

EQUALITY



# Poverty and employment: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States

## Roma survey – Data in focus



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# **Poverty and employment: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States**

Roma survey – Data in focus



# Foreword

Roma make up Europe's largest ethnic minority and have for centuries formed an integral part of European society. But despite efforts at national, European and international level to improve the protection of their fundamental rights and advance their social inclusion, many Roma still face severe poverty, profound social exclusion, discrimination and barriers to exercising their fundamental rights.

Equal and full access to employment is key to furthering social inclusion and combating poverty. Employment is not only a source of income that determines material well-being, it also builds human capital and shapes survival strategies, relationships between groups and across societies. Just as poverty is not only about money, employment is not only about jobs. This is why the Europe 2020 strategy so prominently reflects both poverty and employment.

In this report, FRA presents the results of the 2011 FRA Roma survey on poverty and employment. About 90 % of Roma in the survey have an income below the national poverty threshold; about 40 % of the children live in households struggling with malnutrition or hunger. More than half of the Roma in the survey live in segregated areas, in housing that falls far below minimum housing standards. Persistent prejudice and discrimination undermine Roma employment prospects. Only about a third of those surveyed has paid work, which is often precarious and informal.

Despite widespread discrimination, most Roma are actively seeking work. But concerted efforts are necessary to break through this cycle of disadvantage, improving employment opportunities as well as reducing poverty and hardship. In times of economic crisis, the most vulnerable groups are affected first, putting at risk the modest progress achieved in implementing the EU Framework and national Roma integration strategies. Currently, 58 % of young Roma people in the 11 countries surveyed are neither in employment nor in training or education, compared to 13 % on average in the EU. While there appears to be some reduction in the employment gap between young Roma and non-Roma, this is not due to increased employment opportunities for Roma, but rather to deterioration in the employment prospects of young non-Roma. Genuine Roma inclusion is about bringing the opportunities enjoyed by Roma to the level of those of non-Roma – not the other way around.

The problems faced by Roma are complex and therefore require an integrated approach – low educational attainment, labour market barriers, segregation and deprived living conditions must all be addressed through coordinated, mutually reinforcing interventions. The EU has an important role to play in implementing such change, by improving legislation against discrimination, coordinating policy, setting common integration goals and allocating funding. But national, regional and, especially local governments bear the core responsibility for engaging Roma communities and making change happen.

Achieving a tangible improvement in Roma people's lives and providing their children with equal opportunities requires political will – courage and determination to act. However, political will alone is not enough. It must be matched by the knowledge of what works and what does not and by reliable monitoring tools capable of capturing the results achieved and their determinants. Otherwise, the funding devoted to improving employment opportunities and decreasing discrimination in the labour market may be wasted.

FRA's contribution to the process of Roma inclusion is providing evidence on all its facets. By gathering data, assisting the design of progress indicators and testing novel approaches involving Roma communities at local level, FRA makes Roma inclusion efforts more targeted and inclusive. The current publication is one element of this comprehensive endeavour.

**Morten Kjaerum**

Director

# Country codes

Country code	Country
<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria
<b>CZ</b>	Czech Republic
<b>EL</b>	Greece
<b>ES</b>	Spain
<b>FR</b>	France
<b>HU</b>	Hungary
<b>IT</b>	Italy
<b>PL</b>	Poland
<b>PT</b>	Portugal
<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>SK</b>	Slovakia



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# Introduction

Roma people are the largest ethnic minority in the European Union (EU) and among the most deprived, facing social exclusion, discrimination and unequal access to employment, education, housing and health. Equal and full access to employment is key to furthering social inclusion and to combating poverty. The analysis of the labour market and financial situation of Roma presented in this report is based on the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Roma pilot survey. It aims to enhance understanding of the situation and facilitate the development of better targeted policies at EU and national level.

The EU is obliged under the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) to combat social exclusion and discrimination (Article 3 of the TFEU) and reaffirm social rights as laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Social Charter adopted by the Community and by the Council of Europe.<sup>1</sup> Many of the estimated 10–12 million Roma in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They are marginalised and live in very poor socio-economic conditions. This is incompatible with the values upon which the EU is founded, undermines social cohesion, hampers competitiveness and generates costs for society as a whole. The EU has adopted a strategy designed to tackle these issues while ensuring full respect for fundamental rights. The Europe 2020 strategy, which aims at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and targets Roma explicitly, though not exclusively, highlights this fact. The Europe 2020 strategy has also guided the development of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, which are, in turn, designed to support the implementation of the 2020 strategy.<sup>2</sup>

On 9 December 2013 the Council of the European Union adopted a Council recommendation to provide guidance to Member States in enhancing the effectiveness of their measures to achieve Roma integration. It focuses on strengthening the implementation of their national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of policy measures within broader social inclusion policies aimed at improving the situation of Roma and at closing any gaps between Roma and the general population. The recommendation specifically suggests that Member States take effective measures to ensure equal

treatment of Roma in access to the labour market and to employment opportunities. It also recommends that they take measures to combat poverty and social exclusion affecting the disadvantaged, including Roma, through investment in human capital and social cohesion policies. Member States are encouraged, depending on the size and social and economic situation of their Roma populations, to consider making Roma integration an important issue within their national reform programmes or their national social reports in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy.<sup>3</sup>

Roma inclusion efforts target Roma, but they are of concern to everyone living in the EU, as improving Roma employment opportunities will help achieve the Europe 2020 growth strategy for all, including other marginalised groups. The Europe 2020 strategy is focused on five ambitious goals in the areas of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy. Two of these are of immediate interest for this report: employment and poverty reduction. The strategy aims at an employment rate of 75 % for those of working age (20–64); for poverty, the target is to bring at least 20 million people out of risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>4</sup> These two targets are interlinked, but higher incomes alone cannot reduce poverty. It is primarily employment, as a major vehicle of social inclusion, that can improve living conditions and enable people to successfully tackle the challenges of poverty. In addition, improving Roma employment contributes to social cohesion by enhancing diversity and supporting democratic stability – a pre-condition for the effective protection of human rights.<sup>5</sup>

To tackle persistent economic and social marginalisation and achieve full respect for fundamental rights, the EU framework identifies and sets minimum standards to be reached in four crucial areas: access to education, employment, healthcare and housing to help Member States reach the overall targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. The monitoring of these minimum standards should be based on common, comparable and reliable indicators and reported

<sup>1</sup> European Union, Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, 2007; Council of Europe, European Social Charter (revised), 1996.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Council of the European Union (2013).

<sup>4</sup> The other three targets are in the area of research and development, climate change and education. In the area of research and development, 3 % of the EU's GDP should be invested. In the area of climate change and energy sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions are targeted to become 20 % lower than 1990 to gain 20 % of energy from renewables and to increase energy efficiency by 20 %. In the area of education, the rates of early school leaving are targeted below 10 % and at least 40 % of 30–34-year olds should complete a third level education. See European Commission, *Europe 2020 in a nutshell*.

<sup>5</sup> Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2010).

annually.<sup>6</sup> In response, the European Commission, acknowledging the effects of the financial crisis and the fragile social stability, added an indicator scoreboard on employment, inequality and social exclusion<sup>7</sup> to its macroeconomic surveillance mechanism.

## Roma pilot survey

In 2011, FRA – in cooperation with the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank – conducted a pilot survey of Roma and non-Roma populations living nearby. The study collected data in 11 EU Member States on their situation in employment, education, housing and health, as well as on issues of equal treatment and rights awareness.<sup>8</sup>

In total 16,319 households were surveyed in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. For each household, one respondent aged 16 and above was selected for an interview. In part, the information given refers to the household as a whole so that in total the data describe the living conditions of 61,271 persons in these households.<sup>9</sup> For each country about 1,000 Roma households and 500 non-Roma households living in close proximity were sampled randomly. The sample included only regions which were known to have a significant Roma population.<sup>10</sup>

The sample reflects the situation of all regions in the 11 Member States with an above-average proportion of Roma. Consequently, the survey is not representative of the total Roma population or the general population of the Member States surveyed. The survey spotlights the living conditions in areas where Roma identity is more visible than elsewhere. The non-Roma population was sampled in the same area and is distinct from the Roma population in respect to income, employment and housing. In addition, there is also an observable economic gap between these two groups and the 'majority population', a term used here to describe the general population in a country, reflecting that country's average living standard. The research found that both the Roma and the non-Roma surveyed often shared elements of marginalisation and a lack of infrastructure that characterises segregated living areas.

Roma ethnicity was determined solely through self-identification. This implies explicit awareness and a certain feeling of belonging to the Roma minority.

A summary of key findings was published jointly with the UNDP and the European Commission in 2012.<sup>11</sup> The present report provides more detailed analysis in reference to the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy on employment, poverty and social exclusion. It focuses on the employment situation and the factors driving both the individual respondents' and the households' employment situations, the patterns of at-risk of poverty and the financial situation and living conditions of the households. In particular, the analysis tries to understand the employment gaps identified in the survey and how this might be related to factors, such as segregation, living conditions and education.

These factors are important to take into account, because employment in the form of paid work requires that there is, first, a supply of jobs; second, an adequately skilled workforce; and third, adequate conditions that allow the workforce to engage in regular daily work. In this regard, lack of state or private investment limits the supply of jobs; lack of qualifications limits the skills that employers need. Moreover, factors such as living in segregated areas with limited or no access to public transport and poor infrastructure, child care obligations, as well as discrimination and racism reduce the possibilities of finding work.

## Roma households in segregated areas

The target areas for the survey were selected to cover urban and rural areas and those with a higher share of resident Roma.

Roma households were selected to be surveyed if at least one household member self-identified as Roma. The term 'Roma', as used by the Council of Europe, refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom). It also covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.<sup>12</sup> The term 'non-Roma' refers to the population living closest to the Roma surveyed and is not representative of the majority population.

In France, the Roma surveyed were *gens du voyage* living in halting sites (*aire d'accueil*). In Italy and Greece, about half and one third of Roma respondents, 47 % and 30 %, respectively, live in encampments.

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2011).

<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2013a).

<sup>8</sup> FRA (2012).

<sup>9</sup> An additional sampled group of Roma migrants in France is not included in this analysis. Results on this sample group can be found in: Cherkezova, S., Tomova, I. (2013).

<sup>10</sup> Detailed information on sampling design and coverage can be found in: FRA (2013).

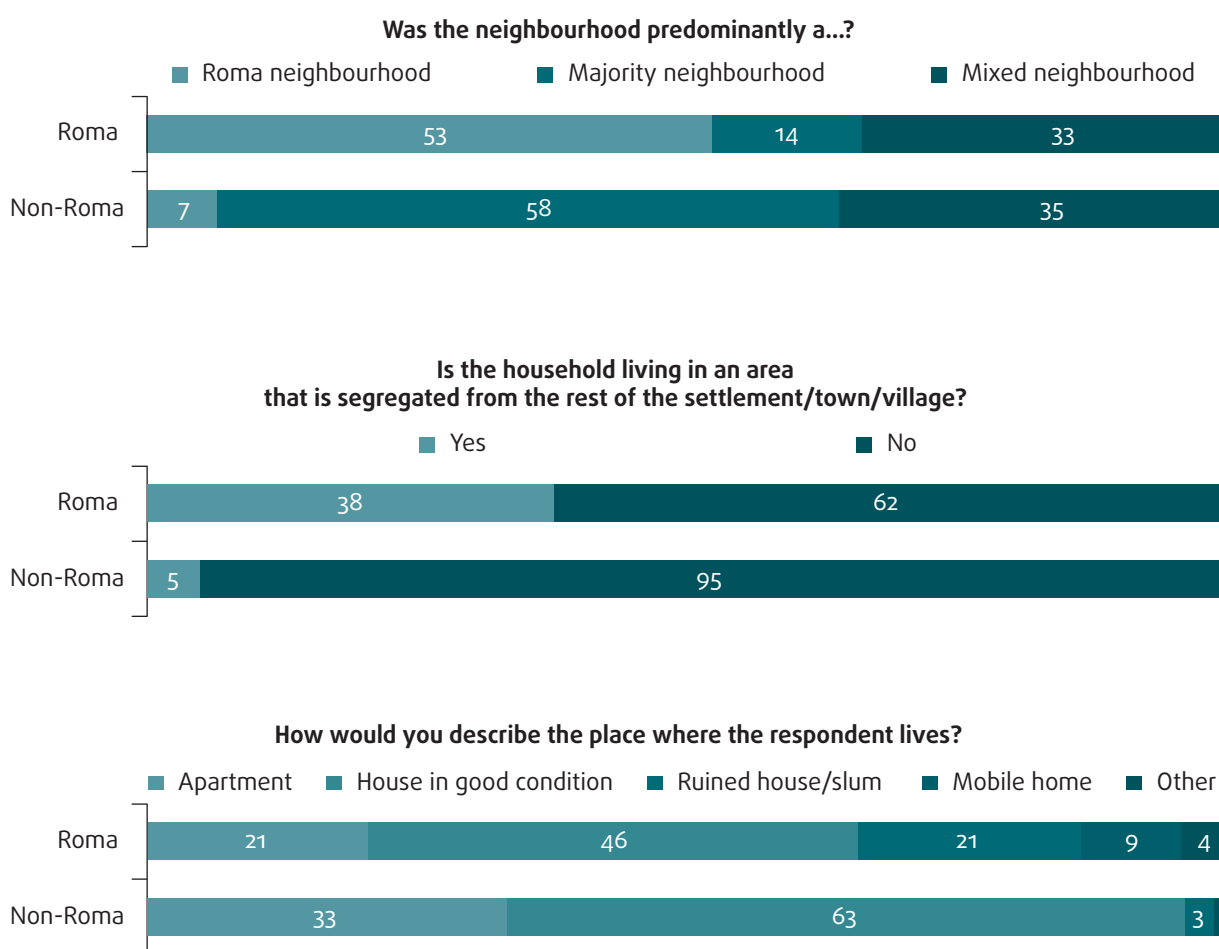
<sup>11</sup> FRA (2012).

<sup>12</sup> Council of Europe (2012).

Interviewers were asked to classify the type of neighbourhood respondents live in (Figure 1). The results show that the Roma surveyed are concentrated in neighbourhoods which differ from those of the non-Roma living nearby. More than half of the non-Roma but just 14 % of the Roma live in majority areas, whereas more than half of the Roma lived in a Roma neighbourhood.

On average, about 38 % of the Roma surveyed live in segregated areas, in contrast to 5 % of non-Roma, according to the interviewers' assessment. In addition, 20 % of the Roma live in slums or ruined houses and 9 % in caravans or mobile homes (in France, Greece and Italy).

**Figure 1: Interviewer assessment of the respondent's area, by Roma and non-Roma (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households



# Key findings and FRA opinions

## KEY SURVEY FINDINGS ON ROMA POVERTY AND EMPLOYMENT

*The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States – Survey results at a glance*, a joint FRA, UNDP, World Bank and European Commission publication, presents the main findings of the combined data of the UNDP and FRA Roma surveys, including on poverty and employment:

### Poverty

- On average, about 90 % of the Roma surveyed live in households with an equivalised income below national poverty lines.
- On average, around 40 % of Roma live in households where somebody had to go to bed hungry at least once in the last month since they could not afford to buy food.

### Employment

- On average, fewer than one out of three Roma are reported to be in paid employment.
- One out of three Roma respondents said that they are unemployed.
- Others said that they are homemakers, retired, not able to work or self-employed.

The survey results show that Roma face multiple challenges in regard to employment: very low employment rates were observed, in particular for young Roma and young non-Roma nearby. Lack of educational qualifications coupled with residential segregation and discrimination reinforce processes of exclusion from the formal labour market. In addition, the results show that many Roma continue to endure deprived housing conditions and extreme poverty imposing a particular burden on women and children, as they spend disproportionately more time in the household. The findings also show important country differences, however, that should be taken into account when developing Roma inclusion, employment and poverty reduction programmes.

## Access to employment

The survey finds that employment rates are particularly low for Roma in all the Member States surveyed. Only 28 % of Roma and 45 % of non-Roma living nearby aged 16 and above indicate paid work as their main activity. A considerable proportion of Roma in paid work face precarious employment conditions: 23 % hold ad hoc jobs, 21 % are self-employed and 9 % are employed part-time.

Paid work rates for non-Roma living nearby in all Member States surveyed are below national averages, which would indicate that the areas targeted by the survey – with a high concentration of Roma – lack employment opportunities in general and are consequently characterised by high levels of poverty overall. Despite the higher level, the non-Roma surveyed have similar patterns to that of the general population – which is not the case for Roma. This could indicate that their employment patterns are different and that, therefore, interventions at national level targeting areas of relative economic decline may fail to reach the Roma population. Young Roma aged 16 to 24 have the lowest employment rates among Roma (24 %) but the smallest employment gap in comparison to non-Roma living in close proximity (27 %).

Self-reported Roma unemployment rates are three times higher than for non-Roma nearby and the general population. Nevertheless, 74 % of unemployed Roma said that they are currently looking for work.

