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**“Monitoring and Evaluation in the National Roma Integration Strategies”: the challenges ahead**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Paper commissioned by Amalipe: Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance

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**THE AIM OF THE REPORT**

National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) have been presented to the European Commission (EC) by the Member states at the end of 2011 and beginning of 2012.[[1]](#footnote-1) The aim of the report is to facilitate the debate on how to make substantial progress in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) during their process of implementation at the local, European and national level. The report focuses on the importance of M&E and its role in the policy process, presents a comparative analysis of the Strategies regarding the sections dedicated to M&E, as well as other related references, and makes proposals on how to support M&E in the implementation of the NRIS. The present document is a summary of the aforementioned report.

**MAIN FINDINGS**

NRIS presented by the Member states are very diverse in terms of approach, quality and level of detail. While some strategies follow the orientations proposed by the EC and focus in the four priority areas identifying clear targets, many others give a general description on the current situation and are less focused or just refer to inclusion objectives stabilised in their respective countries for the general population. All these differences show that there is no basis for a standard approach to Roma integration policies or even M&E process across the EU.

The analysis shows that M&E foreseen in the different NRIS present a variety of methods and processes: while some Member states do not make or make little references to which mechanisms will be followed for the monitoring of their respective strategies, how these will be evaluated or where does the ownership of this process relies on, other are more explicit in this area. Several Member states recognise the need for a strong monitoring system and some are striving to put in place or at least are planning to develop such a system. Despite of this, in general terms there is little alignment between objectives, indicators, systems of monitoring and evaluation process; for instance some strategies include M&E mechanisms that seem to be rather unrealistic for their implementation.

A summary of the main findings is presented below.

**Description of the current situation: available data and sources of information**

Most countries, with the exception of France and Luxembourg have included in their NRIS a section or a chapter that refers to the current situation of Roma either by including a section with information describing the situation of the Roma in the country and their main problems based on specific researches [*Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Spain*], either by providing information based on qualitative data and reports [*Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and UK (Wales)*].

Despite of this, the majority of countries have very little or no available data or studies with information on the current living conditions or situation of Roma and many available researches and studies are obsolete as they do not present a global picture of the country nor a detailed territorial description. Collecting ethnic data remains a problem for most of the countries, especially when this is done by public authorities. Without a better knowledge of the ‘Roma universe’, i.e the actual number of Roma in a state, the M&E will be difficultly present clear impact analysis.

**Setting the objectives for monitoring and evaluating**

The lack of available and updated data in the four key areas have hindered the establishment of tangible quantitative indicators by Member states. The analysis of all countries shows that NRIS follow different ways to describe and present their objectives:

* Some countries [*Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia*] include a section within the strategy or an annexed action plan that describes in further detail the objectives set out in the NRIS.
* Some countries [*Austria, Latvia, Portugal, Spain, Sweden*] include quantitative objectives setting targets in percentages (i.e. percentage of Roma people unemployed) or impact objectives (i.e. reduction of poverty rates).
* Other countries [*Slovenia, United Kingdom, Poland, Austria, Belgium and to some extent Italy*] combine generic outcomes objectives such as “the improvement of the situation of Roma” or “a better integration and social inclusion of Roma population”.
* Some countries [*Denmark, Ireland, Germany, Austria*] include in the strategy a list of objectives that have been set out in their respective mainstreaming national policies (housing, education, employment, housing).
* Some countries [*Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands*] refer to their integration and social inclusion strategies and plans in terms of objectives for the general population (for the entire population) but do not include specific ones for Roma population.

**Indicators that will be used to monitor and evaluate the results**

The identification of clear indicators related to the objectives set in the NRIS is essential to monitor and evaluate the results at the medium and long-term. In general terms, most countries do not clearly have a set list of indicators. Among those that have included them, some have foreseen quantitative results whilst a few other have chosen qualitative indicators from two different perspectives: those that have set impact or quantitative objectives with indicators that measure results in terms of percentages (% of unemployment; % of Roma children in education; etc.) [*Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden*] and those that have set activity or generic objectives with indicators based on inputs or outputs that measure the implementation of activities (number of awareness-raising activities; number of participants; etc.) [*Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia*].

