

# Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on Roma and Travellers communities

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# **1 Specific implications of the general measures taken to stop the COVID-19 pandemic on Roma and Travellers communities**

## **1.1 Type of measures**

- **Lockdown and restriction of movement**

On 17 March 2020, France ordered compulsory isolation for the entire population, including Roma and Travellers communities.<sup>1</sup> This nationwide lockdown was extended until 11 May,<sup>2</sup> when a gradual deconfinement started from this date.<sup>3</sup>

- From 17 March until 11 May, people were only permitted to leave their homes under certain circumstances, such as grocery shopping, outdoor exercise, medical appointments, and vital family reasons. They had to generate and carry with them a certificate stating the reason for leaving the house.<sup>4</sup>

- Since 11 May, people are allowed out of their homes without having to produce a self-certification. Travelling is also possible. However, trips to another department of France of more than 100km from home had been forbidden until 1 June. A few exceptions were possible notably for those who had to go to work, to school, for medical appointments, vital family or judicial reasons. In these cases, people were required to carry an attestation form stating the reason for the displacement. They had to print out or generate a digital document in accordance with their preference.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-260 of 16 March 2020:, available at <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041728476&categorieLien=id>

This text was modified in several occasions.

<sup>2</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-423 of 14 April 2020 supplementing the Decree n° 2020-293 of 23 March 2020, available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041797938&categorieLien=id>

<sup>3</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-548 of 11 May 2020, available at: [www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529)

This text was modified by decree n° 2020-604 of 20 May, available at: [www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041897835&categorieLien=id](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041897835&categorieLien=id)

<sup>4</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-260 of 16 March 2020: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041728476&categorieLien=id>

<sup>5</sup> France, Government, "Displacement certificate", 13 May 2020, available at: [www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-du-Ministere/Deconfinement-Declaration-de-deplacement](http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-du-Ministere/Deconfinement-Declaration-de-deplacement)

- A second phase of the deconfinement plan began on 2 June. A decree adopted on 31 May indicates, *inter alia*, that travelling farther than 100km is now possible for all.<sup>6</sup>

As regards national borders, France carried out targeted controls with all neighbouring countries until 15 June to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

Since the start of the sanitary crisis, all French and European citizens may enter the country as well as certain categories of third-country nationals. As such, those who have their permanent residence in France, health professionals, freight carriers, and cross-border workers.<sup>8</sup> Until 15 June, people who were travelling to France had to carry a travel certificate, which was a specific document certifying the reason for the journey.<sup>9</sup> They were also requested to fill out and carry with them a statement certifying they do not have any symptoms of a Covid-19 infection.<sup>10</sup> From 15 June, these requirements apply only for people coming from outside the European space.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, all exits were and remain authorised.

- **Gatherings**

In March, a series of decrees had been adopted limiting public gatherings and meetings in order to slow the spread of Covid-19 in the country.<sup>12</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-663 of 31 May 2020, available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041939818&dateTexte=20200605>

<sup>7</sup> France, Ministry of Interior, "Reinforcement of controls at the franco-german border", 15 March 2020, available at: [www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Communiqués/Renforcement-des-contrôles-a-la-frontiere-franco-allemande](http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Communiqués/Renforcement-des-contrôles-a-la-frontiere-franco-allemande)

<sup>8</sup> France, Government, "Information on Coronavirus", 26 April 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus](http://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus);

France, Ministry of Interior, "Travel certificate", 22 May 2020, available at: [www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Infos-pratiques/Attestation-de-deplacement-et-de-voyage](http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Infos-pratiques/Attestation-de-deplacement-et-de-voyage)

<sup>9</sup> France, Government, "Restrictions of movement and implementation of sanitary measures to borders", 22 May 2020, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/actualites/presse/communiqués-de-presse/article/communiqué-restrictions-de-circulation-et-mise-en-place-de-mesures-sanitaires>

<sup>10</sup> France, Ministry of Interior, "Travel certificate", 22 May 2020, available at: <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Infos-pratiques/Attestation-de-deplacement-et-de-voyage>

<sup>11</sup> France, Ministry of Interior, "Restrictions of movement to borders", 13 June 2020, available at: <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Communiqués/La-levee-des-restrictions-de-circulation-aux-frontieres-interieures-europeennes-de-la-France>

<sup>12</sup> France, Decree of 4 March 2020, available at: [www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041686833&categorieLien=id](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041686833&categorieLien=id);

France, Decree of 9 March 2020, available at: [https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=11FE53EF8439B6D66F8FFD81BF05B4DE.tplqfr43s\\_2?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041704203&dateTexte=&oldAction=rechJO&categorieLien=id&idJO=JORFCONT000041704068](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=11FE53EF8439B6D66F8FFD81BF05B4DE.tplqfr43s_2?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041704203&dateTexte=&oldAction=rechJO&categorieLien=id&idJO=JORFCONT000041704068)

decree of 13 March banned any gathering, meeting or activity bringing together more than 100 people simultaneously, whether held indoors or outdoors.<sup>13</sup>

Since 11 May, no event bringing together more than 5,000 people can take place on the territory of the Republic until the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2020. In addition, all gatherings, meetings or activities for a non-professional reason bringing together more than 10 people simultaneously on the public highway or in a public place are prohibited. However, a few exceptions are possible, for example when they are considered to be “essential to the continuity of the life of the Nation”.<sup>14</sup>

- **Closure of businesses**

Due to the lockdown imposed by the French authorities, several businesses had to close.<sup>15</sup> Employees in “essential sectors” (e.g. food industry, healthcare, waste management, energy, transport) were encouraged “to maintain their activity, in compliance with health safety rules”, according to the President of the Republic.<sup>16</sup> The decree of 23 March provided a list of establishments that could “continue to receive the public”, including food shops, multi-store shops, pharmacies, opticians, funeral services, press distribution, retail sale of automotive fuel, shops related to vehicles and motorcycles, computers, construction material, financial activities.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> France, Decree of 13 March 2020, available at:

[www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=143A5DD624DE61F830B70FEE6B25B9C8.tplgfr38s\\_3?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041721916&dateTexte=&oldAction=rechJO&categorieLien=id&idJO=JORFCONT000041721601](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=143A5DD624DE61F830B70FEE6B25B9C8.tplgfr38s_3?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041721916&dateTexte=&oldAction=rechJO&categorieLien=id&idJO=JORFCONT000041721601)

<sup>14</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-548 of 11 May 2020, available at:

[www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529)

This text was repealed and replaced by the decree n° 2020-663 of 31 May 2020, available at:

[www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041939818&dateTexte=20200605](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041939818&dateTexte=20200605)

The decree n° 2020-663 was amended by decree n° 2020-724 of 14 June 2020, available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041991876&categorieLien=id>

<sup>15</sup> France, Decree of 14 March 2020, available at:

[www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041722917&categorieLien=id](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041722917&categorieLien=id)

<sup>16</sup> France, Le Figaro, “Coronavirus: Emmanuel Macron calls on companies and their employees to maintain their activity”, 19 March 2020, available at: [www.lefigaro.fr/politique/coronavirus-emmanuel-macron-appelle-les-entreprises-et-leurs-salaries-a-poursuivre-leur-activite-20200319](http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/coronavirus-emmanuel-macron-appelle-les-entreprises-et-leurs-salaries-a-poursuivre-leur-activite-20200319)

<sup>17</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-293 of 23 March 2020, available at:

[www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041746694&categorieLien=ci](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041746694&categorieLien=ci)

In view of the gradual deconfinement starting from 11 May, the Economy Minister stated that “400,000 businesses representing 875,000 jobs [would] reopen”.<sup>18</sup> The decree of 11 May detailed a list of establishments that had to remain closed, such as restaurants, cafes, cinemas, trade fairs, and covered sports establishments.<sup>19</sup> On 2 June, cafes, bars and restaurants reopened in certain zones.<sup>20</sup> A “stronger resumption of work” would begin from 15 June, as announced by the French President.<sup>21</sup>

## 1.2 Implications of measures

The general measures taken to stop the Covid-19 pandemic have had several implications on Roma and Travellers communities.

