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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Commission activities Information from the Commission (i) Midterm evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies

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Delegations will find attached the information note from the Commission on the above subject, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 6 December 2018 (Any Other Business item).

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**Information note to the Council for the AOB point on the Mid-term evaluation of the  
EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020**

1. CONTEXT

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) up to 2020 was adopted as a Communication by the Commission on 5 April 2011, and was endorsed by the Council<sup>1</sup> in May 2011 and by the European Council in June 2011<sup>2</sup>. Its main objective is to tackle the socio-economic exclusion of and discrimination against Roma by promoting their equal access to education, employment, health and housing. The EU Framework invited the Member States to develop and implement national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of measures within their broader social inclusion policies, to meet four EU Roma integration goals:

- 1. Ensure that all Roma children complete as a minimum, primary school education.*
- 2. Cut the employment gap between Roma and the rest of the population.*
- 3. Reduce the gap in health status between Roma and the rest of the population.*
- 4. Close the gap between the share of Roma with access to housing and to public utilities (such as water, electricity, and gas) and that of the rest of the population.*

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<sup>1</sup> Council Conclusions (EPSCO) of 19 May 2011 on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/123075.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/123075.pdf).

The mid-term evaluation was carried out in response to the Council Conclusions of 8 December 2016<sup>3</sup>. The evaluation assessed five basic criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and EU added value) and three additional ones (equity, coordination, sustainability). The additional criteria are reviewed under the basic evaluation criteria which they are most closely connected to ("equity" under "relevance," "coordination" under "effectiveness", and "sustainability" under "EU added value"). The evaluation is informed by an external evaluation carried out by a team of consultants from October 2017 to May 2018. Evaluation findings have been based on literature review, interviews in 27 Member States and enlargement countries, country analysis studies, open public consultation and a variety of data sources<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The **relevance** of the EU Framework's original objectives, i.e. whether they were appropriate to the needs at the time and to current needs, is assessed as **overall positive with limitations**. The priority areas have been confirmed as key to Roma inclusion and continue to be valid today. The relevance of the Framework's objectives could, however, have been stronger through: i) a more ambitious goal in the area of education, ii) a specific non-discrimination goal alongside the four Roma integration goals and stronger focus on the fight against antigypsyism, iii) efforts to address the needs of specific subgroups within the Roma population such as Roma women, Roma children and young Roma, EU-mobile Roma and Roma who are third-country nationals (**equity**).

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<sup>3</sup> Council Conclusions (EPSCO) of 8 December 2016: 'Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration,' <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15406-2016-INIT/en/pdf>. The Council conclusions 'urge the Commission to carry out a mid-term evaluation of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020 and to propose a post 2020 strategy on Roma integration, and include therein a proposal for a revision of the Council Recommendation.'

<sup>4</sup> ESIF programming documents, FRA EU-MIDIS survey, UNDP/ World Bank/ EC regional Roma survey and 2017 UNDP/World Bank/EC survey on the Western Balkans etc.

The **effectiveness** of the EU Framework in achieving progress towards the Roma integration goals has been assessed as **limited**. Education is the area with most progress (with improvements in early school-leaving, early childhood education and compulsory schooling, but deterioration in segregation). The self-perceived health status of Roma has improved but medical coverage continues to be limited. No improvement has been observed in access to employment, and the share of young Roma not in employment, education or training (NEET) has even increased. The housing situation remains difficult. Some progress has been observed in respect of the general objective of fighting poverty. Antigypsyism and hate crime continue to be a matter of high concern, despite evidence of some reduction in discrimination experiences of Roma when accessing services in some areas.

The EU Framework has been more effective in setting up and strengthening instruments and structures for Roma integration and in increasing cooperation and the capacity of actors working on Roma integration. This is particularly true at EU level, for which **coordination** has been assessed as **positive**. At both EU and national level the EU Framework was found to have improved stakeholder cooperation.

**Coherence** (how well the EU Framework works together with other EU and national instruments) has been assessed as **positive at EU level but limited at national level**. At EU level, the EU Framework helped to make progress in mobilising legal, policy and financial instruments that support Roma integration. This is particularly the case for the Europe 2020 strategy (through synergies between the Europe 2020 headline targets, Roma integration goals and country-specific recommendations on Roma) and European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF 2014-2020: Roma-specific investment priority and ex-ante conditionality). The EU Framework and EU legal instruments were found to be highly complementary in terms of aims and scope. The enforcement of EU legislation by the Commission strengthens the Framework's policy objectives, while the monitoring of NRIS implementation allows the Commission to assess the application of EU law. On the other hand, the evaluation found that the Framework contributed to mainstreaming Roma integration into legal, policy and financial instruments at national level to a more limited extent. Most NRIS do not yet connect well with national public policies.

The **efficiency** of the monitoring and reporting systems has been assessed as **limited**. The Framework could have been more strongly aligned with domestic and European reporting requirements. Independent monitoring has been ensured through surveys funded by the Fundamental Rights Agency and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), making possible monitoring progress over time. Since 2017 the Commission has piloted a project to monitor the implementation of NRIS by coordinated civil society coalitions. Costs and benefits could not be conclusively quantified, evaluated and attributed to the Framework. While costs are short-term, the majority of the potential benefits are long-term and cannot be realised until 2020.

**EU added value** has been assessed as **positive**. EU action has provided added value to national Roma policies and their implementation through political, governance and financial dimensions. On the political side, it gave prominence to Roma inclusion on the EU and national agendas, and drew attention to Roma issues even in countries with smaller Roma populations. On the governance front, the EU action facilitated the development of structures for Roma inclusion, provided stability thanks to the multiannual character of the Framework, and offered policy guidance, monitoring and reporting, as well as opportunities for mutual exchange and cooperation. Regarding the financial dimension, the Framework has brought support for implementing the NRIS from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

**Sustainability** has been assessed as **limited**. Most of the current national policies and structures created around the NRIS (national Roma contact points, systems of coordination, monitoring and reporting, consultation with civil society) would disappear or become less operational and more symbolic if the EU Framework did not continue after 2020.

### 3. NEXT STEPS

Not all of the lessons learned from this evaluation can be addressed in the context of the current EU Framework. Findings such as the need for a revision of the Framework's objectives or the need for a new specific focus on non-discrimination and antigypsyism cannot be addressed within the current EU Framework. Equally, the non-binding nature of the EU Framework will continue to enable Member States to follow a tailored approach taking into account specific national contexts when selecting Roma integration measures. The current mandate of the national Roma contact points and their influence on the design and implementation of mainstream policies is unlikely to be changed in the short term. However, in the remaining implementing period until 2020, the Commission intends to intensify its efforts to address the remaining gaps, as identified by the evolution of the EU Framework etc.

The results of the mid-term evaluation will feed into reflections for EU Roma policies in the post-2020 period.