

Making use of European Structural and Investment Funds for Roma Inclusion

A Guide for Local Authorities

EURoma Network



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EURoma (*European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds* www.euromanet.eu) is an initiative launched in 2007 that gathers 12 EU Member States with the aim of promoting the use of the Structural Funds for the social inclusion of the Roma population. Network partners are represented by Managing Authorities and public bodies responsible for Roma policies. The primary objectives of EURoma are the sharing of strategies, initiatives and approaches, mutual learning based on experience, knowledge generation and the dissemination and standardisation of such knowledge.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Why this guide?

The publication of this guide arrives at a critical moment: the planning phase for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) of the next programming period 2014-2020 is currently on-going, future Regulations have already been approved and Member States are either in the final steps of signing or have just signed their Partnership Agreements (PAs) and Operational Programmes (OPs). **Now it is time to implement!**

The local level plays a crucial role in the implementation of ESI Funds and hence, local administrations are vital in ensuring that the funds get to the local level, that is, to their beneficiaries, including the Roma population.

The ESI Funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), are the EU's main financial and policy instruments at the disposal of Member States to design and implement policies aimed at enhancing social cohesion and reducing inequalities within the EU. As a consequence, in many countries the ESI Funds are a major **opportunity for investing in Roma communities**.

In fact, they offer a pool for designing more effective long-term policies, fostering the cooperation between the national, regional and local administrations and involving different actors including Roma organisations. They are therefore a particularly relevant means of facilitating the inclusion of the Roma in terms of combating discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and improving their situation in the areas of employment, education, healthcare and housing conditions. Furthermore, they allow for undertaking long-term integrated operations in all these areas.


Roma issues have become more and more relevant at the European level and promoting the social inclusion of the Roma form part of an ESF key investment priority "integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma". Furthermore, both **ESF and ERDF Regulations explicitly refer to the Roma population as target beneficiaries**: 20% of the ESF has been earmarked for fighting social exclusion and poverty, which includes the Roma population as target beneficiaries; housing interventions are eligible as part of an integrated intervention under the ERDF – they may also be covered by the ESF on a complementary basis.

However, one of the most important reasons for publishing this guide is that there is a need for a more efficient impact of the ESI Funds with regards to Roma integration at the local level; in fact, many municipalities are interested in accessing the ESI Funds in order to **improve the situation of their Roma population at local level**.

1.2 The purpose of the guide

The central aim of the present guide is to provide **guidelines and practical suggestions on the use of the SF for Roma inclusion at the local level**. The guide should be seen in the context of the emerging European Union (EU) policy framework embodied in the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), the current

(2007-2013) and future (2014-2020) programming period for ESI Funds. It complements the EUroma guide *Tackling Roma needs in the 2014-2020 Structural Funds Programming Period. Guide to improve the planning process* by shifting the focus from the national and regional planning processes of Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes to **local planning for effective interventions with Roma by using ESI Funds**.

 EUroma Guide “Tackling Roma needs in the 2014-2020 Structural Funds Programming Period. Guide to improve the planning process”:
http://www.euromanet.eu/newsroom/archive/euroma_launches_publication_to_support_the_effective_inclusion_of_roma_in_the_next_programming_period.html

AIM OF THIS GUIDE

- Give practical information on how Structural Funds Regulations work
- Explain the priorities of the funds
- Explain how local authorities can access funds as a tool to promote social inclusion and improve living conditions of Roma in situations of exclusion
- Propose practical models
- Refer to existing experiences



Enhance the effectiveness of local interventions with Roma and make a real difference on the ground

1.3 Target audiences and how to use this guide

The primary target audience of this guide are **local administrations**, in particular staff in charge of Roma policies and staff in charge of policies affecting the Roma (i.e. education, employment, housing, social services etc.), as it provides practical guidelines and recommendations of how to access ESI Funds in order to implement Roma inclusion activities at local level.

In addition, this guide can be useful to **institutions at the national and regional level** that are responsible for the design of the ESI Funds, especially the Operational Programmes, as it provides concrete models and recommendations on how the funds can be implemented at local



level. Indeed, regional and national authorities have the responsibility of allowing, and ensuring, the appropriate involvement of local authorities in accessing EU funding.

Furthermore, **National Roma Contact Points** can also make use of this guide and disseminate the information to the local level in their respective countries; **Roma organisations** can use it as well for activating their dialogue with local authorities and contributing to the planning process.

1.4 A new positive political framework

Recent developments of the EU policy framework facilitate the promotion of Roma inclusion at the local level:

1 In 2010, the EU adopted the **Europe 2020 Strategy as its overarching framework for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the coming decade**. The strategy includes specific targets related to employment, education, poverty reduction and social inclusion, which directly concern special groups, such as the Roma. These targets are currently guiding the national, regional and local policy processes towards achieving the set objectives in 2020. More specifically, these targets form an important part of the European semester process and are therefore reflected annually in its key documents, such as the Annual Growth Survey (AGS), the National Reform Programmes (NRP) and the Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) that, in several cases, explicitly recommend strengthening efforts to improve the situation of the Roma population at the local level.

2 The EU Framework for **National Roma Integration Strategies** was adopted in 2011 and calls on Member States to draft NRIS. These national strategies should specify **concrete targets in the four main pillars: education, employment, healthcare and housing**. These objectives have to be consistent with the Europe 2020 Strategy and each Member States NRP.

3 Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implantation of NRIS have demonstrated that, in many cases, the **national strategies are lacking implementation at the local level**; in fact, more and more EU institutions have expressed their opinion that “NRIS should work at local level.” Therefore, the **access to ESI Funds at local level has to be strengthened significantly** in the next programming period 2014-2020. As a response to it, this guide provides practical information on how to achieve the respective national Roma integration targets at local level by applying ESI Funds.

1.5 The local level as key factor in the integration of Roma

As mentioned above, local institutions play a crucial role in the implementation of Roma integration strategies, as they are the ones dealing directly with Roma issues. An effective implementation of a national policy at local level implies specific and concrete measures and active participation of the local institutions and stakeholders.

Depending on the administrative structure in the Member States, the local level tends to have between relatively many and a lot of competencies, which means that many of the **challenges for Roma inclusion are the responsibility of local administrations**. In many countries, they are **key decision makers and providers of services**, such as housing, urban planning, education, health care, social and environmental services – all these are key determinants of the integration of Roma communities.

Local interventions promoting the integration of the Roma are in the benefit of all citizens and are therefore vital to:

- ➔ Break the inter-generational transmission of poverty and exclusion among Roma;
- ➔ Unleash the energies of Roma youth to generate new sources of growth and fiscal revenue;
- ➔ Foster constructive relationships in villages and neighbourhoods and contribute to social cohesion in a local, national and European context;
- ➔ Contribute to the EU's democratic viability by ensuring the involvement of Roma in the local political arena as a springboard for their involvement in national and EU politics;

1.6 Content of this Guide

What are the main messages and keys to success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ It gives concrete recommendations on successful approaches, good practices and lessons learnt from other experiences at local level.
How to design local Roma policies with the support of the ESI Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ It outlines the increasing relevancy of Roma inclusion in the EU Agenda and explains the existing framework and instruments that can be applied at local level. ➔ It highlights the problems and challenges of Roma inclusion policies at local level and explains how ESI Funds can be used to implement initiatives that promote Roma inclusion at local level. ➔ It gives an overview of the advantages and added value of Roma integration policies and provides examples and good practices at local level.
How to address key issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ It analyses existing barriers for municipalities to accessing Structural Funds and gives practical tips on how to overcome them.
How to take the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ It provides useful suggestions on how to get informed, form partnerships and participate in and influence the planning process of ESI Funds.
Exploring potential options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ It presents a concrete example of ways to accessing Structural Funds from the local level – the dos and don'ts as well as how they work in practice.

2. The Main Messages and Keys to Success

This chapter outlines the key ideas of this guide, summarising main messages and practical recommendations for implementing successful Roma Inclusion policies at local level.

2.1. Main Messages

Based on recommendations and practical suggestions presented in this guide, the main messages can be summarised as follows:

Message 1: Roma inclusion is a duty of local authorities. Above all, it is to the benefit of the entire community, not only to the Roma.

Facts to remember:

- At European level, there is a framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) which insists on action at the local level.
- Your country is due to implement a NRIS which identifies actions and potential territorial areas of focus.
- Promoting Roma inclusion not only saves money and avoids future problems and conflicts, but also brings economic and social returns for the entire community.

Practical suggestions:

- Make Roma inclusion a political priority on the local agenda
- Define a policy strategy for the inclusion of the Roma based on a (local) diagnosis of the situation
- Identify clear priorities and targets
- Involve and empower Roma at all stages of Roma integration initiatives
- Learn from experiences and connect with other villages/municipalities/cities

Message 2: Municipalities can benefit from the ESI Funds for Roma inclusion by developing projects particularly aimed at the integration of Roma or by developing projects that focus on areas with a high Roma concentration

Facts to remember:

- Right now, your country is planning its actions for the financing period until 2020.
- The ESI include objectives related to education, employment, and social inclusion.
- There is one ESF investing priority specifically focusing on Roma and other marginalised communities.
- With the support of the ESI, local authorities can undertake integrated operations aiming at the desegregation of excluded and isolated settlements where Roma are living

Practical suggestions:

- Find out how the ESI are being implemented in your country
- Identify the bodies responsible for the implementation of the ESI Operational Programmes
- Benefit from a broad range of organisations that can provide you information and advice on implementing ESI-funded local Roma integration activities

Message 3: There are different ways of addressing Roma needs through EU funds and different needs can be addressed through different funds.

Facts to remember:

- You can access funds for projects that specifically focus on Roma inclusion in the areas of education, employment, social inclusion and fighting discrimination.
- You can access funds for activities in territorial areas where Roma are living.
- You can develop community-led local initiatives involving the local actors.
- You can access funds for capacity building and technical assistance.

Practical suggestions:

- Explore and consider potential options and select the most adequate one for the circumstances of your village/municipality/city
- Learn how other cities deal with Roma inclusion
- Learn from lessons identified in other reports and good practices

2.2 Keys to success and practical recommendations

Based on recommendations and practical suggestions presented in this guide, the following factors have been identified as having a positive effect on the success of local Roma inclusion programmes:

- 1 Take sufficient time for planning and **plan for the medium and long-term** (e.g. projects for 3-4 years up to 7 years and more) and with the objective of achieving sustainable results by performing a proper diagnostic analysis of the situation and **setting measureable indicators** in the key areas of Roma inclusion (i.e. education, employment, health, housing).
- 2 Combine actions that address the multiple dimensions of problems faced by Roma. In doing so, an **integrated approach** should be applied (e.g. specific and adapted education, employment, health and housing programmes in good coordination with social services and other services; individual itineraries).
- 3 Build on existing experiences that guarantee continuity and sustainability of the actions in the medium to long term.
- 4 **Define mandates and responsibilities** (with room for shared responsibilities) for the programme. The leadership function has to be defined clearly.
- 5 **Access to employment and housing** are the central drivers in **urban areas** (including for Roma migrants): employment combined with social housing can act as a springboard complemented with training activities and individual education itineraries (including systematic support to Roma children to prevent early school leaving).
- 6 Actively **involve and empower Roma** from the planning phase onwards (incl. implementation, monitoring and evaluation), including through Roma mediators. Partnerships should be formed with civil society organisations, especially Roma organisations. Plans should involve capacity-building actions for all involved actors.
- 7 Consider the particular situation of **Roma women**, in particular multiple forms of discrimination and gender inequalities.
- 8 Improve knowhow and specialisation of local staff and **raise political and public awareness** about prejudice and discrimination.
- 9 Aim for the **mainstreaming of Roma issues** into general policies (avoiding segregated or parallel programmes). Mainstream services should be adapted to Roma needs.
- 10 Initiatives must achieve “**explicit but not exclusive targeting**”, meaning that they should be adapted and open to Roma, but they should also include other potential beneficiaries, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised.

