



Policy Paper

# Roma Child Poverty and Social Exclusion

**Eurodiaconia** is a European network of 54 organisations in 32 countries, founded in the Christian faith and working in the tradition of diaconia. Representing over 30.000 local organisations, our members provide inclusive social and healthcare services and promote social justice.

This publication has been validated by our members and was approved by Eurodiaconia's board on 16 September 2021.

## Mission

Eurodiaconia is a network of churches and Christian organizations that provide social and health care services and advocate for social justice. Together we work for just and transformative social change across Europe, leaving no-one behind.

## Vision

Driven by our Christian faith, our vision is of a Europe where each person is valued for their inherent God-given worth and dignity and where our societies guarantee social justice for all people, including the most vulnerable and marginalized.

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# About this publication



Eurodiaconia is a network of 54 organisations in 32 countries, founded in the Christian faith and working in the tradition of diaconia. Representing over 30,000 service providers, Eurodiaconia members provide social and health services and promote social justice. Many of them provide services to assist children and their families living in poverty, as well as projects that seek to empower Roma<sup>1</sup> communities while providing essential social services.

Eurodiaconia members work to provide access to education, after-school activities, and other social services along the spectrum of the childhood for Roma and non-Roma children. Eurodiaconia members also work with the families of children living in poverty, assisting parents to access quality employment, housing, family mediation and therapy, integration services for families with a migration background, and projects focused on the inclusion of Roma families.

*Eurodiaconia members work to provide access to education, after-school activities, and services along the spectrum of the childhood for Roma and non-Roma children.*

## Why Roma child poverty and social exclusion?

This paper follows on from our 2019 Policy Paper on Child Poverty<sup>2</sup> and provides insight and recommendations to policy makers at the EU and Member State level to strengthen existing efforts and to update strategies specifically targeting Roma child poverty and

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Roma” refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned (Council of Europe Definition) <https://rm.coe.int/1680088eab>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eurodiaconia.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Revision-of-Policy-Paper-on-Child-Poverty-July-2019.pdf>

social exclusion. Experience from our members working with Roma children in poverty is the foundation of the recommendations, which are listed at the end of this document.

Eurodiaconia members working with Roma children living in poverty continually emphasize the need for early intervention in the lives of children living in poverty to break the generational cycle of poverty and social exclusion. For Roma children in particular, poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is closely linked to antigypsyism and barriers that prevent their meaningful participation in education and society. We have chosen to highlight Roma children living in poverty to bring attention to the current situation and prevent further destitution because of the COVID-19 crisis. We believe that the experiences of our members working on the ground to provide social services to Roma children living in poverty provides necessary insight for policy makers both on the EU and national level to step up and fill in the gaps of current policy related to Roma child poverty.

The recently released Child Guarantee calls for Member States to ensure effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school and out-of-school activities, at least one healthy meal each school day, healthcare, and effective access to adequate nutrition and decent housing. It notes that children should be included in the design, monitoring, and evaluation of the Action Plans. The explanatory memorandum for the Child Guarantee asserts that other forms of disadvantage, alongside poverty, create barriers for inclusion and participation in society and asks that Member States consider the specific needs of children with a minority or ethnic background, amongst other intersectional vulnerabilities.

The Child Guarantee is a welcome first step towards tackling Roma child poverty and social exclusion, but further action in other areas is necessary, including a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy and targeted action to combat discrimination.

Synergies between The Child Guarantee and other EU policies include a Commission report on the application of the EU Racial Equality Directive, which prohibits discrimination based on ethnic or racial origin, including discrimination of Roma children, in different areas such as education and social protection.

Furthermore, the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation recommends fighting multiple and structural discrimination against Roma, in particular

Roma children. It urges Member States to take strong measures that support Roma children and their families in the interrelated fields of employment, social services, quality, inclusive mainstream education and early childhood education and care, health, housing and access to essential services, nutrition, and access to leisure activities.

The Sustainable Development Goals highlight child poverty in multiple ways, calling for child poverty to be halved by 2030 (9 million children lifted out of poverty). Goal 10 calls for reduced inequalities between and within Member States in income as well as those based on ethnicity, sex, disability, origin, or other status. Other SDGs targeting zero hunger, good health and well-being, clean water and sanitation, and quality education are also relevant to Roma child poverty.

