

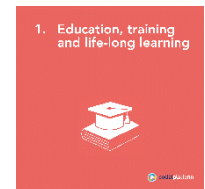
## **ERGO NETWORK BRIEFING PAPER**

### **Inclusive Education**

**Version: December 2019**

#### **EU Policy Framework**

- ✓ Education is one of the five headline targets of the **Europe 2020 Strategy**: target of reducing early leavers of education and training to less than 10 percent of population aged 18 to 24, and increasing the tertiary educational attainment to 40 percent of the same age frame.
- ✓ It is Principle 1 of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**: “Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market”.
- ✓ Goal 4 of the **Sustainable Development Goals** aims to “**ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**”.
- ✓ One of the 4 objectives of the EU Framework for **National Roma Integration Strategies**



#### **EU Institutions reactions**

- ✓ The latest communication issued by the European Commission on the Evaluation of the EU Roma Integration Strategies 2019, and its previous evaluations, clearly underline **the need to prioritise education and training** in policy initiatives.
- ✓ Several countries (**Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia**) received a **Country-Specific Recommendation in 2019** regarding improving Roma access to quality education, as well as better integrating them into mainstream education.
- ✓ In Slovakia **infringement procedures** for segregation of Roma children are ongoing. In 2017, the overall share of Roma children enrolled into special schooling (a class or a school) was six times higher (18.2%) than in case of non-Roma children (3.2%). Roma children formed 50.8% of children in special classes and 42% of children in special schools.

## Statistics

Special Eurobarometer 493: ***Discrimination in the European Union. Roma*** (May 2019):

*“In your opinion, how would your fellow citizens feel about having Roma pupils in the same classroom as your children?”.*

In the best performing country (Finland), 59% said they had no problem.

## Roma segregation

**Geographical segregation:** schools in Roma communities don't get teachers, or get poor teachers, or teachers without Roma training, are underequipped, not prioritised.

**Special needs schools / classes** – lack of majority language skills; less kindergarten education; poverty preventing homework and studying.

**Antigypsyism** – discrimination from the community:

- **teachers** – sit in the back of the class, not being given support, sometimes ridiculing Roma pupils (see measures in Romania)
- **non-Roma parents** – don't want their children mixing with Roma children
- **non-Roma students** – bullying

## Consequences

Roma children are not provided, from a very early age, with the same opportunities, but then are blamed for failing to 'integrate' later in life and have an increased drop-out rate.

Segregated schools breed a sectioned view of society, which fuels inequalities and discrimination, in a context of a rise of the far right discourse and increased racism.

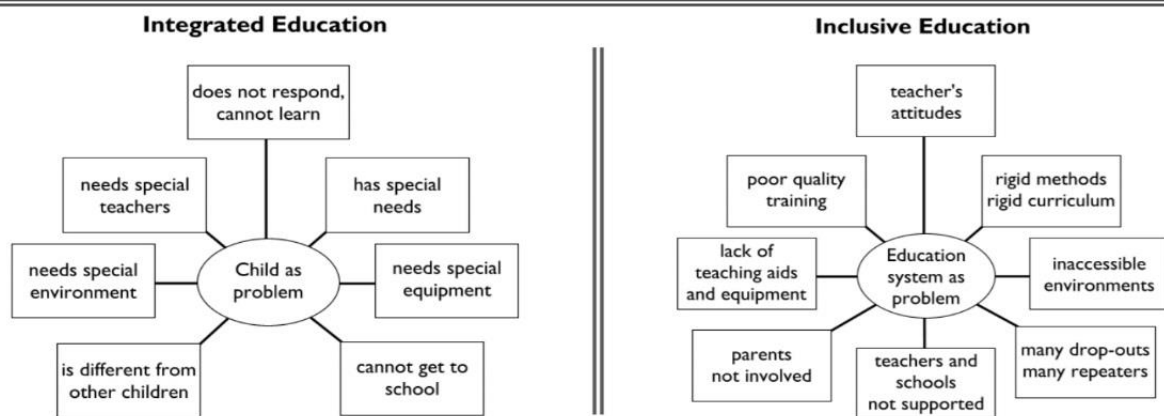
*“Roma and non-Roma children need to have the same access to inclusive education. This is not a favour, and it is not charity, it is a right, and a responsibility of the people in charge. Governments must not differentiate between their citizens.”*

Soraya Post, Co-Chair ERGO Network

## Policy Recommendations

- ✓ Set in place an ambitious successor of the **EU Framework for Roma Integration Strategies**, with quantified targets, including for education, measuring also its quality and inclusiveness, and placing the fight against antigypsyism at its the core.
- ✓ Ensure that Roma, including their access to mainstream, quality education, are prioritised in other key processes, such as the **successor of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in the European Semester, and in the implementation of the EPSR and SDGs**.
- ✓ **Ringfence dedicated EU funds** for Roma rights and inclusion and make sure that they employed to their full potential by ensuring ownership and access by grassroot NGOs, as well as transparent monitoring, involving Roma civil society.
- ✓ **Step up the fight against antigypsyism** by including it as a horizontal dimension in EU social inclusion and economic strategies, and by explicitly adding it in national and European anti-discrimination and anti-racism legislation.

## From integrated to inclusive education



(Aurora Ailincăi, Council of Europe)

## Practice Recommendations

- ✓ End structural discrimination in education settings – **abolish Roma-only schools and classes** and sanction school staff who discriminate between pupils.
- ✓ **Ensure quality public services in Roma communities:** accessible, affordable transport; teacher training and supply; school materials and equipment.
- ✓ **Early intervention:** support efforts to include Roma children in early childhood education and care (nurseries, kindergartens etc)
- ✓ Train **school mediators and in-class assistants** to support teachers and educators.
- ✓ **Provide majority language support** (not just for Roma children), and after-hours support with homework.
- ✓ **Intersectional approach:** support Roma girls; wrap-around support for poor families (housing, income support, nutrition).
- ✓ **Promote positive narratives** of diversity and social cohesion within school settings, as well as better awareness of Roma, their history, culture, and traditions.
- ✓ **Bring together all stakeholders:** Roma and non-Roma pupils, Roma and non-Roma parents, school staff, local authorities, to identify and implement positive solutions.



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