- 11** Mobilise **all existing resources** (human, institutional, economic) for the projects.

3. Fostering local Roma policies with the support of European Structural and Investment Funds

Key Ideas

- 1** **Local and regional authorities play a fundamental role in governing the Roma inclusion processes** in all EU Member States, making them natural candidates for an involvement in ESI-funded operations.
- 2** The new ESI Funds foresee **active engagement of the local level** in the planning and implementation of the Funds as well as specific forms of actions adapted to local level needs:
 - Local authorities are the institutions closest to the citizens and many of the **most important decisions affecting Roma people are taken at the local level**, especially in relation to the day-to-day practical issues such as health, education, housing and welfare, what may be termed a 'proximity' role;
 - They are important providers, if not the **key providers, of services of crucial importance for the Roma community**: social services, housing, health services, education, utilities (e.g. water, waste disposal, street paving, street lighting);
 - They **bring together the broad range of stakeholders** necessary for the successful implementation of locally-based projects and services for Roma people;
 - They are normally the authority **responsible for physical and spatial planning** where settlement issues can be most difficult;
 - They are the **starting point for the involvement of Roma communities in local politics**, democratic society and active citizenship, essential for social inclusion;
 - They often **implement existing national plans and strategies for Roma integration** according to their level of competence and will do so to a greater extent within the NRIS. National and regional authorities should support the local level in the implementation of these plans.



3.1 Increasing relevancy of the Roma inclusion in the EU Agenda

3.1.1. The need to improve the Roma's social situation

Improving the social situation of the Roma is not only a matter of human rights and solidarity – **it is also an economic matter**. The Roma are the largest minority group in the EU, totalling between 10 and 12 million people. This group is spread throughout the European continent and with a high concentration in Central and Eastern Europe. The Roma population is characterised by a significant degree of heterogeneity between and within countries, between urban and rural areas, between and within cities/towns. Despite this diversity and with the exception of specific Roma groups and individual cases, a **very high proportion of Roma persons are affected by severe forms of poverty and social exclusion**, especially in some countries.

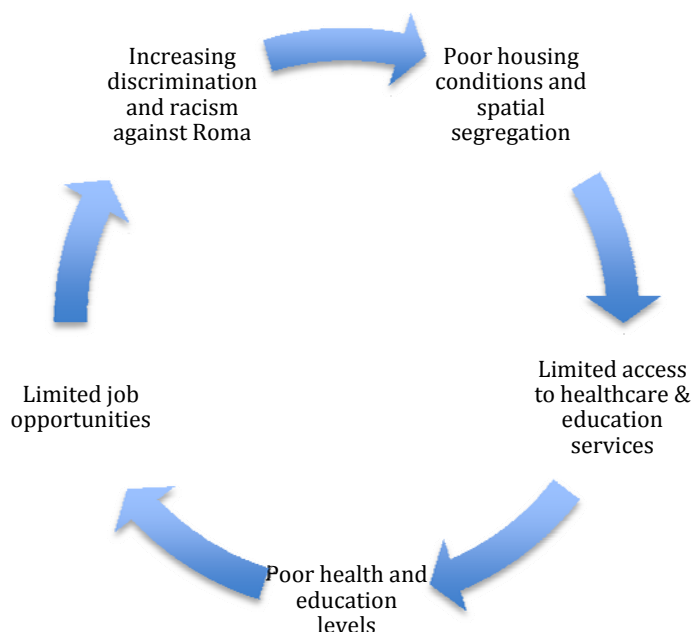
It is estimated that 90 per cent of Roma in those Member States with the largest Roma populations are living in or at risk of poverty, while almost 80 per cent of Roma experience severe material deprivation.

The Roma face deep social problems manifest in:

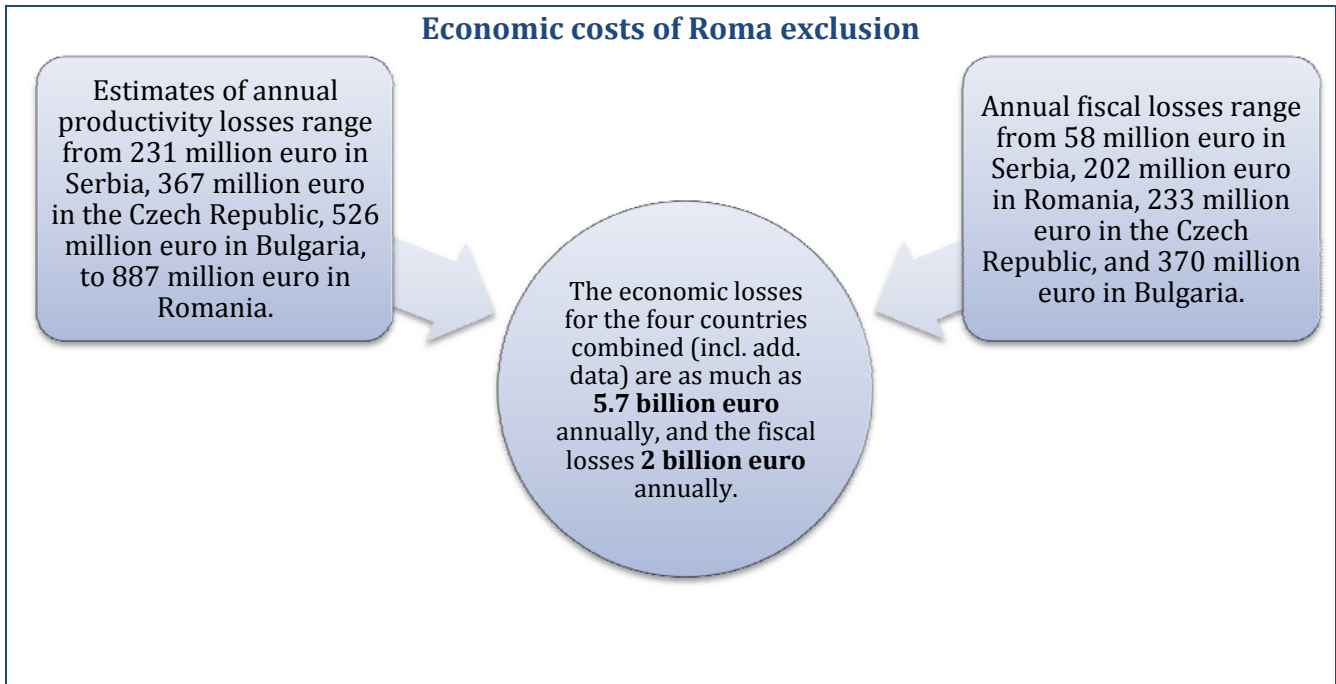
- low educational levels,
- high unemployment and precarious employment,
- inadequate housing, or lack of housing
- poor health,
- a negative social image and discrimination on the ground of ethnicity.

The **gap between Roma communities and the majority population has been growing significantly** in many countries in the past two decades. This **situation is further worsening** due to the current economic crisis and the growth of racist discourses and movements and intensifies difficulties encountered by municipalities in managing diversity and achieving social and territorial cohesion.

The Vicious Circle of Roma Exclusion



In addition to the above, it is also important to highlight the economic cost of Roma exclusion. As the vast majority of working-age Roma lack sufficient education their successful participation in the labour market is limited. As a result, European countries are losing hundreds of millions of Euros annually in productivity and in fiscal contributions to the government. Furthermore, in several countries Europe 2020 targets related to employment, education and social inclusion will not be reached if there is no substantial progress in the integration of Roma.



Source: World Bank "Economic Costs of Roma Exclusion":

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/EXTROMA/0..contentMDK:22526807~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:615987.00.html>

3.1.2. A positive framework of EU Roma policies

Without doubt, Roma issues have gained considerable significance in the EU agenda within recent years. The following developments have contributed to forming a positive framework of Roma policies in the EU:

Year	Policy and legal measures	Characteristics
2009	10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies 2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting 3. Inter-cultural approach 4. Aiming for the mainstream 5. Awareness of the gender dimension 6. Transfer of evidence-based policies 7. Use of European Union instruments 8. Involvement of regional and local authorities 9. Involvement of civil society 10. Active participation of the Roma
2010	The amendment of Article 7.2 of Regulation 1080/2006/EC on the European Regional Development Fund for Member States as regards the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly raises the availability of EU financial resources for Roma inclusion • Insists on the importance of involving municipalities as beneficiaries in the implementation of Structural Funds. • Establishes the integrated approach and desegregation as a condition to accessing ERDF funds for housing interventions.
	EC Communication “ <i>The social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe</i> ”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative shift in the EU’s approach towards the socio-economic integration, the improvement of social conditions and the access to social rights of Roma by contributing to raising the Roma issue on the political agenda and to adopting a shared approach to Roma inclusion among stakeholders
2011	EC Communication “ <i>An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020</i> ”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly advocates the deployment of SF for Roma inclusion in the National Roma Integration Strategies. • Insists on the crucial importance of local authorities in implementing programmes to achieve a difference on the ground.
	Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong indication of the commitment of the EU both to ensure SF reach Roma and to involve local authorities in the use of SF for Roma inclusion • Makes a strong call on Member States to fulfil their obligations towards the Roma EU citizenry.

