



Fókuszban a roma nők

Roma Women in Focus

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A roma nők társadalmi és
politikai befogadásának
időszerű kérdései Európában

Current Issues in Europe
Regarding
the Social and Political
Inclusion of Romani Women



Magyar Női Érdekvédelmi Szövetség



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



NEMZETI CIVIL ALAPPROGRAM

Current Issues in Europe Regarding the Social and Political Inclusion of Romani Women- policy paper issued for the *Roma Women in Focus* conference held in Budapest on the 7th April, 2011¹

Introduction

This paper attempts to provide an input for the forthcoming “*EU Framework and National strategy on Roma inclusion*”² regarding the social, economic and political integration of Romani women. It presents the situation of Romani women by discussing and analyzing the relevant accessible research data for a more responsive and inclusive policy making. The analysis of the social position of Romani women as a group will be based upon the interaction of ethnicity, gender and class (at least). Meanwhile, the analysis also reflects on the heterogeneity of the Roma populations living in Europe, taking into account the different situations of the various Roma communities, but also the similarities of the phenomena affecting the social integration of Roma in different European countries.

Our paper aims to address the shortcomings of existing policy studies, which often dismiss the specific situation of Romani women. Data on the situation of Romani women is particularly scarce. However most of the studies, which are disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, show that Romani women experience greater social exclusion than Roma men, on the one hand, and the women of the majority community, on the other. Based on the available data Romani women face intersectional/ or multiple discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender and class.³ They face particularly serious exclusion in the field of employment, education,

¹ The conference was made possible by an NCA project, pseudonym: NCA-NK-10-A-0024 won by the Hungarian Women’s Lobby under the title: *Női szerep-európai szerepvállalás. Európai nők és a szociális integráció*

² Report on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion, Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Rapporteur: Lívia Járóka, Published 18.2.2011.

³ Angéla Kóczé, with contributions from Raluca Maria Popa , Missing Intersectionality. Race/Etnicity, Gender, and Class in Current Research and Policies on Romani Women in Europe /Policy Studies Series/. Budapest: CEU CPS, 2009.

healthcare, housing services; moreover they have a very limited access to the long term care system, to social benefits, to financial services and in addition to public and political participation.

Gender equality should be one of the priority areas in the forthcoming strategy:

We believe that gender equality should be one of the priorities, as well as a direct theme in the forthcoming “*EU Framework and National strategy on Roma inclusion*”. This document should follow the legacy of recognizing the obligations of the European Union and its Member States to comply with international human rights standards on gender equality, particularly under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as legal obligations to ensure equality between women and men in the EU, as defined in the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union.⁴

The European Commission, Council Directive 2000/43/EC, implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, states that “*the Community should, in accordance with Article 8 (2) of the EC Treaty*”, aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality between men and women, especially since women are often the victims of multiple discrimination”. Apart from the recognition of multiple discrimination of the affected women (particularly Romani women), European institutions have not made further efforts to counter it so far in the binding legal framework⁶.

The absence of a formally agreed upon definition of multiple discrimination, as well as the absence of regulation of it, furthermore the inconsistencies between different legislations dealing with discrimination on various grounds, translates into a situation whereby there is no legal or policy regulations to tackle discrimination of women from disadvantaged groups who face several types of discrimination; women from vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities

⁴ See for example: Communication from the Commission: A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men (COM/2010/0078), or the resolution of the European Parliament of 1 June 2006 on the situation of Roma women in the European Union (Texts adopted, P6_TA(2006)0244).

⁵ In the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 8 (ex Article 3(2) TEC): „*In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women*”.

⁶ See for example: „Multiple Discrimination Between the EU Agenda and Civic Engagement the Long Road of Intersectional Perspective” by Barbara Giovanna Bello, in Roma Rights Journal of the European Roma Rights Center, Number 2, 2009, pp. 11–20.

(Romani women), elderly women and women with disabilities,⁷ should be assessed and monitored by EU and national agencies.