In France, the term ‘Travellers’ (‘Gens du Voyage’) is an administrative denomination designating a community by its non-sedentary mode of living. It has no ethnic or communitarian connotation and covers a variety of populations who are overwhelmingly French citizens.<sup>22</sup> The term ‘Roma’ refers to people who originate from Central and Eastern Europe and who have moved to France in the recent years.<sup>23</sup>

- **Employment**

With regard to Travellers, several NGOs highlighted that the containment measures prevented many residents of mobile homes from exercising their professional activity. On 17 March, the President of the National Association of Travellers Citizens (ANGVC) alerted that “Travellers, whose activities are not listed by ministerial decree under authorised activities – in particular non-food traders in the markets –, will suffer a substantial loss of activity and resources”. He added that the same situation concerns those who work on sites (pruning and other painting work, etc.).<sup>24</sup> On 17 April, the National

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<sup>18</sup> France, Le Parisien, “Deconfinement: 400,000 companies will be able to reopen on Monday, announces Bruno Le Maire”, 7 May 2020, available at: [www.leparisien.fr/economie/deconfinement-400-000-entreprises-vont-pouvoir-rouvrir-lundi-annonce-bruno-le-maire-07-05-2020-8312673.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/economie/deconfinement-400-000-entreprises-vont-pouvoir-rouvrir-lundi-annonce-bruno-le-maire-07-05-2020-8312673.php)

<sup>19</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-548 of 11 May 2020, available at: [www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529)

<sup>20</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-663 of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020, available at: [www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041939818&dateTexte=20200605](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041939818&dateTexte=20200605)

<sup>21</sup> France, Presidency of the Republic, “Address to the French people”, 14 June 2020, available at: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/06/14/adresse-aux-francais-14-juin-2020>

<sup>22</sup> France, National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, “Gens du voyage”, available at: <https://www.cncdh.fr/fr/dossiers-thematiques/gens-du-voyage>

<sup>23</sup> France, National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, “Roms”, available at: <https://www.cncdh.fr/fr/dossiers-thematiques/roms>

<sup>24</sup> France, National Association of Travellers Citizens, available at: [www.angvc.fr](http://www.angvc.fr)

Federation of Solidarity Associations for Action with Tziganes and Travellers (FNASAT) stressed that a very large number of Travellers “will face a catastrophic drop, even a stop, in their income”.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, many of them saw their resources reduced<sup>26</sup>.

Concerning Roma communities, the compulsory confinement and the reduction of professional activities to those “essential to the continuity of the life of the Nation” have drastically restrained the principal working activities of these people as well.<sup>27</sup>

- **Health**

In slums, in migrant workers’ homes and for certain groups of Travellers, the risk of infection with Covid-19 is very high due to situations of extreme poor housing, without the possibility of remaining confined in practice or of respecting correctly the “barrier gestures”.<sup>28</sup>

Regarding Travellers specifically, the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (or DIHAL, which is responsible via the Prime Minister for coordinating, piloting, accompanying, implementing and actively supporting public policies to combat poor housing) indicated that their living conditions expose them particularly to the disease (crowded conditions, vulnerable people, difficulties in accessing basic resources).<sup>29</sup> More precisely, for these people the individual confinement is very difficult to respect, either because their accommodation is not suitable or because they have nowhere to stay confined. The proximity of the areas and the sharing of spaces (e.g. sanitary spaces sometimes) put them at risk, especially in the absence of separate confinement spaces for sick people, according to the United Associations Collective.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> France, Maire Info, “The question of Travellers during the epidemic: some answers to the questions that mayors are asking”, 17 April 2020, available at: [www.maire-info.com/coronavirus/la-question-des-gens-du-voyage-pendant-l%27epidemie-quelques-reponses-aux-questions-que-se-posent-les-maires-article-24120](http://www.maire-info.com/coronavirus/la-question-des-gens-du-voyage-pendant-l%27epidemie-quelques-reponses-aux-questions-que-se-posent-les-maires-article-24120)

<sup>26</sup> France, United Associations Collective, “The forgotten of the confinement”, 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> France, United Associations Collective, “The forgotten of containment”, 16 April 2020, available at: [www.romeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/DP-CAU-V5.pdf](http://www.romeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/DP-CAU-V5.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> France, United Associations Collective, “One month after the start of the confinement, what happens to homeless and poorly housed people?”, 25 May 2020, available at: <https://collectif-associations-unies.org>

<sup>29</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, “Recommendations for the reception and support of the Travellers in the context of the epidemic Covid-19”, 15 April 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche\\_synthese\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_15042020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche_synthese_gdv_covid-19_15042020.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> France, United Associations Collective, “The forgotten of the confinement”, 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

In conjunction with these factors, Travellers exposed to Covid-19 are likely to suffer complications as a consequence of their initial health state.<sup>31</sup> The NGO 'Médecins sans frontières' noted that some Travellers were not fully aware of the possibilities of access to healthcare during the sanitary crisis. "Many have stopped their treatment for chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension" but "they didn't know they could go to the pharmacy with their old prescription". Moreover, some Travellers have no attending doctor. According to the same source, "either they go to the emergency room or they stay at home".<sup>32</sup>

As concerns Roma people, the Romeurope National Human Rights Collective warned in March about the "absolute emergency" of organising health and food aid in the coronavirus epidemic context. It denounced a "catastrophic situation" for the Roma who live in slums and squats and deplored in this respect the absence of mobile medical units for Roma camps, which contributed to difficulties in "identifying and guiding people with symptoms when they have no information in their language".<sup>33</sup>

The collective 'Solidarité Roms et Gens du voyage Lille' explained to the press that the risk is "significant" for these people because they are living in confined spaces, in difficult conditions, with a higher than average rate of diabetes. "It is very difficult to respect the barrier gestures in the slums", added this network of associations.<sup>34</sup>

- **Education**

On 16 March 2020, all kindergartens, schools and universities closed. In this context, the Ministry of National Education turned to online learning, with courses accessible online, on a platform called "My class at home". Parents who had no access to the internet were invited to contact schools in order to obtain the teaching materials developed. They also had the possibility to

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<sup>31</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> France, Slate, "Affected by the Covid-19, Travellers fear the deconfinement", 14 May 2020, available at: [www.slate.fr/story/190488/covid-19-gens-du-voyage-crainte-deconfinement-difficultes-precarite](http://www.slate.fr/story/190488/covid-19-gens-du-voyage-crainte-deconfinement-difficultes-precarite)

<sup>33</sup> France, Le Monde, "Coronavirus: a collective alert on the 'health crisis' in the Roma slums", 26 March 2020, available at: [www.lemonde.fr/sante/article/2020/03/26/coronavirus-un-collectif-alerte-sur-la-crise-sanitaire-dans-les-bidonvilles-roms\\_6034530\\_1651302.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/sante/article/2020/03/26/coronavirus-un-collectif-alerte-sur-la-crise-sanitaire-dans-les-bidonvilles-roms_6034530_1651302.html)

<sup>34</sup> France, France bleu, "Coronavirus: first death of a member of the Roma community living in a slum in the Lille region", 22 April 2020, available at: [www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/premier-deces-d-un-membre-de-la-communaute-rom-vivant-dans-un-bidonville-de-la-metropole-lilloise-1587571129](http://www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/premier-deces-d-un-membre-de-la-communaute-rom-vivant-dans-un-bidonville-de-la-metropole-lilloise-1587571129)



receive the teachers' instructions and materials by post, or to find them in the town hall.<sup>35</sup>

Some organisations deplored the difficulties of the Roma with the educational continuity via distance learning. For example, the association 'Une famille, un toit' made a census on three specific sites of the Nantes agglomeration and noted in May that "out of 35 families, only 4 had means of communication, such as smartphones or computers on which they could receive calls or lessons", while very few parents took the initiative to contact the relevant services or were contacted to pick up the proposed materials.<sup>36</sup>

Negative implications have also been reported for Travellers' children<sup>37</sup>. Access to distance education platforms to ensure educational continuity ('My class at home', 'National Center for Distance Education', 'Pronote', etc.) did not withstand the influx of connection requests, stressed the National Association of Travellers Citizens (ANGVC), with the consequence of limiting the school continuity in practice.<sup>38</sup>

Several NGOs including Unicef and 'Ligue des droits de l'Homme' alerted on 6 May that "children and young people in very precarious situations living in slums, squats, social hotels, emergency and integration accommodation, reception areas for Travellers and structures for the protection of childhood, are exposed to difficulties and increased risks of dropping out even though their relationship with school is essential". This is why they called on public authorities to take up concrete measures "for a better consideration of all children and young people" (e.g. to ensure their access to digital tools and that they benefit from school support).<sup>39</sup> According to the Minister of Health, around 500,000 children have been identified as "dropouts" during the national lockdown, coming in particular from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "My class at home: implementing educational continuity", available at: [www.education.gouv.fr/ma-classe-la-maison-mise-en-oeuvre-de-la-continuite-pedagogique-289680](http://www.education.gouv.fr/ma-classe-la-maison-mise-en-oeuvre-de-la-continuite-pedagogique-289680)

<sup>36</sup> France, France Info, "Coronavirus: in the 46 slums of the Nantes agglomeration, the health emergency was managed... but after?", 5 May 2020, available at: <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/pays-de-la-loire/loire-atlantique/nantes/coronavirus-46-bidonvilles-agglomeration-nantaise-urgence-sanitaire-ete-geree-apres-1824304.html>

<sup>37</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> France, National Association of Travellers Citizens, "News", available at: [www.angvc.fr](http://www.angvc.fr)

<sup>39</sup> France, NGOs' joint open letter, "Back to school: don't forget the most vulnerable children!", 4 May 2020, available at: [www.ldh-france.org/retour-a-lecole-noublions-pas-les-enfants-les-plus-vulnerables/](http://www.ldh-france.org/retour-a-lecole-noublions-pas-les-enfants-les-plus-vulnerables/)

<sup>40</sup> France, Hearing of the Minister of Health before the National Assembly, 6 May 2020, available at: [www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/covid19/l15covid191920012\\_compte-rendu](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/covid19/l15covid191920012_compte-rendu)

On 11 May, a gradual reopening of schools has started.<sup>41</sup> Children return in staggered year groups, with a maximum of 15 pupils allowed in each class,<sup>42</sup> on a voluntary basis.<sup>43</sup>

- **Housing**

Since the beginning of the health crisis, concerns arose over the housing of Roma and Travellers communities.

