

Pandemic worsens Roma and Travellers poverty and discrimination



"The Coronavirus does not discriminate, but the measures to contain it do. Facing stricter lockdown, poor welfare support and limited access to online learning, many Roma and Travellers communities have been ravaged by the pandemic. Member States need to tackle these challenges, strengthen social inclusion and involve Roma and Travellers themselves – both during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond," says FRA's Director **Michael O'Flaherty**.

FRA's latest bulletin "[Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Impact on Roma and Travellers](#)" documents the main challenges:

- **Lockdown** – entire Roma and Traveller communities faced stricter lockdown as precautionary measures, even before there were any confirmed infections.
- **Housing** – many live in overcrowded households with no access to running water. This makes physical distancing or washing hands very difficult, and put Roma and Travellers at higher risk of contracting the disease.
- **Employment** – lockdown left street vendors and those with precarious contracts unemployed. As many Roma and Travellers were not part of the formal economy before the pandemic, they cannot access support or claim

welfare benefits.

- **Poverty** – the loss of jobs increased poverty and the risk of malnutrition, which was already high before the pandemic.
- **Healthcare** – in some countries, only half of Roma and Travellers have health insurance. Moreover, many face discrimination when accessing healthcare.
- **Education** – already before the pandemic, most Roma and Traveller children were early school leavers. Now, many do not have internet access nor computers, so they cannot take part in online learning when schools close.
- **Hate speech** – hate speech and discrimination against Roma and Travellers increased during the pandemic, as they were blamed for spreading the virus.

FRA calls on Member States to implement inclusion measures recommended since [2013 by the Council of the European Union](#). In particular, FRA stresses that:

1. Roma and Travellers must have equal access to all mainstream poverty reduction, employment generation and other social inclusion schemes.
2. Health and education mediators, who provide basic services in Roma communities during the pandemic, need adequate resources and support to assist people in need, especially since the number of infections is rising again across the EU.
3. Member States need to fight anti-Gypsyism and prejudice against Roma and Travellers. Their communities are often presented as a risk to the general population while in fact they are more at risk themselves because of the conditions they live in.

Background:

[FRA's new Roma & Travellers survey](#) shows that a quarter of Roma and Travellers in Western Europe could not afford basic items, such as heating or healthy food already before the pandemic. They also face rampant discrimination and harassment in their everyday lives.

The EU will soon release its new 'EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation'. It aims to find a way forward and address the challenges Roma and Travellers face in the EU.

This bulletin documents the situation of Roma and Travellers in 15 EU Member States between 1 March to 30 June 2020.

[Press release – Increasing the EU's 2030 emissions reduction target is](#)

necessary and feasible



On Monday, the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety held a debate with Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the Commission, on stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition.

Mr Timmermans presented the Commission's plan to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 % by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, as [announced on 17 September](#) in the State of the Union speech by the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

Currently, emissions are not going down fast enough, Mr Timmermans said, but he underlined that becoming carbon neutral is both feasible and beneficial for the EU. He invited Parliament to confirm the proposed 55 % 2030-target as the EU's new Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, and to submit this to the UNFCCC by the end of this year.

The Chair [Pascal Canfin](#) (Renew, FR) reminded MEPs that next week [Plenary](#) will vote on a [report](#) by the Environment Committee on the EU Climate Law, which calls for 60 % emission reductions in 2030.

Several MEPs expressed concern that the new 2030-target proposed by the Commission is a net-target, making it less ambitious since actual reductions would be smaller because emissions removed through carbon sinks would also count towards reaching the target. Mr Timmermans defended a net 2030-target, saying carbon sinks are needed to achieve carbon neutrality and are fully in line with international commitments.

MEPs also questioned Mr Timmermans on the likelihood of getting other non-EU countries to follow the EU's example and increase their climate ambition. Mr Timmermans replied that we need to make climate action a "race to the top", informing MEPs that there are interesting initiatives to increase ambition being put forward or in the pipeline in many countries.

Mr Timmermans finally informed MEPs that the Commission would come up with proposals by June 2021 to revise key EU legislation such as the EU Emissions Trading System, energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and strengthening CO2 standards for road vehicles to enable the EU to reach a more ambitious target.

You can see a recorded video of the debate [here](#).

