
OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS MEASURES ON THE MARGINALISED ROMA COMMUNITIES IN THE EU

SUMMARY OF THE CORONAVIRUS IMPACT ON ROMA

The Coronavirus outbreak has widened long-standing exclusion, poverty and discrimination against some of the disadvantaged and rights deprived groups in the EU, including its largest ethnic minority, the Roma people. Many National Roma Contact Points (NRCPs), public authorities and civil society organisations have raised the specific vulnerability marginalised Roma face in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic crisis. Some of them have put in place both mainstream and targeted preventive measures to protect their population including these vulnerable communities.



However, Member States' (MS) emergency measures, such as hand washing with warm water, prove a challenge for 30% of Roma living in households with no tap water. Compliance with personal hygiene recommendations is also questionable, as 40% of Roma have no sanitary facilities in their dwellings. In some MS, up to 80% of Roma live in cramped, overcrowded Roma neighbourhoods, which makes physical distancing, a key element of preventive public health measures, next to impossible.

Additionally, there is also a risk that the mid-term socio-economic impacts of the pandemic will hit these communities the hardest, contributing to further inequalities. For example, remote learning through digital education is most often not accessible and/or affordable for marginalised Roma children, lacking any/adequate IT equipment, and/or internet connection, or sometimes even electricity. This could further deepen inequalities in education. Many Roma living in segregated settlements see themselves cut from any source of income and (formal or informal) economic activity, leading to rising unemployment and poverty.

The reported cases of scapegoating the Roma and ethnicisation of the Coronavirus crisis across MS are even more worrisome. MS need to ensure that their most vulnerable members do not carry the burden of the pandemic and suffer from additional hate and discrimination. Hence, the protection against the spread of the Coronavirus in these communities is crucial and in need of additional emergency interventions¹.

This paper provides an overview of the information gathered from NRCPs and some of JUST's civil society and partner organisations, among which FRA provided substantial input. JUST requested NRCPs to provide

¹ This was the request made by Commissioners Schmit, Dalli and Kyriakides to relevant ministers across MS on 8 April 2020.

brief information on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on marginalised Roma communities and the actions and/or measures undertaken by them or other public authorities to approach the situation. Input from civil society comes from various articles about related initiatives of NGOs and other voluntary groups.

1. CHALLENGING AREAS

The NRCPs provided information on how the Coronavirus pandemic has affected marginalised Roma communities in their respective MS. Their feedback converges on the multiple pandemic-engendered difficulties faced by Roma communities in **all four priority areas, i.e. health, employment, education, and housing, including difficulties related to social protection, migration for work, discrimination and antigypsism, and unequal access to information.**

- *Health*

Too many Roma live in poor sanitary conditions, lacking access to drinking (tap) water, basic hygiene and often live in houses without basic public infrastructure. Thus, mainstream prevention measures, such as urging people to wash their hands with warm water are irrelevant/inaccessible to them. Existing social exclusion and segregation additionally cause unequal access to primary healthcare, despite a high proportion of longstanding chronic illnesses.²

- *Employment*

The existing low employment rates among marginalised Roma are likely to decrease further in the wake of the Coronavirus crisis. The social measures applied by MS refer only to people who lost formal and regular jobs. However, their livelihoods depend on daily or occasional work in the informal sector (seasonal jobs, unregulated contracts), hence they are the first to remain without jobs and unable to access unemployment benefits.³ This reality has also led to waves of Roma working in other MS as EU mobile workers returning to their home countries, where they face insecurity, online and offline hate comments and scapegoating (see below).

- *Education*

Marginalised Roma communities should not be left with no/fewer educational opportunities during the pandemic, thereby intensifying pre-existing inequalities. With schools closed and switching to online education, children have to rely on home schooling and good internet connection. Low educated or illiterate parents cannot provide the necessary support. MS need to ensure that educational institutions and educators are well prepared to provide distance learning. This requires adequate digital infrastructure, teaching materials and skilled teachers and support to deliver online learning efficiently. Under the current circumstances, not all learners can access distance learning, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds and in remote areas, where internet access is inexistent. Moreover, the closure of schools also deprive children in some MS of free daily meals, thus creating additional burdens on their families' strained budgets.⁴ In addition, the absence of the school and class environment reflects in children's social deprivation.

- *Housing*

Overcrowding is an issue for many Roma living in segregated and excluded settlements or ghettos, with considerably less space per person than the national average, especially after relocations through forced

² Data from FRA indicate that the share of Roma living in households without tap water is 30%, without indoor shower or bathroom is 40%. Additionally, 22% live with longstanding illness or health problem and only 76% have national health insurance coverage.

³ Data from FRA indicate the share of Roma people who self-declared main activity status 'paid work' is 43%.

⁴ FRA collected data to indicate that early leavers from education are 68%. These data are likely to increase because many Roma children are unable to participate in home schooling.

evictions. It makes physical distancing, one of the mainstream prevention measures, next to impossible. Life in excluded and segregated environments hinders effective access to healthcare, makes maintaining employment more difficult, and renders access to grocery stores (absent from these locations) nearly impossible.⁵

- *Social protection*

Inter-generational poverty prevents Roma from accruing financial reserves. Since many have been active in the informal sector, they are completely excluded from the mainstream coronavirus-response related to social protection. Without an income or social support, thousands are left without the means to purchase food.⁶

- *Migration for work*

As the Coronavirus outbreak has led to the halting of most business activities, Roma working in the non-formal sector have lost their jobs. Therefore, waves of migrant Roma (mostly seasonal workers employed in constructions, agriculture and homecare for the elderly) returned from Western European countries (high risk ones like UK, DE, IT, ES, FR to their homes mainly in RO, BG, and SK. Fearing the uncontrolled spread of the virus and lacking income sources, they returned to the poor and segregated settlements and ghettos they had left. If contaminated, they could rapidly spread the virus in the marginalised Roma localities, which could have fatal consequences given the extremely poor and overcrowded living conditions.⁷ Moreover, the waves of returnees have sprung chain reactions of extreme hate and racist sentiments (see below).

- *Discrimination and antigypsyism*

The abusive use of newly introduced restrictive measures in the legitimate aim of protecting public health in some MS reinforces discrimination and violence against marginalised Roma. Improper and insensitive narratives of political figures and [ethnicisation](#) of the issue in the media, pointing at marginalised Roma living in settlements or ghettos as threat for the rest of the population, described as undisciplined people or drain on society further exacerbates existing anti-Roma sentiments (instead of looking at them as victims of exclusion, poverty and inequalities). The risks of spreading COVID-19 in marginalised communities is often described as a [public health security](#) (link in German) threat justifying additional specific restrictive measures that do not concern the rest of the population.

