



# Ethnic minority and Roma women in Europe A case for gender equality?



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# Ethnic minority and Roma women in Europe: A case for gender equality?

**Synthesis report**

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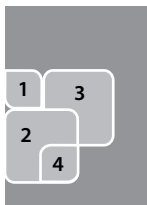


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# Executive summary

## 1. Introduction

The existing evidence suggests that ethnic minority and especially Roma women are the most vulnerable to multiple discrimination and present higher risks of social exclusion and poverty than the women of the native population and minority men. There are, however, differences in the social and economic conditions of women among and within ethnic minorities and across European countries that should be considered in order to frame suggestions for policymaking.

This comparative report presents the socio-economic conditions and perspectives of women belonging to disadvantaged ethnic minorities, with special attention to Roma women. The analysis focuses on those ethnic minorities that suffer the most disadvantages in a given national context, mainly in terms of access to education, housing, healthcare, social benefits, and to employment and financial services. The report also presents the main legislative and policy responses developed at the national level to target their social inclusion with some good practice examples. The information in this report is provided by the national experts of the EGGSI Network of experts in gender equality, social inclusion, healthcare and long-term care and covers 30 European countries (EU and EEA/EFTA) <sup>(1)</sup>.

The report is organised in two parts: Part 1 (from Chapter 1 to 4) presents the situation of women belonging to disadvantaged ethnic minorities in general, while Part 2 (from Chapter 5 to 8) focuses on Roma women. Some overall conclusions are presented in the final chapter.

## 2. Disadvantaged ethnic minority women in European countries

### 2.1. Definition and distribution of disadvantaged ethnic minorities

There is no recognised Europe-wide definition of ethnic minorities or minorities in general. The definition considered in the report is the broad one provided by the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their

Full Participation in the Labour Market, according to which: 'the umbrella term ethnic minority is used [...] not as a legal category but as a broad and purely descriptive term (persons not belonging to the ethnic majority)' <sup>(2)</sup>. This means that in addition to established ethnic minorities (who may be of immigrant or non-immigrant origin, citizens or not), the report also covers information on recent migrants, asylum seekers and/or refugees, the Roma and stateless persons.

Not all ethnic minorities are in a disadvantaged situation. Some, usually living in border areas and often formally recognised as minority groups (national/linguistic/religious/ethnic minorities), are well-protected by the national legal framework, which usually preserves their cultural identity with special provisions for political representation, education, social services, employment and fiscal conditions. However, in all Member States one can find disadvantaged communities whose language, religion, culture and origin differ from those of the majority society, although they are often not recognised as ethnic minorities. Typical examples are third-country immigrants, asylum seekers, and stateless persons, such as the Roma. In some countries, second and third-generation immigrants also face socio-economic deprivation and discrimination <sup>(3)</sup>.

The disadvantaged groups considered in this report are therefore not a homogeneous population. Although disadvantaged ethnic minorities present some common features in the disadvantages and discrimination they face, there are significant differences in relation to their settlement model, culture and religion, legal status and period of migration.

In the EU-15/EEA countries, as well as in Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia, disadvantaged ethnic minorities consist mainly of citizens with a different ethnic origin, persons with an immigrant background (either recent immigrants from third-countries and/or second- and third-generations), asylum seekers and refugees.

(1) EGGSI is the European Commission's network of 30 national experts (EU and EEA countries) in the fields of gender equality, social inclusion, health and long-term care. The network is coordinated by the Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale and Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, and undertakes an annual programme of policy-oriented research and reports to Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

(2) *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market (2007), p. 28. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(3) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries* — report prepared by the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment (2006). Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. p. 90. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>



In most of the eastern European Member States (e.g. Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia) <sup>(4)</sup>, on the other hand, immigration is a limited and very recent phenomena, while ethnic minorities have always been numerous, due to the complex historical past of these countries. Besides the Roma in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia, the Turks constitute a disadvantaged ethnic group in Bulgaria.

Throughout Europe, no precise and complete official data are available on ethnic minority women: data disaggregated by sex are lacking, as are quantitative and qualitative studies. In many countries ethnic registration is not allowed, while in others the official statistics contain no information on ethnicity or self-identification. There are, however, some data on migration flows which provide information on the number of foreign-born women in European countries. The existing statistics <sup>(5)</sup> show an increasing feminisation of migration flows into EU-15 countries from eastern Europe and third countries, due to the increase in family reunification, family migration and the migration of single and lone breadwinner women.

## 2.2. Gender and ethnicity: the dimensions of social exclusion for ethnic minority women

Overall, women from disadvantaged ethnic minorities experience *greater risks of social exclusion and poverty* than the men from their community and ethnic majority women, especially in accessing employment, education, health and social services. To some extent this is due to the gender roles persisting in some of the most disadvantaged ethnic minority (such as Roma) communities. The risks of social exclusion are particularly relevant for highly mobile communities, such as nomadic and migrant groups.

### Educational level and access to the education system

In contrast to the rest of the population, in most European countries ethnic minority women often show poorer *educational attainment* than ethnic majority women and men of the same community. Their lack of education is, indeed, one of the main factors behind their social exclusion and poverty, as well as that of their children, and it influences their employment status, the quality of their work, and also their access to healthcare.

Access to adult education and training is also more difficult for ethnic minority women than men, due to their household duties, their generally greater isolation and lower language proficiency.

There are, however, differences among ethnic minority groups. Migrant women from eastern European countries, for example, tend to have a higher level of education on average than women from other countries, but their qualifications are often not recognised. The data on second-generation immigrants also show a greater investment in education and a reduction in the educational gap with the native population, with girls of some ethnic minority groups performing better than the boys, especially in countries with comprehensive educational systems and support for women's education (like the Scandinavian countries). Girls and young women of some ethnic minorities, such as the Roma, or from Africa and various Asian countries are, however, more likely to leave school earlier than boys, due to their family responsibilities and the persisting gender roles in their communities.

### Housing conditions

Disadvantaged ethnic minorities often live in *segregated low-income neighbourhoods* with poor access to public transport and social services: either in assigned residential homes in socially poor areas (urban ghettos), or in overcrowded housing. Usually they suffer discrimination in the private housing market and pay higher rents than native tenants, and tend to have irregular contracts which do not protect them against eviction, especially if they are irregular immigrants. Segregated settlements, while reducing the feeling of social isolation and reinforcing the community networks, may translate, especially for women, into greater isolation from the majority population and higher pressures on their traditional role within their community and household.

### Health conditions and access to the healthcare system

Their poor socio-economic conditions increase the health risks faced by disadvantaged ethnic minority women, reducing their life expectancy compared to native women (as in the case of Roma women). Early and multiple pregnancies, abortions and psychosomatic diseases are frequent, especially among women

(4) EGGSI Network national reports of Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, 2008.

(5) OECD (2007), *International Migration Outlook, Sopemi annual report 2007*, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Paris.



from developing countries. Access to healthcare services is difficult due to linguistic and often cultural and religious barriers, as well as lack of information, low income levels and non-eligibility. For illegal immigrants and/or stateless communities, the lack of legal documents is a considerable barrier; residence and/or work permits being required to access health services in most countries. The result is that a significant number of migrants and ethnic minorities have no proper health insurance and support and this also affects access to long-term care. The lack of training and experience among health service workers to address cultural and religious issues also reduces accessibility to these services, especially for ethnic minority women.

### Access to social benefits

Due to their generally low-quality jobs, temporary employment contracts or illegal forms of employment, many immigrant and ethnic minority women fail to accumulate full entitlements for contribution-based *social benefits*. On the contrary, they are more likely to be on assistance-based social benefits in those countries where these are available. In particular, one-parent families (usually single mothers) receive a significant proportion of their income from the social security system (for example in Scandinavian countries and the UK). However, irregular immigrants and stateless communities (such as the Roma) are mostly excluded from these benefits, lacking documents and a permanent address.

### Access to employment, job quality and working conditions

In the labour market, women from disadvantaged ethnic groups tend to show *higher inactivity and unemployment rates* than the minority men and ethnic majority women. This is generally due to their traditional domestic role in the family, especially in those ethnic communities where traditional forms of gender roles prevail, but also to the lack of qualifications and the prejudice they often face from employers. The cultural influence of the country of origin appears to be particularly relevant and persistent in influencing the labour market participation of women: for example, women from eastern Europe and the Far East usually show higher activity and employment rates than other ethnic minority women <sup>(6)</sup>.

(6) On the cultural influence of the country of origin in relation to the labour market participation of women see also Fernandez, R. and Fogli, A. (2005), *Culture: An Empirical Investigation of beliefs, Work and Fertility*, CEPR Discussion Paper, No 5089.

When employed, ethnic minority women are more likely to work in informal jobs with low wages, especially in the female-dominated cleaning and personal care services, while self-employment is infrequent among them. This reduces their eligibility for unemployment benefits or other contribution-based benefits (i.e. child-raising allowances), especially in countries where social benefits are related to the employment status and social assistance is residual, as in certain southern European countries (Greece and Italy, for example). Even women with high educational levels are often employed in low-skilled jobs and their qualifications are not recognised. Indeed, the OECD data <sup>(7)</sup> shows that foreign-born women in most European countries present a higher rate of over-qualification in relation to their occupations than foreign-born men and native women.

### Access to financial services

Disadvantaged ethnic minorities have limited access to financial services, and women face even greater difficulties, because they tend not to have regular, secure employment and their property does not afford sufficient guarantee. This makes it difficult for them to obtain funds for their entrepreneurship, to buy houses or even to open a bank account. Access to financial services is also hampered by language problems and scant knowledge of the finance system. The examples given in the EGGSI national reports also cite discrimination, in terms of both gender and ethnicity, on the part of lending institutions, and the scarce diffusion of other forms of credit, such as micro-credit.

### Multiple discrimination of ethnic minority women

Ethnic minority women tend to be discriminated against for more reasons and in more spheres of life than men. Besides sex discrimination both outside and within their communities, they often suffer from social prejudice as ethnic minorities because of cultural and religious differences.

The labour market is a significant area in which immigrant and ethnic minority women find themselves disadvantaged due to gender bias. They usually face significant prejudice, have less power of negotiation and are more vulnerable than men to unfair treatment and exploitation, especially when employed in the informal economy and private households.

(7) OECD (2007), *International Migration Outlook, Sopemi Annual report 2007*, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Paris.

Discrimination at work can also find expression in employment in unskilled and low-paid jobs with poor career prospects, even for highly qualified women.

Furthermore, religion and cultural traditions constitute relevant factors affecting the conditions of women within the ethnic minorities themselves. Ethnic minority women with religious and cultural values similar to those of the majority population experience problems regarding access to the labour market and a secure income, often being lone mothers or the family breadwinner (as is the case for the example of women migrants from Latin American and eastern European countries). Ethnic minority women within more male-dominated communities, however, can also experience discrimination as women within their communities due to the accentuation of their traditional role as care-givers.

Domestic violence is harder to recognise, since women from disadvantaged ethnic minorities may not be aware of their rights, tend to have scant knowledge of the services available and are usually in a weaker position than the women of the majority population, being socio-economically more dependent on their partners, especially when their residence permit is tied to marriage and family reunification.

Specific problems are faced by women victims of trafficking in human beings (often women from Romania, Africa and eastern European countries not belonging to the EU) who suffer violence or forced prostitution.

### 2.3. Legislative and policy responses in European countries

The legislative and policy responses of European countries reflect both the specific characteristics of the settlement patterns these countries have been experiencing and the structure of the national welfare regimes.

#### Relevant legislation

All the EU/EEA countries have developed anti-discrimination legislation which includes, among others, measures for protection against discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity as well as on the grounds of sex, and which have also been furthered by the recent transposition of the EU directives on anti-discrimination (such as the racial equality directive and the employment equality directive), gender equality, and the status of third-country nationals

(such as the directive on long-term residents)<sup>(8)</sup>. The EGGSI experts point out that, aside from being covered by the generally applicable anti-discrimination and gender equality framework, usually there are no specific provisions with regard to equal opportunities for ethnic minority women per se, except for legislation regulating the status of pregnant illegal immigrants and legislation regarding human trafficking in some countries (such as Italy and Greece). The lack of systematic gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Directive 2000/43 is also reported in the Commission communication on its application<sup>(9)</sup>.

Of the European countries, it is in particular the eastern European Member States (such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) which legally recognise ethnic minorities, given the great number of citizens with different ethnic backgrounds in these countries, while immigration is still a limited and relatively recent phenomenon. In these countries legislation is mainly related to the protection of the languages, traditions and cultural identity of formally recognised ethnic minority groups and to the right of these ethnic minorities to use their language in public administration (under certain conditions) and participate in political life.

In the EU-15 Member States and the EEA countries, the relevant legislation is related mostly to the legal instruments regulating immigration, especially with regard to residence rights, even though in some of these countries (such as Austria, Germany and Italy) there are legal instruments designed to protect the culture, traditions and language of formally recognised ethnic minority groups.

The *legal status* of ethnic minorities is a relevant factor in explaining their access to social services and the labour market. The lack of legal status is particularly problematic for illegal immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and for stateless communities who have to deal with problems of being ever exposed to

(8) European Council (2003a), *Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents*, Official Journal of the European Union, No L 16/44, 23 January 2004. [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/123034\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/123034_en.htm)

(9) European Commission (2006b), *The application of Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of Equal Treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM(2006) 643 final, Official Journal L 180, 19/07/2000 P. 0022 – 0026, Brussels. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0643:FIN:EN:PDF>

risks of eviction or expulsion from a country. In most cases residence in the country depends on obtaining a work permit, which is possible only if there is a regular work contract. This can be a particular problem for ethnic minority women, who are more vulnerable to losing their right to temporary residence due to difficulties in showing continuous employment as they usually work in non-regulated sectors and the black economy. Lately, in some EU-15 countries (such as France, Germany and Italy) legislation on immigration (entry and residence in the territory of the state in question and legislation on family reunification) of third-country immigrants has been tightened.

Legislation on benefit rights in most countries involves permanent residence and citizenship, even though in some countries, such as Spain, illegal immigrants also have access to some social benefits. In most countries only emergency health service and the right to education are extended to illegal immigrants and their children.

Ethnic minorities and especially women, tend to be politically underrepresented in most European countries.

### Integration policy models

In recent years, European countries have begun to adopt specific policies targeting ethnic minorities and immigrants. Little attention is, however, still being paid to existing gender differences and to the incorporation of a gender-mainstreaming-approach into these policies even though some interesting projects are being implemented at the national and local level. Policies explicitly addressing ethnic minority women appear to be more successful, as evaluations in the UK and the Netherlands have shown.

*Language learning and bilingual education* are the main areas of intervention, specially aimed at newly arrived immigrants. In a few countries (such as the Netherlands), there are courses designed specifically for ethnic minority women, although only a few countries provide education in the ethnic minority language (Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia). In the UK and Spain an education fund has been created to overcome the education gap, while in Estonia there is a fund for better training of teachers in Russian bilingual schools.

In relation to *welfare policies*, ethnic minorities in general and ethnic minority women in particular are usually eligible for social benefits on the basis of their

disadvantaged socio-economic situation; in some countries (such as Luxemburg and Norway) there are some social benefits specifically assigned to asylum seekers. Women of disadvantaged ethnic minorities are, however, usually more vulnerable to policy change than men, and this is the case, for example, with the recent trend towards *workfare policies* implemented in the Scandinavian countries, the UK and Germany. These policies aim at *activating* recipients of welfare benefits, who are required to participate in job search and job training programmes in order to continue to receive benefits. These policies tend to be more effective when provisions are made for the specific multiple barriers ethnic minority women face in entering the labour market, as they usually have many children or are lone mothers and have limited access to care services and well-paid jobs.

A specific problem is the difficulty in *reaching ethnic minority women*, when welfare policies do not explicitly target them, due to their greater isolation and segregation within some communities as compared with the men. At the moment, it is mainly the *healthcare policies* of a limited number of EU countries that take into account the different cultural backgrounds of ethnic minority women by involving intercultural mediators, providing assistance and translation into foreign languages and showing sensitivity to cultural issues.

By contrast, in most of the EU Member States, the *housing policies* usually do not target ethnic minorities directly (except for Greece, Italy and the UK), but as low-income groups they tend to have access to social housing programmes (except for irregular immigrants and stateless minorities).

### 2.4. Examples of good practices

The report presents some programmes and projects directly targeted at ethnic minority women, considered as good practices by the national experts. The most represented fields of interventions are: labour market integration, social inclusion, education, legal counselling, housing and culture.

Some *labour market* projects offer job training and qualification in order to promote and support the labour market integration of ethnic minority women (Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, etc). Others aim at reducing cultural and social barriers, as well as informing women about the specific norms and traditions of the labour market in the host country (Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden). Enhancing

understanding and recognition of the needs of ethnic minority women especially among the employers (Luxembourg) is another important field of intervention, which is, however, somewhat underdeveloped. Other projects aim at facilitating ethnic entrepreneurship (Sweden).

Distribution of information material in different languages and the multicultural training of health workers are among the actions carried out to reduce cultural and language barriers and facilitate the access of ethnic minority women to the *healthcare system*. Some projects, on the other hand, focus on specific health problems, for example helping the disabled of national minorities (Latvia), African women with HIV and women who have suffered from violence or have mental health problems (Belgium), as well as women exposed to health risks having suffered genital mutilation (such as Somali women in Sweden).

To help overcome isolation and marginalisation and to face everyday problems, some projects support *neighbourhood and socialisation activities* (Belgium, Spain), through mediation services, psychological and legal support, and helping women to get in touch with other women.

Legal *counselling* projects provide information on basic or specific rights related to work inclusion, housing, temporary and permanent residence permits, and marriage laws affecting bi-national couples.

Only a few projects address *intercultural information and diversity training* of teachers, employers and health professionals (such as in Greece and Portugal).

### 3. Roma minority women in Europe

Throughout Europe the Roma communities are at high risk of marginalisation. The dimensions of disadvantage are similar to those experienced by women from other ethnic minority groups, but Roma women typically face additional or more pronounced forms of marginalisation and discrimination.

#### 3.1. Definitions and distributions of Roma communities in European countries

Data on the situation of Roma women are particularly scarce, even though most of the sociological studies show that Roma women experience greater social exclusion than Roma men and the women of the majority community, especially in accessing employ-

ment, education, health and social services, partly as a result of the gender roles that persist in Roma communities.

However, the Roma are *not a homogeneous population*: at the Europe-wide level there are a considerable number of communities differentiated by settlement model, culture and religion, legal status, language, area of origin and period of migration. Roma can be mobile persons with a nomadic culture, or sedentary, such as many of the Sinti of the first migration waves, residing permanently in specific areas of some EU-15 Member States (such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain). The vast majority of Roma living in Europe are sedentary. The legal status of Roma communities is highly differentiated across European countries and within each country (where they are present), according to the specific sub-group considered. As in the case of other ethnic minorities, the main difference is between national citizens (who may have the status of ethnic minorities or national minorities), asylum seekers and refugees, and immigrants (legal or illegal).

As in the case of ethnic minority women in general, *precise and complete official data* are unavailable for Roma women; moreover in some European countries there are no accurate data on the size of the Roma population, even if, according to recent estimates, 'there are possibly over 10 million Roma in Europe<sup>(10)</sup>'.

#### 3.2. Roma-specific social disadvantages and exclusion: a gender perspective

Roma families differ from other families in certain demographic features: high fertility and mortality rates and consequently a large child population, and, conversely, a smaller number of senior citizens. Life expectancy among Roma men and women is usually lower than that of the majority of the population in all EU Member States, due to their living conditions and poor access to health services.

#### Educational level and access to the education system

Roma communities are characterised by low educational levels with a high rate of illiteracy and poor

(10) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, report prepared by the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels.

school attendance by the children. Irregular participation in education and a high drop-out rate at around 12–14 years of age are widespread among Roma children due to economic factors, greater mobility between places for some Roma communities and little regard for education. Roma children also experience greater difficulties in adapting to school rules and have more learning problems, not only because of language barriers, but also because of the lack of awareness among teachers and schools of their specific needs and culture and the racism against them. Roma children are more likely than other children to be segregated in special schools or classes due to their greater learning difficulties, the reluctance of schools to enrol them, the pressure of the ethnic majority parents not to have Roma children in class with their children and the isolation of Roma settlements.

Roma girls display even poorer educational performance than Roma boys. They normally leave school earlier than the boys, due to their family responsibilities and the Roma culture, which does not allow girls to be exposed to the outside culture and considers women the custodians of traditional values. The low educational level of Roma women is particularly negative because it affects future generations, as the children of mothers with higher levels of education are more likely to attend school than children of mothers with low educational levels.

### Housing conditions

The resistance that Roma encounter in their search for adequate *accommodation* often results in provisional solutions and difficulties with neighbours. The prejudices of the ethnic majority population and the weaker economic position of the Roma make it hard for them to find accommodation on the private housing market. One of the major problems Roma encounter is the lack of formal land ownership or property titles for houses. The Roma usually live in segregated, isolated districts with poor access to public transport and social services (for example in Germany), or in shanty camps on the outskirts of urban areas (as in Italy, Spain and some eastern European Member States), or caravan sites (the UK). As a consequence, living conditions in Roma settlements are frequently poor, with problems of extreme overcrowding, lack of basic facilities, such as running water and electricity, and high risks of eviction. This makes the domestic workload particularly onerous and stressful for Roma women, who spend most of their lives in these hous-

ing conditions, and contributes to aggravating their health problems.

### Health conditions and access to the healthcare system

Roma women and men have an average life expectancy at birth considerably lower than the rest of the population. This is a consequence of their bad housing and living conditions, as well as their patchy access to screening and healthcare.

Roma women tend to experience greater health risks than non-Roma women, because of early and multiple pregnancies and abortions, a heavy workload at home, poor housing, malnutrition, etc. There is very scant use of family planning services among the Roma, partly explained by cultural beliefs that discourage the use of contraception: abortion is still adopted as a method of 'birth control' even though the tendency is decreasing. In some countries (such as Slovakia and Hungary) cases of imposed sterilisation of young Roma women have been reported. Many pregnant Roma women (including underage Roma mothers) are not registered with a family physician and fail to go through pre-natal check-ups because of lack of information and cultural barriers such as lack of trust in professional care and the difficulties of discussing their health problems with strangers, especially men.

Roma women use healthcare services less than the rest of the population, because medical treatment may conflict with the Roma rules of hygiene and modesty, and because they often feel excluded by the negative attitudes/racism/discrimination of some healthcare workers and hospitals. Moreover, social disorganisation and poverty are often underlying causes for reduced access to information, especially in isolated Roma communities. Their access to services is also hindered by language problems, as the Roma language lacks many specific words in the fields of medicine and health and social care.

On the other hand, Roma women are primary care providers within their families and communities and also beneficiaries of healthcare services (for example by going to the hospital to give birth) and, often, they represent the main liaison between their families/communities and these services. For this reason many programmes aimed at providing social and health services to the Roma communities often involve Roma women as cultural mediators (as in Romania).



### Access to social benefits

The high inactivity and unemployment rates are a cause of the high level of dependency on social assistance benefits; informal and occasional employment prevents the Roma from accessing unemployment benefits or other contribution-based benefits. This is particularly the case for Roma women, who are more likely than Roma men to be inactive or unemployed and, if employed, to be so in the informal economy. In some countries the lack of identity documents (which is the case of many Roma) prevents their access to social assistance and other benefits. The difficulties in accessing social care services leave the care burden completely on Roma women.

### Access to employment, job quality and working conditions

Like other ethnic minority women, Roma women face greater difficulties in accessing the labour market than women belonging to the ethnic majority population, thus showing higher inactivity and unemployment rates. Roma women usually display higher levels of unemployment and inactivity given their low level of education and their intermittent work habits, due to their traditional domestic role in the family and their frequent pregnancies, but also to lack of qualifications and prejudice on the part of employers. Roma women are most often employed in auxiliary, unskilled, physically demanding work, and in seasonal and occasional labour in services (like cleaning) in the black or grey economy, which provide very low wages and prevent them from having access to social security benefits. Begging is also an activity predominantly carried out by women and children in large urban areas, while subsistence farming is predominantly an activity for women in rural areas.

### Access to financial services

Roma people, and particularly Roma women, have limited access to financial services, because they do not have regular, secure employment, their property does not offer sufficient guarantee, and they also suffer from discrimination on the part of lending institutions. Only recently have pilot projects offering micro-credit to Roma women been implemented in some countries (such as Spain, and the 'Training and enterprise creation' project in Bulgaria).

### 3.3. The specific situation of Roma women: a case of multiple discrimination

Being among the most deprived communities in Europe, Roma women and men face specific forms of prejudice and social exclusion induced by the negative attitudes of the ethnic majority population. Roma women in particular, coping with the usual difficulties of social inclusion borne by women belonging to the majority population, show additional difficulties aggravated by the specific Roma culture, which is based on 'traditional' and strictly separated gender roles, which may hamper the personal development of the girls and women.

Roma women are disadvantaged in many areas, even if the extent to which this results from discriminatory practices is not easy to assess, given the lack of data and studies on discriminatory perceptions. There is, however, agreement on the persistence of discrimination on the part of the broader national community, especially in terms of *education, health, employment, participation in public/political life*. Cases of discrimination vary from access to education/health services (i.e. staff prejudices or segregation in school/health units, maternity clinics), access to the labour market and job opportunities (due to prejudices on the part of employers, co-workers and, often, representatives of local institutions).

The other important source of discrimination lies *within the Roma communities* and is directly associated with the role of women in Roma culture and family structure. The traditional Roma family is fully patriarchal: the woman occupies a subordinate position and there is a clear division of work between tasks for women and for men: traditionally, the woman's role is mainly that of taking care of home and family and she has the responsibility for the transmission of traditional Roma culture and ethnicity between generations. Unlike the women in other ethnic minority groups, the Roma women start taking on adult-caring roles from the age of 11, are expected to marry young and have many children in life-long marriages. In some Roma communities, arranged marriage is a practice accepted by the women. These traditional home and family duties often prevent Roma women from entering the formal labour market and make it hard for them to combine work and family life.

Divorce, both for those married officially and for those who married traditionally, is not common among the Roma, especially if there are children. In the case of divorce, women are in the weaker position, as it is usually the father who takes custody of the children or gives them to the grandparents to take care of. This is why Roma women do not readily leave their husbands, even in very difficult marriages or in cases of domestic violence.

The traditional care-giver role of Roma girls and women is also an obstacle to their *education*, as they are often forced to leave school at an extremely young age to help care for younger siblings or carry out other household responsibilities.

In the absence of a secure job, Roma women who are single mothers or widows, or who have escaped domestic violence, face particularly acute problems when trying to secure economic well-being for their household. The precarious labour market position and extreme poverty of most young Roma women increase their *vulnerability* and their risk of resorting to prostitution or even delinquency as components of ‘subsidiary survival strategies’. Roma women may also be exploited in criminal activity, which is usually some form of illegal employment or, more seriously, trafficking.

In many European countries, the Roma minority *is not represented* in Parliament, even in countries where the Roma represent a large minority group. Roma women are generally politically underrepresented, even though there has recently been a tendency to become more engaged in grassroots organisations.

### 3.4. Legislative and policy models of inclusion

At the EU level, the Roma are generally covered by the existing anti-discrimination instruments. There is no specific EU legislation on Roma minorities as such. Non-legislative resolutions have, however, been adopted by the European Parliament. Especially significant in the context of this report is the April 2005 ‘Resolution on the situation of Roma women in the EU’ (2005/2164(INI)).

Throughout Europe the underlying assumption of national policies addressing the Roma is that their collective rights are properly protected — whatever their status: national citizens or foreigners — in the broader framework of legislation against racism,

discrimination and xenophobia, on the one hand, and of mainstream welfare provisions and benefits on the other hand. Only a few of the countries analysed — mostly in eastern Europe, where the Roma population is relatively large, and in Member States with a significant tradition of multi-ethnicity — have specific legislation regarding Roma minorities (although with no specific reference to Roma women and gender equality).

The absence of a legally acknowledged status of the Roma community is not incompatible with the design and implementation of policies targeted specifically at this community. In fact, the Roma are often the most disadvantaged recipients of ethnic minority policies, even though the EGGSI national reports show that targeted policies do not always reach the Roma to the same degree as other ‘more integrated’ ethnic minorities, and in particular tend not to reach Roma women.

National policymaking processes, in terms of Roma social inclusion, differ across European countries, especially in relation to the structure of the national welfare regimes. The demographical weight of the Roma and their social relevance is also important in accounting for the existence of targeted policies. As for their gender impact, the overall ‘equal opportunity approach’ of each country seems to be relevant in accounting for a gender differential outcome, however modest, in the welfare interventions implemented.

The poor knowledge of and data on Roma women’s social conditions and on their own views and expectations is reflected in policies. Roma women are hardly ever specifically targeted by policies and even gender-equality policies rarely address their specific needs and problems, which are widely unknown. The three policy areas of greater concern in a gender perspective are likely to be education, healthcare and employment opportunities, and a common feeling is that a special ‘cultural caution’ should be exercised in designing and implementing dedicated policies. Improved dialogue and involvement of different interest groups within the Roma community may help to prevent suspicion of or resistance to programmes aimed at empowering Roma women.

The *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15* initiative, promoted by nine eastern European countries <sup>(11)</sup> in

(11) i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org)



cooperation with several international institutions, is an interesting example of international cooperation on Roma social inclusion. This initiative considers as key areas of concern *education* (approached in terms of desegregation, integration, raising the educational level, better access to childhood services); employment (training and retraining, improvement of the level of Roma people's employment); housing (reducing segregation); health (better health conditions, higher life expectancies at birth, better access to the healthcare system). Explicit (albeit occasional) reference is also made to gender mainstreaming as one of the transversal issues.

### 3.5. Good practice examples: labour market participation and social inclusion of Roma women

In most countries, though not all, the EGSSI National Experts have been able to sketch out some examples of 'good practice' in Roma inclusion that may be relevant, and gender-appropriate, at least on a local scale.

*Education* — involving both girls and women — is by far the most recurrent domain of practice within this framework. Only a few programmes are directly geared to girls and women, even though they appear to derive particular benefit from educational programmes.

Two relatively widespread fields of intervention are also *social mediation* and *employability development*.

The first field of intervention is on the mediating role Roma women usually have between their community and the social (especially health) services. The Dutch 'Care consultants' project is an interesting example, as are the Romanian projects on school and health mediators.

The employment projects aim mainly at providing specific training to Roma women in order to enable them to access better jobs. Successful programmes usually combine a range of measures: training, job mediation, assistance services and empowerment and micro-credit. The main risk of these programmes, usually funded by the European Social Fund, is their lack of continuity if they are not internalised within ordinary programmes.

More generally, two broader aims underlie most effective inclusion practices: promoting self-organisation

capabilities and facilitating community integration. On the one hand, the grassroots start-up of autonomous organisations, involving Roma women, is likely to be a promising channel to foster their empowerment, their appropriate interaction with welfare institutions and their skill-building. On the other hand, the more effective social support initiatives appear to be those integrated into different 'basic need' domains (social care, health, housing, etc.). Effective coordination with local civil service stakeholders, along with local authorities, is also crucial for a 'good practice' to have significant middle-term impact.

While the evidence on good practices may be uneven and not necessarily representative (nor always amounting to transferable actions), two key aspects are described in most national analyses. To begin with, advocacy and campaigning in the non-Roma environment are worth promoting, to mitigate mistrust and prejudices against the Roma. Secondly, addressing primarily Roma women, besides being a legitimate 'positive action' option, in its own right, has much broader and more important implications. Targeting women, indeed, may have a twofold long-term impact — not only on them but also on other family members, especially children.

## 4. Conclusions

Women represent a substantial component of the disadvantaged ethnic minorities in European countries, due also to the increasing feminisation of migration flows. Ethnic minority women present specific needs and difficulties which call for gender-sensitive policy approaches, and their role in the raising of the new generations makes them an even more important target for social-inclusion policies. However, they are usually invisible both in data collection and in research and policymaking.

This report has highlighted the main difficulties women from disadvantaged ethnic minority groups and especially Roma women face in their everyday life and outlined the existing institutional structure in European countries to promote their social inclusion. Notwithstanding the lack of adequate data and information, different areas of exclusion have been considered: access to education, housing, social benefits, health services, employment and financial services, underlying both the common aspects of exclusion and the differences in the conditions of specific groups of disadvantaged women.

The analysis shows the importance of adopting both a gender mainstreaming approach in all policies targeting their social inclusion and specific policies addressing the differentiated needs of disadvantaged ethnic minority women facing multiple-discrimination.

Addressing the conditions of Roma and ethnic minority women is particularly challenging, because it means considering the multiple interaction of social, cultural and economic factors that influence their daily lives — barriers of gender and traditions, discrimination, racism, poverty and poor access to education and employment. Not only is the scope of policies important, but especially their implementation, which interacts with the social conditions of most ethnic minorities, their own traditionally prevailing lifestyles and the prevailing attitudes in majority societies.

Various other issues with relevant policy implications emerge from the comparative analysis presented in the report, including: the importance of the education systems in supporting the integration of

second- and third-generation immigrants; the need to complement welfare approaches with targeted support policies especially when addressing ethnic minority women; the scant knowledge of specific ethnic minority women's needs and the difficulty of reaching the most disadvantaged among ethnic minority women, such as Roma women, and of defining reliable and effective tools of gender mainstreaming when it comes to designing, implementing and evaluating social interventions addressing disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

The role of local authorities and NGOs, together with women and ethnic minority associations, appears to be particularly important in this respect, due to their closer links with disadvantaged communities at the local level. The systematic monitoring of gender disparities within disadvantaged groups, cross-border cooperation and exchange of experience and practices may also help in understanding the specific needs of different communities and the design of effective policies.