Some associations warned that many Travellers would be unable to pay back the loans taken out for the purchase of caravans.<sup>44</sup> According to the National Federation of Solidarity Associations for Action with Tziganes and Travellers (FNASAT), around 12,000 Travellers have taken out such a loan, with monthly payments, on average of 250 euros per month.<sup>45</sup> The National Association of Travellers Citizens (ANGVC) also alerted that some Travellers staying in halting sites would find themselves in great difficulty for the payment of their rent as many sites demand a prepayment.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the question of housing payments, the President of the National Consultative Commission on Travellers (or CNCGV, a specialised national administrative body whose main task is to study the specific questions relevant to Travellers and make proposals aimed at ensuring their access to their rights) mentioned the difficulty to settle the caravans at a

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<sup>41</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "Deconfinement: update on 7 May", 7 May 2020, available at: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/deconfinement-point-de-situation-au-7-mai-303594>

France, Ministry of National Education, "Information and recommendations for schools, staff and families", available at: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/coronavirus-covid-19-informations-et-recommandations-pour-les-etablissements-scolaires-les-274253>

France, Ministry of National Education, "Deconfinement Phase 2: update on 28 May", 28 May 2020, available at: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/deconfinement-phase-2-point-de-situation-au-28-mai-303813>

<sup>42</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, Circular of 4 May 2020, available at: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/20/Hebdo19/MENE2011220C.htm>

<sup>43</sup> France, National Assembly, "Hearing of Jean-Michel Blanquer by the Cultural Affairs Committee", 21 April 2020, available at: [www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/actualites-accueil-hub/audition-de-jean-michel-blanquer-par-la-commission-des-affaires-culturelles](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/actualites-accueil-hub/audition-de-jean-michel-blanquer-par-la-commission-des-affaires-culturelles)

<sup>44</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> France, Maire Info, "The question of Travellers during the epidemic: some answers to the questions that mayors are asking", 17 April 2020, available at: [www.maire-info.com/coronavirus/la-question-des-gens-du-voyage-pendant-l%27epidemie-quelques-reponses-aux-questions-que-se-posent-les-maires-article-24120](http://www.maire-info.com/coronavirus/la-question-des-gens-du-voyage-pendant-l%27epidemie-quelques-reponses-aux-questions-que-se-posent-les-maires-article-24120)

<sup>46</sup> France, National Association of Travellers Citizens, "News", available at: [www.angvc.fr](http://www.angvc.fr)

distance from each other. He stressed that in France “there should be 39,000 places in the reception areas but there are only 30,000”.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, the ban of gatherings and meetings in a bid to stop the spread of the coronavirus affected the halting of large groups travelling together (‘grand passage’). The ‘Association Grands Passages’ (AGP), which is a principal actor for the preparation and organisation of Travellers’ movements each year, indicated that it cancelled all the major passages of the summer season 2020 which it supervises.<sup>48</sup>

Worries have been expressed more generally for all poorly housed persons, including Roma people. The National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (or CNCDH, which is an independent body) outlined that if living in poor housing – because of too small, overcrowded and/or unsanitary housing – is generally a “source of suffering and difficulties”, in the particular situation of the confinement the concerned people can “find themselves trapped in these unworthy homes, posing risks to their mental and physical health”.<sup>49</sup>

- **Food security**

The sanitary crisis also affected the food security of some Roma and Travellers, who could not work due to the coronavirus. Several national and local associations, such as “La Sauvegarde du Nord”, underlined in particular that many children have been deprived of a daily free or lower cost meal because of the closure of school canteens during the confinement period.<sup>50</sup>

At the beginning of the health crisis, food aid for Roma people was provided only by NGOs and civil society associations, according to the Romeurope group. The situation during the first weeks was thereby described as “disastrous” by this collective.<sup>51</sup> Since April, there has been an evolution in a positive way. Food distribution is organised by authorities across the country, with the exception of certain areas. In Bordeaux for example, the

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<sup>47</sup> France, La Gazette, “Travellers: vulnerable residents who had anticipated the confinement”, 20 March 2020, available at: [www.lagazettedescommunes.com/670361/gens-du-voyage-des-habitants-vulnerables-qui-avaient-anticipe-le-confinement/](http://www.lagazettedescommunes.com/670361/gens-du-voyage-des-habitants-vulnerables-qui-avaient-anticipe-le-confinement/)

<sup>48</sup> France, Government, “Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers”, 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> France, National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, “State of health emergency. A dramatic situation for poorly housed people”, 21 April 2020, available at: [www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/obscncdh.lettre3\\_0.pdf](http://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/obscncdh.lettre3_0.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> France, Senate, “The closure of canteens deprives the most modest of a precious meal”, 9 April 2020, available at: [www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/la-fermeture-des-cantines-prive-les-plus-modestes-d-un-precieux-repas-181819](http://www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/la-fermeture-des-cantines-prive-les-plus-modestes-d-un-precieux-repas-181819)

<sup>51</sup> France, Le Monde, “Coronavirus: a collective alert on the ‘health crisis’ in the Roma slums”, 26 March 2020, available at: [www.lemonde.fr/sante/article/2020/03/26/coronavirus-un-collectif-alerte-sur-la-crise-sanitaire-dans-les-bidonvilles-roms\\_6034530\\_1651302.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/sante/article/2020/03/26/coronavirus-un-collectif-alerte-sur-la-crise-sanitaire-dans-les-bidonvilles-roms_6034530_1651302.html)

NGO 'Médecins du monde' stressed that there was "a real food crisis", where "about 500 people, including children and pregnant women, [had] nothing left to eat".<sup>52</sup>

The situation has been "extremely tense" for Travellers too in some localities, as reported by the United Associations Collective. An illustration can be drawn from Toulouse, where nearly 200 families were blocked in April without access to food distributions.<sup>53</sup>

- **Water and sanitation**

Concerns have been raised about the access of Roma and Travellers communities to water and sanitation.

It is estimated that between 19,000 and 20,000 people live in slums and squats, and that around 15,000 of them are Roma. 80% of squats and slums had no access to water before the crisis, the Romeurope National Human Rights Collective stated to the press. It is therefore "impossible to comply with hygiene and prevention measures".<sup>54</sup> In the Roma slum of Champs-sur-Marne (Seine-et-Marne department) for example, people had to fetch water cans from points that are sometimes far away. An additional practical problem which aggravated this situation was that "these people who most often do not know how to read or write in French are unable to print, complete or copy the travel certificate".<sup>55</sup>

In parallel, the accommodation of Travellers is not limited to halting sites provided with water and sanitation. Essentially for economic reasons or because large groups have difficulties in finding appropriate sites, families are sometimes stranded on land without access to these fundamental benefits, even further from support and solidarity systems, according to the United Associations Collective.<sup>56</sup> Following numerous complaints, the Defender of Rights demanded local authorities to take into account the

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<sup>52</sup> France, L'Humanité, "Roma. They're going to die of hunger, not coronavirus, alarm the associations", 8 April 2020, available at: [www.humanite.fr/roms-ils-vont-mourir-de-faim-pas-du-coronavirus-salarment-les-associations-687502](http://www.humanite.fr/roms-ils-vont-mourir-de-faim-pas-du-coronavirus-salarment-les-associations-687502)

<sup>53</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> France, L'Humanité, "Roma: They're going to die of hunger, not coronavirus, alarm the associations", 8 April 2020, available at: [www.humanite.fr/roms-ils-vont-mourir-de-faim-pas-du-coronavirus-salarment-les-associations-687502](http://www.humanite.fr/roms-ils-vont-mourir-de-faim-pas-du-coronavirus-salarment-les-associations-687502)

<sup>55</sup> France, Le Parisien, "In Champs-sur-Marne, in the Roma slum, the situation becomes explosive", 23 March 2020, available at: [www.leparisien.fr/seine-et-marne-77/coronavirus-a-champs-sur-marne-dans-le-bidonville-des-roms-la-situation-devient-explosive-23-03-2020-8286132.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/seine-et-marne-77/coronavirus-a-champs-sur-marne-dans-le-bidonville-des-roms-la-situation-devient-explosive-23-03-2020-8286132.php)

<sup>56</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

difficulties of Travellers confined to a family land in getting authorisation from the mayor to benefit access to water.<sup>57</sup>

### 1.3 Estimates of the scale of the impact

- **Number of communities affected by lockdowns**

There were no specific lockdowns to certain localities. The nationwide lockdown affected all people, including Roma and Travellers communities.