3.2. Roma at the local level: main problems and challenges

Most of the challenges related to Roma inclusion have to be addressed at local level as this is where the Roma live. The problems faced by the Roma population at local level are often directly related to their living circumstances. The below categorisation does not cover the full variety nor does it generalise the situations experienced by Roma living in Europe; however, the different situations refer to the most frequent living conditions of the Roma population observable throughout the EU and therefore provide an insight into the problems and challenges faced at local level:

Most frequent situations of Roma in Europe at the local level¹

Situation 1: Roma communities living in integrated urban and suburban neighbourhoods

Characteristics	Dynamics & Trends	Common in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-density areas of the cities, usually in lower-middle or working-class neighbourhoods. • Roma living together with rest of population, often with other minorities/migrants. • Engaged in a process of socio-economic integration but with higher risk of exclusion than their neighbours. • Public services often quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High physical concentration of Roma tends to hamper integration, distribution facilities it. • Concentration can often be caused by “white flight”. • Concentration in housing has multiplier effect in public services, esp. schools (higher birth rates). • Public investment in infrastructure (e.g. quality of social housing) is crucial for positive change. • Participatory practices (involvement of Roma associations) accelerate inclusion. • Access to public services is crucial for integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most common in Spain. • Also frequently in central Europe (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia) as well as Poland, Romania and Bulgaria

Situation 2: Roma communities living in segregated urban and suburban neighbourhoods

Characteristics	Dynamics & Trends	Common in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deteriorated urban and suburban neighbourhoods, spatially isolated, slums, settlements or semi-rural housing areas • Ethnic concentration (exclusively Roma), high levels of poverty and deprivation • Sometimes living there for a long time, sometimes result of migration from countryside to cities, sometimes occupied after the fall of the Soviet bloc (consequence of rehousing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of measures aimed at improving physical or social accessibility, lack of infrastructure (deteriorating over time), low quality housing • Symbolic and physical boundaries • Stigmatisation: little attractiveness for private investment, unattractive to professionals of public services (esp. most skilled & most important for improvement of socio-economic conditions), self-stigmatisation (reduces expectation of improvements) • Public abandonment: not a priority for local politicians, common discourse “they don’t want to be integrated”, influences decreasing interest and compromise of Roma in taking care of both public and private goods • Ethnic concentration, “white flight”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slovak Republic • Czech Republic • Hungary • Romania • Bulgaria • Greece • Spain • Portugal • Italy • France • But examples in all EU countries

¹ Reproduced from “What works for Roma inclusion in the EU. Policies and model approaches.” EC DG Justice, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/whatworksfor_romainclusion_en.pdf

Situation 3: Roma communities living in segregated rural settlements

Characteristics	Dynamics & Trends	Common in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregated rural settlements, isolated from cities and villages or situated in the vicinity of villages, extreme deprivation • In some countries (Slovakia, Romania, Hungary) “segregated villages”: ghettoised, high risk of socio-economic exclusion. • Many established at the beginning of the 1950s, but also many other recently. • Lack of basic infrastructure & access to services. • Lack of access to productive resources (land, working capital) needed for subsistence agriculture: absence of food and heating means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High birth rates, early marriages etc.: expansion of slums, increasing imbalance between Roma & non-Roma. • Worsening lack of basic consumer goods and economic opportunities. • Extreme poverty and high levels of dependency on social welfare, debt trap, subject to various forms of exploitation. • Legal insecurity: no property rights (refusal to provide public services) • Increasing migration: to cities, to other countries (EU-15). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slovakia: 25% of Roma • Romania: 40.5%-65% • Hungary: 44%-60% • Bulgaria: 43-48% • Frontier areas: Hungary-Slovakia, Romania-Serbia, Romania-Hungary. • Greece: 25% • Portugal: Algarve

Situation 4: Roma migrants and Roma EU nationals moving within the EU-15 Member States

Characteristics	Dynamics & Trends	Common in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short- and medium-term migrants (former Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Slovak and Czech Republics) to mainly EU-15. • Push factors: poverty and the experience of racism, discrimination, violence • Pull factors: circular patterns, search for more stable employment/higher quality of public services, friends & family in destination countries, lower anti-Roma discrimination • Status: lack of full citizenship (ethnic minority), refugees or asylum-seekers, no residence permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing prominence on the political agenda: worsened public perceptions of Roma, diplomatic tensions on Roma issue, fuelled racist political discourses • Generalised confusion and inadequacy of ordinary mechanisms • Rising hostility and public order approach • Increasing the vicious circle of exclusion and discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 1990s: migration to Italy, France, the UK, Germany Belgium • Most recently all EU-15, incl. peripheral countries: Ireland, Spain, Portugal; to a lesser extent Nordic countries

Situation 5: Roma Travellers and (Semi-) Mobile Lifestyles

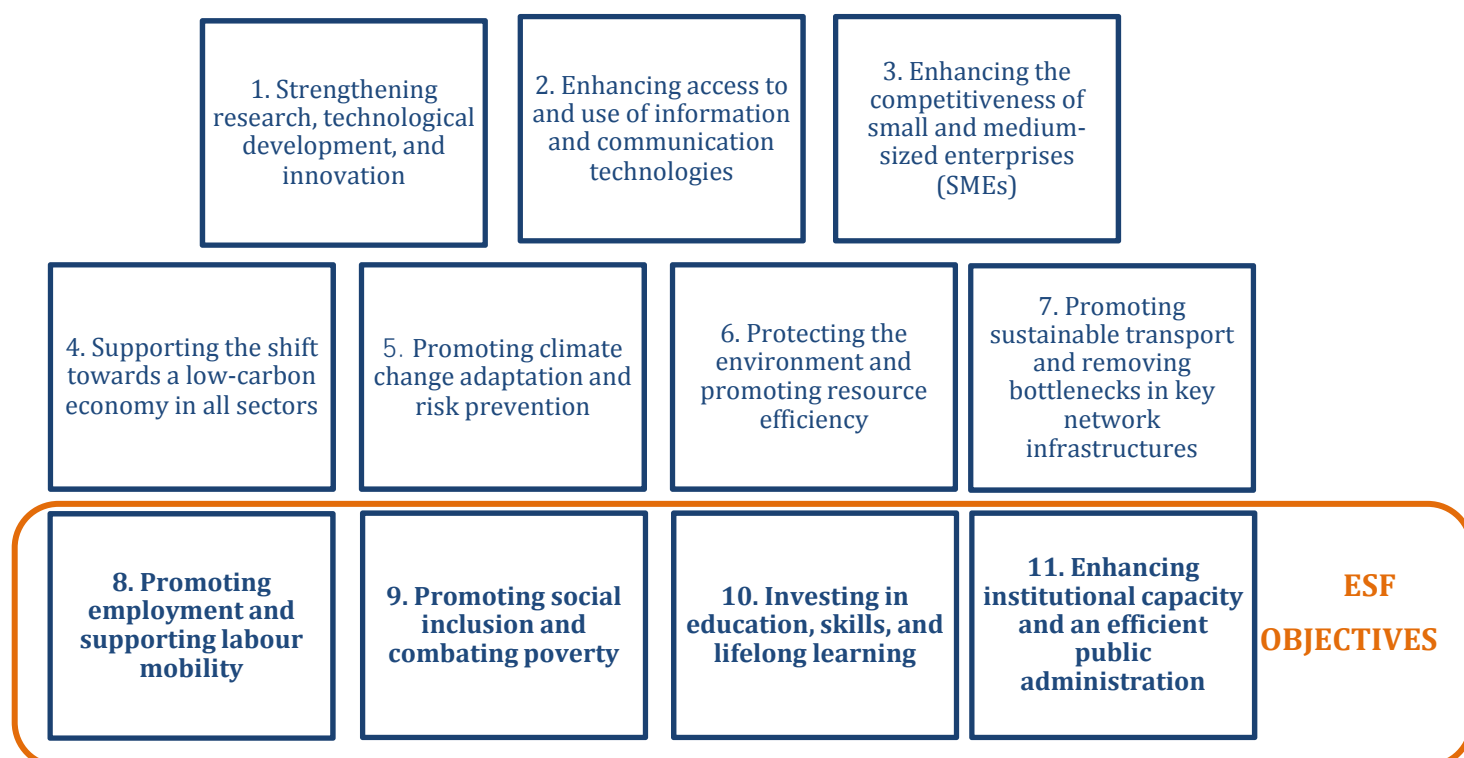
Characteristics	Dynamics & Trends	Common in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to live in separate places (sites, camps, etc.), located at a distance from majority populations, usually built by local authorities, sometimes rent a piece of land where extended families install their mobile homes • Mobility is scarce in winter time and increases in the summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • En masse not very common anymore (mid-twentieth century) • Historical difficulties by states to accept this lifestyles, misunderstandings of reasons for by population. • Mobile ways of life pose several administrative problems for public institutions (access to services): increasing confrontation with authorities, discrimination. • Caravan recognised as form of housing (in some countries), limited space made available, local authorities often ignore them to reduce pressure from citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent in the past • Continues in western and northern Europe: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, the UK and Ireland, to some extent in Nordic countries & the Netherlands

3.3 Connecting European Structural and Investment Funds with the Roma

3.3.1. How European Structural and Investment Funds work

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) are a crucial financial tool in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies.

The 11 thematic objectives of ESI Funds



Several Funds work complementarily

The Regulations of two particular ESI Funds specifically address the integration of the Roma population:

- The **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** aims to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU by correcting imbalances between regions. The ERDF supports regional and local development to contribute to all thematic objectives. It is frequently used for 'hard' projects and infrastructure, like roads, bridges, railways etc. and, in the coming period, for supporting innovation as well as for fostering low carbon economy. However, it can and should be used for social infrastructure (social and community facilities, neighbourhood services, community development and housing in the case of marginalised communities).
- The **European Social Fund (ESF)** is the EU's main financial instrument for investing in people. It increases the employment opportunities of European citizens, promotes better education, and improves the situation of the most vulnerable people at risk of

poverty. It focuses on the last 4 thematic objectives (8-11). There is a specific investment priority focus on Roma.

Furthermore, the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** aims to support rural areas by improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, improving the environment and the countryside and improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy. As described in the above chapter, many Roma, especially in some countries, live in rural areas and have a poor quality of life. This fund could therefore tackle disadvantaged micro-regions where many Roma rural settlements are located.

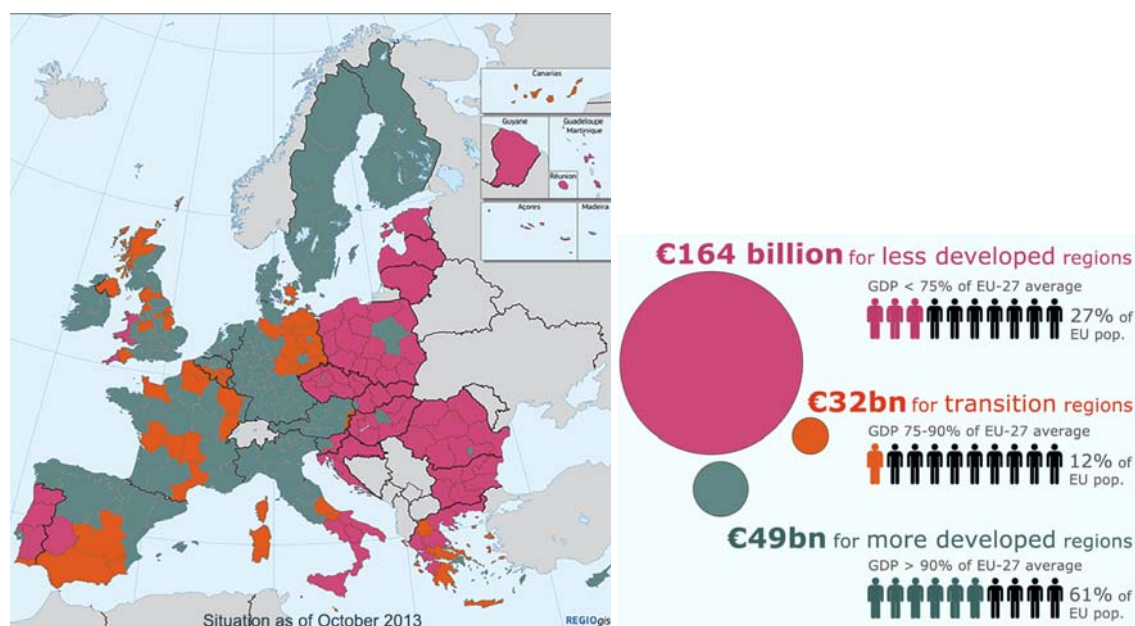
Delivery of ESI Funds

ESI Funds are allocated to the Member States following bilateral negotiations with the EC at the beginning of each seven-year programming period, or 'Multiannual Financial Framework – the current one being 2014-2020. Despite being EU money, ESI Funds are under the responsibility of Member States and their regional authorities, which have to manage these budgets under their respective Partnership Agreements, which include a series of Operational Programmes.