Background

In March 2020, the Commission proposed an [EU climate law](#) that would make it a legal requirement for the EU to become climate-neutral by 2050 as part of the European Green Deal. This follows the December 2019 European Council decision to endorse the 2050 climate-neutrality objective. On 17 September, the Commission [amended its proposal](#) to incorporate a new 2030 emissions reduction target.

Parliament has played an important role in pushing for more ambitious EU climate legislation and declared a [climate emergency](#) on 29 November 2019.

EEAS Vacancy Notice: CA FGIII – Administrative and Financial As

We are:

The European External Action Service (EEAS) supports the work of the High Representative in defining and implementing an effective and coherent EU foreign policy. The EEAS supports his tasks of conducting the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and chairing the Foreign Affairs Council. It also supports the High Representative in his capacity as Vice President of the Commission with regard to his responsibilities within the Commission in the external relations field including the coordination of other aspects of the EU's external action. The EEAS works in close cooperation with Member States, the Council and relevant services of the European Commission.

The EEAS is composed of staff working in Headquarters in Brussels and in a network of 143 Delegations worldwide. It works in close cooperation with Member States, the Council and relevant services of the European Commission.

The "Rights, Obligations and Medical Cell" Division within the Human Resources Directorate of the EEAS is responsible for implementing the rights and obligations of all staff working in HQ and in the network of EU Delegations. This includes:

- i. accounting and paying remunerations;

- ii. managing leave entitlements and implementing working time policies;
- iii. managing administrative and financial entitlements for staff posted in third countries (Annex X of the Staff Regulations);
- iv. handling legal issues and ethics files regarding obligations set in the Staff Regulations, including procedures for prior authorizations where required;
- v. developing policies aimed at improving well-being and work-life balance, including support to families for staff; acting as correspondent of organizations and associations dealing with well-being and families of EEAS staff;
- vi. providing health advice and medical support as well as health risks assessment and management;
- vii. dealing with administrative and financial aspects of health repatriations and crisis country evacuations, including for dependents in Delegations.

We propose:

The position of the Administrative and Financial Assistant – contract agent FGIII as per article 3b of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS).

Under the responsibility of the Head of Division and the supervision of the Team Leader of the Budget, Financial and Accounting Team, we propose an interesting position of Administrative and Financial Assistant. 2

We look for:

A highly motivated and service-minded colleague with excellent analytical mind and well oriented to problem-solving, one who is flexible, precise, with attention to details, able to work independently and within the team, and ready to exchange views and practises with other team members.

The successful candidate will have to combine a number of different functions and will be working in a team of 3 to 4 members.

His / Her main duties will be:

- Be responsible for procurement procedures and contract management in the division including (but not limited to) preparation of calls for tender, initiation of procurement files, preparation of budgetary commitments, management of payments and recoveries in the role of operational and financial initiating agent. Ensure and follow all aspects of the process – procedural, legal, administrative and financial;
- Act as back-up in monthly checks for payroll preparation;
- Check and initiate payroll payments and other files within responsibility of the team and division;
- Ensure follow-up and clearing of waiting accounts;

- Manage debt recovery including follow up of end-of the year contracts;
- Check and initiate budgetary regularizations;
- Provide general payroll related administrative support to colleagues, managing functional mailboxes;
- Contribute to yearly budgetary cycle, from planning to execution;
- During rotation period (April-September) support Removal's team and other teams in the Division if need be.

Legal basis

The vacancy is to be filled in accordance with the conditions stipulated under the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS). ¹

The successful candidate will be offered a contract agent position (Function group III); renewable contract for a maximum duration of 6 years (with a valid CAST exam).

Eligibility criteria:

Candidates for this contract agent III post should:

- (i) have passed a valid EPSO CAST in a valid FG for this post
or
- (ii) be registered in the EPSO Permanent CAST in a valid FG for this post
https://epso.europa.eu/apply/job-offers_en?keyword=&contract=37&grade=Al
...
- have a level of post-secondary education attested by a diploma or a level of secondary education attested by a diploma giving access to post-secondary education and appropriate professional experience of three year;
- have the capacity to work in languages of CFSP and external relations necessary for the performance of their duties. Knowledge of other EU languages would be an asset;
- be a national of one of the Member States of the European Union and enjoy full rights as a citizen.