#### FRA opinion

*The Europe 2020 strategy aims for 75 % of the population aged 20 to 64 to be employed in 2020. To achieve this rate for Roma, national employment strategies must take into account Roma people's particular situation and intensify efforts to support income generation efforts at local level. In some Member States this may include support for different forms of employment and self-employment, such as commercial activities. Public authorities should ensure that vocational training schemes targeting Roma reflect their specific situation, as well as the demands of the labour market.*

*Public employment schemes can be a temporary solution for unemployment, but they should also be used as an opportunity for requalification and further training. Local investments in infrastructure and public services, such as child and healthcare, could be used to stimulate local employment that can benefit Roma both by developing skills and providing work.*

*The strategy of the European Commission for equality between women and men has identified five priority areas putting a particular focus on equal economic independence. In this light if employment and income generation strategies focus specifically on Roma women it could help them achieve that goal.*

#### FRA opinion

*EU Member States should examine ways to provide medical insurance for Roma in insecure or informal employment and increase awareness of the availability of free medical insurance for those unable to contribute, as access to healthcare is a fundamental right. In addition, Member States should ensure that employers fulfil their obligations in regard to payment of health insurance contributions including for flexible contractual and temporary work arrangements.*

*EU Member States should examine the issue of pension entitlements for Roma or their lack of awareness of such entitlements. Pension benefits are essential to enable older people to live independently and they often contribute significantly to the welfare and financial survival of a household living in deprived conditions.*

## Social security issues in employment

A good proxy for assessing the quality of employment is eligibility for medical and social insurance, including pension schemes. The survey results show that a substantial share of Roma are facing insecure or informal employment and are not eligible for medical and social insurance, including pension schemes. On average, 19 % of Roma in paid work say that they do not have medical insurance. In regard to pensions, the survey results show that every third Roma respondent aged 45 and above does not expect or – if retired – does not receive a pension. By comparison, only 5 %–11 % of the non-Roma population living in close proximity in these countries say they do not have a pension or do not think they will receive a pension after retirement.

## Poverty and marginalised living conditions

Inability to find employment is linked to the risk of deprivation. In Portugal, Romania and Slovakia, almost all Roma households surveyed had a disposable household income below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

Being 'in employment' does not, however, mean that there is no risk of poverty, which depends on the type of work and its remuneration. Paid work seems to have almost no impact on the relative financial position of the Roma households surveyed.

Poverty does not affect all household members equally. Roma children are the most vulnerable and face multiple disadvantages: 42 % of Roma who live in households with an income below the national at-risk-of-poverty rate are children and young adults under 18. The at-risk-of-poverty rate for Roma households with four or more children is close to 100 %. For households with two or more children, the employment of women does not suffice to overcome the relative risk of poverty threshold. There is a marked difference only in households with one or no children, if at least one woman is employed.

The childhood hunger rates we find in the survey are at least three times higher for Roma than for non-Roma. On average 41 % of Roma children live in households where at least once in the last month someone had to go hungry to bed because they could not afford to buy food.



## FRA opinion

*EU Member States should ensure that Roma and other marginalised groups are entitled to adequate social and housing assistance to tackle phenomena of extreme deprivation, including inadequate and lack of food.*

*Member States have an obligation under international law to ensure that children in households characterised by extreme poverty, including Roma, do not grow up under conditions of malnutrition which can cause long-lasting physical and psychological harm. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, Article 27) and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 24) guarantee the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.*

*The European Commission and Member States should ensure that EU funds are effectively and efficiently used within the Multiannual Financial Framework to provide food and support to the most deprived, to ensure that Roma, in particular children, do not face hunger. This use of funds is in line with the Recommendation on Child Poverty, published as an annex to the Social Investment Package 2013, which recommends that Member States organise and implement policies to address child poverty and social exclusion, promoting children's well-being.*

*Paid work may not be sufficient to overcome extreme poverty for Roma families. Member States should ensure that wages and social assistance provisions allow families to have an income sufficient to keep them out of extreme poverty.*

## Structural barriers for labour market integration

Prejudice and ethnic discrimination are key factors hindering labour market integration. Many Roma said that they have experienced unequal treatment when looking for work in the last five years. In Spain, Romania and Portugal 38 %–40 % said they have experienced such discrimination. In Italy, Greece and the Czech Republic the figures are between 66 % and 74 %. Many also said that they have experienced such treatment at work, for example in the Czech Republic (41 %) and in Greece (33 %).

Segregation and deprived housing conditions are key factors that influence the vicious circle of exclusion. They affect people's aspirations and determine

the survival strategies they choose. Based on the interviewers' assessments, about 38 % of the Roma surveyed live in segregated areas against only 5 % of non-Roma living nearby; around 20 % of Roma live in slums or ruined houses. Of those surveyed, 42 % of Roma and 12 % of non-Roma said that they have no access to electricity, running water or sewage.

The lack of employment opportunities are linked to residential segregation. Non-Roma who live in Roma neighbourhoods have lower employment rates (31 %) than non-Roma living in majority neighbourhoods (41 %).

## FRA opinion

*EU Member States and the European Commission have an obligation to ensure that legislation concerning equal treatment in employment, occupation and training is implemented and monitored effectively. Equality bodies should ensure that people, in particular those most at risk of discrimination, such as Roma, are aware of relevant legal provisions and that they can use them effectively.*

*Member States should consider action to ensure that the right to housing (Article 31, European Social Charter) is respected in order to prevent and reduce homelessness by making adequate housing accessible to those without adequate resources. In accordance with the Council Regulations on the European Regional Development Fund (EC No. 1080/2006) and the European Social Fund (EC No. 1081/2006), Member States should make use of the EU's Structural Funds to develop and improve public utilities' infrastructure in disadvantaged areas and to improve equal access to employment and public services. Local integration strategies should strive to reduce spatial and residential segregation based on ethnic origin. Member States should consider systematically collecting data to monitor the implementation of Roma integration policies in regard to public infrastructure, spatial and residential segregation.*

*Infrastructure development can be an effective tool for generating employment locally. Such projects should be explicitly oriented at involving the unemployed from vulnerable communities. Even when the short-term cost is higher, the additional investment pays off long term in the form of reduced risk of poverty and social exclusion and a higher level of social cohesion. Member States could therefore consider factoring such intangible benefits into procurement procedures for EU-funded infrastructure projects at local level.*





# 1

## Labour market participation patterns



### KEY FINDINGS

- Employment rates are particularly low for Roma in all surveyed countries: only 28 % of Roma and 45 % of non-Roma living nearby aged 16 and above indicate paid work as their main activity.
- The employment gap is largest in Portugal where only 15 % of Roma said that they have some form of paid work, while 43 % of the non-Roma in the same area give paid work as their main activity. The situation is similar in Slovakia and Spain, although in the latter the employment gap is smaller.
- A high proportion of Roma in paid work face precarious employment conditions: 23 % hold ad hoc jobs, 21 % are self-employed and 9 % are employed part-time.
- The employment gap in Greece appears practically non-existent and shows very similar results for Roma (39 %) and non-Roma nearby (40 %) in paid work. Greece has the lowest share of full-time work (14 %) for working-age Roma (20–64).
- Of those in paid work, Roma in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic have the highest share of full-time work at 81 %, 80 % and 79 %, respectively, which may be a legacy of the previous economic system.
- Young Roma have the lowest employment rates among the Roma population (24 %), but they have the smallest employment gap to the non-Roma surveyed (27 %).
- Nonetheless, the overall situation remains adverse for young Roma, 19 % of non-Roma and 58 % of Roma aged 16 to 24 are not in employment, education or training.
- Paid work rates for non-Roma in all survey countries except the Czech Republic, Italy and Slovakia are below national averages. This shows that the areas targeted by the survey, those with a high Roma concentration, are also areas lacking employment opportunities and, in consequence, facing high levels of poverty.
- Comparing paid work rates for Roma with the general population shows no relationship, indicating that national labour market policies do not reach the Roma population.
- Roma women in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia have a similar and even higher share of paid work as men. The biggest employment gap between Roma men and women can be found in Greece and France. In Greece, about a third of the surveyed Roma live in encampments. In France, 100 % of those surveyed live in encampments, which may indicate a more traditional division of labour among the travelling Roma.

Roma labour market participation has been low throughout Europe for the past 20 years. Following the transition from socialism in central and eastern Europe, Roma employment rates dropped dramatically.<sup>13</sup> Roma were often the first to be dismissed from low-skilled

occupations and frequently remained unemployed, unable to reconnect with traditional occupations such as trading, producing and selling craft items and metal working.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ringold, D. (2000).

<sup>14</sup> Liégeois, J.-P. (2007).

The economic crisis has profound negative effects for those at the bottom end of income distribution.<sup>15</sup> Persons with low qualifications, in low-wage sectors and in precarious employment were among the first to lose their jobs. In the southern and some of the eastern EU Member States, unemployment continues to rise.<sup>16</sup> The UNDP study of Roma in central and south-eastern Europe shows that when comparing 2004 with 2011 the reduction in Roma employment rates has been proportionally greater than for non-Roma. Although Roma aged 15 to 24 have improved their educational attainment significantly, this has not yet been reflected in enhanced employment prospects. Policies narrowed the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma, but they were not followed by employment programmes that could have had an impact on the overall outcome. The UNDP study concludes that Roma educational participation has yet to feed through into the labour market.<sup>17</sup>

The FRA survey data show that activity patterns within Roma communities are often distinct both from those of the general population and the non-Roma population living nearby. When comparing the status of Roma with non-Roma (both the general population reflected in the national averages and the non-Roma living in close proximity), the differences in the demographic structures of both groups need to be taken into account. The Roma surveyed are markedly younger, live in larger households, and have, on average, more children. Therefore, in comparison with the general population and the non-Roma population surveyed, the share of the working age population among Roma is higher and that of retired and older persons, lower. These differences make the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma even more pronounced.

## 1.1. Paid work

In the FRA Roma survey, respondents were asked about their current labour market status, distinguishing between paid work, unemployment, housekeeping and retirement. For the survey, the selected household respondent was asked to provide information on each member of the household aged 16 and above, choosing from 17 possible key activities.<sup>18</sup> The Europe 2020 strategy aims for 75 % of the population aged 20 to 64 to be employed, against a baseline value of 69 % in 2009. The EU Framework on National Roma Integration strategies pursues similar goals, aiming to cut the employment gap between Roma and the general population. The employment gap, estimated

from FRA survey data, is based on the self-declared current main activity. It is not directly comparable with the employment rates published by Eurostat for the EU 2020 targets. The Europe 2020 targets are based on the International Labour Organization definition, "having worked at least one hour in the last week". But they can be used to outline the magnitude of the gaps between the groups – and thus the magnitude of the challenges the Framework on the National Roma Integration Strategies is facing. The FRA survey results reveal a significant gap in labour market participation between Roma and non-Roma living nearby (Figure 2).

The employment gap is largest in Portugal where only 15 % of the Roma against 43 % of the non-Roma nearby said that they have paid work as their main activity. The situation is similar in Slovakia and Spain, although the employment gap is smaller in the latter. In contrast, the employment gap in Greece appears virtually non-existent, showing very similar results for Roma (39 %) and non-Roma (40 %).

While these figures may confirm a general pattern of disadvantage for Roma in most countries, the situation differs considerably from country to country and may be related to varying conditions in individual Member States. The differences may also stem from the internal diversity of Roma groups, which, apart from other criteria, differ by the traditional occupations they once practiced.<sup>19</sup>

Data from the survey suggest that in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy and Greece, the Roma employment rate is at least twice as high as in Portugal. These results require in-depth country-level analysis as patterns and quality of employment differ substantially. While Greece and Italy have the highest rates of paid work, for example, they also have the lowest proportion of full-time employment, the FRA survey shows. Only 14 % of Roma in paid work and of working age (20–64) in Greece have full-time employment, compared with 71 % of the non-Roma living nearby. Most Roma in Greece responded that they were self-employed or in ad hoc jobs (see also Figure 6). Thematic country reports show that there has been a notable change in the type of occupation since 2000. Traditional self-employed work, for example street vending, has decreased whereas collecting and selling discarded material for recycling, in particular scrap metal, has increased significantly. In Italy, Roma have a more traditional pattern of self-employment and still carry out crafts, trading and artistic activities.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> FRA (2010); Horváth, B., *et al.* (2012).

<sup>16</sup> European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO), available at: [www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/).

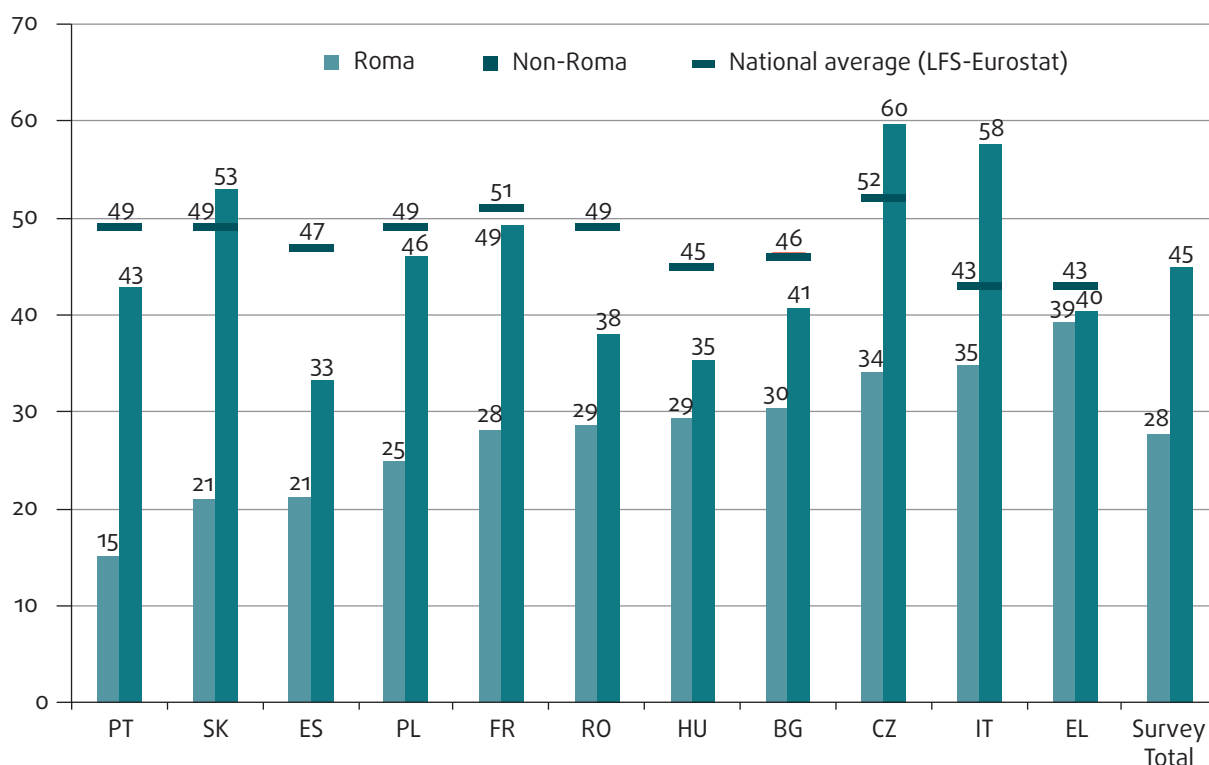
<sup>17</sup> O'Higgins, N. (2012), pp. 33ff.

<sup>18</sup> For details see FRA (2013).

<sup>19</sup> Marushiakova, E., Popov, V. (2001).

<sup>20</sup> FRA, Country thematic studies on the situation of Roma, 2013, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/country-data/2013/country-thematic-studies-situation-roma>.

**Figure 2: Self-declared main activity status 'paid work' (including full-time, part-time, ad hoc jobs, self-employment) in the Roma survey and the Eurostat Labour Force Survey, by EU Member State (%)**



Sources: FRA Roma Pilot Survey, 2011, persons in households (aged 16 and above); Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2011 annual average (aged 15 and above)

In general, the paid work rates measured in the FRA survey are below the national averages as collected by Eurostat.<sup>21</sup> This clearly shows that the areas targeted by the survey, or those with a high Roma concentration, are also areas that lack employment opportunities and, in consequence, face high levels of poverty. In Italy, the Czech Republic and Slovakia alone does the non-Roma population living nearby have employment rates that are above the national average, as measured by Eurostat. This indicates that substantive disparities within countries exist and in some areas the gap between the two groups is even larger.