It is the responsibility of the Member State to deliver the ESI Funds through so-called Managing Authorities, which are defined as: *“A national, regional or local public authority or a public or private body designated by the Member State to manage the OP”*. The same Managing Authority may manage more than one OP.

Funding levels and geographical coverage

Under the Cohesion Policy a total of 325 billion euro will be available (through the ESI Funds) for the coming programming period 2014-2020. Levels of investment from ESIs depend on the level of development of different regions:



Source: European Commission

Co-funding

The level of co-funding varies and depends on the regions: for instance, the more developed regions usually have to co-fund 50%, transitional regions usually up to 40% and the less developed regions 20%.

3.3.2. European Structural and Investment Funds at the local level

The new programming period 2014-2020 of ESI Funds strengthens the local dimension in a variety of areas:

Distribution of ESI Funds by territories:

- The above-described geographical distribution of ESI funding levels represents the territorial prioritisation of investment objectives in the different regions. It also clearly highlights the importance of the local level in guaranteeing that the funds achieve their objectives.

Strengthening the local level in a multi-level governance context:

- In the planning process of the Structural Funds by the Member States the local level plays a key role for the Partnership Agreements and the Operational Programmes.

The local perspective of Operational Programmes:

- Operational Programmes need to include concrete investment objectives that should be achieved in specific areas which consequently implies a close cooperation between the local level, both in the planning and implementation process.

Impulse to an integrated territorial development approach:

- The new ESI regulations state that the content of the Partnership Agreement should include measures to ensure an integrated approach to the use of funds for territorial development with a special focus on geographical areas most affected by poverty or with target groups at highest risk of discrimination or exclusion.

Reinforcement of local participative development:

- The Local level gains particular strength in the case of the EAFRD and its focus on the development of rural areas that requires active engagement of the local level.

New implementation mechanism for local integrated approach:

- In order to promote an integrated approach from a territorial perspective, the new regulations provide two mechanisms to facilitate local ownership: community-led initiatives and integrated territorial investments; both mechanisms involve pursuing local stakeholders and communities in the implementation of programs.

Ex ante conditionalities with a territorial perspective:

- Ex ante conditionalities are requirements to be met in order to access funds and develop programs. Each of the conditionalities specifies compliance criteria – many of them refer to the local level.

3.3.3. How are the European Structural and Investment Funds related to the Roma?

The above-described ESI Funds objective 9 specifically aims to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, which is reflected in the 6 ESF investment priorities addressing this objective 9. All these investment priorities can relate to inclusion for the Roma population; the second one explicitly focuses on Roma.

ESI Funds Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

ESF Investment priorities (ESI Funds Objective 9)

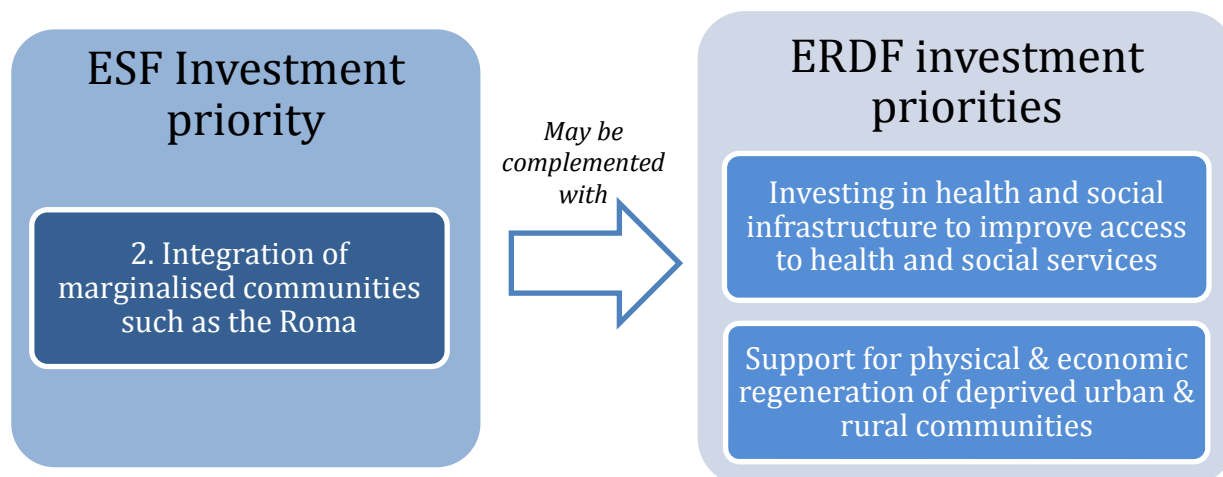
1. Active inclusion
2. Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma
3. Combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation
4. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable & high-quality services, including health care & social services of general interest.
5. Promoting the social economy & social enterprises
6. Community-led local development strategies

As described above, the ESF includes an investment priority which specifically refers to Roma: **“Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma”**. The ESF is therefore the ideal ESI Fund to finance actions related to Roma inclusion.

Furthermore, this ESF investment priority may be complemented by the following **ERDF investment priorities**:

- ➔ Investing in health and social infrastructure to improve access to health and social services
- ➔ Support for physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities

Specific ESF and ERDF investment priorities targeting Roma



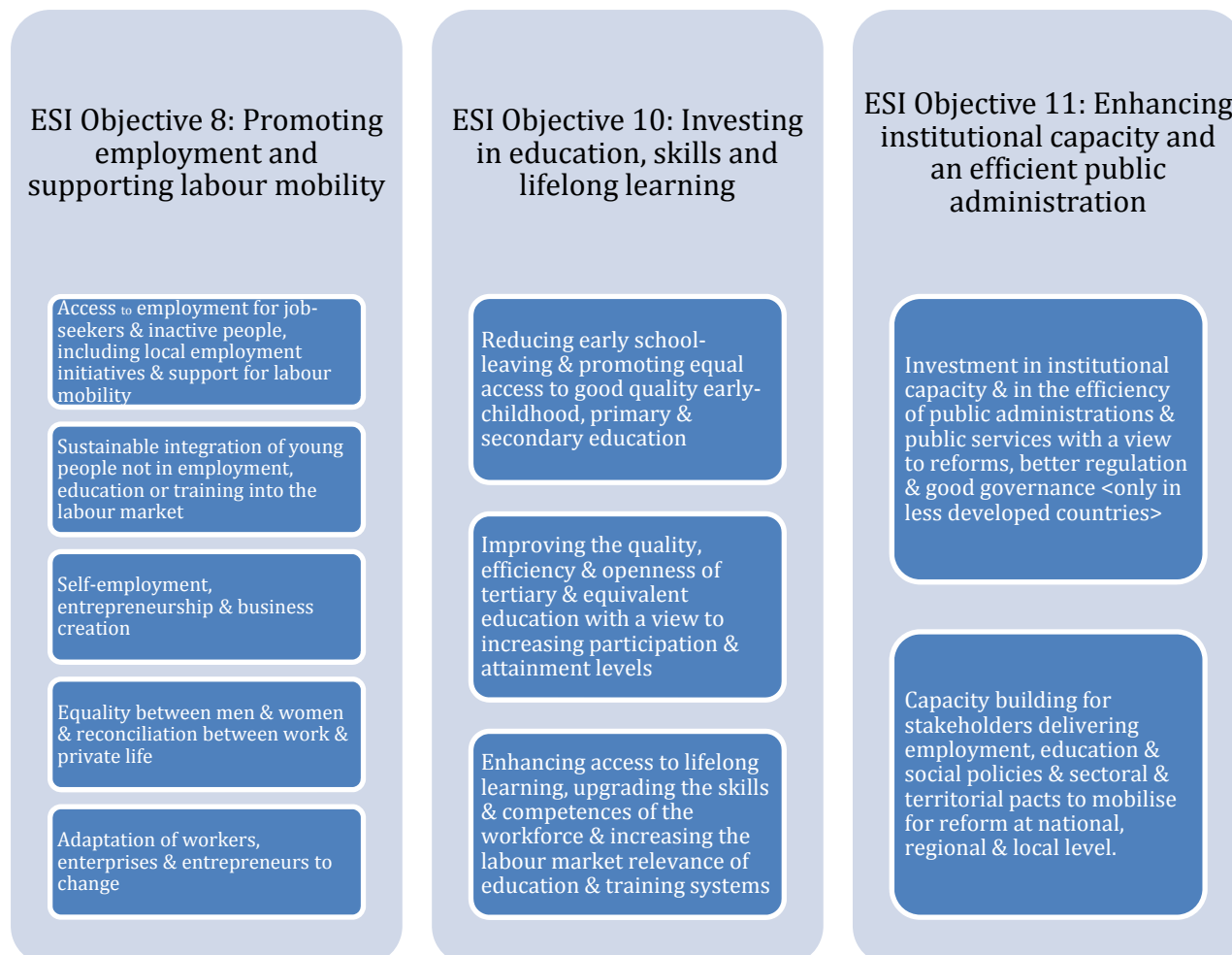
Potential actions under this ESF investment priority (which may be complemented by ERDF):

- Integrated pathways to the labour market, including individualised support, counselling, guidance and access to general and vocational education and training.
- Access to services, in particular social care, social services and healthcare
- Elimination of segregation in education, promoting early-childhood education, fighting early school-leaving and ensuring successful transitions from school to employment.
- Measures to overcome prejudices and discrimination.
- Support for the physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities including the Roma, including the promotion of integrated plans where social housing is accompanied notably by interventions in education, health including sport facilities for local residents and employment (ERDF).