Selection criteria:

Candidates should:

- have good knowledge of financial rules and processes as well as experience with accounting, audit and financial system tools;
- have knowledge and/or proven experience in the administration and/or human resources or a good awareness of issues relating to human resources in the EU context, including the main legal basis such the Staff Regulations and CEOS;
- be proactive, highly motivated and have good organizational skills;
- be able to work autonomously;
- have good inter-personal skills and be client-oriented;
- have good drafting and communication skills;

- be able to work under pressure and to tight deadlines when necessary;
- have a pragmatic problem-solving approach;
- have a good knowledge of English and French and be able to work effectively in both.

Furthermore:

- previous experience in contract management (preparation, negotiation, execution);
- previous experience as responsible for budget preparation and execution;
- previous experience in financial, accounting and audit sectors and/or being registered auditor;
- previous experience in dealing with cross-functional projects for analysis and improvement of internal procedures;
- previous experience in human resources management;
- good knowledge of standard administrative procedures as well as knowledge of IT tools for personnel and document management;
- experience in working with or within other EU institutions, agencies and bodies and/or in private organisations/companies in a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural environment

would be considered as strong assets.

Specific conditions of employment

The signature of the contract will be subject to prior favourable opinion of the Medical Service.

The successful candidate might be required to undergo security vetting if she or he does not hold already a Personal Security Clearance to an appropriate level, in accordance with relevant security provisions.

Equal opportunities

The External Action Service applies an equal opportunities policy.

Application and selection procedure²

Please send your CV and cover letter (with your EPSO CAST number) via email to the mailbox:

RIGHTS-AND-OBLIGATIONS@eeas.europa.eu.

Deadline for applications: 09/10/ 2020 at 18.00 (CET).

Candidates shall draft their CV following the European CV form which can be found at the following internet address: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>.

Late applications will not be accepted.

The selection panel will make a pre-selection on the basis of the qualifications and professional experience described in the CV and

motivational letter, and will produce a shortlist of eligible candidates who best meet the selection criteria for the post. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be informed about the outcome of the pre-selection phase.

The candidates who have been preselected will be invited for an interview by a selection panel. The panel will recommend a shortlist of candidates for a final decision by the Authority Authorised to Conclude Contracts of Employment. The Authority may decide to interview the candidates on the final shortlist before taking this decision.

Place of employment: EEAS Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium

Post available: immediately in EEAS HQ (Brussels)

¹ Staff Regulations of Officials (SR) and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS). For reference, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1570023902133&uri=CE...>

² Your personal data will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, as implemented by ADMIN(2019)8 Decision of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The privacy statement is available on the Europa website:

(http://eeas.europa.eu/data_protection/rights/index_en.htm) and on the EEAS Intranet:

(<https://intranet.eeas.europa.eu/page/eeas-work/data-protection/privacy-s...>).

Indicative programme – Competitiveness Council (Research and innovation), 29 September 2020



Chairs: Anja Karliczek, Federal Minister of Education and Research

Place: Europa building, Brussels

All times are approximate and subject to change

Tuesday, 29 September 2020

Research

From 08.00
Arrivals

+/- 08.30

Doorstep by Minister Karliczek

+/- 10.00

Beginning of the Council meeting (Roundtable)

Adoption of the agenda

10.10 Public deliberations ([live stream](#))

Regulation on establishing Horizon Europe's Framework Programme

Decision establishing specific programme implementing Horizon Europe

+/- 15.15 **Joint press conference** with Minister Anja Karliczek and European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel in [live streaming](#).

General arrangements

Please note that the press centre remains closed. Coverage of the doorsteps and roundtable will be provided by host cameras and photographers. Audiovisual products will be available [here](#).

Arrangements for the press conference

Please note that there will be no physical press conference. EU accredited journalists will be able to ask questions remotely using [this link](#).

Deadline: Tuesday, 29 September 2020, 14.15

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants approximately half an hour after the deadline.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[Yemen: Statement by the Spokesperson on the prisoners' exchange](#)



The Government of Yemen and the movement Ansar Allah agreed on Sunday 27 September to immediately release 1081 conflict-related prisoners and detainees. The agreement, facilitated by the UN Special Envoy and the ICRC, was reached at the fourth meeting of the Supervisory Committee on the Implementation of the Prisoners' Exchange Agreement.

This exchange of prisoners' between the parties of the conflict represents a key step in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and in building trust among the sides. A concrete implementation plan will now have to be worked out swiftly to implement the deal and to allow the detainees to return to their families.

The EU encourages the parties to continue engaging constructively with the UN Special Envoy towards a nationwide ceasefire and a resumption of political talks. The EU reiterates its full support to the UN-led process.