- *Unequal access to information*

Roma people living in segregated and marginalised localities lack access to the official information on preventive measures due to their physical segregation, lack of education, (digital) illiteracy and lack of access to the internet. Not only does this deprive them of timely preventive information that could avoid unnecessary deaths, but it also increases mistrust in the authorities, as measures of confinement risk to be misinterpreted and leads to protests. In fact, such incidents occurred in several excluded settlements and even prisons, where restrictive measures have been misunderstood.

As for the reported cases of COVID-19 contaminations in Roma-inhabited localities, the reported numbers are unlikely to reflect the reality. While several MS do not collect data disaggregated by ethnicity, the testing rates also vary considerably from one MS to another. Numbers are likely to increase in the upcoming weeks. At this stage, it is too premature to insert numbers and draw conclusions.

2. POSITIVE APPROACHES

⁵ According to [FRA](#), the share of Roma living in households that do not have the minimum number of rooms according to the Eurostat definition of overcrowding is 78%. The share of Roma living in households where most neighbours are also Roma is 67%.

⁶ According to [FRA](#), the share of Roma household numbers at-risk-of poverty rate (current monthly income below 60% of national median equalised income after social transfers) is on average 80%.

⁷ For example in Slovakia, the Plenipotentiary office for Roma communities together with the Ministry of Interior carried out testing of such Roma returnees in 98 Roma localities to assess the situation and take necessary measures.

Despite the urgency of the situation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, MS have mostly made proof of swift action in their responses to fight the outbreak. Here below are some of the promising practices that have been reported. By no means exhaustive, this short overview aims to give an idea and inspire effective action across all affected MS.

NRCs and civil society in the MSs with a significant Roma population and the most acute issues developed two approaches to deal with the issue:

- on the one hand, *demanding for firm and targeted state involvement for the most vulnerable* living in segregated Roma communities, and
- on the other hand, *trying to address messages for calm and home confinement to the Roma communities* (often in Romani language as well with mobile loudspeakers in Roma neighbourhoods' streets, increasing the sense of "martial law" measures).

In this sense, **the role of Roma education and health mediators** in most of the MS proved crucial, as they mainly live in the same communities and speak Romani language. They also engendered the much-needed trust among marginalised Roma communities and became community gatekeepers.

- **Health mediators** work actively with Roma communities to explain what coronavirus is, what the means of protection are, what quarantine is and how to respect the quarantine rules.
 - E.g. the awareness-raising campaign carried out on social media (and in Romani language) in Slovakia [Koronameterel](#) ("Corona will die") by the Healthy Regions (an ESIF-funded organisation working under the umbrella of Ministry of Health) engaging Roma health mediators, health professionals and famous people.
- **Educational mediators** work directly with Roma children in Roma settlements providing them teaching material and introducing them to the IT-based distance learning system. They also work with Roma parents to raise awareness about the illness and provide information relevant to the IT learning process.
 - E.g. in Sliven (BG), [educational mediators](#) distribute school materials to Roma students who lack IT equipment and Roma NGO Amalipe is running a campaign for donation of old computers to Roma children.

The **promotion of volunteering initiatives** – flourishing in most MS, assists and helps vulnerable population groups together with strengthening common responsibility, humanity and social cohesion.

- Roma and non-Roma volunteers are sewing protection masks for all in need including health professionals. In [CZ](#), Slovo 21 coordinates the Roma Women's group Manushe to sew facemasks (and distribute for free in their localities and hospitals), a [promising sign of solidarity and breaking prejudice](#). Similar initiatives take place in [SK](#) and generally [across Europe](#).

In some MS, the **NRCs have taken a very proactive role** with efforts to connect multiple stakeholders and monitor local implementation:

- creation of online groups (Facebook) to communicate and coordinate actions of all actors involved, mobilising mediators and protective gears (BG, HR, SI, etc.);
- development of networks of NGOs, Roma coordinators and site workers.

Public authorities

Based on the information from NRCs, authorities mainly took/provided support for the following types of measures:

- emergency measures of informative and preventive nature in collaboration with (pro-)Roma NGOs (BE, BG, CZ, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, PL, RO, SK, SI);

- organisation of (uninterrupted) access to water and electricity supply during the confinement (BE, BG, CZ, ES, FR, HR, RO, SK, SI);
- re-allocation of funding to mitigate the social, physical and psychological implications of the pandemic (BE, GR, IT, RO);
- providing marginalised Roma neighbourhoods with basic food and hygiene products (BE, BG);
- the suspension of expulsion measures against the Traveller community and permission to occupy municipal fields (IE, BE), or exceptional measures for sheltering in slums and/or camps (FR);
- the creation of a 24-hour phone line dedicated to people in need (RO) and more generally channels of emergency support (IT, HR);
- support to families in education and debt: instructions on the implementation of distance education in emergency situations and DIGI School project (SI);
- small actions serve as models of cooperation between authorities and the communities, ultimately based on active citizens' participation; notably in ROMACT municipalities in BG and RO; e.g. ROMACT Community Action Group in BG helped people from a very marginalised neighbourhood to get access to the Public Canteen Programme;
- efforts to disseminate information in relevant languages (on protective measures in Russian and English in EE, on domestic violence in Romani and Turkish in BG by JUSTROM3 teams).

Despite widely covered instances of rampant racism stemming from enforcement authorities, politicians, and the media, MS have also reported instances of **better, more harmonious interactions between police forces and Roma communities** – in FR, police officers help bring homework to children, in IT they distribute food bonuses.

Similarly, **the national media** has shown instances of tolerance to the Roma community, a positive development to be further built on:

- Public statements to raise awareness of Roma people's plight in the outbreak (the **Croatian Ombudswoman**)
- The Greek government spokesperson referred to Roma as “vulnerable” and “victims” of this situation that they have to be protected, and also by saying the phrase “we trust you” to follow the rules.

Examples are by no means limited to the above. More instances of positive approaches can be found in the overview table below, under section 5.

3. IMMEDIATE AND MID- TO LONG-TERM PRIORITIES FOR MOBILISATION OF EU FUNDING

The NRCPs reported on immediate and mid-term measures to prioritise for the current 2014-2020 and the future 2021-2027 financial programming period and how updated national strategies could help mitigate negative impacts of the pandemic in marginalised Roma communities. They referred to the mainstream measures that Roma as citizens of the MS shall also benefit from, measures targeting vulnerable groups (including Roma) and measures targeting exclusively Roma communities. If information about the immediate measures was quite extended, on mid- to long-term measures it was quite scarce. Some NRCPs stressed that the impact of these measures is under assessment and evaluation to provide future policy learning and feed policy review.

