

**“MAINSTREAM APPROACHES
AREN’T WORKING...”:
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
2016 ASSESSMENT OF
MEMBER STATES’ PROGRESS
TOWARDS ROMA
INTEGRATION; THE CASE OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM**

A briefing note

July 2016



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“MAINSTREAM APPROACHES AREN’T DEMONSTRATING IMPACT IN THE UK....”

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF MEMBER STATES’ PROGRESS TOWARDS ROMA INTEGRATION

July 2016

1. Since 2011 the European Commission (EC) has adopted a framework for supporting ‘Roma integration’ (defined in the UK context as also including Gypsy, Traveller as well as Roma). Each year, the Commission has carried out an assessment on each member states progress in achieving social inclusion, combating discrimination and making progress in five key areas.
2. The EC proposed to member states that they could either (a) adopt distinct ‘national Roma integration strategies’, or (b) develop integrated sets of policy measures, to meet the goals of Roma integration and inclusion. The UK government adopted the latter approach, and adapted existing policy measures. This was best exemplified in the Ministerial Working Group progress report¹ (2012), and which was last reviewed in 2015.
3. We attach the five page summary document² from the EC which summarises progress across the European Union.
4. The EC concludes with a number of recommendations; these are (with commentary in red):

To achieve tangible and sustainable results, the Commission encourages Member States to:

- Set up national Roma platforms which should play a crucial role in ensuring the transparent involvement of all stakeholders in implementation, monitoring and reporting activities; **remit of the Department for Communities & Local Government**
- Make full use of the new tools and European Structural and Investment Funds; **recent exchange of correspondence with (then minister), Baroness Williams, at DCLG**
- Fight against discrimination and segregation; monitor and fight hate speech and anti-Gypsyism; also through enforcing anti-discrimination and anti-racism and xenophobia legislation at national and local levels; **launch of new hate crime action plan via lead of Ministry of Justice**
- Further develop data collection, monitoring and reporting to be able to measure the impact of the mainstream and targeted measures on Roma and the use of ESIF funds; **as above, remit of DCLG and DWP, (then minister) Baroness Williams**
- Scale up successful and proven practices and support capacity building of local authorities and civil society; **DCLG; as ‘national Roma contact point’**

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma-report-2016-factsheet_en.pdf

- Support the achievement of Roma integration goals through inclusive mainstream policy reform and sustainable national funding; **DCLG**

5. As part of this exercise, the EC also carries country-by-country assessment. The two page UK assessment is available here http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma-report-2016_en.pdf (pp88-89).

6. The main assessment of the UK government’s practice is severely critical:

“The mainstream approaches have not demonstrated sufficient impact on improving the situation of Roma.”

7. We have approached staff in the UK ‘National Roma Contact Point’ (CLG) to request a copy of the UK government submission to the EC which obviously forms the basis for the UK assessment. Third sector and voluntary agencies were also asked to submit comment to the EC; in the UK, Roma Support Group and the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups submitted evidence.

8. The UK assessment is re-produced below:

HORIZONTAL MEASURES	
KEY ELEMENTS	ASSESSMENT
FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-GYPSYISM, PROTECTION OF ROMA CHILDREN AND WOMEN	
Mainstream measures preventing discrimination, including fighting hate crime (England, Wales), protecting Roma women and children addressed under Women’ empowerment fund. Teaching materials, guides promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding. Involvement of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups (representatives of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma organisations) in the consultation process with Government departments (England). Increasing number of civil society organisations (Leeds, Glasgow, Derby, Luton, Manchester, Sheffield, East Anglia) developing Roma advocacy, mediation, community engagement and policy development. Ensuring equality and non-discriminatory practices by service providers remain challenge to be addressed. Activities aimed at fighting stereotyping media coverage, prejudices against Roma and combating anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech should be taken. To this end, the public authorities and representatives of Roma communities should work together. Multiple disadvantages faced by Roma women and Roma children need more specific measures. Awareness raising training and information on human rights should be provided.	Ensuring equality and non-discriminatory practices by service providers remain challenge to be addressed. Activities aimed at fighting stereotyping media coverage, prejudices against Roma and combating anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech should be taken. To this end, the public authorities and representatives of Roma communities should work together. Multiple disadvantages faced by Roma women and Roma children need more specific measures. Awareness raising training and information on human rights should be provided.