# Résumé

## 1. Introduction

Les données existantes suggèrent que les minorités ethniques, et en particulier les femmes roms, sont les plus exposées à la discrimination multiple et sont plus sujettes à l'exclusion sociale et à la pauvreté que les femmes issues des populations autochtones et que les hommes appartenant aux minorités ethniques. Cependant, il existe, au sein même des minorités ethniques et entre les différents pays européens, une diversité de conditions sociales et économiques des femmes qui doit être prise en compte lors de la conception de politiques.

Ce rapport comparatif présente les conditions et les perspectives socio-économiques des femmes faisant partie des minorités ethniques, et plus spécifiquement les femmes roms. L'analyse se focalise sur les minorités ethniques les plus défavorisées dans un contexte national précis, notamment en termes d'accès à l'éducation, au logement, au système de santé, aux aides sociales, à l'emploi et aux services financiers. Ce rapport présente également les principales mesures législatives et politiques développées à l'échelle nationale qui visent leur inclusion sociale, ainsi que quelques exemples de bonnes pratiques. Les informations contenues dans ce rapport sont fournies par le réseau EGGSI, qui est constitué d'experts nationaux en matière d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, d'inclusion sociale, du système de santé et des soins de longue durée, et couvre trente pays européens (UE et EEE/AELE) <sup>(12)</sup>.

Le rapport se compose de deux parties: la première partie (du 1er au 4e chapitre) décrit la situation des femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques en général, tandis que la deuxième partie (du 5e au 8e chapitre) traite plus particulièrement des femmes roms. Les conclusions générales sont présentées dans le dernier chapitre.

## 2. Femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques défavorisées dans les pays européens

### 2.1. Définition des minorités ethniques défavorisées

Il n'existe aucune définition, reconnue au niveau européen, des minorités ethniques ou des minorités

en général. La définition considérée dans ce rapport est la définition générale fournie par le Groupe consultatif d'experts de haut niveau sur l'intégration sociale des minorités ethniques pour leur pleine participation au marché du travail (High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market), suivant laquelle: «Le terme général "minorité ethnique" est employé [...] non pour définir une catégorie juridique, mais comme un terme large et purement descriptif (désignant les personnes ne faisant pas partie de la majorité ethnique)» <sup>(13)</sup>. Ainsi, outre les minorités ethniques déjà établies dans le pays (provenant ou non de l'immigration, avec ou sans statut de citoyen), ce rapport inclut aussi des données sur les immigrés récents, les demandeurs d'asile et/ou les réfugiés, les Roms et les apatrides.

Toutes les minorités ethniques ne sont pas défavorisées. Certaines, vivant dans les zones frontalières et officiellement reconnues comme groupes de minorité (minorités de nationalité, linguistiques, religieuses, ethniques) sont convenablement protégées par le contexte juridique, qui cherche à préserver leur identité culturelle par des dispositions spéciales pour la représentation politique, l'éducation, les services sociaux, l'emploi et les conditions fiscales. Cependant, dans tous les États membres se trouvent des communautés défavorisées qui, bien que différentes de la société majoritaire aux niveaux linguistique, religieux et culturel, ne sont pas reconnues comme des minorités ethniques. Les émigrants des pays tiers, les demandeurs d'asile et les apatrides, tels les Roms, en sont l'exemple le plus flagrant. Dans certains pays, même les immigrés de deuxième et troisième génération doivent faire face aux privations socio-économiques et à la discrimination <sup>(14)</sup>.

Les groupes défavorisés considérés dans ce rapport ne constituent donc pas un groupement homogène. Bien que les minorités ethniques défavorisées présentent des traits communs, surtout en ce qui concerne les obstacles et la discrimination qu'elles

(12) L'EGSSI est un réseau de la Commission européenne composé de trente experts nationaux (des États membres de l'UE et des pays de l'EEE) dans les domaines de l'égalité entre les sexes, de l'inclusion sociale, de la santé et des soins de longue durée. Ce réseau est coordonné par l'Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale et la Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini. Il entreprend un programme annuel de recherche orienté vers les politiques et présente ses rapports à la DG Emploi, affaires sociales et égalité des chances.

(13) *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion* (Les minorités ethniques sur le marché du travail: un appel urgent pour une meilleure inclusion sociale), rapport du Groupe consultatif d'experts de haut niveau sur l'intégration sociale des minorités ethniques pour leur pleine participation au marché du travail, 2007, p. 28. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(14) Commission européenne (2006 a), *Inégalités entre les sexes dans les risques de pauvreté et d'exclusion sociale pour les groupes défavorisés de trente pays européens*, rapport rédigé par le Groupe d'experts en matière d'égalité des sexes, inclusion sociale et emploi, 2006, DG Emploi, affaires sociales et égalité des chances, p. 90. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>

doivent affronter, il existe d'importantes différences entre les modèles d'implantation de chaque population, les cultures et les religions, les statuts juridiques et les périodes de migration.

Dans les quinze pays de l'UE, les pays de l'EEE, ainsi qu'à Malte, à Chypre et en Slovaquie, les minorités ethniques défavorisées sont pour la plupart composées de citoyens d'origines ethniques différentes, de sujets issus de l'immigration (immigrés récents provenant de pays tiers ou deuxièmes et troisièmes générations), de demandeurs d'asile et de réfugiés.

En revanche, dans la majorité des États membres de l'Europe de l'Est (par exemple, Estonie, Lituanie, Pologne, Roumanie et Slovaquie) <sup>(15)</sup>, l'immigration est un phénomène limité et très récent, même si les minorités ethniques ont toujours été nombreuses dans ces pays, en raison de leur passé historique complexe. Outre les Roms en Bulgarie, Hongrie, Slovaquie, République tchèque et Roumanie, les Turcs de Bulgarie constituent eux aussi un groupe défavorisé.

Il n'existe, dans toute l'Europe, aucune donnée précise et complète sur les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques: ce qui manque, ce sont non seulement des données triées selon le sexe, mais également des études quantitatives et qualitatives. Dans de nombreux pays, l'enregistrement des origines ethniques n'est pas autorisé et, dans d'autres pays, les données officielles ne contiennent aucune information sur les origines ethniques ou l'auto-identification. Cependant, des données existent sur les flux migratoires qui nous renseignent sur le nombre de femmes des pays européens nées à l'étranger. Les statistiques existantes <sup>(16)</sup> montrent une féminisation croissante des flux migratoires de l'Europe de l'Est et des pays tiers vers les 15 pays de l'UE; cela est dû à une tendance croissante au regroupement familial, aux migrations des familles et à l'émigration des femmes seules qui travaillent.

## 2.2. Sexe et ethnicité: les dimensions de l'exclusion sociale pour les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques

En général, les femmes provenant des minorités ethniques défavorisées sont plus sujettes à l'exclusion

sociale et à la pauvreté que les hommes appartenant aux mêmes communautés et que les femmes appartenant à l'ethnie majoritaire, surtout en ce qui concerne l'accès à l'emploi, à l'éducation, aux soins et aux services sociaux. Dans une certaine mesure, cette situation s'explique par la persistance d'une répartition sexuée des tâches dans certaines communautés de minorités ethniques défavorisées (telles que les Roms). Les risques d'exclusion sociale sont particulièrement élevés pour les communautés extrêmement mobiles, tels les groupes nomades et migrants.

### Niveau de scolarité et accès au système d'éducation

Contrairement au reste de la population, dans la plupart des pays européens, les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques ont souvent atteint un niveau de scolarité inférieur à la majorité des femmes et des hommes appartenant à la même communauté. Leur manque d'éducation est, en effet, l'un des facteurs principaux d'exclusion sociale et de pauvreté (la leur et celle de leurs enfants) et influence aussi leur conditions d'emploi, la qualité de leur poste de travail et la possibilité de bénéficier des soins médicaux.

L'accès des adultes à l'éducation et à la formation est aussi plus difficile pour les femmes des minorités ethniques que pour les hommes, en raison de leurs obligations domestiques, de leur plus grand isolement et de leurs moindres compétences linguistiques.

Cependant, il existe des différences entre les populations des minorités ethniques. Les femmes émigrées des pays d'Europe de l'Est, par exemple, ont tendance à avoir en moyenne un niveau de scolarité plus élevé que celui des femmes provenant d'autres pays, mais leurs qualifications ne sont souvent pas reconnues. Les données sur les immigrés de deuxième génération montrent que l'importance accordée à l'éducation et à une réduction du décalage existant avec la population native est plus grande, et révèlent que les jeunes femmes appartenant à certaines minorités ethniques obtiennent de meilleurs résultats par rapport aux garçons, surtout dans les pays où existent des écoles polyvalentes et où le système d'éducation supporte l'éducation des femmes (comme les pays scandinaves). Les jeunes femmes appartenant à des minorités ethniques particulières, telles les Roms, ou qui proviennent de l'Afrique et de nombreux autres pays de l'Asie, sont davantage susceptibles d'abandonner les études plus tôt que les garçons, en raison de leurs responsabilités familiales et de la persistance du modèle de répartition sexuée des tâches au sein des communautés.

(15) Rapports nationaux 2008 du réseau EGGSI, *Ethnic Minority and Roma women* (Les femmes issues des minorités ethniques et les femmes roms), Estonie, Lettonie, Pologne, Roumanie et Slovaquie.

(16) OCDE (2007), *International Migration Outlook* (Perspectives sur les migrations internationales), rapport annuel Sopemi 2007, DG pour l'emploi, le travail et les affaires sociales, Paris.

## Logement

Les minorités ethniques défavorisées habitent souvent dans des quartiers isolés à faible revenu où l'accès au transport public et aux services sociaux est réduit: dans des logements attribués situés dans des quartiers socialement pauvres (les banlieues/ghettos urbains) ou dans des logements surpeuplés. Généralement, les minorités sont discriminées par le marché immobilier privé: elles doivent payer des loyers plus élevés par rapport aux locataires autochtones et sont soumises à des contrats irréguliers qui ne les protègent pas contre l'éviction, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit d'immigrés irréguliers. Si les quartiers où la ségrégation est forte réduisent la sensation d'isolement social et renforcent les réseaux et les liens au sein des communautés, ils peuvent aussi, notamment dans le cas des femmes, intensifier l'isolement de la population majoritaire et engendrer de plus fortes pressions sur leur rôle traditionnel à l'intérieur de leur communauté et du foyer.

## Conditions de santé et accès au système de santé

La pauvreté des conditions des femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques défavorisées augmente leur exposition aux risques sanitaires, en réduisant leur espérance de vie comparativement à celle des femmes autochtones (c'est le cas des femmes roms). Les grossesses précoces et multiples, les avortements et les maladies psychosomatiques sont fréquents, surtout parmi les femmes des pays émergents. L'accès aux services de santé est rendu difficile par l'existence de barrières linguistiques, culturelles et même religieuses, ainsi que par le manque d'informations, les faibles revenus et l'inéligibilité. Pour les immigrés irréguliers et les communautés apatrides, l'absence de papiers légaux constitue une barrière importante, puisque les permis de séjour et de travail sont nécessaires pour accéder aux services de santé dans la plupart des pays. En conséquence, un grand nombre d'immigrés et de minorités ethniques n'ont ni assurance de santé ni le soutien nécessaire, ce qui a également un impact en matière d'accès aux soins de longue durée. Le manque de formation adéquate et d'expérience du personnel de santé en matière d'interaction avec les différents aspects culturels et religieux contribue également à réduire l'accessibilité à ces services, notamment dans le cas des femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques.

## Accès aux services sociaux

En raison de la mauvaise qualité de leurs emplois, des contrats de travail temporaires ou des formes irrégulières de travail, de nombreux émigrants, et notamment les femmes issues des minorités ethniques, n'arrivent pas à obtenir le droit aux prestations sociales. Au contraire, ils sont censés recourir aux aides sociales dans les pays où celles-ci sont disponibles. En particulier, les familles monoparentales (généralement mères célibataires) reçoivent une grande part de leur revenu du système de sécurité sociale (par exemple, dans les pays scandinaves et au Royaume-Uni). Cependant, les immigrés irréguliers et les communautés apatrides (tels les Roms) sont pour la plupart exclus des prestations, car ils n'ont ni papiers ni adresse permanente.

## Accès au travail, qualité et conditions

Sur le marché du travail, les taux d'inactivité et de chômage sont plus élevés parmi les femmes issues des groupes ethniques défavorisés que parmi les hommes issus des minorités et les femmes appartenant à l'ethnie majoritaire. Cela est une conséquence du maintien du rôle domestique au sein de la famille, surtout dans les communautés ethniques où les rôles familiaux traditionnels prévalent, mais également du manque de qualifications et des préjugés des employeurs. L'influence culturelle du pays d'origine apparaît particulièrement importante et persistante quant à la participation des femmes au marché du travail: par exemple, les femmes issues de l'Est de l'Europe et de l'Extrême-Orient montrent généralement des taux d'activité et d'emploi plus élevés par rapport aux femmes issues d'autres minorités ethniques<sup>(17)</sup>.

Lorsqu'elles sont employées, les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques sont plus susceptibles de travailler dans l'économie informelle et pour des salaires faibles, en particulier dans le secteur de l'entretien et de l'assistance aux personnes qui est un secteur dominé par les femmes, alors que le travail indépendant est encore rare chez elles. Cela réduit leur droit à l'indemnité de chômage et à d'autres prestations contributives (c'est-à-dire les allocations pour enfants à charge), en particulier dans les pays où les aides sociales sont soumises au statut professionnel et où l'assistance sociale est réduite, comme

(17) Sur l'influence culturelle du pays d'origine quant à la participation des femmes au marché du travail, voir aussi Fernandez, R., et Fogli, A. (2005), *Culture: An Empirical Investigation of Beliefs* (Culture: une enquête empirique sur les croyances), CEPR Discussion Paper, No 5089.

dans certains pays du sud de l'Europe (par exemple, l'Italie et la Grèce). Même les femmes avec un niveau d'éducation élevé ont souvent des emplois peu qualifiés et leurs qualifications ne sont pas reconnues. En effet, les données présentées par l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE) <sup>(18)</sup> montrent que, dans la plupart des pays européens, les femmes nées à l'étranger présentent un taux plus élevé de surqualification par rapport à leur emploi que les hommes nés à l'étranger et les femmes autochtones.

### Accès aux services financiers

Les minorités ethniques défavorisées ont un accès limité aux aides financières, et les femmes doivent faire face à des difficultés encore plus grandes, puisqu'elles n'ont généralement pas d'emploi stable et que leurs biens ne représentent pas une garantie suffisante. Cette situation rend difficile l'obtention de fonds pour monter une entreprise, acheter une maison ou même ouvrir un compte bancaire. L'accès aux services financiers est aussi entravé par les problèmes linguistiques et la connaissance limitée du système financier. Les exemples présentés dans les rapports nationaux de l'EGGSI incluent, parmi les nombreuses entraves, la discrimination de la part des institutions prestataires, liée soit au sexe soit à l'appartenance ethnique, et la faible diffusion de formes de crédit différentes, tel le microcrédit.

### Discrimination multiple envers les femmes issues des minorités ethniques

Les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques sont plus souvent confrontées à des discriminations que les hommes; ces discriminations sont motivées par plus de facteurs et dans différentes sphères de la vie courante. Outre la discrimination sexuelle, que ce soit en leur sein ou hors des communautés d'origine, les femmes subissent également un préjudice social dû aux différences culturelles et religieuses. Le marché du travail représente un espace significatif où les femmes immigrées et appartenant aux minorités ethniques font souvent l'objet de discrimination sexuelle. En général, elles doivent affronter les préjugés, ont moins de pouvoir de négociation et sont plus exposées que les hommes aux traitements iniques et à l'exploitation, surtout dans les emplois informels et les emplois auprès de ménages privés. La

discrimination sur le poste de travail s'exprime aussi par des emplois sous-qualifiés et sous-payés, avec peu de perspectives d'avancement de carrière, même pour les femmes hautement qualifiées.

En outre, la religion et les traditions culturelles sont des facteurs importants qui influencent les conditions des femmes au sein des communautés mêmes. Les femmes issues des minorités ethniques avec des valeurs religieuses et culturelles similaires à celles de la majorité de la population affrontent des problèmes liés à l'accès au marché du travail et au revenu fixe, étant des mères célibataires ou le seul soutien de famille (comme, par exemple, les femmes émigrées des pays de l'Amérique latine ou de l'Europe de l'Est). Les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques peuvent également subir la discrimination sexuelle, même dans les communautés gérées par les hommes, en raison de l'accentuation de leur rôle de dispensatrices de soins.

En revanche, la violence domestique est plus difficile à reconnaître, puisque les femmes issues des minorités ethniques peuvent ne pas être conscientes de leurs droits. En outre, elles ont souvent une connaissance limitée des aides disponibles et sont généralement en position de faiblesse par rapport aux femmes de la population majoritaire, car elles dépendent plus que ces dernières de leurs partenaires du point de vue socio-économique, surtout lorsque leur permis de séjour est lié au mariage et au regroupement familial.

Il existe des problèmes particuliers concernant les femmes victimes du trafic d'êtres humains (souvent des femmes venant de la Roumanie, de l'Afrique et des pays de l'Europe de l'Est qui n'appartiennent pas à l'Union européenne) qui sont victimes d'abus ou contraintes à se prostituer.

## 2.3. Actions législatives et politiques dans les pays européens

Les actions législatives et politiques des pays européens reflètent tant les caractéristiques spécifiques des modalités d'implantation dans ces pays que la structure des régimes providentiels nationaux.

### Législation correspondante

Tous les pays de l'UE et de l'EEE ont développé une législation antidiscriminatoire qui inclut, entre autres, des mesures visant à la protection contre la discrimination raciale et basée sur le genre. Cette législation est

(18) OCDE (2007), *International Migration Outlook (Perspectives sur les migrations internationales)*, rapport annuel Sopemi 2007, DG pour l'emploi, le travail et les affaires sociales, Paris.



renforcée par la récente transposition des directives antidiscriminatoires de l'UE (telle la directive relative à l'égalité raciale et la directive concernant l'égalité de traitement en matière d'emploi et de travail), par les directives promouvant l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et par les directives nationales des États tiers (telle la directive relative aux résidents de longue durée) <sup>(19)</sup>. Les experts de l'EGGSI soulignent que, hormis le cadre politique général en matière antidiscriminatoire et d'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, il n'existe aucune disposition visant l'égalité des chances en ce qui concerne spécifiquement les femmes issues des minorités ethniques, exception faite pour la législation qui régit la position des femmes enceintes immigrées irrégulièrement et pour la législation visant le trafic des êtres humains dans certains pays (tels l'Italie et la Grèce). L'absence d'intégration systématique de la question de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes dans la mise en œuvre de la directive 2000/43/CE est aussi constatée dans la communication de la Commission sur son application concrète <sup>(20)</sup>.

Parmi les pays européens, ce sont surtout les États membres de l'Europe de l'Est (tels l'Estonie, la Lettonie, la Lituanie, la Pologne, la République tchèque, la Roumanie et la Slovaquie) qui reconnaissent juridiquement les minorités ethniques, en raison de la forte présence dans ces pays de citoyens issus de différents milieux ethniques, tandis que l'immigration est encore un phénomène limité et assez récent. Dans ces pays, la législation a pour but principal la protection de la langue, des traditions et de l'identité culturelle des minorités ethniques formellement reconnues, et de garantir à ces communautés le droit à utiliser leurs propres idiomes dans l'administration publique (à certaines conditions) et leur participation à la vie politique du pays.

Dans les quinze membres de l'UE et dans les pays de l'EEE, la législation correspondante est liée aux instruments juridiques qui régissent l'immigration, et notamment les droits de séjour, bien que dans certains pays (tels l'Allemagne, l'Autriche et l'Italie) il existe des instruments légaux expressément créés pour proté-

ger la culture, les traditions et la langue des minorités ethniques formellement reconnues.

Le statut juridique des minorités ethniques est un des premiers facteurs d'accès aux services sociaux et au marché du travail. L'absence de statut juridique pose de sérieux problèmes, notamment aux immigrés irréguliers, aux demandeurs d'asile, aux réfugiés et aux communautés apatrides qui doivent subir les risques d'éviction ou d'expulsion d'un pays. Dans la plupart des cas, la possibilité d'obtenir le droit de séjour dans un pays est soumise à l'obtention d'un permis de travail, ce qui n'est possible qu'à travers un contrat de travail régulier. Cela peut représenter un problème important pour les femmes issues des minorités ethniques, qui sont plus sujettes au risque de perdre leur droit de séjour temporaire en raison des difficultés à démontrer qu'elles ont un emploi stable, puisque généralement elles travaillent dans les secteurs non réguliers et informels de l'économie. Récemment, dans certains des quinze membres de l'UE (tels l'Allemagne, la France et l'Italie) la législation sur l'immigration de sujets des pays tiers (entrée et résidence sur le territoire, législation sur le regroupement familial) est devenue plus restrictive.

Dans la plupart des pays, la législation qui régit les droits aux aides exige la résidence permanente et la citoyenneté, même si dans certains pays, comme l'Espagne, même les immigrés irréguliers peuvent accéder à certaines aides sociales. Dans la plupart des pays, seuls le service d'aide médicale urgente et le droit à l'éducation sont élargis aux immigrés irréguliers et à leurs enfants.

Les minorités ethniques, et notamment les femmes, sont généralement sous-représentées dans la plupart des pays européens.

### Modèles de politiques d'intégration

Au cours des dernières années, les pays européens ont adopté des politiques spécifiques visant les minorités ethniques et les immigrés. Cependant, peu d'attention est donnée aux différences entre les hommes et les femmes et à l'incorporation d'une approche qui intègre cette question dans les politiques, même si d'intéressants projets ont été mis en œuvre à l'échelle nationale et locale. Les politiques qui concernent explicitement les femmes des minorités ethniques semblent produire de meilleurs résultats, comme le démontrent les évaluations effectuées au Royaume-Uni et aux Pays-Bas.

(19) Conseil européen (2003), directive 2003/109/CE du Conseil du 25 novembre 2003 relative au statut des ressortissants de pays tiers résidents de longue durée, JO L 16 du 23.1. 2004, p. 44, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/l23034\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l23034_fr.htm)

(20) Commission européenne (2006 b), «L'application de la directive 2000/43/CE du 29 juin 2000 et la mise en œuvre du principe d'égalité de traitement entre les personnes sans distinction de race ou d'origine ethnique», communication de la Commission au Conseil et au Parlement européen, COM(2006) 643 final, JO L 180 du 19.7.2000, p. 22-26, Bruxelles, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0643:FIN:FR:PDF>.

L'apprentissage de la langue et l'éducation bilingue sont les principaux domaines d'intervention, visant expressément les immigrés récents. Dans quelques pays (tels les Pays-Bas) des cours existent, expressément conçus pour les femmes issues des minorités ethniques, mais le nombre de pays qui dispensent une éducation dans la langue des minorités ethniques est encore moindre (Estonie, Hongrie, Lettonie, Lituanie et Slovaquie). Au Royaume-Uni et en Espagne, un fonds pour l'éducation a été institué pour combler le clivage de l'éducation, alors qu'en Estonie a été créé un fonds pour une meilleure formation des enseignants dans les écoles russes bilingues.

En ce qui concerne les politiques en matière de protection sociale, les minorités ethniques en général, et notamment les femmes issues des minorités, sont éligibles pour bénéficier des aides sociales sur la base de leur situation socio-économique défavorisée; dans certains pays (tels que le Luxembourg et la Norvège) des aides sociales particulières sont dispensées aux demandeurs d'asile. Cependant, les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques sont généralement plus exposées aux changements de politique que les hommes. C'est le cas, par exemple, des récentes tendances aux politiques «workfare» mises en œuvre dans les pays scandinaves, au Royaume-Uni et en Allemagne. Ces politiques visent à rendre actifs les bénéficiaires des prestations sociales, qui sont contraints de participer à la recherche d'un emploi et aux programmes de formation pour continuer à bénéficier des soutiens de l'État.

Ces politiques sont généralement plus efficaces lorsque les dispositions sont créées expressément pour abattre les multiples barrières que les femmes issues des minorités ethniques rencontrent lors de leur entrée sur le marché du travail, puisqu'il s'agit souvent de femmes avec beaucoup d'enfants ou de mères célibataires qui ont un accès limité aux services de garde d'enfants et à aux emplois bien rémunérés.

Un problème spécifique concerne la difficulté d'améliorer les conditions des femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques, lorsque les politiques sociales ne les ciblent pas directement, en raison de leur exclusion et ségrégation par rapport aux hommes au sein de certaines communautés. En ce moment, ce sont principalement les politiques sanitaires d'un petit nombre de pays de l'UE qui prennent en considération les différents milieux culturels des femmes issues des minorités ethniques à travers l'engagement de médiateurs culturels, offrant leur assistance et

des services de traduction, et qui sont sensibles aux problèmes posés par les différences culturelles.

En revanche, dans la plupart des pays membres de l'UE, les politiques du logement ne visent pas directement les minorités ethniques (les seules exceptions sont la Grèce, l'Italie et le Royaume-Uni), mais en tant que groupes à faibles revenus, celles-ci ont souvent accès aux programmes de logements sociaux (exception faite pour les immigrés irréguliers et les minorités apatrides).

## 2.4. Exemples de bonnes pratiques

Ce rapport présente des programmes et des projets qui visent directement les femmes issues des minorités ethniques et qui sont considérés comme des bonnes pratiques par les experts nationaux. Les domaines d'intervention les plus représentés sont les suivants: intégration au marché du travail, inclusion sociale, éducation, services de soutien juridique, logement et culture.

Quelques projets concernant le marché du travail offrent une formation et des qualifications afin de promouvoir et soutenir l'intégration des femmes issues des minorités sur le marché du travail (Autriche, Bulgarie, Danemark, Italie, etc.). D'autres projets traitent de la réduction des barrières culturelles et sociales, ainsi que de l'information des femmes sur les normes et caractéristiques spécifiques du marché du travail du pays hôte (Norvège, République tchèque, Suède). Une compréhension plus profonde et une meilleure connaissance des besoins des femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques, particulièrement chez les employeurs (Luxembourg), sont également des démarches d'intervention indispensables, qui restent cependant sous-développées. D'autres projets encore visent à faciliter l'entrepreneuriat ethnique (Suède).

La distribution de matériel informatique en plusieurs langues et la formation multiculturelle du personnel de santé sont deux des principales mesures réalisées en vue de réduire les entraves culturelles et linguistiques et de faciliter l'accès des femmes issues des minorités au système de santé. Certains projets se concentrent sur des problèmes de santé spécifiques, par exemple aider les handicapés issus des minorités ethniques nationales (Lettonie), les femmes africaines contaminées par le virus d'immunodéficience humaine (VIH) et les femmes qui ont subi des abus ou souffrent de troubles mentaux (Belgique), ou encore les femmes exposées

aux risques sanitaires à la suite d'une mutilation génitale (c'est le cas des Somaliennes en Suède).

Pour combattre l'isolement, la marginalisation et affronter les problèmes quotidiens, certains projets promeuvent les rapports de bon voisinage et les activités de socialisation (Belgique, Espagne), à travers des services de médiation, de soutien juridique et psychologique, aidant ainsi les femmes à entrer en contact avec d'autres femmes.

Les projets de soutien juridique informent sur les droits, des droits de base jusqu'aux droits spécifiques, concernant l'intégration dans l'emploi, le logement, les permis de séjour, temporaire et permanent, et les lois en matière de mariage concernant les couples binationaux.

Il n'y a que peu de projets qui touchent à l'information interculturelle et à la formation à la diversité des enseignants, des employeurs et des professionnels de la santé (tels les projets de la Grèce et du Portugal).

### 3. Les femmes issues des minorités roms en Europe

Dans toute l'Europe, les communautés roms sont exposées à un risque important de marginalisation. La défaveur subie est semblable à celle des femmes issues des autres minorités ethniques, mais les femmes roms doivent généralement faire face à des formes de marginalisation et de discrimination plus fortes.

#### 3.1. Définitions et distribution des communautés roms sur le territoire européen

Les données sur la situation des femmes roms sont particulièrement pauvres, même si la plupart des études sociologiques montrent qu'elles vivent une exclusion sociale plus forte par rapport aux hommes roms et aux femmes de la communauté majoritaire, notamment en ce qui concerne l'accès à l'emploi, à l'éducation et aux services de santé et sociaux, en partie à cause de la persistance de la répartition sexuée des tâches au sein des communautés roms.

Toutefois, les Roms ne sont pas un peuple homogène: à l'échelle européenne, de nombreuses communautés existent qui se distinguent par les modalités de leurs implantations, par leur culture et religion, par le statut juridique, la langue, le milieu d'origine et l'époque d'émigration. Les Roms peuvent être des

sujets mobiles avec une culture nomade, ou bien des sédentaires, tels les nombreux Sinti des premières vagues migratoires, qui résident de façon permanente dans des zones spécifiques de certains des 15 États membres de l'UE (par exemple, l'Allemagne, l'Autriche, la Belgique, l'Espagne, la Grèce et l'Italie). La plus grande partie des Roms qui vivent en Europe sont sédentaires. Le statut juridique des communautés roms est extrêmement variable à travers l'Europe entière et au sein des pays particuliers (où ils sont présents), suivant le sous-groupe spécifique que l'on choisit de prendre en compte. Évidemment, les différences juridiques principales se retrouvent entre les citoyens nationaux (qui peuvent avoir obtenu le statut de minorités ethniques ou de minorités nationales), les demandeurs d'asile, les réfugiés et les immigrés (réguliers ou irréguliers).

De même que dans le cas des femmes issues des minorités ethniques, on ne dispose pas de données officielles précises et complètes; en outre, dans certains pays européens, les données concernant l'étendue de la population rom sont presque absentes, même si, selon des estimations récentes, «il pourrait y avoir plus de 10 millions de Roms en Europe» <sup>(21)</sup>.

#### 3.2. Désavantages sociaux et exclusion caractéristiques du peuple rom sous l'angle des différences entre les hommes et les femmes

Les familles des Roms diffèrent des autres familles par certains caractères de nature démographique, comme les taux élevés de fertilité et mortalité. Par conséquent, il s'agit d'une population largement composée d'enfants et où, inversement, les personnes âgées sont peu représentées. L'espérance de vie des hommes et des femmes roms est généralement inférieure à celle de la population majoritaire dans tous les États membres de l'UE, en raison de leurs conditions de vie et de l'impossibilité de bénéficier des services de santé.

#### Niveau de scolarité et accès au système d'éducation

Les communautés roms sont caractérisées par de faibles niveaux de scolarité, un taux élevé d'analphabétisme et une faible fréquentation scolaire de la part

(21) Commission européenne (2006 a), Inégalités entre les sexes dans les risques de pauvreté et d'exclusion sociale pour les groupes défavorisés de trente pays européens, rapport rédigé par le Groupe d'experts en matière d'égalité des sexes, inclusion sociale et emploi, 2006, DG Emploi, affaires sociales et égalité des chances, Bruxelles.

des enfants. La participation irrégulière à l'éducation et un taux élevé d'abandon des études à 12-14 ans sont répandus parmi les enfants roms en raison des facteurs économiques, de la grande mobilité de certaines communautés roms et de la moindre importance accordée à l'éducation. En outre, les enfants roms ont du mal à s'adapter aux règles imposées dans les écoles et ont plus de problèmes d'apprentissage, non seulement à cause des barrières linguistiques, mais également à cause du manque de conscience par les enseignants et les écoles de leurs besoins particuliers et de leur culture, et enfin à cause de la discrimination raciale. Les enfants roms sont plus exposés au risque de ségrégation dans les écoles ou dans les classes spéciales en raison de leurs difficultés d'apprentissage, de la réticence des institutions scolaires à les inscrire, de la pression exercée par les parents appartenant à la majorité ethnique pour ne pas avoir d'élèves roms dans la classe de leurs enfants et de l'isolement des implantations des roms.

Les filles roms affichent des niveaux plus faibles que ceux des garçons roms. Elles abandonnent les études plus tôt que les garçons, en raison de leurs responsabilités familiales et de la culture rom, qui ne permet pas aux filles de s'exposer aux autres cultures et considère les femmes comme les gardiennes des valeurs traditionnelles. Le faible niveau de scolarité des femmes roms a des répercussions négatives sur les générations successives, puisque les enfants de mères avec un niveau de scolarité élevé ont plus de chances d'aller à l'école que les enfants dont les mères ont un faible niveau de scolarité.

### Logement

Les difficultés que les Roms rencontrent durant la recherche d'un logement satisfaisant se traduisent souvent par des solutions provisoires et des problèmes de voisinage. Les préjugés de la population dominante envers les Roms et la faible position économique de ces derniers rendent difficile l'obtention d'un logement sur le marché immobilier privé. L'un des principaux problèmes que les Roms rencontrent est l'absence de titre officiel de propriété foncière ou résidentielle. Généralement, les Roms habitent des quartiers isolés où la ségrégation est en vigueur, avec peu d'accès au transport public et aux services sociaux (par exemple, en Allemagne), dans des bidonvilles à la périphérie des zones urbaines (en Espagne, en Italie et dans certains États membres de l'Europe de l'Est) ou dans des campings pour caravanes (au Royaume-Uni). Par conséquent, les conditions de vie des Roms sont souvent pauvres:

problèmes de surpeuplement, absence de toute commodité essentielle, telles l'eau courante et l'électricité, et risque élevé d'expulsion. Cette situation rend le travail domestique particulièrement onéreux et stressant pour les femmes roms, qui doivent passer une grande partie de leur vie dans ces conditions de logement, et contribue à aggraver leur problèmes de santé.