3.1. Immediate priorities

There was almost a common agreement among NRCPs' responses about immediate priorities such as the below:

- provide access to clean water in marginalised Roma localities that do not have access;

- provide access to free health services for all in need including those without health insurance targeting physical and mental health;
- provide access to sanitation, facemasks and medicines in marginalised Roma localities;
- provide access to information on how to prevent the spread of the virus and where to search for help through different means of communication and in Romani language (leaflets, posters, word of mouth, TV, radio, social media);
- provide access to safe quarantine measures to avoid spread of the virus including access to food and housing meeting conditions for self-isolation);
- set up mobile units (or temporary healthcare facilities) to provide/assist sensitive testing (without ethnicisation of the issue) among the Roma returnees, particularly to poor and overcrowded localities to prevent spreading of the disease;
- provide facilities for distance education for children in need;
- strengthen the position of health mediators, education mediators and other field workers, the first contact people or gatekeepers in these communities.

3.2. Mid- and long-term priorities

Eradication of the longer-term socio-economic impact of Coronavirus crisis needs a recovery plan with mid- and long-term measures, including those targeting marginalised Roma. Some MS stated that the post-2020 Framework should include measures to address the impact of Coronavirus in the Roma communities, but did not detail. Others stressed the importance of putting even more pressure on governments and public authorities to include measures in the four priority areas that could help to mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus crisis in marginalised Roma communities. Some responses highlighted the need to first identify all/most of the cases at local/community level to plan the recovery process. Nevertheless, solid information on the concrete mid- (MT) or long-term (LT) measures was rather scarce in the NRCs' responses.

• Health

Public health investment including marginalised Roma must be a top political priority, including funding specifically allocated to health prevention and protection through the following:

- sustaining sanitation measures initiated during the crisis (broadly defined), including access to water, toilets, hygiene, servicing of the sites. (MT);
- improving access to tap water (LT);
- improving access to healthcare (MT, LT);
- strengthening the position of Roma health mediators through education and provision of necessary equipment (MT, LT).

• Employment

- support the utilisation of active labour market policies, social economy and social enterprises in order to absorb and strengthen workplace-related skills of Roma at risk of poverty (LT).
- recognition of workers who are part of non-formal economy (LT).
- easier access to legal status for migrant workers, if needed (LT).

• Education

- compensation of all pupils for their social deprivation by strengthening social bonds through extracurricular activities such as outdoor school trips, school educational trips, free school club access (MT, LT);
- strengthening the work of school psychologists and social educators when returning to school (MT);

- compensatory tutoring of Roma from marginalised communities and of all children in need, which can be implemented by community centres or local NGOs. Tutoring could mitigate the effects of the crisis on their knowledge, motivation and school performance (MT);
- improvement of IT skills for Roma children, teachers and parents from marginalised communities (MT, LT);
- provision of adequate digital infrastructure, teaching material and Roma education mediators equipped for distance learning (MT, LT);
- provision of distance learning premises within the marginalised localities such as public libraries, community centres where pupils can get IT and Internet access (MT, LT).

- *Housing*

Comprehensive housing and infrastructure programs shall become a priority for MS to tackle the overcrowding and poor quality housing:

- investment in affordable social housing and/or support self-help housing construction with loans provision to builders and support of organisations that will manage the initiative could be a way to improve the housing conditions for many marginalised Roma and other groups in similar situations (MT, LT);
- developing and financially supporting Travellers' housing, in order to answer Travellers' needs (halting and family sites) and reduce substandard housing. Many people are living outside these dedicated places due to the lack of space, which leads to further worsening their precarious situation (MT, LT).

- *Social protection*

- MS should provide greater support for the expansion of social protection to Roma by means of advisory services and financial incentives (MT, LT);
- MS should ensure that food aid distribution meets the needs and that the actions are maintained during the post-crisis period, if needed (MT).

- *Migration for work*

The forthcoming economic crisis could lead to a strong deterioration of living conditions in some countries. This will strike the hardest persons who are already in a precarious situation, and thus is likely to lead to an amplification of migration flows. Hence, cooperation on the mobility of EU citizens (and third country nationals) with a specific focus on marginalised people should be improved.

- *Discrimination and antigypsyism*

Strengthening the measures combating prejudice, hate speech and discrimination of Roma should be prioritised and effectively implemented:

- awareness raising training for police or media outlets (MT, LT);
- spreading positive images about Roma and benefits of multiculturalism and inclusion in media (MT, LT);
- condemnation through better legal investigation of hate speech towards Roma (including media and public figures) (MT, LT).

4. COVID-19 RELEVANT MEASURES AND/OR ACTIONS AT EU LEVEL

4.1. Collection and sharing of practices to promote policy learning

Commissioners' letter to Member States' Ministers

On 8 April 2020, Commissioners Dalli, Kyriakides and Schmit sent, on behalf of the Commission, a letter to the relevant Ministers in each Member State emphasising the need for specific measures for vulnerable groups, including Roma, in the context of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. In view of the high-risk factors mentioned above, the Commissioners drew attention to the importance of the availability of food and drinking water for all, as well as delivery of key sanitation products and medicines. Support should be safely delivered through field workers and health mediators working in Roma communities. Additionally, the letter pointed to the pre-existing racial inequalities, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and recommended that governments ensure the wide dissemination of information on the current crisis to both Roma communities and the majority population to avoid hate spreading further. They encouraged cooperation with NGOs and other institutions that could provide housing, health and social support for vulnerable groups during the Covid19 crisis. Lastly, the Commissioners reassured Member States of the urgent measures taken to ensure financial back-up and targeted assistance under the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative.

Collection of practices from NRCs

JUST contacted all Member States' NRCs to collect information on the measures taken at national level to address the negative impacts of the Coronavirus outbreak on Roma communities. For a country-by-country overview, please refer to the table under section 5 below.

Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives

To assist financially the Roma communities affected by the Coronavirus outbreak, the Commission has initiated two packages of measures, i.e. the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative \(CRII\)](#) and the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus \(CRII+\)](#). They enable the rapid mobilisation of available allocations under the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) for emergency response and are used to provide safeguards to all people including disadvantaged groups who are in need for this particular support. This will provide immediate liquidity to Member States' budgets and will help to frontload the yet unallocated €37 billion of cohesion policy funding within the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes, thus providing a much needed boost to economic investments. Moreover, the [EU Solidarity Fund](#) will provide additional assistance of up to €800 million to the worst affected countries in order to alleviate the financial burden of the immediate response measures.

The European Network on Roma Inclusion under ESI Funds (EURoma Network)

The EU Roma Network fosters a transnational cooperation that brings together public authorities responsible for Roma policies, ESF managing authorities from 15 Member States, and the European Commission to maximise the use of ESI Funds for Roma inclusion. In the context of the Coronavirus outbreak, the network coordinated by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano gathered input from their members on the (planned) use of ESI Funds to address specifically the particular effects of the current crisis on marginalised communities such as the Roma.