The “*EU Framework and National strategy on Roma inclusion*” apparently includes gender mainstreaming and requests targeted action to tackle multiple discrimination and the particular disadvantages faced by Romani women. Furthermore there is a need to monitor the implementation of these measures with respect to Roma women’s rights and their social integration, as well as the extent to which gender is incorporated in other national Roma inclusion strategies and policies

Human rights abuses, violence against Romani women:

Domestic violence:

Expert studies and ethnographic fieldwork show that large numbers⁸ of Romani women suffer physical or sexual violence committed by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives. There are several human rights reports which give accounts of the violence against Romani women. For example, the research which was carried out by the European Roma Rights Center and their partner organizations⁹ in Serbia shows that great number of Romani women have been victims of domestic violence at the hands of their husbands, in-laws and other family members, in many cases over long periods of time. Out of 160 Romani women interviewed, 79 did not answer questions regarding violence against women. The silence is due to the nature of this extremely sensitive issue. Of the 81 that answered the questions, 63 had suffered, or currently suffer, violence, while only 18 stated that they had never been victims of violence.

The great majority of violence and human rights abuses against Romani women goes under-reported due to a number of factors: First, violence against women is still accepted in some

⁷ See *EIGE Factsheet*, <http://www.eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EIGE-100-inequalities-Factsheet.pdf>

⁸ See for example: USAID: Domestic Violence in Europe and Eurasia 2006, http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/docs/domestic_violence_study_final.pdf

⁹ The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Bibija, Eureka and Women’s Space, (hereafter “partners”), with financial support from the Open Society Institute’s Public Health Program, jointly provided parallel report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (hereafter “Committee”), commenting on the Initial Report of the Republic of Serbia (hereafter “Serbia”), submitted under Article 18 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereafter “Convention”). at its 38th Session. <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/media/03/7C/m0000037C.pdf>

patriarchal societies, thus Romani families who mirror social values in an even more traditional way in regard to this oppressive practice. Secondly, there is a fear of further stigmatizing the group by exposing intra-group violence. Thirdly, perpetrators of violence against women are rarely held accountable for their acts, so discouraging women from seeking legal help. Fourth, as there is a general mistrust between the police and the Roma communities, Romani women fear further victimisation on the part of the police (and/or others)¹⁰. In addition, similarly as in the case of female victims of the majority society, there are a number of practical issues that make it virtually impossible for young, uneducated Romani girls and women to escape these situations. These include lack of alternative housing, inadequate economic means to survive on their own, and/or lack of employment opportunities.

Arranged marriage, forced marriage and child marriage

In some Romani communities arranged marriage, child marriage and forced marriage are still prevalent as „traditional practices”. One of the most enlightening reports on these issues was written by the Romani Criss staff members, Nicoleta Bitu and Crina Morteau. Their report underlines the need for common action, which should be undertaken by the Roma community, as well as the national authorities, to support Roma children in benefiting from all of their legal rights and, wherever the case may be, to raise parents’ awareness regarding their children’s need to enjoy a normal development and to gain social status via their own choices¹¹.

Arranged child marriage is a human rights violation, which exposes girls to sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as precluding educational and employment opportunities for girls. Child marriage also has a significant impact on the health situation of Romani girls. Romani girls faced increased risk of complications during pregnancy and delivery, which may even lead to

¹⁰ Empowering Women or Perpetuating Victimhood: Minority Ethnic and Roma Women’s Experiences of Domestic Violence Policy and Service Provision. IMECE Turkish Speaking Women’s Group, London Training and Employment Network, Regional Social Welfare Resource Centre November 2010. <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article985&lang=en>

¹¹ Nicoleta Bitu and Crina Morteau, *Are the Rights of the Child Negotiable?: The Case of Early Marriages within Roma Communities in Romania* by The report realized with the support of the UNICEF representation in Romania, within the *Early Marriages within Roma Communities: Rule of Law, Cultural Autonomy and Individual Rights (of Children and Women) Project*, Bucharest, 2009, Romani Criss. See also the project *Life is wonderful. Preventing Child Marriages* by Center Amalipe in 2010 made possible by the Daphne III. Project of the European Commission.

to death. Infant mortality rates are increased and significantly higher when compared with the non-Roma infant mortality rate.

