link between residential and educational segregation, which are key drivers of school dropout rates; calls on the Member States to adopt all necessary measures to reach the Barcelona objectives as soon as possible, with particular emphasis on measures promoting and facilitating pre-schooling for Roma children; also calls on the Commission to address the gaps in access to quality childcare between Roma and non-Roma children in the upcoming revision of the Barcelona objectives within the European care strategy package; calls on the Member States, furthermore, to guarantee effective and free access to kindergartens for all Roma children living in settlements to ensure their participation, in line with the European Child Guarantee; calls on the Member States to systematically monitor dropout risks and inequalities in access to education at all levels to allow for timely interventions, both in terms of pedagogical help and individual counselling, as well as extra-curricular activities for children and their parents; stresses that engaging Roma parents in a meaningful way would also help address the risk of children dropping out of school; calls on the Member States to put in place measures and schemes to motivate young Roma students who have completed statutory education periods to finish their secondary education, for example special allowances;
5. Deplores the persisting segregation of Roma children in special education and programmes outside mainstream educational systems, often stemming from misdiagnoses as disabilities based on the results of culturally and linguistically biased tests; underlines that standardised psychological testing utilised in some Member States should not be used as an eliminatory instrument to delay entry into regular school programmes; calls on the Member States to put in place mechanisms to review and, where necessary, reverse diagnostic decisions; regrets, furthermore, the persistent discrimination against and segregation of Roma children in several Member States within mainstream schools, including through segregated classes and floors, segregation within classes and segregated dining; highlights that segregated schooling is based on reduced curricula, which rarely enables Roma students to enter the general school system, higher education or subsequent employment; calls on the Member States to eradicate practices of continued segregation of Roma children, implement comprehensive desegregation strategies with clear targets and sufficient resources to implement them with clear and ambitious timetables, adopt inclusive learning methods, guarantee full access for Roma children to school-based activities and implement anti-discrimination campaigns in schools; calls on all Member States to prioritise the

specific educational needs of Roma and vulnerable children, with a view to guaranteeing their right to participation, education and good learning outcomes, effectively reducing the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma and preventing segregation; highlights the importance of integrating Roma children into the official national curricula, including for vocational education and training;

6. Deplores the fact that Roma-majority schools have substandard funding, facilities and curricula; calls on the Member States to invest in pre- and in-service training for teachers to enhance their capacity to provide appropriate teaching for Roma children, especially focused on sensitivity to Roma culture and identity, non-discrimination as a human right and positive strategies for promoting tolerance and tackling discriminatory behaviour and anti-Gypsyism¹, which contributes to prejudice and ill-informed views on the capacity and willingness of Roma children to learn and leads to low academic expectations; calls on the Member States to allocate more financial resources for quality teaching assistants, ensuring the smooth integration of children from Roma settlements into mainstream education; calls on the Member States to introduce comprehensive age-appropriate sexuality and relationship education and education regarding responsible parenthood for young people in schools, also as a means of preventing underage pregnancies among Roma girls living in settlements, which further contributes to the vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty;
7. Stresses that lockdowns to contain COVID-19 further deepened existing inequalities in education in several Member States, leaving Roma children, especially those living in segregated Roma settlements, without access to online education owing to a lack of access to digital infrastructure, connectivity and digital teaching materials; calls on the Member States to ensure that EU emergency funds allocated for tackling COVID-19, such as those provided under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, specifically reflect the needs of Roma and vulnerable children and ensure quality, affordable services in Roma communities, including through specific indicators in the national recovery and resilience plans; calls on the Member States to pursue new avenues of inclusion and engagement of Roma children in digital education, including greater investments in improving the accessibility of digital infrastructure and digital literacy in order to prepare them for the digital era; calls on the Member States to support the education of Roma women and girls, with a particular emphasis on the importance of STEM, and tackle their school dropout rate;

Health and environment

8. Is alarmed by higher infant mortality rates in Roma populations compared to non-Roma populations, especially of those living in settlements; emphasises that children in Roma settlements are being born into poverty and an environment that is not conducive to healthy physical and psychosocial development; calls on the Commission to monitor investment and implementation by Member States of the European Child Guarantee and the specific targets set in the national action plans for Roma children, notably regarding their particularly disadvantaged situation, which manifests itself in poor educational outcomes and school dropout rates; calls on the Member States to adopt necessary measures supported by significantly increased public investment for the swift and efficient implementation of the European Child Guarantee and strongly encourages the Member States to allocate more than the minimum 5 % of European Social Fund Plus

¹ Unicef position paper entitled 'The Right of Roma Children to Education'.