The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child emphasises that every child in Europe and across the world should enjoy the same rights and live free from discrimination and intimidation of any kind. It focuses, amongst other priorities, on socio-economic inclusion, participation in political and democratic life, and creating an EU where children can safely navigate the digital environment and harness its opportunities.

The European Pillar of Social Rights and the new Social Pillar Action Plan also include an emphasis on fighting child poverty. Although the Action Plan's goal of lifting at least 5 million children out of poverty in the EU by 2030 is not as ambitious as the goal set by the SDGs, it sets an important benchmark for addressing child poverty and enables Member States to reach this goal by allocating 5% of ESF+ funds towards children living in poverty or at risk of poverty for Member States most affected by Child Poverty. The Action Plan's revised social scoreboard also includes a headline indicator for at-risk-of-poverty rate or exclusion of children and thus provides a way to monitor the progress made in the fight against child poverty. For Member States to deliver on the SDGs, they will have to set more ambitious targets for lifting children out of poverty. Additionally, the lack of disaggregated data and absence of specific targets for groups most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion in the revised social scoreboard is likely to result in the continued exclusion of Roma families and children.

In the context of this legislation and these remaining gaps, this paper outlines the major difficulties currently faced by Roma children and their families who live in poverty as well

as the measures that will be required to overcome societal and structural barriers to their full inclusion and flourishing in society.

# Roma child poverty and social exclusion in Europe



The Roma are the largest ethnic minority in Europe. There are approximately 10-12 million Roma living in Europe with 6 million of these being citizens or residents of the EU. While there is a strong diversity among Roma, many Roma are still victims of antigypsyism and social exclusion, with many Roma living in poverty in segregated communities.

Before COVID-19, Roma children were already disproportionately living in poverty or at risk of poverty. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey in nine EU Member States, Roma children are the most deprived group, with more than 90% of Roma children living at risk of poverty (EU-MIDIS II survey 2015-2016).<sup>3</sup>

Roma people have overwhelmingly remained in poverty despite efforts to remedy the situation due to generations of antigypsyism in governmental institutions and society that have resulted in their systemic exclusion from society. It is crucial therefore to address Roma poverty and child poverty through the lens of anti-discrimination and towards active inclusion, in addition to addressing the typical cycle of poverty/generational poverty.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey-roma-selected-findings>



## Roma child poverty and social exclusion during COVID-19

COVID has exacerbated the situation of Roma children living in poverty and resulted in their further exclusion. Eurodiaconia members reported that many children have been unable to access online schooling, school meals, or adequate hygiene and live in crowded and unsuitable accommodation. Many Roma children have effectively missed a year or more of formal education. Eurodiaconia members also stressed the effect of the lockdowns on the mental health of children living in poverty who were isolated and deprived of social contact and living in increased uncertainty and economic precarity.

Data from FRA<sup>4</sup> confirms that Roma people were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, both facing an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and disproportionately affected by measures taken to contain the virus. The lack of access to running water and proper sanitation in addition to crowded housing contributed to the spread of the virus in segregated Roma communities.

FRA also reports that lockdowns prevented many Roma people from engaging in work, specifically precarious work as street vendors and travelling traders. They also faced difficulties in claiming support and benefits available to those working in the formal labour market, and therefore faced an increase in poverty. Antigypsyism in the form of hate speech and human rights violations were widespread, and Roma were scapegoated for the spread of the virus. The lack of basic infrastructure in Roma communities led to Roma children falling behind in school without access to digital equipment, electricity, and internet.

Europe's recovery from the pandemic must specifically target Roma children, who are at risk of falling even further into cycles of intergenerational poverty and early-school leaving. Increasing social protection for Roma families and children, combatting antigypsyism, and breaking down barriers to education must be part of Member State's social and economic recovery from the pandemic.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/covid19-rights-impact-september-1>

## School Segregation

Educational segregation remains a major systemic disadvantage for Roma children. As of 2016, Roma students attended schools where all (13%) or most (33%) of students are Roma and attended classes where all (13%) or most (31%) are Roma (Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies).<sup>5</sup> Segregated Roma schools are often underfunded, and students are often forced to learn in single-room style classrooms alongside students from different ages.