Employment rates observed in the FRA survey may differ in scope and definition from the standard question used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (Figure 3). Eurostat uses fewer response categories and includes 15-year-olds. In addition, due to the comparatively small country samples, the margin of error for the employment rate in the FRA survey is larger than that in the Labour Force Survey. Larger sample sizes in national surveys targeting these

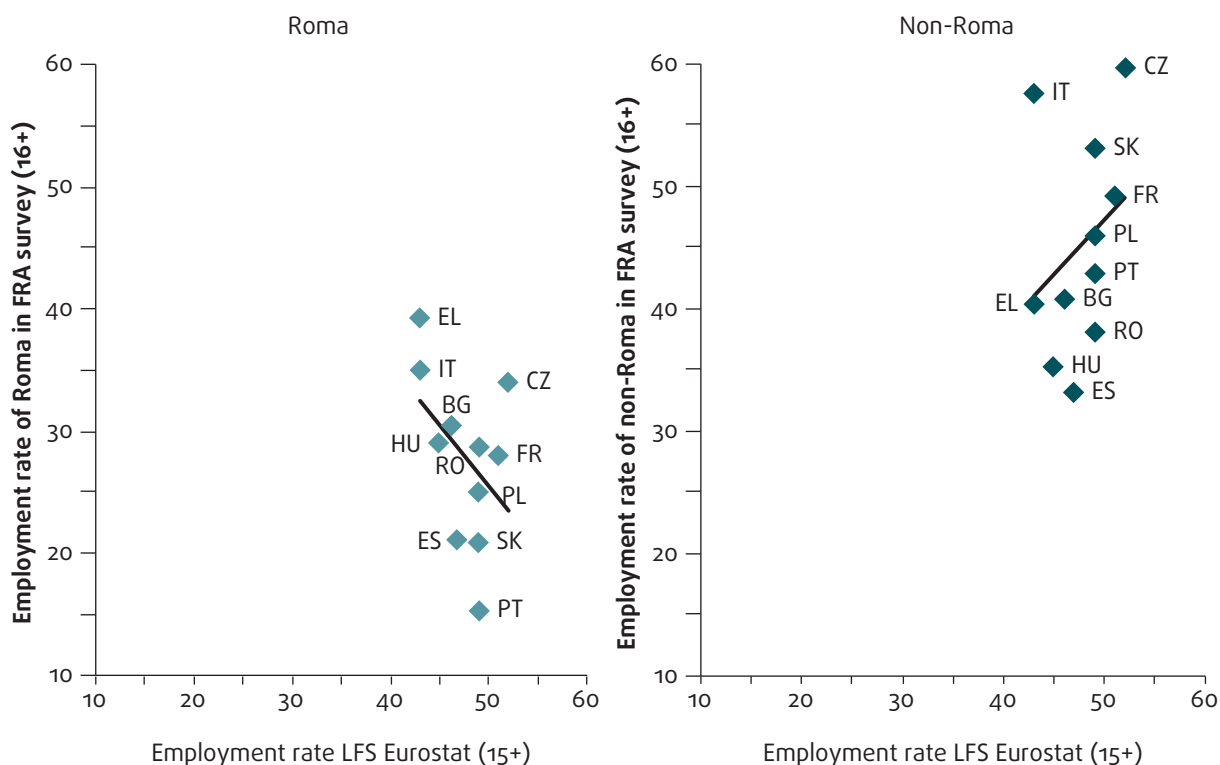
areas would yield useful results for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of Roma inclusion strategies.

It would be plausible to expect that employment rates, as measured by the FRA survey, would generally be higher for countries with high labour market participation, as measured by the Labour Force Survey. This is confirmed for non-Roma, but the inverse is true for Roma. In countries where the Labour Force Survey registers higher employment rates, the FRA survey found higher employment rates among non-Roma, but lower ones among the Roma surveyed. The diverging results suggest that higher employment rates for the general population at national level do not translate into higher employment rates for Roma. The findings support the results of the UNDP analysis, providing some evidence that Roma were decoupled from national labour market dynamics in central and south-eastern EU Member States between 2004 and 2011.<sup>22</sup> Whereas Portugal, Spain and France show similar patterns as the central and south-eastern EU Member States – with Roma employment rates far below the national average – the same does not hold

<sup>21</sup> The self-declared labour market status is collected in the Labour Force Survey (Mainstat) for most of the EU Member States and was used for comparison with the general population.

<sup>22</sup> O'Higgins, N. (2012). The UNDP survey covered the FRA Roma survey countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

**Figure 3: Self-declared employment rates of Roma and of non-Roma in the Roma survey and the Eurostat Labour Force Survey, by EU Member State (%)**



Sources: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011 persons in households (aged 16 and above); Eurostat Labour Force Survey, 2011; Mainstat (aged 15 and above)

true for Greece, where the paid work rates for Roma are the same as for non-Roma living near-by and just below the national average.

## 1.2. Youth participation in the labour market

The most disadvantaged Roma group in terms of employment are the youngest, or those aged 16 to 24, although they have the smallest employment gap to the non-Roma living nearby. Only 9 % of the young Roma surveyed are in paid work in Portugal, compared to 33 % in Greece, which has the highest labour market participation among the Roma surveyed (Figure 4). Employment rates in this age group hinge on the proportion of those still in education or training.

Education is key to gaining opportunities in the labour market. Although the proportion of Roma respondents who have never been to school declines markedly among the younger age groups, overall educational attainment is still low for all those above 16. The FRA survey shows that the majority of young Roma do not complete upper secondary education. The proportion of early school leavers among young Roma aged 18–24 ranges from 72 % in the Czech Republic to 82 %–85 % in

Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovakia. In France, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Spain, more than 93 % of Roma aged 18 to 24 have not completed upper secondary education.<sup>23</sup> The rate of early school leavers, defined by the Europe 2020 indicator as young people aged 18 to 24 who are neither in education nor training, was 13.5 % in 2011 for the total EU-28 population.<sup>24</sup>

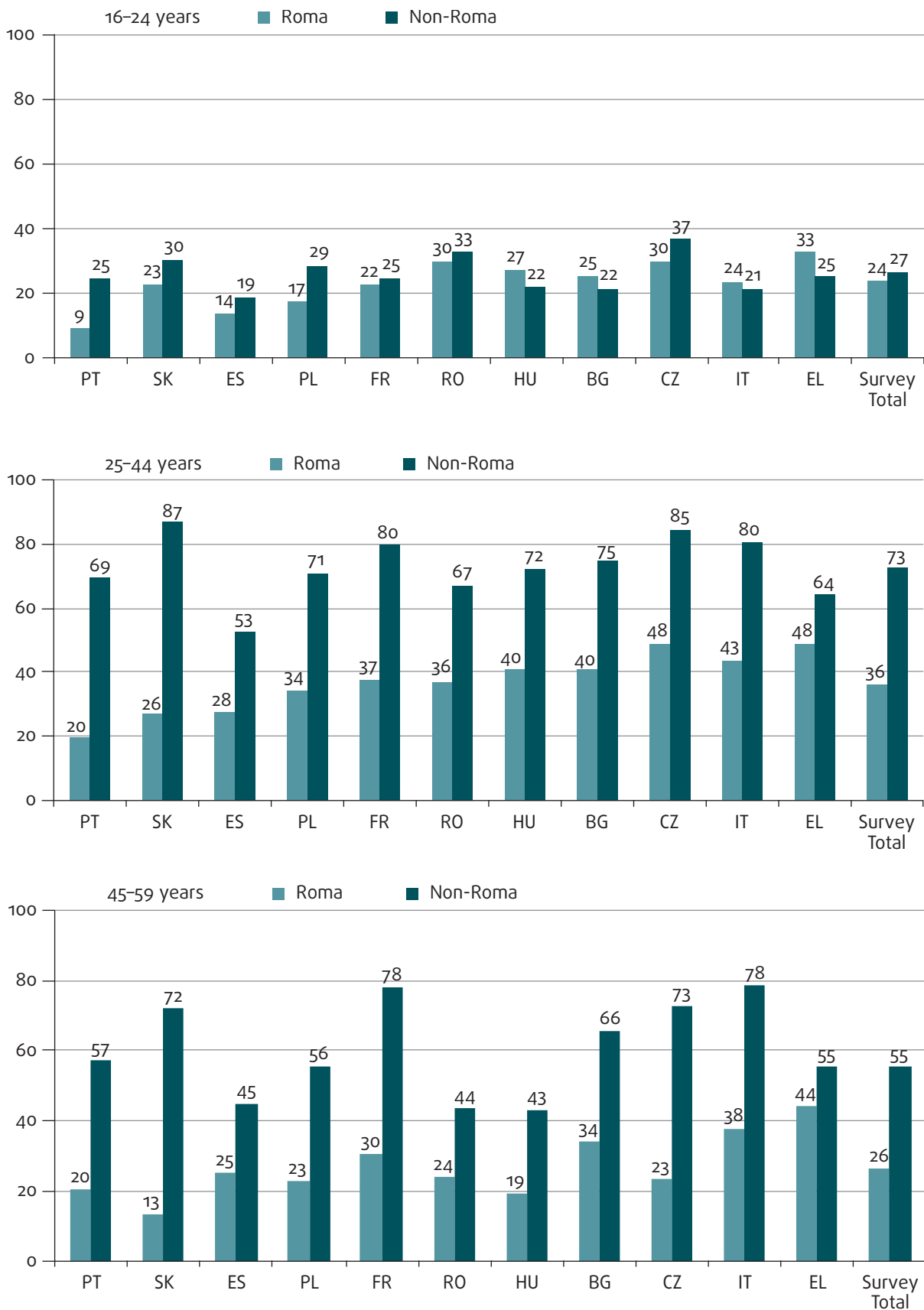
The youngest group of Roma respondents (16–24) have a higher paid work rate than the oldest group (45 and above) in Slovakia, Romania and the Czech Republic. In all the other countries surveyed the highest employment rates are found among Roma respondents aged 25 to 44. In the Czech Republic and Greece about every second Roma respondent in that age group said that they are in paid work.

For the youngest age group (16–24) there are only small differences in paid work rates between Roma and non-Roma, except for Portugal. This could be interpreted as a positive development. But UNDP, in its report on central and south-eastern European countries, pointed out that although it observed

<sup>23</sup> FRA (2014a).

<sup>24</sup> Eurostat, Europe 2020 indicators, Headline indicators.

Figure 4: Self-declared main activity 'paid work', by age group and EU Member State (%)



Note: Countries are ranked by the total population in paid work as per Figure 2.

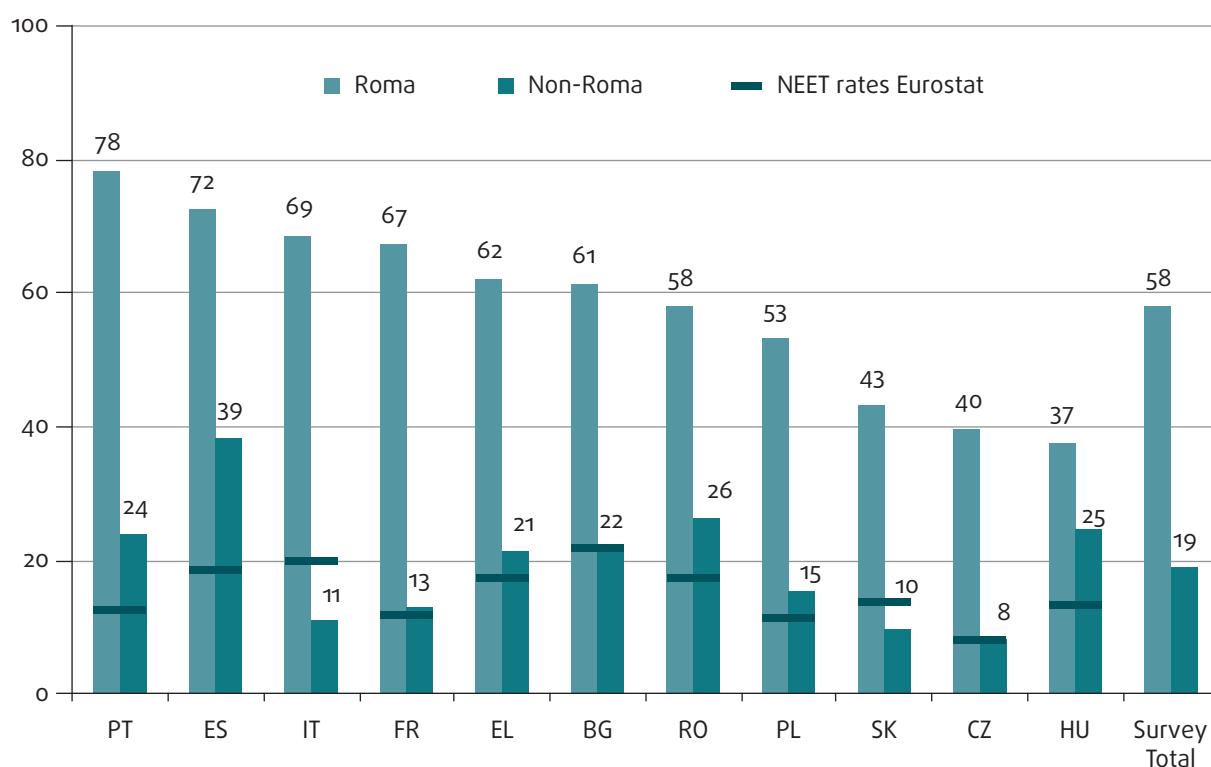
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

a significant increase in educational attainment rates in this age group, the employment effects clearly failed to meet expectations.<sup>25</sup> Although comparable trend data for the other EU Member States are not available there are indications of similar trends in Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. Whereas for these Member States and Romania, Roma educational attainment is much lower than in the central EU Member States, illiteracy rates have more than halved for Roma aged 16 to 24 from the rates of those aged 45 and above.<sup>26</sup> Given that EU youth unemployment reached an historic high of 22.5 % in 2012 and hit peaks of 55.3 % in Greece, 53.2 % in Spain and 37.7 % in Portugal, the impact of education on employment opportunities seems to be limited for all young people, including Roma.<sup>27</sup> The interpretation of differences in labour market participation between age cohorts needs to

take into account political developments as well as the correlation with participation rates in education.

Non-Roma are in general more often in paid work than Roma. Figure 4 shows the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma living nearby. The biggest employment gap for those aged 16 to 24 is in Portugal (16 percentage point difference) and Poland (11 percentage point difference), the survey shows. For those aged 25 to 44 the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma is much larger, with a 61 percentage point difference in Slovakia and a 50 percentage point difference in Portugal. The smallest gap can be observed in Greece, which has a 16 percentage point difference, followed by Spain, Romania and Hungary.

**Figure 5: Young people aged 16 to 24 not in employment, education or training, by EU Member State (%)**



Note: 'Employment' in self-definition of current main activity comprises any paid or unpaid work, 'education' and 'training' according to self-definition of current main activity (16-24). Restricted comparability with NEET rates Eurostat: Young people (15-24) not in employment and not in any education and training 2011 [youth\_empl\_150, edat\_lfse\_22] based on data from the Labour Force survey, employment according to the ILO definition, not involved in any training or education in the four weeks preceding the survey.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households; Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2011 NEET rates

<sup>25</sup> O'Higgins, N. (2012).

<sup>26</sup> FRA (2014a).

<sup>27</sup> European Commission, *Youth unemployment*, [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/21\\_youth\\_unemployment.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/21_youth_unemployment.pdf).

### 1.3. Young people not in employment or in education or training

Employment statistics do not give an accurate picture of the activity status of Roma youth in Europe. For a comprehensive assessment it is necessary to include information on education and training. European policy makers have increasingly used the NEET indicator – young people Not in Employment and not in any Education or Training – to better capture the situation of youth within the Europe 2020 strategy.<sup>28</sup> According to the Eurostat NEET indicator, 13 % of young people aged 15 to 24 were not in the labour market nor in education in the EU-28 in 2011. The FRA Roma pilot survey can provide a crude proxy for this indicator based on the self-declared current main activity of respondents. This shows that the employment gap between young Roma and non-Roma living nearby has almost disappeared, although the rates are low for both groups. Nonetheless, the overall situation remains adverse for Roma. According to the FRA survey, 19 % of non-Roma and 58 % of Roma aged 16 to 24 are not in employment or in education or training (Figure 5).

Among young Roma a notable gender gap can also be observed, with 65 % of young Roma women against 52 % of young Roma men not in employment, education or training. This reflects the overall disadvantage of young Roma women. They have lower employment rates and lower school attainment rates than young men of the same age group.<sup>29</sup>

Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have the lowest NEET rates for young Roma at 37 %, 40 % and 43 %, respectively. In these countries a reverse gender gap can be observed with women more likely than men to be in the labour market or education. While these three countries have the highest overall educational attainment of young Roma, young Roma women still lag behind. Roma women aged 16 to 24 in those countries have notably higher employment rates than young men. This could indicate that the educational attainment of Roma women brings better returns in terms of employment.

The vast majority of young Roma in Portugal (78 %), Spain (72 %) and Italy (69 %) are excluded from employment and education. Non-Roma aged 16 to 24 living nearby also have higher NEET rates than the general population, the highest with 24 % and 39 % in Portugal and Spain, respectively. In Italy and Slovakia however the NEET indicator for non-Roma living nearby is slightly lower than the national average.

<sup>28</sup> European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2011).

<sup>29</sup> FRA (2014b).

### 1.4. Employment patterns of paid work

The definition of ‘paid work’ in the survey included full-time and part-time employment, ad hoc jobs and self-employment. There was no specific question on ‘informal activities’, as the distinction between self-employment and ad hoc jobs is often difficult to establish.

Historically, Roma have faced significant change in their employment patterns, as demand for traditional crafts, products and services progressively diminished.<sup>30</sup> Of those that remain, only a few are capable of generating enough demand to provide a sufficient number of jobs.<sup>31</sup>

In central and eastern EU Member States the structural economic adjustments towards market economies led in the transition period after socialism to the collapse of many large-scale state-owned or collective rural enterprises, which employed Roma. These job losses also brought increased rural poverty and spurred domestic urban migration as Roma sought work.<sup>32</sup> Pre-transitional patterns of full-time employment, even at lower pay now, may still be reflected in current employment patterns in countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. In south-western EU Member States, such as Spain and Greece, a long tradition in trading, crafts and seasonal work is still visible in the high proportion of self-employment.

