



EUROPEAN ROMA AND TRAVELLERS FORUM
EVROPAKO FORUMO E ROMENGO THAJ E PHIRUTNENGO
FORUM EUROPÉEN DES ROMS ET DES GENS DU VOYAGE

FACT SHEET ON THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN SPAIN

January, 2016

The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) which is the most representative Roma organization in Europe, is active in pushing for improvements in the living conditions of the Roma and in combating racial discrimination. The ERTF has a partnership agreement with the Council of Europe, which provides it with a political dimension and a privileged relationship with the various organs of the Organisation. It addresses governments, intergovernmental organisations, political groups, companies and other non-state actors. It seeks to disclose discrimination of Roma accurately, quickly and persistently. It researches the facts relating to individual cases and patterns of human rights abuse. These findings are publicized, and members, supporters and staff mobilize public pressure on governments and others to stop the abuses.

The ERTF and its members are committed to the aim of achieving equal rights and equal opportunities for Roma in Europe as well as increasing political participation. The ERTF takes an active role in the fight against discrimination (anti-Gypsyism) and for the full realisation of human rights

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	Population:	46,815,916 to the National Census of 2011
Roma population	Official:	No data
	Estimated	Between 725 000 and 750 000 according to average estimate by European Union i.e. 1.57% of the population

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

According to a survey conducted in 2007, there are **750 000 Roma in Spain (ES), but Spanish Roma, in other words “gitanos”, are not officially recognized as an ethnic minority in the country.** It is extremely important to understand the difference between Spanish Gitano who are well-integrated even if facing, from time to time, discrimination in social and economic rights and a growing racism from the rest of society and Roma migrants who have arrived recently in Spain, live in harsh economic conditions and face considerable racial discriminations in all fields of life.

The discrimination against the Roma community is perceptible and attitudes have hardened since the economic crisis has severely affected Spain. According to a survey conducted by El Mundo, 40% of the Spanish would not tolerate a Roma as neighbor. Spain is commonly accepted as a role model when it comes to the Roma Inclusion within Europe. Yet, despite several projects, policies and actions undertaken by the government and mostly by non-governmental organisations, this common idea should be reevaluated. The Roma community in Spain, today, is still disadvantaged regarding the majority population in all fields of life: **education, employment, housing, health and access to public services.**

EXISTENCE OF LEGAL PROVISIONS

International instruments

- **United Nations (UN):**
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- **Council of Europe (CoE):**
 - European Convention on Human Rights: Macedonia has ratified Protocol No12 (general prohibition of discrimination);
 - Revised European Social Charter ;
 - European Convention on the Exercise of Children’s Rights
 - Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
 - European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.
- **European Union**
 - **National Roma integration strategy 2012-2020:** Main four areas of the national strategy are education, employment, health and housing. Besides them, the national strategy aims to focus on Roma culture, combat discrimination and ensure a gender-based approach. In Spain, these policies all have a regional focus.

National provisions

- ESF Operational Programme on Fight Against Discrimination
- The Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014
- **Spain's operational plan (Plan Operativo 2014-2016 La Estrategia Nacional para la Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España 2012-2020):** "Roma will be targeted through specific and mainstream measures both in the regional and national OPs. The national social inclusion and social economy OP includes the Roma-specific investment priority and envisages measures in the areas of employment, education, housing, health and social inclusion."¹

DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Discrimination is a significant barrier to the social inclusion of Gitanos and Roma, encountered in the fields of education, housing, health, access to good services and the right to work, although Spanish Gitanos are well integrated and have a better access to all these social rights than Roma migrants. Within their ten-year struggle with the discrimination against Roma, The Area of Equal Treatment of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano points out that there were 1073 discrimination cases registered from 2003 till 2013².

EDUCATION

Education remains one of the fields in which Roma are most discriminated against. **Low attendance rates, high level of illiteracy and school segregation** are still encountered by many Roma in Spain. Seventy percent of Roma over the age of 16 are illiterate³ and high drop-out rates at different educational levels still remain as a significant challenge to overcome.