Early school leaving is common, with only 18% of Roma students completing upper secondary, vocational, or post-secondary education (Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies).

Ongoing infringement procedures against Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic on the topic of school segregation highlight the gravity of the situation and need for strong commitments to end school segregation in all Member States.

Unfortunately, Eurodiaconia's initial assessment of National Recovery and Resilience Plans<sup>6</sup> show that in most country recommendations, Roma are either not mentioned or are insufficiently mentioned in key areas, including access to employment, housing, healthcare, and social services. For example, in the plans released by Bulgaria, Roma are mentioned as making up a large percentage of early school leavers. However, there is no mention of the high level of educational segregation, the resulting inequalities in educational outcome for Roma children, and plans to target this ongoing issue.

Our members report that Roma families, especially those living in segregated settlements, often experience generational illiteracy. This means that parents are unable to assist their children with learning to read or recognise letters from a young age. Therefore, it is incredibly important for Roma children to be able to access early childhood education to make sure that they are not behind when they start formal education. Furthermore, for the many Roma families who immigrate to other countries

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<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/report-implementation-national-roma-integration-strategies-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/report-implementation-national-roma-integration-strategies-2019_en)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eurodiaconia.org/2021/05/national-recovery-and-resilience-plans-where-are-the-roma/>

or return to their home countries after a lengthy period abroad, language difficulties can present a major barrier to integrating into local school systems.

## Institutionalisation of Roma children

Roma children are over-represented in institutional care, with a recent report by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)<sup>7</sup> stating that children are removed from their families because of two key reasons: poverty and prejudice. The report cites lack of preventive measures such as insufficient skilled social workers, lack of community support services, along with material conditions of the family (inadequate housing, unemployment, and indebtedness). Many Roma children are placed in institutional care after school absenteeism, a primary reason for this absenteeism being harassment and bullying from classmates and teachers. Institutionalised children are rarely returned to their families and suffer greatly from being removed from their families.

The solution to the over-institutionalisation of Roma children therefore must address both causes. First, antigypsyism must be recognised and addressed in a systemic way. Secondly, social services must be well-equipped, funded, and trained to prioritise solutions in the best interests of the child. Transparent systems and processes must be put in place to ensure that children are not placed in institutions because of discriminatory practices.

## Digital Poverty

Digital poverty is yet another obstacle that leads to Roma and other children living in poverty unable to break the cycle of poverty and early school leaving.

Although there is no disaggregated data by ethnic background on the digital poverty faced by Roma children, the rates of digital deprivation are much higher in countries with a high population of Roma. Data from 2019 shows that in Romania 23.1% of children

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload\\_en/file/5284\\_file1\\_blighted-lives-romani-children-in-state-care.pdf](http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/5284_file1_blighted-lives-romani-children-in-state-care.pdf)

are digitally deprived, and in Bulgaria 20.8% (DigiGen Project).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, digital poverty particularly affects children in severe material deprivation, of which Roma children are overrepresented.

The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the gap of children experiencing digital deprivation. Many children have lost over a year of formal education due to lack of access to digital devices. Beyond access to digital devices are facilitating factors, including access to electricity, internet, not enough devices in the home, not being able to use devices, or lack of parental support. For children already living in extreme poverty, who often have parents who are illiterate and unable to assist their children in utilising digital devices, simply providing laptops and tablets is not enough.

While the pandemic has brought about a growing awareness of digital poverty and the digital divide, there is a need to better understand the specific needs of digitally deprived families and children and to better monitor the incidence of digital poverty in Europe. Beyond assessment of the needs of digitally deprived children in Europe, there needs to be concrete investment in digital tools and education on how to utilise digital tools for all children and families. Special attention must be provided for children living in extreme poverty and those with digitally illiterate parents.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.digigen.eu/results/digitally-deprived-children-in-europe/>

# Experiences of our Members



Eurodiaconia members work to target different aspects of poverty and exclusion by addressing poverty and social exclusion in a holistic way. Their work with Roma children is often centred on access to education, as well as providing after school tutoring and leisure activities. Eurodiaconia members also work with Roma families, including assistance to access employment.