Trafficking and enforced prostitution:

To date, research and data have been very limited on the issue of trafficking and enforced prostitution of Romani youth and women in Central and Eastern Europe, despite numerous reports on trafficking, highlighting the fact that minority groups, particularly Romani communities (in Europe), or girls who grow up in orphanages (among them, Roma children are over-represented in East–Central Europe) are affected by this kind of human rights violation.¹²

The research¹³, conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, by the European Roma Rights Center indicates that Roma are highly vulnerable to trafficking due to structural forms of discrimination and poverty which result in low socio-economic status, low educational achievements and high levels of unemployment. Based on information gathered during primary interviews with law enforcement authorities, anti-trafficking service providers and Romani and non-Romani NGOs, Roma are perceived to represent 50-80% of trafficking victims in Bulgaria, 40-80% in Hungary, 70% in Slovakia, up to 50% in parts of Romania and up to 70% in parts of the Czech Republic. Also, we have to emphasize that very few Roma were reported to access victim prevention and protection services in the target countries. In general, prevention of trafficking and forced prostitution does not take place due to the dramatic decrease of social protection systems which fail to provide appropriate protection for the Romani women and Romani youth who are most vulnerable to trafficking and sexual exploitation¹⁴

According to Hungarian women rights NGO activists, “25-30% of prostitutes in Amsterdam¹⁵, and 98-99% in Zurich are Hungarian citizens of whom 80-85% are Romani women¹⁶. Based

¹² See for example the U.S. Department of State, The 10th annual Trafficking in Persons Report, 2010, on Hungary, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/142983.pdf>; or Hungary – NGO Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, 11th session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council, November 2010.

¹³ ERRC Conference Facilitates Stakeholder Discussion of Trafficking in Romani Communities 10 December 2010, <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=3797>

¹⁴ Rita Izsák, 'The European Romani Women's Movement – International Roma Women's Network'. AWID, 2008. [http://www.awid.org/eng/Media/Files/Case-study-of-European-Romani_Oct-29/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.awid.org/eng/Media/Files/Case-study-of-European-Romani_Oct-29/(language)/eng-GB)

¹⁵ http://webcast.tv2.hu/dynamic/index.php?m=video&video_id=390032

on information provided by NGO activists from Zurich and Amsterdam stating that the majority of women in prostitution have been trafficked and/or exploited. This phenomenon is one of the most poorly discussed topics even amongst Romani women activists.

Romani women and children threatened by right wing politicians and extreme right groups

There is an increasing violence, threat and intimidation of Romani women and children by extreme right political groups. Since 2008, in many EU countries extremist political parties and politicians have sharpened their anti-Romani rhetoric and actions, creating a climate in which violations against Roma, are more likely to occur with impunity. For example, the Mayor of a Hungarian town, Edeleny, and a FIDESZ MP, stated during a press conference that pregnant Romani women hit their bellies with rubber hammers and took harmful medicines to increase the chances that their child would be born with disabilities in order to receive increased state financial aid.¹⁷ The ‘Hungarian Guard’, a paramilitary organisation with an explicitly racist agenda, continues to operate openly, despite a decree by the Supreme Court banning it in 2009. Even today in Hungary in 2011, it is reported by several activists that Romani women and children are one of the prime target of threats and intimidation by a neo-Nazi group in the village of Gyöngyöspata¹⁸.

Assessing Multiple Disadvantages in Education

It is a widely accepted notion that equal access to quality education would increase the employment opportunities of Roma. With respect to access to education, ethnicity, social status, and rural/urban divides combine to structure and often curtail opportunities for individuals and groups. There is a general scarcity of data disaggregated by ethnicity in the

¹⁶ Data on nationality/citizenship is provided by official sources in Amsterdam and Zurich (prostitutes are registered by the authorities in both cities), however, references on Roma ethnicity are based on the perceptions of local NGO activists, social workers and public officers.

¹⁷ See <http://www.168ora.hu/itthon/a-ciganyok-a-csaladi-potlekert-gumikalapacsot-vagy-gyogyszert-a-magzatnak-42894.html>

¹⁸ Társaság a Szabadságjogokért (TASZ): Report and Legal Position on the Situation in Gyöngyöspata. http://tasz.hu/files/tasz/imce/gyongyospata-legal_position.pdf

field of education¹⁹ (just like in other fields of social life²⁰), and most reports and studies have focused on ethnicity only, highlighting the remarkable discrepancies in education between Roma and non-Roma, with few studies also exploring the educational differences between Romani men and women, or those between Romani and non-Romani women (e.g. EUMAP, 2007)²¹. Further gender-sensitive research in this field is urgently needed, as the findings of currently available studies suggest.