Low attendance

In an age range between 16-26 years, it was established that one in 10 never studied. Many Roma children do not obtain certification or diploma.

Besides, **the lack of service facilities provided to Roma such as the school bus service has also an impact on the attendance.** Transport service to get children to school does not extend consistently to the outskirts of cities. The camps of Roma communities are therefore not served.

Pre-school education

Although Spain has a positive reputation among European countries with regard to the **high rates of the primary school enrollment of Roma, it turns out to be negative when it comes to higher education.** Completion of upper-secondary-school, with a low percentage of 5%,⁴ is a weak point to be targeted and improved.

Spain followed the 2011 programme on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities. The guidelines put in place tools for facilitating inclusion, but this programme is not reserved for the Roma and will not necessarily take into account the specific needs of children of the Roma community. Roma-specific projects will succeed only if the government adopts an approach centered on equality.

1 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf

2 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

3 http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/09/09/inenglish/1378734350_880996.html?rel=rosEP

4 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/myth-spanish-model-roma-inclusion>

Higher drop-out rates and Absenteeism

The number of Roma children who drop out of school remains high with a percentage close to 65%. The average age at which children leave school is approximately 12 years. Thus, early school leaving with a rate of 72.9% remains as one of the most serious educational problems to be addressed.⁵

The school failure rate for Roma children is five times higher than children from non-Roma families.

Furthermore, tuition fees and extracurricular outputs are too high for families to bear the cost and is an issue affecting the drop-out rates.

Roma boys' and girls' drop-out rates are alike at the early levels of education.⁶ The rate of girls attending school is very high but drop-out is common when shifting from primary to secondary school, mostly due to family obligations. Roma women completing their university education are still a few.⁷

Segregation in school

Racism towards the Roma community in schools persists. A survey shows that 25% of Spanish parents do not want their children to share the same classroom with Roma students.⁸

Disproportionate segregation in the schools provokes the rejection and the discrimination against Roma, and perpetuates stereotypes. The non-Romani population is not willing to send their children to schools with a high proportion of Roma. Meanwhile, in schools **having a high number of Romani children, the level of the quality of education is decreasing.**

Positive practices

There are also promising practises targeting Roma children coming from the civil society.

Fundación Secretariado Gitano has been launching campaigns each year since 2010 with different contents and methodologies. Using a workshop bus from an EU funded campaign **"When i grow up i want to be"** managed to reach Roma children and their families in the Roma neighborhoods of 38 cities. The target age group of the children was from 7 to 10 and the aim was to promote the secondary school attendance. Children were asked about their dream jobs and to create an artwork, which they could take home with a message: "Whatever your dream may be, finish secondary school". The campaign reached 2800 children.⁹ **'Roma with an education, Roma with a future'** was mainly targeting the early school leavers. It had an impact on the media, with reports and news on the Roma community and their education on national and regional television, radio and press. 'Fulfill your dreams' focused on supporting young people to finish the high school and find out about their dream jobs. As a result of a casting in 21 cities among 300 Roma students, 40 Roma students obtained a mentoring with the involvement of 10 prestigious companies. Lastly, **#LeonorDropsOutOfSchool'** has been launched due to the recent alarming drop-out rates. In Spain, Roma children's right to education is not guaranteed, not often visible and not supported by the public authorities. As a public awareness campaign, it aims to make the education of Roma children a "state issue" and bring it to the center of the political debate.