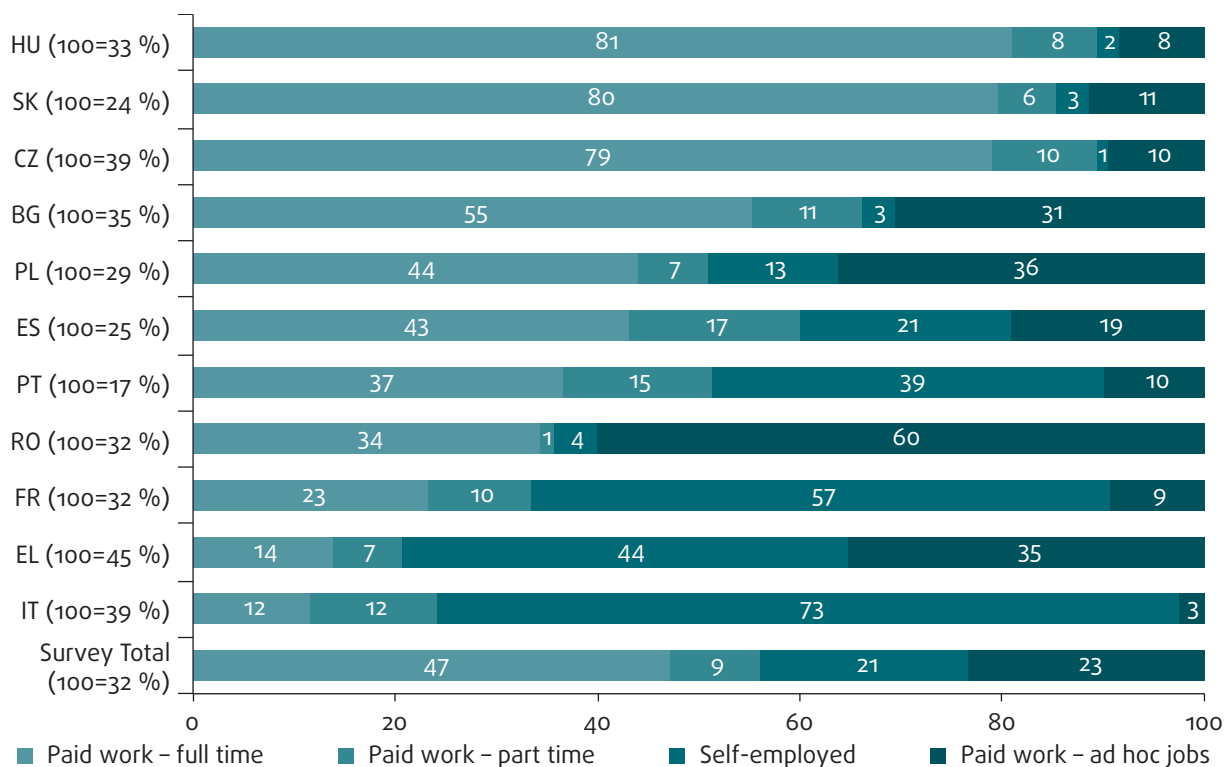
When looking at the employment patterns (Figure 6) of those who said they are in paid work, Italy and Greece, which have the highest proportion of declared work participation for Roma of working age (20-64) (39 % and 45 %, respectively), have only 12 % and 14 % in full-time employment. In Romania, Poland, Greece and Bulgaria, 60 %, 36 %, 35 % and 31 %, respectively, of those who are in paid work pursue ad hoc jobs. In Italy, 73 % say that they are self-employed. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia exhibit Roma post-communist transition pattern. Employment rates are particularly low but consist predominantly of full time jobs. Self-employment is not significant in these countries. In Portugal and Spain, of the 17 % and 25 %, respectively, of Roma at working age who are in paid work, less than half of these jobs are full-time employment (Portugal, 37 % and Spain, 43 %). Considering the importance of employment for poverty reduction, further focused research on the different forms of employment, including informal activities, is needed.

<sup>30</sup> Liégeois, J.-P. (2007).

<sup>31</sup> O’Higgins, N., Ivanov, A. (2006), pp. 16–17.

<sup>32</sup> Ivanov, A., *et al.* (2002).

**Figure 6: Employment patterns of Roma aged 20 to 64, by % in paid work (=100) and EU Member State**



Note: Working age population, Roma in paid work only, aged 20-64. The distribution of employment patterns adds up to 100 % of those who said they are in paid work. The first column (Survey total 100=32 %) indicates the rate of paid work for each country. Read: 32 % of all Roma in the survey indicate paid work, of whom 47 % are in full-time paid work.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

## 1.5. Unemployment

### KEY FINDINGS

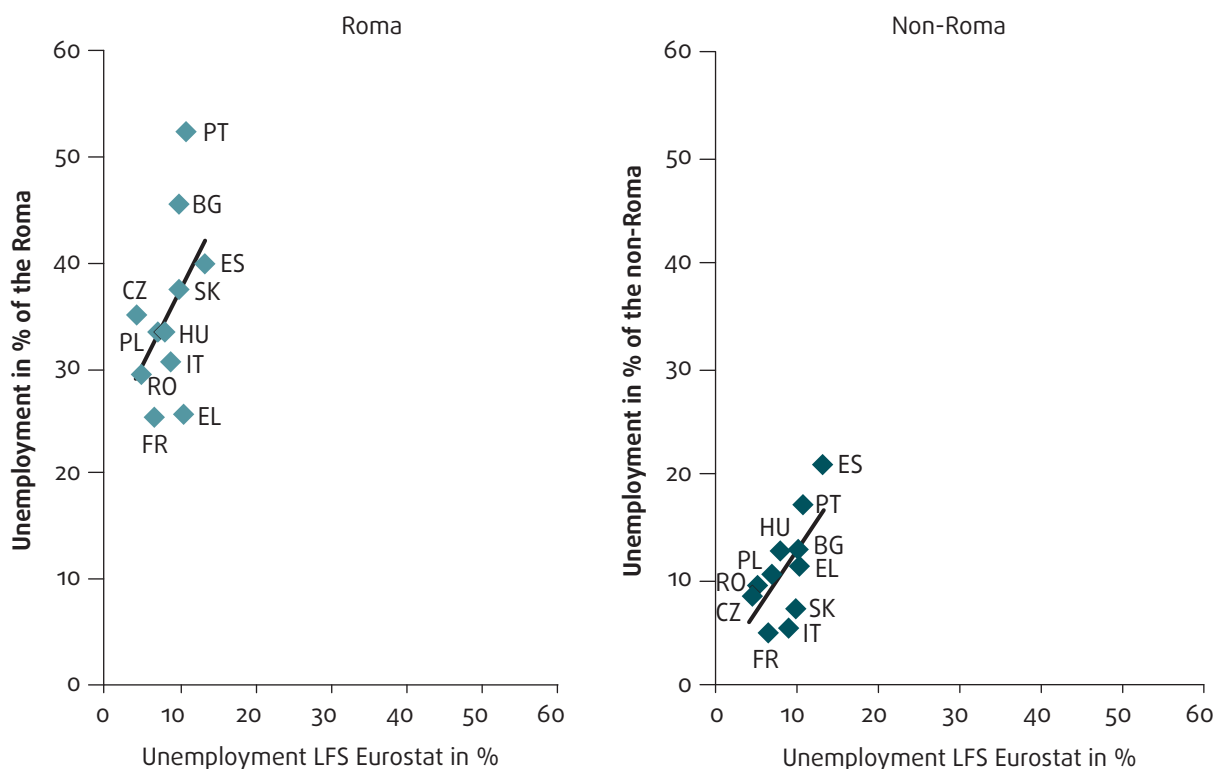
- Unemployment rates for Roma are three times higher than for the non-Roma living nearby and the general population.
- Most unemployed Roma are actively seeking work, 74 % of unemployed respondents say they are currently looking for a job.

The survey asked respondents to define their current job situation. Respondents could choose between 17 different response categories, including paid and unpaid work, inability to work due to illness, retirement, training and house-keeping. ‘Unemployment’ was therefore self-defined and should be clearly distinguished from officially registered and recorded unemployment. Given this construction, respondents would probably classify engaging in informal activities as working rather than as being unemployed.

Self-declared unemployment for Roma shows a complementary pattern to employment. It is highest in Portugal at 53 % and among the lowest in Greece at 26 % (Figure 7). Non-Roma respondents’ results present a more diverse self-declared unemployment picture, with the highest proportion of those declaring unemployment in Spain (21 %) and the lowest in France and Italy (5 %). The non-Roma’s lower unemployment rates as percentage of the total population need to be interpreted carefully, because of the higher share of retired persons. Figure 7 shows the relation between the unemployment rate based on self-defined main activity status in per cent of the surveyed population aged 16 and above and the national average in the Eurostat (Labour Force Survey) data for those aged 15 and above. As for Figure 3 on employment, one would expect that in countries with lower unemployment among the general population, unemployment would also be lower among the surveyed population. For most of the countries surveyed, the unemployment rate for non-Roma is above the national average, probably because the survey covered mostly disadvantaged areas. This does not hold true, however, for regions in France, Italy and Slovakia: unemployment of non-Roma in the survey is slightly below the national



**Figure 7: Self-declared unemployment of Roma and of non-Roma in the Roma survey and Eurostat Labour Force Survey, by EU Member State (%)**



Note: The Labour Force Survey question on self-defined main activity is optional for Member States and available only on request. The percentage base is the total population aged 15 and above. The unemployment rate based on the main activity self-classification is usually lower than the unemployment rate based on the working age population and the ILO definition.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households (aged 16 and above); Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2011, Mainstat (aged 15 and above)

average indicating instead that Roma do not gain from regional advantages. In all countries surveyed, Roma have a much higher share of unemployment. To some extent this can be explained by the higher share of persons at working age among Roma. Portugal and Bulgaria have the highest, and France and Greece the smallest, gap between Roma unemployment rates and the national average.

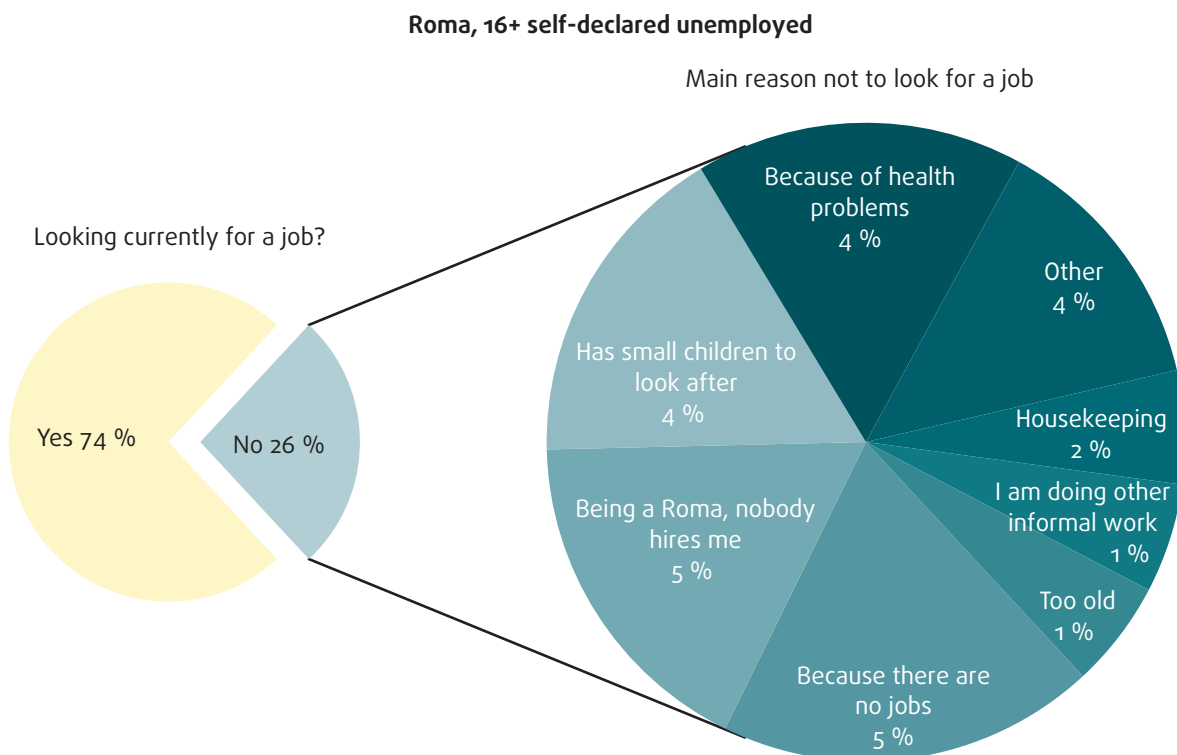
On average most unemployed Roma surveyed said that they are actively seeking work (74 %). Figure 8 outlines reasons unemployed Roma respondents (26 %) provided for why they are not looking for work.<sup>33</sup> Ten per cent can be classified as *discouraged unemployed*: about half have resigned themselves to being unemployed, believing that nobody will hire them because they are Roma. The other 5 % see no prospects in the employment market. Four per cent are meeting child care obligations and another 4 % are restricted due to health problems. Less than 1 % of the

unemployed respondents say that they are not looking for a job because they have informal work. Responses to three categories, 'having no papers', 'studying', and being 'too young' were below statistical significance and were added to the 'other' category. The lack of personal identification documents, identified by the Council of Europe as a serious impediment to human rights fulfilment in general, was not selected by a statistically significant proportion of survey respondents as an impediment to finding work.

Given that gains in education had only limited effects on the employment situation of Roma and that most are actively looking for work, low education and skill levels among Roma explain only in part the high unemployment rates reported. Other structural barriers, such as segregation, racism and discrimination may be reinforcing these disadvantages.

<sup>33</sup> A country-level analysis is not possible due to the relatively small number of individual responses, when broken down by response category.

**Figure 8: Main reason not to look for a job when unemployed, Roma aged 16 and above**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, Roma respondents aged 16 and above

## 1.6. Labour market participation of women

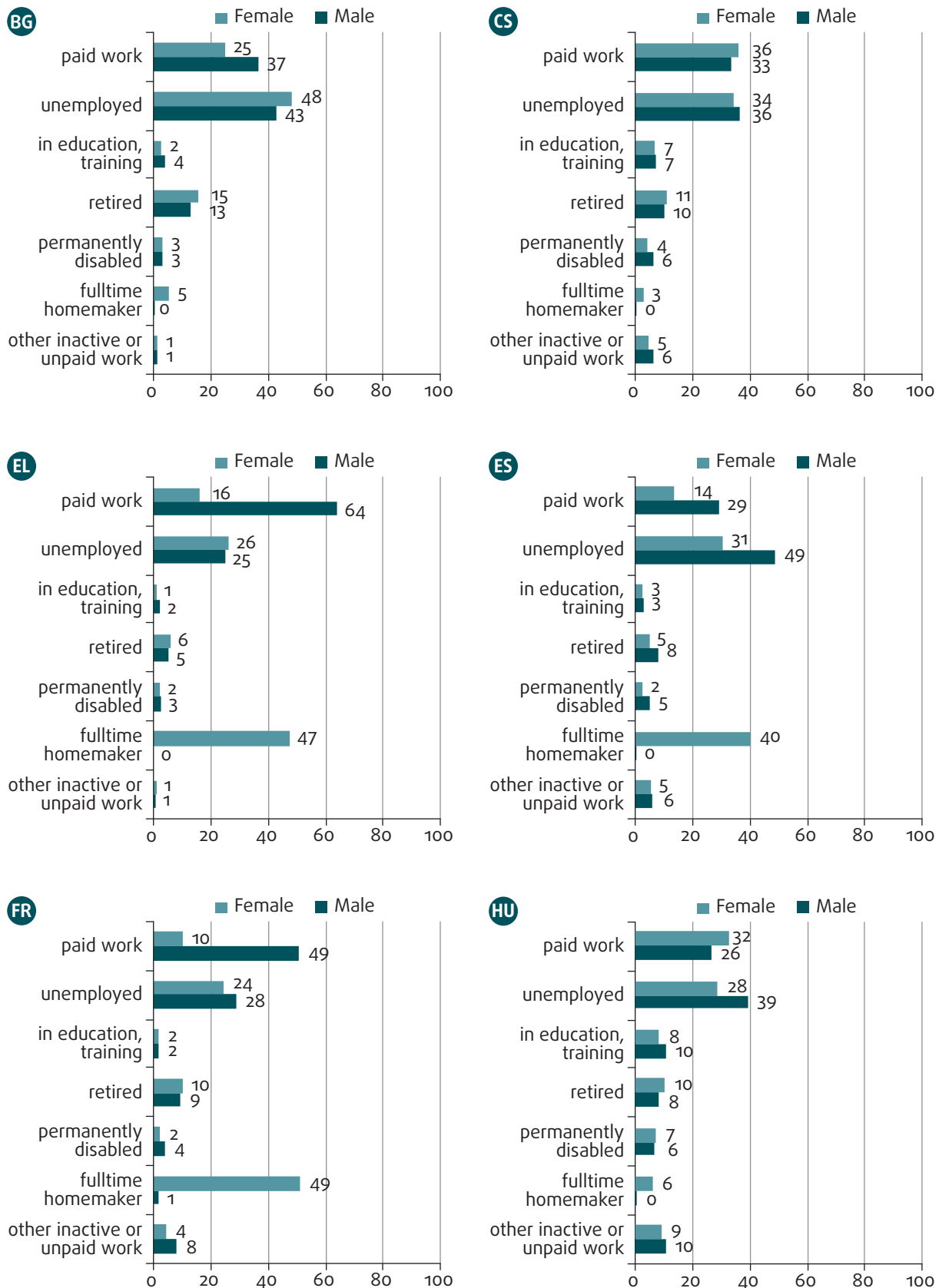
A more comprehensive picture of labour market participation is provided by the following figures, which show the main activities of Roma men and women. The EU Member States surveyed differ notably in regard to women's participation in the labour market. In post-communist societies women have a long tradition of participating equally in the labour market, which seems to hold true for Roma. In Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, for example, women have the same share in paid work as men, and the Bulgarian situation is quite similar. In these countries, Roma women also have comparable unemployment rates. Higher gender equality is also reflected in the percentage of women who see themselves as full-time housekeepers. In the four countries mentioned, only about 2%–6% of the Roma women surveyed were reported as full-time homemakers (Figure 9).