It has to be noted that some Roma groups living near Paris chose to return to Romania and Hungary at the start of the outbreak, as reported by media outlets.<sup>58</sup>

- **Magnitude of pandemic-induced poverty**

The poverty induced to Roma and Travellers communities by the sanitary crisis is significant according to the NGOs. For the Romeurope National Human Rights Collective, some people among them have lost around 95% of their total income and no longer have access to electricity and water.<sup>59</sup>

The United Associations Collective emphasised that the containment measures affected particularly the populations of slums and squats (where many Roma people live), who were already very weakened by years of insecurity and evictions. The almost complete cessation of people's survival activities tipped some of the people concerned, including 30 to 40% of children, into even greater poverty.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> France, Defender of Rights, "Synthesis. Sanitary emergency", 3 June 2020, p. 10, available at: <https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/synth-eus-num-03.06.2020.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> France, Le Parisien, "Porte de la Villette, in Paris, the forgotten Roma slum suffers from the confinement", 6 April 2020, available at: [www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/porte-de-la-villette-a-paris-le-bidonville-rom-oublie-souffre-du-confinement-06-04-2020-8294856.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/porte-de-la-villette-a-paris-le-bidonville-rom-oublie-souffre-du-confinement-06-04-2020-8294856.php);

France, La Croix, "Covid-19: in a slum near Paris, bring the water to avoid the carnage", 15 April 2020, available at: [www.la-croix.com/Monde/Covid-19-bidonville-pres-Paris-amener-eau-eviter-hecatombe-2020-04-15-1301089598](http://www.la-croix.com/Monde/Covid-19-bidonville-pres-Paris-amener-eau-eviter-hecatombe-2020-04-15-1301089598);

France, Actu.fr, "Seine-Saint-Denis. Nearly 800 Roma left two slums in Montreuil before the health crisis", 3 April 2020, available at: [https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/montreuil\\_93048/seine-saint-denis-pres-800-roms-ont-quitte-deux-bidonvilles-montreuil-avant-crise-sanitaire\\_32775461.html](https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/montreuil_93048/seine-saint-denis-pres-800-roms-ont-quitte-deux-bidonvilles-montreuil-avant-crise-sanitaire_32775461.html)

<sup>59</sup> France, Sudradio, "Coronavirus - Travellers and Roma: Some have lost 95% of their income and no longer have access to water and electricity", 2 April 2020, available at: [www.sudradio.fr/societe/coronavirus-souffrance-chez-les-gens-du-voyage-et-la-communaute-rom-certains-ont-perdu-95-de-leurs-revenus-et-nont-plus-acces-a-leau-et-lelectricite/](http://www.sudradio.fr/societe/coronavirus-souffrance-chez-les-gens-du-voyage-et-la-communaute-rom-certains-ont-perdu-95-de-leurs-revenus-et-nont-plus-acces-a-leau-et-lelectricite/)

<sup>60</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

- **Types of Roma and Traveller occupations affected hardest**

Travellers' activities are carried out mainly under the status of self-employed in trade or personal services (gardening, tree pruning, etc.).<sup>61</sup> Some also work in the markets or do painting work.<sup>62</sup> All these professional occupations have been considerably hindered by the measures adopted in response to the health crisis (lockdowns, restriction of activities, etc.). The same situation concerns Roma people, who are for example scrap dealers, work on construction sites,<sup>63</sup> or do gleaning work.<sup>64</sup>

## **2 Specific measures to address the implications of the pandemic on Roma and Travellers**

### **2.1 Measures to tackle the spread of the virus specifically among Roma and Travellers communities**

- **Medical testing**

Several non-mandatory instructions and recommendations have been carried out concerning these communities. In a document relating to reception and support of Travellers, the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (DIHAL) recommends attending doctors, doctors in call centres, and regional health agencies (ARS) to identify and follow possible cases (people with clinical signs suggestive of Covid-19). It is indicated that "every symptomatic person will be tested" and that the doctor decides on the orientation and the care strategy taking into account the possibilities of isolation of the person within his family and the Travellers' group living on the site.<sup>65</sup> In this perspective, some regional health agencies have set up at the local level, in cooperation with medical establishments, mobile testing campaigns intended specifically for the Travellers.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> France, Maire Info, "The question of Travellers during the epidemic: some answers to the questions that mayors are asking", 17 April 2020, available at: [www.maire-info.com/coronavirus/la-question-des-gens-du-voyage-pendant-l%27epidemie-quelques-reponses-aux-questions-que-se-posed-les-maires-article-24120](http://www.maire-info.com/coronavirus/la-question-des-gens-du-voyage-pendant-l%27epidemie-quelques-reponses-aux-questions-que-se-posed-les-maires-article-24120)

<sup>62</sup> France, National Association of Travellers Citizens, "News", available at: [www.angvc.fr](http://www.angvc.fr)

<sup>63</sup> France, Le Parisien, "Porte de la Villette, in Paris, the forgotten Roma slum suffers from the confinement", 6 April 2020, available at: [www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/porte-de-la-villette-a-paris-le-bidonville-rom-oublie-souffre-du-confinement-06-04-2020-8294856.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/porte-de-la-villette-a-paris-le-bidonville-rom-oublie-souffre-du-confinement-06-04-2020-8294856.php)

<sup>64</sup> France, United Associations Collective, "The forgotten of the confinement", 16 April 2020, available at: <https://collectifassociationsunies.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/dp-cau-v5-2.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers", 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> France, 'France Bleu', "Coronavirus: Samu and police intervention in a Travellers' camp in Schoeneck", 12 March 2020, available at: [www.francebleu.fr/infos/sante-](http://www.francebleu.fr/infos/sante-)

Although there are no specific measures targeting Roma people, the Government has published instructions for persons working with the homeless, residents of squats, slums and illegal camps, where Roma people live.<sup>67</sup> It is recommended in particular to ask about the existence of symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 infection (e.g. feeling of fever, chills, cough, flu syndrome, cold, sore throat). In case of such symptoms, the person, with his consent, is notified to the health professional, the permanences of access to healthcare (PASS) and the mobile health team in order to benefit from a medical evaluation. The person can then be tested by professionals qualified to practise this type of act.<sup>68</sup>

In addition, the Government provided recommendations for day shelters, accommodation centers (including national asylum system) and suitable accommodation. Regional health agencies coordinate testing operations in collective accommodation structures and identify mobile teams capable of taking samples and transmitting them to a laboratory. The tests carried out are covered by the health insurance according to a simplified invoicing process.<sup>69</sup>

- **Physical distancing and isolation**

There are no special measures of physical distancing to tackle the spread of the virus among Roma and Travellers communities. The general “social distancing and hygiene measures” – called “barriers” – have to be respected by these groups too. They include physical distance of at least one metre between two people, washing hands regularly, coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue, and avoiding touching the face.<sup>70</sup>

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[sciences/coronavirus-intervention-du-samu-et-de-la-police-dans-un-camp-de-gens-du-voyage-a-schoeneck-1584031201](#); France, ‘Nice matin’, “Positive cases diagnosed in a Travellers’ camp tested on Monday”, 31 March 2020, available at: [www.nicematin.com/sante/des-cas-positifs-diagnostiques-dans-un-camp-de-gens-du-voyage-teste-ce-lundi-489103](#)

<sup>67</sup> France, Government, “Instructions and recommendations for a gradual deconfinement for social care actors, people working with homeless, residents of squats, slums and illegal camps”, 14 May 2020, available at: [https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/deconfinement-maraudes-bidonvilles-covid-19.pdf](#)

<sup>68</sup> France, Government, “Instructions and recommendations for a gradual deconfinement for social care actors, people working with homeless, residents of squats, slums and illegal camps”, 14 May 2020, available at: [https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/deconfinement-maraudes-bidonvilles-covid-19.pdf](#)

<sup>69</sup> France, Government, “Instructions and recommendations applicable to the progressive deconfinement of day shelters, accommodation centers (including national asylum system) and suitable accommodation”, 13 May 2020, available at: [https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/deconfinement-accueils-de-jour-centres-hebergement-logements-adaptes-covid-19.pdf](#)

<sup>70</sup> France, Decree n° 2020-548, 11 May 2020, available at: [www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000041866783&dateTexte=20200529](#)

France, Decree n° 2020-663 of 31 May 2020, available at:

Regarding Travellers infected with Covid-19 in particular, the Government specified that the isolation will be organised as at home or, if the material conditions allow it, the person with Covid-19 may be separated in a caravan for this purpose. This isolation “requires being able to respect the rules of social distancing between families for everyday actions” (in particular access to sanitary blocks and places to cook). Thus, it is recommended to isolate the persons infected from the rest of the group inside their living site. However, if this is impossible, “it will be up to the State services in connection with the local authorities and the regional health agencies to mobilise temporary reception and halting sites (with access to water and electricity and collection of household waste)”.<sup>71</sup>

- **Lockdown**

During the confinement period (from 17 March to 11 May), Travellers could not benefit from the derogations referred to in the relevant decrees for their journeys. According to the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, they were not allowed to change halting sites and had to stay on the one they were on. For this reason, the public reception service on the permanent halting sites had to be maintained. Travellers had to remain confined in their home (their caravan), and they were only allowed to leave it for the reasons provided for in the decree. Managers (reception), mediators and professional associations working with Travellers were invited to provide them with printed travel certificates.<sup>72</sup>