Nearly 70% of Spanish Roma adults are illiterate. The level of education and qualification of Roma children is lower than that of the majority population. The Spanish National Roma Integration Strategy 2012 -2020 has five strategic lines of action to fight against the educational problems. Among them is the eradication of adult illiteracy and education of adults.¹⁰

5 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/64/76/RESUMEN_EJECUTIVO_El_alumnado_gitano_en_secundaria_ingles.pdf

6 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

7 http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf

8 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/myth-spanish-model-roma-inclusion>

9 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_country_factsheets_2014/spain_en.pdf

10 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_spain_strategy_en.pdf

The **Education working group of the Spanish State Council of Roma People** contributes to the implementation of the Spanish National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) by regular meetings and activities. **Yet, the lack of budget estimation within the NRIS and the Operational Plan 2014-2016 is a worrying element** which might obstruct the success of the projects and programmes.¹¹

EMPLOYMENT

Economic well-being from the nineties to 2006 aided Roma to overcome unemployment and poor living conditions **whereas the economic crisis of today affects them exactly in the opposite way.**

In addition to a high unemployment rate due to the crisis, Roma who work also face low **profile, less stable jobs and a high percentage in the informal economy.** Besides, the majority of the population sees them as a 'social burden' and this triggers social discrimination.¹²

The social and economic crisis created a gap between the majority population and the Roma community. According to FOESSA, which carried out a comparative study on the period 2009-2013, a **major part of the Roma community was in extreme poverty (54%) in 2013** compared to 2009 when they were moderately poor. Data on poverty in the Roma Inclusion Index 2015, shows that 49% more Roma are at risk of poverty and 31% more live in absolute poverty than the total population.

Poor educational and professional structure

Roma face a high rate of unemployment, which has worsened by at least 22.6% in the last five years because of the crisis.

The **low professional qualification of Roma prevents them from accessing a variety of jobs** on the market. The Spanish labour market has become more complex and gradually restricted **notably in the field of construction where most Roma worked.**

Discrimination on the labour market Roma still face discrimination in the labor market. Belonging to the Roma community is an additional difficulty in obtaining employment. Spanish regulations have toughened and, the Roma, who practice itinerant trades are the subject of regular monitoring by the administration.

This discrimination requires monitoring.

Street Begging

A distinction has to be made between the Gitanos from Spain and the Roma from Eastern Europe. In fact, although Spain's Gitanos stopped begging nearly three decades ago, Eastern European Roma still beg.¹³ **The non-Spanish Roma, particularly from Eastern Europe, experience extreme poverty back in their country.** Social rejection makes it almost impossible for them to find a job, while a large majority do not have housing and are deprived of health-care. **These conditions leave them with no choice but street begging.**¹⁴

11 <http://www.romadecade.org/contributions-from-decade-partners/overview-of-education-of-roma-in-spain/9787>

12 <http://www.thelocal.es/20131122/the-crisis-makes-spains-gypsies-even-more-invisible>

13 <http://www.thelocal.es/20131122/the-crisis-makes-spains-gypsies-even-more-invisible>

14 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

Positive developments

A new Spanish programme “Acceder” is intended to improve access to employment. This programme assists people to access to the labor market regardless of their qualifications. It provides an additional element for the Roma community by providing further information and assistance in order to create his own company.¹⁵

The results of this programme are not yet convincing and it is difficult to extract data demonstrating a positive evolution since the economic and social crisis affects the Spanish labor market. Moreover, due to the crisis, there is a budget cut to Roma-specific programmes.

HEALTH

The life span of the Roma is 10 years less than that of the majority population while the infant mortality rate is three times higher. There is no data available on Roma people’s access to health insurance¹⁶. They have limited access or no access to health services.

Lack of health insurance coverage among the Roma population

The health insurance coverage is not guaranteed for a large majority of the Roma community. Medical treatment and care management are inaccessible.

Moreover, it is often difficult for the Roma community to keep official documents in a safe place in case of loss or theft of the health insurance card it is difficult for them to pay 10 euros for a new one.

Discrimination in the health care system

Economic discrimination affects the Roma community and access to health services. Many reforms have been carried out in the Spanish system. The latter have deleted services and others have become chargeable.

The Roma community no longer has access to local services where they had the opportunity to undergo treatment. These centers have been removed or relocated. In the latter case, they are often too distant from the settlements.