The biggest employment gap between Roma men and Roma women can be found in Greece and France. In the latter only non-resident Roma (*gens de voyage*) were

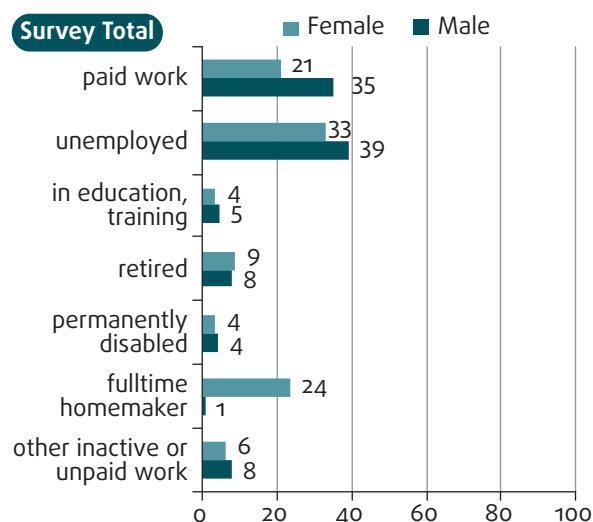
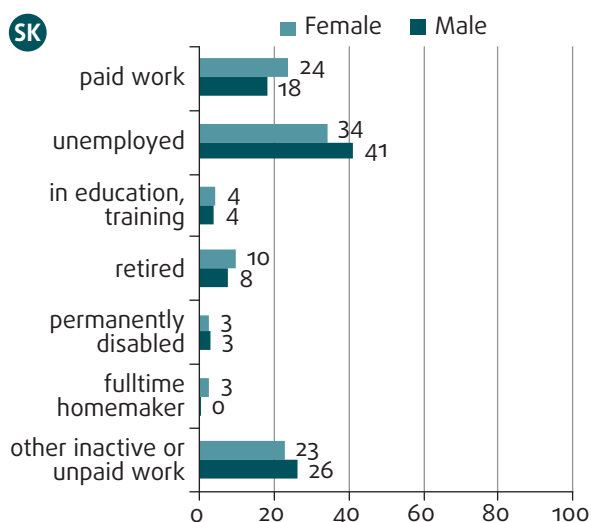
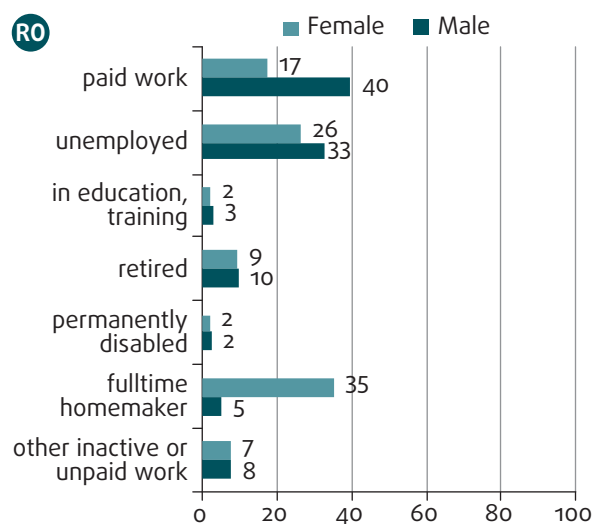
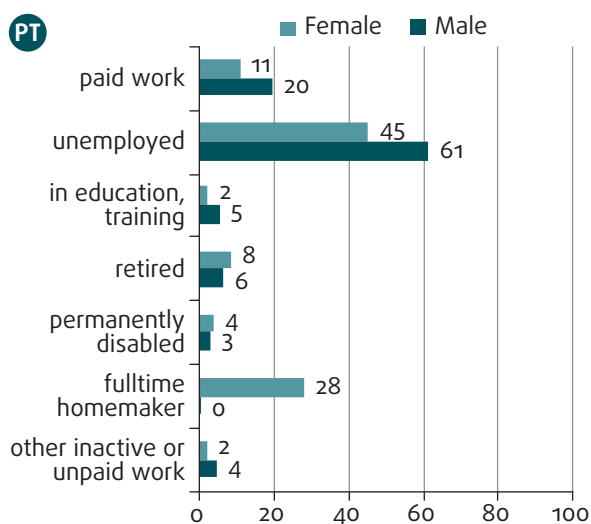
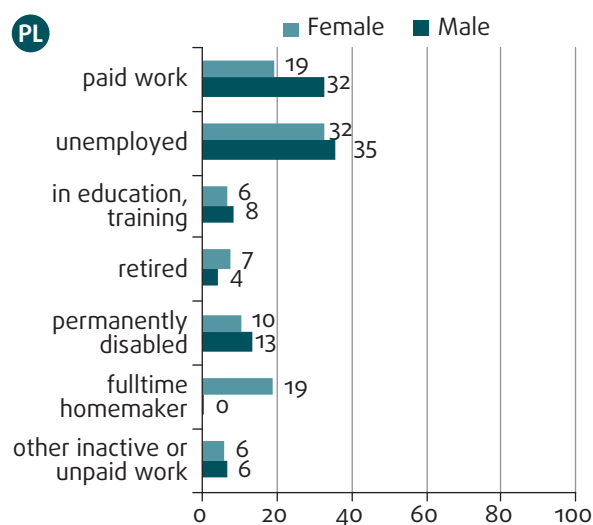
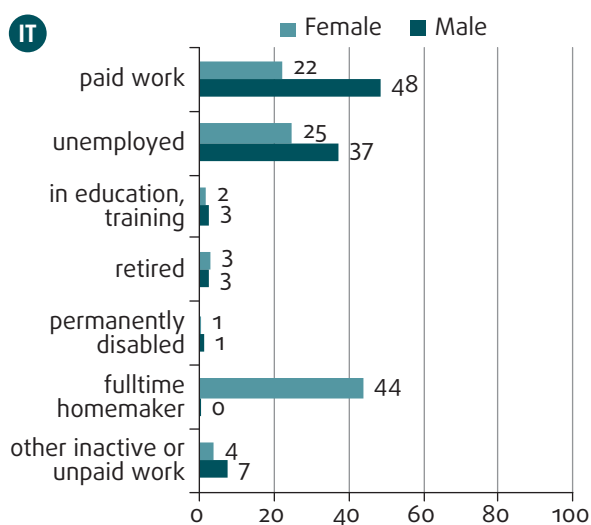
included in the survey. The family is a core element of this more traditional way of life which may also explain the more traditional division of labour between women and men than for settled Roma. In France, Greece, Spain and Italy more than 40% of Roma women surveyed were categorised as full-time homemakers. Poland (19%), Portugal (28%) and Romania (35%) still have high proportions of women 'at home'. The higher percentage of self-declared full-time housekeeping for women may partly reflect traditional gender roles but it can also indicate women's resignation and withdrawal from the labour market. Inactive persons not actively seeking work, including women with care obligations, are often regarded as a labour force reserve with the potential to be re-activated.

Only a small minority of Roma in all countries is in education or training, confirming analyses showing that overall a minority of Roma attend upper secondary school. The share of Roma aged 16 and above who are in education or training is higher in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The share of retired persons is comparatively low in all countries surveyed, which partly reflects the on average younger age structure of the Roma population surveyed.

Figure 9: Main activity pattern of Roma men and women, by EU Member State (%)



Poverty and employment: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011, persons in households, Roma aged 16 and above

# 2

## Structural barriers for labour market integration



### KEY FINDINGS

Segregation and poor housing conditions are severe impediments for access to employment and affect social inclusion:

- Of the Roma surveyed, 38 % live in segregated Roma neighbourhoods, while 20 % live in slums or ruined houses, based on interviewer classification.
- Non-Roma who live in Roma neighbourhoods have substantially lower employment rates (31 %) than non-Roma who live in majority neighbourhoods (41 %).
- On average, the majority of Roma consider that they experience discrimination when looking for work: in Spain, Romania and Bulgaria 38 %–41 % of the Roma surveyed said that they were discriminated against within the last five years when looking for work; this ranged from 66 % to 75 % in Italy, Greece and the Czech Republic.
- Roma respondents said they most frequently experience discrimination at work by their employers or work colleagues in the Czech Republic (41 %) and Greece (33 %). Lower proportions of perceived discrimination at the workplace were indicated in Slovakia (9 %), Romania (10 %), Portugal (13 %) and Bulgaria (15 %).

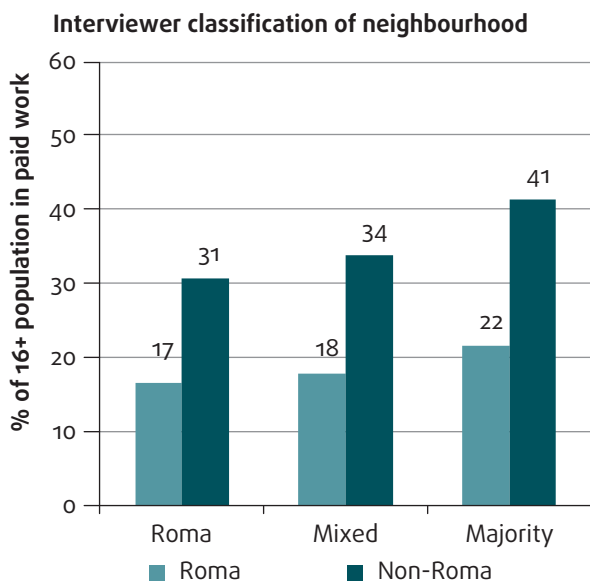
### 2.1. Spatial segregation

Spatial segregation can be an additional barrier to labour market integration. The Roma pilot survey targeted Roma and non-Roma living in close proximity, with differentiation based on ethnic self-identification. The areas were selected on the basis of a higher density of Roma living there. Due to the marginalised situation of Roma these areas are expected to have lower housing costs for populations with lower incomes. Interviewers were asked to assess if those surveyed lived in distinct neighbourhoods by filling out a post-interview questionnaire that asked the following: 'Was the neighbourhood predominantly a (1) Roma neighbourhood (2) Majority neighbourhood (3) Mixed neighbourhood'. Answers were based on subjective assessment.<sup>34</sup> More than half of the Roma interviewed (53 %) were reported to live in

predominantly 'Roma neighbourhoods' and only 14 % in 'mixed neighbourhoods' with the majority population. In contrast, more than half of the non-Roma interviewed (58 %) were reported to live in a majority neighbourhood and only 7 % in a Roma neighbourhood. Residence patterns appear to influence employment for both Roma and non-Roma (Figure 10). Non-Roma respondents living in Roma neighbourhoods have substantially lower employment rates than non-Roma living in majority neighbourhoods. The same pattern can be observed for Roma respondents. Regardless of ethnic origin, persons living in a Roma neighbourhood seem to be affected by a 'residential segregation disadvantage'. Those living in a Roma neighbourhood have on average about 30 % lower employment rates than those living in a majority neighbourhood. However, the results show that Roma ethnic origin further influences employment opportunities: Roma employment rates are on average 50 % lower than those of non-Roma living in the same type of neighbourhood.

<sup>34</sup> Questionnaire and technical report with background information on the survey are available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/roma-pilot-survey>.

**Figure 10: Persons in paid work, by Roma and non-Roma and neighbourhood (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households aged 16 and above

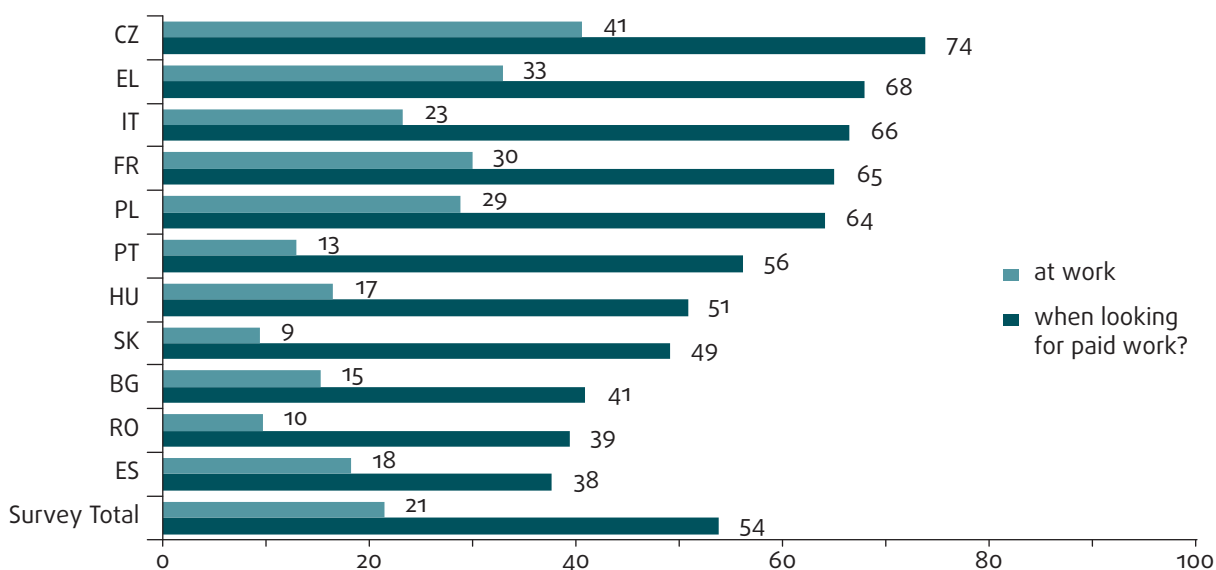
last five years reported experiencing discrimination (Figure 11). In this country discrimination was also widely perceived among those who have had a job at least once within the last five years: 41% of the respondents report discrimination at the workplace because they are Roma. More than half of the job-seeking Roma respondents said that they had face discrimination due to their ethnic origin in: Greece (67%), Italy (66%), Poland (63%), France (61%), Portugal (56%) and Hungary (50%). In Spain, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia the rates are somewhat lower. These findings confirm previous results observed in the 2008 FRA EU-MIDIS survey, which show lower overall discrimination rates for Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania in a seven-country comparison.<sup>35</sup> In all countries the rate of perceived discrimination at work is much lower than the rate of perceived discrimination when looking for work. The lowest proportion of perceived in-work discrimination on the ground of ethnic origin was reported in Slovakia, Romania and Portugal. The rates for experiences of discrimination must be considered alongside with the degree of isolation. If the neighbourhood is predominantly Roma, the exposure and therefore the risk to experience discriminatory and racist behaviour is smaller. The FRA EU-MIDIS I survey also showed that fear of discrimination leads to avoidance behaviour. I.e. Roma avoid certain shops or cafes as they expect to be treated badly.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.2. Discrimination

Between 38% and 75% of Roma considered that they have experienced discrimination when looking for a job. The situation is worst in the Czech Republic where three out of four Roma looking for work in the

<sup>35</sup> FRA (2009a).  
<sup>36</sup> FRA (2009b).

**Figure 11: Experience of discrimination in the last five years because of being Roma, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: "Over the past 5 years have you ever looked for paid work/had a job?" If yes: "Have you ever been discriminated against when looking for paid work/at work by people who you worked for or work with?"

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, Roma respondents aged 16 and above

# 3

## Social security issues in employment



### KEY FINDINGS

- A substantial share of Roma respondents have only insecure or informal employment. On average, 19 % of Roma in paid work said that they lack medical insurance, with peaks in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece of 51 %, 46 % and 42 %, respectively. In Spain, however, only 1 % of Roma in paid work – despite a high share of ad hoc jobs – said that they are not covered by health insurance. In France, the Czech Republic and Hungary only 3 % of Roma in paid work say they lack medical insurance
- Every third Roma respondent aged 45 and above does not expect to receive or, if retired, does not receive a pension. In comparison, only 8 % of the non-Roma living nearby claim to have no pension entitlements.
- The lowest rates of Roma aged 45 and above who say they have no pension entitlements were observed in Hungary (20 %), the Czech Republic (14 %) and Slovakia (11 %).
- In Poland, Romania and Greece about half of the Roma respondents above the age of 45 do not expect or are not aware of any pension entitlements. In contrast, only 5 %–11 % of the non-Roma population said that they have no pension or do not think they will receive a pension when they retire.