(ESF+) resources under shared management to supporting activities under the guarantee; calls on the Member States to urgently take action to ensure that children in Roma settlements are supported by healthcare professionals from birth and start treatment if necessary, as well as to recognise psychological or physical abuse of children, with an obligation to notify the competent authorities of all such cases; recalls the over-representation of Roma children in care institutions and stresses the need for a child-centred approach that pays close attention to the rights and needs of the most vulnerable; calls on the Member States, to this end, to make early childhood intervention centres and community centres employing field social workers, pedagogical staff and health professionals, including Roma health and educational mediators and assistants, widely available and accessible;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support health awareness and healthy living conditions in deprived communities, in particular Roma settlements, through mobile medical screening stations and prevention activities; further stresses that gender equality in medical care organisations must be respected in accordance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and that initiatives such as the establishment of a network of nurses and care homes, regular visits to paediatricians, adult general practitioners, family support services, home care and care services for older persons and other persons in need of care and support should be available and accessible;
10. Emphasises the environmental risks to the health and lives of Roma people living in settlements, as well as the wider community, caused by toxic waste surrounding their settlements; calls on the Member States to urgently address the situation in order to reduce the disproportionate exposure of Roma to such risks and to develop comprehensive waste management systems and infrastructure in line with the European Waste Framework Directive¹; calls on the Member States to develop strategies to raise awareness within the affected communities of the dangers caused by toxic waste and the lack of proper waste management in Roma settlements; stresses the role of the Commission in enforcing EU legislation in this regard; calls on the Commission and the Member States to make targeted use of the policy tools and resources for tackling energy crises and for ensuring a just green energy transition in order to ensure Roma communities have access to clean, affordable and secure energy, to prevent further deterioration of energy poverty and to improve the health of Roma people living in settlements;
11. Recalls that under the new binding EU standards for equality bodies, Member States should support these bodies' increased litigation powers by giving them legal standing before the courts in individual and collective complaints and ex officio and should support their legally binding decision-making power, including in situations where there are multiple institutions comprising the national equality body, so that they are able to address, identify and sanction intersectional discrimination, which often affects Roma; is of the opinion that the Member States should ensure that these bodies' mandates cover all forms of discrimination, including victimisation and hate speech;

Employment and social inclusion

¹ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3).

12. Notes that high rates of long-term unemployment in Roma settlements and the prevalence of Roma NEETs are compounded by the social exclusion and poverty faced by their inhabitants; calls on the Member States to invest in social enterprises and best practices with the aim of employing the long-term unemployed; calls on them to also invest in programmes for Roma NEETs such as vocational training, especially on digital skills and green jobs, including through the recovery programmes; believes that the Commission's action plan for the social economy can support Member States' efforts in this regard with guidance on taxation, access to State aid and social public procurement for social economy organisations; believes the forthcoming proposal for a Council recommendation on developing the social economy framework should ensure an intersectional approach targeting vulnerable groups, including Roma, and Roma women in particular, who face even bigger obstacles than Roma men in accessing the labour market; calls on the Member States, furthermore, to support quality and sustainable job creation, the regularisation of informal work and accessible bridges to employment for Roma workers such as public employment schemes, which can be a temporary solution for unemployment and an opportunity to requalify and do further training; recalls that many Roma people are long-term unemployed, which affects their entitlement to benefits and pensions; stresses the importance of national minimum income schemes combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market in combating poverty and social exclusion; urges the Member States to support wage transparency and ethnic- and gender-neutral job evaluations, promote wages that provide for a decent standard of living and launch anti-discrimination and training campaigns to combat anti-Gypsyism and promote diversity in the workplace, targeting recruiters, employers and co-workers;
13. Notes that community centres play a key role in working with Roma people living in settlements; calls on the Member States to ensure that every Roma settlement has an adequately equipped community centre in order to provide space for educational activities, for example kindergartens, afterschool care facilities for schoolchildren, leisure activities for both children and adults and hygiene facilities, with the Roma community involved in the maintenance and running of the premises;
14. Calls on the Member States to make youth employment, especially of young Roma women, a priority in the implementation of their national Roma integration strategies; calls on the Member States to take full advantage of the reinforced Youth Guarantee to advance employment and social inclusion among young Roma people; points to the untapped potential of highly educated young Roma people as a driver of positive change in Roma communities and in tackling deeply rooted prejudice and stereotypes among the majority population;
15. Calls on the Member States to ensure proper involvement of social-legal protection bodies in children and social guardianship cases in marginalised Roma settlements in order to ensure that children receive the protection and care necessary for their well-being and development, while respecting their best interests; calls for further coordinated efforts and an appropriate framework of measures to be put in place to eliminate adverse phenomena in the settlements, such as usury, child sexual exploitation, substance abuse, gambling and labour exploitation; deplores the high rate of forced begging among Roma children and calls on the Member States who have not done so to put in place legislation that protects children and bans forced begging; underlines the need for police forces to recognise the specific conditions of Roma people and for the Member States to provide training for police forces to counter discrimination and criminalisation of Roma people, both internally and in the majority