Roma people face **indirect or direct discrimination** in the healthcare system due to the prejudices of the mainstream society:

- In a Clinic where a Roma student had her internship as a clinical assistant, a Roma patient needed to be bathed during the treatment. Although the woman was well groomed, interns asked each other in an unwilling way “Who wants to bathe the gypsy?” The Roma intern volunteered to bath the woman, but a nurse who was helping her said “this is disgusting. I am out of here!” The intern proposed to the family to take the necessary action (2013).
- A young 14-year-old Roma goes to a dental Clinique with his father to have braces. The father observed patients making payments after the treatment. When it was his son’s turn, the medical assistant asked them to make the payment of 100 euros before receiving treatment. When the father pointed out seeing other patients making their payments afterwards, the assistant said that is the law and they had to leave if they didn’t pay in advance (2013).

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_stories_2013/spain_en.pdf

¹⁶ http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf

Some health care centers do not accept to treat Romanian Roma children although they are protected by law and have a right to access to health care.

The authorities themselves often make discriminatory remarks. In a newspaper interview the Regional Minister of Health and Social Welfare of Andalusia said: "The best guarantee of equality in health-care is if the banker is sleeping next to the Gypsy's bed."¹⁷

To overcome the discrimination against Roma within the healthcare system, the Spanish state has trained health mediators to ensure more efficient and appropriate treatment of the Roma community. A network of 16 NGOs (Equi sastipen Network) supports and monitors Roma health. The **Spanish Network of Healthy Cities (RECS)** focuses its activities on disadvantaged groups.

The **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2013-2016**, provides for measures to ensure access of vulnerable groups to health services.¹⁸

HOUSING

There are governmental policies at national, regional and local level aimed at increasing the living standards and social inclusion of Roma; **one-third of the Roma population in Spain** is struggling with **poverty** and social exclusion as two major problems.¹⁹ According to the "Housing Map of the Roma Community in Spain, 2007", there are still **4% of Roma households living in slums and 12% in substandard housing**.²⁰

Lack of access to social housing

Roma families are affected negatively by the economic crisis. It is harder today for many families to afford the cost of accommodation due to **poverty and there is a rise in court-ordered evictions. Roma who have property documents for their homes are less than 3% of the population.**

Social services responsible for assisting people in accessing housing and banks are less supportive of the Roma.

Public housing policies have to be reinforced together with other social policies and the planning and implementation of social housing should be taken into consideration by the structural funds.

Improper living conditions in Roma settlements

In Spain, most of the Roma households' standards are medium-quality. In spite of the destruction of slum housing, it is still **difficult for Roma families to have access to decent housing**. Moreover, due to the housing segregation, **more than 12% of them live in segregated neighborhoods, with indecent and low standards**. Overcrowded living conditions and lower housing standards are on the increase.²¹ Compared to the rest of the population, Roma households are more crowded, with an average of 2.44 more persons per room. **According to the Roma Inclusion Index of 2015, 1 % of Roma are homeless, 4% have no running water and 9% no electricity.**²²

17 <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/discriminacion14English/index.html#60/z>

18 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/country_assessment_2014/spain_en.pdf

19 http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/final-report_en.doc

20 <https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/housing/index.html>

21 http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/final-report_en.doc

22 http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf

Positive Developments

"The State Housing and Rehabilitation Plan 2009-2012" is still in force and aims to "contribute, together with other administrations, to the eradication of sub-standard housing and slums".