Literacy rates are one of the indicators of the multiple disadvantages that Romani women face. The gap in literacy rates for Romani women is not only a gender one, but also an ethnic one. Data from Bulgaria show significant differences in literacy between Bulgarian Roma women and majority Bulgarian women. According to the 2001 Bulgarian census, 23 only 4.23 percent of Romani women have secondary education, and a tiny fraction (0.24 percent) completed higher education. At the same time, 40.54 percent of majority women in Bulgaria have completed secondary education; 18.79 percent of them have completed higher education. Thus, the participation rate of non-Romani women in the education system is almost ten times higher than that of Romani women. The most severe aspect of this general pattern is the discrepancy in literacy. As the same census data shows, the illiteracy rate among Romani women is eight times higher than among non-Romani women in Bulgaria (18.83 percent for Romani women, compared to 2.29 percent for non-Romani women). Presumably, there is a similar education pattern in other European countries as well.

In Hungary, there are significant discrepancies in education attainment between Romani women and men as reported by Péter Farkas²². Farkas measured the overall education achievement of parents of a group of Roma students. According to his findings, there is a significant difference between Romani women's and men's overall education achievement especially at the high school level, in vocational or grammar school. Only 5.8 percent of Romani female parents graduated from vocational school, compared with 17.5 percent of male parents who had finished vocational school. Other social divisions also affect the

¹⁹ OSI, *No Data—No Progress. Country Findings, Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005–2015*. Budapest: Open Society Foundation/ Roma Initiatives, .August 2010. http://www.edumigrom.eu/sites/default/files/field_attachment/news/node-17841/OSI_No-data-no-progress-country-reports_2010.pdf

²⁰ Alexandra Oprea, 'The Erasure of Romani Women in Statistical Data: Limits of the Race Versus Gender Approach,' OSI EUMAP, 2003, http://www.soros.org/resources/articles_publications/articles/roma-data-20030403

²¹ Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma, Volume 1, 2007, OSI EUMAP, 2007.

²² Péter Farkas Péter, 'A roma tanulók iskolai sikerességének és a roma kisebbség helyzetének javítását szolgáló eszközök és a Nemzeti Fejlesztési Terv' (Tools aimed at promoting the educational achievements of the Roma pupils and the situation of the Roma minority and the National Development Plan). *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* 2002. nov.

education chances for Romani women. The impact of rural-urban divisions on the education levels is also significant.

Lack of Access to Employment

Employment is a principal means for the greater integration of Romani women. The international development community overwhelmingly agrees on this point, as illustrated by reports concerning Roma labor market characteristics in Central and Southeast Europe released by the United Nations Development Fund²³, or the World Bank²⁴. Both studies found that unemployment rates were significantly higher among Roma than (non-Roma) majority communities. Despite the fact that, at the time, these studies were among the most comprehensive in the region, it is noteworthy to mention that they lacked data on gender differences in Roma unemployment. Most recent studies integrate an awareness of gender differences in Roma employment, or unemployment. ²⁵ A study carried out by the UNDP on Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe in 2006²⁶ includes gender disaggregated data on each of the policy fields that it covers, including employment. Data on unemployment and employment rates by sex, which were collected for this study, show significant differences for Roma, but also for the majority population. Based on these findings, the report concludes that Romani women face multiple discrimination.

Research carried out for a 2005 Shadow Report On the Situation of Romani Women in the Republic of Macedonia submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women²⁷ showed that out of 202 Romani women between the ages of 18 and 54 years, 51 percent were unemployed, eight percent were employed in state institutions as cleaners, five percent were employed in private firms without social insurance, four percent were self-employed with social insurance, and 34 percent were working on the black market

²³ UNDP, *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope: Vulnerability Profiles for Decade of Roma Inclusion Countries*. Bratislava: Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, United Nations Development Programme, 2005.

²⁴ Dena Ringold, Mitchell A. Orenstein, Erika Wilkens, *Roma in an expanding Europe : breaking the poverty cycle*, Washington, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – The World Bank, 2005.

²⁵ See e.g.: Angéla Kóczé (ed., 2010) *Nehéz sorsú asszonyok feketén-fehéren: Roma nők munkaerő-piaci és megélhetési lehetőségei két kistérségben*. Kutatási beszámoló. (Hard life of women – in black and white. Employment and livelihood opportunities of Roma Women in two Micro-regions). Budapest: MTA Etnikai-Nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2010.