National Equality Bodies (NEBs)

EQUINET provides [brief insights](#) into the main discrimination and inequality trends related to the COVID-19 crisis as evident from NEBs' national work. In addition to discrimination and hate speech incidents directed towards Roma and Travellers stemming from individuals, private businesses and local authorities, NEBs have detected instances or received complaints of racist media coverage of the crisis that could

exacerbate community tensions. Highlights from their responses (a detailed country-by-country overview is included in the table under section 5 below) on actions taken in reaction to such issues include:

- public statements or communications to targeted audiences on specific topics related to the virus, such as on the rights and needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups;
- official letters to government ministers and departments on specific areas of concern and recommendations sent to private companies and media outlets highlighting their responsibility to comply with non-discrimination legislation;
- fake news tracking about the virus that could potentially undermine equality and human rights, follow-up with counter messages or work with fact-checking websites to have misleading information removed or disputed.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

In a [press release](#) on 8 April 2020, FRA presented their report “[Coronavirus pandemic in the EU: Fundamental Rights Implications](#)”, which looks at the measures across 27 EU Member States to address the pandemic during February and March 2020. It highlights rights-respectful approaches that could inspire other Member States. Two more monthly reports are to be published in the same series.

Of the four issues that warrant further and regular assessment of the fundamental rights implications, i.e. daily life, vulnerable groups, racism and data protection, Roma communities feature among already vulnerable and at-risk groups, to be particularly impacted by the pandemic. FRA urges Member States to ensure greater protection and refrain from isolating Roma communities, to develop targeted measures to address their specific needs and make healthcare information accessible. The increase in racist incidents should also trigger close monitoring and effective reporting, investigation and prosecution of such crimes.

Roma Civil Monitor

The [civil monitoring initiative](#), a pilot project funded by JUST D.1, is strengthening the monitoring mechanisms of the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies through systematic civil society monitoring. Within this ambit and against the background of the Coronavirus outbreak, the RCM’s [research](#) revealed negative impacts of the Covid19 pandemic on a growing number of segregated “socially excluded localities,” and also reported on measures taken (by civil society and by governments, sometimes in cooperation) to fight to pandemic (e.g. BG, IE, EL).

4.2. Directly managed projects

JUSTROM3 “Roma Women’s Access to Justice”

The EU/CoE joint programme aims to address multiple discrimination and improve related access to justice of Roma and Traveller women. In its [third phase](#), the programme engages consultants in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, and Romania focusing on three major pillars: empowerment of Roma women, enhancement of professional resources and increased synergies and partnerships. However, the Coronavirus crisis has shifted the focus on health issues and urging the local and national authorities to provide public services – access to water. Concrete activities consist of:

- direct participation in local and national emergency campaigns in line with instructions from the relevant national or local sanitary authorities;
- information dissemination (Facebook, WhatsApp support groups, phone calls, flyers, etc.), distribution of hygiene products, protective material and food;
- facilitating access of Roma communities to non-Roma actors leading prevention and/or emergency actions (municipalities, NGOs, Red Cross, civil protection, etc., depending on the context);

- assisting Roma women community leaders involved in or initiating activities in the community to prevent, mitigate and/or overcome the negative impact of the COVID-19;
- online legal consultations and information (requests for legal consultations have increased);
- legal monitoring of possible abuses during the crisis period and reporting to relevant national authorities and/or Council of Europe;
- monitoring of racist attitudes both in the online and offline public spheres and reporting to relevant national authorities and/or Council of Europe;
- advocacy work towards relevant local authorities for the provision of public services, in particular access to health, to water, to ensure the collection of garbage, equal access to online education.

ROMACT Programme – Bulgaria & Romania

Another EU/CoE joint programme, **ROMACT** seeks to assist mayors and municipal authorities to work together with local Roma communities to develop policies and public services that are inclusive of all, including Roma. The aim to improve responsiveness and accountability of local authorities towards marginalised Roma communities has been put to test during the current pandemic. It was reported that the provision of expertise and coaching on planning, project development and access to funding continue as planned. Additionally, in Bulgaria and Romania, several ROMACT municipalities, in cooperation with multi-level stakeholders, have taken quick measures (informative and preventive; see table under section 5 for details). The small projects under ROMACT small grants scheme are ongoing and implementation starts gradually in each location. Around 15 000 people should be reached with supplies and 30 000 with information on how to stay safe.

5. COVID-19 RELEVANT MEASURES AND/OR ACTIONS AT MEMBER STATE LEVEL

The overview table below is based exclusively on information provided by NRCPs, ROMJUST3 consultants, civil society organisations, and equality bodies following a call for collection of practices initiated by JUST. The reported measures - where input was provided - are disaggregated by the initiating authority, that is, either the NRCP or other public authorities at national/regional/local level, civil society organisations, and equality bodies.

Table of reported measures:

COUNTRY	MEASURES/ACTION
Austria <i>Mainstream measures</i>	The NRCP uses <i>Romanes</i> via e-mail for COVID-19 information and is willing to proceed to reallocation of funding on a case-by-case basis, if needed.
Belgium <i>Mainstream & targeted measures</i>	<p>Federal authorities responsible for social integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of an inter-federal task force for vulnerable groups; - Extension of the federal system of 250 reception and accommodation places for the homeless in operation in Brussels until May 31; - Support for the creation of containment spaces (number to be determined) according to the instructions of Sciensano Covid-19, from April 1 to May 31, 2020 in 4 major Belgian cities; - A budget of 276,000 euros allocated to food aid organizations as well as to storage and distribution centers; - A budget of 3 million euros to be allocated to the Public Social Welfare Centers to support the beneficiaries of food and basic hygiene products; - PPS Social Integration launched a call for volunteers to support food aid for the most deprived.

Unia, the Belgian Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, wrote to Mayors in Wallonia regarding the situation of local Traveller communities.

Municipal authorities in Wallonia authorised Traveller groups to occupy municipal fields following recommendations from the Walloon government:

- The Travelling community installed on official or unofficial fields must be able to stay there by the local authorities;
- Take measures to avoid displacement of the Travelling community during the confinement period;
- Suspension of expulsion measures against the Travelling community;
- Organization of access to water and electricity for the Travelling community during the confinement period.

Municipal authorities in Flanders: The Flemish government has flagged the importance of taking into account and identifying the needs of the vulnerable groups within society, which also entails the promotion of the national telephone number to ask questions. They facilitate and promote volunteering initiatives to assist and help vulnerable population groups and strengthen social cohesion.