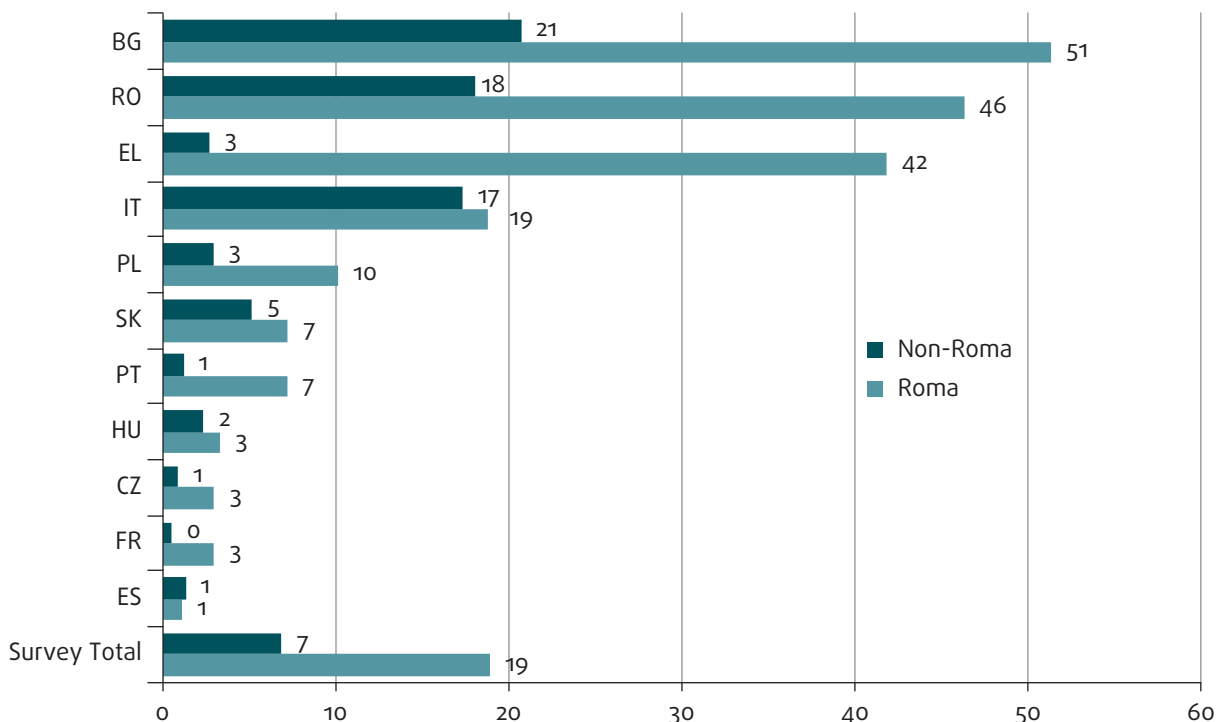
### 3.1. Medical insurance

Employment status in the EU Member States entails health and social insurance, coverage in case of accident, age and unemployment and is therefore seen as a key instrument of social inclusion. Respondents were asked if they have medical insurance. Answers to this question reflect both access to medical insurance, as well as awareness of such access. The data reveal that some of the respondents who said that they are in paid work reported that they are not covered by any medical insurance. The proportion of these respondents is particularly high in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece at 31 %, 60 % and 35 %, respectively (Figure 12). These countries also show the biggest gap

in comparison to non-Roma living nearby. It is possible that low income, precarious and informal employment or a combination of these factors may affect entitlements to health insurance. In Spain, however, only 1 % of respondents indicated a lack of health coverage, although a significant proportion of them say they work in ad hoc jobs (10 %), demonstrating the significance of social protection systems for the most vulnerable.

A significant proportion of non-Roma face similar problems. Of non-Roma respondents, in Bulgaria, Romania and Italy, 20 %, 18 % and 17 %, respectively, reported that they are not covered by medical insurance.

**Figure 12: Share of persons who said they have no medical insurance but who are in paid work, by EU Member State (%)**



Note: Only persons in paid work (including full time, part-time employed, self-employed, ad hoc jobs).

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, Respondents aged 16 and above

### 3.2. Pension entitlements

The Roma pilot survey asked people if they are expecting to receive pension benefits once they reach pensionable age. Answers to this question reflect the level of entitlement but also the awareness and the access to state pension systems. A lack of pension entitlement does not only reflect long periods of unemployment but informal and precarious working conditions without social security.

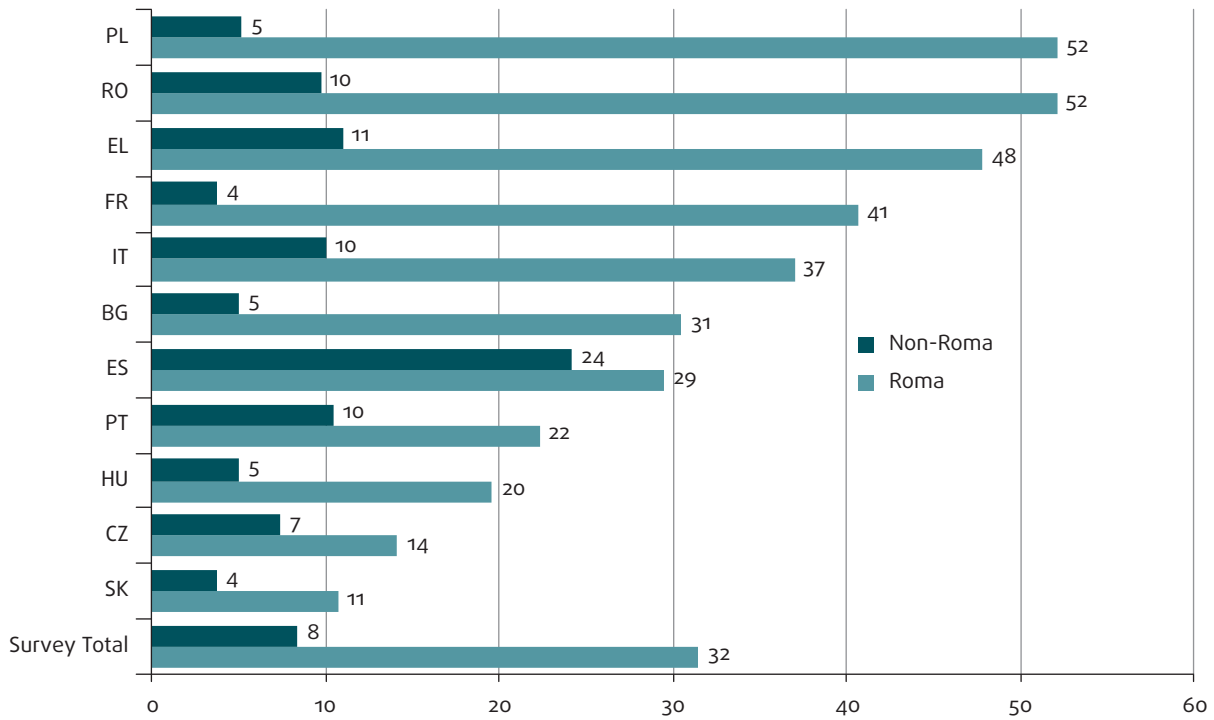
Figure 13 visualises the pension expectations of Roma and non-Roma persons aged 45 and above, the age group that is expected to have an increasing interest in pensions. In Poland, Romania and Greece about half

of the respondents do not expect or are not aware of any pension entitlements. By comparison, only 5%–10% of the non-Roma population living in close proximity state that they do not have a pension or do not think they will receive a pension after retirement. One exception is Spain, where pension expectations are almost evenly balanced – 24% of non-Roma and 29% of Roma respondents say they have no such entitlements. Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia had the fewest people, both Roma and non-Roma, who expected not to receive a pension. This still reflects the former communist countries’ policy of full employment with social security.





**Figure 13: Share of persons aged 45 and above who say they are not entitled to pension benefits once they reach pensionable age, by EU Member State (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, Respondents aged 45 and above



# 4

## Europe 2020 strategy target on poverty and social exclusion



### KEY FINDINGS

- In Italy, France and Portugal, almost all Roma households surveyed have a disposable household income below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold.
- In Romania, 78 % of Roma respondents are at risk of poverty, followed by the Czech Republic (80 %), Poland (81 %) and Hungary (81 %).
- In addition, practically all Roma households surveyed with four or more children are at risk of poverty.
- Roma children are the most vulnerable group facing multiple disadvantages: 42 % of Roma who live in households with an income below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold are children under 18.
- Paid work seems to have almost no impact on the relative financial position of Roma households. Of the Roma in Italy who have paid work, 95 % remain below the national poverty threshold. That figure is 93 % in France and 92 % in Portugal. Hungary, Poland (67 %) and Romania (70 %) show the lowest at-risk-of-poverty rate for Roma in paid work.
- Almost three quarters of the Roma surveyed in Portugal (73 %) and more than half in Slovakia, Poland and Spain live in households with almost no labour market participation. Greece shows the highest work participation (25 % of low work intensity) and similar to individual employment rates, the gap between Roma and non-Roma living nearby is the smallest.
- If women in households with two or more children are employed it might reduce hardship but on average the household still remains below the at risk of poverty threshold.
- Only in households with one or no children, there is a greater difference if at least one woman is employed. Persons in households with no children are with 63 % at risk of poverty albeit one woman is employed. The at risk of poverty rate is 85 % if the woman is not employed.
- Of those surveyed, 42 % of Roma and 12 % of non-Roma indicated that they do not have access either to electricity, running water or sewage. The worst housing conditions were observed in Romania, Slovakia and Hungary.
- On average, 41 % of Roma children surveyed lived in households where at least once in the last month someone went hungry because they could not afford food. These rates are at least three times higher for Roma than for non-Roma.
- In Slovakia, rates for children living in households which suffer hunger are 12 times higher for the Roma than the non-Roma population, and in Italy 40 times higher. For Italy and Greece, which have the second highest child hunger rates after Romania, this finding contrasts sharply with the high Roma employment rate.

The target indicator of the Europe 2020 growth strategy to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is composed of three components. It sums up the number of persons who are: at risk of poverty; or severely materially deprived; or who are living in households with a very low work intensity (Table 1).

Persons at risk of poverty have a very low household income, weighted for household size and childrens' ages, and one that is below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. Persons are considered to live in a household with very low work intensity if they are aged 0 to 59 and the working age members in the household worked less than 20 % of their potential during the past year. This indicator reflects the percentage of people with an equivalised disposable income below the 'at-risk-of-poverty threshold'. The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is set for each country at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income. Disposable income is the sum of all net incomes within a household during a year. To reflect differences in household size and composition, the income figures are given per equivalent adult. This means that the total household income is divided by its equivalent size using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale. This scale gives a weight of 1.0 to the first adult, 0.5 to any other household member aged 14 and above and 0.3 to each child under 14.

Severe material deprivation is assumed if a person cannot afford basic needs such as keeping the home warm or is in arrears with current bills for rent or mortgage. The 'severe material deprivation' rate is defined as the percentage of the population with an enforced lack of at least four out of nine material deprivation items in the 'economic strain and durables' dimension. The nine items considered are: 1) arrears on mortgage or rent payments, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments; 2) capacity to afford paying for one week's annual holiday away from home; 3) capacity to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day; 4) capacity to face unexpected financial expenses 5) household cannot afford a telephone (including mobile phone); 6) household cannot afford a colour TV; 7) household cannot afford a washing machine; 8) household cannot afford a car and 9) ability of the household to pay for keeping its home adequately warm.

Table 1 gives an overview of the total population in the 11 EU Member States included in the Roma pilot survey.

The formulation of the Roma pilot survey questions makes it possible to estimate work intensity and at-risk-of-poverty rates and to provide some insights into severe material deprivation of the households surveyed.

**Table 1: Europe 2020 indicators on poverty and social exclusion for the total population, by EU Member State (%)**

	Europe 2020 indicators on poverty and social exclusion 2011			
	Low work intensity	At risk of poverty	Severe material deprivation	At risk of poverty or social exclusion
BG	11	22	44	49
CZ	7	10	6	15
EL	12	21	15	31
ES	12	22	4	27
FR	9	14	5	19
IT	10	20	11	28
HU	12	14	23	31
PL	7	18	13	27
PT	8	18	8	24
RO	7	22	29	40
SK	8	13	11	21
EU-27	10	17	9	24

Note: The last column is less than the sum of the previous three due to overlaps between the three groups.

Source: Eurostat EU-SILC, 2011



### 4.1. At risk of poverty

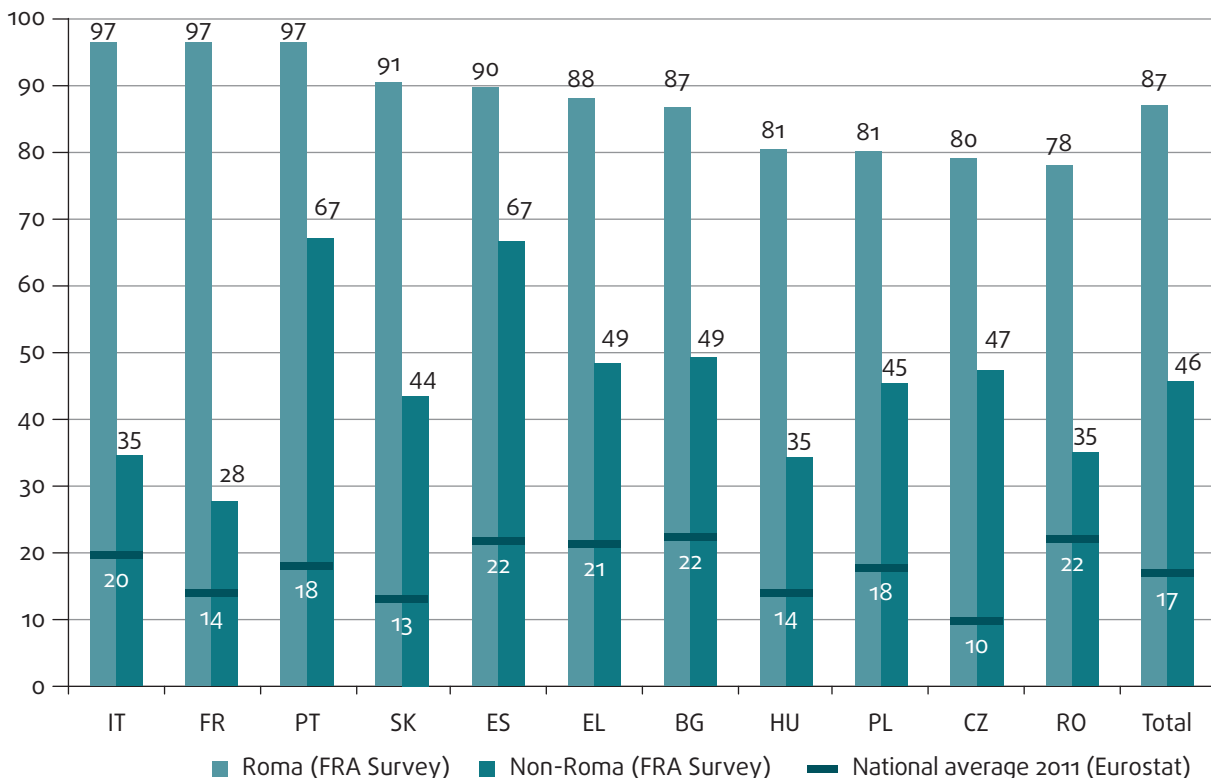
At risk of poverty is the lead indicator of the Europe 2020 target to combat poverty and social exclusion. It indicates a low income, below 60 % of the national median (middle income). It is a relative concept depending on the national median income level, which is only an indirect measure of poverty. The living standard which can be reached with a certain income depends also on available assets, access to housing and public services and personal needs. However, income is measurable and comparable and low income is still a good proxy for poverty. Given that income can only give an indication of a multidimensional phenomenon, it was agreed to label it as being ‘at risk’ of poverty and was used as the leading indicator for the EU Lisbon Growth Strategy 2000–2010 on poverty.

Marginalised living conditions are directly reflected in the indicator on material deprivation. The choice of items to measure severe material deprivation, however, was driven by distribution and prevalence in the general population. These choices are, therefore, unable to capture the extreme living conditions of Roma in many of the areas covered by this survey.

In Italy, France and Portugal, almost 100 % of the Roma households surveyed have a disposable household income below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. The lowest can be observed in Romania, where 78 % of Roma are at risk of poverty (Figure 14). The income question also covers possible informal income sources and reflects an income distribution throughout the EU, where Roma place at the very bottom.

In all the EU Member States surveyed, the sample areas appeared to have weaker labour markets and exhibit poverty rates above the national average also for the surveyed non-Roma surveyed living nearby. The discrepancy is in part related to the approximation the FRA Roma pilot survey uses which will generally overestimate the poverty rate. The peaks are in Portugal and Italy where 67 % of the non-Roma have an equivalised household income below the national poverty threshold.

**Figure 14: At risk of poverty (below 60 % of the national median), by EU Member State (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households; Eurostat EU-SILC, 2011

**KEY TERMINOLOGY****Equivalised income**

The Roma pilot survey asked how much the household has on average to live on each month. While this may be considered a good approximation of the relative income position, it generally underestimates the amount of annual income which is used for the conventional at-risk-of-poverty indicator that Eurostat uses. The monthly income does not cover irregular incomes or lump sum payments and, given that the survey only asks one question on this topic, it is likely that smaller income components are not included. Equivalised income was calculated on the basis of the modified OECD scale to account for economies of scale in larger households. The modified OECD scale assigns a weight of 1 to the first adult, 0.5 for each additional adult and 0.3 for each child. The modified OECD scale assumes economies of scale, however, which might not be accurate for large Roma households living in conditions of extreme poverty. For consistency, the analysis takes the national thresholds of 2010 published by Eurostat, as they were the ones available at the time of the interviews. The at-risk-of-poverty rates calculated upon the Roma pilot survey data are likely to slightly overestimate the at-risk-of-poverty rate.

## 4.2. Working poor

Employment is assumed to be the best protection against poverty, but this does not necessarily seem to hold true for the Roma households surveyed. The 'in-work poverty rate', relates to the number of persons in paid work whose household income remains below the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. In-work poverty occurs when the total household income derived from work does not cover household needs either because the wages of the bread-winners are too low or because the household is too big. The 'in-work at risk of poverty' rate as produced by Eurostat has been on the rise, reaching an estimated 9.3 % of the working population in 2012 for EU-28.<sup>37</sup>

Paid work seems to have almost no impact on the relative financial situation of Roma households: 95 % of the Roma surveyed in Italy who had paid work remained below the national poverty threshold, 93 % in France and 92 % in Portugal. Hungary, Poland (67 %) and Romania (70 %) show the lowest at-risk-of-poverty level for Roma respondents in paid work. For non-Roma respondents the in-work poverty rates are not only considerably lower, they also differ substantially from the poverty rates of the unemployed.