### Conditions sanitaires et accès au système de soins

Les femmes et les hommes roms ont à leur naissance une espérance de vie considérablement inférieure à celle du reste de la population. Cela est une conséquence directe des mauvaises conditions de logement et de vie ainsi que de l'accès irrégulier aux examens de dépistage et aux soins médicaux.

Les femmes roms sont généralement plus exposées aux risques sanitaires que les autres, en raison de leurs nombreux et précoces grossesses et avortements, de leur charge de travail domestique excessive, de l'insalubrité des logements, de la malnutrition, etc. Le recours aux services de planification familiale est très rare chez les Roms. Cela s'explique en partie par leurs valeurs culturelles qui découragent l'usage de la contraception: l'avortement est encore conçu comme méthode de «contrôle des naissances», même si la tendance à utiliser ce procédé est en diminution. Dans certains pays (telles la Hongrie et la Slovaquie) des cas de stérilisation imposée de jeunes femmes roms ont été recensés. De nombreuses femmes roms enceintes (y compris des mères roms encore mineures) ne sont pas enregistrées chez un médecin généraliste et ne se rendent pas aux visites prénatales à cause de l'absence d'information et des barrières culturelles, telles que la méfiance envers les soins des professionnels et la difficulté de discuter de leurs problèmes de santé avec des étrangers, surtout s'il s'agit d'hommes.

Les femmes roms font moins appel aux services de santé que le reste de la population, soit parce que les soins médicaux peuvent interférer avec les règles d'hygiène et de pudeur des Roms, soit parce qu'elles se sentent souvent discriminées à cause des attitudes négatives/racistes/discriminatoires de certains assistants sociaux et des structures hospitalières. De plus, la réorganisation sociale et la pauvreté sont souvent responsables d'un faible accès à l'information, surtout dans les communautés roms les plus isolées. Le recours aux services médicaux est également entravé par des problèmes linguistiques, car la langue rom manque de nombreux termes spécifiques aux domaines de la médecine, des soins de santé et sociaux.

D'un autre côté, les femmes roms sont à la fois des soutiens primordiaux de leurs familles et communautés, car ce sont elles qui sont chargées de leur prodiguer les soins nécessaires, et les bénéficiaires des services de santé (par exemple, l'hospitalisation au moment de l'accouchement) et, souvent, elles représentent le lien entre leurs familles/communautés et ces services spécifiques. C'est la raison pour laquelle de nombreux programmes qui visent à dispenser les aides sociales et sanitaires aux communautés roms engagent les femmes roms dans le rôle de médiatrices culturelles (c'est le cas, par exemple, de la Roumanie).

### Accès aux services sociaux

Les taux élevés d'inactivité et de chômage sont l'une des causes de la grande dépendance des Roms des prestations d'aide sociale; les emplois informels et occasionnels empêchent les Roms de bénéficier des indemnités de chômage ou des autres prestations contributives. C'est notamment le cas des femmes roms, qui sont plus sujettes que les hommes au risque d'inactivité ou de chômage et qui, même une fois employées, ne le sont que dans le secteur informel de l'économie. Dans certains pays, ne pas avoir de pièces d'identité (et c'est précisément le cas pour de nombreux Roms) empêche de percevoir les aides sociales et d'autres prestations. Enfin, l'impossibilité de bénéficier des services d'assistance sociale charge sur les femmes roms tout le fardeau des soins de la famille.

### Accès au travail, qualité et conditions

Tout comme les femmes appartenant aux autres minorités ethniques, par rapport aux femmes issues de l'ethnie majoritaire, les femmes roms doivent faire face à de nombreuses difficultés pour accéder au marché du travail et sont donc plus facilement victimes de l'inactivité et du chômage. Généralement, les femmes roms accusent des taux plus élevés de chômage et d'inactivité en raison de leurs faibles niveaux de scolarité et de leurs emplois intermittents, qui sont étroitement liés au rôle traditionnel qu'elles jouent au sein de la famille, aux fréquentes grossesses, mais aussi à l'absence de qualification et aux préjugés de la part des employeurs. Les femmes roms occupent souvent des emplois auxiliaires, non qualifiés et physiquement éprouvants, et des emplois saisonniers et occasionnels dans le secteur des services (par exemple, femmes de ménages) de l'économie noire ou grise, qui offre de faibles salaires et empêche tout accès aux prestations sociales. La mendicité est également une activité exercée en majorité par les femmes et les

enfants des grands centres urbains, alors que l'agriculture de subsistance est l'activité principale des femmes des zones rurales.

### Accès aux services financiers

Les Roms, et notamment les femmes, ont un accès limité aux services financiers, parce qu'ils n'ont pas de travail garanti et stable, que leurs biens n'offrent pas suffisamment de garanties et qu'ils sont discriminés par les organismes de prêts. Ce n'est que récemment que les projets pilotes des programmes concernant l'offre de microcrédits aux femmes roms ont été mis en œuvre dans certains pays (en Espagne et en Bulgarie, avec le projet «formation et création de l'entreprise»).

### 3.3. La situation spécifique des femmes roms: un cas de discrimination multiple

Parmi les communautés les plus défavorisées d'Europe, les hommes et les femmes roms doivent faire face à des formes particulières de préjugés et d'exclusion sociale engendrées par l'attitude négative de la population majoritaire. Les femmes roms, notamment, ont, outre les problèmes habituels concernant l'insertion sociale rencontrés également par les femmes appartenant à la majorité de la population, des difficultés supplémentaires inhérentes spécifiquement à la culture rom, et dérivant de la répartition «traditionnelle» et rigide des rôles selon le sexe, qui entrave le développement personnel des filles et des femmes.

Les femmes roms sont défavorisées dans de nombreux domaines, même s'il est presque impossible de déterminer la part des pratiques discriminatoires, à cause du manque de données et d'études sur les perceptions discriminatoires. La persistance de la discrimination de la part des communautés nationales plus larges est cependant amplement reconnue, surtout en ce qui concerne l'éducation, la santé, l'emploi, la participation à la vie publique et politique. Les cas de discrimination vont de l'accès à l'éducation et aux services de santé (c'est-à-dire, préjugés de la part des équipes ou ségrégation au sein des unités scolaires, sanitaires et des cliniques de maternité), à l'accès au marché du travail et aux opportunités d'emploi (à cause des préjugés des employeurs, des collègues et souvent aussi des représentants des institutions locales).

Une autre grande source de discrimination réside au sein même des communautés roms et est directement associée au rôle culturel joué par les femmes dans la structure familiale. La famille rom traditionnelle est



entièrement patriarcale: la femme occupe une position subordonnée et une claire répartition du travail existe, qui sépare les devoirs des hommes de ceux des femmes. Traditionnellement, les tâches d'une femme sont l'entretien de la maison et de la famille et la transmission intergénérationnelle de la culture et de l'ethnicité. À la différence des femmes issues d'autres minorités ethniques, les filles roms commencent à vivre comme des femmes adultes dès l'âge de 11 ans. Elles sont censées se marier jeunes et avoir de nombreux enfants au cours de leur mariage, qui devra durer toute leur vie. Dans certaines communautés roms, le mariage arrangé est une pratique normalement acceptée des femmes.

Généralement, les devoirs imposés par la tradition et la famille empêchent les femmes d'accéder au marché du travail officiel et rendent la gestion de l'espace familial et du travail plus compliquée.

Le divorce, soit pour les femmes officiellement mariées, soit pour celles qui se sont mariées suivant les coutumes traditionnelles, n'est pas commun parmi les Roms, surtout quand il y a des enfants. En cas de divorce, les femmes sont en position de faiblesse, car normalement c'est le père qui garde les enfants ou les confie aux grands-parents pour qu'ils les élèvent. C'est la raison pour laquelle les femmes roms ne quittent pas leurs maris, même en cas de mariages difficiles ou de violences domestiques.

Le rôle traditionnel de soutien de famille des femmes roms constitue aussi une entrave à leur éducation, puisqu'elles sont souvent contraintes d'abandonner leurs études pour s'occuper de leurs frères et sœurs ou subvenir à d'autres obligations domestiques.

En absence d'un emploi stable, les mères célibataires, les veuves ou bien les femmes roms qui se sont enfuies du foyer pour échapper aux violences domestiques doivent faire face à des problèmes particulièrement graves pour assurer le soutien de leurs familles. La précarité du travail et la pauvreté extrême de la plupart des jeunes femmes roms augmente leur vulnérabilité et le risque de devoir recourir à la prostitution ou à la délinquance comme «stratégies subsidiaires de survie». Les femmes roms peuvent aussi être exploitées dans des activités criminelles, que ce soit dans des emplois irréguliers ou, dans les cas plus graves, dans des trafics.

Dans de nombreux pays européens, la minorité rom n'est pas représentée au Parlement, même dans les

pays où les roms constituent un groupe de minorité important. Les femmes roms aussi sont politiquement sous-représentées, cependant une tendance récente les voit de plus en plus engagées dans les organisations populaires.

### 3.4. Modèles juridiques et politiques d'inclusion

À l'échelle européenne, les Roms sont généralement couverts par l'existence des mesures antidiscriminatoires. Aucune législation européenne spécifique ne traite des minorités roms en tant que telles. Cependant, des résolutions non juridiques ont été adoptées par le Parlement européen, comme la résolution sur la situation des femmes roms dans l'UE, datée du mois d'avril 2005 [2005/2164 (INI)], qui est particulièrement pertinente pour le présent rapport.

Dans toute l'Europe, le concept sous-jacent à toute politique nationale concernant le peuple rom est une adéquate protection de leurs droits (indépendamment de leur statut juridique: qu'ils soient citoyens ou étrangers) grâce, d'une part, au cadre plus large de la législation contre le racisme, la discrimination et la xénophobie et, d'autre part, à la protection et aux prestations sociales. Seuls certains des pays analysés (en Europe de l'Est, où la population des Roms est largement répandue, et dans les États membres qui ont une importante tradition multiethnique) ont adopté des législations spécifiques concernant les minorités roms (néanmoins, on n'y retrouve aucune référence spécifique aux femmes roms et à l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes).

Cependant, l'absence de statut juridique reconnu pour la communauté rom n'est pas incompatible avec la création et la mise en œuvre de politiques visant spécifiquement cette communauté. En fait, les Roms sont souvent les bénéficiaires les plus défavorisés des politiques concernant les minorités ethniques, même si les rapports nationaux de l'EGGSI montrent que les politiques ciblées n'atteignent pas toujours le peuple rom au même degré que d'autres minorités ethniques plus intégrées et que, notamment, elles n'arrivent pas à améliorer les conditions des femmes roms.

Les processus nationaux de création des politiques en matière d'inclusion sociale des Roms diffèrent d'un pays européen à l'autre, surtout en ce qui concerne la structure des régimes nationaux de protection sociale. Le poids démographique des Roms et leur impor-

tance sociale sont des éléments qui ne peuvent être négligés lors de la conception de politiques ciblées. En ce qui concerne leur impact sur les différences entre les femmes et les hommes, il paraît que «l'approche générale pour l'égalité des chances» de chaque pays explique la différence, quoique modeste, des résultats obtenus dans les interventions sociales mises en œuvre.

La pauvreté des connaissances et des données existantes concernant les conditions sociales des femmes roms et leurs point de vue et aspirations se reflète dans les politiques, qui n'envisagent presque jamais les femmes roms spécifiquement. Même les politiques concernant l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes n'abordent pas directement leurs besoins et problèmes, qui restent pour une grande part méconnus. Les trois domaines politiques dans lesquels l'intervention se révèle le plus nécessaire, dans le cadre d'une possible égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, sont l'éducation, les soins et les opportunités d'emploi. En outre, on ressent généralement qu'une «attention culturelle» particulière doit être accordée lors de la conception et de la mise en œuvre des politiques ciblées. Un dialogue participatif et la collaboration des divers groupes d'intérêts de la communauté rom peuvent contribuer à réduire la méfiance et la résistance envers les programmes ciblant le renforcement du rôle des femmes roms.

La Décennie de l'inclusion des Roms 2005-2015, promue par neuf États membres de l'Europe de l'Est <sup>(22)</sup> en coopération avec de nombreuses institutions internationales, est un exemple important de coopération internationale pour l'inclusion sociale des Roms. Cette initiative envisage quatre domaines clés: l'éducation (traitée en termes de déségrégation, intégration, élévation du niveau de scolarité, facilitation de l'accès aux services pour l'enfance); l'emploi (formation et reconversion des capacités, avancement du niveau d'emploi des Roms); le logement (réduction de la ségrégation); la santé (meilleures conditions sanitaires, espérance de vie plus élevée dès la naissance, facilitation de l'accès au système de santé). Enfin, l'intégration de la question de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes dans les nouvelles politiques se pose comme un sujet transversal fondamental.

(22) À savoir: l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine, la Bulgarie, la Croatie, la Hongrie, le Monténégro, la République tchèque, la Roumanie, la Serbie et la Slovaquie, [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org)

### 3.5. Exemples de bonnes pratiques: participation au marché du travail et inclusion sociale des femmes roms

Dans la majorité des pays, mais pas dans tous, les experts nationaux de l'EGGSI ont pu esquisser quelques exemples de bonnes pratiques qui visent à l'inclusion des Roms et qui nous paraissent importantes et pertinentes du point de vue de la différence entre les femmes et les hommes, du moins à l'échelle locale.

L'éducation — concernant les filles et les femmes — est de loin le domaine le plus fréquemment exploité. Seuls quelques programmes concernent directement les femmes, même si celles-ci paraissent bénéficier en grande partie des programmes d'éducation.

Deux importants domaines d'intervention sont la médiation sociale et le développement de l'employabilité.

Les femmes roms occupent une place essentielle dans le premier domaine d'intervention, grâce à leur rôle de médiatrices entre leur communauté et les services sociaux (notamment, les services de santé). Le projet néerlandais «Care consultants» en est un exemple appréciable, ainsi que les projets roumains sur l'école et les médiateurs sanitaires.

Les projets concernant l'emploi visent surtout à dispenser une formation spécifique aux femmes roms, en leur offrant ainsi la possibilité d'accéder à de meilleurs emplois. Les programmes les mieux réussis se basent sur un large éventail de mesures: formation, médiation du travail, services d'assistance, soutien et renforcement, et microcrédit. Le risque principal de ces programmes, usuellement financés par le Fonds social européen, est l'absence de continuité dans les cas où ils ne sont pas englobés dans les programmes politiques communs.

Plus généralement, deux objectifs plus larges sous-tendent des pratiques plus efficaces: la promotion des capacités d'organisation autonome et l'intégration dans la communauté. D'une part, les start-up populaires des organisations autonomes, auxquelles les femmes roms participent, sont un canal prometteur pour encourager leur émancipation et une correcte interaction avec les institutions sociales et leur donner la possibilité de développer leurs compétences. D'autre part, les initiatives de soutien social les plus efficaces paraissent être celles intégrées dans les domaines des différents «besoins essentiels» (c'est-à-dire soins sociaux, santé, logement, etc.).



Une coordination efficace avec les responsables du service civil local et les autorités locales est également cruciale pour l'impact à moyen terme de la «bonne pratique».

Quoique les données relatives aux bonnes pratiques puissent être inégales et pas toujours représentatives (et qu'elles ne correspondent pas toujours à des actions transmissibles), deux aspects fondamentaux sont décrits dans la plupart des analyses nationales. Pour commencer, il est nécessaire de promouvoir des campagnes de «défense» dans les milieux non roms pour atténuer la méfiance et les préjugés envers les Roms. En second lieu, outre le fait qu'il s'agit d'une «action positive» légitime en soi, le ciblage direct des femmes roms a des implications plus importantes: cette approche peut conduire, à long terme, à un double effet positif, non seulement sur elles, mais aussi sur les autres membres de la famille, notamment les enfants.

## 4. Conclusions

Les femmes représentent l'élément primordial des minorités ethniques défavorisées dans les pays européens, en raison aussi de la féminisation croissante des flux migratoires. Les femmes appartenant aux minorités ethniques présentent des besoins et des difficultés spécifiques qui requièrent une approche politique capable d'en tenir compte. En outre, leur rôle d'éducatrices des nouvelles générations fait d'elles un objectif privilégié des politiques d'inclusion sociale. Cependant, elles demeurent généralement invisibles, que ce soit dans les recueils de données, dans les recherches, ou encore lors de la conception des politiques.

Ce rapport a mis en évidence les principales difficultés que les femmes issues des minorités ethniques défavorisées, et notamment les femmes roms, doivent affronter dans leur vie quotidienne, et décrit la structure institutionnelle existante visant à promouvoir leur inclusion sociale dans les pays européens. En dépit du manque de données et d'informations adéquates, cette étude a pris en considération différents domaines d'exclusion: l'accès à l'éducation, le logement, les aides sociales, les services de santé, l'emploi et les services financiers, en soulignant à la fois les aspects communs d'exclusion et les différentes conditions des groupes de femmes défavorisées.

L'analyse démontre, d'une part, la nécessité d'adopter une approche visant l'intégration de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes dans toute politique

ciblant l'inclusion sociale des femmes appartenant aux minorités défavorisées qui doivent faire face à une discrimination multiple, et, d'autre part, la nécessité de concevoir des politiques qui envisagent les différents besoins.

Les conditions des Roms et des femmes issues des minorités ethniques représentent un défi particulièrement complexe à relever, parce qu'il comporte la prise en compte de l'interaction multiple de tous les facteurs sociaux, culturels et économiques qui agissent dans leur vie quotidienne — les entraves liées au sexe et aux traditions, la discrimination, le racisme, la pauvreté et l'impossibilité d'accéder à l'éducation et à l'emploi.

Mais, outre l'envergure des politiques, c'est leur mise en œuvre qui constitue l'élément le plus important, car elle interagit avec les conditions sociales de la plupart des minorités ethniques, leurs styles de vie traditionnels et avec les positions dominantes des ethnies majoritaires.

Il ressort encore de l'analyse comparative présentée dans ce rapport de nombreux éléments ayant des implications importantes pour les politiques, par exemple: l'importance des systèmes d'éducation pour soutenir l'intégration des immigrés de 2e et 3e générations; la nécessité d'intégrer les approches du «workfare» avec des politiques ciblées de soutien, surtout quand il s'agit de femmes issues des minorités ethniques; la faible connaissance des besoins spécifiques des femmes appartenant aux minorités et la difficulté d'améliorer les conditions des femmes les plus défavorisées, telles les femmes roms, et encore la difficulté de développer des instruments fiables et efficaces pour intégrer la question des femmes au moment de concevoir, de mettre en œuvre et d'évaluer les interventions sociales visant les minorités ethniques défavorisées.

Le rôle des autorités locales et des organisations non gouvernementales, en collaboration avec les femmes et les associations des minorités ethniques, se révèle particulièrement important dans ce domaine, en raison des liens étroits qu'elles entretiennent avec les communautés défavorisées au niveau local. Le monitoring systématique des disparités entre les femmes et les hommes au sein des groupes désavantagés, la coopération transversale et l'échange d'expériences et pratiques peut aussi aider à comprendre les besoins spécifiques des différentes communautés, et donc soutenir la conception de politiques efficaces.

# Zusammenfassung

## 1. Einleitung

Empirische Daten deuten darauf hin, dass Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten und insbesondere Roma-Frauen stärker dem Risiko der Diskriminierung und der sozialen Ausgrenzung ausgesetzt sind als einheimische Frauen oder Männer der Minderheitsgruppe. Dennoch bestehen Unterschiede bezüglich der sozialen und ökonomischen Lage der Frauen, sowohl innerhalb als auch zwischen den ethnischen Minderheiten sowie im europäischen Vergleich, die bei der Formulierung politischer Ratschläge berücksichtigt werden sollten.

Diese vergleichende Studie stellt die sozioökonomischen Bedingungen und Perspektiven der Frauen dar, die zu den benachteiligten ethnischen Minderheiten gehören, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Roma-Frauen. Die Analyse konzentriert sich auf diejenigen ethnischen Gruppen, die in einem nationalen Kontext am stärksten beim Zugang zu Bildung, zum Wohnungsmarkt, zur medizinischen Versorgung, zu sozialen Hilfenleistungen, zu Beschäftigung und zu finanziellen Dienstleistungen benachteiligt werden. Die Studie stellt auch die wichtigsten gesetzlichen und politischen Antworten auf nationaler Ebene dar, welche auf die soziale Integration dieser Gruppe abzielen, sowie einige Beispiele vorbildlicher Verfahrensweisen. Die in dieser Studie verwendeten Informationen stammen von der Expertengruppe des EGGSI-Netzwerkes für Geschlechtergleichstellung, soziale Integration, Gesundheitsversorgung und Pflegeversicherung und beziehen sich auf insgesamt 30 europäische Länder (EU und EWR/EFTA) <sup>(23)</sup>.

Der Bericht gliedert sich in zwei Teile: Teil 1 (Kapitel 1-4) stellt die allgemeine Situation der Frauen von benachteiligten ethnischen Minderheiten dar, während Teil 2 (Kapitel 5-8) sich auf Roma-Frauen konzentriert. Eine allgemeine Zusammenfassung ist im letzten Kapitel zu finden.

(23) EGGSi ist das Netzwerk der Europäischen Kommission, welches aus 30 Länder-Experten (EU- und EWR-Länder) besteht, die in den Bereichen Geschlechtergleichstellung und soziale Integration, Gesundheitsversorgung und Pflegeversicherung arbeiten. Das Netzwerk wird vom Institut für Sozialforschung (Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale) und der Stiftung Giacomo Brodolini koordiniert, welche eine jährliche policyorientierte Untersuchung durchführt und der Generaldirektion Beschäftigung, Soziales und Chancengleichheit Bericht erstattet.

## 2. Frauen benachteiligter ethnischer Minderheiten in europäischen Ländern

### 2.1. Definition und Verteilung benachteiligter ethnischer Minderheiten

Europaweit besteht keine einheitliche Definition für ethnische Minderheiten oder für Minderheiten im Allgemeinen. Die hier verwendete umfassende Definition stammt von der hochrangigen Beratergruppe für soziale Eingliederung von sozialen Minderheiten und deren uneingeschränkte Teilnahme am Arbeitsmarkt (High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration and their Full Participation in the Labour Market), nach der „der Überbegriff ethnische Minderheit nicht als juristische Gruppe, sondern als weit gefasster und rein beschreibender Begriff verwendet wird (Personen die nicht zur Mehrheitsgruppe gehören)“ <sup>(24)</sup>. Das bedeutet, dass dieser Bericht nicht nur Informationen über klar definierte Minderheiten, sondern auch über jüngste Migranten, Asylsuchende und/oder Flüchtlinge, die Roma und Staatenlose enthält.

Nicht alle ethnischen Minderheiten sind in einer benachteiligten Situation. Minderheiten in Grenzregionen und als ethnische Minderheiten anerkannte Gruppen (nationale/sprachliche/religiöse/ethnische Minderheiten) sind im Rahmen der nationalen Gesetzgebung geschützt, die ihre kulturelle Identität mittels bestimmter Vorkehrungen in der politischen Vertretung, der Bildung, der Gesundheitsversorgung, der Beschäftigung und den steuerlichen Maßnahmen schützt. Dennoch sind in allen Mitgliedstaaten benachteiligte ethnische Minderheiten zu finden, deren Sprache, Religion, Kultur und Herkunft sich von der Mehrheitsgesellschaft unterscheidet, wenngleich sie oft nicht als ethnische Minderheiten anerkannt sind. Typische Beispiele sind Immigranten aus Drittländern, Asylsuchende und staatenlose Personen, wie beispielsweise die Roma. In einigen Ländern leidet auch die zweite und dritte Immigrantengeneration

(24) „The umbrella term ‚ethnic minority‘ is used [...] not as a legal category, but as a broad and purely descriptive term (persons not belonging to the ethnic majority)“, in: *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion* [Ethnische Minderheiten im Arbeitsmarkt: ein dringender Aufruf zur besseren sozialen Integration], Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market [Hochrangige Beratergruppe für soziale Eingliederung von sozialen Minderheiten und deren Teilnahme am Arbeitsmarkt] (2007), S. 28, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

unter sozioökonomischen Entbehrungen und unter Diskriminierung <sup>(25)</sup>.

Die in dieser Studie betrachteten benachteiligten ethnischen Minderheiten sind nicht als eine homogene Bevölkerungsgruppe zu verstehen. Auch wenn ethnische Minderheiten einige Gemeinsamkeiten in Bezug auf Benachteiligung und Diskriminierung aufweisen, bestehen doch teilweise erhebliche Unterschiede in den Niederlassungsmustern, der Kultur und Religion, ihrem Rechtsstatus sowie der Migrationsperiode.

In den EU-15-/EWR-Ländern sowie in Malta, Zypern und Slowenien sind benachteiligte ethnische Minderheiten vor allem Staatsbürger mit einer anderen ethnischen Herkunft, Personen mit einem Migrationshintergrund (Einwanderer aus Drittstaaten oder deren Kinder der ersten oder zweiten Generation), Asylsuchende und Flüchtlinge.

In den meisten osteuropäischen Mitgliedstaaten (z. B. Lettland, Estland, Rumänien, Slowakei, Polen) <sup>(26)</sup> ist im Gegensatz dazu Einwanderung ein begrenztes und relativ neues Phänomen, wobei ethnische Minderheiten, vor allem aufgrund der komplexen Vergangenheit dieser Länder, immer zahlreich vertreten waren. Außer den Roma in Rumänien, Bulgarien, Ungarn, der Slowakei und der Tschechischen Republik sind in Bulgarien auch die Türken eine benachteiligte ethnische Minderheit.

Europaweit sind keine genauen und vollständigen offiziellen Daten bezüglich Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten verfügbar: Es fehlen nach Geschlecht getrennte Daten sowie quantitative und qualitative Studien. In vielen Ländern ist eine Erfassung der ethnischen Zugehörigkeit verboten, in anderen Ländern werden in den statistischen Daten keine Angaben zur Volkszugehörigkeit oder zur Selbstklassifizierung gemacht. Dennoch gibt es einige statistische Daten zu den Migrationsflüssen, die Informationen

über die Zahl der im Ausland geborenen Frauen in Europa beinhalten. Die bestehenden Statistiken <sup>(27)</sup> zeigen eine Verweiblichung der Migrationsflüsse in die EU-15-Länder aus den osteuropäischen Staaten und Drittländern auf, die durch die gestiegene Zahl der Familienzusammenführungen, der Familienmigration und der Einwanderung von alleinstehenden, weiblichen Haushaltsvorständen verursacht wird.

## 2.2. Geschlecht und Ethnizität: das Ausmaß der sozialen Ausgrenzungen von Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten

Im Allgemeinen sind Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten stärker dem Risiko der sozialen Ausgrenzung und der Armut ausgesetzt als Männer der gleichen ethnischen Minderheit und als Frauen der ethnischen Mehrheit, insbesondere was den Zugang zu Beschäftigung, Bildung, Gesundheitsversorgung und Sozialleistungen betrifft. Dies ist bedingt durch die bestehenden Geschlechterrollen bei einigen der am meisten benachteiligten ethnischen Minderheiten (wie im Falle der Roma). Das Risiko der sozialen Ausgrenzung ist bei mobilen Gemeinschaften wie den Nomaden oder den Migranten besonders hoch.

### Bildungsniveau und Zugang zu Bildungssystemen

Im Gegensatz zum Rest der Bevölkerung haben Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten in den meisten europäischen Ländern niedrigere Bildungsabschlüsse als Frauen der ethnischen Mehrheit und als Männer der gleichen ethnischen Minderheit. Die mangelnde Bildung ist daher einer der Hauptgründe für soziale Ausgrenzung und Armut, was ebenso für ihre Kinder gilt. Ihr Beschäftigungsstatus, ihre Arbeitsqualität und auch ihr Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung werden dadurch beeinflusst.

Der Zugang zur Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung ist für Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten schwieriger als für die Männer. Dies ist insbesondere durch ihre häuslichen Verpflichtungen, ihre stärkere Isolation und ihre geringeren Sprachkenntnisse bedingt.

Dennoch bestehen Unterschiede zwischen den Gruppen ethnischer Minderheiten. Frauen einiger Migrantengruppen, zum Beispiel aus den osteuropäischen Staaten, haben oftmals ein höheres

(25) Europäische Kommission (2006 a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries* [Geschlechterungleichheiten – das Risiko der Armut und sozialen Ausgrenzung von benachteiligten Gruppen in den dreißig europäischen Ländern]- Bericht vorbereitet von der Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment [Expertengruppe für Geschlechtergleichheit, Soziale Integration und Beschäftigung] (2006). Generaldirektion Beschäftigung, Soziale Angelegenheiten und Chancengleichheit, Brüssel, S. 90, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>

(26) Siehe Länderberichte des EGGSI-Netzwerks 2008, *Ethnic Minority and Roma women* [Ethnische Minderheiten und Roma-Frauen] in Polen, Slowakei, Rumänien, Estland und Lettland.

(27) OECD (2007), *International Migration Outlook, Sopemi Annual report 2007* [Ausblick der Internationalen Migration, Sopemi, Jährlicher Bericht 2007], Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs [Direktion für Beschäftigung, Arbeit und Soziale Angelegenheiten], Paris.

Bildungsniveau als Frauen anderer Länder, jedoch werden ihre Qualifikationen nicht anerkannt. Statistische Daten der zweiten Immigrantengeneration zeigen eine höhere Bildungsbeteiligung und eine Verringerung der Bildungsunterschiede zu der einheimischen Bevölkerung, wobei Mädchen einiger ethnischer Minderheiten besser abschneiden als Jungen. Dies ist insbesondere in Ländern mit einem umfassenden Bildungssystem der Fall, in denen die weibliche Bildung gefördert wird (wie beispielsweise in den skandinavischen Ländern). Mädchen und junge Frauen einiger ethnischer Minderheiten, wie die Roma, oder Frauen aus afrikanischen und verschiedenen asiatischen Ländern verlassen die Schule jedoch früher als die Jungen, was durch die Übernahme von Aufgaben in der Familie und den in ihren Gemeinschaften bestehenden Geschlechterrollen bedingt ist.

### **Wohnsituation**

Benachteiligte ethnische Minderheiten leben oftmals in abgesonderten und einkommensschwachen Vierteln mit schlechtem Zugang zu öffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln und zu sozialen Dienstleistungen: Sie leben entweder in Sozialwohnungen- oder heimen, in sozialschwachen Gegenden (urbanen Ghettos) oder in überbelegten Wohnungen. Auf dem privaten Wohnungsmarkt werden sie oftmals diskriminiert, zahlen höhere Mieten als einheimische Mieter und haben oftmals irreguläre Mietverträge, die sie nicht vor Räumung schützen, insbesondere wenn sie illegale Migranten sind. Während segregierte Wohngebiete das Gefühl der sozialen Isolation verringern und die ethnischen Netzwerke stärken, führen sie insbesondere bei Frauen zu einer stärkeren Abgrenzung von der Mehrheitsbevölkerung und zu einer Verstärkung der traditionellen Rolle in ihrer Gemeinschaft und im Haushalt.

### **Gesundheitslage und Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung**

Die schlechte sozioökonomische Lage erhöht das Gesundheitsrisiko der Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten und verringert ihre Lebenserwartung (wie im Falle der Roma-Frauen) im Vergleich zu einheimischen Frauen. Frühe und mehrfache Schwangerschaften, Abtreibungen und psychosomatische Krankheiten sind häufig, insbesondere bei Frauen aus Drittstaaten. Der Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung wird durch sprachliche, kulturelle und religiöse Barrieren sowie durch fehlende Informati-

onen, niedriges Einkommen und fehlende Zugangsberechtigungen erschwert. Für illegale Einwanderer und/oder staatenlose Gemeinschaften ist das Fehlen von Aufenthaltspapieren eine erhebliche Hürde, da in den meisten Ländern eine Aufenthalts- und/oder Arbeitserlaubnis für den Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung notwendig ist. Die Folge ist, dass eine erhebliche Zahl von Migranten und ethnischen Minderheiten keine angemessene Krankenversicherung und Versorgung erhält, was ebenso für die Pflegeversicherung gilt. Der Mangel an Ausbildung und Erfahrungen des Pflegepersonals bezüglich der Berücksichtigung kultureller und religiöser Aspekte erschwert ebenfalls den Zugang zu den Gesundheitsleistungen. Dies gilt insbesondere für Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten.

### **Zugang zu Sozialleistungen**

Bedingt durch die allgemein niedrige Qualität ihrer Jobs, Zeitarbeitsverträge oder illegale Arbeitsformen haben viele Migrantinnen und Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten keine Möglichkeit, die Zugangsvoraussetzungen für beitragspflichtige Sozialleistungen zu erhalten. Im Gegensatz dazu nehmen sie Sozialleistungen in Ländern, in denen sie Sozialleistungen in Anspruch nehmen können, in höherem Maße wahr. Insbesondere Alleinerziehende (normalerweise alleinstehende Mütter) beziehen einen Großteil ihres Einkommens über die Sozialversicherungssysteme (beispielsweise in den skandinavischen Ländern und im Vereinigten Königreich). Hingegen sind illegale Migranten und staatenlose Gruppen (wie die Roma) ohne Aufenthaltsstatus und ohne Wohnsitz meistens von diesen Sozialleistungen ausgeschlossen.