Bulgaria

*Mainstream &
targeted measures*

The NRCP follows the dynamics of the situation through receiving and summarizing the information from the official authorities, comparing this information with the information received from NGOs in the field, Roma activists, and health and education mediators.

Particular measures:

- created a common online group (Facebook) to communicate and coordinate their actions. Many NGOs are part of the group as well as the Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for the Roma inclusion;
- mobilised health and education mediators for fieldwork;
- ensured that all mediators receive individual protective equipment;
- helped with the printing of 1500 brochures provided to health mediators;
- looking for opportunities to get the Ministry of Education (MES) to provide Internet in the communities;
- contact with NGOs, health mediators or Roma activists from these neighbourhoods to investigate possible situations of violence or discrimination from the police/authorities;
- supported the continued implementation of the programme “Socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups. Integrated Measures to Improve Access to Education”, especially if no physical presence is required.

The Chairman of the **Foundation for Minority Health Issues** and Member of the Board of the National Network of Health Mediators called on municipalities to support, also financially the activities of mediators in Roma communities.

Some **municipalities** have ordered their utility companies to ensure uninterrupted water supply; some to provide meals for Easter.

Some **schools** provided masks and protective gear (gloves, disinfectant) to mediators.

Several ROMACT municipalities, in cooperation with multi-level stakeholders, have taken quick measures (informative and preventive). They provided marginalised neighbourhoods with basic food and hygiene products, and created 24-hour phone lines for people in need, dedicated to the crisis. Additionally, 17 ROMACT municipalities will

receive small grants to conduct awareness campaigns on health and confinement rules, distribute protection masks and gloves to social workers, provide family packages of hygiene or sanitary products and food items, and provide punctual information on channels of emergency support.

For example, in Sliven, the ROMACT Community Action Group assessed the situation in highly marginalized Nadezhda neighbourhood, following which a letter was sent to the municipality management and, as a result, 200 additional people were given access to the Public Canteen Programme.

JUSTROM teams, including Roma women leaders continued providing information about COVID-19 in Romani and Turkish language and legal information about the protection against domestic violence.

Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialog and Tolerance

- **Educational mediators'** role for children in disadvantaged families and neighbourhoods (bring paperwork, induct into electronic system use) + for adults (information spread, online campaigns, constant contact).

Integro Association established a coordination group of NGOs and relevant government representatives, with direct contact to the National Headquarters for combating the Coronavirus infection. Integro's health and educational mediators are visiting Roma neighbourhoods to provide information, monitor quarantine and refer people to specialists, distribute schooling materials for children, translate preventive brochures (15 000 printed) and support local authorities' action to provide food, water tanks, IT equipment and internet access for online learning programs.

Croatia

Mainstream & targeted measures

Most central-level measures are mainstreamed (with the exception of education) plus many **regional and local targeted measures**:

- extremely helpful role of **Roma teaching assistants and pilot Roma health mediators** (Međimurje), and particularly of Roma national minority councils, a special form of local & regional advisory bodies on minority affairs to local & regional authorities, in outreach and providing with contacts, advice and health protection materials (Međimurje, Bjelovar and other counties);
- **County Working Group on Roma**, in cooperation with the Roma minority council and a Roma NGO has distributed food coupons;
- the **Public Health Institute in cooperation with the Roma minority council of the City of Zagreb** has translated leaflets on "Covid 19", "Infection", "Self-isolation" to Romani and made it available through web pages, social networks and platforms.

The **Ministry of Education engaged in cooperation with other stakeholders**:

- support by UNICEF Croatia, providing additional 100 tablets and 500 SIM-cards to Roma children in need;
- UNICEF buying additional server to meet increased needs of the Ministry of Education;
- Early Years Network (REYN Croatia) research and analysis of situation in almost all schools with Roma pupils with recommendations, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

The **Croatian Ombudswoman** released a **public statement**, which, among other topics, focused on homeless people, Roma and residents of rural areas with less access to public services and basic needs, warning that these groups do not have equal opportunities to

	<p>follow the recommended preventive measures.</p> <p>The Croatian Employment Service noted that mainstream measures introduced to preserve jobs and salaries are also reaching Roma population.</p> <p>Further examples: regional implementation of REC-funded project “Pro Health for Roma” in Međimurje County + Red Cross Society’s psychological support under the “Roma support – mobile team for family support” – additional provision of food and hygiene supplies.</p>
Cyprus	No official information about the virus and safety measures in Roma settlements.
Czechia <i>Targeted measures</i>	<p>The NRCP sent a letter to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport on the situation of distance learning for Roma (in collaboration with the Governmental Council for Roma Minority Affairs). Additionally, they spread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informative materials about protective measures, and instructions for families in the area of education and debt issues to their network of NGOs, Roma coordinators and site workers; - information from the Agency for Social Inclusion to their network including the members of Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs; - informative materials about possibility of financing of NGOs from state program „Antivirus” (focus on companies support). <p>The Agency for Social Inclusion, department of the Managing Authority the Ministry of Regional Development provides targeted support to the socially excluded localities – information on how to support families in education and debt, protective measures, etc.</p> <p>Slovo 21 is coordinating the Roma Women’s group Manushe to sew facemasks (distributed for free in their localities and hospitals) - a promising sign of social solidarity and breaking prejudice.</p>
Estonia <i>Mainstream measures</i>	<p>All persons living/staying in Estonia, regardless of the existence of medical insurance receive equal medical treatment in case of diagnosed COVID-19 (25% of Roma are uninsured).</p> <p>Information is translated in Russian and English (newly arrived Roma do not speak Estonian).</p> <p>Pupils having no computer at home can either borrow one from school or get a computer donated by companies and private persons.</p>
Finland <i>Mainly mainstream & targeted measures</i>	<p>The NRCP contributed to the national instructions regarding the people in vulnerable position and in need of temporary housing.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health and Social Housing (MSAH) wrote a blog on International Roma Day that brought up the situation of the poorest Roma in Europe during the coronavirus pandemic. It opened the call for the remaining ESF funding rapidly. The funding targets people in vulnerable situations, including the Roma, to mitigate the social, physical and psychological implications of the pandemic.</p> <p>The government has issued special restrictions to protect all elderly people from the COVID-19 virus. In addition, the Roma NGOs have a program on contacting the elderly Roma on the regular basis (Helsinki metropolitan area).</p>