However, it is important to remember that, even though there is one specific ESF investment priority (under the ESI Funds thematic objective 9) focusing on the Roma community, there are many **possibilities of including Roma as beneficiaries of any of the other ESI Funds thematic objectives, especially the ESF objectives and their respective investment priorities** as the following chart demonstrates:

The most relevant ESF Investment Priorities under ESI Funds Thematic Objectives 8, 10 and 11



3.3.4. What are the added values of applying European Structural and Investment Funds for Roma inclusion?

The application of ESI Funds for Roma offers a powerful financial tool for the effective implementation of NRIS:

Long-term sustainable projects	Roma inclusion project must have a long-term and sustainable vision. ESI-funded Roma inclusion projects can therefore be developed with duration of up to 7 years.
Extensive financial support	The ESI Funds co-financing requirement stimulates the active involvement of all stakeholders.
Opportunity for combining action levels from a holistic perspective	<p>Actions implemented concurrently at the national (policies) and local levels (grassroots) have a significant impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top down – bottom up: ESI Funds allow for localised implementation that feed back into EU's holistic

	<p>approach to economic development and social cohesion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local – national: integration of various levels of policy design and implementation. • Grassroots – policy strategies: it is possible to work not only with the Roma community but also with society at large so that project and actions are at the benefit of the entire community.
Opportunity for strong partnerships	A strong partnership between public and private organisations (public authorities, businesses, the media and the non-profit sector) is possible and desirable for policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
Opportunity to target the most excluded groups while mainstreaming Roma issues	By placing them on the policy agenda and by achieving the implementation of targeted yet non-segregated services. Action adapted to target groups guarantees and increases impact, which emphasises the close linkages between education, employment and inclusion.
Opportunity for capacity building:	By fostering administrative capacity, training of Roma professionals and managers and creating local social capital.
New models of policy design and implementation	Partnership approaches with a high engagement of private organisations, including non-profit organisations, in the planning and implementation of the Funds.

3.4. Which types of Operational Programmes promote Roma inclusion?

There are different approaches that Member States could use to develop OPs that promote the inclusion of Roma. Depending on the type and objectives of OPs developed for your country, the following 3 approaches are the ones most commonly used to address Roma inclusion in OPs:

- ➔ **Explicit targeting** means focusing on Roma and implementing measures specifically tailored to their needs, or focusing explicitly on excluded groups including Roma. **Explicit but not exclusive Roma targeting**, while including other groups in similar socio-economic circumstances, has proven to be one of the best ways of tackling Roma socio-economic integration. Several countries are including specific measures targeting Roma in their OPs. Explicit targeting implies clear objectives, specific themes, adequate forms of implementation as well as specific forms of reporting.
- ➔ **Mainstreaming** means taking into account the needs of the Roma in different OPs and is one option that Member States may follow in order to develop policies inclusive of Roma people. In fact, promoting the inclusion of the Roma in mainstream society should be the ultimate aim of all policies.

- ➔ **Micro-territorial actions** focus on specific needs of the geographical areas at the greatest risk of poverty, as well as the of groups at risk of exclusion and discrimination, as is the case of the Roma. This integrated approach usually combines the use of several funds with their respective objectives, e.g. ERDF should provide investments in health, education and social infrastructures, as well as to recover physical and economic excluded areas; ESF should concentrate on education, employment, social inclusion, the fight against poverty and the improvement of administrative capacity.

Based on the above-described common approaches to address Roma inclusion in OPs, the following table gives an overview of potential situations and potential OPs you may find in your country. It also explains that in some countries you may find different OPs which could allow local authorities to access ESI Funds in order to finance actions that promote Roma inclusion.

Potential situations	Most likely approach		
	Targeting	Main-streaming	Micro-territorial
1. A full National OP focused on Roma, e.g. a government decides to have a specific OP for Roma integration.	ESF OP or ESF OP with the support of ERDF and/or EARDF		May focus on urban or rural areas with higher Roma concentration.
2. OPs usually focused on social inclusion, including specific objectives and actions with Roma, e.g. an OP to promote social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups	ESF OP or ESF OP with the support of ERDF and/or EARDF		May focus on urban or rural areas including areas with higher Roma concentration
3. Inclusive Roma approach with one of several ESF thematic objectives ESF (education, employment, social inclusion, administrative capacity), e.g. OP on human resource development		One or several ESF OPs or one or several ESF OPs with the support of ERDF and/or EARDF	May focus on urban or rural areas including areas with higher Roma concentration
4. Inclusive Roma approach in the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative and the Youth Guarantee, e.g. OP for youth employment		One ESF OPs or one ESF OPs with the support of ERDF and/or EARDF	May focus on urban or rural areas including areas with higher Roma concentration
5. Inclusive Roma approach with thematic objectives corresponding to ERDF and EARDF, e.g. OP on rural development		One or several ERDF and/or EARDF programs.	May focus on urban or rural areas including areas with higher Roma concentration

4. What are the existing barriers and how can they be overcome?

4.1 Existing barriers for municipalities accessing EU Funds for Roma inclusion

In many countries, ESI Funds are currently underused, especially at local and regional administration level. Common barriers to accessing ESI Funds at local level are:

Common barriers

- Political reluctance, in part due to social resistance
- Low motivation due to previous failures
- Lack of information on ESI funding opportunities
- Lack of active involvement of the local level in the planning process of ESI Funds
- Limited technical capacity in local administrations, sometimes due to their small size
- Requirement of co-financing, coupled with lack of resources and cash-flow problems
- Complex administrative rules managing ESI Funds
- Lack of clear guidelines for intervention
- Difficulties in establishing adequate partnerships

4.2 Five steps to overcome these barriers

The following steps are essential for municipalities to overcome the barriers of accessing EU funds for Roma inclusion. The below table gives a brief overview of the different steps which will be explained in detail in this chapter.

Step 1: Make Roma integration a policy priority	Addresses lack of political motivation and reluctance and explains why it is important for local politicians to address Roma issues.
Step 2: Get informed	Addresses the lack of information on ESI funding opportunities (and to a certain extent complex administrative rules managing ESI Funds) and explains where to find the necessary information.
Step 3: Explore all co-	Addresses the barrier of co-funding requirements and lack

financing possibilities	of resources and gives tips on where to look for possible co-funding.
Step 4: Get connected & learn from others	Addresses the lack of information on ESI funding opportunities and limited technical capacity. It gives examples of different platforms, forums, programmes etc. that may be helpful for learning, sharing experiences and getting support.
Step 5: Establish partnerships and foster cooperation	Addresses difficulties in establishing adequate partnerships and proposes ways to foster cooperation with the different stakeholders.

Step 1

➔ Make Roma integration a policy priority

As explained above, a lack of political motivation is one of the main barriers to promoting Roma integration. The first step to solving the problem of Roma exclusion is political will and the commitment of political institutions at all levels: **Roma inclusion has to form an integral part of the political agenda** – at national, regional and local level.

Why should elected local representatives tackle Roma problems?

1. **Because fighting Roma exclusion is the right thing to do:** promoting Roma inclusion policies not only complies with international standards but also fosters the protection of human rights.
2. **Because the social image and perception of the city/municipality/village will improve** if all persons of the community are fully integrated (e.g. cities that do not have settlement problems are perceived as safer and more stable by the population; populations in cities with high levels of segregation usually experience extreme stigmatisation).
3. **Because maintaining segregation and exclusion is more expensive:** there is a large body of evidence that cities that invest in the promotion of inclusion of marginalised communities not only save expenditures in the long-run but also receive economic returns by means of increased social and human capital (e.g. not solving the problem of segregated Roma settlements implies large expenditures solving social problems affecting the entire community while the problems remain unsolved; transition settlements usually imply more expenditure and delaying the solution of the problems)
4. **Because the reduction of segregation improves social relations of the entire community:** while segregation can only lead to discrimination and conflict, integration is the key to a harmonious society.



5. **Because it is to the benefit of all citizens:** everyone wants to live in a safe, stable and harmonious society that provides opportunities for everyone. By improving the Roma situation, all neighbours will benefit. Addressing Roma needs should be done in a way that everyone benefits.
6. **Because it is a way to attract ESI funding:** well-designed Roma inclusion projects are most likely to receive ESI funding. The Structural and Investments Funds are one of the best opportunities to invest in Roma projects at the local level.

Step 2

➔ Get informed

The two most important questions before getting started are:

- ➔ **Who decides about the implementation of the ESI-funded programmes in my country?**

Decisions about the allocation of ESI Funds in each country are taken by national and regional authorities:

- ➔ At the policy level: By the central government (commonly the Ministry of Presidency and the Ministry of Finance together with other ministries and/or departments e.g. the Ministry of Employment, Education and Social Affairs for the ESF, the Ministry of Urban and Local Planning/Development for the ERDF, the Ministry of Agriculture for the EAFRD).
- ➔ At the technical and administrative level by ESF, ERDF and EAFRD Managing Authorities, usually located in government ministries. The Managing Authorities are the intermediary bodies responsible for managing these funds and their respective OPs.
- ➔ It is important to take into account that some countries have a high degree of administrative decentralisation into Regions; therefore, the Regional Administrations play an important role in the decision making process. For instance, almost all regions have Regional OPs.

🔗 ESF Managing Authority in your country: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=524&langId=en>

🔗 ERDF Managing Authority in your country:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm

- ➔ **To what extent do local authorities have to be involved in the implementation of ESI-funded programmes?**



The recently approved **European Code of Conduct on partnership** in the framework of ESI Funds² obliges Member States to involve relevant partners in the preparation and ensure their participation in the implementation of OPs. The regulation gives **particular importance to competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities**, including regional authorities, national representatives of local authorities and local authorities representing the largest cities and urban areas. The Code of Conduct states that Member States shall involve relevant partners in the preparation of programmes, including for the following tasks:

- the analysis and identification of needs;
- the definition or selection of priorities and related specific objectives;
- the allocation of funding;
- the definition of programmes' specific indicators;
- the composition of the monitoring committee

What do I need to know?

The above-mentioned **Managing Authorities** (in particular the ESF Managing Authority in your country) should provide you with information on the following important questions you need know when planning ESI-funded Roma integration activities at local level:

1. Are there OPs in my country focusing on local development and urban development?
In some cases, there are specific OPs focused on urban and local development, in others there are parts of an OP focusing on local and urban development.
2. If this is the case, who are the intermediary bodies at regional or local level responsible for the management of these OPs?
Usually, intermediary bodies may be regional authorities, departments of the central Government and, in some cases, specialised agencies.
3. Can cities/municipalities/villages be final recipients of these funds? If so, under which OPs?
Usually cities may be final recipients of the funds through intermediary bodies; these funds are to be used for the development of specific investment priorities and actions. Under certain conditions, local authorities may also act as intermediary bodies, directly managing ESI Funds (see 4.2.4. Global Grants)
4. If this is the case, how will the funds be allocated to the local level?
Usually funds can be allocated through different forms, such as calls for tender, direct decisions based on statistics, joint agreements etc.
5. What are the investment priorities of these OPs? Is any ESF OP in my country focusing on the ESF investment priority “integrating marginalised communities such as the Roma”?
Remember that actions related to the inclusion of Roma can be undertaken actions under the ESF investment priority “integrating marginalised communities such as the Roma” but

² <http://eucis-III.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e0ba59dcb487a8983ceda27d9&id=6bd3fdf87a&e=c9da669d35>

also through other ESF, ERDF and EARDF investment priorities.