## Projects and best practice

Romanian member **Diakonia Covasna/Diakonia Sfantu Gheorghe**<sup>9</sup> have run day centres and after-school programmes for Roma and other vulnerable children since 2011. They consider it important to work not only with Roma children, but also with other children in the community, and to implement projects to create tolerance between local ethnic and social groups. During the pandemic, they reported that many Roma children struggled to transition to digital education due to a lack of knowledge or assistance on how to utilise digital devices. The situation became particularly dire, with many Roma youth leaving school to work or becoming young parents. To respond to this situation, they organised a mentorship network to assist students to continue their studies and teach them how to utilise digital devices.

Eurodiaconia's member from Serbia, **Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation (EHO)**, works with Roma families, many of whom recently returned or were forcibly returned from abroad.<sup>10</sup> Their project assists children to register in school and provides pedagogical assistance to Roma students. They

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.diakonia.ro/office/index.php/en/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://ehons.org/rs/civilno-drustvo/14/2021/01/28/podrska-integraciji-povratnickih-porodica.html>

have a team of mainly Roma associates, who are activists, pedagogists, and social workers, who work closely with families to ensure that their children are adjusting well to school and receiving the assistance they need to learn the language. These associates organise family conferences on a regular basis, where all stakeholders relevant to the children's integration gather to discuss and agree on concrete steps with the input of all family members. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many children living in segregated villages were cut-off. Distance-learning was not possible for the families who lacked the necessary equipment. EHO created an application to provide additional support to the children and families to organise mentoring face-to-face so that the families could ask for support and connect with the mentors who could then provide support for the children with homework. They also provided the children with tablets.

**Diakonie ČCE** in the Czech Republic runs a pre-school in Vsetín<sup>11</sup> for Roma children who are living in a Roma settlement. They utilise the Montessori method and aim to bridge the gap for children from illiterate Roma families so that the children can have a good head-start before they enter formal education.

The TOY for Inclusion project<sup>12</sup> run by Eurodiaconia member **The Salvation Army** in The Netherlands is an example of best practice in social inclusion. Although the children participating in the project are not necessarily living in poverty, the purpose of the project is to bring together children from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to create an inclusive space for them to learn and play together. An understanding of the poverty experienced by Roma as a symptom of social exclusion enables the project to tackle one of the roots of generational poverty and exclusion.

Our Finnish member **Deaconess Foundation** operates a drop-in centre called Hirundo in Helsinki for Roma migrants from Eastern Europe. The centre provides social counselling for families and supports the encounters between Roma families and children and day care services, school, and child protection services. Mediation and support are needed since Roma migrant families have a short history of migration to

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.diakonievsetin.cz/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://reyn.eu/dutch-play-hubs/>

Finland, so there is a lack of trust and awareness between them and public services. The community workers provide psychosocial support, practical information, and translation when such meetings occur. The Foundation also organizes trainings for police, health, social, education sector professionals and students on equality and the circumstances of Roma migrant families. Roma migrant children often have unequal access to education and other social and health services, since their parents do not have knowledge about systems in Finland, and the language barrier is an extra burden.

Deaconess Foundation also funds and implements together with E-Romnja (The Association to Promote Roma Women's Rights) work with Roma girls and boys in four localities in Romania. The project works with children and youth to make them proud of their Roma identity, increases their mobilization at the local level, and advocates with authorities to include the needs and voices of Roma families and children on local and national agendas. There is also a focus on mediating between schools and Roma children and families.

## Key challenges and recommendations

It is anticipated that Roma children will continue to fall through the gaps in the implementation of the Child Guarantee and other recent legislation. Because of the **multiplicity of barriers** faced by Roma children to access basic services, it is likely that they will be overlooked in plans to address the needs of vulnerable groups. For example, many Roma children live in segregated settlements and are unable to access school or they can only access low-quality segregated schools. For these children to access education and other basic services, transportation services to gap this geographical segregation must be provided for free.

For children who face **multiple discrimination**, for example, Roma children with disabilities, Roma girls who are at risk of early marriage, or LGBT Roma youth, the barriers to accessing their rights and overcoming poverty are even more complex. Policymakers and programmes targeting Roma children living in poverty must consider the multiple discrimination that exist for Roma children and include intersectional analysis and measures that account for this. For example, when attempting to address the geographical segregation of Roma children by providing free transportation to non-

segregated schools, specialised transportation for children with disabilities must be available.