<p>France</p> <p><i>Mainstream & targeted measures</i></p>	<p>The NRCP structured itself as a crisis unit regarding homelessness issues, Travelers issues and slums and camps inhabited by EU mobile vulnerable citizens' issues. Ensures constant link with the Office of the Minister for Housing and everyday monitoring of the situation. It proposes and launches actions to solve problems that come out (for instance a system of vouchers for food aid or an agreement with the hotel industry to dedicate rooms for homeless, as explained below).</p> <p>Main initiatives undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EU mobile vulnerable citizens:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - daily briefing for the government, national monitoring and synthesis of the situation; - resolution of local problems after an NGOs alerts regarding access to water on a camp, looking for solutions with local authorities; - spreading and sharing best practices and answers for players on the ground (for instance, production of regularly updated Q&A document or of practical sheets (for instance, how to organize food aid in a camp)); - organization of sanitary information for slums inhabitants, for instance broadcast of several documents and videos, translated in most required languages; - organization of the dialogue with civil society, national and local authorities; - partnership with the UNICEF for intervention on slums with Action contre la Faim; - evolution of the digital platform Résorption Bidonvilles to enable the monitoring of the COVID-19 issues. • <i>Travellers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - written and broadcasted a guidelines sheet to help field agents know what to do. It has been approved by the crisis inter-ministerial chain of command, which then broadcasted it to prefectures and Health Regional Agencies. <p>Main measures for marginalised and vulnerable people without ethnic or racial considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sanitary measures and housing for the vulnerable people:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drinking water in slums and camps; - the continuity of civil service in the matters of hosting and helping the most precarious populations. At least one specialized hosting centre (housing centre for Covid-19 positive cases without severe symptoms) should be open per department. The goal of this measure is to allow badly housed people to isolate if they show mild symptoms of the virus; - winter break for evictions extended until 31 May 2020; - exceptional measures for sheltering: in total 175 000 people were hosted in the beginning of April. 10 000 places in hotels have been mobilized from the beginning of the crisis, in addition to the places normally created. 59 specialised sites have been opened for homelessness suffering from Covid-19 but who do not need hospitalization (about 2 300 places); - guideline sheets and translated videos broadcasted ; • <i>Food aid:</i> the government launched a system of vouchers to buy first-need items (alimentary and sanitary), ordered by local authorities with the help of associations. They apply to 65 000 people living in precarious conditions, including slums and camps; • <i>Psychological support</i> – the NRCP broadcasted guideline sheets; • <i>Distance education</i> – associations or police help bring homework to children (post office involved as well); the NRCP is the focal point of schooling initiatives
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	<p>addressed to children living in slums;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Intra-family violence</i> – food delivery helpers stay vigilant to spot possible abuses affecting children especially.
Germany <i>Mainstream measures</i>	General policy measures, not aimed only at national minorities, cover Sinti and Roma equally. General information on Corona and government measures is available in various different languages. Different integration measures, such as migration counseling and language acquisition, are for example adapted to online service and online tutorials.
Greece <i>Mainstream & targeted measures</i>	<p>The NRCP is currently working along with the managing authorities on designating proper measures based on JUST's recommendations. The General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty corresponded urgently to address the situation coordinating all the relevant stakeholders (Ministry of Interior Affairs, Local and regional authorities, National Organization of Public Health, Civil Protection, Ministry of Health, Civil Society of Roma Community).</p> <p>The government allocated 2, 25 million euros for 98 Roma communities to tackle the outbreak of Coronavirus. Emergency measures focus on: a) assignment of disinfection services in and around Roma settlements; b) information by any appropriate means of the Roma population on the effects of the COVID-19; c) supply of drinking bottled water to camps where required; and d) any other precautionary measure considered by each municipality for the protection of public health within and around the camps. The NRCP is monitoring the implementation of these measures.</p> <p>Mainstream measures relating to the workforce during the pandemic impact all Greek citizens, Roma included.</p> <p>Roma mediators working in the Roma support centres (run by the municipalities) have organised outreach activities and food deliveries. The Panhellenic Confederation of Greek Roma together with volunteers - among them JUSTROM team members too - has distributed food supplies to affected Roma families in the Attica Region.</p>
Hungary <i>Mainstream & targeted measures (in development)</i>	<p>The NRCP sent a policy proposal for the implementation of inclusion projects during the state of emergency. The Social Inclusion Directorate responds to the state of emergency in several programs. Institutional and complex development programs continue taking the necessary precautions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>the Program of Inclusion Settlements</i>: helps municipalities purchase IT tools, supports online teaching, delivers food, started production of masks and disinfectants in some settlements. In complex settlement programs, reallocation of resources allows to purchase protective gear; - <i>star Points, local community service</i>, offers telephone or online counselling and personal services, plus internet access outside the building; - other programs (<i>Increased Opportunities – Training and Employment, Inclusion Mentoring Network, Supporting Inclusion Cooperation, Active for Knowledge</i>) feature activities to provide protective gear to staff, collect and distribute sanitizers, keeping contact with disadvantaged groups; - <i>sure Start Children's' Homes</i> – no group services but offers IT tools, meals, laundry and bathing; - <i>tanodas/study balls</i> help students through contact and online education, and monitor their progress. Local primary schools help children transition to non-formal education;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as part of the FEAD program to support people in need – delivery of food packages to 20,000 people in need. <p>The National Roma Self-Government (ORÖ):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wrote to the Deputy State Secretary for Social Inclusion urging for specific measures and setting up a dedicated Roma Task Force. According to the reply, the government does not have a Roma-specific program in relation to COVID-19; • wrote to the Minister of Interior asking for specific measures (food checks, double pensions, double family allowance, involvement of Roma self-government representatives in mayors’ efforts to help the deprived, delivery of protective gear and food); • created a <i>Roma Task Force</i> which negotiated with the Minister for Agriculture on the employment in the agricultural sector (an agreement is under way) <p>CSOs mainly help disadvantaged communities keep afloat. Activists of the National Roma Civil Council (Országos Roma Civil Tanács) try to ensure a presence in around 300 local communes. 168 NGOs and several hundreds of civilians provided aid to over 1300 families while carefully respecting the precautionary measures. Butterfly Development is carrying out a distance-learning community gardening programme to support poor families become self-reliant through gardening.</p>
<p>Ireland</p> <p><i>Mainstream & targeted measures</i></p>	<p>The Department of Justice and Equality has provided additional funding to assist in the provision of necessary services during the Covid-19 crisis.</p> <p>The Department of Justice and Equality is ensuring that members of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy Committee and the Migrant Integration Strategy Committee are updated with official COVID-19 information.</p> <p>The Health Service Executive (HSE) is providing assistance at both national and local level to ensure information and assistance reaches vulnerable groups. The HSE have included the <i>Traveller and Roma communities in priority groups for fast tracking of COVID-19 tests</i> based on a population risk analysis and the disproportionate number of Travellers and Roma with underlying health conditions and overcrowded living conditions.</p> <p>Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, who runs a <i>local Traveller Primary Health Care project</i>, is carrying out national and regional coordination and advocacy work with the Irish Health Service Executive, developing guidance and resources for Traveller Health Units. They are very active on the social media developing Traveller- and Roma-dedicated videos on staying safe (some focus on social isolation, pregnant mothers, and old people).</p>
<p>Italy</p> <p><i>Mainstream measures</i></p>	<p>The municipalities of Rome and Naples have been enabled to allocate around EUR 15 million and EUR 8 million, respectively, for all the disadvantaged. However, procedurally there are certain lapses with the applications related to short deadlines and requirements of online submissions, a big challenge for the (computer) illiterate and/or those lacking IT equipment. JUSTROM teams are actively helping families in this regard.</p> <p>NGO Comunità di Sant’Egidio that work under the auspices of both municipalities have provided food packages, soup kitchens and other relevant services from the outset of this crisis.</p> <p>Local police in Rome has reportedly initiated the distribution of food-related bonuses outside settlements as of 17 April 2020. In Naples, several NGOs provide healthcare</p>