POVERTY REDUCTION	
No measures are reported.	
POLICY AREAS	
EDUCATION	
Free school lunches (Pupil Premium, England), control activities by Ofsted, School Inspection (England), measures fighting all forms of bullying (England, Wales), toolkit provided to teachers working with Roma, curriculum materials for use in secondary schools on cultural awareness and understanding of Gypsies and Travellers (Wales), 100 cross-community Summer Camps programme (Northern Ireland).	More targeted support should be followed when addressing the low attendance and poor attainment of Roma pupils. The local authorities and the academies (schools) responsible for educational outcomes of pupils should work in coordinated way and ensure that these children have access to the mainstream measures.
EMPLOYMENT	
Mainstream measures aiming at increasing ethnic minority employment and participation in the labour market	A targeted approach to ensure access to and increase participation of Roma to employment mainstream measures is needed in addition to helping them avoid falling into dangerous and exploitative work conditions within the informal economy. The opportunities under the ESF funding to support local employment programmes, and for which Roma can also benefit from, should be further explored
HEALTH CARE	
Mainstream and targeted measures, including various publications/guides (England, Wales, Scotland), cultural awareness advice to healthcare practitioners (Wales), assessment reports on health needs of Gypsies and Travellers by Local Health Boards and Clinics (Wales), Employment of Traveller and Roma Community Health Workers (Northern Ireland)	Greater focus on tackling the health inequalities of Roma is needed. The health needs' assessment should be carried out throughout the UK. Further targeted measures to improve the Roma health status should be considered with a special attention to women and children. Communities' participation in health and social care initiatives should be scaled up. The cultural awareness competency measures for health staff should be provided throughout the UK.
HOUSING	
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, presenting new concept of defining Travellers for planning sites purposes, statutory duty for local authorities to assess accommodation needs and provide Traveller sites where there is a need and support for the development of new sites (England, Wales); Mainstream programme supporting affordable homes, providing for the Traveller Pitch Funding (England); Gypsy and Traveller Sites Capital Grant and Caravan Count System (Wales) Site provision for Gypsy/Travellers (Scotland).	The lack of authorised sites still remains a challenge to be addressed. Within the local planning approach, the involvement and close cooperation with representatives of Roma and social services should be strengthened. Planning policies and decisions should be carefully assessed in order to eliminate discriminatory practices and advance equality
STRUCTURAL MEASURES	
CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION	
Involvement of the NRCP in coordination of the relevant Government Departments' reports, in	Strengthening further the capacity building of Roma and their involvement in design,

supporting the work of the Ministerial Working Group on preventing and tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers as well as in facilitating the work of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups. The NRCP also financially supports the integration projects (e.g. City of Sheffield). Transnational cooperation of city of Glasgow with cities in Slovakia and Romania. No measures are reported on the cooperation with the UK Equality body.	implementation and monitoring of policies relevant to them is essential. The cooperation with Equality body should be established. The outcomes of the Equality Body reports should be well reflected in design of relevant policies.
MONITORING	
No measures are reported, although there are assessment reports and data available, in particular in the areas of education and health.	Measuring the impact of mainstream measures on the situation of Roma, should be put in place. The outcomes of the assessment reports should be well reflected in policy design and implementation.
FUNDING	
In the 2014-2020 period of total of €1,3bn (€51m ERDF, €1.1bn ESF and €123m EAFRD) has been allocated to promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, targeting action to the socially disadvantaged (including, but not limited to Roma)	Existing possibilities under the ESIF funds for targeted measures to support inclusion Roma should be further exploited and effectively implemented.
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	
The mainstream approaches have not demonstrated sufficient impact on improving the situation of Roma. Targeted measures could be further exploited by also using the existing possibilities under the ESIF funds. Scaling up the existing initiatives implemented throughout the UK should also be explored. Cooperation between national and local authorities needs to be addressed, as well as the involvement of Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant measures. Evidence gathering should also be developed to enable the assessment of the impact of the measures.	

9. The key finding is that in the UK, “mainstream approaches have not demonstrated sufficient impact on improving the situation of Roma”.

10. To assess how these findings and recommendations are considered, and how various government departments are considering what action is now required, it is recommended that.....write to the Secretaries of State for Education, Health, Communities & Local Government, Work & Pensions and Justice, drawing their attention to these assessments, and asking them to consider what different actions are now required to meet the objectives of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller integration.