In view of the gradual deconfinement (from 12 May to 2 June), the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing took into consideration the particular way of life of these people, who do not necessarily have a proof of residence corresponding to their place of halting, and recommended therefore to verify in priority the possession of a certificate and the justification of the displacement. It specified that all documents had to be considered and analysed with discernment (e.g. halting certificate, employer’s certificate). It also suggested that Travellers should have the possibility to stay on a halting site if they wish it.<sup>73</sup>

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<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041939818&dateTexte=20200605>

<sup>71</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, “Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers”, 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, “Recommendations for the reception and support of the Travellers in the context of the epidemic Covid-19”, 15 April 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche\\_synthese\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_15042020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche_synthese_gdv_covid-19_15042020.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, “Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers”, 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)



- **Provision of running water and sanitation**

At the national level, public authorities issued some instructions relating to access to water and sanitation for Travellers. The Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing recommended the State representatives in the department and managers in relation with Travellers' accommodation (municipalities, public establishments for inter-municipal cooperation under management or delegated management) to ensure the good functioning of the permanent halting sites and to:

- Maintain access to continuous water and electricity supply without immediate obligation to pay and / or prepay (switch to forced operation) in the event of financial difficulties;
- Facilitate the staggering or postponement of the recovery of the right of use;
- Ensure regular collection of household waste;
- Display official health information tools (pictograms, medical contacts, etc.).<sup>74</sup>

Additionally, in its instructions of 27 March addressed to the prefects, the Ministry of Interior indicated the measures to be taken to protect people "in precarious situations". In this respect, a cartography of water points should be created.<sup>75</sup>

At the local level, specific actions have been carried out by the authorities with regard to the populations living on the street and in particular in the slums, illegal camps and squats. For example, the State services in Île-de-France, in partnership with local communities and several associations have mobilised to ensure access to drinking water and to sanitation facilities at all sites.<sup>76</sup>

Meanwhile, several French courts have ordered the provision of water and sanitation to communities without it. To be granted a water point, two Romanian persons brought their case before the Lille Administrative Court. The prefect and the municipality had explained that there were regular

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<sup>74</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers", 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> France, Ministry of Interior, Circular of 27 March 2020, available at: [www.infomie.net/IMG/pdf/directive\\_aux\\_prefets\\_27\\_mars\\_personnes\\_precaires.pdf](http://www.infomie.net/IMG/pdf/directive_aux_prefets_27_mars_personnes_precaires.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> France, Prefecture of Île-de-France, "Mobilisation for vulnerable people living in camps, squats and slums", 10 April 2020, available at: [www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/ile-de-france/Region-et-institutions/L-action-de-l-Etat/Hebergement-et-Logement/Hebergement-d-urgence/Mobilisation-pour-les-personnes-vulnerables-vivant-dans-les-campements-squats-et-bidonvilles](http://www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/ile-de-france/Region-et-institutions/L-action-de-l-Etat/Hebergement-et-Logement/Hebergement-d-urgence/Mobilisation-pour-les-personnes-vulnerables-vivant-dans-les-campements-squats-et-bidonvilles)

distributions of water bottles to the camp residents and that these people also could get water from a fire hydrant 900m from the camp. The arguments were found insufficient by the judges. By its decision of 29 April, the court ordered the prefecture and the city of Villeneuve-d'Ascq to provide the camp residents with temporary access to water. It also decided that latrines had to be built, and garbage collection bins to be made available.<sup>77</sup>

Seized by the collective Romeurope in Val-de-Marne department, the Administrative Court of Melun enjoined on 22 April the prefecture and the municipalities of L'Haÿ-les-Roses, Choisy-le-Roi and Villejuif to take the necessary measures to ensure drinking water supply, to organise a household waste collection service, and to install toilets as well as sufficient temporary showers. The court considered that the absence of these installations constitutes a serious and manifestly illegal infringement of human dignity.<sup>78</sup>

## **2.2 Measures to support Roma and Travellers communities with regards to medical and social assistance**

- **Medical and social support**

In its guidelines intended for Travellers communities, the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing specified that all recommendations and obligations on the health care of positive cases and the follow-up of contact cases apply to Travellers too. It noted that the organisation of life on a collective site requires additional measures and recommended managers (reception), mediators (departmental, public establishments for inter-municipal cooperation) and professional associations working with Travellers (support, domiciliation), communal and intercommunal centres for social action (domiciliation, social assistance) to strengthen the social support of families and to:

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<sup>77</sup> France, La Voix du nord, "Villeneuve-d'Ascq: the prefect and the mayor ordered to provide access to water at the last Roma camp not provided", 1 May 2020, available at: [www.lavoixdunord.fr/747303/article/2020-05-01/villeneuve-d-ascq-le-prefet-et-le-maire-sommes-de-fournir-un-acces-l-eau-au](http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/747303/article/2020-05-01/villeneuve-d-ascq-le-prefet-et-le-maire-sommes-de-fournir-un-acces-l-eau-au)

<sup>78</sup> France, Water - Île-de-France, "Victory for access to water in several slums of 94", 7 May 2020, available at: <https://eau-iledefrance.fr/victoire-au-ta-pour-lacces-a-leau-dans-plusieurs-bidonvilles-du-94/> ;

France, 94 Citoyens.com, "Assistance to Roma slums confined in Val-de-Marne: marauding, legal actions and controversies", 23 April 2020, available at: <https://94.citoyens.com/2020/assistance-aux-bidonvilles-roms-confines-en-val-de-marne-maraudes-actions-en-justice-et-polemiques,23-04-2020.html> ;

France, La Voix des Rroms, "The anti-tsiganism is still at large", 16 May 2020, available at: [www.lavoixdesrroms.com/single-post/2020/05/16/L'ANTITSIGANISME-COURT-TOUJOURS](http://www.lavoixdesrroms.com/single-post/2020/05/16/L'ANTITSIGANISME-COURT-TOUJOURS)

- Inform about the application of government recommendations relating to Covid-19 and disseminate the instructions clearly and appropriately;
- Respond to and support the essential needs of people in medical isolation (adapted communication tools, psychological support, reinsurance, etc.);
- Exercise special vigilance for vulnerable families domiciled in another municipality;
- Ensure, when necessary, the supply of masks;
- Identify families weakened by the loss of resources linked to the confinement or medical isolation measures.<sup>79</sup>

At the local level, regional health agencies (ARS) set up reinforced measures to support Travellers communities. For example, in New-Aquitaine region, an action was launched “to widely disseminate health and containment recommendations, but also to implement effective actions as soon as the first suspected or confirmed cases are detected in order to limit the spread of the epidemic” according to the ARS’ press release. The work is carried out in conjunction with the usual health mediation associations so that health instructions (management of barrier gestures, need to stop travel, maintenance of safety distances, etc.) are properly applied. It is noted that “the prefectures, elected officials and regional health actors are of course associated to promote the implementation of these measures”. When a suspected or confirmed Covid-19 case is identified, support can be provided to facilitate access to a medical consultation.<sup>80</sup> The ARS also provides masks to ensure prevention around the identified person and contact persons. If several cases are confirmed, prevention and anticipation measures are immediately deployed.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding Roma groups, there are no specific measures. The Government published nevertheless instructions for people working with the homeless, residents of squats, slums and illegal camps, where Roma communities live.

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<sup>79</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, “Recommendations for the reception and support of the Travellers in the context of the epidemic Covid-19”, 15 April 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche\\_synthese\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_15042020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche_synthese_gdv_covid-19_15042020.pdf) ; France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, “Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers”, 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> France, ARS New-Aquitaine, “Prevention measures and management of Covid-19 cases in Travellers communities in New Aquitaine”, 29 March 2020, available at: [www.nouvelle-aquitaine.ars.sante.fr/communiqué-de-presse-coronavirus-point-de-situation-en-nouvelle-aquitaine-du-29032020](http://www.nouvelle-aquitaine.ars.sante.fr/communiqué-de-presse-coronavirus-point-de-situation-en-nouvelle-aquitaine-du-29032020)

<sup>81</sup> France, ARS New-Aquitaine, “Prevention measures and management of Covid-19 cases in Travellers communities in New Aquitaine”, 29 March 2020, available at: [www.nouvelle-aquitaine.ars.sante.fr/system/files/2020-03/CP\\_Covid19\\_ARSNA\\_29\\_03\\_2020\\_1.pdf](http://www.nouvelle-aquitaine.ars.sante.fr/system/files/2020-03/CP_Covid19_ARSNA_29_03_2020_1.pdf)

It indicated that assistance activities for the most vulnerable people are essential for the continuity of the country, in particular those guaranteeing the provision of basic services to the most deprived (food, hygiene, healthcare) and recommended the continuity of the activity of social worker patrols and health mediation teams. It also initiated an online service to identify volunteers wanting to help these persons (<https://covid19.reserve-civique.gouv.fr/>).<sup>82</sup>