	<p>information and follow specific settlements. JUSTROM managed to send to Naples about 2,500 facemasks, distributed through a network of institutional and non-institutional stakeholders.</p> <p>Upre Roma is activating political contacts and lobbying to provide necessities for poor communities left without food (many of the 40 000 are Roma). They also started a petition to demand access to clean water for Roma camps and offer constant support over the phone.</p> <p>The Minister for Equal Opportunities and Family: anti-violence centres for women victims/survivors of violence are operational with a toll free number in work. Likewise, the Ministry of Interior has extended the YouPol application, intended for anonymous denunciations of bullying, stalking and domestic violence cases (broadcasting targeted TV ads).</p>
<p>Lithuania</p> <p><i>Mainstream measures</i></p>	<p>Schools and the Ministry of Education and science are obliged to provide with computers all the socially disadvantaged families to ensure distance learning for children.</p>
<p>Luxembourg</p> <p><i>Mainstream measures</i></p>	<p>General measures, two of which touch the most disadvantaged segments of population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Action Winter</i> (shelter service for the homeless) extended until April 2020; offers testing for COVID-19 and separate unit for positive cases (three so far); • <i>Spëndchen</i>, a platform of social groceries, takes online orders and distributes FEAD products (upon inscription at the social services/NGOs for irregular residents) – April 2020 only.
<p>Poland</p> <p><i>Mainstream measures</i></p>	<p>Mainly mainstream measures, with additional ones taken locally where Roma communities live in substandard living conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distribution of personal protection equipment and disinfection materials; • children without access to internet receive school materials from Roma school assistants; • municipalities demanded additional financial resources from the Ministry of Digitalisation to purchase laptops/tablets for needy children (Roma included); • subsidies to poorest Roma families to purchase personal protection items through local welfare agencies in addition to information and using tips. <p>NRCP keeps contact with Roma leaders to disseminate information within their communities.</p> <p>Illegal settlements (Poznan municipality) – the social welfare office is constantly monitoring the situation; children receive school materials and a special medical ambulance comes twice a week; missed school meals due to the crisis are reimbursed.</p>
<p>Romania</p> <p><i>Mainstream measures</i></p>	<p>The measures (medical, social, and economic) taken by the Ministry of European Funds in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic reached EUR 1,5 billion.</p> <p>Roma people benefit from the national prevention measures. However, certain communities with substantial Roma members have received special intervention measures from the authorities (water and electricity supply, financial resources and food supplies for the quarantined persons).</p> <p>The National Committee for Special Emergency Situations (NCSES; inter-ministerial committee) monitors the situation at national level. The National Agency for Roma is</p>

working on building up a system of real-time data collection, which will contribute to the identification of the problems of vulnerable communities (Roma included) and will be brought to the attention of the decision makers for the emergency intervention. On April 16, the National Agency for Roma has brought to the attention of the Prime Minister a proposal for an Emergency National Program, aiming to prioritize the vulnerable communities (Roma included).

Iasi City Hall introduced water to the Roma community in Ses Bahlui, following an official e-mail sent by a Roma woman. Young people supply the elderly in the communities with food and hygiene products, complying with the legal regulations on combating the spread of the virus COVID-19.

Romani language teachers provide access to education by phone, because they do not have technical equipment or lack internet/electricity connection (Iasi).

Health mediators (together with facilitators) from Iasi provide information and explain the hygiene measures, and supply with hygiene products and/or food in collaboration with NGOs or legal persons (Iasi & Bucharest).

The Directorate of Social Assistance in Bucharest provides basic food for Roma communities in Bucharest (Ferentari), and offers awareness campaigns to convince the people to stay at home. **Roma and non-Roma NGOs in Bucharest** offer masks and gloves to the Roma community in Ferentari and Giulesti (Bucharest).

Regarding food, **the Ministry of European Funds** signed a 1-billion RON [contract](#) for the distribution of food aid to disadvantaged people.

Roma community leaders made requests to the Romanian Red Cross and Roma/non-Roma NGOs which provided basic food to the Roma community.

Several **ROMACT municipalities**, in cooperation with multi-level stakeholders, have taken quick measures (informative and preventive). They provided marginalised neighbourhoods with basic food and hygiene products, and created 24-hour phone lines for people in need, dedicated to the crisis. Additionally, under ROMACT7, 15 ROMACT municipalities in Romania will receive small grants to conduct awareness campaigns on health and confinement rules, distribute protection masks and gloves to social workers, provide family packages of hygiene or sanitary products and food items, and provide punctual information on channels of emergency support.

Examples:

- In Resita, the Social Assistance Directorate, together with the Voluntary Service for Emergency Situations, conducted a preventative campaign against COVID-19 with leaflets and posters in the three Roma neighbourhoods. Local activists, the Roma Community Action Groups in ROMACT and municipal staff identified the most marginalised families and took some measures.
- In Carei, sanitary and personal hygiene products were provided by the County Health Department and distributed to disadvantaged Roma families. Another good practice worth mentioning is also the creation of a dedicated phone number for people in need which is reachable on a 24 h basis, like in the municipality of Bistrita.

The National Agency for the Roma has published a number of letters/documents for the regional administration with “good advice”.