6. If so, who is implementing this investment priority and how?

As you know, one investment priority can be implemented in one or several OPs and can be supported by one or several funds.

8. Who else is implementing ESI co-funded integration programmes in my country? (e.g. other municipalities or regions;) What can I learn from their experience?

In your country, you will most likely find cities and villages that benefited from the Structural Funds in the period 2007-2013.

9. To what extent could Technical Assistance support local authorities in accessing Structural and Investment Funds?



Funds for Technical Assistance are usually allocated to the administrative management of ESI Funds; however, it can also be also allocated to making diagnostics, providing capacity building for staff, assistance in the preparation of projects etc.

10. How will the money available for fostering administrative capacity be invested in my country?

Remember that under the ESF, there is one investment priority (Enhancing administrative capacity and supporting public administration) which can provide support to your local administration and to the stakeholders operating at the local level. This support can be used for improving capacities in work with Roma.

Additionally, the following contacts at EC level can provide you with the further information on the different OPs being implemented in your country:

EC Desk Officers responsible for your country at:

-  The Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO):
http://ec.europa.eu/staffdir/plsql/gsys_www.branch?pLang=EN&pId=1819&pDisplayAll=1
-  The Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL)
http://ec.europa.eu/staffdir/plsql/gsys_www.branch?pLang=EN&pId=473&pDisplayAll=1

Step 3

➔ Explore all co-financing possibilities



Finding the necessary co-funding remains one of the biggest challenges for accessing ESI Funds – especially for local administrations. However, the often strict co-funding requirements should not keep local administrations from exploring all their co-financing possibilities:

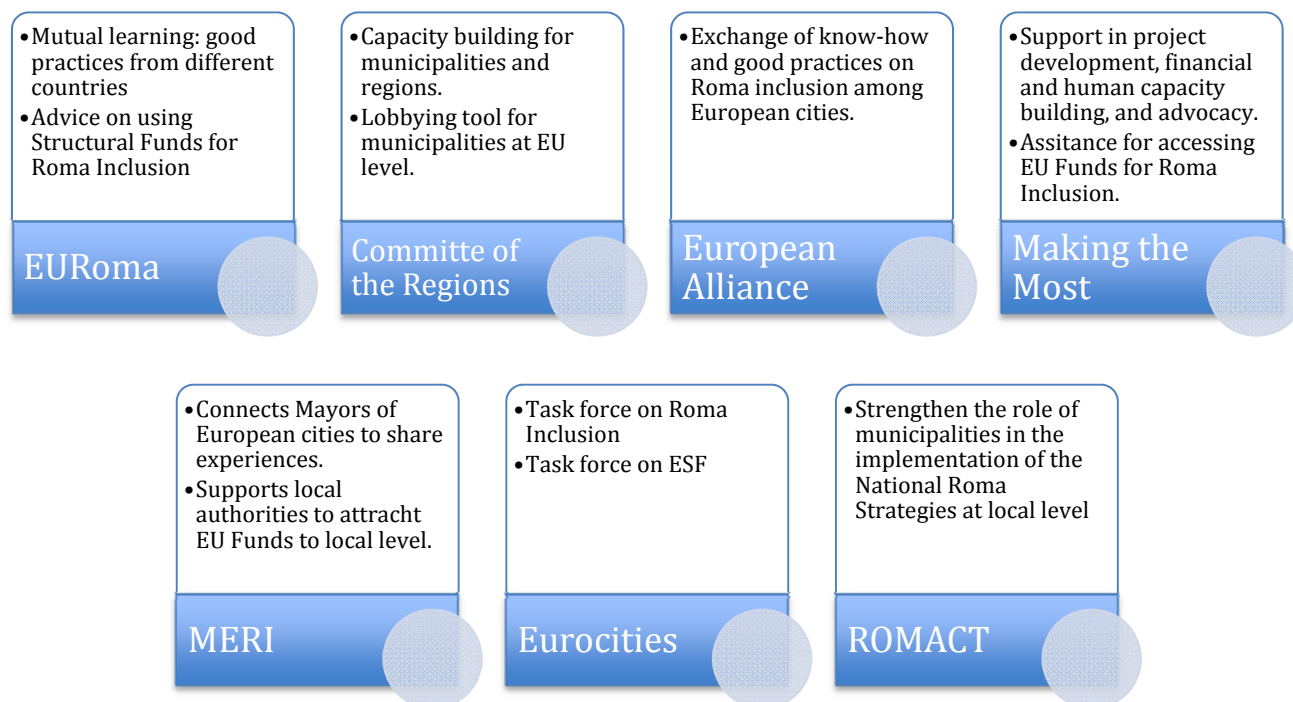
- ➔ In case of integrated actions (e.g. rehousing activities), always consider the possibility of **combining ERDF and ESF funding** for both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ investments.
- ➔ Municipalities should always explore the possibility of applying for **co-funding from their central and regional government sources**. These may include national funds that could finance both targeted projects (e.g. funds available for the NRIS or the National Roma Plans) as well as mainstream services (e.g. funds available for the fields of education, employment, housing, etc.).
- ➔ ESI funding provides the opportunity of an enormous financial “boost” for local administrations. It is therefore highly recommendable for each municipality to **allocate some of its own resources to co-fund interventions** aimed at fostering social inclusion and reducing inequalities. Depending on the region (less developed, transitional, more developed), some municipalities are eligible to multiply their own resources through ESI Funds by up to 5 times the amount of their initial investment (e.g. less developed regions: co-funding level 20%).
- ➔ For some operations, there may be an **active participation of private profit and non-profit institutions**; in this case these donors could provide part of the necessary co-funding (e.g. NGOs managing EU Funds with the economic support of private donors).
- ➔ It is recommended for municipalities to explore the broad diversity of **other public and private sources** – especially in the project design phase. Some examples of international donor organisations known to (co-)finance Roma inclusion initiatives are World Bank, Habitat for Humanity, Open Society Foundation etc.

Step 4

➔ Get connected & learn from others

Sharing experiences on Roma integration projects is not only recommendable at national or regional level, but even more so in a European context. There are a vast variety of **platforms and networks, whose aim is to promote mutual learning on Roma inclusion** (among other issues) between European cities and regions. The following networks can provide you with practical hands-on experience from other cities, municipalities and regions across Europe:

Overview of platforms and networks for local authorities engaged in Roma inclusion policies



EURoma

EURoma is a European Network made up of representatives of twelve Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia and Sweden), determined to promote the use of Structural Funds to enhance the effectiveness of policies targeting Roma people and to promote their social inclusion.

The primary aims of EURoma are the sharing of strategies, initiatives and approaches, learning based on experience and best practices, and the dissemination and standardisation of such knowledge.

In line with these objectives, two working lines are undertaken:

- Transmission and exchange of information, through internal and external communication channels.
- Mutual learning: sharing of approaches and strategies, identification and transfer of experiences, creation of a forum for the organisation and management of projects, development of common and transversal products.



There are two representatives in each of the partner countries:

- The respective ESF Managing Authority
- The body of the Member State responsible for policies targeting the Roma community or the body to which it delegates its authority.

Besides these official representatives from each country, EUroma is seeing more and more participation from a variety of other stakeholders, such as ERDF Managing Authorities, local and regional authorities, NGOs as well as international organisations and other countries interested in its activities.

On its website the network offers general information on projects, good practice, legal texts and other resources regarding the Roma and Structural Funds.

ESF Learning Network: Reinforcing policy learning for Roma inclusion (EUroma plus)

The ESF Learning Network “Reinforcing policy learning for Roma inclusion”, also known as EUroma plus Network, was launched in May 2013 with the aim of reinforcing the work done by EUroma. The new network aims to increase the impact and effectiveness of the Structural Funds for Roma inclusion through transnational cooperation by achieving a higher political commitment for the planning process of the 2014-2020 programming period and ensuring that the lessons learnt from the previous programming period are incorporated as policy decisions in the current one. The network is led by the Spanish ESF Managing Authority and gathers ESF Managing Authorities and National Roma Contact Points from 8 Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovak Republic and Spain) together with European Commission representatives.

Under EUroma plus the following activities are being conducted:

- Based on the information from eight countries, an analysis has been produced on how Structural Funds were implemented with the aim of promoting Roma inclusion during the programming period 2007-2013; furthermore, this document provides an overview about the Member States’ plans to use Structural Funds for promoting Roma including in the next period 2014-2020.
- Two thematic seminars focusing on specific issues will be held.
- Two meetings with participants from the policy level in order to exchange and compare the situations in each country, foster commitment and compare the progress that has been made for the future programming period.

 EUroma: <http://www.euromanet.eu/about/index.html>

The Committee of the Regions and the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform

The **Committee of the Regions (CoR)** is the main European body bringing together EU regions and municipalities; it currently has 353 members. It is a formal EU institution and has an important consultative role, regularly presenting its views on cohesion policy. It is the main interlocutor of the EC regarding cohesion policy issues and is in **direct (ad hoc) contact with regional and local representatives**, including through the Representations in the Member States. The CoR provides important mutual support and lobbying mechanisms for municipalities.



Furthermore, the CoR runs the **Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform** – a group of over 160 cities and regions from the 28 EU Member States, which monitors how Europe 2020 is implemented on the ground, promoting the exchange of good practices. The platform also provides a powerful tool for capacity building of municipalities and regions as it offers specific support on thematic issues, such as working groups and the promotion of exchanges on specific topics, including Roma inclusion.

- 🔗 Committee of the Regions: <http://cor.europa.eu/en/>
- 🔗 Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/>

The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion

The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion was set up in March 2013 by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities with the support of Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues. More than 120 cities and regions from over 27 countries are participating in the Alliance.

The Alliance aims to **promote the exchange of know-how and good practices on Roma inclusion among participating cities and regions**, and to enable participating cities and regions to speak with one voice by providing a platform for advocating on issues concerning Roma inclusion at local and regional level.

- 🔗 The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion: <http://www.roma-alliance.org/>

ROMACT

In September 2013, the Council of Europe and the EC launched a new programme called ROMACT. Currently, it includes cities and municipalities from 5 countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Italy). The new programme aims to strengthen the role of municipalities in the implementation of the National Roma Strategies at local level by promoting local Roma inclusion projects and providing support for accessing ESI Funds.

- 🔗 ROMACT <http://coe-romact.org/>

Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma

Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma (MtM) is a programme of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) which supports national, and local governments in realising the targets of the **Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015** – a network of European governments (Central, South-eastern, Eastern Europe and Spain), intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as well as Roma civil society that aims to eliminate discrimination against Roma and close the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society; twelve countries are currently taking part in the decade.