Concerning the sources of verification, except for some of the countries that have presented annexes of indicators with this information, there is little reference to the way the information will be collected, the frequency of measurement, etc., which makes it difficult when assessing the quality of the information.

**Methods of monitoring and evaluation**

The analysis shows that there are a variety of approaches and methods; for instance, those that combine different tools such as the elaboration of review reports, external assessment, periodic studies or statistics, meetings of inter-ministerial committees or committees of stakeholders, etc. [*Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden*]; those that have not foreseen a specific method, as this will be done through the evaluation carried out in mainstreaming policies [*Denmark, Ireland*]; and those that do not foresee specific methods [*Cyprus, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK (Wales)*] or refer to international reports, which regularly evaluate the situation of Roma [*Germany*].

With regards to the M&E timeframe, this is not often specified and not differentiated. In most countries monitoring will be done annually. As per the evaluation, some countries include a mid-term evaluation by 2015 and a second evaluation at the end of the strategy’s period, while only a few foresee regular evaluation on an annual basis.

Concerning interaction between M&E and the implementation process, only a few countries [*Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden*] include references to how the M&E feeds in the implementation process through regular assessment or evaluation reports that could potentially be taken into consideration at a certain point in time to revise, amend or adapt the objectives and activities foreseen in their respective strategy so as to adapt to new challenges or realities.

In terms of funding for monitoring and evaluation, with the exception of Finland NRIS do not make a reference to the funds that will be allocated to this task.

**Department responsible of the monitoring and evaluation**

Responsibilities on the monitoring and evaluation of the NRIS relies, in general terms, in the governmental department responsible of the design and endorsement of the strategy; in fact, in most cases, the governmental department responsible of the strategy is at the same time the governmental department responsible of the M&E and also hosts the NCP. In very few cases, the governmental responsibility depends of a high ranked department and the involvement of the regional and the local level in the M&E is scare except in some cases. There are very little references on the means, capacities and effective power that bodies responsible for M&E will have in practical terms.

**Participation of stakeholders, CSOs and Roma representatives**

More than half Member states foresee the participation of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process. Among the bodies to be involved there are frequent references to the role of academia and university experts, to CSOs working with Roma, Roma NGOs and Roma leaders although in most cases this participation is based on voluntary decisions rather that in formal structures of civil dialogue. Some countries do not specify the mechanism of participation [*Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia*]. In some cases, ad hoc systems and mechanisms for stakeholders’ participation have or will be established [*Austria, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia*]. In other cases, existing consultative bodies will be engaged in the monitoring and implementation process [*Finland, Spain*]. In the case of Sweden, the strategy indicates a variety of methods that could be used to involve Roma representatives. Other countries have included Roma civil society organisations and representatives in the commissions, committees, platforms or forums that collaborate with the governmental department responsible of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy [*Austria, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia*]. And finally, some countries do not include reference to the participation of Roma representatives or civil society organisations [*Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, UK (Wales)*].

**THE BULGARIAN AND ROMANIA NRIS**

The **NRIS in Bulgaria** applies an integrated targeted approach to Roma citizens in vulnerable condition, which falls within the framework of a more general strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion. It is one of the very few NRIS that was adopted by the national Parliament. The description of the current situation of the Roma is based on data provided by the National Statistical Institute from the population and housing census of 2011 although the description given is rather partial as there is no information about the situation of Roma within regions.

The goals set are comprehensive and well planned although these are not set as measurable objectives and do not refer to how the planned actions or activities will influence positive change or development taking into account the data included in the “Current status of the Roma Community” section. The “administrative monitoring” described in the strategy foresees the elaboration of an administrative report in 2015 and annual reports by each institution engaged in the process of implementation. However it does not refer to the evaluation methodology and lacks of concrete indicators and mechanisms for collecting information related to the outcomes of the integration policies. The NCCEII is the governmental structure responsible of the implementation of the Strategy as well as of the monitoring and evaluation, taking into account that ministries and other competent authorities. Although the Strategy foresees the participation of the Roma community as a success factor it does not describe how this will be implemented.

The **NRIS in Romania** is framed under the social policies, focused on the concept of social inclusion. The Strategy starts with two sections (“Relevant general information” and “defining the problem”) that analyse the available data on the situation of the Roma population in the country based on the National Census of 2002, taking into consideration that in Romania declaring ethnic identity remains a personal option; other sources of information used are reports from the World Bank, the Open Society Foundation or the Presidential Commission for the Social and Demographic Risks’ Analysis.