Căși Sociale ACUM! wrote an open letter to the authorities, that details the squalid conditions of over 1,500 people, their immune systems weakened by years of living in a

	<p>crowded and toxic environment (see letter here – in RO). Nevo Parudimos convinced the municipality to distribute weekly food packages to poor families and have already distributed 160 washbasins, antibacterial soap and disinfectants to families in the Roma-populated marginalized neighbourhoods. They also collaborate with a textile factory to produce 1000 free facemasks.</p> <p>In a series of posts in the Aresel group created by Ciprian Necula, Roma and non-Roma public figures reach out to Roma and the majority. Other leaders are also calling for calm and for staying home/stopping to organize weddings or community gatherings through vlogs and written posts (Florin Motoi, Gelu Duminica) or calling for constructive cooperation between the Romanian authorities and Roma communities (Vasile Danciulescu). People also use social networks for initiatives to ask for donations of laptops / tablets / smart phones to support people to stay connected.</p> <p>Roma Education Fund launched a campaign online for recruiting volunteers to offer educational support/teaching.</p> <p>A number of local initiatives call for collaboration between county authorities and Roma NGOs.</p>
<p>Slovakia</p> <p><i>Mainstream & targeted measures</i></p>	<p>The Office of the Plenipotentiary in cooperation with Ministry of Interior is preparing a <i>framework of initiatives</i> financed through the reallocation of resources: ensuring protective gear, preventing the spread of the virus and in quarantined areas, ensuring access to drinking water, assistance during the distribution of material needs benefits, and publication of recommended guidelines.</p> <p>Tests were carried out in 93 communities (three cases re-tested after found positive). The most exposed settlements adopted measures to stop the spread of Corona virus (compulsory quarantine, hospitalisations of tested with worsened condition) in line with Slovak health authorities’ recommendations.</p> <p>The Government recommended the local governments to provide unlimited access to drinking water to all persons living in marginalised communities to prevent the spread of infection.</p> <p>The Slovak National Centre for Human Rights issued information with official helplines and contacts at institutions for groups that may be at higher risk due to the COVID-19 situation.</p> <p>MEP Peter Pollák joins Slovak Permanent Crisis Team to address COVID-19 in Roma-inhabited localities. The former Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities will be supporting Slovakia's Permanent Crisis Team in association with combating COVID-19.</p> <p>Local activists and midwives are disseminating vital information to prevent virus spread in 260 overcrowded segregated Roma settlements. See B Rorke article.</p> <p>Healthy Regions (ESIF funded, works with marginalised Roma communities on social determinants of health) and People in Need started a huge campaign “Koronameterel” (“We will kill Corona” in Romanes) involving health professionals, famous Roma people and Roma health mediators when Slovakia had only few cases. They aim to raise awareness on the illness and prevention measures through short videos (very popular) published on social media.</p>
<p>Slovenia</p> <p><i>Mainstream & targeted measures</i></p>	<p>Responsibility for dealing with the crisis falls on municipalities, competent ministries, and the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (ARSCPDR).</p> <p>The NRCP made <i>efforts to connect</i> representatives of the Roma community, municipalities</p>

and the ARSCPDR though written as well as through telephone communication, based on the proposed guidelines of the National Institute of Public Health, in order to provide tanks with clean drinking water in those Roma settlements where needs were identified. NRCP *wrote letters to ministers* urging to inform Roma communities of the safety measures. They also provide *financial resources* both to the Council of the Roma Community of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as (through the Council) specific funds to the implementation of activities of Roma NGOs.

COVID-19 measures applied equally at national level – *NRCP maintains contact with targeted municipalities* to take into account Roma communities’ needs when implementing measures – no issues with water supply to Roma families.

The **Institute of Education of the Republic of Slovenia** (IERS) issued professional instructions for principals of elementary schools on *the implementation of distance education in emergency situations*. Roma assistants provide additional support. The Centre for School and Extracurricular Activities (CSEA), which is the Ministry’s chosen contractor of the project “Together for Knowledge” (co-financed through ESF), aimed at helping Roma children and their parents to integrate into the education and training systems, was specifically engaged acquiring new knowledge even outside the school premises.

The **Ministry of Education** has also launched the “*DIGI School*” *project* in order to provide equal opportunities for distance education to all schoolchildren as soon as possible. It collected over 1,000 computer devices and 800 modems, and with more than 2,000 computers schools across the country came to the rescue.

The **Ministry for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities** acted with a recommendation and instructions to the providers of social care programs, social activists and providers of multi-purpose Roma centres (day care centres, counselling centres, information offices and programs advocacy programs, accommodation programs, etc.) working in the field with the Roma, on temporary suspension of all activities of direct work with users for the duration of the epidemic. The Ministry has also reported that *five multi-generational centres* carry out activities for Roma, and in two centres during the epidemic they also carry out *the project “Surplus food”* – food that otherwise remains in the shops is distributed among the aid needed. Roma in the northeast of the country were informed of the epidemic and of the prevention measures over Radio Romiic. The employees of the centres provide children with learning materials and help them with distance learning. All centres have regular telephone contacts with the Roma, providing information regarding the epidemic, assistance with tasks and counselling. If necessary, they receive homemade protective masks.

Municipalities are also active in the area of offering help and assistance where needed, especially concerning distributing information among people and concerning the distance education of children from vulnerable groups, among which are also Roma children.

Spain

Mainstream measures

NRCP: on 8 April 2020, the **Director General for Family Diversity and Social Services** had a meeting with the Secretary of State for Social Rights and the member NGOs of the **State Council for Roma People** to know of any problems entailed by the measures recommended, as follows:

- guarantee the attention of the social services of autonomic and local administrations and the collaboration of NGOs;
- care of basic needs that guarantee the information for the correct confinement and socio-sanitary care (check the state of health; prevent the contagion; cover the basic needs for food, medicines and basic hygiene; gas, water and electricity supply;

	<p>provision of preventive material and accommodation; and seek for respect of fundamental rights);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - facilitate benefits that guarantee a minimum income in the situation of cessation of economic activity, food aid or economic transfer, cover the basic needs of one to three-year-old babies and pregnant women, and monitor and support school-age children; - train and give individual protection to the service personnel, strengthen the services with sanitary staff and facilitate their mobility. <p>Other authorities:</p> <p>A member of the Spanish Council for the Elimination of Ethnic or Racial Discrimination has used its position as a Trusted Flagger/trusted informant on social media to report many instances of anti-Roma hate speech related to the COVID-19 crisis. It has also worked with verification platforms to counter the COVID-19 related fake news spread by WhatsApp groups about the Roma community.</p> <p>Fundación Secretariado Gitano:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposals to the Spanish Government: - urgency in the application of the Government-approved package of social measures at regional and local levels; - the establishment of priorities which focus on the most vulnerable people and neighbourhoods, and the swift communication of these priorities to regional and local governments: distribution aid and other resources must be directed as a priority towards the most vulnerable; - collaboration with NGOs; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working to detect, prevent and act whenever discrimination occurs in the current situation, providing support to the victims, contacting media and taking legal action when needed; • created a questionnaire to gather information on specific measures being taken/planned to be developed soon by members.
<p>Sweden <i>Mainstream measures</i></p>	<p>Financial support to NGOs regarding information (general policy, not aimed only at Roma). Social services take action at municipal level but no information on Roma-specific cases.</p>