- **Housing**

- Recommendations and measures

According to the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, halting sites should not close during the confinement: they are not establishments open to the public (ERP) and so they are not affected by Article 10 of decree n° 2020-548 which lists the establishments that could no longer accommodate the public. In addition, it clarified that families must not be placed in a wandering situation, which would create other difficulties (illegal halting).<sup>83</sup>

The Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (DIHAL) suggested in this respect that the evacuations of illegal occupants should be suspended until 11 May.<sup>84</sup> Some prefects of departments officially took steps in this direction, implemented a tolerance on these halting sites.<sup>85</sup> As of the start of the deconfinement, the DIHAL proposed that these procedures should be implemented with discernment to limit displacements and by promoting the prior identification of future halting areas.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> France, Government, "Instructions and recommendations for a gradual deconfinement for social care actors, people working with homeless, residents of squats, slums and illegal camps", 7 April 2020, available at: <https://federationsolidarite.org/images/consignes-acteurs-veille-sociale-bidonvilles-covid-19.pdf>; France, Government, "Instructions and recommendations for a gradual deconfinement for social care actors, people working with homeless, residents of squats, slums and illegal camps", 14 May 2020, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/deconfinement-maraudes-bidonvilles-covid-19.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> France, Ministry of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, "Coronavirus : Travellers, Questions/answers for the mayors", 9 April 2020, available at: [www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/coronavirus-gens-du-voyage-questionsreponses-pour-les-maires](http://www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/coronavirus-gens-du-voyage-questionsreponses-pour-les-maires)

<sup>84</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Recommendations for the reception and support of the Travellers in the context of the epidemic Covid-19", 15 April 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche\\_synthese\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_15042020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche_synthese_gdv_covid-19_15042020.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> France, Bank of the territories, "Confinement: what provisions for Travellers?", 14 April 2020, available at: [www.banquedesterritoires.fr/confinement-quelles-dispositions-pour-les-gens-du-voyage](http://www.banquedesterritoires.fr/confinement-quelles-dispositions-pour-les-gens-du-voyage)

<sup>86</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers", 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

In case of financial difficulties, the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing also recommended to maintain the access to continuous water and electricity supply without immediate obligation to pay and/or prepayment and to facilitate the staggering or postponement of the recovery of user charges. It proposed additionally not to initiate the eviction procedures linked to non-payments.<sup>87</sup> Some public establishments of inter-municipal cooperation decided to make free the supply of water and electricity during the confinement.<sup>88</sup>

In general, the period of the 'winter protection break' is fixed each year from 1 November to 31 March: it means that during this period, public forces cannot carry out evictions. In the face of the spread of Covid-19, it was initially extended until the 31<sup>st</sup> of May and then until the 10<sup>th</sup> of July.<sup>89</sup> Roma and Travellers communities should be able to benefit from this measure.<sup>90</sup>

- Court ruling

The European Court of Human Rights ruled on the issue of the conditions for the expulsion from a Roma family camp. With its decision *Hirtu et al. v. France* of 14 May, it condemns the French authorities for not having "taken into consideration the consequences of this measure and the particular situation of the applicants". In its judgment, the Court recalls that the Roma community constitutes a socially disadvantaged and vulnerable group. Thus, their particular needs on that account have to be taken into consideration in the proportionality assessment that the national authorities are under a duty to undertake, "not only when considering approaches to dealing with the unlawful settlement but also, if eviction was necessary, when deciding on its timing and manner and, if possible, arrangements for alternative accommodation". The persons concerned must also be able to have the proportionality of this measure reviewed by an independent tribunal in the light of the relevant principles under Article 8. The European Court estimated

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<sup>87</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Recommendations for the reception and support of the Travellers in the context of the epidemic Covid-19", 15 April 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche\\_synthese\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_15042020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/04/fiche_synthese_gdv_covid-19_15042020.pdf);

France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers", 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> France, Ministry of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, "Coronavirus : Travellers, Questions/answers for the mayors", 9 April 2020, available at: [www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/coronavirus-gens-du-voyage-questionsreponses-pour-les-maires](http://www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/coronavirus-gens-du-voyage-questionsreponses-pour-les-maires);

<sup>89</sup> France, Law n° 2020-546 of 11 May 2020, available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000041865244&categorieLien=id>

<sup>90</sup> France, Association of residents of Ephemeral or Mobile Housing, "Alert on the precarisation of alternative residents", 23 May 2020, available at: [www.halemfrance.org/?Communique-del-association-HALEM](http://www.halemfrance.org/?Communique-del-association-HALEM)

that this was not the situation in the present case, stressing that the circular of 26 August 2012 had not been respected. It found thereby a violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights which protects the right to respect for private life, and of Article 13 on the right to an effective remedy.<sup>91</sup>

The French Defender of Rights welcomed this decision and noted that the failure to anticipate eviction operations is counterproductive since it only displaces the problem to another site while making the occupants' situation more precarious. The institution declared that it will be particularly vigilant in respecting the scope of this judgment in the current health context where violations of fundamental rights affect precarious people, including the occupants of informal settlements.<sup>92</sup>

- **Food security**

In a document relating to reception and support of Travellers, the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing called on local public authorities and associations to identify people in difficulty and to act in a coordinated manner in order to satisfy the food needs of this population.<sup>93</sup>

With regard to people living in slums, illegal camps and squats, the State services in regions and departments are responsible for coordinating public actions and associations in order to provide means of subsistence. An associative operator has often been designated as the leader for food distributions.<sup>94</sup> In addition, a special service voucher system was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April enabling people in precarity, among them persons living in camps and slums, to buy food and hygiene products during the health crisis. The

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<sup>91</sup> ECHR, 14 May 2020, *Hirtu and others v. France*, n° 24720/13, available at: [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#f{%22docname%22:\[%22hirtu%22\],%22documentcollectionid%22:\[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22\],%22itemid%22:\[%22001-202442%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#f{%22docname%22:[%22hirtu%22],%22documentcollectionid%22:[%22GRANDCHAMBER%22,%22CHAMBER%22],%22itemid%22:[%22001-202442%22]})

<sup>92</sup> France, Defender of Rights, "Expulsion from a roma camp: the Defender of Rights welcomes the judgment of the ECHR that condemns France", 14 May 2020, available at: [www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/fr/communiqu%C3%A9-de-presse/2020/05/expulsion-dun-campement-de-roms-le-defenseur-des-droits-salue-larret-de](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/fr/communiqu%C3%A9-de-presse/2020/05/expulsion-dun-campement-de-roms-le-defenseur-des-droits-salue-larret-de)

<sup>93</sup> France, Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, "Covid-19 - Reception and support of Travellers", 12 May 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche\\_recommandations\\_gdv\\_covid-19\\_14052020.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/05/fiche_recommandations_gdv_covid-19_14052020.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> France, Prefecture of Ile-de-France, "Mobilisation for vulnerable people living in slums, illegal camps and squats", 10 April 2020, available at: [www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/ile-de-france/Region-et-institutions/L-action-de-l-Etat/Hebergement-et-Logement/Hebergement-d-urgence/Mobilisation-pour-les-personnes-vulnerables-vivant-dans-les-campements-squats-et-bidonvilles](http://www.prefectures-regions.gouv.fr/ile-de-france/Region-et-institutions/L-action-de-l-Etat/Hebergement-et-Logement/Hebergement-d-urgence/Mobilisation-pour-les-personnes-vulnerables-vivant-dans-les-campements-squats-et-bidonvilles)

vouchers, of €7 per day, are distributed by associations. The overall budget for this specific measure is more than 15 million euros<sup>95</sup>.

- **Financial support**

There is no financial support regarding specifically Roma and Travellers communities. However, they may benefit from the measures intended for people with low income. In his address on 13 April, the President of the Republic announced the payment of an “exceptional aid” for the poorest households.<sup>96</sup> Families who are recipients of the active solidarity income (RSA) or the specific solidarity allowance (ASS) received a one-off payment of €150 plus €100 per dependent child. Other low-income households were allocated €100 per child. An estimated 4 million families benefited from this aid, which was paid automatically from 15 May in one lump sum.<sup>97</sup> Civil society organisations welcomed the measure but found it too limited in a release dated 17 April. They regretted, notably, the exclusion of many people in precarious situations (such as young persons who do not receive the active solidarity income).<sup>98</sup>

- **Employment**

In relation to employment, there are no specific measures intended for Roma and Travellers communities, but these people may benefit from general ones aimed to support affected businesses. On 11 March, the French Economy and Finance Minister offered immediate measures, such as eased credit terms from the state investment bank, postponements of social and tax payment deadlines. The Minister of Action and Public Accounts announced

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<sup>95</sup> France, Ministry of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities, “Update: more than 21,000 accommodation places now open for homeless people and 97 specialised accommodation sites available for covid-19 patients since the beginning of the sanitary crisis.”, 4 May 2020, available at: <https://www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/actualisation-plus-de-21-000-places-dhebergement-desormais-ouvertes-pour-les-sans-domicile-fixe-et>

<sup>96</sup> France, Presidency of the Republic, “Address to the Nation”, 13 April 2020, available at : [www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/04/13/adresse-aux-francais-13-avril-2020](http://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/04/13/adresse-aux-francais-13-avril-2020)

<sup>97</sup> France, Ministry of Health, “Covid-19: the Government announces the payment of an exceptional solidarity aid to the poorest households”, 15 April 2020, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/actualites/presse/communiqués-de-presse/article/covid-19-le-gouvernement-annonce-le-versement-d-une-aide-exceptionnelle-de>

<sup>98</sup> France, The Collective Alert, “Exceptional help for people in a precarious situation: welcomed but far too limited”, 17 April 2020, available at: [www.ldh-france.org/aide-exceptionnelle-en-faveur-des-personnes-en-situation-de-precarite-un-geste-bienvenu-mais-trop-limite/?fbclid=IwAR1jWF2ETn3Ws7-ubQAIhEMx9xbIvtNyIJ92bj263S0cEbeYeEr0uWyUKA](http://www.ldh-france.org/aide-exceptionnelle-en-faveur-des-personnes-en-situation-de-precarite-un-geste-bienvenu-mais-trop-limite/?fbclid=IwAR1jWF2ETn3Ws7-ubQAIhEMx9xbIvtNyIJ92bj263S0cEbeYeEr0uWyUKA)

in May<sup>99</sup> and the in June<sup>100</sup> the renewal of the possibility for companies facing difficulties to defer their social and tax payments.