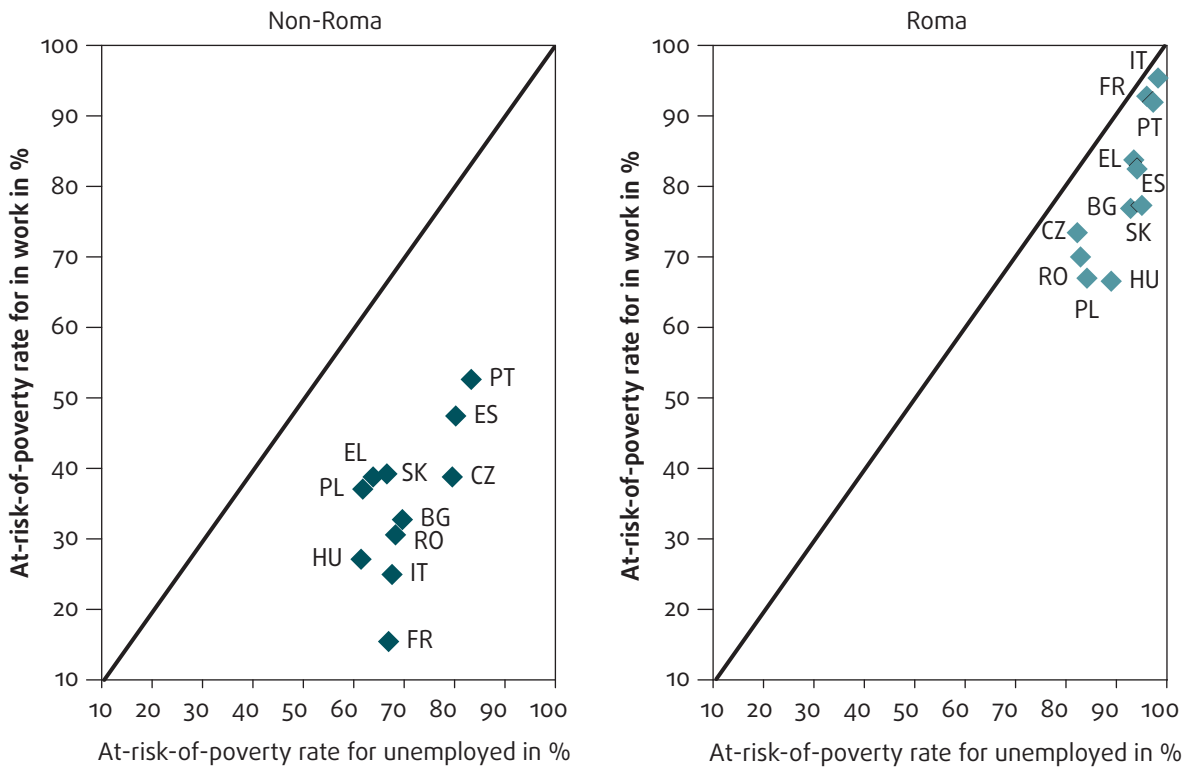
Figure 15 compares poverty rates for the employed and the unemployed among the Roma and non-Roma population. The further down the diagonal a country is placed, the stronger the impact of employment appears. In the case of non-Roma respondents, the poverty rate is more than halved for the employed compared to the unemployed. In sharp contrast, the poverty rates for Roma are generally much higher. The improvement of the financial situation that accompanies employment remains insufficient to lift families above the poverty threshold.

This means that for Roma there is no financial incentive to take up work if such work cannot even guarantee them and their families a living. In addition, only a small fraction of the unemployed Roma surveyed can claim unemployment benefits reflected in almost total income poverty throughout the 11 Member States surveyed. The Czech Republic, Romania and Poland have slightly lower at-risk-of-poverty rates for unemployed, whereas only in the Czech Republic is the situation for unemployed non-Roma respondents the same.

The EU indicator 'at-risk-of-poverty gap' gives an indication of the intensity of the poverty risk due to low income (Figure 16). It shows the median distance between individual household income and the national at-risk-of-poverty threshold. In Italy, half of the Roma who are at risk of poverty have an income 66 % below the Italian threshold. This means that a single person household needs more than €527 per month simply to reach the Italian threshold. In Romania, the national threshold is only €106 per month. Here the at-risk-of-poverty gap amounts to 52 %, meaning that half of the Roma at-risk-of-poverty must survive on less than €51 per month (per single person equivalent). Considering the actual cost of living in these Member States it becomes apparent that the income of Roma households surveyed which is below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold is not sufficient to cover any basic needs. For non-Roma the at-risk-of-poverty gap is much closer to the national threshold. One possible explanation for this huge income difference could be the uneven age distribution and low pension entitlements of Roma households. Pension payments in most countries contribute significantly to household income, preventing poverty. The analysis indicates that Roma have far fewer pension benefits compared to non-Roma households, a fact which may intensify financial retrenchment. Furthermore it can be expected that a lower share of household incomes come from pensions for Roma than for non-Roma – because of Roma's lower life expectancy. The data from the survey on average age of Roma and non-Roma provide some indication of this. Further research with a closer focus on the impact of pension benefits now and in the future may enhance our understanding of poverty dynamics.

<sup>37</sup> Eurostat, In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate, (source: SILC).

**Figure 15: At risk of poverty for persons in work and unemployed (below the national 60 % median threshold), by EU Member State (%)**



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households (aged 16 and above)

### Child poverty

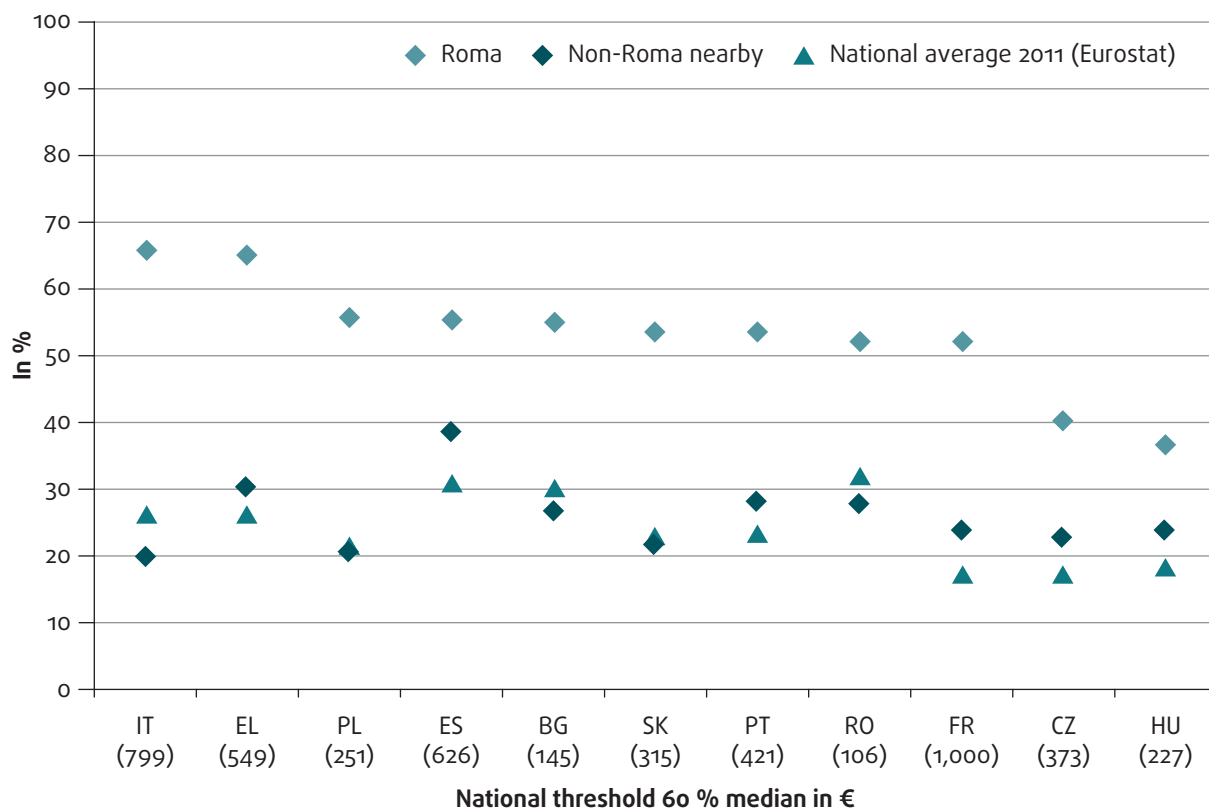
Tackling child poverty and breaking the cycle of disadvantage is a guiding principle for the European Commission to make sure that the rights of the child as defined in the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the UN Convention of the Rights of Child are respected, protected and fulfilled. The 2013 communication *Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage* calls on Member States to focus on children who face increased risks due to multiple disadvantages, such as Roma children.<sup>38</sup> The proportion of Roma children who live in households falling below the national at-risk-of-poverty line is twice as high as that of non-Roma children living nearby (Figure 17). Of the Roma who are at risk of poverty, 42 % are under 18 (for non-Roma households the figure is around half, 22 %). Children are a particularly vulnerable group as they cannot access the labour market before the age of 15 and depend fully on the welfare provided by the family and the state. Neither families nor public welfare mechanisms cover sufficiently the material well-being needs of Roma children in poor families.

The Commission strategy to tackle child poverty and to ensure access to adequate resources aims at supporting parents’ participation in the labour market, ensuring access to early childhood education and promoting the quality of work in a way that parents can balance work and parenting roles.

The labour market participation of women is often seen as a crucial complementary tool to bring children out of poverty. The following analysis examines the impact of labour market participation of women within multi-person households with at least one woman at working age (20–59) in the household. One-person and one-parent households are not very common household types among Roma, and therefore the analysis does not differentiate among them. The survey collected information on total household income which does not allow for differentiating income by gender. In households without children under the age of 18, women’s labour market participation makes a significant difference for the poverty risk of this household type. Disregarding women’s employment in most countries the

<sup>38</sup> European Commission (2013b).

Figure 16: Relative at-risk-of-poverty gap, by EU Member State (€)\*



Notes: \*Median of the relative at-risk-of-poverty gap of the monthly equivalised income to the national at risk of poverty threshold (Eurostat 60 % median threshold for a one-person household per month in Euros). To directly compare countries' living standards, purchasing power differences need to be considered.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

at-risk-of-poverty rate for childless households remains high. In Hungary and Poland alone does women's work reduce the poverty risk for these households to 40 %.

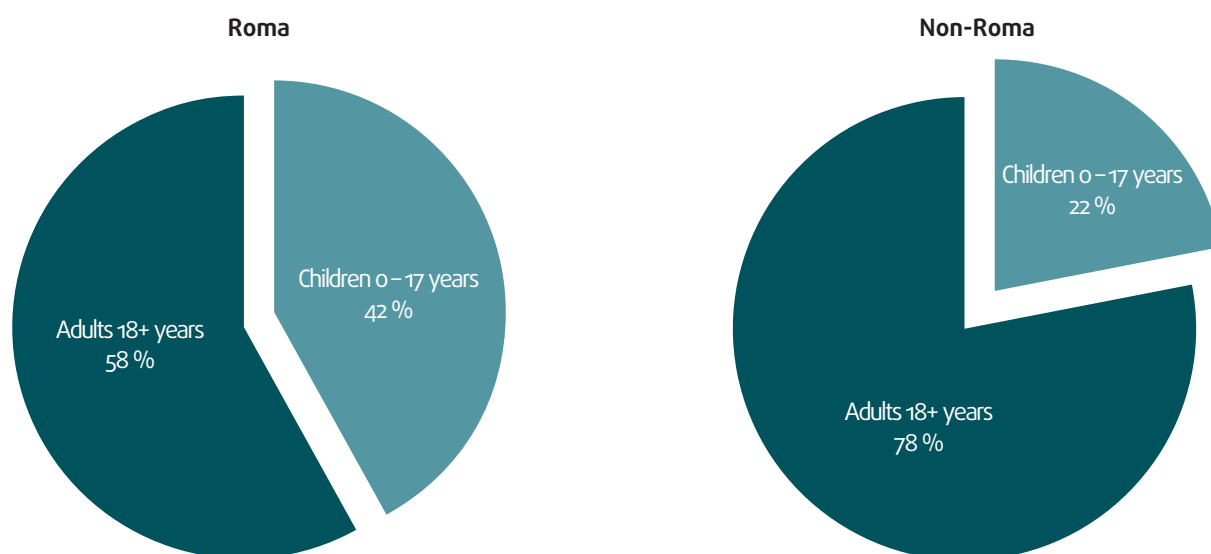
The at-risk-of-poverty rate rises with the number of children. The impact of women's employment on the at-risk-of-poverty rate for households with children, however, is modest, reaching for households with four or more children an at-risk-of-poverty rate close to 100 %. Women's employment has no decisive impact on the at-risk-of-poverty rate for households with children in any Member State surveyed with few exceptions. For example, in Romania, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for households with one child is 54 % if at least one woman in the household is employed compared to 74 % if no women work (Table 2). This can be explained by the particular low at-risk-of-poverty threshold in Romania, where even small amounts of income help to exceed the threshold.

### 4.3. Low work intensity of households in the FRA Roma pilot survey

The second component of the Europe 2020 target indicator to reduce at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion addresses the number of people living in households with very low work intensity. Low work intensity refers to the ratio between the number of persons in the household who are in paid work and the number of persons of working age (20–59), with paid work defined in the FRA survey to include full-time, part-time and self-employment and any form of paid ad hoc jobs. Work intensity is calculated in this analysis as a percentage of household members in paid work as a share of the total number of household members of working age (20–59). Low work intensity of a household is defined as less than 20 % of the possible workforce in a household being in paid work. The indicator does not differentiate between part-time and ad hoc jobs and therefore rather underestimates low work intensity compared with the Europe 2020 indicator. Almost three quarters of



Figure 17: Share of children aged 0–17 at risk of poverty, by Roma and non-Roma (%)



Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

Table 2: At risk of poverty with women in and out of labour force within the household,\* by number of children in the Roma household and EU Member State (%)

	MPH without children		MPH with 1 child		MPH with 2–3 children		MPH with 4 plus children	
	No woman employed	One woman and more employed	No woman employed	One woman and more employed	No woman employed	One woman and more employed	No woman employed	One woman and more employed
BG	90	65	91	79	90	82	94	91
CZ	77	63	77	74	82	80	97	93
EL	87	70	86	75	88	88	92	92
ES	91	76	92	80	91	78	95	100
FR	97	71	97	100	99	100	97	100
HU	72	40	83	72	86	75	96	89
IT	99	91	100	89	99	100	98	91
PL	75	40	74	81	84	81	85	89
PT	94	88	94	74	99	96	98	100
RO	64	49	74	54	84	75	93	83
SK	87	51	91	72	97	87	97	94
Survey Total	85	63	87	74	91	83	95	92

Note: \*Only Roma multi-person households (MPH) with at least one woman at working age. Children: below the age of 18 and living in the household.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

the Roma surveyed in Portugal (73 %) and more than half in Slovakia, Poland and Spain live in households with almost no labour market participation (Figure 18). Greece (25 %) shows the lowest work participation rate and similar to individual employment rates, the gap between Roma and non-Roma is the smallest. The percentage of non-Roma living in low work intensity households is highest in Spain (26 %), Portugal (21 %), Hungary (18 %) and Romania (18 %) which all have very different low work intensity rates for the Roma population.

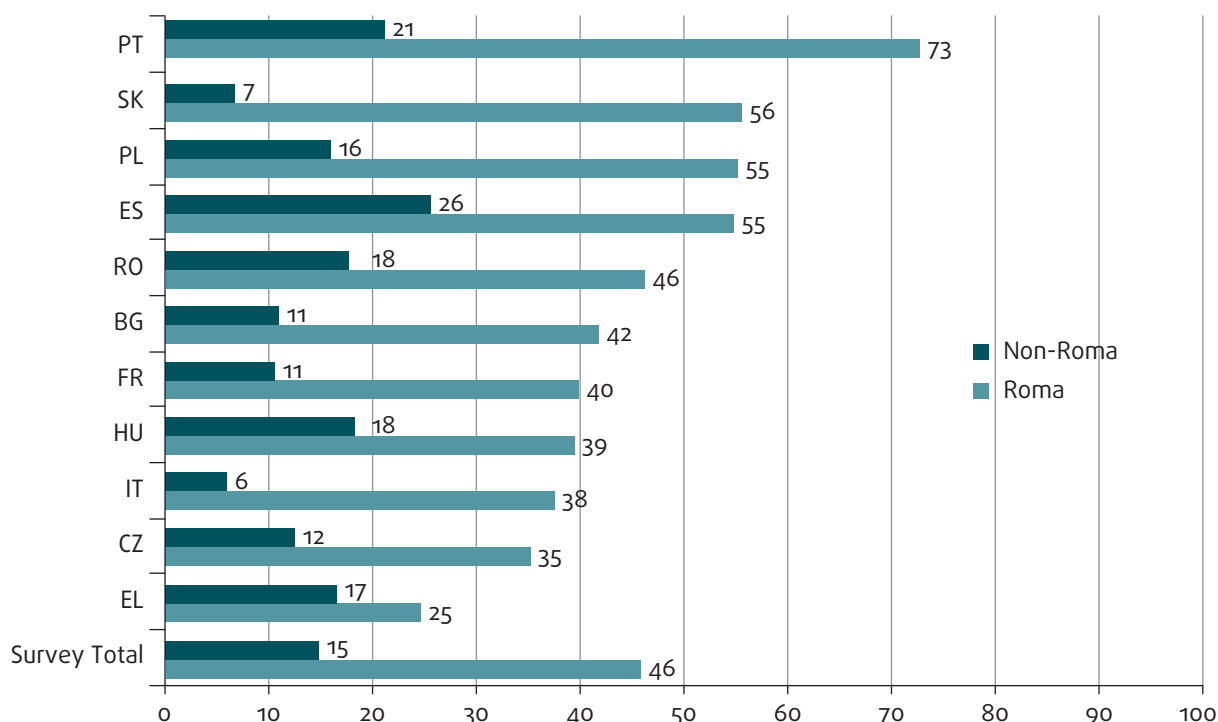
#### 4.4. Marginalised and pauperised living conditions

The Europe 2020 indicator on poverty and social exclusion encompasses as a third component – ‘severe material deprivation’ – which is assumed if a person cannot afford basic needs.<sup>39</sup> The FRA survey data do not allow a replication of this indicator but confirm that Roma livelihoods are severely disadvantaged.