population; calls on the Member States to rigorously investigate incidents of police abuse to ensure there is no impunity for violence, intimidation measures and ill treatment against Roma individuals or communities and to address the inadequate access to justice for Roma;

16. Reiterates its call on the Commission to work with the Member States on a common methodology to collect and publish equality data disaggregated by ethnicity and different types of settlements, where recognised in national law, with full respect for privacy and fundamental rights standards, in order to assess the situation of Roma people and effectively evaluate progress in the implementation of measures under the EU Roma strategic framework for tackling the root causes of their social and economic exclusion; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to include specific targets for Roma employment in the Social Scoreboard;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the strengthening of social dialogue and the collective representation of Roma workers as a means of facilitating their access to quality jobs with decent working conditions; calls on the Member States to improve their public work schemes in order to allow Roma people and other individuals in vulnerable situations to develop and improve relevant skills;

Use of EU and national funding

18. Is concerned that in some Member States, the use of resources earmarked for Roma people has been low thus far, risking a significant loss of financial resources by the end of the current programming period; regrets that current systems and conditions set for drawing down ESIF in a number of Member States do not allow for their smooth and efficient absorption, often owing to bureaucratic and structural barriers in national systems; recalls, in this regard, the need to reduce administrative burden, promote the use of simplified cost options and provide further assistance and flexibility, including direct distribution of funds to regional and local policies and civil society programmes to make it easier for managing authorities and beneficiaries responding to the immediate needs of Roma people living in settlements in the EU to use them; calls on the Member States and the Commission to urgently increase funding for the European Child Guarantee with a dedicated budget of at least EUR 20 billion in order to combat the poverty that is affecting children and their families and to contribute to the goal of reducing poverty by at least 15 million by 2030 – including at least 5 million children across all the Member States;
19. Points to a lack of political will in some local authorities in the Member States who are reluctant to implement new projects to improve the living conditions of Roma people in settlements; calls on the Member States and their managing authorities to pay special attention to such local authorities and to implement strategies to motivate them to change their negative approach, including through possible conditionality mechanisms; stresses, in this regard, the need to ensure Roma political participation and representation at all levels and to tackle harmful negative stereotypes which fuel discriminatory attitudes and behaviours among the non-Roma population; further points to the existence of structural barriers in some Member States that hinder the implementation of projects by local authorities and civil society and urgently calls on those Member States to remove them and to offer clear support instruments to local authorities to help them engage in new projects focused on Roma people living in settlements and their wider community;