Spain is far ahead of the other European countries in the field of housing but there is still progress to be accomplished to provide the Roma community with proper living conditions and housing standards.²³

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In Spain, the Roma are not represented sufficiently neither at the national nor at the local level and **there are very few Roma who have responsibilities within the political platform.**

Political representation

In Spain, the perception of politics has gone through a change from a passive state to a mobile and active phase supporting the involvement of citizens and their practice of politics at the regional level. With its changing nature, politics give, particularly to the discriminated communities, an opportunity to participate and involve actively in public affairs ²⁴ **Nevertheless, Roma are still underrepresented. There are only ten Roma candidates elected in the municipal elections of 2015 who have become councilors in their respective municipalities.**²⁵

On the other hand, **the creation of the State Council of the Roma People (CEPG) and the Institute of Roma Culture are accepted as very significant political decisions.** The CEPG is a counselling "inter-ministerial State institution" which gives place to the Roma community in its governance. Roma organizations see the Council as a constructive and positive step.²⁶

Roma culture and media

Roma culture is an inevitable element of the Spanish culture as well as the Christian, Arab, and Jewish cultures which has existed in Spain for 6 centuries and has brought its diversity into many fields like arts, literature, music etc. For instance, today, **Flamenco is known worldwide as a 'gypsy' dance and is identified with Gitanos.**

Nevertheless, the Roma people are also identified with drugs and crime by the majority of the population, which results in rejection. **Television programmes have an impact on prejudices against Roma and perpetuate them since they only give a restricted image of Roma people. The cultural TV programme Palabra de Gitano is a case in point.**

The media is indifferent to the living conditions of the Roma both at the national and transnational level. Although the media has improved during the last ten years, it still does not have a role as a 'bridge' between the Roma community and mainstream society.²⁷

'Pavo Today' is a promising initiative in the media field. It is launched by FSG as an awareness-raising newspaper for journalists to "invite them to reflect on their responsibility" in shaping the social image of the Roma community and also warning against "malpractice" when necessary.

23 http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9810_file1_roma-inclusion-index-2015-s.pdf

24 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

25 <http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2015/noti2015-06-03.htm>

26 http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/final-report_en.doc

27 <http://www.thelocal.es/20131122/the-crisis-makes-spains-gypsies-even-more-invisible>

There is a lack of information on Roma and Roma culture in the history books. In an article entitled 'The Myth of the Spanish Model of Roma Inclusion', it is stated that **"Roma students aren't in the classrooms, and their history isn't in textbooks"** Although, Roma culture has contributed to Spanish culture within their long history of 500 years, **Roma culture is not mentioned in history schoolbooks.**²⁸ **As a result of the strong repression against Roma culture, the Romani language has not been spoken in Spain since the 18th century. Caló**, a dialect of mixed Spanish words and old Romani words is not spoken by Roma youngsters today. **There is only a few Roma speaking Caló, but is not supported by the education system and the authorities.**

RACIST CRIMES

Despite the efforts to fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia in all European states, discrimination, hate speech, **anti-Gypsyism, far right demonstrations and hate crime have been on the rise.**²⁹

Police ill-treatment

Today, in Spain, the Roma people still face racist **attitudes and prejudices of the police forces towards Roma.**³⁰

- In "Huesca's party district", a young Roma involved in a fight hit a police officer. The event was widely reported in the media with an emphasis on the fact that the person involved in the fight was a Roma. As a result of the social tension following similar incidents, a meeting was held with the head of the FSG's Equal Treatment Department to solve potential future conflicts. Nevertheless, the Police Commissioner was less interested in conflict resolution. During the meeting he said: "obviously a Gypsy is more suspect of criminal behaviour than anyone else" (2013).
- In the town of Ansoáin, a young Roma girl was accused of stealing some articles from a supermarket where she was shopping with a friend of hers. The shop manager called the police and upon their arrival, they examined the shopping bags and found no stolen goods. Nonetheless the young girl was called to appear in court a few weeks later and was asked by the prosecutor to sign a plea of six days imprisonment on weekends and/or holidays. Feeling threatened and scared, she signed the plea. (2013)
- In Barcelona, discrimination by the police officers in public areas happens regularly. A group of Romanian Roma was chased away by the police in a popular plaza, where they were eating and resting. The cleaning services were asked to remove their trolleys without even allowing them to take their personal belongings. The reaction of the police is not a result of a disorderly behaviour since they were not making any excessive noise. The attitude of the police is not based on evidence but is a result of "pure prejudice". (2013)