With regards to the M&E method, it describes a complex process with the participation of many different actors, both at national and county level although it is unclear how this will work in practice. This will be coordinated by the Central Department for Monitoring and Assessment (CDMA) and an inter-ministerial Joint Working Group responsible of endorsing the annual report and submitting it to the government. The participation of Roma organisations and Roma representatives is foreseen through the National Agency for Roma.

**THE CHALLENGES AHEAD**

When it comes to implementation, it is necessary to focus on the action plans, to identify specific measures, to develop projects and actions, to establish clear timetables and allocate appropriate funding in order to produce results. In fact, implementation will imply the development or use of “existing robust monitoring systems by setting a baseline, appropriate indicators and measureable targets in collaboration, where possible, with the National Statistical Offices and to ensure that each programme makes provision for the assessment of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impacts.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Below, we describe the areas where there improvement is needed.

* **Creating conditions for proper M&E**

NRIS M&E need to be seen both as a process and a method as well as a means of engaging more people in an informed way with Roma. It is very important to create conditions for qualitative change in terms of the extent to which the NRIS process leads to better ways of talking about and addressing Roma issues. Efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability must be at the heart of the NRIS M&E. Member states should, according to their current situation, make progress in the following areas:

* Designing national and local actions plans with a clear focus on targets with the involvement of key stakeholders. That would require: a more focused and better targeted approach to the four priority areas; including the territorial approach by involving the regional and the local level; establishing adequate budgets and allocating economic resources; clarifying how the proposed objectives will be achieved and specifying responsibilities and task; mobilizing and involving domestic actors.
* Improving data collection and systems of gathering information by involving key stakeholders to achieve a wide consensus. For instance, by developing systematic actions and measures to obtain accurate and updated information on Roma living conditions, also at the local level; collecting information on the developed activities in the framework of the strategies; clarifying how new information will feed into the policy process.
* Establishing appropriated systems of monitoring, on one hand, and evaluation, on the other, with clear guidelines on how and who will develop them. For instance, through mid-term evaluations, annual reports, etc.
* **Framing monitoring and evaluation in the EU policy process**

Several Member states refer in their respective NRIS to the EU 2020 Strategy and NRPs as required by the EC Communication. Nevertheless, very little is said in most of the cases on how these two processes, NRIS and NRPs, will interact and feed into each other. In order to improve this, progress is needed in 2 areas:

* At EU level: taking into account the Roma situation in the Annual Growth Survey and include in the Commission assessment of the NRPs country-specific recommendations related to Roma, to be endorsed by the European Council.
* At national level: Member states must submit their reforms and measures to make progress towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (NRP) with explicit references to the Roma.

NRIS should be explicitly rights-based to ensure that Roma, as citizens or residents of the EU Member States, can fully enjoy their fundamental rights as enshrined both in EU law and in international human rights treaties binding on Member States. M&E in these strategies need to follow the respect for fundamental rights, the observance of which need to be monitored by the EC and ultimately ensured by the Court of Justice of the EU.

The advantages and potentialities of SF render them not only a financial tool but also a policy tool, hence it is recommended to have a wider connection between EU structural funds and financial programmes to achieve the expected results.

* **The role of the different actors in M&E**

NRIS have to widen the scope of M&E to different levels European, national and local paying special attention to the involvement and engagement of different stakeholders in structured processes, especially Roma organisations and representatives. For instance:

* The European institutions could provide tools for the monitoring process, supporting the capacity of Member states in the evaluation process and facilitating mechanisms of joint M&E between Member states and European institutions.
* The connection between EU processes and the local level must be improved in order to obtain a better and more effective implementation of Roma national policies; this represents a major challenge in many Member states and a key issue in the implementation of NRIS. M&E processes have to contribute to bridging the gap between national policies and the implementation process at local level and to include the local and regional dimensions of Roma issues into national and international agendas.
* Civil society organizations, including Roma organizations and representatives, need to be fully involved in the entire process of the NRIS (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) not only at the national but also at the local level.
1. All NRIS are available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. European Commission 2011 op.cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)