20. Notes that it often takes generations to achieve significant progress in socio-economic empowerment and Roma integration; calls on the Member States to urgently make full use of available funding instruments and resources at both national and EU level to create favourable conditions for the sustainable funding and implementation of continuous programmes and projects in an efficient, integrated, coordinated and flexible way and eliminate any obstacles, including direct and indirect forms of discrimination, that hinder the absorption of funding, in particular the ESF+, the European Regional Development Fund and the Recovery and Resilience Facility; calls on the Commission to support, monitor and evaluate the Member States' actions in this regard through their national recovery and resilience plans, national Roma strategic frameworks, European Child Guarantee national action plans, the EU anti-racism action plan and European Semester country-specific recommendations; calls on the Commission and Member States, in particular, to ensure that EU measures and funding reach Roma people living in settlements and emphasises that targeted actions and initiatives should be primarily based on the bottom-up principle and come from the local level and municipalities that are closest to the communities in question, with financial and administrative assistance supported at the national or EU level; calls on the Member States, in this regard, to make better use of available financial resources for technical assistance and to ensure that direct technical assistance is widely provided to both administrators and specific applicants; urges the Commission to make sure that the identification of settlements and specific policies and measures to address their situations are incorporated in the 2021-2027 EU cohesion fund programmes and European Semester country-specific recommendations;
21. Calls for a comprehensive and in-depth impact and performance analysis by the European Court of Auditors of the use of ESIF, especially the ESF+ and the European Regional Development Fund, for the years since the EU strategy for Roma inclusion was established in 2011, with a particular focus on spending on Roma settlements and related social issues;

Need for action at EU level

22. Highlights that current practices in some Member States with regard to Roma people living in settlements show evaluation of projects based on quantitative outputs alone is insufficient and can even be misleading as to the reality on the ground, as it means there is no information on the quality of projects' progress; warns that as a consequence, this could lead to decisions that pose a threat to the sound financial management of the EU budget; calls, therefore, for a swift application of the general regime of conditionality for the protection of the EU budget in relation to the relevant Member States; notes that the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the European Child Guarantee and the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030 constitute a credible benchmark for qualitative assessment; calls for particular attention to be given to intersectional discrimination and to addressing the rights and needs of the most vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities, children and women, when carrying out qualitative assessments; believes it is essential that the Commission require concrete qualitative outcomes that better reflect the reality on the ground, in addition to quantitative outputs, when evaluating individual projects funded by the ESIF in marginalised Roma settlements; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to start monitoring and evaluating projects based first and foremost on its own observations from on-site visits in order to decrease its dependence on information from governments

and media reports and strengthen oversight of the EU budget; further stresses, in this regard, the need to strengthen the FRA Roma division by recruiting Roma researchers;

23. Calls for the Commission and Parliament to carry out regular missions to examine the situation of Roma people living in settlements in different Member States, if possible periodically, in order to contribute to raising awareness among both policymakers and the public, to exchange information on the challenges Roma people face between Member States and relevant authorities, and to exchange best practices and coordination at the EU level;
24. Stresses that the Commission must robustly act as the guardian of the Treaties to ensure the full and correct implementation of EU law and to take appropriate and timely action where Member States fail to do so, particularly with regard to breaches of EU citizens' rights, including those of Roma; notes that infringement procedures, such as the cases of educational segregation of Roma pupils, have not resulted in effective elimination of causes of discrimination; firmly believes that the Commission should do everything in its power to prevent violations of human rights and the fundamental values of the EU, starting with effective prevention of the use of EU funds for supporting discriminatory practices in the Member States; calls on the Commission, therefore, to establish an early warning mechanism for reporting risks of abuse or misuse of ESIF and other EU funds earmarked for addressing the situation of Roma people in marginalised settlements; is of the opinion that the lack of action and commitment of some Member States to solve the issue of Roma people living in settlements, as well as structural and bureaucratic barriers, could constitute a violation of the founding values of the EU as enshrined in Article 2 TEU, namely human dignity, equality and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities; calls on the Council and the Commission to investigate the situation of Roma living in marginalised settlements with a view to determining whether such settlements and their conditions pose a clear risk of a serious breach of the EU Treaties;
25. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen the active engagement and meaningful participation of Roma – especially Roma women, young people and other under-represented groups – in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies and of projects aimed towards them at the EU, national, regional and local levels so they can be actively involved in shaping the EU's future and can contribute to changing perceptions in EU societies; believes that Roma participation and leadership should be a qualitative target under national Roma strategic frameworks; believes that support for elected Roma officials in municipal councils should be encouraged as an example of good practice for advancing social inclusion and the democratic participation of Roma;
26. Notes that significant parts of the Roma population struggle with poverty, social exclusion and limited access to employment or services such as education, healthcare and housing, also as a result of anti-Gypsyism and structural discrimination; calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle anti-Gypsyism in all areas of society through effective legislative and policy measures, both in the Member States and in enlargement countries; calls on the Member States to mainstream the fight against racism and anti-Gypsyism in all of the European Pillar of Social Rights principles, as it is a key structural driver of Roma exclusion; highlights the need to end any form of structural and institutional anti-Gypsyism, segregation and discrimination in education, employment, health, housing and access to social protection and other services;