Our members stressed that the situation of Roma children living in poverty cannot be considered separately from their parents and families. The high level of poverty faced by Roma families must be addressed, and **barriers towards accessing decent housing, employment, social benefits, and social and health services** must be identified and addressed in a holistic way.

Roma child poverty is a complex issue that is rooted in **antigypsyism** and the systemic perpetuation of discrimination against Roma people. The correlation between poverty and social exclusion must be considered and addressed in parallel for solutions to be effective. For Roma children to have a real chance at overcoming **generational cycles of poverty**, ending antigypsyism must be a priority at the local, regional, and national levels.

The **active participation of Roma children and families** in the design, implementation, and evaluation of relevant policies and programmes is paramount to the sustainability and success of new legislation meant to protect children. Consultation with civil society and NGOs working in this area is also crucial.

Eurodiaconia members identified **geographical segregation, stigma (antigypsyism) and educational segregation** as key drivers that perpetuate the cycle of poverty for Roma families and children. Roma children in non-segregated schools face resentment and mistreatment from their non-Roma classmates and communities.

Members identified **education** as a critical area for disrupting the cycle of poverty. In addition to helping Roma children access education, the provision of wrap-around services in the form of after-school support, pedagogical assistance, and language services are needed. Promoting the importance of education to Roma families without assisting them to overcome the barriers that prevent them from doing so is not helpful. Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation shared that active outreach to Roma families, facilitated in their organisation by a team of Roma social workers, is important to build trust with Roma families to encourage them to send their children to school and help them sort out the administrative tasks while providing the educational and practical



support needed to do so. These holistic interventions are necessary to reduce early marriages and early school leaving.

A **lack of trust in authorities** is a key barrier for projects assisting Roma children living in poverty. Parents do not trust authorities and fear that their children will be taken away from them. Longstanding mistrust of authorities by Roma families is common, due to a history of mistreatment, discrimination, and violence that continues to this day. Overcoming mistrust of school administration, social workers, and other authority figures by actively building trust and overcoming systemic discrimination in social services is necessary for Roma communities to feel safe and treated with dignity and respect.

In terms of digital poverty, members shared that lack of access to digital devices is not the only issue – it is also that **children do not know how to use digital devices** and their teachers and parents are not able to monitor or assist their usage of such devices.

Members noted that **administrative burden and discrimination** makes it difficult for Roma families to access services. Poor quality and coordination of local level services result in difficulties accessing social services, and discrimination leads to a vicious cycle of self-isolation. There is a need for coordination of local stakeholders, as well as better coordination on a national level to ensure that Roma children do not so easily fall through the gaps.

Finally, members emphasized that the positive traits of Roma culture and heritage ought to be more widely shared, and that **educational curriculum should include Roma role models and history**. Educating teachers and children on antigypsyism and Roma history will help Roma children feel more welcome in school, reflect positively on their Roma identity, and will also educate the majority culture to overcome harmful stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes that can result in unsafe learning environments for Roma children.

# Policy Recommendations



While The Child Guarantee and other instruments including the Social Pillar Action Plan provide a clear path forward towards addressing child poverty, they require additional commitments towards ending poverty and exclusion for families and all of society. There must be ambitious targets set by the EU and Member States to eradicate child poverty that are backed with adequate funding and strong political will on all levels. Additionally, anti-poverty legislation that ensures minimum income, adequate minimum wage, affordable housing, ending homelessness, and broadening anti-discrimination legislation are necessary to ensure that parents of children living in poverty can overcome barriers to accessing employment, accessing suitable housing, and overcome generational poverty and exclusion.

Eradicating child poverty requires addressing the needs of specific groups that are disproportionately affected by economic and social inequality. Beyond effective service provision, true structural change that allows Roma people to access their rights and live free from discrimination is needed to lift Roma children out of poverty and social exclusion and in turn, fulfil their true potential.

*True structural change that allows Roma people to access their rights and live free from discrimination is needed to lift Roma children out of poverty and social exclusion.*

The following recommendations elaborate what we see as the most necessary actions to combat Roma child poverty and social exclusion on the EU and Member State level.