Roma also face negative attitudes rooted in "deep suspicion" among the society. Police stop Roma and ask for their identification papers 10 times more compared to the people with Caucasian appearance.³¹

First Action Protocol for Police and Security Forces in Cases of Hate Crime was introduced in December 2014 to make police officers aware of hate crimes and react more consciously. Information on hate crimes is given through the website of the Ministry of the Interior to increase the awareness of hate crime victims. They are able to get information brochures to recognize a hate crime and report it to the police and security forces when necessary.³²

28 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/myth-spanish-model-roma-inclusion>

29 <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2015/EN/1-2015-299-EN-F1-1.PDF>

30 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

31 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/myth-spanish-model-roma-inclusion>

32 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

Hate speech

Spain publishes hate crime reports annually and according to OSCE ODIHR's hate crime reports there were 1168 hate crimes recorded in 2013. Due to the bias against Roma only a few incidents have been reported. The Cabinet for Social Studies reported a series of incidents of damage to property, during which the tyers of vans owned by Roma people were slashed. **The Movement against Intolerance** reported one physical assault carried out by a group against a couple.³³ **Discrimination against Roma** and Roma culture is most evident on Internet. Today, with the widespread use of the **social networks and platforms, there are many discriminatory and racist materials and hate speeches targeting Roma**. For instance, an account called 'Anti-Gitanos' on several platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, has published the picture of a funeral with the caption: **"A good Gypsy is a dead Gypsy"**.³⁴

Positive developments

A transnational project **"NET-KARD"**, ran in 2013-2014, aimed to prevent discrimination against Roma, assist victims to promote cooperation among key actors and provide the lawyers, jurists, police service, Roma associates and media professionals with a series of practical guides on fighting anti-Roma discrimination.³⁵ **"Dosta!"**, a campaign funded by the government and realized by NGOs, also aims at raising awareness. "Hate attorneys" in 50 provinces of Spain³⁶ have a significant role fighting against hate crimes and discrimination.

A campaign **#YoNoSoyTrapacero/ #YoNoSoyTrapacera (#I am not a swindler!)** a social awareness campaign, referring to both genders grammatically, puts a focus on the discrimination towards the Roma community, pointing out **the use of the word 'Gitano' in the last printed edition of the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy**.³⁷ The campaign's main objective is to create awareness among the society, particularly through social platforms with a video. It widely uses the social networks. **The campaign succeeded and reached its aim by maintaining the change in the on-line edition of the dictionaries**. Second target is the update of the printed edition.³⁸

33 <http://hatecrime.osce.org/spain>

34 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

35 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf

36 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/country_assessment_2014/spain_en.pdf

37 <https://www.gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/111180.html>

38 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/16/spanish-dictionary-row-gypsy-swindlers-definition-offensive>

GENDER EQUALITY AND ROMA WOMEN

Roma women are in a more vulnerable position in social life, education, health and employment, compared to Roma men³⁹. Roma women are accepted as the “main driving force behind the transformation of the Roma community”. They are members of a patriarchal society and correspondingly a victim of “dual-discrimination” due to the resistance of the male in their society and the discrimination of the mainstream society. **Yet, Roma women in Spain are defined to be “a role model in Europe”.** They are willing to take education and support their daughters’ education as well. **They manage to complete their university education for their career plans more than the men and the number of women with university degrees is rising gradually even if it is not very high yet.** Education is a key element of their personal and future professional development.⁴⁰

Within the labour market, **unemployment of Roma women is quite significant.** In the services sector, they have low-skilled jobs and encounter prejudices and stereotypes from their employers who prevent them from getting high profile jobs. **There is still not a high number of Roma women actively involved in politics.**

Violence against women (VAW) still exists in the Roma community. EMPOW-AIR is a project mainly based on preventing and detecting violence against women and raising awareness by conducting research, generating appropriate tools and promoting the empowerment of Roma women. The project was launched by SURT, a Spanish women foundation; following a request by Romani women, to take action against violence against them.⁴¹ One of the most significant steps of the project is to carry the issue of violence against Romani women to a political level to be able to take action more efficiently.