Since the start of the lockdown, companies may implement the “partial activity” mechanism (also called “partial unemployment”).<sup>101</sup> According to the Government’s website, it is expected that affected businesses pay compensation equal to 70% of gross salary (about 84% net) to their employees. It is also noted that “employees with the minimum wage or less are compensated 100%” and that “the company will be fully reimbursed by the state, for salaries up to 6,927 euros gross monthly”. The Minister of Solidarity and Health, the Minister of Action and Public Accounts and the Minister of Labour announced the renewal of this exceptional measure for the month of June, in order to take into account the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>102</sup>

Self-employed workers facing difficulties in their activities can as well request a recalculation of their contributions, or a special financial aid when this is necessary. Particularly, a solidarity fund, set up by the State with the regions, which aims to support very small businesses (VSEs) affected by the economic consequences of the coronavirus crisis. It is intended for traders, artisans, liberal professions and other economic agents, regardless of their status (company, individual entrepreneur, association, etc.) and their tax and social security system (including ‘micro-entrepreneurs’). Businesses of 10 employees or less are eligible, with an annual turnover of less than 1 million euros and a taxable annual profit of less than 60,000 euros for the last financial year. The financial aid is paid to companies which could not receive the public or which lost at least 50% of their turnover in March and April 2020 compared to March and April 2019. The companies are able to benefit from an aid equal to the declared loss within the limit of 1,500 euros.

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<sup>99</sup> France, Ministry of Action and Public Accounts, “Extension of the possibilities for postponing social security and tax contributions to May for companies facing difficulties”, 4 May 2020, available at: <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/reconduction-possibilites-report-cotisations-contributions-sociales-mois-mai>

<sup>100</sup> France, Ministry of Action and Public Accounts, “Gérald Darmanin announces that the possibilities for postponing social security contributions are extended for the month of June, on request”, 2 June 2020, available at: [https://minefi.hosting.augure.com/Augure\\_Minefi/r/ContenuEnLigne/Download?id=7527227F-7F00-40D8-BBBD-C73ACCFE38E3&filename=1040%20-%20Gérald%20DARMANIN%20annonce%20que%20les%20possibilités%20de%20report%20des%20cotisations%20sociales%20sont%20prolongées%20pour%20le%20mois%20de%20juin%20sur%20demande..pdf](https://minefi.hosting.augure.com/Augure_Minefi/r/ContenuEnLigne/Download?id=7527227F-7F00-40D8-BBBD-C73ACCFE38E3&filename=1040%20-%20Gérald%20DARMANIN%20annonce%20que%20les%20possibilités%20de%20report%20des%20cotisations%20sociales%20sont%20prolongées%20pour%20le%20mois%20de%20juin%20sur%20demande..pdf)

<sup>101</sup> France, Government, “Which are the support measures and useful contacts to accompany you?”, 11 March 2020, available at: [www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/03/brochure\\_fiches\\_pratiques\\_sur\\_les\\_mesures\\_de\\_soutien.pdf](http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2020/03/brochure_fiches_pratiques_sur_les_mesures_de_soutien.pdf)

<sup>102</sup> France, Government, “Renewal of partial unemployment for homeworkers in June”, 5 June 2020, available at: <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/covid19-soutien-entreprises/reconduction-juin-chomage-partiel-salaries-domicile>



The companies in greatest difficulty are able, as of 15 April, to request additional assistance. The amount is between 2,000 and 5,000 euros depending on the size and situation of the company.<sup>103</sup>

### **2.3 Measures addressing the needs of Roma and Travellers children**

The issue of distance learning effectiveness has been at the heart of the concerns. As reported by the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing, distance learning is set up by local authorities and NGOs.<sup>104</sup> The Academic centres for the education of newly arrived non-French-speaking students and children from itinerant families and travellers (CASNAV), which are academic support and advice units,<sup>105</sup> work with the NGOs and associations to provide children with educational kits (lessons, exercises, etc.), and telephone packages (to allow telephone exchanges between teachers and families).

More generally, the inequalities in access to education faced by children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, which are compounded due to the pandemic, have raised concerns.<sup>106</sup> Several measures are taken in this respect, from which some Roma and Travellers children have benefited. Cooperation has been established between the Ministry of National Education and 'La Poste' (the main postal service company in France) to organise the distribution of computer equipment available to schools to families identified as 'distant from digital devices', as well as to enable students experiencing digital disconnection to receive homework by post using the 'Assignments at home' system.<sup>107</sup> In addition, the Government launched on 20 April a plan of 15 million euros to "reinforce the continuity of education in working-class neighbourhoods". This sum was mainly used to buy and distribute hardware and connection material for pupils in need.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> France, Government, "Solidarity fund for companies, freelancers, entrepreneurs", available at: [www.impots.gouv.fr/portail/](http://www.impots.gouv.fr/portail/)

<sup>104</sup> Interview with the Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing / DIHAL (*Délégation interministérielle à l'hébergement et à l'accès au logement*), 16 June 2020.

<sup>105</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "Academic centres for the education of newly arrived non-French-speaking students and children from itinerant families and travellers (CASNAV)", available at: <https://eduscol.education.fr/cid78710/casnav.html>

<sup>106</sup> France, Presidency of the Republic, "Address to the French people, 13 April 2020", available at: [www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/04/13/adresse-aux-francais-13-avril-2020](http://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/04/13/adresse-aux-francais-13-avril-2020)

<sup>107</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "Teaching continuity: National Education and Post mobilized to maintain the link with students and their families", 31 March 2020, available at: [www.education.gouv.fr/continuite-pedagogique-l-education-nationale-et-la-poste-mobilisees-pour-maintenir-le-lien-avec-les-303321](http://www.education.gouv.fr/continuite-pedagogique-l-education-nationale-et-la-poste-mobilisees-pour-maintenir-le-lien-avec-les-303321)

<sup>108</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "Covid 19: Strengthening educational continuity in priority neighbourhoods", 20 April 2020, available at: [www.education.gouv.fr/covid-19-renforcer-la-continuite-educative-dans-les-quartiers-prioritaires-303462](http://www.education.gouv.fr/covid-19-renforcer-la-continuite-educative-dans-les-quartiers-prioritaires-303462)

The Government also expressed its desire to increase in an unprecedented way the support given to the large associative actors specialised in tutoring and mentoring. Following the closure of schools, the organisations 'Article 1' and 'Fédération des associations générales étudiantes' (FAGE) for example launched an operation of school support to facilitate educational continuity for low-income pupils and children of healthcare professionals. In order to orient new mentors and tutors towards these associations, the Government initiated a call for volunteers (with the objective to teach around 30,000 pupils until the end of July).<sup>109</sup>

Furthermore, for the reopening of schools after the period of confinement, priority has been given, among others, to children identified as "dropouts".<sup>110</sup> As regards this category, targeting in particular 500,000 children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds,<sup>111</sup> a circular indicates that "pupils who have not regularly participated in distance education are given special attention in order to put them in favourable learning conditions and thus prevent a possible risk of dropping out of school".<sup>112</sup>

### **3 Any negative public reactions targeting Roma and Travellers or positive change in attitudes towards them**

#### **3.1 Negative public reactions**

- **Negative reactions in statements by politicians and public figures**

On 9 May, two days before the beginning of deconfinement, the mayor of the Voisenon municipality (Seine-et-Marne department) published a press release entitled "Vigilance: Travellers ('gens du voyage')". He stated in particular: "I appeal to your vigilance and your solidarity so that as soon as you see a caravan circulating in our village to contact the competent services".<sup>113</sup>

<sup>109</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "Covid 19: Strengthening educational continuity in priority neighbourhoods", 20 April 2020, available at: [www.education.gouv.fr/covid-19-renforcer-la-continuite-educative-dans-les-quartiers-prioritaires-303462](http://www.education.gouv.fr/covid-19-renforcer-la-continuite-educative-dans-les-quartiers-prioritaires-303462)