MtM offers **project development assistance, financial and human capacity building, and advocacy** and seeks to create a critical mass of concerned governmental actors at all levels to keep Roma inclusion high on the policy agenda. MtM is concerned with problems such as the weak visibility of Roma issues in the implementation of EU cohesion policies at the national and local levels; resource and expertise disadvantages; and overly bureaucratic funding procedures, which block access of the most deprived to rights and opportunities.

Tools of the MtM programme include the Project Generating Facility (project development assistance, training, and advocacy at the local level), the Mentoring Intervention (promoting participation of Roma in local partnerships), the Non-Eligible Costs/Supplementary funds (supplementary funding), the Capacity Building Programme. Furthermore, MtM provides policy analysis and advocacy services aimed at drawing policy level conclusions and recommendations from field level experiences gathered through project generation services.

☞ Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma:

<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/making-most-eu-funds-roma>

☞ Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015: <http://www.romadecade.org/>

The European network Mayors Making the Most (MERI)

In 2012, the Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma programme (see above), in cooperation with the European Commission, launched a new initiative to establish a European network of local authorities which have implemented – or plan to implement – programmes supporting integration of vulnerable groups with a focus on Roma. The network called Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network (MERI) **promotes the inclusion and integration of Roma at local levels through best practice-sharing and learning across European countries**, and brings to the forefront local level results and achievements. In addition, through building capacities at local level, the MERI network plans to **attract more EU funds to the local level**. The network aims at creating a **space for local authorities to exchange on their Roma inclusion programmes**, to promote a learning venue and a visibility platform for municipalities which ultimately implement national strategies for Roma integration.

The MERI network is **open to all European municipalities which pursue Roma inclusion**. Its purpose is to create a Europe-wide platform where possibilities for cooperation, joint programmes, twinnings and exchanges for solving challenging issues will be offered. Currently, municipalities from 15 countries stretching from the Baltic region, South-eastern, Eastern and Central Europe to the South Caucasus are participating in MERI.

☞ MERI: <http://www.logincee.org/>

Eurocities

Eurocities is the **European Association of Metropolitan Cities** (populations over 250,000) and has more than 135 members in 35 countries. Eurocities plays an important role in bringing



together regional and metropolitan authorities and promoting their involvement in the work of the EU, including cohesion, regional and social policy.

Eurocities established two working groups for participating cities which are of particular relevance for making the best use of EU funding for Roma inclusion:

- **The Roma inclusion task force** is committed to fighting discrimination and exploitation and to foster Roma inclusion through exchanging good practice on Roma inclusion; raising awareness of the city perspective on EU mobility and Roma inclusion within EU institutions and the National Roma Contact Points; influencing EU policy on non-discrimination and management of intra-EU migration; building East-West cooperation on Roma inclusion in cooperation with Open Society Foundations; securing funding for cities to improve their policies on Roma inclusion; and addressing the exploitative dimension of Roma exclusion.
- **The ESF task force** focuses on making sure that the role of cities in European Social Fund is both sustained and enhanced in the proposed programme for 2014-2020. The task force concentrates on following the negotiations on the final shape of the ESI Funds Regulations, especially the ESF; collecting data from cities on the involvement of cities in the programming of OPs; exchanging experiences on the lobbying strategies of cities at national level; and coordinating activities with on cohesion policy, especially relating to the cohesion policy package and the programming and development of PAs.

🔗 Eurocities: <http://www.eurocities.eu/>

🔗 Roma inclusion task force:
http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/activities/working_groups/Roma-inclusion-task-force&tpl=home

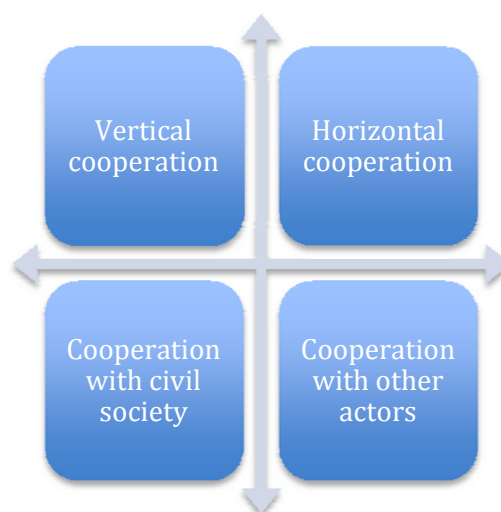
🔗 ESF task force:
http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/activities/working_groups/ESF-task-force-&tpl=home

Step 5

➔ Establish partnerships and foster cooperation

Successful Roma inclusion projects at local level require partnerships and cooperation at 4 levels:

The 4 dimensions of partnership



- **Vertical cooperation** between the central level (Government) and the local level: In order to put NRIS into practice, it is very important to align local policies with national strategies. This requires cooperation from both sides.
 - ➔ **How to foster vertical cooperation:** The central government and its respective ministries and departments responsible for the implementation of the NRIS should provide local authorities with the necessary advice and support to take action. Local authorities should strengthen their relationship with the respective central government authorities by actively demonstrating their plans and activities to promote Roma inclusion – ESF and ERDF Management Authorities are the key contact points at central level.
- **Horizontal cooperation** between different departments at local level: Roma needs and problems always concern the responsibilities of a variety of departments (e.g. housing, employment, education, health etc.) and it is therefore important that these departments work together and address these problems through integrated approaches.
 - ➔ **How to develop horizontal cooperation:** It is important for each department to remember that Roma needs and problems have multiple dimensions and therefore have to be addressed in such manner: a housing problem cannot be solved by e.g. rehousing activities alone, difficulties in accessing the labour market cannot be addressed by e.g. employment activities alone etc. Achieving Roma inclusion requires a set of common objectives to which all departments are committed. These common objectives could then be specified for each area of responsibility. It is recommendable that one or two departments lead Roma inclusion activities and therefore, having the consensus and commitment from all departments is essential. Drawing up a local Roma Inclusion Action Plan could, for example, strengthen this commitment.
- **Cooperation with civil society:** when planning projects aiming at Roma inclusion, it is essential to involve civil society, especially Roma organisations, in the entire project phase.



- **How to engage civil society and promote participation:** Civil society organisations, especially Roma organisations, are the key to a successful implementation of Roma inclusion policies. When planning interventions related to Roma inclusion, local authorities should make sure to consult all relevant civil society organisations from the planning phase onwards (e.g. ask for their experience on the ground, invite them to planning sessions etc.). Civil society organisations can also serve as key implementing partners of activities related to Roma inclusion, as they are the ones who are in direct contact not only with Roma but also with all inhabitants of a village/municipality/city. Civil society organisations can also play an important role in monitoring Roma inclusion plans – it is therefore recommended to also invite them to participate in Monitoring Committees. Furthermore, it is of crucial importance to identify and involve Roma leaders or organisations that best represent the voices of the local Roma population from the consultation process onwards; these could include (elected) representatives of the local Roma population who could have the capacity to engage with the Roma.
- **Cooperation with other actors:** it is highly recommendable to form further partnerships with research institutions (e.g. impact assessment) or private companies (especially for employment projects) that support the promotion of Roma inclusion.
- **How to involve other actors:** An impact assessment of either previous or planned interventions provides the possibility of readjusting and fine-tuning any future plans related to Roma inclusion and therefore guarantees the achievement of its objectives. Independent (local) research institutions can serve as excellent partners for providing such an objective evaluation of multi-dimensional impacts. It is therefore recommended for local authorities to commission such studies of previous/planned Roma inclusion projects. University departments in the fields of sociology, urban & regional planning, economics, social work/social services, medicine and others can offer valuable knowledge and experience to conduct this type of research. With regards to employment and labour insertion projects, the cooperation with (local) private companies is the key to success. Local authorities should convince companies about the importance of Roma inclusion and the role of employment in this process. Local authorities could reach agreements with companies that provide incentives to promote training and employment of Roma. Local authorities may also introduce Social Clauses in the public procurements; for example, they could include award criteria in their evaluation systems which favours companies that provide public services and at the same time facilitate employment to excluded groups, such as the Roma.

5. Potential options for local authorities to access European Structural and Investment Funds as a tool to promote Roma inclusion

5.1. Four models to access Structural and Investment Funds at local level

As described in chapter 3.4, there are different potential situations for applying ESI Funds as financial tool for promoting Roma inclusion. The following four models represent examples of how local authorities could access ESI funding for their Roma inclusion programmes. Some mechanisms are applied in all countries, others do not. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the main access to ESI Funds remains standard calls.

5.1.1. Community-led local development (CLLD) initiatives

What is it?

Community-led local development (CLLD) is a method for involving local stakeholders, especially civil society and local economic actors, in a local project. It focuses on the design and implementation of integrated local strategies to help rural areas to transition to a more sustainable future. This may be a particularly appropriate tool in times of crisis, which allows local communities to demonstrate that they can take concrete steps towards forms of economic development that are smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

Operational Programmes of the new programming period 2014-2020 may provide for the use of this mechanism in certain cases: especially city neighbourhoods for the ESF and rural for the EAFRD. For more details on the aims and requirements for CLLD initiatives, please see the ESI Funds Regulations.

When to use it?

This model is ideal for implementing local actions that promote Roma inclusion under national and regional ESF programmes. ESF funds can be supplemented by other funds (e.g. ERDF, EAFRD). The population size of local/regional authorities for these types of initiatives should not be less than 10,000 and not more than 150,000.

Which actions can be supported?

In line with the ESF investment priorities and within the context of this guide, CLLD activities should promote the integration of marginalised communities, such as the Roma. Furthermore, activities related to the following ESF priority areas can and should complement this integration process:

Access to employment

Sustainable integration of youth (esp. NEET)

Reducing early-school leaving

Promotion of equality between women and men

Socio-labour integration of people furthest from the labour market

Fighting discrimination

Promoting the social economy and social entrepreneurship

CLLD projects also supported by ERDF funding can include activities related to:

- Investing in health and social infrastructure to improve access to health and social services
- Support for physical & economic regeneration of deprived urban & rural communities

CLLD also supported by EAFRD funding could tackle disadvantaged micro-regions where many Roma rural settlements are located.

- 📄 European Commission brochure for this type of initiative:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf
- 📄 Guidance on Community-Led Local Development for Local Actors:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_clld_local_actors.pdf
- 📄 Guidance on Community-led Local Development in ESI Funds
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_community_local_development.pdf
- 📄 ESI Funds Regulations (CLLD: Chapter II, Article 32 and 33):
<http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303&from=EN>

5.1.2. Sustainable urban development

What is it?

Under the ERDF, there are specific provisions for sustainable urban development. The ERDF Regulations state that the fund supports, within operational programmes, sustainable urban development through strategies that set out integrated actions to tackle the economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges affecting urban areas. These projects should be undertaken through Integrated territorial investment (see ESI Funds Regulations link below) or through a specific operational programme, or through a specific priority axis. In its PA, each Member State should establish the principles for the selection of urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented and an indicative allocation for those actions. Your ERDF Managing Authority should inform you about the selection criteria and allocation of funds for your country (see chapter 4.2, Step 2 “Get Informed”).