### **Zugang zur Beschäftigung, Arbeitsqualität und Arbeitsbedingungen**

Auf dem Arbeitsmarkt weisen Frauen benachteiligter ethnischer Minderheiten höhere Nichterwerbstätigkeits- und Arbeitslosenraten auf als Männer ethnischer Minderheiten und Frauen der ethnischen Mehrheit. Dies wird vor allem durch ihre traditionellen häuslichen Aufgaben der Frauen in der Familie bedingt, insbesondere in denjenigen ethnischen Gruppen, wo eine traditionelle Geschlechterrolle vorherrscht, aber auch durch ihre mangelnden beruflichen Qualifikationen und durch Vorurteile der Arbeitgeber. Die kulturellen Einflüsse des Herkunftslands beeinflussen dauerhaft und besonders stark die Beteiligung der Frauen am Arbeitsmarkt: Zum Beispiel weisen Frauen aus Osteuropa und dem Fernen Osten

eine höhere Beschäftigungsrate als Frauen anderer ethnischer Minderheiten auf <sup>(28)</sup>.

Wenn sie arbeiten, gehen Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten oftmals illegalen Niedriglohnjobs nach, vor allem in dem von Frauen dominierten Reinigungs- und Pflegesektor. Selbständige Frauen sind hingegen selten. Dies verringert den Anspruch auf Arbeitslosenunterstützung oder andere beitragspflichtige Leistungen (z. B. Erziehungsgeld), insbesondere in Ländern, in denen Sozialleistungen an das Arbeitsverhältnis geknüpft sind und Sozialhilfe nur auf sehr geringem Niveau gewährt wird, wie es in einigen südeuropäischen Ländern der Fall ist (beispielsweise in Italien und Griechenland). Sogar Frauen mit einem hohen Bildungsabschluss gehen oftmals niedrigqualifizierten Tätigkeiten nach, auch, weil ihre Ausbildung nicht anerkannt wird. Daten der OECD <sup>(29)</sup> belegen, dass in den meisten europäischen Ländern vergleichsweise mehr ausländische Frauen für ihre Tätigkeit überqualifiziert sind als ausländische Männer und einheimische Frauen.

### Zugang zu Finanzdienstleistungen

Benachteiligte ethnische Minderheiten haben einen eingeschränkten Zugang zu Finanzdienstleistungen, und Frauen haben noch mehr Schwierigkeiten, da sie seltener ein geregelt und sicheres Arbeitsverhältnis haben und ihr Eigentum nicht für eine Sicherheit bei der Bank ausreicht. Dies erschwert es, Gelder für ein eigenes Gewerbe oder für den Kauf eines Hauses zu erhalten oder ein eigenes Bankkonto zu eröffnen. Der Zugang zu Finanzdienstleistungen wird zudem durch Sprachbarrieren und geringe Kenntnisse in Bezug auf das Finanzsystem eingeschränkt. Die Beispiele aus den Länderberichten des EGGSI-Netzwerkes führen auch Diskriminierungen in Bezug auf Geschlecht und ethnische Zugehörigkeit von Seiten der Finanzinstitute sowie eine schlechte Verbreitung anderer Kreditformen wie z. B. Mikrokredite auf.

### Mehrfache Diskriminierung von Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten

Es gibt mehr Gründe und Lebensbereiche, in denen Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten diskriminiert wer-

den, als dies bei Männern der Fall ist. Abgesehen davon, dass sie aufgrund ihres Geschlechts sowohl außerhalb als auch innerhalb ihrer ethnischen Gruppe diskriminiert werden, sind sie auch als Angehörige ethnischer Minderheiten wegen der kulturellen und religiösen Unterschiede mit sozialen Vorurteilen konfrontiert.

Insbesondere auf dem Arbeitsmarkt werden Immigrantinnen und Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten aufgrund ihres Geschlechts benachteiligt. Sie sind oftmals mit erheblichen Vorurteilen konfrontiert, haben weniger Verhandlungsmöglichkeiten und reagieren verletzlicher auf ungerechte Behandlung und Ausnutzung als die Männer der ethnischen Minderheit, insbesondere wenn sie in der Schattenwirtschaft und in Privathaushalten tätig sind. Die Diskriminierung am Arbeitsplatz zeigt sich auch darin, dass sie häufig Beschäftigungen im Niedriglohnsektor nachgehen, für die sie keine Qualifikation benötigen und die auch im Falle hochqualifizierter Frauen nur geringe Aufstiegschancen bieten.

Darüber hinaus sind religiöse und kulturelle Traditionen wesentliche Faktoren, welche die Situation der Frauen innerhalb der ethnischen Minderheit beeinflussen. Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten mit ähnlichen religiösen und kulturellen Werten wie die der Mehrheitsgesellschaft haben Probleme beim Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt und dabei, ein gesichertes Einkommen zu bekommen, da sie oftmals alleinerziehend oder der Ernährer der Familie sind (wie beispielsweise im Falle von Immigrantinnen aus Lateinamerika oder Osteuropa). Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten aus männlich dominierten Gesellschaften erfahren aber auch geschlechtsspezifische Diskriminierung innerhalb ihrer eigenen ethnischen Gruppe durch die Betonung ihrer traditionellen Fürsorgerolle.

Häusliche Gewalt ist schwerer zu erkennen, da Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten ihre Rechte nicht kennen, eine geringe Kenntnis über bestehende Rechte und Dienstleistungen in diesem Bereich haben und sich im Vergleich zu einheimischen Frauen in einer schwächeren Position befinden, da sie häufig sozioökonomisch stärker von ihren Partnern abhängig sind, insbesondere wenn ihre Aufenthaltserlaubnis an eine Heirat oder Familienzusammenführung geknüpft ist.

Besondere Probleme begegnen Frauen, die Opfer von Menschenhandel geworden sind (oftmals aus

(28) Zum kulturellen Einfluss des Herkunftslands in Bezug auf die Arbeitsmarktbeteiligung der Frauen siehe: Fernandez, R., Fogli, A. (2005), *Culture: An Empirical Investigation of Beliefs, Work and Fertility* [Kultur: eine empirische Untersuchung zu Glauben, Arbeit und Fruchtbarkeit] CEPR Discussion Paper, No 5089.

(29) OECD (2007), *International Migration Outlook, Sopemi Annual report 2007*, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Paris.



Rumänien, Afrika und osteuropäischen Ländern, die nicht der EU angehören), die Gewalt oder Zwangsprostitution erfahren haben.

### 2.3. Gesetzliche und politische Antworten in den europäischen Ländern

Die gesetzlichen und politischen Antworten in den europäischen Ländern spiegeln sowohl die Erfahrungen mit den allgemeinen Niederlassungsmustern als auch die Struktur der nationalen Sozialsysteme wider.

#### Relevante Gesetzgebung

Alle EU-/EWR-Länder haben eine Antidiskriminierungsgesetzgebung entworfen, welche unter anderem Maßnahmen zum Schutz gegen Diskriminierung aufgrund von Ethnizität und Geschlecht beinhaltet, die auch durch die kürzlich umgesetzten EU-Richtlinien für Antidiskriminierung (wie z. B. die Rassengleichheitsrichtlinien und die Richtlinien für Beschäftigungsgleichheit), für Geschlechtergleichheit und für den Status der Drittstaatsangehörigen (wie die Richtlinien für langfristig aufenthaltsberechtigte Drittstaatsangehörige) ergänzt wurden <sup>(30)</sup>.

Die EGGSI-Experten weisen darauf hin, dass es außer den allgemein anwendbaren Antidiskriminierungs- und Gleichbehandlungs-Rahmengesetzen normalerweise keine speziellen Bestimmungen für die Gleichbehandlung von Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten an sich gibt, mit Ausnahme der Gesetzgebung in Bezug auf den Status von schwangeren Immigrantinnen und von Opfern von Menschenhandel in manchen europäischen Ländern (wie in Italien und Griechenland). Der Mangel einer systematischen Anwendung des Gender Mainstreaming im Rahmen der Anwendung der Richtlinie 2000/43/EG wurde auch von der Kommission in ihrem Umsetzungsbericht hervorgehoben <sup>(31)</sup>.

(30) Richtlinie 2003/109/EG des Rates vom 25. November 2003 betreffend die Rechtsstellung der langfristig aufenthaltsberechtigten Drittstaatsangehörigen, ABl. L 16/44 vom 23.1.2004., [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/l23034\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l23034_de.htm)

(31) Europäische Kommission (2006 b), Anwendung der Richtlinie 2000/43/EG des Rates vom 29. Juni 2000 zur Anwendung des Gleichbehandlungsgrundsatzes ohne Unterschied der Rasse oder der ethnischen Herkunft], Mitteilung der Kommission an den Rat und an das Europäische Parlament, KOM(2006) 643 endg., ABl. L 180 vom 19.7.2000, S. 22-26, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0643:FIN:DE:PDF>

Von den europäischen Ländern sind es insbesondere die osteuropäischen Mitgliedstaaten (wie die Tschechische Republik, die Slowakei, Estland, Lettland, Litauen, Polen und Rumänien), die ethnische Minderheiten anerkennen. Dies ist durch die große Anzahl der Bürger anderer ethnischer Zugehörigkeit in diesen Ländern bedingt, während Einwanderung ein noch geringfügiges und relativ neues Phänomen darstellt. In diesen Ländern ist die Gesetzgebung vor allem auf den Schutz der sprachlichen, traditionellen und kulturellen Identität der formell anerkannten ethnischen Minderheitengruppen ausgelegt sowie auf das Recht des Gebrauchs ihrer Sprachen in den öffentlichen Verwaltungen (unter bestimmten Bedingungen) und der Teilnahme am politischen Leben.

In den EU-15-Mitgliedstaaten und den EWR-Ländern ist die entsprechende Gesetzgebung hauptsächlich auf die Rechtsinstrumente zur Regulierung der Einwanderung begrenzt, besonders in Bezug auf die Aufenthaltsrechte, auch wenn in einigen Ländern (wie beispielsweise in Österreich, Deutschland und Italien) auch Rechtsinstrumente zum Schutz der Kultur, der Traditionen und der Sprachen der formell anerkannten ethnischen Minderheiten entwickelt wurden.

Der Rechtsstatus der ethnischen Minderheiten ist ein wesentlicher Faktor für den Zugang zu den Sozialleistungen und dem Arbeitsmarkt. Das Fehlen eines Rechtsstatus ist insbesondere problematisch für illegale Einwanderer, Asylsuchende, Flüchtlinge sowie für staatenlose Gemeinschaften, die immer dem Risiko einer Ausweisung oder Vertreibung ausgesetzt sind. In den meisten Fällen ist der Aufenthaltsstatus in einem Land an die Arbeitsgenehmigung geknüpft, für die man wiederum einen Arbeitsvertrag benötigt. Dies kann insbesondere für Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten problematisch sein, die gefährdeter sind, ihren vorübergehenden Aufenthaltsstatus zu verlieren, wenn sie keine dauerhafte Arbeit nachweisen können, da sie oftmals in nicht regulierten Sektoren und in der Schattenwirtschaft arbeiten. Kürzlich wurde in einigen EU-15-Staaten (wie beispielsweise in Frankreich, Italien und Deutschland) die Einwanderungsgesetzgebung (Einwanderung und Aufenthalt in besagten Ländern und die Gesetzgebung zur Familienzusammenführung) für Drittstaateneinwanderer verschärft.

Die Gesetzgebung zum Erhalt von Sozialleistungen setzt in den meisten Ländern den Aufenthaltsstatus und die Staatsbürgerschaft voraus, auch wenn in



einigen Staaten, wie z. B. in Spanien, illegale Migranten zu einigen Sozialleistungen Zugang haben. In den meisten Ländern ist nur die Notfall-Gesundheitsversorgung und das Recht auf Bildung auf illegale Immigranten und ihre Kinder ausgeweitet.

Ethnische Minderheiten und insbesondere Frauen sind in den meisten europäischen Ländern politisch unterrepräsentiert.

### Modelle der Integrationspolitik

In den letzten Jahren haben die europäischen Länder begonnen, spezielle Politiken in Bezug auf ethnische Minderheiten und Immigranten einzuführen. Wenig Beachtung finden jedoch die bestehenden Geschlechterunterschiede und die Einbindung des Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatzes in die Politik, auch wenn einige interessante Projekte auf nationaler und lokaler Ebene durchgeführt wurden. Politische Ansätze, die explizit auf die Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten ausgerichtet sind, scheinen in diesem Zusammenhang erfolgreicher zu sein, wie die Evaluierungen im Vereinigten Königreich und in den Niederlanden zeigen.

Sprachförderung und zweisprachiger Unterricht sind wichtige Bereiche, insbesondere für neu eingewanderte Personen. In einigen wenigen Ländern (wie beispielsweise in den Niederlanden) gibt es spezielle Kurse für Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten, wohingegen nur einige Länder eine Schulbildung in einer Minderheitensprache anbieten (Estland, Ungarn, Lettland, Litauen und die Slowakei). Im Vereinigten Königreich und in Spanien wurde ein Bildungsfonds eingerichtet, um die Bildungsunterschiede zu verringern, während Estland einen Fonds für die Verbesserung der Lehrerausbildung in russischsprachigen zweisprachigen Schulen eingerichtet hat.

In Bezug auf die Sozialpolitik sind ethnische Minderheiten im Allgemeinen und insbesondere Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten normalerweise berechtigt, Sozialleistungen aufgrund ihrer benachteiligten sozioökonomischen Situation zu beziehen; in einigen Ländern (wie in Luxemburg und Norwegen) gibt es einige Sozialleistungen speziell für Asylsuchende. Frauen benachteiligter ethnischer Minderheiten sind jedoch empfindlicher gegenüber politischen Veränderungen als Männer, wie sich beispielsweise bei der Einführung einer auf Workfare Policies ausgerichteten Politik in den skandinavischen Ländern, im Vereinigten Königreich und in Deutschland zeigt. Diese Maßnahmen zielen auf eine Arbeitsaktivierung der Sozialhilfeempfänger

ab, die für die Fortführung des Sozialhilfebezugs zur Arbeitssuche und zur Teilnahme an Qualifizierungsmaßnahmen verpflichtet werden. Diese Politik ist dann besonders erfolgreich, wenn Maßnahmen zum Abbau von Hemmnissen, mit denen sich Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten bei der Eingliederung in den Arbeitsmarkt konfrontiert sehen, durchgeführt werden. Dies betrifft beispielsweise Frauen, die viele Kinder haben oder alleinerziehend sind und einen schwierigen Zugang zu Betreuungseinrichtungen oder gut bezahlten Arbeitsplätzen haben.

Besonders schwierig ist es, Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten zu erreichen, wenn die Sozialmaßnahmen nicht speziell auf sie zugeschnitten sind, was durch ihre stärkere Isolation und Segregation in einigen ethnischen Gemeinschaften der Fall ist. Derzeit gibt es in einigen europäischen Ländern hauptsächlich im Bereich der Gesundheitsversorgung Bemühungen, die verschiedenen kulturellen Hintergründe von Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten zu berücksichtigen, indem interkulturelle Vermittler eingesetzt werden, die Hilfe leisten, Übersetzungsdienste anbieten und kulturelle Unterschiede berücksichtigen.

Im Gegensatz dazu gibt es in den meisten europäischen Staaten keine Maßnahmen im Bereich des Wohnungswesens, welche speziell auf die ethnischen Minderheiten ausgerichtet sind (außer in Griechenland, Italien und im Vereinigten Königreich), wobei sie aber als einkommensschwache Gruppen häufiger Zugang zu Sozialwohnungsprogrammen haben (illegale Einwanderer und staatenlose Minderheiten ausgenommen).

### 2.4. Beispiele vorbildlicher Praktiken

Die Studie stellt einige Programme und Projekte vor, die speziell für Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten konzipiert sind und von den Landesexperten als Beispiele vorbildlicher Praktiken ausgewählt wurden. Die meisten Beispiele sind in den Bereichen Arbeitsmarkteinbindung, soziale Integration, Bildung, Rechtsberatung, Wohnungswesen und Kultur angesiedelt.

Einige Projekte im Arbeitsmarktbereich bieten Berufsbildungen und Qualifizierungsmaßnahmen an, um Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten die Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt zu erleichtern (z. B. in Österreich, Bulgarien, Dänemark, Italien usw.). Andere zielen auf den Abbau von kulturellen und sozialen Hindernissen ab und informieren Frauen über die Normen und Traditionen des Arbeitsmarktes des jeweiligen Landes

(wie beispielsweise in der Tschechischen Republik, Norwegen, Schweden). Die Verbesserung des Verständnisses und der Anerkennung der Bedürfnisse von Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten von Seiten der Arbeitgeber (wie bei einem Projekt in Luxemburg) ist ein anderer wichtiger Bereich, der jedoch nicht besonders entwickelt ist. Andere Projekte zielen auf das Erleichtern der Selbständigkeit von ethnischen Minderheiten (Schweden) ab.

Die Bereitstellung von mehrsprachigem Informationsmaterial und das multikulturelle Training des Gesundheitspersonals sind die wesentlichen Bereiche, in denen die kulturellen und sprachlichen Barrieren abgebaut und der Zugang der Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten zum Gesundheitssystem gefördert werden kann. Einige Projekte konzentrieren sich andererseits auf Gruppen mit spezifischen Gesundheitsproblemen, so beispielsweise auf Behinderte aus ethnischen Minderheiten (Lettland), afrikanische Frauen mit HIV, Opfer von häuslicher Gewalt oder mit psychischen Problemen (Belgien) sowie auf Frauen mit erhöhtem Gesundheitsrisiko durch Genitalverstümmelung (wie beispielsweise somalische Frauen in Schweden).

Um die Isolation und Marginalisierung sowie die täglichen Probleme zu überwinden, konzentrieren sich einige Projekte auf die Schaffung von Nachbarschaftsnetzen und Sozialisierungsmöglichkeiten (wie in Belgien und Spanien), durch Vermittlungsdienste, psychologische und rechtliche Betreuung sowie durch die Vermittlung von Kontakten zu anderen Frauen.

Projekte zur rechtlichen Unterstützung bieten Informationen zu allgemeinen oder spezifischen Rechtsbereichen, die im Zusammenhang mit der Arbeitsintegration, dem Wohnungswesen, kurzfristigen oder langfristigen Aufenthaltsgenehmigungen und der Gesetzgebung bezüglich binationaler Hochzeiten stehen.

Nur wenige Projekte widmen sich der interkulturellen Information und dem Diversity Training von Lehrern, Angestellten und Gesundheitspersonal (wie in Griechenland und Portugal).

### 3. Die Roma-Frauen in Europa

Europaweit sind die Roma einem hohen Risiko der Marginalisierung ausgesetzt. Das Ausmaß der Benachteiligung ist vergleichbar mit demjenigen an-

derer ethnischer Minderheiten, jedoch erleiden Roma-Frauen zusätzliche und stärkere Formen der Marginalisierung und Diskriminierung.

#### 3.1. Definition und Verteilung der Roma-Gemeinschaften in den europäischen Ländern

Die statistischen Informationen zu Roma-Frauen sind in besonderem Maße ungenügend, auch wenn die meisten soziologischen Studien zeigen, dass Roma-Frauen, mehr noch als Roma-Männer und Frauen der ethnischen Mehrheit, unter Ausgrenzung in den Bereichen Beschäftigung, Bildung, Gesundheit und Sozialleistungen leiden, vor allem durch die strikte Geschlechterrollenverteilung innerhalb der Roma-Gemeinschaft.

Trotzdem ist die Gemeinschaft der Roma keine homogene Gruppe: Europaweit bestehen signifikante Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Gruppen, was sowohl Niederlassungsmodelle, Kultur und Religion als auch Aufenthaltsstatus, Sprache, Herkunft und Zeitpunkt der Migration betrifft. Roma sind entweder nomadisch oder sesshaft, wie beispielsweise die Sinti der ersten Migrationswelle, die in einigen der EU-15-Staaten dauerhaft in bestimmten Gegenden angesiedelt sind (so wie in Italien, Spanien, Griechenland, Belgien, Österreich und Deutschland). Der Großteil der Roma in Europa ist sesshaft. Der Aufenthaltsstatus der Roma ist hingegen in den europäischen Ländern sehr unterschiedlich, aber auch innerhalb eines Landes (wo sie präsent sind), je nach entsprechender Untergruppe. Wie auch im Falle der ethnischen Minderheiten, kann zwischen den einheimischen Staatsbürgern (die entsprechend den Status der ethnischen Minderheit oder der nationalen Minderheit haben), Asylsuchenden und Flüchtlingen sowie Immigranten (legal oder illegal) unterschieden werden.

Wie im Falle der ethnischen Minderheiten sind auch für Roma-Frauen keine präzisen und offiziellen statistischen Daten vorhanden; vielmehr gibt es in einigen europäischen Ländern nicht einmal genaue Daten über die Größe der Roma-Gemeinschaften, auch wenn neueste Schätzungen ergeben, „dass es europaweit etwa 10 Millionen Roma gibt“<sup>(32)</sup>.

(32) European Commission (2006 a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, [Geschlechterungleichheiten – das Risiko der Armut und sozialen Ausgrenzung von benachteiligten Gruppen in den dreißig europäischen Ländern]- Bericht vorbereitet von der Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment [Expertengruppe für Geschlechtergleichheit, Soziale Integration und Beschäftigung]. Generaldirektion Beschäftigung, Soziale Angelegenheiten und Chancengleichheit, Brüssel.

### 3.2. Roma – spezifische Benachteiligung und soziale Ausgrenzung: eine geschlechtsspezifische Betrachtung

Die Familien der Roma unterscheiden sich in einigen Bereichen von anderen Familien: höhere Geburten- und Sterberaten, mit einer großen Zahl an jungen Menschen und einem geringen Anteil an älteren Personen. Die Lebenserwartung von Roma-Frauen und -Männern ist in der Regel geringer als die des Großteils der Bevölkerung in den EU-Mitgliedstaaten. Dies ist auch durch den niedrigeren Lebensstandard und den erschwerten Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung bedingt.

#### Bildungsniveau und Zugang zum Schulsystem

Die Gruppe der Roma ist gekennzeichnet durch einen niedrigeren Bildungsstandard und eine geringere Teilnahme der Kinder am Schulunterricht. Die unregelmäßige Teilnahme und eine hohe Anzahl an Schulabbrechern ist bei den 12- bis 14-jährigen Roma-Kindern weit verbreitet, was vor allem durch ökonomische Gründe, einer höheren Mobilität und den geringeren Stellenwert von Bildung innerhalb der Roma-Gemeinschaft zu erklären ist. Roma-Kinder haben zudem mehr Schwierigkeiten, sich an die Regeln der Schule anzupassen. Sie haben Lernschwierigkeiten, nicht nur aufgrund von Sprachproblemen, sondern auch wegen des fehlenden Bewusstseins seitens der Lehrer und der Schule gegenüber ihren Bedürfnissen und ihrer Kultur wie auch wegen des ihnen entgegengebrachten Rassismus.

Roma-Kinder werden aufgrund ihrer Lernschwierigkeiten häufiger als andere Kinder in Sonderschulen oder in segregierten Klassen untergebracht. Dies geschieht auch aufgrund des Widerstrebens der Schulen, sie zu integrieren und auch weil die Eltern der ethnischen Mehrheit der Präsenz von Roma-Kindern in den Klassen ablehnend gegenüberstehen sowie aufgrund der Abgeschlossenheit von Roma-Siedlungen.

Roma-Mädchen haben dabei ein noch niedrigeres Bildungsniveau als die Jungen. Sie verlassen in der Regel die Schule früher als die Jungen, was durch ihre Familienverpflichtungen und ihre kulturellen Normen bedingt ist, welche es Mädchen nicht erlauben, in Kontakt mit der Mehrheitskultur zu kommen, und Frauen als die wesentlichen Bewahrer der Romakultur betrachtet. Der niedrige Bildungsstandard von Frauen ist insofern problematisch, als dies auch Auswirkungen auf die nächsten Generationen hat, da Kinder

von Frauen mit höherer Bildung häufiger zur Schule gehen als Kinder von Frauen mit niedriger Bildung.

#### Wohnsituation

Bei der Wohnungssuche stoßen die Roma oftmals auf Widerstand, der häufig zu provisorischen Lösungen und zu Schwierigkeiten mit der Nachbarschaft führt. Die Vorurteile der Mehrheitsgesellschaft und die schwächere ökonomische Situation der Roma-Bevölkerung verringern ihre Möglichkeiten, auf dem privaten Wohnungsmarkt eine Wohnung zu finden. Eines der größten Probleme ist, dass sie keine Grundstücke oder Häuser besitzen. Roma wohnen oftmals in segregierten, isolierten Randgemeinden mit schlechtem Zugang zu öffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln (z. B. in Deutschland) oder in Barackenvierteln in den äußeren Stadtgebieten (wie in Italien, Spanien und in einigen osteuropäischen Mitgliedstaaten) oder in Wohnwagensiedlungen (Vereinigtes Königreich). Daher sind die Lebensbedingungen häufig ärmlich, und es gibt Probleme wie die Überbelegung, die fehlende Grundversorgung in den Bereichen Wasser und Elektrizität und ein höheres Vertreibungrisiko. Dies macht die häusliche Arbeitslast der Roma-Frauen besonders beschwerlich. Sie müssen einen Großteil ihres Lebens unter schwierigen wohnlichen Bedingungen leben, was sich auch negativ auf ihre Gesundheit auswirkt.

#### Gesundheit und Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung

Roma-Frauen und -Männer haben eine weitaus niedrigere durchschnittliche Lebenserwartung als andere Bevölkerungsgruppen. Dies ist hauptsächlich auf ihre Wohn- und Lebenssituation zurückzuführen, aber auch auf den unregelmäßigen Zugang zu Gesundheitskontrollen und zu medizinischer Versorgung.

Dabei haben die Roma-Frauen ein höheres Gesundheitsrisiko als andere Frauen, bedingt durch frühe und häufige Geburten und Schwangerschaftsabbrüche, eine hohe Arbeitsbelastung im Haushalt, ärmliche Wohnbedingungen, Fehlernährung usw. Familienplanung wird selten angewendet, was einerseits durch kulturelle Werte bedingt ist, die Verhütungsmittel ablehnen: Schwangerschaftsabbrüche werden häufig als eine Methode der „Geburtenkontrolle“ angewendet, wenngleich mit sinkender Tendenz. In einigen Ländern (wie in Slowenien und Ungarn) wurden auch Fälle der Zwangssterilisation von jungen Roma-Frauen bekannt. Viele schwangere Roma-

Frauen (darunter auch minderjährige Roma-Mütter) sind nicht bei einem Hausarzt gemeldet, und viele unterziehen sich auch keinen vorgeburtlichen Untersuchungen. Dies ist einerseits durch fehlende Information, andererseits durch kulturelle Barrieren, wie Misstrauen gegenüber professioneller medizinischer Hilfe bedingt, aber auch durch die Schwierigkeit, mit Fremden und insbesondere mit fremden Männern über Gesundheitsthemen zu sprechen.

Roma-Frauen nutzen das Gesundheitssystem seltener als die einheimische Bevölkerung, weil die ärztliche Behandlung im Widerspruch zu ihren Hygienevorschriften und ihrer Sittsamkeit steht, und sie sich oftmals wegen der negativen Behandlung oder wegen Rassismus von Seiten des medizinischen Personals vom System ausgeschlossen und diskriminiert fühlen. Der reduzierte Zugang zu Informationen wird auch durch soziale Zerrüttung und Armut beeinflusst, insbesondere in isolierten Roma-Gemeinschaften. Ebenfalls wird der Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung durch Sprachprobleme erschwert, da die Roma-Sprache für einige medizinische, gesundheitliche oder soziale Themen keine Wörter kennt.

Andererseits sind Roma-Frauen die wichtigsten Fürsorgeträger innerhalb der Familie und ihrer Gemeinschaften und Nutznießer von Gesundheitsdiensten (z. B. wenn sie die Geburt im Krankenhaus durchführen). Sie stellen häufig die Verbindung der Romageinschaft mit den Gesundheits- und Sozialdiensten dar. Aus diesem Grund binden viele Gesundheits- und Sozialhilfeprogramme Frauen als kulturelle Vermittlerinnen ein (wie in Rumänien).

### Zugang zu sozialen Leistungen

Die hohen Nichterwerbstätigkeits- und Arbeitslosenraten sind ein wesentlicher Grund für den hohen Grad der Abhängigkeit von Sozialleistungen. Illegale und gelegentliche Beschäftigung verhindert, dass die Roma Zugang zur Arbeitslosenversicherung oder anderen beitragspflichtigen Leistungen haben. Dies betrifft insbesondere Roma-Frauen, die häufiger von Nichterwerbstätigkeit und Arbeitslosigkeit betroffen sind als Männer und, wenn überhaupt, häufig in der Schattenwirtschaft tätig sind. In einigen Ländern stellt das Fehlen von Ausweispapieren (was viele Roma betrifft) ein Hindernis für den Zugang zu sozialen Diensten und anderen Unterstützungsleistungen dar. Diese Schwierigkeiten führen zu einer hohen Belastung der Roma-Frauen, welche die Hauptlast der Fürsorgepflichtigen tragen.

### Zugang zu Beschäftigung, Arbeitsqualität und Arbeitsbedingungen

Wie auch andere ethnische Minderheiten haben Roma-Frauen größere Schwierigkeiten beim Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt als Frauen der ethnischen Mehrheit, weshalb sie höhere Nichterwerbstätigkeits- und Arbeitslosenraten aufweisen. Dies ist zum einen auf ihren niedrigeren Bildungsstandard und ihre sporadischen Arbeitsgewohnheiten auf ihre traditionelle Rolle innerhalb der Familie und ihre häufigen Schwangerschaften zurückzuführen, aber auch auf ihre mangelnde berufliche Qualifizierung und auf Vorurteile von Seiten der Arbeitgeber. Roma-Frauen führen größtenteils Hilfsarbeiten, niedrigqualifizierte und körperlich anstrengende Tätigkeiten aus, sind entweder saisonal oder in Gelegenheitsjobs (z. B. in der Reinigungsbranche) und häufig auch in der Schatten- oder Grauwirtschaft tätig, was zu niedrigen Einkommen führt und den Zugang zum Sozialversicherungssystem verhindert. Eine weitere Tätigkeit, die vor allem von Frauen und Kindern in städtischen Regionen durchgeführt wird, ist das Betteln, wohingegen Subsistenzwirtschaft eher von Frauen in ländlichen Regionen betrieben wird.

### Zugang zu Finanzdienstleistungen

Die Bevölkerungsgruppe der Roma und insbesondere der Roma-Frauen hat einen beschränkten Zugang zu Finanzdienstleistungen, weil sie weder eine geregelte und sichere Arbeit haben noch andere Sicherheitsgarantien vorweisen können und von den Finanzinstituten häufig diskriminiert werden. Erst vor kurzem haben in einigen europäischen Mitgliedstaaten einige Pilotprojekte begonnen (beispielsweise in Spanien oder in Bulgarien das „Training und Existenzgründungsprojekt“), die Mikrokredite für Roma-Frauen bereitstellen.

### 3.3. Die besondere Situation der Roma-Frauen: ein Fall vielfacher Diskriminierung

Als eine der am stärksten benachteiligten ethnischen Gruppen sind Roma-Frauen und -Männer mit einer Reihe von Vorurteilen und sozialen Ausgrenzungen konfrontiert, welche durch die negativen Verhaltensweisen der Mehrheitsbevölkerung verursacht werden. Besonders Roma-Frauen, die sich wie Frauen im Allgemeinen einer Reihe von Schwierigkeiten bei der sozialen Integration gegenübersehen, haben zusätzliche Integrationsschwierigkeiten aufgrund ihrer Kultur, die auf traditionellen und strikt getrennten Ge-

schlechterrollen basiert, welche auch die persönliche Entwicklung der Frauen und Mädchen beeinflusst.

Roma-Frauen sind in vielen Bereichen benachteiligt, auch wenn es aufgrund fehlender statistischer Daten und Studien schwer zu beurteilen ist, wie sehr dies durch diskriminierende Praktiken beeinflusst wird. Dennoch ist man sich darüber einig, dass es eine fortwährende Diskriminierung von Seiten der nationalen Gemeinschaft gibt, insbesondere was die Bildung, die Gesundheit, die Beschäftigung und die Beteiligung am öffentlichen Leben betrifft. Fälle der Diskriminierung reichen vom Zugang zur Bildung oder der Gesundheitsversorgung (z. B. Vorurteile der Angestellten, Segregation in Schulen und Krankenhäusern oder in den Geburtshäusern) bis zum Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt und zu Stellenangeboten (aufgrund von Vorurteilen der Arbeitgeber, der Mitarbeiter und oft der öffentlichen Angestellten).