²⁶ UNDP, *At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe*, Bratislava: Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2006.

²⁷ See: Roma Centre of Skopje, NWP, ERRC, *Joint Submission: Shadow Report: On the Situation of Romani Women in the Republic of Macedonia*, October-November 2005, http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/macedonia_20051101

without any social insurance or protection. – these findings resemble data from other studies conducted in Europe²⁸

Lack of Access to Social Benefits:

Only very limited numbers of Romani women are employed, most of them are working in low-quality jobs, on temporary employment contracts, or in illegal forms of employment in which they fail to have full entitlements to contribution based social benefits. Moreover, those Romani women who are immigrants, or stateless, who lack documents and permanent addresses, are absolutely excluded from social insurance services. In most European countries pensions and certain social benefits are linked to employment history, therefore the majority of Romani women who have never been employed, or who have been working in marginal employment, or in the grey and black economy, will be totally left out of any long-term social services.²⁹

Intersectional Discrimination in Reproductive Health

Gender, ethnicity and class have a profound impact on the health status of Romani women. The World Health Organization (WHO) argues that *“across continents and cultures, established gender norms and values mean that women typically control less power and fewer resources than men. Not surprisingly, this often gives men an advantage – in the economic, political, and educational arenas, but also with regard to health and health care.”*³⁰ Ethnographic studies substantiate the existence of gender imbalances in health in Roma communities too. Available data shows higher rates of illness and mortality among Roma than the majority populations in European countries, moreover, a number of health and gender factors put Romani women at a relative disadvantage in comparison to Roma men. A range of

²⁸ Gábor Kertesi, Gábor, ‘Roma foglalkoztatás az ezredfordulón. A rendszerváltás maradandó sokkja’ [The employment of Roma at the end of the 20th century], *Szociológiai Szemle*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2005, pp. 57–87.

²⁹ See e.g. *European Commission: Ethnic minority and Roma women in Europe: A case for gender equality?* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4833&langId=en>

³⁰ See the World Health Organization webpage on women and gender:

<http://www.who.int/gender/genderandwomen/en/index.html>

health risks affect the reproductive lives of Romani women.³¹ Significant numbers of adolescent Romani girls – some of them at the early age of 11 or 12 – become mothers every year. Furthermore, some reproductive health problems are specific to Romani women; forced sterilization still occurs as a gendered manifestation of racism against Romani women and Roma communities in some countries of Central Europe, particularly, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic.³²

Lack of Access to financial services:

Access to financial services is fully determined by the economic situation of individuals or families. Romani women, have limited access to financial services. One of the reasons is that they do not have regular, secure and registered employment, and are consequently characterized as extremely “risky” debtors. Moreover, their property does not offer sufficient guarantee, e.g. for mortgage. The increased use across Europe of financial products (bank credits, loans) leaves many people belonging to the Roma minority behind, as patterns of non-use of financial services are related to issues such as: employment status, income, housing tenure, age, ethnicity and long-term sickness or disability. One significant barrier certain Roma communities encounter when accessing financial services, such as banking and insurance, is not having a permanent address, or the high risk of expulsion faced by mobile persons. Restricted access to official financial services fuels the development of illegal financial services. A recent development is that there are some pilot projects offering micro-credit to Roma, for example in Hungary, Spain, or Macedonian Bulgaria.³³

³¹ European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia: *Breaking the Barriers – Romani Women and Access to Public Health Care*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities 2003, <http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/ROMA-HC-EN.pdf>

³² The following reports discuss forced sterilization of Romani women: Coercive Sterilization of Romani women (ERRC 2008), at: http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/roma/events/romawomen_20080703/errcbrochure_20080703.pdf; Final Statement of the Public Defender of Rights in the Matter of Sterilizations Performed in Contravention of the Law and Proposed Remedial Measures (Ombudsman of the Czech Republic 2005), at: <http://www.ochrance.cz/documents/doc1142289721.pdf>; A.S. vs Hungary, Communication 4/2004 (Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 2004), at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/protocol/decisions-views/Decisionpercent204-2004percent20-percent20English.pdf>

³³ See e.g. ‘Evaluation of the Provision of Micro-Credit and Enterprise-Training to Roma Women Project’, 2007, <http://www.cds.com.mk/index.php/en/project-organizational-development/110-evaluation-of-the-provision-of-micro-credit-and-enterprise-training-to-roma-women-project.html>, <http://www.kiutprogram.hu>

On the basis of our report we propose the following recommendations.