considers that the fight against anti-Gypsyism is a horizontal issue and that it should be taken into account in all relevant areas of EU policy; calls on the Commission to strengthen the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive and on the Member States to develop and implement effective and ambitious national plans against racism and racial discrimination, with a focus on all forms of racism, including anti-Gypsyism, drawing inspiration from the common guiding principles adopted by the Commission; calls on the Member States to set clear and measurable objectives for the fight against discrimination and anti-Gypsy speech and crime, in line with Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia; calls on the Council, furthermore, to unblock negotiations on the horizontal anti-discrimination directive¹ as it is a prerequisite for achieving equality in the EU;

27. Emphasises the need to acknowledge the cultural and linguistic heritage of Roma people and encourages the Commission and the Member States to preserve and promote Roma culture and public awareness through programmes and the media at their respective levels, thus contributing to the diversity of the EU community;
28. Urges the Commission to step up its efforts to gradually eradicate marginalised Roma settlements across the EU by launching an EU action plan to eradicate Roma settlements by 2030, with the aim of reinforcing the use of existing policy and financial instruments; emphasises that this EU action plan should provide guidelines, establish priorities and concrete targets and envisage a component of transnational cooperation and exchange of positive practices between Member States;
29. Underlines that the issues of Roma people living in settlements are cross-sectoral and require the attention and coordinated involvement of several commissioners and directorates-general at EU level; calls, therefore, for the creation of the post of Commission coordinator for Roma inclusion and equality to comprehensively monitor progress across relevant policy instruments and to liaise directly with Roma people in order to relay the reality of their situations and concerns to the Commission's Task Force on Equality, as well as, inter alia, to the national Roma contact points, the FRA, the EURoma network, the European Roma Platform and the High-Level Group on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity in order to create synergies and achieve Roma people's equality, inclusion and participation in the EU;
30. Similarly calls for the establishment of a Parliament coordinator for Roma inclusion position, to be filled by one of the vice-presidents of Parliament, who would work to ensure that Roma issues are mainstreamed throughout Parliament's relevant policy and legislative work; calls, at the same time, for the establishment of a Roma mainstreaming network to be chaired and coordinated by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and composed of a representative of each European Parliament Committee in order to complement and strengthen the work of the coordinator, producing a synergic effect in ensuring that the interconnected and complex issues facing the Roma community are addressed with a comprehensive, horizontal approach; believes that both Parliament's coordinator and Roma mainstreaming network should work closely with its Intergroup on Anti-Racism and Diversity;

¹ Commission proposal for a Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

31. Points to the additional challenges and the need for strengthened cooperation between the Member States related to the free movement of people within the EU as well as the situation of Roma people fleeing the war in Ukraine; calls on the Member States to take effective measures against segregation of intra-EU Roma migrants and Roma refugees from Ukraine and protect them against unlawful expulsions and discrimination in access to essential services, especially in the fields of housing, education and employment; calls on the Member States to ensure that refugees, including Roma, are not profiled or discriminated against when applying for temporary protection under the Temporary Protection Directive and are not forced to apply for asylum, and also calls on them to engage civil society organisations in ensuring that in-kind assistance, free transportation and accommodation benefit everyone fleeing Ukraine equally; calls on the Member States to step up their efforts to ensure registration of birth certificates for Roma children is properly enforced to put an end to childhood statelessness among Roma communities across the EU;
32. Takes note of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025); calls on the Commission and the Member States to further combine their efforts to foster equal opportunities, diversity and social inclusion and fight discrimination and anti-Gypsyism with those of the Council of Europe;
33. Points out that programmes and instruments such as Erasmus Plus and the Youth Guarantee give opportunities to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and Roma people and their organisations;
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34. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.