Ein anderer wichtiger Aspekt der Diskriminierung findet sich innerhalb der Roma-Gemeinschaften und ist direkt mit der Rolle der Frau innerhalb der Kultur und der Familienstruktur verbunden. Die traditionelle Roma-Familie ist völlig patriarchal: Die Frauen haben eine untergeordnete Position, und es gibt eine strikte Arbeitstrennung zwischen Frauen und Männern. Traditionellerweise ist die Frauenrolle mit den häuslichen Pflichten und der Familie verbunden, und es ist ihre Aufgabe, für die Weitergabe der Roma-Kultur und der Ethnizität zwischen den Generationen die Verantwortung zu übernehmen. Anders jedoch als Frauen anderer ethnischer Minderheiten beginnen Roma-Frauen bereits mit elf Jahren Fürsorgepflichten zu übernehmen, und es wird von ihnen erwartet, früh zu heiraten und viele Kinder zu bekommen. In einigen Gemeinschaften akzeptieren die Frauen die arrangierte Hochzeit. Diese traditionelle Rolle im Haushalt und in der Familie verhindert den Zugang zum offiziellen Arbeitsmarkt und erschwert die Vereinbarkeit von Arbeits- und Familienleben. Scheidungen bei offiziell und auch bei traditionell verheirateten Paaren sind sehr ungewöhnlich unter den Roma, insbesondere wenn sie Kinder haben. Bei Scheidungen sind Frauen in der schwächeren Position, da die Kinder normalerweise dem Vater zugesprochen oder in die Obhut der Großeltern gegeben werden. Das ist einer der Gründe, warum Frauen nur selten bereit sind, ihren Ehemann zu verlassen, selbst bei schwierigen Ehen oder auch im Falle von ehelicher Gewalt.

Die traditionellen Fürsorgepflichten sind für Roma-Frauen und -Mädchen auch eine Hürde für ihre

Schulbildung, da sie häufig gezwungen sind, die Schule in sehr jungem Alter zu verlassen, um jüngere Geschwister zu versorgen oder häusliche Pflichten zu übernehmen.

Durch das Fehlen einer sicheren Arbeitsstelle haben alleinstehende oder verwitwete Roma-Frauen oder Roma-Frauen, die der ehelichen Gewalt entflohen sind, besondere Schwierigkeiten, das Einkommen für die Familie zu sichern. Die prekäre Position auf dem Arbeitsmarkt und die extreme Armut der meisten jungen Roma-Frauen erhöht damit deren Gefährdung, als Teil ihrer Überlebensstrategie in die Prostitution oder Kriminalität abzurutschen. Auch werden sie durch illegale Beschäftigung, oder was noch ernstzunehmender ist, durch Menschenhandel ausgebeutet.

In vielen europäischen Mitgliedstaaten ist die Roma-Minderheit nicht im Parlament vertreten, selbst in den Ländern, wo die Roma eine große Minderheitengruppe darstellen. Roma-Frauen sind im Allgemeinen politisch unterrepräsentiert, wobei sie sich seit einiger Zeit mehr und mehr in Graswurzel-Organisationen engagieren.

### 3.4. Gesetzgebung und Modelle der Integrationspolitik

Auf EU-Ebene sind Roma durch bestehende Antidiskriminierungsinstrumente geschützt, eine eigenständige EU-Gesetzgebung für die Roma-Minderheit besteht jedoch nicht. Allerdings sind vom Europäischen Parlament nichtlegislative Beschlüsse angenommen worden. Im Zusammenhang mit diesem Bericht ist der im April 2005 verabschiedete „Beschluss zur Situation der Roma-Frauen in der EU“ [2005/2164(INI)] von besonderer Bedeutung.

Überall in Europa besteht die grundlegende Annahme, dass die kollektiven Rechte der Roma durch die nationalen politischen Rahmenbedingungen ausreichend geschützt sind – unabhängig von ihrem Status: Staatsbürger oder Ausländer – einerseits durch die Rahmengesetze gegen Rassismus, Diskriminierung und Fremdenfeindlichkeit, andererseits durch die Querschnittsbereiche der sozialen Fürsorge und Sozialleistungen. Nur in wenigen der analysierten Länder – hauptsächlich in den osteuropäischen Ländern mit einem großen Anteil an Roma und in Mitgliedstaaten mit einer bedeutenden multiethnischen Tradition – bestehen besondere Gesetze für die Roma-Minderheit (auch wenn sie sich nicht auf Roma-Frauen und die Geschlechtergleichstellung beziehen).



Das Fehlen eines anerkannten gesetzlichen Status der Roma-Gemeinschaft ist nicht unvereinbar mit dem Entwurf und der Umsetzung von politischen Maßnahmen für diese Gruppe. Tatsächlich sind die Roma die benachteiligsten Empfänger von Maßnahmen für ethnische Minderheiten, auch wenn die EGGSI-Landesberichte zeigen, dass Roma mit auf sie ausgerichteten politischen Maßnahmen nicht immer so gut erreicht werden wie andere „stärker integrierte“ ethnische Minderheiten und dass insbesondere Roma-Frauen schlecht erreicht werden.

Die politischen Gestaltungsprozesse zur Eingliederung der Roma unterscheiden sich in den europäischen Ländern entsprechend des nationalen Sozialsystems. Das demografische Gewicht der Roma und ihre gesellschaftliche Relevanz spielen eine wichtige Rolle bei der Suche nach gezielten Maßnahmen. Was die Auswirkung auf die Gleichstellung betrifft, so scheint ein allgemeiner „Chancengleichheitsansatz“ für die Ergebnisse von Sozialreformen relevant zu sein, um die Geschlechtergleichstellung bei der Umsetzung von Reformen zu berücksichtigen.

Die geringen Kenntnisse und Angaben zu der sozialen Situation der Roma-Frauen und zu ihren Sichtweisen und Erwartungen spiegeln sich in den politischen Maßnahmen wider. Es gibt kaum gezielte Maßnahmen für Roma-Frauen, und selbst Gleichstellungsmaßnahmen zielen selten auf ihre besonderen Bedürfnisse und Probleme ab, da diese kaum bekannt sind. Die drei wichtigsten Politikbereiche mit einem größeren Bezug zur Gleichstellung sind Bildung, Gesundheitsversorgung und Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten, wobei es ein allgemeines Empfinden dafür gibt, dass bei der Entwicklung und der Einführung von an Roma orientierten Politiken „kulturelle Vorsicht“ ausgeübt werden sollte. Ein verbesserter Dialog und die Einbeziehung der verschiedenen Interessensgruppen innerhalb der Roma-Gemeinschaft können dazu beitragen, das Misstrauen und den Widerstand gegenüber den Programmen zur Stärkung der Roma-Frauen abzubauen.

Die Initiative Dekade der Roma-Integrierung 2005-2015, die von den neun osteuropäischen Mitgliedstaaten<sup>(33)</sup> in Zusammenarbeit mit verschiedenen internationalen Organisationen vorangebracht wird, ist ein interessantes Beispiel für eine internationale Kooperation zur sozialen Integration der Roma. Die-

se Initiative betrachtet die Bereiche Bildung (im Sinne von Verringerung der Segregation, Integration, Verbesserung des Bildungsniveaus, verbessertem Zugang zu Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen), Beschäftigung (Fortbildung und Umschulung, Verbesserung des Arbeitsniveaus von Roma), Wohnen (Verringerung der Segregation) und Gesundheit (bessere Gesundheitsbedingungen, höhere Lebenserwartung zum Zeitpunkt der Geburt, besserer Zugang zum Gesundheitssystem).

Es wird ausdrücklich (wenngleich nur gelegentlich) Bezug auf das Gender Mainstreaming als eine der Querschnittsaufgaben genommen.

### 3.5. Beispiele vorbildlicher Praktiken: Beteiligung am Arbeitsmarkt und soziale Integration von Roma-Frauen

In den meisten – wenn auch nicht in allen – Ländern haben die EGGSI-Landesexperten einige vorbildliche Projekte zur Einbindung der Roma aufzeigen können, die im Bereich der Gleichstellung relevant sind und sich zumindest auf lokaler Ebene für die Integration eignen.

Bildung – unter Einbeziehung von Mädchen und Jungen – ist bei weitem der häufigste Anwendungsbereich für die Projekte in diesem Rahmen. Nur manche Programme beziehen sich direkt auf Mädchen oder Frauen, auch wenn es den Anschein hat, dass Frauen einen besonderen Nutzen aus diesen Programmen ziehen.

Zwei relativ weit verbreitete Bereiche sind auch die soziale Vermittlung und die Verbesserung der Beschäftigungsfähigkeit.

Der erste Interventionsbereich bezieht sich auf die Vermittlungsrolle der Roma-Frauen zwischen ihrer Gemeinschaft und den sozialen (und insbesondere Gesundheits-) Diensten. Das niederländische „Gesundheitsberater“-Projekt ist ein interessantes Beispiel dafür, so wie auch die rumänischen Projekte im Bereich der Schul- und Gesundheitsvermittler.

Die Projekte im Beschäftigungsbereich zielen darauf ab, spezielle Bildungsmaßnahmen für Roma-Frauen bereitzustellen, um ihnen einen Zugang zu besseren Arbeitsplätzen zu verschaffen. Erfolgreiche Projekte kombinieren normalerweise verschiedene Maßnahmen: Training, Arbeitsvermittlung, Beratungsdienstleistungen, Empowerment und Mikrokredite. Das

(33) Folgende Staaten sind daran beteiligt: Bulgarien, Kroatien, Mazedonien, Montenegro, Rumänien, Serbien, die Slowakei, die Tschechische Republik und Ungarn, [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org)



Hauptrisiko dieser Programme, die normalerweise vom Europäischen Sozialfonds finanziert werden, ist die fehlende Kontinuität, wenn sie nicht in normale Programme eingegliedert werden.

Zwei breitere Ziele stehen im Allgemeinen hinter den meisten wirksamen Integrationspraktiken: Die Förderung der Fähigkeit zur Selbstorganisation und die Erleichterung der gesellschaftlichen Eingliederung. Auf der einen Seite sind die Graswurzel-Gründungen von eigenständigen Organisationen unter Einbeziehung der Roma-Frauen ein vielversprechender Weg zum Empowerment, zur angemessenen Interaktion mit Sozialdiensten und zum Aufbau von Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen. Andererseits scheinen die wirksameren Initiativen zur sozialen Unterstützung diejenigen zu sein, die in verschiedene Bereiche der „Grundbedürfnisse“ integriert sind (soziale Fürsorge, Gesundheit, Wohnen usw.). Die wirksame Koordination zwischen den örtlichen Stakeholdern und den lokalen Behörden ist äußerst wichtig für den mittelfristigen Erfolg eines Projekts.

Während die Aussagen zu den vorbildlichen Praktiken unterschiedlich und nicht unbedingt repräsentativ sind (sie sind nicht immer auf eine Übertragbarkeit der Aktionen hin ausgerichtet), werden zwei wesentliche Aspekte in den meisten Länderanalysen aufgeführt. Zunächst einmal lohnt es sich, Fürsprache und Kampagnen im Nicht-Roma-Umfeld zu fördern, um Misstrauen und Vorurteile gegen Roma abzubauen. Zweitens hat die Ausrichtung auf Roma-Frauen, neben dem schon an sich „positiven Einfluss“, weitreichende und wichtigere Auswirkungen. Die Einbeziehung von Frauen kann zwei langfristig andauernde Auswirkungen haben – nicht nur auf sie, sondern auch auf andere Familienmitglieder, insbesondere auf ihre Kinder.

#### 4. Schlussfolgerung

Frauen stellen einen wesentlichen Anteil der benachteiligten ethnischen Minderheiten in den europäischen Ländern dar. Dies ist auch durch die zunehmende Verweiblichung der Migrationsflüsse bedingt. Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten haben dabei besondere Bedürfnisse und Schwierigkeiten, die eine geschlechtersensible Politik erfordern. Die Bedeutung der Frauen bei der Erziehung macht sie noch stärker zu einer wichtigeren Zielgruppe sozialer Integrationspolitik.

Dennoch sind sie normalerweise unsichtbar, sowohl was die Datenerhebungen als auch was die Forschung und die Politik betrifft.

Dieser Bericht hat die wesentlichen tagtäglichen Probleme der Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten und insbesondere der Roma-Frauen beleuchtet und die bestehenden institutionellen Strukturen in den europäischen Ländern aufgezeigt, welche die soziale Integration fördern. Ungeachtet einer fehlenden angemessenen Datengrundlage und fehlender Informationen wurden verschiedene Bereiche der Ausgrenzung betrachtet: Zugang zur Bildung, zum Wohnungsmarkt, zu sozialen Leistungen, zur Gesundheitsversorgung, zu Beschäftigung und zu Finanzdienstleistungen, unter Beachtung der gemeinsamen Aspekte der Ausgrenzung und der unterschiedlichen Lage der verschiedenen Gruppen benachteiligter Frauen.

Die Analyse zeigt die Notwendigkeit der Anwendung von Gender Mainstreaming in allen Politikbereichen zur sozialen Eingliederung sowie von spezifischen politischen Maßnahmen, welche die verschiedenen Bedürfnisse der vielfach benachteiligten Frauen der ethnischen Minderheiten berücksichtigen.

Das Ansprechen der Situation der Roma-Frauen und der Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten ist eine besondere Herausforderung, da man hierbei die vielfachen ineinandergreifenden sozialen, kulturellen und ökonomischen Faktoren berücksichtigen muss, die ihr tägliches Leben beeinflussen: Barrieren aufgrund des Geschlechts und der Traditionen, Diskriminierung, Rassismus, Armut und schlechter Zugang zu Bildung und Beschäftigung. Nicht nur der politische Aufgabenbereich ist hierbei wichtig, sondern auch die Implementierung, welche mit den sozialen Voraussetzungen der meisten ethnischen Minderheiten, ihren eigenen traditionell vorherrschenden Lebensstilen und den herrschenden Einstellungen der Mehrheitsgesellschaft interagiert.

Mehrere andere Themen mit politischer Bedeutung traten bei der vorliegenden vergleichenden Analyse hervor, darunter: die Bedeutung der Bildungssysteme bei der Förderung der zweiten und dritten Migrantengeneration; die Notwendigkeit, die Workfare-Ansätze mit speziellen politischen Unterstützungsmaßnahmen zu ergänzen, besonders wenn sie auf Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten ausgerichtet sind; die ungenügenden Kenntnisse über die Bedürfnisse von Frauen ethnischer Minderheiten; die Schwierigkeiten, die Frauen der am stärksten benachteiligten ethnischen Minderheiten, wie beispielsweise die Roma-Frauen, zu erreichen, und die

Schwierigkeit, verlässliche und wirksame Werkzeuge des Gender Mainstreaming zu definieren, um diese bei der Ausgestaltung, der Implementierung und Evaluierung der sozialen Interventionen für ethnische Minderheiten einzusetzen.

Die Rolle der lokalen Behörden und Nichtregierungsorganisationen in Zusammenarbeit mit den Frauen und Frauenvereinigungen, scheinen hierbei beson-

ders wichtig zu sein, vor allem durch ihre nähere Beziehung zu den benachteiligten Gemeinschaften auf lokaler Ebene. Die systematische Kontrolle der Geschlechterungleichheiten innerhalb benachteiligter Gruppen, die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit und der Austausch von Erfahrungen und Praktiken sollten dabei helfen, die verschiedenen Gemeinschaften zu verstehen und wirksame Politiken zu entwickeln.



# Introduction

So far, relatively few EU-level analyses have provided a comprehensive overview of the living conditions and opportunities faced by women belonging to ethnic minorities, including the Roma population.

The existing evidence suggests that ethnic minority women are the most vulnerable to multiple discriminations<sup>(34)</sup>. Socio-economic research also shows that in most ethnic minority groups, women have substantially different experience from both their male counterparts and the women belonging to ethnic majority groups<sup>(35)</sup>. Indeed, ethnic minority (and especially Roma) women often have difficulties accessing educational, social and health services, and have a very small (if any) role in family and community decision-making. There are however, gender differences among and within ethnic minorities that need to be highlighted in order to derive suggestions for policymaking.

This comparative report presents the socio-economic conditions and perspectives of women belong-

ing to disadvantaged ethnic minorities, with special attention to Roma women. The analysis focuses on those ethnic minorities that suffer the most disadvantages in a given national context, mainly in terms of access to education, housing, healthcare, social benefits, employment and financial services. The report also outlines the main policy responses developed at the national level to foster their social inclusion, and offers some examples of 'good practices'. The information in this report is provided by the national experts of the EGGSI *Network of experts in gender equality, social inclusion, healthcare and long-term care* and covers 30 European countries (EU and EEA/EFTA)<sup>(36)</sup>.

The report is organised in two parts: the first (from chapter 1 to 4) deals with disadvantaged ethnic minorities (in the broad sense, excluding the Roma) and with immigrant women, while Part 2 (from chapter 5 to 8) focuses on Roma women. The final chapter presents some overall conclusions.

(34) European Commission (2007b), *Tackling multiple discrimination: practices, policies and laws*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Luxembourg. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2026&langId=en>

(35) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, Report prepared by the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Brussels. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>

(36) EGGSI is the European Commission's network of 30 national experts (EU and EEA countries) in the fields of gender equality and social inclusion, health and long-term care issues. The network is coordinated by the Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale and Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, and undertakes an annual programme of policy-oriented research and reports to Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.



# Part 1: Disadvantaged ethnic minority women in Europe

This part of the report presents the socio-economic conditions and the main risks of social exclusion for ethnic minority women, drawing on the qualitative information provided by the national experts of 30 European countries.

There is no recognised EU definition of ethnic minorities or minorities in general. The definition of ethnic minority considered in the report is the broad one provided by the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market, according to which: 'the umbrella term ethnic minority is used [...] not as a legal category but as a broad and purely descriptive term (persons not belonging to the ethnic majority)' <sup>(37)</sup>. This means that in addition to established ethnic minorities (who may be of immigrant or non-immigrant origin, citizens or not), the report also covers information on recent migrants, asylum seekers and/or refugees, the Roma and stateless persons. It must be stressed that at the national level, definition depends on the traditional and historical past of each European country.

Not all ethnic minorities are in a disadvantaged situation. Some, usually living in border areas and often formally recognised as minority groups (national/linguistic/religious/ethnic minorities), are well-protected by the national legal framework, which usually preserves their cultural identity with special provisions for political representation, education, social services, employment and fiscal conditions. However, in all Member States one can find disadvantaged communities whose language, religion, culture and origin differs from the majority society, although they are often not recognised as ethnic minorities. Their members are often immigrants from developing countries, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons, such as the Roma. In some countries second- and third-generation immigrants also face socio-economic deprivation and discrimination <sup>(38)</sup>.

The following analysis focuses on the most disadvantaged ethnic minorities (in the broad sense) within each country. Usually the women in these communities present higher risks of social exclusion and poverty than the women in the native population or the minority men, due to the multiple discrimination they face in relation to their gender and ethnicity.

(37) *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market (2007), p. 28. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(38) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, report prepared by the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Brussels, p. 90. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>



## 1. Definitions and distribution of disadvantaged ethnic minority communities in Europe: an overview

### 1.1. Relevant definitions of ethnic minorities at the European and national level

The European Union's legal instruments do not provide a definition of 'ethnic minorities', or national minorities, or minorities in general. Moreover, at the European and national level there is no single definition of ethnic minorities.

In European research and debate on minority protection, various terminologies are used with different connotations.

Generally, the literature defines a minority as national if 'it shares its cultural identity with a larger community that forms a national majority in another country (such as the Germans in Denmark, the Hungarians in Romania, etc).' (39) An alternative variant defines a minority as ethnic if it includes 'persons belonging to ethnic communities that do not make up the majority of the population in another state and that do not form their national state elsewhere, but have their own cultural and ethnic identity (the Retro Romanians in the Alps, the Celts or Gaelic speakers in North-Western Europe, the Frisians of the North Sea area, the Catalans in South-Western Europe, etc).' (40)

Considering these different terminologies, the absence of a standard minority definition at the EU level and the fact that 'European states continue to have different understandings of the minority or national minority concept and thus the minorities' rights may be subject to different interpretations, approaches and rules according to the legal framework of each country.' (41), the European Parliament signalled, in 2005, that these differences could be ironed out by borrowing the comprehensive definition proposed by the Council of Europe in its Recommendation 1201 (1993). The recommendation proposes that: 'national minorities are a group of persons who: reside on the territory of a state and are citizens of that state; maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties

with that state; display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics; are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of that state; are motivated by a concern to preserve together and maintain their common identity, including their culture, their traditions and religion or their language.' (42)

However, defining ethnic minorities as citizens of the country risks leaving aside a broad category of persons not belonging to the ethnic majority population who might not benefit from the same protection, especially from a linguistic and cultural point of view, as the recognised minority citizens of the country (43).

This concept is further developed in the report 'Ethnic Minorities in the labour market: and urgent call for better social inclusion' of the High Level Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and Their Full Participation in the Labour Market, where it is highlighted that 'the umbrella term ethnic minority is used throughout not as a legal category but as a broad and purely descriptive term (persons not belonging to the ethnic majority).' (44) This means that it can also include immigrants, asylum seekers and/or refugees. For instance, 'many first/second/third-generation citizens of Member States benefit from the same or similar integration policies as legally resident third-country nationals. In many Member States the term minorities is also applied to resident immigrants who have not yet acquired citizenship.' (45)

This is the definition followed in the present report.

(39) Benedikter, T. (2006), *Legal instruments of minority protection in Europe — An overview*, Society for threatened people, Bozen, pp. 2–4.

(40) Benedikter, T. (2006), *Legal instruments of minority protection in Europe — An overview*, Society for threatened people, Bozen, pp. 2–4.

(41) Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for women and men (2007), *Opinion on the gender dimension of the inclusion of the ethnic minorities*.

(42) Council of Europe (1993), Recommendation 1201 (1993), on an additional protocol on the rights of national minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights. Strasbourg. <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta93/EREC1201.htm>

(43) For this reason, the EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights maintained that 'states should not be allowed to rely on the definition of ethnic minority as a group of persons residing on its territory who are citizens of that state and who display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics, to exclude non-citizens from a full range of protections granted to its nationals.' (European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels, p. 9.

(44) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(45) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, pp. 27–28. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

### Ethnic minority definition at the national level

There is no single definition of ethnic minorities in the EU and EEA Member States. Two groups of countries can be differentiated: a group that does not provide any ethnic minority definition and another that defines ethnic minorities in accordance with the general guidelines provided by the Recommendation 1201 (1993) of the Council of Europe. The former group includes countries such as France, Luxembourg, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Portugal, Spain and the UK, and within this group there are some countries (France, Malta and Luxembourg) which do not acknowledge the presence of ethnic minority groups in their territory. In France, this position is determined by the constitutional principle of indivisibility of the Republic, while in Malta and Luxembourg the presence of ethnic minorities on their territory is not recognised by the state <sup>(46)</sup>.

The latter group, which defines ethnic minorities in accordance with Recommendation 1201 (1003) of the Council of Europe includes Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy,

Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Cyprus, Slovenia and Sweden. Within this group of countries definitions differ and therefore the rights offered are different. In Italy and Latvia, minorities are defined on a linguistic rather than ethnic basis; Greece recognises one single religious minority (the Muslim religious minority of Macedonia and Thrace); Austria, Finland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Germany, Estonia, Norway define ethnic minorities as national minorities in the meaning of the Recommendation 1201 (1993) of the Council of Europe. Belgium and the Netherlands define ethnic minority groups <sup>(47)</sup> on the basis of their migrant background.

The distinction between the legal and the 'identity' status is relevant in some countries. For instance, in Romania minorities are formally defined on the basis of self-identification; in the UK, the census allows people to identify themselves as an ethnic minority, and the Race Relations Act permits people to build a case when they have suffered discrimination on the basis of their race/ethnicity, but there is no special legal formula defining ethnic minorities.

(46) European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf)

(47) Understood in the meaning provided by the High Level Group Report *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*.

## Some examples of ethnic minority definitions in the EU/EEA Member States

### **Austria**

The Minorities Act of July 1976 (Law on the Rights of Indigenous Ethnic Minorities in Austria) defines Austrian minorities 'as the groups of Austrian citizens with a language other than German as mother tongue and their own folklore tradition who live in and are natives of parts of the federal territory' (1). However, migrants and asylum seekers also belong to the ethnic minority category, even though they are not recognised as ethnic minorities by the Austrian legal framework.

### **Belgium**

In Flanders, the Flemish Minorities Decree (Minderhedendecreet) relating to minorities and target groups for integration policies, considers as 'allochtones' all persons who are legally residing in Belgium and simultaneously fulfil the following conditions: a) they possess Belgian nationality or not (have at least one parent or grand-parents born outside of Belgium), b) find themselves in a disfavoured position because of their ethnic origin or their weak socio-economic position.

In Wallonia and Brussels, the ethnic minorities include foreigners or people of foreign origin. However, the Walloon region decree on the integration of foreigners or people with an immigrant background (Décret RW sur l'intégration des personnes étrangères ou d'origine étrangère), which provides for support for foreign people or people of foreign origin through regional centres of integration, does not specifically define the characteristics of the target group.

### **The Czech Republic**

Ethnic minorities are defined as 'a community of citizens of the Czech Republic living in the territory who differ from other citizens by a common ethnicity, language, culture, and tradition, making up a numerically substantial minority of the population, and expressing the will to be regarded as an ethnic minority to preserve and develop their distinctiveness, language, and culture and also for the purpose of expressing and protecting the interests of their historically formed community defined as anyone whom the majority identifies as a member of this socially and ethnically defined group' (2). This definition is applied in particular to the Roma minority. Czech law distinguishes between ethnic minorities (Czech citizens) and foreigners living in the Czech Republic with a residence permit (3).

### **Cyprus**

According to article 2, paragraph 3 of the Cyprus Constitution (1960) a 'religious group' (national minority) 'refers to a group of persons ordinarily resident in Cyprus, professing the same religion and either belonging to the same rite or being subject to the same jurisdiction thereof the number of whom, on the date of the application of this Constitution, exceeds one thousand out of which at least five hundred have become citizens of the Republic on such date.' (4)

### **Denmark**

The migrants and ethnic minorities are persons born in a foreign country with neither of the parents born in Denmark or of Danish origin. If no information is available about either of the parents and if the person is born in another country, then he/she is considered a migrant. The descendants are persons born in Denmark of non-Danish origin and non-Danish citizens. The children born of Danish parents that retain their foreign citizenship are considered descendants. If one of the parents acquires Danish citizenship, the children will not be considered descendants (5).

### **Estonia**

According to the National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act (1993), national minorities are defined as Estonian citizens who reside in the territory of Estonia; have long-term, sound and permanent ties with Estonia; differ from Estonians by their ethnic belonging, cultural characteristics, religion or language and are led by their wish to collectively maintain their cultural customs, religion or language which are the basis for their common identity.

### **Greece**

The Greek state does not recognise 'ethnic minorities' within its territory. Minority groups are formally given the status of 'religious minorities'.

### **Hungary**

The recognised ethnic minorities are groups of people who have lived in the territory of the Republic of Hungary for at least one century, represent a numerical minority in the country's population, whose members are Hungarian citizens and who are distinguished from the rest of the population by their languages, cultures, and traditions. However, large and growing groups of migrants are excluded from the category of national and the legal definition of ethnic minorities. Legally recognised ethnic minorities can be divided into minorities having large communities (Croats, Germans, Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks, and Slovenes); minorities having only small groups (Bulgarian, German, Greek, Polish, Ruthenian and Ukrainian), and the Roma minority (6).

(1) Ratzenböck, V., Lehner, A. and Hofecker, O., (2007), *Compendium Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe — Country Profile Austria*. <http://www.culturalpolicies.net>

(2) Act No 273/2001 Coll. on the rights of members of ethnic minorities.

(3) Act No 273/2001 Coll. on the rights of members of ethnic minorities.

(4) Cyprus Constitution, 1960.

(5) Danmarks Statistik, 2007, [www.dst.dk](http://www.dst.dk)

(6) Hungarian Minority Act LXXVII of 1993 on the rights of national and ethnic minorities. [http://www.helsinki.hu/docs/Act %20LXXVII %20of %201993.pdf](http://www.helsinki.hu/docs/Act%20LXXVII%20of%201993.pdf)

**Iceland**

There is no official definition of ethnic minorities. The term immigrant refers to a foreign national who has been living for a long time in Iceland, but was born overseas or both of his parents were born overseas or have had foreign citizenship some time in the past.

**Italy**

There are no ethnic minorities legally recognised. However, the state recognises linguistic minorities, protecting them by means of ad hoc legislation. Immigrants from third-countries are referred to as 'extracomunitario', which means a citizen from outside the European Union. Although used in statistics and policies to refer to citizens of countries other than members of the European Union, in public discourse the term is used for immigrants from poorer countries, without distinguishing skin colour or religion.

**Latvia**

Ethnic minorities are defined on a linguistic rather than an ethnic base. The ethnic minorities are citizens of Latvia, who as a result of cultural, religious or linguistic differences are considered distinct from the Latvians who for several generations or for extensive periods of time have been traditionally living in Latvia and who consider themselves as belonging to the Latvian state and society, and stateless persons. Persons who are not citizens of Latvia or any other state and who are residing on a permanent basis and legal grounds in the Republic of Latvia do not fall under the category of national minorities in the meaning of the convention pursuant to the definition of national minorities given in the respective declaration of the Republic of Latvia. However, those who identify themselves with a national minority that corresponds to this definition may enjoy the rights envisaged by the convention, unless the law provides otherwise (7).

**Liechtenstein**

There is no official definition of ethnic minorities.

**Luxembourg**

There is no official definition of ethnic minorities. The ethnic minority concept refers mostly to migrants.

**Malta**

There is no legal definition of ethnic minorities. However, the commonly agreed definition for everyday purposes states that asylum seekers are persons with a humanitarian or subsidiary protection.

**The Netherlands**

The government also distinguishes between Dutch citizens and foreigners, and between Western (mostly from the rich OECD countries) and non-Western immigrants (all other countries). The term 'ethnic minorities' denotes the fact that minority groups were once designated as the target group of the minorities policy because of their disadvantaged position. However, population statistics identify ethnic minorities as 'non-Western migrants' (niet-westerse allochtonen). 'Allochtonen' is also applied to migrants' children, even though they were born in the Netherlands (8).

**Norway**

In Norway, recognised ethnic minorities are officially defined in line with the general guidelines provided by the Recommendation 1201 (1993) of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, in Norway there is also a definition referring to immigrants according to which immigrants are persons who are born outside Norway or persons with parents born outside Norway. They are divided into first-generation and second-generation immigrants and in Western and non-Western immigrants (eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, South and Middle America and Turkey). Immigrants do not include persons that have one parent born in Norway.

**Poland**

The official definition distinguishes between national minorities and ethnic minorities. A national minority consists of Polish citizens who are numerically smaller and differ significantly from the rest of the population in language, culture or tradition. They have been living on the present territory of the Republic of Poland for at least 100 years and identify themselves with a nation organised in its own state. The term ethnic minority refers to groups of Polish citizens who are numerically smaller than the rest of the population; that have a significantly different language, culture and tradition; strive to preserve their language, culture or tradition; are aware of their historical and national community and try to preserve it, but do not identify themselves with a nation organised in its own state (9).

**Romania**

Ethnic minorities are mainly defined by self-identification, having different national or cultural traditions from the majority population. Ethnic groups may be migrant, indigenous or nomadic communities. In terms of rights and protection of culture and traditions, there is no distinction between national minorities having a mother country and ethnic minorities not having a mother country to protect their interest through bilateral treaties.

**Slovakia**

There is no clear definition of the term 'national minority'. In practice Recommendation 1201 (from 1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is accepted.

(7) Law on the Framework Convention on the Protection of Ethnic Minorities, 2005.

(8) Gijsberts, M. (2004), *Ethnic minorities and integration: Outlook for the future*. Social and Cultural Planning Office. The Hague.

(9) Polish act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and regional language.

### **Spain**

There is no legal definition of ethnic minorities as entities with differentiated characteristics according to ethnicity, religion or identity. The consideration of ethnic minorities by public authorities focuses on the management of migration flows.

### **Sweden**

The concept of ethnic minority is not applied officially. In public policy, the ethnic minority concept is mostly applied to define the immigrant population.

### **UK**

There is no fixed or official definition of ethnic minority. Ethnic identification is not based on an objective and rigid classification of ethnic groups. It takes into account aspects such as culture, language, colour, family place of origin. Most importantly it is fluid and defined differently in different contexts. Therefore, it may be defined as 'a community whose heritage offers important characteristics in common between its members and which makes them distinct from other communities'. The collective term ethnic minority is used to refer to all those people who chose a category other than white (defined as white, British and English-speaking) in the census. This definition excludes the white ethnic minorities such as Gypsies and Travellers<sup>(10)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(10) Modood, T. et al (1997), *Ethnic minorities in Britain: diversity and disadvantage: the fourth national survey of ethnic minorities*. Policy Studies Institute, London. p. 13.

## 1.2. Dimension and distribution of disadvantaged ethnic minorities in the European countries

Not all ethnic minorities are disadvantaged and face discrimination. Ethnic minorities formally recognised as minority groups (national/linguistic/religious/ethnic minorities) are protected by the national legal framework, which usually preserves their cultural identity with special provisions in relation to political representation and education. However, in all Member States one can find disadvantaged communities whose language, religion, culture and origin differs from the majority society, although they are often not recognised as ethnic minorities. Their members are often immigrants from developing countries, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons, such as the Roma. In some countries second and third-generation immigrants also face socio-economic deprivation and discrimination<sup>(48)</sup>.

Table 1 presents the disadvantaged ethnic minority groups by country and the incidence of women within these groups, where available, as identified by the EGGSI national experts in their reports. Quantification of the ethnic minorities' dimension and ethnic minority women's incidence is based on the limited existing official data and on estimations provided by the existing research on ethnic minorities and by the NGOs active in this field. There are, in fact, no precise data on the dimension of the ethnic minority population in European countries and most of the European Commission studies<sup>(49)</sup> underline the need to gather data on the number of ethnic minority people in order to detect 'inequalities and raise awareness, persuading policy-makers of the need to combat discrimination in their respective societies'<sup>(50)</sup>.