In each country, at least 5% of the ERDF resources allocated to the “Investment for growth and jobs goal” should be allocated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development where cities, sub-regional or local bodies responsible for implementing sustainable urban strategies are responsible for the managing and/or implementing (e.g. through global grants, see chapter 5.2.4.) these projects.

When to use it?

Sustainable urban development strategies are ideal for addressing the problems of Roma living in urban areas; these projects are therefore highly recommendable in situations with Roma population living in urban neighbourhoods (e.g. see Situation 1 & 2, chapter 3.2.). Sustainable urban development strategies are based on a territorial approach and they can cover specific areas including neighbourhoods or areas where Roma are living. They must be inclusive and address the problems and needs of all inhabitants of the area by taking into account the needs of marginalised communities, such as the Roma.

Previous experiences from ERDF-funded projects (e.g. URBAN, URBACT) demonstrate the positive effects of sustainable urban development projects. Respective websites also provide substantive information, tools and lessons learnt from different experiences addressing Roma integration in urban

areas (see links below).

Which actions can be supported?

Within the context of this guide, sustainable urban development strategies should address the ERDF investment priority “promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination”. These strategies could be complemented with any of the following ERDF investment priorities:

Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures

Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility

Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure

Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

- 🔗 URBAN II:
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/social_inclusion_fight_against_poverty/g24209_en.htm
- 🔗 ROMA-Net (URBACT project 2009-2013):
<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/roma-net/homepage/>
- 🔗 Urban Development in the EU: 50 projects supported by the ERDF during the 2007-2013 period:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/50_projects/urban_dev_erdf50.pdf
- 🔗 ESI Funds Regulations (Integrated territorial investment: Chapter III, Article 36):
<http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303&from=EN>

5.1.3. Integrated Rehousing Operations

What is it?

Integrated rehousing operations are interventions that combine rehousing activities with further actions (e.g. in the fields of education, health, employment) that facilitate the inclusion of socially excluded communities. This type of operation is highly recommendable for rehousing interventions of marginalised communities as its integrated approach is the key to reducing or limiting the risk of segregation. Under the Thematic Objective 9, the ERDF regulation includes an investment priority that focuses on promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination; this includes the provision of support for physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas.

When to use it?

When planning rehousing activities for marginalised Roma and/or non-Roma communities, an integrated approach is the ideal way to reduce segregation of these communities and paves the way to full inclusion into society. This model is highly recommendable for situations with Roma communities living in segregated urban and suburban neighbourhoods (see Situation 2, chapter 3.2.)

Which actions can be supported?

Applying an integrated approach is a requirement for receiving ERDF funding for rehousing activities targeting marginalised communities. When developing this type of operation any kind of segregation

should be avoided. It is recommended to combine rehousing interventions with actions that further promote the inclusion of marginalised communities in the following fields:

Education

Health

Social affairs

Employment
& security

Desegregation
measures

Remember that ERDF funding can be complemented with ESF funding for the “integration of marginalised communities” (see chapter 3.3.3.). These two funds are therefore the ideal combination for Integrated Rehousing Operations.

2 examples from Spain:

- 📄 Thematic report on dispersal program. Rehousing and social integration program in Madrid:
http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/Projects/Roma_Net/outputs_media/Thematic_report_rehousing_L_C2_Almeria.pdf
- 📄 Integration helps Roma become full members of European society (Avilés):
<http://europa.eu/ey2012/BlobServlet?docId=737&langId=en>

5.1.4. Global Grants

What is it?

Global Grants are mechanism in which a Member State or Managing Authority may entrust the management and implementation of a part of an OP to one or more intermediate bodies, including local authorities, regional development bodies or non-governmental organisations. This passing on of management responsibilities allows to better reach target groups, which could be Roma population.

When applying this mechanism, the intermediary body taking over responsibility of the management of the funds has to bear in mind the technical and reporting capacities needed to manage these funds. Having said this, Global Grants bring certain advantages:

- Funding is passed directly to the intermediary body for management, allocation and distribution;
- The intermediary body is free to design its own rules for operation and administration;
- Flexible easy-to-use application systems, 100% up-front funding.

When to use it?

This mechanism is usually used for the implementation of small programmes at local level. Local authorities considering applying this option for Roma inclusion activities should have a full understanding of the OPs being implemented in their country (see chapter 4.2, Step 2 “Get Informed”) in order to guarantee that their plans are in accordance with the respective OP’s objectives. Furthermore, according to the regulations, the intermediate body shall provide guarantees of its solvency and competence in the domain concerned to undertake the planned activities.

Global Grant schemes provide the possibility for consortiums (e.g. a group of local authorities) to act as one intermediary body. This option is especially recommended for small local authorities with little technical capacity.

Which actions can be supported?

Actions supported under Global Grants have to be in line with the objectives of the OP being implemented in each country. Global grants can include, among others:

Small grants for the capacity building of civil society and Roma organisations

Dedicated amounts of money for the specific actions in the areas of education, employment, social interventions, health care, etc.

Grants allocated to several partners (e.g. a local administration together with a NGO for the implementation of specific projects).

🔗 Global Grants:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/vm20002006/chap4_en.htm

🔗 Global Grant for Better Implementation of European Programmes (European Training Centre Paris): <http://www.etcp.fr/component/content/article/90>



5.2. Examples of local and regional authorities using Structural and Investment Funds for Roma inclusion

Examples of local and regional authorities using the ESF for Roma inclusion

Jyväskylä, **Finland**, where the city authorities employs social mediators to work with the Roma community for employment support, home-school liaison and to accompany individuals in their dealings with welfare and labour market offices;

County Louth Vocational Education Committee, **Ireland**, which obtained ESF funding for an education programme for Irish Travellers: numeracy and literary instruction, training allowances, educational materials for slow learners, childcare provision for trainees, classes off-site and intercultural training for education staff;

Letanovce local authority, **Slovakia**, received support under the ESF for social and community workers for classic social work support, interventions and counselling to help families at risk or in crisis situations; the promotion of leisure time activities for young people; development of a clothing bank and food bank; promotion of school attendance; preventative medical examinations and vaccination; improved cooperation and relationships with the police and assistance with work placements;

The ESF can be used to develop the Roma economy. The commune authority of Francesti, Valcea, **Romania** is using the operational programme *Human resource development*, priority axis 6, *Promoting social inclusion*, intervention 6.1 *Development of the social economy* to create 23 jobs in a social economy enterprise, develop a daycare centre for 30 children and provide professional training for income generation;

In **Italy**, the ESF has provided €936,000 to the local authorities for training courses to improve the skills of social workers in health and social care. €220,000 have been allocated to Bolzano and Emilia Romagna for social cooperatives, vocational guidance, certification and personal pathways. Lazio was provided with €360,000 for placements in health care and retail sales;

Most, in the **Czech Republic**, had been using the ESF since 2005 when the local authority appointed a coordinator and club for national minorities. Under the operational programme *Human resources and employment* the project *Prevention of social exclusion in the Romany localities* was granted €185,000 to provide education (school attendance, help with homework, motor skills development, *Computer ABC*, joint activities with parents), social counselling (e.g. anti-debt, family difficulties, conflict at work), labour market training (CVs, forms and work placement), accompanied by a system of indicators and monitoring (e.g. number of participants).

Examples of local and regional authorities using the ERDF for Roma inclusion

North Great Plain, **Hungary**, where Nyiregyhaza local authority obtained €1.57m ERDF funding divided between infrastructure and community development for desegregation and integrated urban development (housing improvements, kindergarten, roads, playgrounds);

In Limassol, **Cyprus**, the capital, ERDF funds are used at municipal level in those areas where Roma people live for the improvement of roads, water, street lighting, pedestrian crossing, tree planting, bicycle lanes, playgrounds, the prevention of early school leaving, Greek language training (Roma people generally speak Turkish);

Education in Hrabusice, Oslany, **Slovakia**, for school-building, renovation, modernisation, accompanied by after-school activities;



Re-development of municipal cultural centre, Galanta, **Slovakia** as a focus for cultural and social events (*Romafest*, art, theatre, lectures, debates, exhibitions, youth club and concerts);

Southern **Finland** over 2009-2012 where a €34,000 project of the City of Helsinki Social Services Departments and a local college provide help for Roma people to complete primary school, reach vocational and high schools, get internships, find jobs as well as help young Roma families to combine family life and continue to study.

The local authority of Ostrava, **Czech Republic**, used €238,000 to reconstruct technically devastated but occupied apartment house in socially excluded area. The investment included a complete technical renovation of interior areas, construction of new housing units, old windows replacement and revitalization of an outer plaster with respect to energy savings and other environmental aspects.

Examples of local and regional authorities combining ESF and ERDF funding

South Great plain, **Hungary**, where the local authority of Hodmezovarasely combined ESF and ERDF funding to develop an integrated kindergarten and school for Roma and other children;

Emilia Romagna, **Italy**, where the €1.9m ERDF and ESF *Pathways for Sinti and Roma* programme starts with outreach workers visiting camps and leads on to job-centre guidance, aptitude test, CV development, job-seeking skills and a programme for inter-personal skills.

Local charity organization in Cheb, **Czech Republic**, used ERDF (€650,000) and ESF (€755,000) funding to reconstruct and equip the Social Services Centre. It provides complex of services such as shelter, social rehabilitation, social counselling and educational activities to prevent and combat social exclusion.

Local authority of Orlová, **Czech Republic**, used ERDF (€280,000) and ESF (€330,000) funding to develop Community Centre. It provides social services for children, youth and their parents such as social counselling, social activation services for families with children and leisure time activities.



Relevant websites

EU, DG Justice:

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/>

EU, DG Justice and Roma:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm

EC Interactive map of local authorities striving to include their Roma populations:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1860&furtherNews=yes>

EU FRA:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/roma>

EURoma network:

<http://www.euromanet.eu/about/index.html>

Europe 2020 website:

http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

Europe Direct:

http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm

European Social Fund and the Roma:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=63&langId=en>

EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

National Roma Integration Strategies:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

ESI Funds Regulations (17 December 2013):

<http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303&from=EN>

Contacts for your country:

ESF Managing Authority in your country:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=524&langId=en>

ERDF Managing Authority in your country:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm



EC Desk Officers responsible for your country at:

DG REGIO:

http://ec.europa.eu/staffdir/plsql/gsys_www.branch?pLang=EN&pId=1819&pDisplayAll=1

DG EMPL:

http://ec.europa.eu/staffdir/plsql/gsys_www.branch?pLang=EN&pId=473&pDisplayAll=1

Abbreviations and acronyms

AGS	Annual Growth Survey
CLLD	Community-led local development
CoR	Committee of the Regions
CSR	Country Specific Recommendations
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional Policy (European Commission)
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale
MERI	European Network Mayors Making the Most
MtM	Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategies
NRP	National Reform Programmes
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Partnership Agreement