39 http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/final-report_en.doc

40 https://www.gitanos.org/upload/83/83/Annual_Report_2014_-_Discrimination_and_the_Roma_community.pdf

41 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_stories_2013/spain_en.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL

- The Spanish authorities should begin collecting data which will ensure that special measures in education, housing, health and employment are designed and implemented in favour of the Roma on the basis of their actual needs and that their implementation will be monitored and their effectiveness regularly checked.
- The Spanish government should ensure that the global economic crisis does not prevent the implementation of national and local programmes for Roma inclusion.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

- Disaggregated data should be collected on discrimination, with due respect for the principles of confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary self-identification, for the purpose of combating racial discrimination.
- The Spanish government should introduce a criminal law provision expressly considering racist motivation as an aggravating circumstance for any offence.
- Spain should recognise anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism and reinforce existing efforts to design awareness-raising campaigns to debunk myths and prejudice about the Roma. The first step should be to recognise past abuses against the Roma, establishing an official commemoration of the Roma Holocaust and its inclusion in the schoolbooks. In doing so, Spain would also tackle the denial of the Roma genocide in considering it as a racist crime which falls under abuse of rights.⁴²

EDUCATION

- The Spanish authorities must engage in improving the conditions for the early inclusion of Roma children in kindergartens and primary schools.
- Practices for teaching children with linguistic deficiencies should be enhanced.
- Specific activities aiming at the inclusion of Roma pupils should be offered so that they obtain a sense of achievement, enhance their confidence and develop a sense of belonging to the educational and social environment.
- The authorities must accentuate their efforts on including Roma culture in schools and to preserve their cultural identity. The practice of Roma assistants must be encouraged, since schools recognise them as important links in their efforts to improve education.
- Spain should refrain from cutting budgets allocated to Roma cultural and educational activities.

EMPLOYMENT

- The Spanish government must strengthen its efforts to support the training of Roma individuals and to improve their job opportunities.
- Discriminatory practices must be prevented by all legal means.

HEALTH

- Spain must urgently address the poor health status of Roma by improving the access to healthcare, physically and financially and also by reinforcing aid programmes and increasing the number of health mediators.
- Preventive health campaigns and health education, targeted at specific Roma issues, especially concerning sexual and reproductive health, addictive substance use and vaccinations, should be reinforced.

HOUSING

- The Spanish government should take all necessary measures to arrange conditions in Roma settlements.
- Spain must ensure access to safe water in all Roma settlements.
- The Spanish authorities must prevent spatial segregation, including the monitoring of plans and housing programmes as well as provides housing capacities outside of Roma settlements.
- The Spanish authorities must, in accordance with international law, ensure the clear prohibition of forced evictions. They must ensure that possible evictions are only carried out after consulting the communities and after taking appropriate legal safeguards, including the provision of suitable alternative accommodation.

RACIST CRIMES

- The Spanish government should ensure to take all necessary measures to prevent the discrimination of Roma and assist the victims of hate crimes aiming at raising awareness of the police forces towards Roma by necessary actions and policies.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Spain should further its support, financially and materially, to the Romani language and culture.
- Spain should focus more on increasing the political participation of Roma, to be elected in local, regional and national bodies.

GENDER EQUALITY AND ROMA WOMEN

- The Spanish government must ensure that Roma women do not encounter discrimination not only in the mainstream society but also in their own community and take all necessary measures to maintain their equality within the social life, education, health and employment.
- Roma women should be encouraged to have education and motivate their children to attend and stay in school.

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