Data collection is particularly relevant in the case of immigrant women, as it is estimated that some 50 % of migrants worldwide are women<sup>(51)</sup>.

(48) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, Report prepared by the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. Brussels. p. 90. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>

(49) European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf)

(50) Advisory Committee on equal opportunities for women and men (2007), *opinion on the gender dimension of the inclusion of the ethnic minorities*.

(51) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, p. 47. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

**Table 1: Disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, their incidence in the total population and the percentage of women belonging to the disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in some European countries**

Country	Disadvantaged ethnic minority groups (other than Roma)	Incidence of disadvantaged minorities in the total population and the percentage of women belonging to these groups
Austria	Female migrants coming from Turkey and former Yugoslavia	Between 2001 and 2007 the share of women has increased from 47 % to 49 % of total immigrants. 576 200 women in Austria have a migrant background, i.e. 12.5 % of all the women living in Austria, excluding women from officially recognised minority groups and second-generation immigrant women who had Austrian nationality by birth <sup>(52)</sup> .
Belgium	Immigrants of Moroccan and Turkish origin; immigrants and descendants from sub-Saharan might also face a difficult situation, but they are not very numerous and the data are insufficient for accurate analysis	Women represent a growing part of migrants, 52.4 % in 2004 and 51 % in 2000. Women represent respectively 48.8 % of immigrant Moroccans and 50 % of Turkish immigrants <sup>(53)</sup> .
Bulgaria	Roma and Turkish traditional minorities	Turks: 746 664 of which 374 805 are women (50.1 %) <sup>(54)</sup> .
Cyprus	Immigrants from Moldavia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Philippines and Vietnam	In December 2006, there were 15 545 immigrants, of which 63 % were women <sup>(55)</sup> .
Czech Republic	Immigrants from the former USSR (Ukraine, Russia, etc) and immigrants from Vietnam.	Ukrainians: 126 526, 40 % of whom are women; Vietnamese: 50 955, 41 % of whom are women; Russians: 23 303, 53 % of whom are women <sup>(56)</sup> .
Denmark	Immigrants from Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan	On 1 January 2007, there were 360 902 immigrants and 116 798 descendants, corresponding to 8.8 % of the total population. Around 215 902 are from third-countries <sup>(57)</sup> . No data provided on ethnic minority women.
Finland	Migrants from emerging and developing countries, especially Russia	In 2006 there were 121 739 foreign citizens in Finland; 25 326 are of Russian origin. Women represent approximately half of the migrant population <sup>(58)</sup> .
France	Immigrants from Asian, sub-Saharan African and recently eastern European countries	In 2005, nearly two-thirds of the immigrants came from Africa, and in particular from Algeria and Morocco <sup>(59)</sup> .
Germany	Immigrants from Turkey and former Yugoslavia.	In 2007, there were 6 744 879 foreigners (persons with no German nationality). The share of female foreigners increased from 31 % (in 1961) to 48.7 % (in 2007). In 2007, there were 1 713 551 foreigners from Turkey of which women represent 47 % and 714 075 foreigners from former Yugoslavia of which 49 % are women <sup>(60)</sup> .
Greece	Greek citizens with a different ethnic background from the majority population and migrant women	Since the eighties there was a continuous increase in immigration: 171 424 foreign nationals in 1982; 797 093 in 2001 <sup>(61)</sup> . No data available on ethnic minority women.
Iceland	Non EU/ EEA citizens	Migrant population increased from 1.7 % in 1994 to 6.8 % of total population in 2008. In 2006, the share of ethnic minority women was 4.7 % of the total population and the equivalent ratio for men was 7.3 % <sup>(62)</sup> .
Italy	Immigrants from Romania, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, Senegal and Ghana, China, Philippines and India, Ecuador and Peru and former USSR	Albanians: 375 947 persons of which 166 738 are women; Romanians: 342 200 persons of which 180 046 are women; Morocco: 340 228 persons of which 137 376 are women; Ecuadorians: 261 659 persons of which 167 755 are women. Ukrainians, Polish, Ecuadorian and Peruvian immigrants are mostly women. In 2007, ethnic minority women incidence is 80.8 % for Ukrainians, 71.7 % for Polish, 60.8 % for Ecuadorian, 61.1 % for Peruvian, whereas for Africans and Asiatic minorities men represent the majority of total immigrants <sup>(63)</sup> .
Liechtenstein	Mostly immigrants from Turkey and former Yugoslavia	Turkish: 7.5 % of population; Serbians: 4.7 %; 50.6 % of immigrants from third-countries are women <sup>(64)</sup> .

(52) Austrian Centre for Ethnic Groups (2007), *Second Report on the Implementation of the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Austria*, Vienna, p.14.

(53) Roi Baudouin Foundation (2008), *Debates on the Belgium migration policies*, Facts and Figures, Brussels, p. 75.

(54) National Statistics Institute, 2001, Belgium. www.nsi.bg

(55) 2006 Demographic Report.

(56) Czech Statistical Office, foreigners in the Czech Republic, tables and statistics. <http://www.czso.cz/csu/2007edicniplan.nsf/engkapitola/1414-07-2007-10>

(57) Danmarks Statistik (2007), *Indvandrere i Danmark* (Migrants in Denmark). Copenhagen.

(58) Statistics Finland of 2006, [http://www.stat.fi/index\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/index_en.html)

(59) OECD (2007) *International migration outlook*, p. 35.

(60) Statistisches Bundesamt (2008): *Ausländische Bevölkerung am 31.12.2007 nach Geschlecht für die am häufigsten vertretenen Staatsangehörigkeiten*. Wiesbaden.

(61) National Statistical Service of Greece, 2006.

(62) Statistics Iceland 2007 (table 2.13).

(63) Italian national institute of statistics, ISTAT, foreign population residing in Italy in January 2007.



## Ethnic minority and Roma women in Europe: A case for gender equality?

Luxembourg	Mostly immigrants from former Yugoslavia and Cape Verde	Former Yugoslavs: 2.70 % of the total population; North Africans: 0.30 %; sub-Saharan Africans: 0.7 %; Asians: 0.70 %; Russians: 0.32 % and Latin Americans: 0.24 % <sup>(65)</sup> . No data available on ethnic minority women.
Malta	Refugees from Eritrea and Somalia	There were 2 404 refugees residing in Malta in 2006. The highest percentage come from Somalia (30 %) followed by persons from Eritrea (22 %) and Sudan (14 %). The organisation for the integration and welfare of asylum seekers estimates that <b>9 % of the asylum-seekers are women</b> <sup>(66)</sup> .
Netherlands	Immigrants from developing countries, and in particular Turkish and Moroccan women	Non-Western migrants represent 10.6 % of the total population. The ethnic minority population is made up of: Turks (2.3 %), Moroccans (2.0 %), Surinamese (2.0 %), Antilleans (0.8 %), Iraqis (0.3 %), Afghans (0.2 %), Iranians (0.2 %) and Somalis (0.1 %). <b>Two thirds of the ethnic minority women are of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean origin</b> <sup>(67)</sup> .
Norway	Non-Western immigrant women	The ethnic minority population is made up of: Pakistani: 28 278; Iraqi: 21 418; Somali: 19 656; Vietnamese: 18 783; Bosnian: 15 667; Iranian: 14 662 and Turkish: 14 546. The largest groups of second generation immigrants are: Pakistanis: 12 526; Vietnamese: 6 374; Turks: 4 971; Somalis: 4 958 and people from Sri Lanka: 4 642. In 2007, there were 117 000 refugees from Bosnia, Iran, Vietnam, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Chile and Russia. In 2006, there were 5 300 asylum seekers, mostly from Iraq, Somalia and Russia. The proportion of women is greater among immigrants from Thailand (84 %), the Philippines (77 %) and Russia (66 %) <sup>(68)</sup> .
Portugal	Immigrants from emerging and developing countries	Immigrants make up 9 % of the active population and 4.5 % of the total population. There are more women immigrants among Ukrainians, Russians, Brazilians and immigrants from S. Tome and Principe <sup>(69)</sup> .
Slovenia	Immigrants from former Yugoslavia and Albania	These groups make up slightly less than 10 % (108 973) of the total population. The incidence of women on the total population of these groups is 48 356 <sup>(70)</sup>
Spain	Immigrants from eastern Europe and developing countries	The total number of persons born in Asian, African, Latin American countries and eastern Europe amounts to 4 108 007, of which <b>46 % are women</b> . Immigration flows from eastern Europe are characterised by a high rate of feminisation, whereas men are much more numerous in the African and Asian communities <sup>(71)</sup> .
Sweden	Somali immigrants and especially women belonging to this minority group	The number of Somalis increased from 16 persons in 1970 to 27 346 in 2006, of which <b>32 % are women</b> <sup>(72)</sup> .
UK	All groups of black and other ethnic minority women are experiencing disadvantages. However, the most disadvantaged categories are women belonging to Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic minority groups.	The largest minority groups are: Indians (1.8 % of the population) followed by Pakistanis (1.3 %), those of mixed ethnic backgrounds (1.2 %), Black Caribbean (1.0 %), Black Africans (0.8 %) and Bangladeshis (0.5 %). Women make up just <b>over half the minority ethnic population in the UK</b> . This trend stands for all ethnic groups and age groups except Asians and the under-16s, where boys are more numerous than girls <sup>(73)</sup> .

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(64) Office of Economic Affairs, Statistics Division (2007a): *Population Statistics as of 31 December 2006*.

(65) Ministry of foreign affairs and immigration.

(66) Draws on an interview with the Organisation for the Integration and Welfare of Asylum Seekers (OIWAS) Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, Malta (20 February 2008).

(67) CBS (population statistics) and Keuzenkamp, S., Merens, A. (2006), *Sociale atlas van vrouwen uit etnische minderheden*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau SCP p. 293.

(68) *Handlingsplan for integrering og inkludering av innvandrerbefolkningen – styrket innsats 2008*. [http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/aid/dok/rapporter\\_planer/planer/2007/handlingsplan-integrering/del0.html?id=485016&epslanguage=NO](http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/aid/dok/rapporter_planer/planer/2007/handlingsplan-integrering/del0.html?id=485016&epslanguage=NO); [http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/00/10/innvanding\\_en/](http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/00/10/innvanding_en/)

(69) SEF (Service of Foreigners and Borders).

(70) Census 2002.

(71) National Institute of Statistics.

(72) Statistisk Årsbok 1997 and 2008. Stockholm: SCB, p. 121.

(73) National Statistics 2003 and Government Equalities Office 2007.

As shown in table 1, even if the disadvantaged ethnic minorities are mostly immigrants or descendants of immigrants from third-countries, there are substantial differences in their distribution across countries. These differences are mainly caused by the nation states' building processes, especially in the eastern European Member States, and by the country-specific migration pattern, especially in the EU-15 and EEA countries.

The eastern European Member States suffered numerous dominations that could explain the high numbers of recognised ethnic minorities: 20 in Romania, 12 in Poland, etc. For instance, in the Baltic countries the percentage of the Russian population is extremely high due to forced migration during the period of USSR domination: 29 % of the total population in Latvia and 26 % in Estonia <sup>(74)</sup>.

The EGGSI Network national reports point out that in the eastern European Member States formally recognised ethnic minorities seem not to suffer any socio-economic disadvantages except for the Roma. However, there is an increasing migrational trend that could in the future create differences between the formally recognised ethnic majority and the unrecognised ones, as is already the case of the Czech Republic.

Conversely, in the EU-15 and EEA countries, plus Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia, the disadvantaged ethnic minority groups include mainly citizens of a different ethnic origin, persons with an immigrant background (either recent immigrants from third-countries or second/third generations), refugees and asylum-seekers that come either from the ex-colonies (such as in the case of the UK and France) or from Asian, Far Eastern, eastern European or African countries.

For instance, in some of these countries such as Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, ethnic minorities originate mainly from Turkey and Morocco and, depending on their historical ties, from other Muslim countries, such as from Maghreb and Algeria in the case of France. Historical links are also relevant in the case of immigration to the UK, where Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are a considerable ethnic group, or in the Netherlands, with immigrants from Surinam and the Antillean communities.

In Italy, Spain and Greece they are mainly represented by immigrants from the eastern European countries, such as Romania, Albania, Moldavia, and Ukraine and

from northern African countries. In Spain, disadvantaged ethnic minorities also come from Asia (such as Philippines). Immigrants from Asia (such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Sri Lanka) and eastern European countries (such as Moldavia, Ukraine, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania) form a sizeable group also in Cyprus.

In Greece, the Muslim religious minority of Turkish and Pomak origin, Roma and immigrants from non-EU countries (such as Albania) are the most disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, while in Portugal they come mainly from Portuguese-speaking African countries.

In Malta, on the other hand, the disadvantaged ethnic population is mainly made up of refugees from the African countries Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan.

In the Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Norway, they come mainly from south-Eastern Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq), Turkey and Somalia, but also, in the case of refugees, from the former Yugoslavia.

Immigrants from the former Yugoslavia area are also present in other EU-15 and EEA countries (such as Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg) and in Slovenia, where Albanians are also a disadvantaged ethnic minority group. In Germany the disadvantaged ethnic minorities are made up of Turkish and eastern European immigrants as well.

Even within all these groups not all the disadvantaged ethnic minorities face the same level of socio-economic disadvantages. For instance, a distinction is to be made between long-settled ethnic minorities (second- or third-generation immigrants) and recent immigrants. In fact, it seems that second- and third-generation immigrants usually have a higher living standard than recent immigrants, but they may still face racial discrimination. In addition, differences also exist among ethnic minorities due to different cultural models and educational levels. For instance, besides the Roma minority women, Muslim women seem to be more disadvantaged than those belonging to other disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, due largely to the women's traditional role within their own community.

According to the EGGSI network reports, illegal immigrants are also facing particular socio-economic exclusion that weigh more heavily on women. This aspect is particularly relevant considering that, with the exception of the Netherlands, the number of immigrants in Europe has been growing and in

(74) EGGSI Network national reports for Estonia and Latvia, 2008.

some countries there is a growing feminisation of immigration flows due to a recent increase in family reunification, a greater independent immigration of breadwinner women, especially from eastern Europe and Latin America, and due also to the fact that women have better chances of being naturalised. For instance, in Austria 'the share of women in the total number of naturalisations has been consistently higher throughout the last decade.'; in Portugal 'data from 2004 show that there are more women than men with a residence permit'; in Cyprus data provided by the 2006 Demographic report in Cyprus proves a feminisation of migration flows: 15 545 immigrants of which 63 % are women <sup>(75)</sup>.

## 2. Gender and ethnicity: Social disadvantage and exclusion

The following analysis focuses on the most disadvantaged ethnic minorities (in the broad sense) within each country, while the Roma are discussed separately in the second part of this report.

### 2.1. A comparative profile of the socio-economic condition of ethnic minorities and the main risks of social exclusion related to ethnicity. A gender perspective

Building an inclusive society where all the members can realise their potential and are able to participate fully in the economy, society and culture is one of the main objectives at the EU level <sup>(76)</sup>.

Ethnic minority women are, however, usually disadvantaged not only in comparison with the majority women, but also in comparison with the ethnic minority men. Besides stigmatisation and discrimination, the factors that contribute to increasing the risk of social exclusion for ethnic minorities and ethnic minority women are: the legal framework, which, especially for immigrants and asylum-seekers, rests precariously on temporary rights to stay and work and secures them fewer rights than those of the nationals; poor language skills; the lack of access to education or the lack of recognition of the qualifications obtained in the country of origin; the high unemployment rates or, when employed,

the low job quality and wages; and poor health and housing conditions <sup>(77)</sup>. This is even more the case for lone ethnic minority mothers as they have to take on the responsibility of bringing up their child and being the only breadwinner. As pointed out in the case of Spain, in some communities one-parent families are usually more frequent than in the native population, and the proportion of female breadwinner household heads is larger than for men <sup>(78)</sup>. In ethnic communities where traditional forms of gender roles prevail, the cultural and religious traditions and family responsibilities may increase women's social exclusion.

#### 2.1.1. Educational level and access to the education system

The European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia (EUMC) underlines that, although from a legal point of view, most European Member States ensure open access to education, in reality the vulnerable categories (immigrants, and especially undocumented immigrants, asylum-seekers, stateless communities) face difficulties in accessing education, and in particular quality education. One of the main problems concerns segregation, as migrant students are often segregated in the lowest educational tracks or in special needs schools <sup>(79)</sup>.

According to the EGGSI Network national reports, in various European countries the educational level of ethnic minorities is still below that of the nationals. The proportion of immigrants with no school qualifications or only primary education remains higher than that of the nationals, and immigrants are mostly underrepresented among people with higher education. Students with an immigrant background tend to lag behind and drop out from education earlier than their native counterparts, mainly because of their disadvantaged socio-economic status and their lower host-country language command. Even if some countries guarantee recognised minority groups the opportunity to have classes in their own language, as is the case in

(75) EGGSI Network national reports for Cyprus, Austria, and Portugal 2008.

(76) The inclusive society 'aims at bridging the gaps between formal and real equality, provides equal opportunities for all its members and actively promotes diversity'. European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market: an Urgent Call for Better Social Inclusion*, December, p. 8. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(77) European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia (2003a), *Migrants, minorities and employment: exclusion, discrimination and anti-discrimination in 15 Member States of the European Union*, October 2003, p. 18 <http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/comparativestudy/CS-Employment-en.pdf>

(78) EGGSI Network national report for Spain, 2008.

(79) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2007a), *Trends and developments 1997–2005: combating ethnic and racial discrimination and promoting equality in the European Union*, Vienna, pp. 33–34. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends\\_en.pdf](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends_en.pdf)

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, the quality of education is often below the mainstream level.

Also access to *adult education* is usually limited for ethnic minorities, and for women is made more difficult by their housework and childcare commitments and by their employment duties, the situation being even worse for lone mothers. The greater isolation experienced by the ethnic minority women compared with the men and their usually lower language proficiency make it difficult to obtain information on schooling and training opportunities, and reduces the possibility of their participation in these courses.

There are, however, large differences between ethnic minority groups and among different generations. Ethnic minorities and immigrant women from the first generation tend to have lower levels of education than ethnic minority men, especially among immigrants from countries such as Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Vietnam and Africa. On the contrary, migrant women from certain eastern European and Asian countries often have a higher level of education than the majority population, even if, as for the men, recognition of their qualifications is difficult and requires long-lasting bureaucratic processes. For example, in Hungary (except for the Roma) and in Poland, the educational level of women from the Czech Republic and Lithuania is in fact often better than that of the majority population, and in the case of Estonia, better than that of the national men<sup>(80)</sup>.

As in the majority population, ethnic minority girls of the second generation tend to have higher educational attainments than their parents and young men of the same community, although the data confirm that there is a significant gender divide regarding the choice of subjects. Ethnic minority girls also tend to chose technical and professional schools more frequently than girls from the majority group. Compared to the situation obtaining some years ago, migrant girls attend school more frequently and for longer

periods. Moreover, the girls' educational performance equips them better to gain a diploma. In Italy and in Sweden, for some ethnic groups the share of ethnic women studying at university is higher than that of the men (in Italy for Polish and Romanian students, in Sweden for students from Iran, Finland, Poland and Bosnia-Herzegovina among others)<sup>(81)</sup>.

The schooling system of the receiving country appears to have a significant impact in reducing the educational inequality among the second generation. According to recent researches, non-comprehensive school systems based on early tracking (early selection and differentiation of pupils by skill level) are more likely to maintain segregation and the educational gap between second-generation students, with poor parental socio-economic backgrounds, and native higher-income families<sup>(82)</sup>.

The religious and cultural norms of ethnic communities, together with discrimination, are relevant in explaining the differences in the educational level among second generations: young girls from communities where traditional gender roles prevail usually present high levels of school failure and drop-out rates, and, in addition, are 'sometimes held back by their families, as well as by cultural prejudice and difficult economic circumstances.'<sup>(83)</sup> In Austria, for example, the educational level of the Turkish girls is still below that of the Turkish boys and in the Netherlands the proportion of Turkish girls leaving school without a diploma is relatively high. For Muslim women in Greece, illiteracy rates are significantly high, drop-out rates for the girls being higher than for the boys. In Sweden, Somali girls perform more poorly than any other group (boys from the same group, and women and men of the host country) during primary and secondary education. In the UK, where minority women are more likely to have a degree than the men of the same communities and British women overall, this is not the case for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women<sup>(84)</sup>.

(80) EGGSI Network national report for Hungary, Poland and Estonia, 2008.

(81) EGGSI Network national report for Italy and Sweden, 2008.

(82) Jean S., Causa O., Jimenez M. and Wanner I. (2007), *Migration in OECD countries: Labour Market Impact and Integration Issues*, Economic Department, Working Paper No 562.

(83) Committee of the Regions (2007), *The situation of Migrant women in the European Union*, Working Document of the Commission for Economic and social Policy C2007/305/10, Official Journal C 305, 15/12/2007 P.

(84) EGGSI Network national report for Austria, Greece, Sweden and the UK, 2008.

### Educational level of ethnic minority women in some European countries

#### **Belgium**

Girls from ethnic minorities perform better than the boys from same group and more frequently attend technical schools than the girls from the majority group <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Bulgaria**

Female illiteracy is 2.5 times higher than among the men, and even higher for rural women (4.1 %). These are mainly Muslim or Roma women living in mountain regions whose mother tongue is other than Bulgarian <sup>(2)</sup>.

#### **France**

Among the population of 30–40 years, the proportion of immigrants with only primary education remained much higher (42 %) than for non-immigrants (17 %) in 2004 and 2005 <sup>(3)</sup>.

#### **Italy**

Among eastern European students, the female component is particularly high for Polish and Rumanian students (respectively 84.7 % and 77.9 %), while the average incidence of females within the non-Italian and Italian male students is 57.8 % <sup>(4)</sup>.

#### **Austria**

The share of Turkish and former Yugoslavian women having only completed compulsory schooling is higher than for the men. 90 % of the Turkish women have only completed compulsory schooling <sup>(5)</sup>.

#### **Portugal**

Approximately 31 % of the female Brazilians residing in Portugal in 2001 have completed secondary school and 19 % have completed university. 23.8 % of Brazilian women have only completed elementary or compulsory school <sup>(6)</sup>.

#### **Sweden**

Approximately 36 % of the adult Somalis only have elementary education, while 16 % have a university degree <sup>(7)</sup>. The educational level of the Somali women is lower than that of the Somali men and Swedish women. Only 5 % of the 25-year-old Somali women study at the university, while half or more of the women with Swedish background and foreign-born women from Iran and Finland study at Swedish universities.

#### **UK**

While 13.6 % of ethnic minority women have no qualifications, nearly half (48 %) of the Bangladeshi women and 40 % of the Pakistani women have no qualifications <sup>(8)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

- (1) Begg I. and Marlier E. (2006), *'Feeding in' and 'Feeding out', and integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities, Key lessons, Peer review and assessment in social inclusion*. European Commission, The Directorate-General for Social Inclusion, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. Brussels.
- (2) National Institute for Education and of the Ministry of Education and Science (2000): *Education for all*. Sofia. <http://www.minedu.government.bg/>
- (3) Borrel C. (2006), *Enquêtes annuelles de recensement 2004 et 2005. Près de 5 millions d'immigrés à la mi-2004*, Insee Première, No 1098. <http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/ipweb/ip1098/ip1098.html>
- (4) Caritas (2006), Dossier Statistico Immigrazione, Roma.
- (5) Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria (2007), *Migrantinnenbericht 2007*, Vienna.
- (6) EGGSI Network national report for Portugal, 2008.
- (7) Integrationsverket (1999), *Delaktighet för integration — att stimulera integrationsprocessen för somalisktalande i Sverige*. Integrationsverkets rapportserie 1999. Norrköping.
- (8) Government Equalities Office (2007), *Ethnic Minority Women in the UK Fact Sheet*, HM Government, London.

### 2.1.2. Housing conditions

The poor quality of housing for ethnic minorities, and especially for recent immigrants from developing countries, is a problem in most of the EU Member States. In some cases it tends to be specific to certain ethnic minority communities, while in others it is a general problem for all the ethnic minority people <sup>(85)</sup>.

Housing is one of the areas where discrimination occurs more often and where the situation has not measurably improved. The increasing deregulation of the housing market has lifted the costs of housing with a negative impact on the housing condition of immigrants <sup>(86)</sup>, due to their lower income and/or insecure work, which reduces their access to the private housing market.

(85) Begg I. and Marlier E. (2006), *'Feeding in' and 'Feeding out', and integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities, Key lessons, Peer review and assessment in social inclusion*. European Commission, Directorate-General Social Inclusion, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, p. 33.

(86) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2007a), *Trends and Developments 1997–2005 — Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality*, Vienna, p. 29. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends\\_en.pdf](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends_en.pdf)

Immigrants are often considered unpopular tenants in the housing markets because of their lower income, poorer social networks, and discrimination. This can be seen in advertisements explicitly excluding foreigners, for instance. The situation is even worse in the case of asylum-seekers and undocumented immigrants, who are more likely to be homeless or suffer more severe housing conditions than other groups<sup>(87)</sup>, in some countries (as in Malta) being held for long periods in detention centres with extremely low living standards. For asylum-seekers, the poor housing conditions are caused by the fact that they are excluded from the regular social service system in some European countries (as in Denmark, Greece, France, Austria) or get only a little social aid.

Conversely, where public housing support is granted, as in Denmark, Finland and Sweden a significant number of immigrants and descendants from third country nationals live in council houses.

Ethnic minorities and immigrants from developing countries are more likely to live in smaller, overcrowded, poorer quality accommodations located in underprivileged areas than the nationals, in part because of their larger families. Nonetheless, they may pay higher rents than the national tenants. In Germany and Austria, for example, a significant proportion of the Turkish minority members live in substandard flats. In Portugal, the minority groups live in low rental housing in poor areas. In the UK, many Pakistani families tend to own poor quality housing in run-down inner city areas<sup>(88)</sup>.

Poor housing conditions weigh even more heavily on ethnic minority women as they are likely to spend more time at home given to their traditional role of care giver. Moreover, as highlighted in the case of Belgium, single women and women heads of families are considered 'risk renters' and further discriminated<sup>(89)</sup>.

Residential segregation also occurs in various other countries. The proportion of immigrants and ethnic minorities tends to increase in areas which already have relatively high immigrant/ethnic minority concentrations, with the risk of deprived areas developing, although concentration may reduce the feeling of social isolation, especially among ethnic minority women. For instance, in Sweden, the Somalis are one of the groups that live most segregated, with particularly negative effects for women, as they tend to spend more time at home and therefore have less contact with the Swedes and Swedish society. In the Czech Republic, Vietnamese migrants tend to live segregated in housing settlements, and this can translate into social isolation, especially for Vietnamese women. In Bulgaria and Greece, it is the Turkish and other Muslim minorities that are concentrated in the most economically deprived parts of the country.

However, according to some EGGSI national reports, immigrants tend to be satisfied with their housing conditions, as is the case in Finland. In the Netherlands, there is a high level of satisfaction for ethnic minority residents of new-built developments. In Spain, ethnic minority and immigrant women tend to be satisfied with their housing, especially the African communities.

In eastern European countries, such as Latvia, Hungary, Poland and Romania, no housing discrimination has been reported by the EGGSI experts, although there are no statistical data or relevant sociological researches available. For instance, in Poland, the housing conditions of recognised minorities are similar to those of the majority of the Polish nationals, except for the situation of recent seasonal immigrant workers entering the country across its eastern border.

In most countries, immigrants from developing countries tend to experience more difficulties in the housing markets during the first years of their stay, while housing conditions tend to improve with the duration of the stay in the host country.

(87) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2007a), *Trends and Developments 1997–2005 — Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality*, Vienna, p. 29. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends\\_en.pdf](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends_en.pdf)

(88) EGGSI Network national report for Germany, Austria, Portugal and the UK, 2008.

(89) EGGSI Network national report for Belgium, 2008.



### Housing conditions in some European countries

#### **Austria**

10 % of the foreign population live in flats which have neither internal water supply nor toilets. More than 15 % of the Turkish population live in substandard flats <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Denmark**

60 % of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries live in social housing compared to 14 % of ethnic Danes <sup>(2)</sup>.

#### **Iceland**

In Reykjavik, where the concentration of foreign nationals is higher than on national average, the majority of the foreigners lives in neighbourhoods with relatively inexpensive flats. There are some cases, where foreign nationals pay higher rent than nationals are willing to pay for a comparable flat. Only 5 % of immigrants are on the waiting list for social housing, although they make-up 7.5 % of the population.

#### **Liechtenstein**

Migrants have more difficulties in finding an apartment. Turks and Balkan nationals seem to be more discriminated against than the other ethnic minorities when looking for an apartment <sup>(3)</sup>.

#### **Luxembourg**

26 % of the immigrants from Cape Verde and 19 % of those from the former Yugoslavia consider themselves victims of discrimination when wishing to acquire real estate. Various services for the accommodation of ethnic minority women are available <sup>(4)</sup>.

#### **Norway**

54 % of immigrants own their house, as compared with 72 % of the whole population. Non-western immigrants from Iraq and Somalia in particular suffer bad housing conditions <sup>(5)</sup>.

#### **Portugal**

The lack of financial support results in disadvantaged living conditions and segregation in poorer districts. African and eastern European families often live in overcrowded dwellings <sup>(6)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(1) Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria (2007), *Migrantinnenbericht 2007*, Vienna.

(2) Udlændingeservice (2007), *Tal og Fakta — befolkningsstatistik om udlændinge*. Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration. Copenhagen.

(3) EGGSI Network national report for Liechtenstein, 2008.

(4) Bodson L., Hartmann-Hirsch C. and Warner, U. (2005), *Migrants' experiences of racism and discrimination in Luxembourg*, Cahier PSELL No 155, Luxembourg.

(5) Blom S. and Henriksen K. (2006), *Levekår blant innvandrere i Norge 2005/06*, Statistisk sentralbyrå.

(6) ACIME (2005), *Relatório de Atividades da Comissão para a Igualdade e Contra a Discriminação Racial*, Lisbon.

### 2.1.3. Health conditions and access to the healthcare system

In general, the ethnic minority population are in worse health conditions (also psychologically) than the national population, due to the effects of hard working conditions, social and economic exclusion and isolation. The immigrants from developing countries with self-evaluated bad health usually outnumber the host country nationals reporting negative health. The health situation of women belonging to ethnic minorities tends to be transversally precarious, due to their household responsibilities and lifestyles, together with the social discriminations they suffer.

Women with an ethnic minority background usually report 'bad health' to a greater extent and consider their health situation worse than that of the men of the same ethnic group and of the women of the

majority population. For instance, in Estonia, Russian women report health problems more often than Estonian women. In Austria, higher rates of psychosomatic diseases can be found among the immigrant women than shown by Austrian-born women. In the United Kingdom, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women report the highest age-standardised rates of 'not good' health <sup>(90)</sup>. In addition, pregnancies and child birth tend to present more difficulties.

Differences in language, culture and religious beliefs, practices and interpretations may, however, lead to less effective care for ethnic minority women. For example, Muslim women, or their partners, may be reluctant or may even refuse to be treated by male medical doctors in hospitals, and all the more by a male gynaecologist. They also often request the assistance

(90) EGGSI Network national reports for Estonia, Austria, and the UK, 2008.

of female social workers when in need of healthcare. On the other hand, healthcare workers usually have insufficient experience and training to address the cultural and religious issues posed by ethnic minority women. The lack of adequate preparation by health professionals to adapt to these aspects reduces the accessibility of these services for ethnic minority women. In most countries there is also a lack of information material in the minorities' language and there is a need to develop interpreting and mediating services to assist ethnic minority women in hospitals.

In some countries greater attention is paid to these issues. For instance, in Finland, maternity services reach immigrant women satisfactorily. In Italy, while prenatal diagnoses are usually less widespread among immigrant women, social protection of pregnancy and maternity, and of children's health is usually ensured, as is in Germany for immigrant women <sup>(91)</sup>.

Although equal access to the healthcare systems is guaranteed in various countries, as is the right to access public health services in situations of emergency, in some countries access is related to the individual's legal and employment status and private health services are very expensive. The result is that a significant number of migrants and stateless groups have no proper health insurance and support. This affects their possibility to access medical care and their use of health services. Actually, many immigrants have no public health insurance due to lack of a job or informal employment, so they have to pay high fees for private health services. For instance, in Bulgaria, because of their poverty and lower educational level, people of Turkish origin face more difficulties in covering their health insurance when they are not insured by the state, and so it is difficult for them to find resources to pay for health services and medicines and ethnic minority women are often excluded even from services provided for pregnant women and their children. For example, in the Czech Republic, pregnant women without legal resident status are excluded from the public health insurance and therefore obliged to take the more expensive private health insurance, which might be denied them due to their high risks. In Greece pregnant migrant women many experience serious financial difficulties with regard to their hospitalisation fees <sup>(92)</sup>.

#### 2.1.4. Access to the long-term care system

Ethnic minority women face similar difficulties in access to long-term care services, as is the case for other social and healthcare services, given the frequent language difficulties, cultural differences, and poor knowledge of the national service system. Taking into consideration the special needs of ethnic minority women would improve these situations. For instance, it is not acceptable for an older woman from Pakistan to be washed and cared for by a man, which would therefore imply assigning women to this service. In Bulgaria, because of their cultural traditions Turkish and Muslim families prefer to take care of household members in need within the family, thus increasing the women's care responsibilities.