## EU Recommendations

### *Access to free, effective, and quality services*

- 1) Disaggregate data by ethnicity to monitor whether Roma children are adequately prioritised in policy outcomes and funding
- 2) Invest into the provision of quality social services along the lifespan with a priority on early childhood

### *Intersectional and holistic approach*

- 1) Ensure an intersectional approach to child poverty by addressing child poverty in other policy areas and include vulnerable children in gender, disability, anti-racism/discrimination legislation
- 2) Monitor and tackle the multiple discrimination against Roma children and address educational and spatial segregation, insufficient access to housing and social and health care

### *Support children and families*

- 1) Step up anti-poverty legislation, for example a directive on adequate minimum income and a directive on minimum wages, to address poverty of the whole family, including families experiencing in-work poverty
- 2) Enable access to employment for Roma adults living in poverty by stepping up anti-discrimination legislation, encouraging inclusive workplaces, and recommending active outreach measures for those furthest from the labour market
- 3) Develop family friendly work policies that help to reconcile work and family life
- 4) Closely monitor the situation of placing Roma children in institutional care in EU Member States
- 5) Prioritise de-segregation and de-institutionalisation as a key issue in Roma inclusion policies and funding priorities

### *Participation and active inclusion*

- 1) Consult children and their families, particularly those living in poverty, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation concerning children
- 2) Consult NGOs and Roma grassroots organisations in the design, implementation, and monitoring of programmes and legislation targeting Roma child poverty

### *Funding priorities*

- 1) Improve monitoring of Member States' use of EU funds to ensure that projects benefit Roma children; immediately stop funding of discriminatory projects/investments
- 2) Fund research on digital poverty and best practice solutions to bridge the digital divide as well as providing digital devices free of charge for all school aged children
- 3) Enhance digital connectivity of the poorest (micro)regions
- 4) Earmark funding for deinstitutionalisation and improvement of child protection

## National Recommendations

### *Policy design*

- 1) Meaningfully consult children, especially those in poverty, and their parents at local, regional, and national level in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of legislation related to child poverty
- 2) Meaningfully consult with equality bodies and civil society/NGOs, particularly grassroots Roma-led organisations, on child poverty legislation on the topic of Roma child poverty
- 3) Consider setting more ambitious targets for lifting children and their families out of poverty than the targets provided in the Social Pillar Action Plan
- 4) Ensure that Roma national strategic plans address the needs of Roma children living in poverty
- 5) Include Roma children (and intersectional needs) as a targeted category of children in need to be reached by corresponding integrated measures within the framework of the Child Guarantee national plans
- 6) Set more ambitious goals than called for in the Social Pillar Action Plan for lifting children out of poverty in order to be in line with the Sustainable Development Goals

### *Access to services*

- 1) Streamline administrative processes and barriers, including residency requirements, so vulnerable families can effectively access services and enrolment in education
- 2) Make administrative documents available in easy-to-read language as well as the Romani language and other relevant minority languages
- 3) Prioritise active outreach for Roma families to help them to enrol children in early childhood education and address factors preventing children from attending school
- 4) Actively build trust between local authorities, educators, and social workers and Roma communities and families
- 5) Provide sustainable support to local civil society and NGOs who provide valuable services to Roma children and their families
- 6) Facilitate cooperation between stakeholders working with Roma children and their families to ensure family needs are met holistically
- 7) Ensure long-term support for Roma children is provided from early age to high-level education to make sure that Roma youth have a chance to participate in civic activities and in policymaking

### *Support children and families*

- 1) Invest in training, employment schemes and parenting support programmes
- 2) Implement active inclusion principles including an adequate minimum income, access to quality services, and inclusive labour markets

- 3) Instead of placing children into institutional care on the basis of poverty, provide sustainable support to families experiencing or being at risk of poverty

#### *Education*

- 1) Prioritise active desegregation measures accompanied by inclusion support for Roma children in mainstream schools
- 2) Include in desegregation efforts free transportation and mandatory trainings for teachers on inclusive teaching methods
- 3) Educate communities on the importance of de-segregation and educational inclusion/active inclusion
- 4) Include Roma role models and history in educational curriculum
- 5) Allocate funding to provide all school aged children with a digital device and ensure that all children have access to electricity and internet in their homes
- 6) Make mandatory the addition of digital skills to school curriculum



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