Figure 19 contrasts in particular the housing conditions of Roma and non-Roma. It appears that for 84 % of the Roma surveyed in Romania, the basic need for electricity, water or sewage remains unfulfilled compared to 52 % for non-Roma living nearby. Although general living standards are overall much better in France, Greece and Italy, the survey results show that 35 % of the Roma households surveyed in Greece, 36 % in Italy and 72 % in France lack fundamental housing amenities compared to 1 %–4 % for the non-Roma surveyed nearby.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, extremely deprived living and housing conditions were observed by interviewers in certain areas in some Member States, particularly in Greece.

In line with other studies the survey results show that a number of Roma live in conditions more reminiscent of some of the poorest regions globally rather than 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe.<sup>41</sup> This is strikingly illustrated by the share of children under the age of 18 who live in a household in which at least one person ‘had to go hungry to bed, because there was not enough money to buy food’ (Figure 20). Childhood hunger rates are at least three times higher for the Roma than for the

Figure 18: Persons in households with low work intensity, by EU Member State (%)



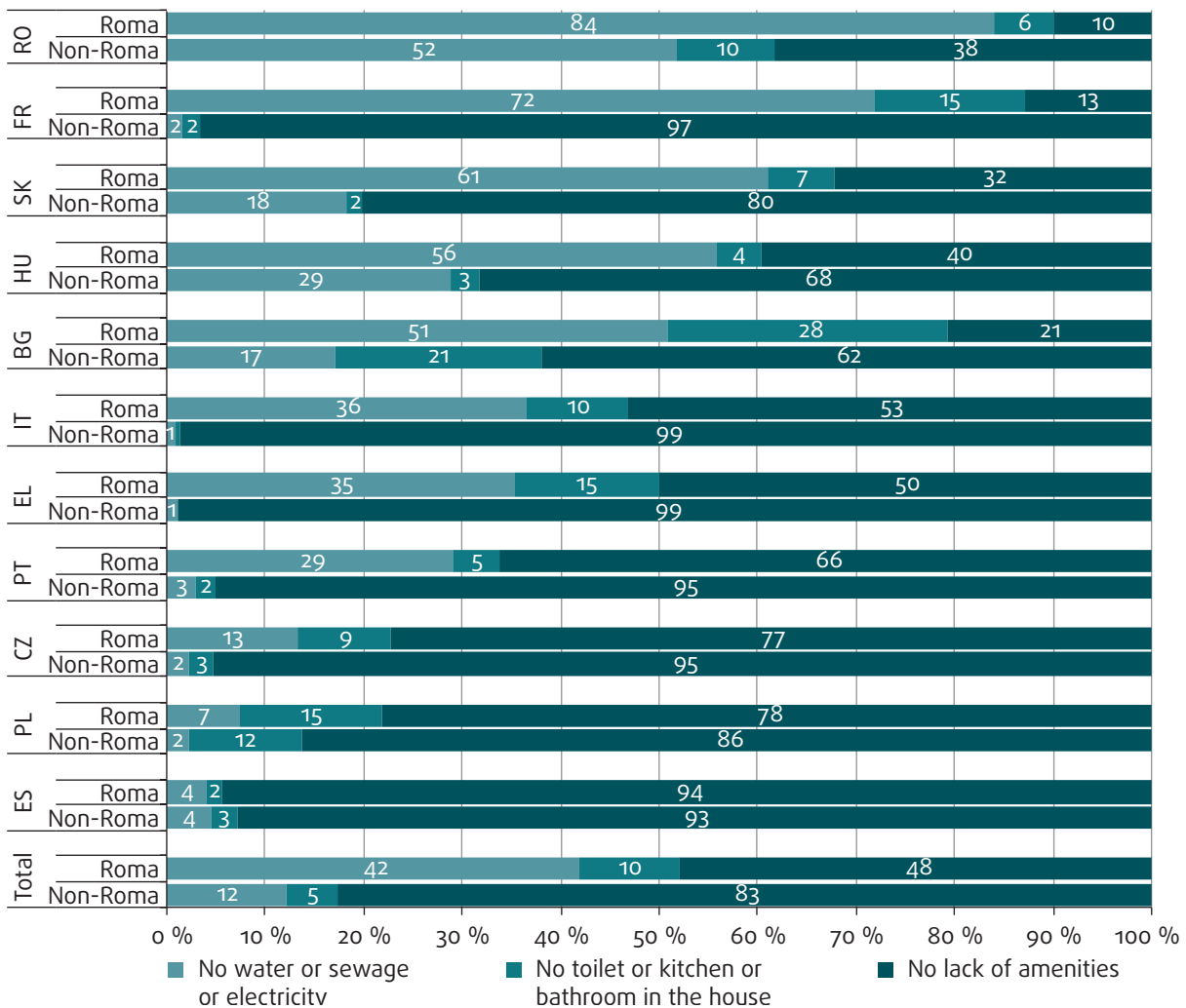
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

<sup>39</sup> See footnote 44.

<sup>40</sup> In France, the sample included only non-sedentary Roma, *gens du voyage*.

<sup>41</sup> Peric, T. (2012).

Figure 19: Basic housing amenities, by Roma and non-Roma and EU Member State (%)



Note: Housing deprivation: (1) Severe housing deprivation: No electricity or no piped water or no connection to sewage or a tank, (2) substandard housing: No toilet or no bathroom or no kitchen (heating facility was not considered) (3) all of these amenities.

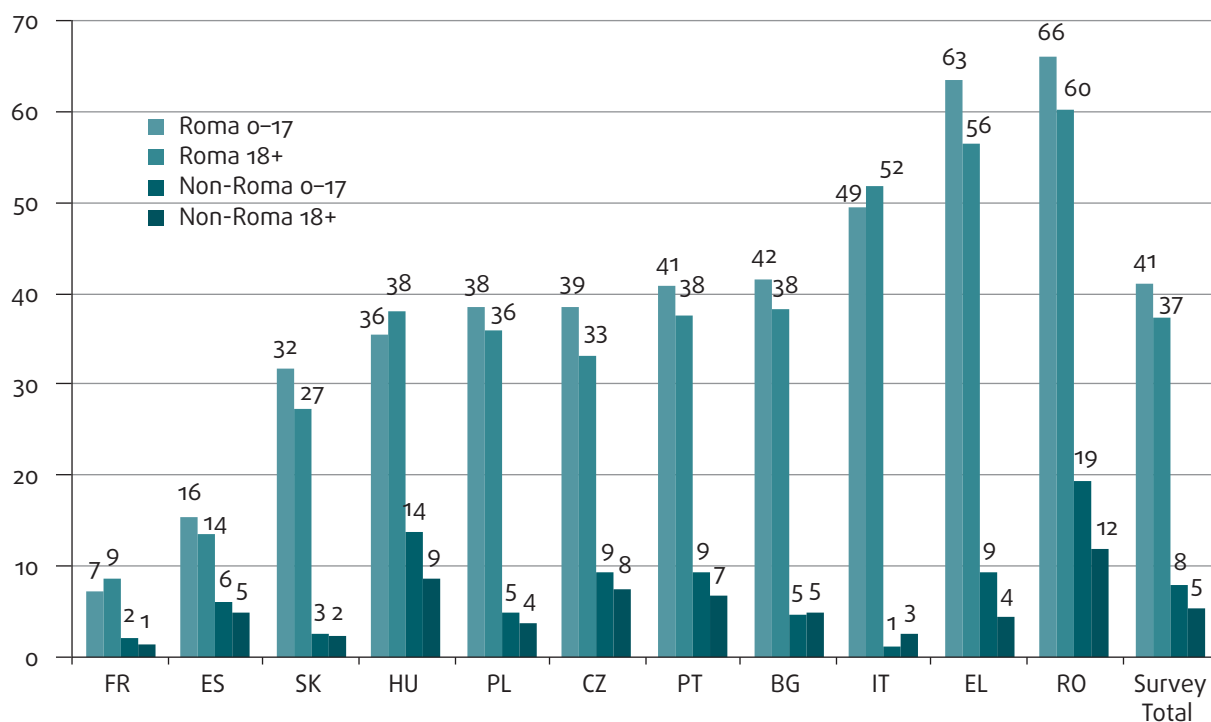
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

non-Roma populations surveyed. In Slovakia, rates for children living in households who suffer hunger are 11 times higher for Roma than for non-Roma. In Italy rates for children living in households that suffer hunger are 40 times higher for Roma than for non-Roma. For Italy and Greece, which have the second-highest childhood hunger rates after Romania, this stands in sharp contrast to the fact that these two countries also have the second-highest

Roma employment rate. This also shows the limits of active inclusion policies and the need for immediate and direct support of families suffering from hunger and extreme deprivation in the EU. Recognising that hunger in post-crisis Europe is on the rise the Council of the European Union approved on 11 December 2013 a Regulation for a Fund for EU aid to the most deprived. The €3.5 billion in funding will be distributed to Member States between 2014 and 2020.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Coreper (2013).

**Figure 20: At least one person in the household who went hungry to bed at least once in the last month, by EU Member State (%)**



Note: Children aged 0-17 and adults aged 18 years and above in households where at least once a person had to go 'hungry to bed, because there was not enough money for food' in the past month.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011, persons in households

# Conclusions

The analysis suggests that, despite national and regional differences, across the EU Member States the Roma surveyed face multiple socio-economic disadvantages, often caused by lack of adequate employment and/or lack of access to the labour market. Factors influencing this situation include a combination of persisting discrimination and exclusion, as well as a lack of education and training that could facilitate access to the labour market.

The long history of discrimination and exclusion of Roma needs to be addressed decisively. EU legislation on discrimination, especially in employment and training, should be rigorously enforced and monitored in close cooperation with social partners, equality bodies and other human rights mechanisms.

The employment patterns of Roma differ across the Member States surveyed, reflecting the historical trajectory of survival strategies adopted by different groups in response to state interventions and market conditions. The comparison with the general population shows some relationship between overall national employment rates and the employment situation of non-Roma in the survey. This correlation is not observed between Roma employment rates and national labour markets, indicating that national labour market policies may only have limited impact on the situation of Roma. Consequently, in order to be effective, employment strategies must follow a regional development approach targeting localities and disadvantaged areas with high shares of Roma populations.

Self-employment, of which there is a higher prevalence in Italy, Greece, France and Portugal, seems to reinforce

labour market disadvantages. Policies supporting self-employment should have a broader focus going beyond income generation to ensure equal access to social security.

A key finding is that paid work is by itself insufficient to alleviate Roma poverty. The persistence of the phenomenon of the 'working poor' can have a disastrous impact in the long run, demotivating young people from seeking a better education and from adopting life strategies based on adequately paid work. The data show that the typical job for an 'average Roma' does not guarantee a living for the 'average Roma family'. Therefore, employment opportunities that guarantee minimum wages combined with social transfers need to provide sufficient income to make ends meet – alleviating the extreme poverty and even hunger the survey identified.

Another key finding concerns women's employment. Women's labour participation may reduce hardship, but it is clearly not enough to overcome the risk of poverty. There is some evidence that the employment gap between Roma women and men is closing for the younger generation. This could be further supported through action empowering women.

The data suggest that discrimination overlaps with residential and housing disadvantage. Its consequences are serious, including lack of electricity, water and sewerage. Poor living conditions are likely to have a serious impact particularly on children and needs to be addressed as a priority by providing adequate housing and the necessary social transfers to ensure that children and the elderly can cover their basic needs.



# Annex: The survey in a nutshell

## Which EU Member States were surveyed?

The survey was conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

## Who was interviewed and how?

- In each Member State, about 1,000 Roma households and 500 non-Roma households were sampled randomly in areas that were known to have a proportion of Roma residents above the national average. The survey therefore reflects the situation in those areas in the 11 EU Member States that have an above-average proportion of Roma.
- A household was categorised as 'Roma' if at least one person in the household identified him- or herself as belonging to the Roma or a related group and was willing to participate in the survey.
- Across all countries, the survey interviewed 10,811 Roma and 5,508 non-Roma households providing information on about 61,271 household members.
- Information on the household and its members was collected through face-to-face interviews in their homes by one randomly selected respondent within the household aged at least 16; non-Roma respondents were sampled from the same residential area or from the closest neighbourhood to the Roma interviewed.
- The majority of Roma interviewed in the survey held the citizenship of the country of residence, with the exception of Italy where about 40 % of respondents were non-citizens.

## What did the survey ask?

Questions about:

- the basic socio-demographic characteristics of all household members.
- their situation in employment, education, health and housing.
- the neighbourhood and its infrastructure.
- integration, discrimination, rights awareness and citizenship issues.
- mobility and migration.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts – a 'household grid' and an 'individual part' or the 'core questionnaire'. The 'household grid' yielded information on the basic characteristics of all members of the household as reported by a randomly selected respondent whereas the 'core questionnaire' went in-depth with questions about the household in general and the individual situation of the selected respondent.

## How representative are the results?

- The results are representative for those Roma women and men living in areas where they reside in a higher than national average density.
- The results for non-Roma are not representative of the general population in each Member State, but serve as a benchmark for the Roma since the non-Roma interviewed often share the same environment, labour market and social infrastructure.
- The survey 'total' mentioned in many graphs and tables is an 'unweighted average' of all Roma included in the survey and should only be used as a reference point for individual country values. The 'unweighted average' does not correct for different population sizes in different countries, in other words does not reflect the situation of the total Roma population in the 11 EU Member States surveyed.

## KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

### Roma identity

Historically, Roma identity was constructed largely *vis-à-vis* non-Roma society, the *Gadje*. The consolidation of the modern states with their disciplining secular and religious structures during the period of modernity made participation or non-participation in these structures increasingly an important identification marker – and later a driver of social exclusion.<sup>43</sup> There is a long academic, legal and policy debate on the strategy of identifying Roma by survey research. The problem is multi-layered: firstly, Roma are a heterogeneous group with respect to their ethnic identity, language use, cultural traditions and level of social inclusion, therefore many scholars argue that ‘Roma’ serves rather as an umbrella term referring to a population with highly varying ethnic identities. Secondly, most European Roma have multiple and complex identities and revealing their ethnic identity depends on how they perceive the possible consequences. Thirdly, due to their frequent experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination, many Roma prefer to conceal their ethnic belonging in an interview situation.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ivanov, A. (2012).

<sup>44</sup> Rughiniş, C. (2010); Milcher, S. and Ivanov, A. (2004); McGarry, A. and Tremlett, A. (2013); Krízszán, A. (2011); Csepeli, G. and Simon, D. (2004); Szelényi, I. and Ladányi, J. (2006); Simon, P. (2007).

There are two main approaches to conceptualising ‘Roma’ belonging in surveys, which result in only partially comparable findings. In the narrower interpretation, the Roma minority is composed of those who identify themselves as Gypsies/Roma (‘self-identification’), while the broader concept embraces all those who are regarded as such by the outsiders (‘external identification’).<sup>45</sup>

The FRA survey took a multi-stage approach to identifying ‘Roma’ respondents: first, it identified Roma-dense areas based on census data (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania) or other available population data sources (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Spain). Then respondents were screened by an introductory question – ‘Are there any Roma living in the household?’ Finally, during the interview the randomly selected respondent was asked to answer a question about the ethnic background of all household members. That question was designed to reconfirm the preceding identification process and not to capture multiple identities – the respondent could select only one identity option.

<sup>45</sup> Ivanov, A., Kling, J., and Kagin, J. (2012).



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Equal and full access to employment serves as a major vehicle of social inclusion, one that can improve living conditions and enable people, such as the European Union's (EU) largest ethnic minority, Roma, to successfully tackle the challenges of poverty. This report presents the results of the European Union Agency's for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2011 Roma survey on poverty and employment, which show, for example, that although most Roma are actively seeking a job, only about a third of those surveyed has paid work, which is often precarious and informal. It reveals multiple challenges: very low employment rates were observed, in particular for young Roma.

The EU has targeted employment and poverty reduction in its 2020 growth strategy, which mentions Roma explicitly though not exclusively. The Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation in December 2013, specifically suggesting that Member States ensure the equal treatment of Roma in accessing the labour market and to employment opportunities. Concerted efforts are needed to break through the cycle of disadvantage.

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