The changing composition of the ethnic minority population will in the future also influence the demand for healthcare for elderly immigrants and ethnic minorities. This is the case especially in countries with a longer migration history, like Austria or Germany, as many immigrants have decided to stay in the host country, also due to missing services in their country of origin. Lacking or insufficient services and difficulties because of low income might affect older disadvantaged ethnic minority women directly, but also affect them indirectly as they are often responsible for family care.

#### 2.1.5. Access to social benefits

Because of their relatively high unemployment and/or inactivity rates, the number of ethnic minority women receiving social benefits is usually higher than the share of men. In particular, one-parent families, usually with single mothers, receive a significant proportion of their incomes from the social security system. On the other hand, many ethnic minority women fail to accumulate full entitlements for contribution-based benefits, due to their employment in temporary low paid jobs or due to undocumented work.

In some European countries with relatively generous assistance schemes, such as the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany, and Spain, ethnic minority women are more likely to receive social assistance, unemployment and housing benefits than the members of the majority population, and they constitute a disproportionate share of those

(91) EGGSI Network national reports for Finland, Italy and Germany, 2008.

(92) EGGSI Network national reports for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Greece, 2008.

who are dependent on welfare allowances<sup>(93)</sup>. In the Netherlands more ethnic minority women than men receive social benefits due to their relatively high unemployment level. In the United Kingdom, for Pakistani and Bangladeshi households suffering from high poverty rates, social security benefits make up a significant proportion of their income, reflecting their higher levels of joblessness. In Germany foreigners receiving social security benefits make up one-fifth of all persons receiving this benefit<sup>(94)</sup>. In Spain, even those who cannot prove legal residence in the country have access to basic services and benefits provided by the local communities.

Conversely, in the Czech Republic, the current legal framework limits the range of people who are entitled to social benefits and excludes all non-nationals who do not have permanent resident status, or who are not employed or studying in the country<sup>(95)</sup>. In addition, the social benefits acquired by migrant women residing and legally working in the

country are not paid abroad, which is detrimental to foreign women when their children remain in the home country, since they are not entitled to parental allowance although social insurance is deducted from their wages. This affects a significant share of Ukrainian women.

Recourse to childcare services and maternity leave arrangements is relatively limited among ethnic minority women and especially among recent immigrant women, as they often lack proper language knowledge and information. Poor language proficiency can also impede a clear knowledge of their rights and hamper access to social services, as is the case of eastern European migrant women in Portugal.

Some minorities, such as the Muslim minority members in Bulgaria or the Chinese in Italy, tend to rely on their family, their relatives, and on their community rather than on the state for support when they are in need.

### Social benefits in some European countries

#### **Austria**

The minimum social aid system provides asylum seekers and foreigners excluded from the regular social system, with the basic needs for accommodation, food, and medical care.

#### **France**

In 1997, about 6 % of households lived below the poverty threshold, but a quarter were Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian households. In the Paris region, in 2001, the poverty rate of EU nationals was 17 %, while for third-country foreigners it was 43 %<sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Iceland**

Around 7 % of ethnic minority families living in Reykjavik during 2006 received rent subsidies, and 4.5 % receive social assistance. The lack of information is one of the reasons why they have less access to social benefits than the native population<sup>(2)</sup>.

#### **Sweden**

In some cities more than half the Somalis live on social allowance, while among other foreign-born people the share is around 20–30 %<sup>(3)</sup>.

#### **UK**

In Pakistani and Bangladeshi households, social security benefits make up 19 % of income. Benefits represent 15 % of the household income for black households. Lack of access to a pension is particularly acute for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, as only 8 % of them take part in an occupational pension scheme, compared to 35 % of white women<sup>(4)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (2005), Annual Employment Survey (Enquête Annuelle Emploi). Paris.

(2) Ólafsson, S. and Jóhannesson, G. Þ. (2007), *Húsnæðiskönnun 2007*. Húsnæðisaðstæður og húsnæðiserfðleikarí ólíkum þjóðfélagsþópum, Reykjavík.

(3) Emilsson, H. (2008), *Somalier på arbetsmarknaden — i Sverige och andra länder*. Cited in the EGGSI national report of Sweden.

(4) National statistics (2002), *Sources of Income: Earning, Pensions and Benefits*. Newport.

(93) EGGSI Network National Reports of the Netherlands, the UK, Germany and Spain, 2008.

(94) Press release from 9.8.2004 of the National statistical Institute Germany, [www.destat.de](http://www.destat.de)

(95) EGGSI Network national reports of the Czech Republic, 2008.

### 2.1.6. Access to employment, job quality and working conditions

In most countries, ethnic minorities face discrimination when accessing the labour market, both in the level and quality of work and in their remuneration. They are more likely to be unemployed and, when employed, to be working in low-qualified temporary jobs. Ethnic minorities have very poor chances of reaching higher positions and are underrepresented in the white-collar occupations. Non-national workers are also more likely to be involved in occupational accidents.

Women from disadvantaged ethnic minorities are more likely to experience longer periods of inactivity and lower employment rates than the ethnic majority women and minority men. The employment gap between ethnic minority men and women is usually wider than the gender gap in the majority population, especially for immigrants from Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, from North Africa and the Indian subcontinent. Women originating from these countries have also a higher level of unemployment than the men and majority women.

There are, however, exceptions to these gender patterns. In Sweden, for instance, the employment rate of the women from African countries who have been living in the host country for a long time is substantially higher than that of their male counterparts. Also in the Netherlands, while discrimination does appear to be a relevant hindering factor for Turkish and Moroccan women when accessing the labour market, it has less influence on the position of these women when they are already working. A similar situation for ethnic minorities is to be seen in Poland, where their unemployment rate is lower than the national average. In Denmark, women from Thailand, China and Vietnam have a participation rate close to or above that of, for example, women from Germany<sup>(96)</sup>. In the EU-15 countries, women from eastern European countries usually have lower unemployment and inactivity rates than the majority women, although higher than those of immigrant men originating from the same countries.

When employed, immigrant and ethnic minority women usually take up jobs vacated by native women, often in the irregular labour market with

low-average incomes and bad working conditions. They are more segregated into low-paid and largely female-dominated sectors, such as personal services, than national women and their ethnic male counterparts. In particular, many immigrant women are employed in domestic work or as home-helpers for old or disabled people in private households, or in the service sector, frequently with long working hours and without social contributions. These caregiver and domestic occupations are often characterised by prolonged illegal conditions, which make many of these women 'socially invisible', with limited access to employment rights and poor earnings. Their often weak socio-economic or insecure legal situation makes them more vulnerable to unfair treatment and exploitation, with fewer possibilities of defending themselves.

Ethnic minority women tend therefore to experience a significant *pay gap* in relation to men of the same ethnic group. This wage difference is linked to the concentration in less-paid occupations. Consequently, their level of economic independence is lower.

The labour market position of ethnic minority women mainly derives from the lack of education, training and language skills, but also from discrimination and the lack of recognition of skills and qualifications; the lack of a legal status (work or resident permit); and the lack of information and social networks and cultural and religious norms in the countries they belong to<sup>(97)</sup>.

The *low level of education and poor language proficiency* are particularly relevant. However, immigrants from non-EU countries, and especially women, have the additional problem that their educational qualifications are not always recognised. In France, for instance, the unemployment rate of immigrants with higher education is on average twice that of the economically active native population with the same level of schooling<sup>(98)</sup>. Achieving educational qualifications in the host country schooling system, on the other hand, increases the likelihood to benefit from a better position in the labour market.

(96) EGGSI Network national reports for Sweden, the Netherlands, Poland and Denmark, 2008.

(97) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels., p. 47. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(98) National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (2005), *Annual Employment Survey* (Enquête Annuelle Emploi). Paris.

Higher qualification levels do not safeguard ethnic minority women from unemployment and from low-skilled jobs to the same extent as they do ethnic minority men. Even ethnic minority women with higher education often work in temporary jobs or in the low-

wage sector. As shown in the following table, in most European countries the proportion of foreign-born women who are over-qualified for the jobs held is higher than the proportion of over-qualified foreign-born men and native women, especially in Greece, Spain and Italy.

**Table 2: Over-qualification rates of native- and foreign-born populations by sex, in some European countries, 2003–2004 <sup>(99)</sup>**  
Percentages

Country	Foreign-born		Natives	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Austria	24.8	18.1	9.3	11.1
Belgium	24.6	19.4	17.7	13.8
Czech Republic	12.8	7.8	6.6	4.0
Denmark	19.7	17.5	10.5	10.4
Finland	26.2	12.2	18.8	9.7
France	18.8	12.9	14.2	8.6
Germany	23.6	17.9	9.9	12.8
Greece	53.4	28.3	9.0	9.0
Hungary	10.5	9.0	7.3	5.5
Ireland	23.9	23.6	15.6	15.8
Italy	27.4	19.9	7.1	5.9
Luxembourg	14.1	5.6	3.2	3.6
Netherlands	16.6	16.9	9.9	8.7
Norway	25.1	16.1	10.6	6.3
Poland	9.3	8.8	9.1	6.5
Portugal	16.2	17.5	8.9	6.5
Slovak Republic	27	22.2	27.9	26.0
Spain	47.6	38.8	24.4	24.1
Sweden	15.3	16.9	7.2	5.7
UK	17	18.4	14.9	15.7

Source: OECD (2007), *International migration outlook, Sopemi 2007*, Paris, p. 139.

The *lack of social networks* is also important: immigrants from non-EU countries may lack the support of the social networks required to get better access to the labour market. However, the length of stay in the host country influences their employment level, which increases with prolonged presence.

*Cultural norms and religious aspects* which diverge from those of the majority population can play a role in hindering the employment of women from some ethnic minority communities. On the whole, the posi-

tion of women in ethnic minority communities where traditional forms of gender roles prevail is particularly disadvantageous with regard to access to employment, not only because of their cultural and religious specificities in relation to the host society, but also due to the inequalities from which they may suffer within their own communities.

All these factors influence the poverty risk of ethnic minority women, which are more vulnerable to poverty than ethnic minority men and majority women <sup>(100)</sup>.

(99) 'Over-qualification is examined with a normative-type measure based on the correspondence between level of education and qualifications for the job held. [...] An over-qualified individual is one who holds a job that requires lesser qualifications than would theoretically be available to him at his education level. Over-qualification rates are calculated for individuals with an intermediate or high education.' OECD (2007), *International migration outlook — Sopemi 2007*. Paris, p. 136.

(100) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

## Employment, job quality and working conditions in some European countries

In **Belgium**, unlike young women with European origins, young Turkish, Moroccan and sub-Saharan African women work mainly as blue-collar, while they are underrepresented as office employees. In 2004, the unemployment rate among Turkish and Moroccan migrants was 45 % compared to 10 % among the Belgian population. 60 % of Moroccan or sub-Saharan African women work as blue collar, while the share is 85 % for the young women with a Turkish nationality. 50 % of young sub-Saharan African women are positioned at the bottom of the wage hierarchy, although this is in line with their male counterparts <sup>(1)</sup>.

In **Bulgaria**, with transition to a market economy, ethnic migrant women have suffered from unemployment and poverty more than men. Turkish women have been expelled from the legal economy, and many of them have been obliged to stay at home, carrying out care work and housework. The share of long-term unemployed women is higher than that of the men, and rural women are particularly vulnerable.

In **Estonia** the Russian-speaking minority members are mainly employed in unskilled jobs, and the trend for non-Estonians to work more often as blue-collar and the nationals as white collar has proved lasting. However, occupational segregation by ethno-national communities has been declining in recent years. The long-term unemployment rate of non-Estonian women is, however, more than 4 times higher than for Estonian women, and ethnic minority women earn 83 % of Estonian women's wages (2005).

In **Finland**, downgrading has hit the Russian women in particular, many of whom work in care services.

In **France** the unemployment rate of ethnic women is in general greater than that of ethnic men and the majority population, especially for Moroccan (31 %) and Algerian (30 %) women as well as those from sub-Saharan countries (23 %) <sup>(2)</sup>.

In **Germany**, young women, especially those from former Yugoslavia or with Turkish origins, have difficulties in finding the jobs they expect after finishing school.

In **Greece**, there is some prejudice against immigrant women, even when they have high educational qualifications. This deskilling affects a large share of women from eastern European countries, who take on unskilled jobs for which they are overqualified.

In **Iceland** around 90 % of the foreign nationals from the EU-10 Member States and from outside the EEA area were registered as working in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs (2007).

In **Italy**, on the whole, the immigrant female participation in the regular labour market is significantly low. However, the regional differences are marked: while in the Northern regions the employment rate of native women is much higher than that of immigrant women, in the southern regions the proportion of immigrant women with a job is higher than the share of autochthonous women in the same position.

In **Liechtenstein** the labour market participation (2002) of female foreign residents is slightly higher (47 %) than that of Liechtenstein citizens (42 %). But female foreigners, especially those speaking a foreign language, are overrepresented in poorly qualified and unskilled jobs such as private cleaning. The unemployment rate in 2006 was 2.5 % among Liechtenstein citizens; it stood at 4.7 % among foreigners. Permanent residents are less affected by unemployment than temporary residents.

In **the Netherlands**, the differences in the labour market position between migrant men and women, and between migrant women and native women, are less important than the disparities between women with diverse ethnic origins. Among ethnic minority women, those of Surinamese origin enjoy the best position in the Dutch labour market.

In **Norway**, it is Somali, Pakistani and Turkish women who have the lowest job incomes on the national labour market, whereas women from India and Bosnia and Herzegovina benefit from almost the same income level as the women of the majority population.

In **Portugal**, women from countries with Portuguese as an official language suffer from employment discrimination, having a low level of education and being employed in low-wage jobs. A significant percentage of Brazilian women with secondary and academic qualifications suffer discrimination in the labour market.

In the **United Kingdom**, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women have much higher unemployment rates compared to native British women, and the highest female economic inactivity rates. Unemployment rates for African, Caribbean and other ethnic minority women are also high. However, once in employment, these women are more likely to work full-time than autochthonous women. The earnings disparity is especially large for African, and for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, since they are more likely to work part-time, which is more poorly paid, also due to their lower educational qualifications. A different case is shown by the Caribbean women, who tend to work on a full-time basis <sup>(3)</sup>

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Begg I. and Marlier E. (2006), *'Feeding in' and 'Feeding out', and integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities, Key lessons, Peer review and assessment in social inclusion*. European Commission, Directorate-General for Social Inclusion, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. Brussels.

(2) Zimmermann K. et al (2008), *Study on the social and labour market integration of ethnic minorities*, Institute for the Study of Labour, Discussion Paper Series, No 2420, Bonn.

(3) Office for National Statistics (2002), *Labour market: Bangladeshis' unemployment highest*, national statistics online, Newport, UK.



### 2.1.7. Access to financial services

A significant proportion of ethnic minority members and non-EU immigrants, as well as undocumented immigrants have no access to financial services, due to their low income, their insecure labour situation or their lack of legal status.

To open a bank account or obtain a loan, guarantees such as permanent address, a residence permit and/or legal work contracts are required, which ethnic groups and immigrants are in some cases not able to provide. It is therefore more difficult if not impossible for them, as in the case of undocumented immigrants, to open a bank account or even obtain credit for their personal or business use.

In Iceland, ethnic minority members complain that the banks are reluctant to lend them money to buy a house, claiming that it is much easier to obtain loans from the public housing financing fund. In the United Kingdom, the Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are the ethnic groups most at risk of financial exclusion, as many do not have any bank account, although they circumvent the problem by finding alternative ways of borrowing money, for example from their co-nationals

Ethnic minority women in particular may face more difficulties in obtaining an account or financial support, since they are usually more affected by insecure employment or joblessness and therefore have more difficulties in presenting securities in order to access bank services. Besides their lower incomes, their dependence on their male partners, especially in ethnic groups where traditional forms of gender roles prevail, may also significantly limit women's economic autonomy. In particular, this affects ethnic minority women intending to begin a career as self-employed. Due to the difficulties in finding start-up capital and funding to cover the relative expenses, ethnic minority women face more difficulties in the start-up phase and management of their own business. To overcome this challenge, in Finland, for instance, a public financing company, Finnvera, offers loans to women entrepreneurs. These instruments are also available to ethnic minority women, although recourse to them is partly hampered by language problems and poor knowledge of the Finnish finance system.

An alternative solution for ethnic minorities is given by micro-credit loans, which are however still not sufficiently diffused, or community- or family-based loan systems.

In order to send money to their home country for family support, immigrants often resort to private money transfer services, which are usually more expensive than banking transfers. In order to support the access to financial services in Spain, where the amount of monetary remittances sent by immigrants is the largest in Europe, the financial institutions have promoted financial literacy among migrant communities to stimulate them to make use of their services.

## 2.2. The multiple discrimination of ethnic minority women

According to a Eurobarometer survey, discrimination based on ethnic origin is felt — by ethnic minority men and women — to be the most widespread form of discrimination (64 %) <sup>(101)</sup>.

Women belonging to ethnic minorities are likely to face discrimination and exclusion for more reasons and in more spheres of their lives than the men. Besides sex discrimination both outside and within their communities, they often suffer from social prejudice as ethnic minorities because of cultural and religious differences. Access to the labour market, to education, social and health services are significant areas where ethnic minority (and immigrant) women are in a more disadvantageous position than ethnic men and the women and men of the host society. This creates multiple barriers to their full integration in society, hampering the freedom to choose how to live their lives and also affecting their children's access to social protection, education and healthcare.

Multiple discrimination can be found, for example, in Greece, where it is estimated that the majority of Muslim women face practices of discrimination with regard both to sex and to ethnic background and religion within the host society. In addition, they face discrimination due to their sex within their own communities, which upholds their traditional domestic role as caregivers <sup>(102)</sup>.

Awareness of the multiple and intersectional discrimination suffered by ethnic minority and immigrant women is, however, slowly improving in European countries.

(101) European Commission (2007c), *Discrimination in the European Union*. Special Eurobarometer 263. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, p. 36.

(102) EGGSI Network national report for Greece, 2008.

The European Commission's 'Roadmap for equality between women and men' <sup>(103)</sup> has underlined the need to combat the multiple discrimination faced by immigrant and ethnic minority women and stressed the need to ensure their rights and civic participation, to fully use their employment potential and to improve their access to education and lifelong learning. Other priority areas of the roadmap, such as the eradication of gender-based violence and trafficking and the elimination of gender stereotypes are also particularly relevant for these women, who often present the most disadvantaged situation and lack knowledge of their rights.

### Labour market, education and social exclusion

As previously noted, the access to the labour market, education and social services is limited for ethnic minority women due to lack of language skills, which is a problem for some ethnic minority groups, lower educational level or lack of recognition of their skills and qualifications. Discrimination also limits women's access to healthcare and social services into the labour market, which in turn affects access to the welfare system <sup>(104)</sup>. This is even more difficult for lone mothers, who do not have the financial support of a partner.

Barriers to labour market participation and employment that ethnic minority women face may also have their origins within their own communities. Especially in communities where traditional gender roles prevail, women are hindered from becoming financially independent as they are supposed to continue their domestic role in the household, taking care of children, husband or the elderly, which increases their dependency on their male partners.

Depending on the host society, ethnic minority women are nevertheless affected to different extents in access to job opportunities, and to education, health and social services. They may be better integrated if they have been long in the host country, have higher educational levels or when their ethnic traditions are less

visible or closer to those of the majority population. On the other hand, ethnic minority and immigrant women with cultural and religious traditions different from the majority population may face more discrimination — which can also be influenced by their skin colour, dress-codes and prejudice on the part of the employer as well as external political or mass media factors, affecting the 'ethnic' sensibility in the host society.

### Stereotypes and stigmatisation

Ethnic minority women in most European societies face stereotypes in the host society, and fail to be considered according to their competencies and individual characteristics. In the United Kingdom, for example, stereotypes make it harder for migrant and ethnic minority women to get a job, integrate into the work place, and get promoted. The Equal Opportunities Commission cites evidence of sexism, racism and anti-Muslim prejudice, especially in the case of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, of whom 90 % are Muslim, and black women, at work <sup>(105)</sup>.

- They are two to three times more likely than white women to be asked questions about their plans for marriage and children.
- One in three black Caribbean women and one in five Pakistani and Bangladeshi women under 35 have experienced racist comments at work.
- In 2005 one in five Pakistani and Bangladeshi women under 35 had experienced negative comments about wearing religious dress.
- Fifty-six percent of minority ethnic women compared with 44 % of white women had experienced discrimination in pregnancy.

### Vulnerability and domestic violence

According to the EGGSI Network national reports, ethnic minority women often appear to experience violence within their families. In some more male-dominated communities forced marriages may occur and cases of honour killings have been registered. Domestic violence against women is, however, harder to recognise and infrequently reported as these women are in a weaker position because of their legal

(103) European Commission (2006c), *A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006–10* COM(2006) 92 final, communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Brussels. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0092:FIN:EN:PDF>

(104) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, p. 47. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>

(105) Equal Opportunities Commission (2007), *Moving on up? The way forward*. Report of the EOC's investigation into Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean women and work cited in the EGGSI Network national report of the UK, 2008.

situation (especially in the case of immigrant women whose residence permits may be tied to marriage and family reunion, which makes it more difficult for them to leave a violent relationship), their economic dependence on the partner, as well as their poorer knowledge of the services available and greater reluctance to use legal means to stop or avoid maltreatment. These women can also be generally mistrustful of public institutions, as for example the police. Especially difficult is the situation of women in those ethnic minorities where some religious and cultural traditions discriminate against women within their households and communities, and of trafficked women, who suffer violence and/or forced prostitution.

### 3. Institutional framework underlying ethnic minorities' social inclusion and gender equality policies

The institutional framework targeting directly or indirectly ethnic minority women is composed of the legislative and policy framework.

The legislative framework concentrates on *the protection of rights* both at EU and national level. It comprises several important areas such as non-discrimination, gender equality, and legislation on the rights of third-country nationals, including access to permanent residency and citizenship, as well as the rights of recognised ethnic minorities.

The policy framework concentrates on welfare policies touching upon the socio-economic condition of ethnic minority women directly or indirectly. The fields of intervention concern the labour market, social benefits, education, housing and healthcare policies.

#### 3.1. European and national legislative framework

When talking about the socio-economic condition of ethnic minorities and especially of ethnic minority women, the *legal framework on anti-discrimination and gender equality* is of extreme relevance, as noted previously. 'Discrimination based on ethnic origin is felt to be the most widespread form of discrimination (64 %)'<sup>(106)</sup> and women tend to face a more disadvantaged socio-economic situation compared to ethnic minority men and majority women, and furthermore

(106) European Commission (2007c), *Discrimination in the European Union*. Special Eurobarometer 263. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, p. 36. [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_263\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_263_en.pdf)

are confronted with multiple discrimination. *Legislation regulating immigration from third-countries* is important as well, as in many cases the where the disadvantaged ethnic minority population is made up of people with an immigrant background.

#### 3.1.1. European legislative framework

There are three primary sources of non-discrimination in Europe: *international human rights law, EU law and national law*<sup>(107)</sup>.

In international human rights law, equality before the law and protection against discrimination are considered universal rights and as such are recognised by a wide range of instruments: the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW, 1979), the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD, 1965), the *United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR, 1966) and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1976). Some of these conventions, such as the ICCPR and the CERD oblige states not only to abstain from discrimination but also to take positive steps in order to give effect to the right not to be discriminated against. States are also required to extend measures for ensuring compliance with the non-discrimination principle to private actors<sup>(108)</sup>.

One of the most important international instruments with regard to the non-discrimination of ethnic minorities is the *Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities* (FCNM)<sup>(109)</sup> adopted by the Council of Europe in 1994. It sets out principles such as the freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, of expression and thought, conscience and religion, access to the media as well as equal access to education and other spheres of social life. However, the Convention does not refer to collective rights of minority groups, but only to individual rights<sup>(110)</sup>.

(107) European Commission (2006d), *Developing anti-discrimination law in Europe, The 25 EU Member States compared*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, p. 14. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2012&langId=en>

(108) European Commission (2006d), *Developing anti-discrimination law in Europe, The 25 EU Member States compared*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, p. 15. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2012&langId=en>

(109) [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/minorities/2\\_framework\\_convention\\_%28monitoring%29/1\\_text/PDF\\_H\(1995\)010%20FCNM\\_ExplanatoryReport\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2_framework_convention_%28monitoring%29/1_text/PDF_H(1995)010%20FCNM_ExplanatoryReport_en.pdf)

(110) European Commission (2005 a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels, p. 15. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf)

In EU law, **non-discrimination** is one of the main principles guiding legal and policy initiatives as 'non-discrimination is both a right of its own and a constitutive element of all human rights in that the enjoyment of all rights must be granted on a non-discriminatory basis.'<sup>(111)</sup>

At EU level, the most important legal instruments include: *article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty*, the *Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)*, the *Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC)*, and the *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*.

The Amsterdam Treaty provides powers to the European Communities to combat discrimination based on various grounds such as sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Article 13)<sup>(112)</sup>:

### Article 13

'Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation'<sup>(1)</sup>.

(1) European Commission (2004 a), *Green Paper on Equality and Non-Discrimination in an Enlarged European Union*, May 2004, p. 10.

On the basis of the powers awarded by article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty, the European Union adopted Directive 2000/43/EC in June 2000 (racial equality directive) with the objective of implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin in the fields of employment, education, social protection (including social security and healthcare), social advantages and access to goods and services (including housing) and Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 (employment equality directive) laying down a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation.

According to these two directives, the Member States must prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, religion and belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the area of work and employment in both the public and private sector. The directives aim at removing many of the obstacles previously associated with legal action in cases of discrimination through: 'recognising the role of statistics as evidence and the need to provide an effective level of legal protection (meaning that associations or legal entities should be empowered to engage in legal proceedings on behalf of or in support of any victim)'.<sup>(113)</sup> Furthermore, the racial equality directive urges Member States to create a specialised body to promote the equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin.

### The Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)<sup>(1)</sup> and the Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC)<sup>(2)</sup>

The racial equality directive and the employment equality directive prohibit direct discrimination ('when one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin') and indirect discrimination ('when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary'), as well as harassment ('unwanted conduct related to racial or ethnic origin (that) takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment') on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The racial equality directive also urges Member States to create a specialised body to promote equal treatment for all persons without discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origins and allows them to launch positive action programmes in favour of ethnic minorities. The directive covers employment, education, social protection, including social security and healthcare, access to and supply of goods and services and housing.

(1) Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:en:HTML>

(2) Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0078:en:HTML>

(111) European Commission (2005 c), *Equality and non-discrimination, Annual Report 2005, Fundamental rights and anti-discrimination*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Brussels, p. 15. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1608&langId=en>

(112) See <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/treaty/pdf/amst-en.pdf>

(113) European Commission (2007d), *Beyond formal equality: Positive Actions under Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC*, Brussels, p. 17.

## EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (1)

Article 20 of the charter sets out the general principle of equality before the law, while article 21 concentrates on the principle of non-discrimination: 'any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited. Within the scope of the application of the Treaty establishing the European Community and the Treaty on the European Union, and without prejudice to the special provisions of those Treaties, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.' (2) Furthermore, 'the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights covers all of the six grounds listed in Article 13 of the EC Treaty, as well as additional grounds such as social origin, genetic features, language, political or other opinion, membership to a national minority, property and birth.' (3) Article 51 of the charter mentions that the principles set by the charter should guide the development of policy in the EU and the implementation of these policies by the national authorities.

(1) EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, 2000, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

(2) European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels, p. 15 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf)

(3) European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels, p. 15 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf)

The directives also allow Member States to launch positive action programmes in favour of ethnic and religious minorities. There is no close definition of the types of measures considered necessary, but Member States may use both 'soft and hard measures ranging from advertising campaigns till binding measures aimed at ensuring full equality in practice.' (114)

Furthermore, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was proclaimed in December 2000 (115):

Besides these legal instruments, the European Court of Justice considers the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and sex to be 'a fundamental right under the Community law, any exceptions to which must be narrowly interpreted' (116).

The importance of non-discrimination against ethnic minorities is further demonstrated by the fact that it is one of the Copenhagen criteria (117) that candidate countries must comply with in order to become EU Members.

(114) *Developing anti-discrimination law in Europe, The 25 EU Member States compared*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Brussels., p. 60.

(115) At the moment, the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights is not a binding instrument. It will become binding once the Lisbon Treaty enters into force.

(116) European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels, p. 15 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf)

(117) Any country seeking membership of the European Union (EU) must conform to the conditions set out by Article 49 and the principles laid down in Article 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union. Relevant criteria were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. To join the EU, a new Member State must meet three criteria: political — stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; economic — existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; acceptance of the Community acquis — ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

When referring to the socio-economic conditions of ethnic minority women, **gender equality legislation** is extremely important as well. The European Community legal initiatives tackle the issue of gender equality through binding legislation, as presented in the box below.

Besides anti-discrimination and gender equality legislation, **EU legislation on third-country nationals** is also relevant as in many EU/EEA countries the disadvantaged ethnic minority population is made of immigrants, especially women, from developing countries.

EU directives on family reunion and human trafficking are particularly relevant for ethnic minority women, as women are more often affected by human trafficking and family reunion than men.

Furthermore, mention should also be made of a recent proposal for a *Council directive of October 2007 on the conditions of entry and residence of third country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment* whose purpose 'is to improve the EU's ability to attract highly qualified workers from third-countries' (118).

(118) [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/114573\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/114573_en.htm)



## Relevant gender equality legislation

Some of the most relevant binding instruments are:

- the directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women (1975) <sup>(1)</sup>;
- the directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (1976) <sup>(2)</sup>;
- the directive on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (1978) <sup>(3)</sup>;
- the directive on the implementation of the equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood (1986) <sup>(4)</sup>;
- the directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (1992) <sup>(5)</sup>;
- the Directive 2002/73/EC amending Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (2002) <sup>(6)</sup>;
- the directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to supply of goods and services (2004), which 'applies to access to goods and services available to the public that are offered outside the area of private life, such as housing, banking and insurance.' <sup>(7)</sup>;
- the directive on the progressive implementation of the principle equal treatment in matters of social security (1978); and the directive on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex (1997) <sup>(8)</sup>.

(1) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31975L0117:EN:HTML>

(2) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31976L0207:EN:HTML>

(3) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31979L0007:en:NOT>

(4) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31986L0613:EN:HTML>

(5) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992L0085:EN:HTML>

(6) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0073:en:NOT>

(7) European Commission, *Gender Equality Law in the European Union, 2007*, p. 7.

(8) European Commission (2005b), *Equality for women and men: European Community acts*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels.

## Relevant legislation on third-country nationals

Some of the most relevant binding instruments in this field are.

- Directive on the right of third-country nationals legally established in a European Union Member State to family reunification (2003), which 'allows third-country nationals who hold a residence permit valid for at least one year, or refugees, to be reunited with their families throughout the family reunification procedure. The persons eligible under this procedure are: the applicant's spouse, legitimate, natural and adopted children of the couple, and, under the authorisation of the Member States, unmarried partner, and adult dependant children or dependant ascendants. The right to family reunification is subject to mandatory respect for public order and public security and Member States may choose to impose other conditions such as adequate accommodation, sufficient resources, sickness insurance and a qualifying period of no more than one year.' <sup>(1)</sup>.
- Directive on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (2004) and the directive on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for the purposes of scientific research (2005) <sup>(2)</sup>.
- Directive concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents (2003) <sup>(3)</sup>.
- Directive on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities (2004), which gives these people the right to 'a residence permit valid for at least six months that can be renewed if the relevant conditions continue to be satisfied. The residence permit grants the holder access to the labour market, vocational training and education. In addition, Member States may make the issue of the permit conditional upon participation in integration programmes designed either to help the holder integrate in the host country or prepare for their return to their country of origin. The directive also sets a reflection period which should allow them 'to recover and escape the influence of the perpetrators and the offences. During this period they may not be made subject to any expulsion order; will have access to accommodation and to medical and psychological treatment and also to free legal aid and translation and interpreting services.' <sup>(4)</sup>.

(1) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/immigration/family/fsj\\_immigration\\_family\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/immigration/family/fsj_immigration_family_en.htm)

(2) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32005L0071:EN:NOT>

(3) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:016:0044:0053:EN:PDF>

(4) [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/l33187\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l33187_en.htm)



### 3.1.2. National legal framework

#### National legislation on non-discrimination

All the EU/EEA countries have developed legislation on anti-discrimination, including, among others, measures for protection against discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and sex, which has also been favoured by the recent transposition of the EU directives on anti-discrimination (racial equality directive and employment equality directive).

However, the communication on the application of the Directive 2000/43/EC of June 2000 mentions that ‘...the Member States did not seem to have dealt systematically with gender mainstreaming in their transposition of Directive 2000/43/EC.’<sup>(119)</sup>

#### Some examples of national legislation on non-discrimination

In **Estonia**, the employment contracts act<sup>(1)</sup> (1992) prohibits discrimination against employees on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, etc.

In **Finland**, the Finnish non-discrimination act (2004) covers a wide range of discrimination grounds associated with personal aspects, including nationality and national origin<sup>(2)</sup>.