<sup>110</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, "Deconfinement: update on 7 May", 7 May 2020, available at: [www.education.gouv.fr/deconfinement-point-de-situation-au-7-mai-303594](http://www.education.gouv.fr/deconfinement-point-de-situation-au-7-mai-303594)

<sup>111</sup> France, Hearing of the Minister of Health before the National Assembly, 6 May 2020, available at: [www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/covid19/l15covid191920012\\_compte-rendu](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/covid19/l15covid191920012_compte-rendu)

<sup>112</sup> France, Ministry of National Education, Circular of 4 May 2020, available at: [www.education.gouv.fr/bo/20/Hebdo19/MENE2011220C.htm](http://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/20/Hebdo19/MENE2011220C.htm)

<sup>113</sup> France, Ouest France, "Seine et Marne. SOS Racisme denounces the 'divisive remarks' of the mayor of Voisenon on Travellers", 14 May 2020, available at: [www.ouest-france.fr/ile-de-france/seine-et-marne/seine-et-marne-sos-racisme-denonce-les-propos-clivants-du-maire-de-voisenon-sur-les-gens-du-voyage-6835230](http://www.ouest-france.fr/ile-de-france/seine-et-marne/seine-et-marne-sos-racisme-denonce-les-propos-clivants-du-maire-de-voisenon-sur-les-gens-du-voyage-6835230)

Several associations and NGOs, such as 'SOS Racisme', criticised the statement and asked the municipality to apologise publicly to the people targeted. They underlined that the remarks of the mayor echo a hate speech observed for several months and that "the media silence surrounding this affair only reinforces the feeling of impunity".<sup>114</sup> In addition, the network of associations 'Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante' stressed that Travellers face regularly "hostility from communities and local elected officials, who delay, or sometimes refuse, to set up the necessary reception structures, even in times of health crisis".<sup>115</sup>

- **Any manifestations of antigypsyism or hate crime against Roma and Travellers**

For two consecutive nights at the beginning of May, three Molotov cocktails were launched on a Roma slum located in Argenteuil (Val-d'Oise department) from a nearby highway, causing fires on the roofs of the huts under which adults and children lived. Despite these acts of violence, no one was injured.<sup>116</sup>

In a joint release the associations 'Romeurope', 'Ligue des droits de l'Homme' and 'Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples' strongly criticised these acts of hatred, arguing that they "are racist and xenophobic acts against people identified as Roma, and must be denounced and condemned as such". Thus, they demanded that public authorities denounce these "unacceptable acts, without a detour, as well as the opening of an investigation into the lack of immediate reaction from the police".<sup>117</sup>

### 3.2 Positive change in attitudes

- **Manifestations of social solidarity with Roma and Travellers**

Many associations support Travellers on the ground and remain attentive to their needs and concerns. In the Paris region for example, a network has been set up to allow the distribution of food parcels to numerous churches and several halting sites, for the benefit of around 40 families per

<sup>114</sup> France, SOS Racism, « SOS Racisme is scandalised by the anti-Roma press release from the municipality of Voisenon », 13 May 2020, available at: <https://urlz.fr/cG8k>

<sup>115</sup> France, 'Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante', "Fraternity and solidarity for Travellers", 27 May 2020, available at: <https://fep.asso.fr/2020/05/fraternite-et-solidarite-pour-les-gens-du-voyage/>

<sup>116</sup> France, Le Parisien, "Argenteuil: an incendiary device thrown on the Roma camp under the A15", 5 May 2020, available at: [www.leparisien.fr/val-d-oise-95/argenteuil-un-engin-incendiaire-jete-sur-le-camp-de-roms-sous-l-a15-05-05-2020-8311422.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/val-d-oise-95/argenteuil-un-engin-incendiaire-jete-sur-le-camp-de-roms-sous-l-a15-05-05-2020-8311422.php)

<sup>117</sup> France, NGOs' joint release, "Intolerable acts of hate in Argenteuil (Val d'Oise)", 6 May 2020, available at: [www.ldh-france.org/actes-de-haine-intolerables-a-argenteuil-val-doise/](http://www.ldh-france.org/actes-de-haine-intolerables-a-argenteuil-val-doise/)

distribution location. To achieve this goal, a truck was loaned from the Food Bank, a house was made available for the warehouse and packages, masks, gloves and hydroalcoholic gel were donated by the Salvation Army.<sup>118</sup>

In parallel, volunteers help Roma children to maintain a school relationship with their teachers.<sup>119</sup> The association 'Rencont'Roms nous' offers homework help to Roma children in a slum of 250 inhabitants in Toulouse. Students and young Roma in civic service supervise the highly motivated schoolchildren.<sup>120</sup>

Another example concerns supply of electronic equipment. Following the mobilisation of associations such as 'ATD Fourth World' (#ConfinésMaisConnectés campaign: declare package excluded!) and 'Emmaüs Connect', 20,000 phones and smartphones, as well as 4,000 recharges with unlimited calls and SMS, plus 10 GB of the Internet, were offered by the French operator SFR which also provided 50,000 prepaid recharges for students in precarious situations.<sup>121</sup>

- **Examples of local initiatives transcending ethnic boundaries**

On 20 March 2020, the Hérault Prefecture announced that the regional health agency, the Departmental Directorate of Social Cohesion (DDCS) and the Montpellier municipality were working on the establishment of water reservoirs. In addition, it announced that State services will be able to supply associations working in the slums with hydroalcoholic solution. As for food distribution, the prefecture entered into cooperation with the NGO 'Secours populaire' to help the redistribution to households.<sup>122</sup>

In the Ile-de-France region, the 'Association Reception, Cooperation, Integration for Newly Arrived ones' (ACINA) is in charge of social support for people living in slums, including Roma. The distributions carried out in the

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<sup>118</sup> France, 'Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante', "Fraternity and solidarity for Travellers", 27 May 2020, available at: <https://fep.asso.fr/2020/05/fraternite-et-solidarite-pour-les-gens-du-voyage/>

<sup>119</sup> France, Mediapart, "ATD Fourth World's fraternal smartphones", 28 May 2020, available at: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/antoinepeillon/blog/280520/les-smartphones-fraternels-d-atd-quart-monde>

<sup>120</sup> France, France Info, "Toulouse: an association offers homework help in a slum and wants to extend its model", 28 May 2020, available at: <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/occitanie/haute-garonne/toulouse/toulouse-association-propose-aide-aux-devoirs-bidonville-veut-etendre-son-modele-1833800.html>

<sup>121</sup> France, Mediapart, "ATD Fourth World's fraternal smartphones", 28 May 2020, available at: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/antoinepeillon/blog/280520/les-smartphones-fraternels-d-atd-quart-monde>

<sup>122</sup> France, Hérault Prefecture, "Coronavirus - State services in Hérault are fully mobilised in favour of the most deprived populations", 20 March 2020, available at: [www.herault.gouv.fr/content/download/33568/226490/file/CP\\_%20Covid19%20aide%20aux%20plus%20démunis%2000320.pdf](http://www.herault.gouv.fr/content/download/33568/226490/file/CP_%20Covid19%20aide%20aux%20plus%20démunis%2000320.pdf)

first days of the emergency benefited the inhabitants of more than thirty sites and enabled the families to receive aid or food vouchers, hygiene products and diapers, essential to their daily lives.<sup>123</sup>

In the municipality of Nantes (Loire-Atlantique department), more than 25 local associations responded to the call launched by the local authorities by creating a workshop for the manufacture of reusable fabric masks for the most deprived persons. Nearly 200 seamstresses worked to deliver 15,000 masks to precarious people, including Roma and Travellers communities. In order to help volunteers to achieve this goal, the municipality provided premises to the associations and some residents made donations of fabric.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> France, Association Reception, Cooperation, Integration for Newly Arrived ones, "ACINA mobilises in response to the health crisis", 29 April 2020, available at: [www.acina.fr/acina-se-mobilise-face-a-la-crise-sanitaire/](http://www.acina.fr/acina-se-mobilise-face-a-la-crise-sanitaire/)

<sup>124</sup> France, Ouest France, "Nantes. They make masks for the most precarious", 20 May 2020, available at: [www.ouest-france.fr/pays-de-la-loire/nantes-44000/nantes-elles-font-des-masques-pour-les-plus-precaires-cf3a9db0-99db-11ea-a8f8-da8d268dfff](http://www.ouest-france.fr/pays-de-la-loire/nantes-44000/nantes-elles-font-des-masques-pour-les-plus-precaires-cf3a9db0-99db-11ea-a8f8-da8d268dfff) ; France, '20 minutes', "Coronavirus in Nantes: 15,000 masks in one month for the most precarious... Dressmakers on the verge of winning their bet", 11 May 2020, available at: [www.20minutes.fr/nantes/2775431-20200511-coronavirus-nantes-15000-masques-mois-plus-precaires-couturieres-passe-reussir-pari](http://www.20minutes.fr/nantes/2775431-20200511-coronavirus-nantes-15000-masques-mois-plus-precaires-couturieres-passe-reussir-pari)