Recommendations

to the European Commission:

- We deeply regret that the European Commission communication on “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” does not take into account gender equality in its recommendations, despite the recognition of the vulnerable situation of Romani women. The Framework does not offer clear guidance for developing or implementing national strategies. Moreover, it does not oblige member states to collect ethnic and gender based disaggregated data to allow proper evaluation and monitoring. We call therefore on the European Commission, and the Council, to ensure that gender equality will be mainstreamed in the national strategies and action plans, with and for Romani women organizations and with the full involvement and support of activists.
- The European Commission should develop ways of promoting understanding and concern among policy makers regarding intersectional discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and class, specific to the needs and interests of Romani women and girls. Moreover, they should urge policy makers to use data disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, and apply them in their work.³⁴

³⁴ These recommendations were also mentioned by Angela Kocze in front of the UN Commission on the Status of Women
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw51/panel1/Angela%20Kocze_FINAL.pdf

General Recommendations to Member States and EU accession countries:

- We call on the Member States and EU accession countries to ensure that Romani women activists and NGOs will be represented and consulted in the development of the national action plan
- We call on the Member States and EU accession countries to ensure that national strategies pay attention to Romani women's specific needs and include concrete benchmarks for the development of Romani women's social and economic status.
- We call on the Member States and EU accession countries to ensure that national strategies will encourage empowerment, capacity-building, and leadership programs for Romani women and girls, who play a particular role in the community building process.
- Governments should establish a data collection method, in line with international standards on data protection, to document the situation and needs of Roma with particular attention to women and girls. Such data should be disaggregated on the basis of ethnicity and gender. The data and information gathered should enable governments to develop, evaluate and monitor issues, policies and courses of action to address the specific needs of Romani women, girls.

General Recommendations to NGOs and INGOs

- We call on NGOs and INGOs to include at least 30% of Romani women representatives in the future coordination mechanisms regarding Roma issues and the development of the national action plans. Also gender equality, in terms of content and gender parity, as the number of Romani women speakers and rapporteurs should be taken into account

Specific Recommendations to Member States and EU accession countries

We call on the Member States and EU accession countries to address, in their national strategies, the following Romani women related issues, programs and actions:

- design a specific leadership program for Romani women which has the potential to participate in local or national decision, policy and legislation making bodies
- empowering and allowing Romani women NGOs to make use of EU structural and agricultural funds.
- offering adequate assistance to Romani victims of domestic violence as well (shelters etc.) creating special programs / scholarships for Roma girls to become police officers, to prevent this.
- to design a program combating child marriages and other forms of harmful practices (prevention programs, awareness raising programs for public servants, social workers, teachers) also preventing / combating women trafficking (prevention programs, awareness raising programs for the police and social workers). Moreover offer adequate assistance to Romani victims of sexual exploitation and enforced prostitution (special shelters etc.)
- design an action and programs which combat and prevent hate crimes, including hate speech, against the most vulnerable groups
- to create a specific educational mentoring and support system through community based education and social services from early childhood until college for Romani youth with specific attention to gender issues.
- increase the role of local government and support Romani parent's associations in mobilizing and supporting girls to keep them in the education system, at the lower secondary level. Increase public awareness of the benefits of girls' education with specific attention to Romani girls.
- revise school textbooks and curriculums to reflect positively on gender equality and include specifically Romani women and girls issues as well.

- raise gender awareness among policy makers in the education system with specific attention to Romani women and girls' issues. Integrate gender analysis in the setting of targets for enrolment levels in vocational and higher education.
- increase Romani women's and girls' participation in the education system and provide scholarships for them to gain from higher education
- create a targeted employment program with a professional training component for Romani women particularly in the education, social and healthcare system
- ensure safe/legal work arrangements for Romani women
- design and access to family planning (awareness raising, financial accessibility) measures to improve the maternal health of Romani women
- preventing and combating enforced sterilization of Romani women in the healthcare system
- create micro loan systems (aimed at small business start-ups, entrepreneurship) where Romani women are the preferred beneficiaries