

Press release – Roma integration: EU must do more against social exclusion and anti-gypsyism



In a resolution adopted on Thursday with 545 votes to 96 and 54 abstentions, Parliament stresses that, due to persistent anti-gypsyism, Romani people in Europe suffer the highest rates of poverty and social exclusion. MEPs therefore call for inclusive education, early childhood development and an end to discrimination and segregation.

The situation of Romani people in the EU has not improved, denounces the text, partly because of “the lack of political will”. MEPs complain that a significant number of Romani people in Europe live in “extremely precarious” conditions, with most deprived of their fundamental human rights.

They call on the Commission to table a legislative proposal focused on fighting poverty and anti-gypsyism and on improving Romani people’s living and health conditions. The proposal should include a plan to eliminate housing, health, employment and education inequalities, as well as specific binding objectives to improve inclusion.

Access to healthcare and compensation for victims of forced sterilisation

Member states should improve access to good quality and affordable healthcare for Romani people, including sexual and reproductive healthcare. All forms of ethnic segregation in health facilities must be banned, including maternal health care settings. MEPs also ask member states to compensate survivors of forced and coercive sterilisation.

No to school segregation

Providing Romani children with an equal start in life is essential to

breaking the poverty cycle, say MEPs, who want to end all forms of school or class segregation experienced by these pupils. They condemn the discriminatory practice of placing them in schools for children with mental disabilities, still in place in some EU countries, and call on the Commission to continue pressing member states to desegregate, taking the cases to the European Court of Justice if needed.

Worsening situation due to COVID-19

MEPs finally note that the COVID-19 crisis has worsened the situation of marginalised communities of Romani people living in overcrowded and inhumane conditions and warn that, due to limited access to healthcare, drinking water, sanitation and food, they are more at risk of contracting the virus.

Quote

[Romeo Franz \(Greens/EFA, DE\)](#), rapporteur, said: “The EU has to do more to ensure the social inclusion of Romani people. For too many years, policies regarding Romani people were not binding and this has to change. We call on EU member states to officially recognise anti-gypsyism, which is the main cause of social exclusion of Romani people, and take legislative measures to combat it”.