In **Hungary**, Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities<sup>(3)</sup> prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic affiliation, mother tongue, disability, health state, religion or creed, political opinion, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, social origin, property status, the conditions of employment (part-time or fixed-term employment), membership of an interest-protecting organisation or any other situation or characteristic features.

In **Norway**, the act on prohibition against discrimination based on ethnicity and religion (2006) prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent, colour, language, religion or belief<sup>(4)</sup>.

In **Romania**, the Romanian equal treatment act (2006) prohibits ‘discrimination on grounds of age, disability, race and ethnic origin, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. The act provides that discrimination on two or more grounds is to be treated as an aggravating circumstance’<sup>(5)</sup>.

In **Slovakia**, the Constitution of the Slovak Republic<sup>(6)</sup> (1992) lays down the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, language, belief and religion, political affiliation or other conviction, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, property, descent or any other status.

In **Sweden**, according to the 2003 act prohibiting discrimination<sup>(7)</sup>, the prohibition of discrimination related to the ethnic origin, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or disability also applies to: the labour market programmes; starting or running a business; membership of workers’ or employers’ organisations or professional organisations and participation to benefits from these organisations; goods; social services; local and national transport services for disabled people; housing adaptation allowances; social insurance and related transfer systems; unemployment insurance; health and medical care as well as other medical services.

In the **UK**, according to the race relations amendment act (2000)<sup>(8)</sup>, discrimination is forbidden on grounds of race, colour, national and ethnic origins. Furthermore, the racial and religious hatred act (2006) creates offences involving stirring up hatred against persons on religious grounds.

Source: EGGSI Network’s national reports, 2008.

(1) <http://www.legaltext.ee/text/en/X1056K10.htm>

(2) <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2004/en20040021.pdf>

(3) <http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu/data/SZMM094B.pdf>

(4) Act on prohibition against discrimination based on ethnicity and religion [http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/aid/dok/lover\\_regler/reglement/2005/The-Anti-Discrimination-Act.html?id=420606](http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/aid/dok/lover_regler/reglement/2005/The-Anti-Discrimination-Act.html?id=420606)

(5) European Commission (2007b), *Tackling multiple discrimination: practices, policies and laws*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Luxembourg, p. 20. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2026&langId=en>

(6) <http://www-8.vlada.gov.sk/index.php?ID=1376>

(7) <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/44/75/cc57af19.pdf>

(8) [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_20000034\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000034_en_1)

(119) European Commission (2006b), *The application of Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM(2006) 643 final, Official Journal L 180, 19/7/2000 P. 0022 – 0026, Brussels. [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006\\_0643en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0643en01.pdf)

## Some examples of legislation on recognised ethnic minorities in the eastern European Member States

### **Czech Republic**

The act on the rights of members of national minorities <sup>(1)</sup> (2001) states that the authorities of the Czech Republic take into account the right to national and ethnic identity as a human right; respect the identity of ethnic minority members as individuals and groups expressed especially through culture, tradition, or language; and take into account the formation of a multicultural society.

### **Estonia**

The language act <sup>(2)</sup> (adopted in 1995) prescribes that where a certain ethnic minority constitutes half of the permanent residents of the municipality, the official languages of the local governmental institutions will be Estonian and the language of the minority. As most of the Estonian ethnic minorities are Russian speaking, some local government institutions also communicate in Russian. The national minorities' cultural autonomy act <sup>(3)</sup> (1993) states that ethnic minorities have a right to form cultural autonomy. However, this right is only extended to the Germans, Russians, Swedes, Jews and other national minorities that have at least 3 000 members.

### **Latvia**

The law on the framework convention for the protection of national minorities (2005) states that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration are the authorities responsible for coordinating at national level the implementation of the obligations set forth by the framework convention for the protection of national minorities. The law on free development and rights for cultural autonomy of national and ethnographic groups (1991) aims to ensure the rights pursuant to international norms for cultural autonomy and cultural self-governance for national and ethnic minority groups.

### **Lithuania**

The Constitution <sup>(4)</sup> (1992) states that all the ethnic/national/religious/linguistic minorities have the right to take care of their ethnical, cultural, educational and organisational charity and mutual assistance matters independently.

### **Romania**

The law of local public administration no 215/2001 states that citizens belonging to a national minority which makes up at least 20 % of the number of inhabitants of an administrative-territorial unit shall enjoy the right to use their mother tongue in their relations with local public administration authorities. The Constitution of Romania <sup>(5)</sup> (adopted in 1991 and revised in 2003) stipulates the recognition and guarantee of the right of persons belonging to national minorities to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, language and religious identity <sup>(6)</sup>.

### **Slovakia**

The act of minority languages <sup>(7)</sup> (1999) states that a citizen belonging to a national minority may submit written submissions to a body of state administration and self-government in his/her mother tongue. This is possible only in a municipality where the minority account for at least 20 % according to the latest census. The schools act (adopted in 1984 and amended in 1994) defines the use of minority language in the education process. The citizens of Czech, Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian (Ruthenian) ethnic origin are guaranteed the right to education in their mother tongue in a scope appropriate for their national development.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) [http://www.vlada.cz/files/rvk/rnm/zakon/menzakon\\_en.pdf](http://www.vlada.cz/files/rvk/rnm/zakon/menzakon_en.pdf)

(2) <http://www.eki.ee/keel/langact.html>

(3) <http://www.legaltext.ee/text/en/XX00038.htm>

(4) [http://www.lrkt.lt/Documents2\\_e.html](http://www.lrkt.lt/Documents2_e.html)

(5) <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=339&idl=2>

(6) Law of local public administration (No 215/2001), Official Bulletin No 123/20.2.2007.

(7) [http://www.culture.gov.sk/uploads/pE/07/pE071V59b5\\_SZDqXyakQRQ/act\\_languageminorities.pdf](http://www.culture.gov.sk/uploads/pE/07/pE071V59b5_SZDqXyakQRQ/act_languageminorities.pdf)

## National legislation on gender equality

Ethnic minority women can benefit from the national gender equality legislation if legally residing in the country. However, the EGGSI experts point out that usually there are no specific provisions as such with regard to *gender equality* for ethnic minority women, except for legislation regulating the status of pregnant illegal immigrants as for instance in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and legislation regarding human trafficking.

Furthermore, in some countries legislation on gender equality also covers multiple discrimination. This provision is extremely relevant for ethnic minority women since, as shown previously, they suffer more often from multiple discrimination than ethnic minority men and majority women. For example, in Spain legislation relating to equality between women and men provides 'that authorities shall, in the preparation, of studies and statistics, devise and introduce the necessary mechanisms and indicators to show the incidence of other variables whose recurrence

generates situations of multiple discrimination in the various spheres of action.'<sup>(120)</sup> In Romania, the law on equality between women and men (Act 340/2006, Article 4h) 'mentions multiple discrimination directly by defining it as an act of discrimination, based on two or more grounds of discrimination.'<sup>(121)</sup>

### National legislation on recognised ethnic minorities

Of the European countries, it is in particular the eastern European Member States that have a legislative framework related to the protection of the languages, traditions and cultural identity of **recognised ethnic minorities**, to the right of these ethnic minorities to use their language in public administration (under certain conditions) and to participate in political life. This is mainly related to the history of these countries, where the relevance of ethnic minorities (understood in the sense established by Recommendation 1201 of the Council of Europe) is higher due to historical dominations (the Austro-Hungarian Empire, USSR, etc). On the other hand, these countries have not yet received large immigration flows, except for forced migration in ex-USSR Baltic countries (as is the case of Latvia and

Estonia), and for the Czech Republic and Hungary, where immigration has become a recent trend.

Some EU-15 countries (Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, etc) also have legal instruments aimed at protecting the formally recognised minorities. For example, in Greece the legislative framework aimed at protecting the traditions and culture of formally recognised ethnic minorities is particularly relevant for women who belong to the formally recognised Muslim religious minority as Shariah is the law regulating family matters within this group. It must however be noted, that subsequent to the 1920/1991 law, the Muftis' decisions have to be in harmony with the Greek constitution.

### National legislation on immigration

In the EU-15 Member States and in the EEA countries, the relevant legislation touching on disadvantaged ethnic minorities is mostly related to the **legal instruments regulating immigration**, which define the residence rights in host countries (conditions for obtaining permanent residence and citizenship), family reunion rights and labour market access.

## Shariah (Islamic Law)

Eastern Macedonia and Thrace are the only regions in Europe — including Turkey — where Shariah is still in force. It is applied by Muftis, appointed by the Greek state, who act as judges in family matters. It provides that Muslim women are entitled to only half of their husband's inheritance; only husbands can initiate divorces against their wives; women may receive alimony only for 100 days after the divorce, and may have custody of children until the age of seven for boys and nine for girls — after which custody automatically passes to the father and his family. In addition, cases of polygamy have been reported and women who have remarried have automatically lost custody of their children. It should be noted that although representatives of the Turkish minority often attribute gender discrimination to the inability of the appointed Muftis to interpret the Koran<sup>(1)</sup>, unofficial Muftis elected by the communities also tend to implement the Islamic law in a way that clearly violates women's human rights.

Subsequent to the 1920/91 law, the Muftis' decisions have to be in harmony with the Greek constitution. The National Human Rights Committee judged in 2004 that the marriage of an 11-year-old Muslim girl of Roma origin by the Mufti was against Greece's human rights commitments<sup>(2)</sup>. In 2008, a court decision by the Rodopi-Protodikio-translation gave a woman belonging to the Muslim minority equal rights to the family inheritance against the ruling of the local Mufti, thus opening the way to challenge established gender relations in the Muslim communities.

Source: EGGSI Network national report for Greece, 2008.

(1) See, for example, Western Thrace Minority Graduates Association, 2005.

(2) National Committee for Human Rights (NCHR), 2005.

(120) European Commission (2007b), *Tackling multiple discrimination: practices, policies and laws*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Luxembourg, p. 20. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=2026&langId=en>

(121) Begg I. and Marlier E. (2006), *'Feeding in' and 'Feeding out', and integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities, Key lessons*, Peer review and assessment in social inclusion. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels, p. 20.

Access to *permanent residence* and furthermore to *citizenship* is extremely important for immigrants as in some countries access to social benefits is dependent on being a permanent resident. This aspect is particularly relevant for immigrant women, as they are usually more dependent on social benefits than ethnic minority men and ethnic majority women.

Residence in the country and *access to the labour market* are closely connected, as staying in the country in question also depends on having a work permit (Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg for example) which is possible only if there is a regular work contract

or self-employment. In addition, temporary residence has to be renewed when the residence permit is no longer valid and this also requires a regular work contract or self-employment. Furthermore, in some countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Iceland) immigrants from third-countries have access to the labour market only if no national or EU citizen has applied for the job. These provisions can affect in particular ethnic minority women, as they usually work in low-paid and non-regulated sectors (such as the domestic help sector) or in the black economy, and consequently may have difficulties in showing continuous employment. Therefore, they risk maintaining illegal status for a prolonged period of time or becoming illegal immigrants.

### Some examples of legislation on access to permanent residence and citizenship

#### **The Czech Republic**

In 2007, the Czech Republic reduced from 10 to 5 years the period of time required before a foreigner could apply for a permanent residence permit, and the entire process of applying for a permanent residence permit has been simplified <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Denmark**

Permanent residence can only be achieved after having lived seven years in Denmark, having passed a language test and followed an introduction programme.

#### **Italy**

Immigrants will be allowed permanent residence after a five-year waiting period on condition that they have the financial means to support themselves.

#### **Liechtenstein**

Permanent residence permits (C) provide unlimited residence in Liechtenstein. The permit is issued after 5 years in the case of EEA citizens and Swiss citizens and 10 years for third-country nationals. Long-term resident foreigners have a right to municipal and national citizenship if they can demonstrate residence in Liechtenstein for at least 30 years. The years from birth to the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday count double. Another possibility to acquire citizenship in Liechtenstein is being married to a citizen of Liechtenstein. For this form of naturalisation, the marriage must have existed for at least three years, and the person must have resided in Liechtenstein for at least twelve years (years of marriage count double).

#### **The Netherlands**

Legislation on the integration of migrants (the civic integration abroad act — adopted in 2005 and in force since 2007 — and the civic integration act — in force since 2007) <sup>(2)</sup> states that migrants wishing to come to the Netherlands and who need a visa must first pass an integration test in their country of origin. If they fail the test, they are not allowed to enter the Netherlands. Once in the Netherlands, immigrants are required to take an integration exam within a set period. Failure to pass this examination has consequences for the granting of permanent residency status and the possibility of naturalisation, and also carries financial sanctions. Furthermore, the acts provide that it is no longer only newcomers who are required to integrate officially, but also aliens who have been residing in the Netherlands for some time. One side-effect of the introduction of this act has however been a considerable fall in the number of applications for temporary residence permits (MVs). At least for the time being, therefore, the act has had a restrictive effect on immigration for family formation and family reunification <sup>(3)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Act No 326/1999 Coll., amended in Act No 170/2007 Coll. 68.

(2) <http://www.eerstekamer.nl/9324000/1/j9vvgh5ihkk7kof/vh7rf1gymzy5/f=y.pdf>.

(3) Dagevos, J. and Gijsberts, M. (red.) (2007), *Jaarrapport integratie 2007*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau SCP, p. 316.

### Some examples of national legislation regulating work permits

In **Cyprus**, the work permit is tied to a specific contract signed with a specific employer and termination of the contract leads to the cancellation of the work permit as well as the residence permit. In this case, legal migrants lose their status unless they have been given 'a release paper' by the employer. The release paper holders have a one-month intermediary period within which they have to sign a contract with a new employer.

In the **Czech Republic**, the access of foreigners to the labour market is considerably dependent on their country of origin, which either makes their situation much easier (EU countries) or makes it very difficult (third-countries) <sup>(1)</sup>. A work permit is issued only in reference to a specific job, which the employer has to register at the relevant employment bureau, and that job must remain unfilled by any other person registered at the employment bureau (above all Czech citizens) owing to lack of suitably qualified candidates or simply of available labour <sup>(2)</sup>.

In **Estonia**, non-EU migrants can apply for work permits or temporary residence permits for work purposes. However, the residence permits may be issued only if the job is not taken by an Estonian citizen during a two-month period.

In **Iceland**, the foreign nationals' right to work act <sup>(3)</sup> (2002) states that before granting a job to a foreign national, the authorities have to make sure that the job has been advertised within the EEA and that no EEA citizen has expressed preference for the respective job. Furthermore, temporary work permits are not granted directly to the immigrant, but to the employer and the immigrant has to apply for a new work permit each time he/she changes jobs. The Human Rights Committee of the United Nations has criticised the Icelandic authorities for granting temporary work permits to employers and not to the particular immigrant worker <sup>(4)</sup>.

The work permit and authorisation to reside in **Luxembourg** are inextricably linked. The right of third-country nationals to reside in Luxembourg depends on the possession of a work permit and normally the residence permit cannot be prolonged if the applicant does not have a work permit at the time of the request. The holder of a work permit is also bound to apply for authorisation in case of change of employer or occupation.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Nešporová, O. 2007. *Rodiny přistěhovalců I.* (Families of Migrants I) Praha: VÚPSV. [http://www.vupsv.cz/Fulltext/vz\\_224.pdf](http://www.vupsv.cz/Fulltext/vz_224.pdf)

(2) Act No 435/2004 Coll

(3) <http://eng.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/legislation//nr/1491>

(4) <http://www.humanrights.is/frettir/nr/884>

In some countries (e.g. Denmark, France and Italy) provisions have recently been adopted which facilitate the residence in the country of highly skilled migrants.

### Some examples of legislation regulating high-skill work migration

In **Denmark**, persons that have a job or possess high qualifications can apply for a green card, which lasts six months.

In **France**, the new immigration law (2006) creates a three-year resident permit for foreigners who are able to demonstrate that they will contribute to the economic or intellectual and cultural development of both France and their country of origin <sup>(1)</sup>.

In **Italy**, Law No 189 of 30 July 2002 (the Bossi-Fini law) introduces no-entrance limitations for highly-skilled workers (university lecturers and professors, professional nurses, etc). This means that these people are not included in the quota of the number of immigrants that are allowed per year.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) *Journal Officiel de la Republique francaise*: Chapter 5 of Lois n° 2006-911 du 24 juillet 2006. [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Backgrounder2\\_France.php](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Backgrounder2_France.php)

Residence in the country can also be granted on grounds of *family unification*. The legal framework related to family reunification of immigrants from third-countries is particularly important for women, both in the situation of independent immigrant women and women joining their spouses. Lately, some European countries have tightened legislation on family reunification (Denmark, Greece, France). However, in

other countries (such as Iceland) the legal provisions favour family reunification.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that in some cases (Liechtenstein, Portugal, etc) residence is awarded on the basis of family reunification ceases if the marriage is dissolved. However, in Liechtenstein special provisions have been made in order to protect migrant women.

## Some examples of legislation on family reunification

### **Denmark**

Family reunification depends on fulfilling certain conditions such as a reasonable size of house and a guarantee that the foreigner will be able to support his/her relative who can be the spouse or children under 15 years old. Furthermore, since July 2005 family reunification can only be obtained by signing a declaration of integration, which includes commitment to learn Danish and to be self-supporting through employment, to be signed also by the spouse in Denmark. They have to present financial guarantees proving that they are self-supporting.

### **France**

The new laws on immigration (2006) include the following aspects: the partner of a French citizen has to be married for three years (instead of two years as in the past) and show a real desire to integrate in French society in order to apply for residence permits; foreigners can apply for family reunion only after 18 months (instead of 12 months as in the past) of legal residence and furthermore they have to give proof of a legal income that has to come from employment and not benefits. Moreover, a family member of an immigrant who does not respect the basic principles of family life in France (recognition of the secular state, equality between a man and a woman, and monogamy) will not be allowed to enter France <sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Greece**

The law on family reunification establishes women as family members entirely dependent on the main 'provider' of the family, which is usually identified as male, for their and their children's residence permit. As a result, these women depend entirely on their husbands for their legal documents, insurance, and healthcare <sup>(2)</sup>.

### **Liechtenstein**

Women, whose children are integrated in Liechtenstein, attend school, and whose situation would be negatively impacted by moving, receive a residence permit upon separation from their partner. Similarly, assessment that the foreign spouse can no longer be expected to maintain marriage in the light of physical, psychological, or sexual violence should be taken into particular account in exercising discretion on behalf of the victim. This provision is intended to make it easier for foreign women who are victims of domestic violence to separate from their partners.

### **Portugal**

The right to reside in Portugal based on family accompaniment ceases when there is a divorce.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) *La vie publique: loi du 24 juillet 2006 relative à l'immigration et à l'intégration*, [http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Backgrounder2\\_France.php](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Backgrounder2_France.php)

(2) Kambouri, H. (2007), *Gender and Migration II: The everyday life of female migrants from Albania and Ukraine in Athens*, Athens.

Regarding the legal framework touching upon immigrant women, attention should also be paid to the *legal framework on trafficked persons* as many of them are women. While in Italy trafficked women are entitled to a residence permit granted on humanitarian grounds, in Greece the legislation entitles them to temporary residence on condition that they collaborate with the police.

As seen throughout the analysis on national legislation on immigration, the legal status is extremely relevant in granting immigrants the right to stay in the country, and to gain access to the labour market, social benefits and healthcare services. The absence of legal status is extremely problematic for asylum-seekers, refugees, stateless persons and illegal immigrants since they have to deal with problems of continuous risk of expulsion. However, in Italy, Greece and Portugal the legal framework provides that pregnant illegal immigrant women (and

women with children under the age of six months in Italy) cannot be expelled. Furthermore, in Spain illegal immigrants have access to basic social benefits provided by the autonomous communities under the same conditions as Spanish nationals, while in other countries they have access only to emergency healthcare services <sup>(122)</sup>.

### 3.2. Policy making and implementation

From the policy perspective, addressing the conditions of ethnic minority women requires, first of all, the recognition of their diverse cultural and socio-economic condition, as well as their legal status (recognised ethnic minority groups; legal migrants with temporary/permanent residency or citizenship; illegal immigrants). This is essential for addressing the multiple and interconnected factors that impact on their daily lives: gender barriers in society; discrimination based on ethnicity and citizenship

(122) EGGSI Network national reports for Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain, 2008.



(as is mostly the case of immigrant women from some third-countries), poor access to employment and education or vocational training and therefore high poverty risks.

In a few countries (such as Spain, Portugal and Norway) there are gender-oriented integration policies for ethnic minorities. They usually focus more on in-

tercultural (language education, civic integration) than on welfare aspects.

In terms of social inclusion policies, the policy responses of European countries reflect the structure of the national welfare systems, the ethnic composition of the country and its migration pattern (in cases where there are large migration flows).

### Examples of gender-oriented integration policies in some European countries

#### **Norway**

The action plan for the integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population (2006) acknowledges the importance of women in raising children and aims at developing future measures to enhance their knowledge of Norwegian society and their participation in society <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Portugal**

The action plan for the inclusion of immigrants focuses on the need: to protect pregnant immigrant women and their children; to work against the vulnerability of women; to divulgate information regarding women's rights and obligations; promote women's participation in society through involvement in associations promoting the defence of women's rights; re-enforce the legal and judicial support for victims of human trafficking, including children; create victims' support shelters to receive victims of human trafficking; create an observatory system for the protection of women against human trafficking; develop a more efficient strategy against human trafficking <sup>(2)</sup>.

#### **Spain**

The strategic plan for citizenship and integration (2007–10) provides for the introduction of a gender perspective in all the phases of the migratory policy (research programme on migration, gender and intercultural aspects; programmes for designing and including a gender strategy in migration; spaces for transfer of knowledge and good practices); programmes to favour the access, participation and involvement of women immigrants in all spheres of social life; programmes designed to combat gender violence, providing social measures and accompaniment for immigrant women who are prostitutes and victims of human trafficking.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Norway Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (2006), action plan for integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population and goals for social inclusion. statistics Norway. [http://www.regjeringen.no/Upload/AID/publikasjoner/rapporter\\_og\\_planer/2006/H-plan2006\\_int\\_og\\_inkl\\_english.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/Upload/AID/publikasjoner/rapporter_og_planer/2006/H-plan2006_int_og_inkl_english.pdf)

(2) Resolution of Ministry Council no 63-A/2007, third of May — Plan for immigrant inclusion. [www.dgeep.mtss.gov.pt](http://www.dgeep.mtss.gov.pt)

### Policies with regard to social benefits

In most EU-15 and EEA welfare regimes, ethnic minority women can benefit from social benefits aiming at ensuring a subsistence level for people on low-income. Some examples are guaranteed minimum income in Austria and Luxembourg, childcare allowances, family allowances in Liechtenstein, means-tested assistance benefits, minimum pension and weekly carer's credit for state pensions in the UK. These social support schemes should help ethnic minority women to reach a level of subsistence by offering them some income.

However, some countries such as Italy and Greece show a shortage of resources devoted to social policies. Furthermore, in these countries women without a family network are more disadvantaged as benefits are mainly based on family rights. This can have an additional impact on ethnic minority women in general as it could induce them to stay

in undesired marriages, and on lone ethnic minority mothers in particular.

The EGGSI network's national reports point out that in most of the EU-15 and EEA countries access to social benefits is generally dependent on having legal status in the country and in some cases is limited to citizens only, as is the case of family allowances in Luxembourg or of the regular disability and subsistence welfare programmes in Greece.

Nevertheless, Spain is a case of good practice in this field as social benefits are not dependent on citizenship, nor are they even conditioned by legal residency in the country. In Spain, even illegal immigrants have access to the basic social services provided by the local authorities.

In the welfare systems of the eastern European Member States, social benefits are mainly based on paid

contributions, and legal status is therefore of considerable importance for accessing them. For instance, in the Czech Republic immigrant women are not entitled to social benefits in the first year of permanent residency, even though they work, and furthermore their benefits are not transferable abroad <sup>(123)</sup>.

### Labour market policies

As for labour market policies, the EU-15 welfare systems are characterised by an increasing focus on making work pay and on helping vulnerable people into the labour market, while reducing dependence

on social benefits. However, this recent trend of workfare policies seems not to consider that ethnic minority women face multiple barriers in entering and remaining on the labour market and therefore have reduced possibilities of being employed in well-paid jobs. Furthermore, when policies do not adapt to the special needs of ethnic minority women they risk not reaching them fully, as evaluations of the new deal policy and jobcentre plus policy initiatives in Britain show.

Conversely, the EGGSI network's national reports pointed out that, when policy initiatives take into

## Labour market policies in Denmark, Sweden and the UK

### Denmark

Recently, the social assistance scheme has been reformed and 'start up help' has been introduced as part of the scheme to increase incentives for the unemployed to take on a job or to look for one more actively. However, this start up help is lower than the ordinary social assistance scheme. Furthermore, social assistance for the spouse is offered if one of the spouses has not had at least 300 working hours within a two-year period and this is reduced if one of the spouses is employed. These policies might affect ethnic minority women and make them more dependent on their husbands.

### Sweden

Reform of the social schemes has severely reduced the duration of unemployment part-time benefits <sup>(1)</sup> (those received by the part-time employees) so that now women may be forced to choose between full social benefit for unemployment or part-time work without the unemployment benefit. This might impact on ethnic minority women as they are usually part-time employees.

### UK

The new deal policy is an active labour market programme which offers targeted support by means of special advisors to members of certain groups who are claiming job-seekers allowance or are at high risk of unemployment. At present there are seven new deal schemes running: for young people; for the over 25s; for the over 50s; for lone parents; for disabled people; for partners of the unemployed; and for musicians. The Department for Work and Pensions claims that the new deal has helped 'more than 125 000 ethnic minority people into work' (DWP 2004). The new deal has, however, not been as effective as it could have been at activating minority ethnic unemployed because the programme is not sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of such a diverse group, it does not run long enough to help those with multiple barriers to employment, it is not available early enough for those who need it and schemes are of varying quality (National Audit Office, [www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao\\_reports/07-08/0708206es.htm](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/0708206es.htm)). Moreover, it did not always reach ethnic minority women, as large numbers are not economically active. Evaluations have found that greater outreach and better translation facilities are needed as well as more advisors from minority ethnic backgrounds. Evaluations have also found that minority ethnic women are more positive about the new deal for lone parents than other programmes (Barnes et al 2006: 137). However, the incentives to take part in the programme were not always perceived as motivating factors among lone parents in minority ethnic groups. For example, the proposed sanction of withdrawing Income Support was mitigated by the fact that women would be able to cope with the help of large family networks <sup>(2)</sup>.

The reformed job centre plus (belonging to the Department for Work And Pensions) aimed at offering a more targeted service to 'customers' with the use of personal advisors. Government policy has also sought to increase the employment rate overall and to encourage economically inactive women into employment. However, the ability of job centre plus to work with ethnic minority customers is constrained by the lack of culturally appropriate employment and support on offer and also by the ability of advisors to 'interface' with these customers <sup>(3)</sup>.

Source: Denmark, Sweden and UK EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

- (1) The Swedish unemployment insurance scheme [www.iaf.se/upload/Informationsblad/english/The\\_swedish\\_unemployment\\_insurance\\_scheme.pdf](http://www.iaf.se/upload/Informationsblad/english/The_swedish_unemployment_insurance_scheme.pdf)
- (2) Fieldhouse, E., Kalra, V. S. and Alam, S. (2002), *A New Deal for Young People from Minority Ethnic Communities in the UK*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28(3), pp. 499–513.
- (3) Annesley, C. (2001), *New Labour and Welfare*, in: Ludlam, S. and Smith, M. (eds), *New Labour in Government* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), pp. 202–218; Annesley, C. and Gamble, A. (2003), *Economic and Welfare Policy*, in: Ludlam, S. and Smith, M. (eds), *Governing as New Labour*. Basingstoke, pp. 144–60.

(123) EGGSI Network national report for the Czech Republic, 2008.

account the ethnic minority women's specific needs and their cultural background, or at least that of the ethnic minority groups in general, they manage to reach them and increase their labour market participation. This is the case of the action plan emancipation and integration of women and girls from ethnic

minority groups in the Netherlands, of the ethnic minority outreach and the partners outreach for ethnic minorities programmes in the UK, the Training and social development operational programme (Poefds) in Portugal, steps in jobs in Sweden and the diversity plan policy in Belgium.

### Labour market policies targeting ethnic minorities

#### **Belgium**

The 'assimilation policy of newcomers' (*Inburgeringstrajecten*) is compulsory for most non-EU newcomers in Flanders and optional in Brussels. It also includes employment/career guidance through the Flemish public employment service (VDAB). Recently participation in this 'Inburgering' scheme has become compulsory for women entering the country on the basis of family reunion.

The diversity plan is a policy initiative, part of the 'assimilation policy of newcomers', aimed at the employment of people of foreign origin in the public administration. This is an important policy initiative that might be relevant for ethnic minority women.

#### **The Netherlands**

The action plan emancipation and integration of women and girls from ethnic minority groups, published by the Minister for Foreigners Affairs and Integration and the Minister for Social Affairs and Employment in 2003, had as an objective to reach out to migrant women and girls participating in the labour market little or not at all, with information about local possibilities for education, language courses and job search accompaniment. The set target was 20 000 women and girls. Up to 2006, some 30 bigger municipalities published a 'participation agenda' as a covenant between the municipality, social partners and/or education institutions, giving migrant women an offer for a job or a practice placement. A report to the Parliament of June 2007 mentions that 29 000 migrant women and girls participated in the activities.

#### **Portugal**

Poefds (2000–06) aims at granting support to initiatives directly related to employment and access to work for ethnic minorities. Likewise there is a focus within this programme on education and vocational training for ethnic minority women. Actually, the participation of ethnic minority women in the courses supported by this programme has contributed to their social inclusion.

#### **Sweden**

Step-in jobs, introduced in 2007, are intended for asylum seekers who have received residence permits, quota refugee immigrants and their close relatives for the first 16 months after receiving a residence permit. Step-in-jobs are subsidised employment linked to learning Swedish for immigrants, and including elements of mentorship. The state also subsidises municipalities receiving refugees. The subsidy consists of a standard payment offered to the municipality that has to make an individual plan of integration for each refugee aimed at giving the respective individual a good prospect of becoming self-supporting. This measure might have a relevant impact on ethnic minority women as it helps them to become self-supporting and as ethnic minority women usually have lower employment rates.

#### **UK**

Ethnic Minority Outreach (EMO) ran from 2002–06 and was managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. The projects were designed to help engage ethnic minorities, moving them closer to the labour market and promoting higher employment rates within ethnic minority communities. The schemes were designed to target the economically inactive who were not claiming benefits. One specific target group was Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. The evaluation identified serious barriers to employment which include: language, education and qualifications, work experience, local labour market demand, health problems, childcare responsibilities and discrimination. The EMO initiative succeeded in reaching many people from ethnic minority groups who would not otherwise have been aware of the range of employment and training services and benefits available to them. Of those furthest from the labour market and participating in the programme, the majority made tangible but limited progress towards their goals. Overall, 26 % of them entered employment but not necessarily secure employment. The evaluation recommended that there was a need for the programme to meet the interim needs for those groups furthest from the labour market rather than applying a work-first approach to all <sup>(1)</sup>.

Partners outreach for ethnic minorities (POEM) programme started in 2007 for 15 months and was managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. It offered support for non-working partners, particularly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who are not in contact with the services offered by jobcentre plus, who perceive themselves as having low incomes and are not in receipt of jobseekers allowance, income support or incapacity benefits. It is being piloted in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Leicester and Bradford — areas with high proportions of non-working ethnic minorities and high levels of deprivation. The scheme offered support to overcome barriers to work such as: family and caring responsibilities; language and skills barriers; resistance from family and community to working; lack of access to affordable childcare; artificial or discriminatory barriers to employment; lack of access to jobs that are culturally acceptable and provide flexible working patterns <sup>(2)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Barnes, H. et al. (2005), *Ethnic Minority Outreach: An evaluation* Research Report 229, Department for Work and Pensions, London.

(2) Department of Work and Pensions of the UK.

However, as in the case of social benefits, access to the labour market in most European countries is conditional on having legal status.

In some eastern European Member States, such as the Czech Republic or Estonia, third-country immigrants can get access to a job only if no Czech or Estonian citizens have applied for it. This makes it particularly difficult for highly qualified migrant women to use their degrees and might segregate them into low-paid sectors with poor working conditions.

### Housing policies

National analyses have pointed out that in some countries (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Liechtenstein, etc) ethnic minority women have access to ample social benefits for housing and to publicly provided housing (social houses) if legally residing as they are low-income earners. Furthermore, some countries (e.g. the UK, Sweden, and Italy) have also implemented policies specially aimed at dealing with the degradation of the areas and of the housing inhabited by ethnic minorities.

### Housing policies for ethnic minorities in Europe

#### **Denmark**

Housing policies regard the urban qualification of the deprived areas, generally inhabited by immigrants, in large cities in order to avoid segregation in the peripheries.

#### **Italy**

The 2007 financial law <sup>(1)</sup> envisages the constitution of a fund for the inclusion of immigrants that will receive EUR 50 million for 2007, 2008 and 2009. The funds will be mainly used to address housing deprivation and the social degradation of immigrants.

#### **Sweden**

The municipalities are responsible for providing a living place. Urban qualification policies of the areas inhabited by immigrants regard: re-building houses, reducing the number of apartments, breaking up big complexes into smaller units.

#### **UK**

The Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund <sup>(2)</sup> (EMIF) aims at tackling homelessness among ethnic minority groups. It provides financial support to voluntary and community groups working in partnerships with the local authorities to deliver innovative projects that aim to reduce levels of homelessness amongst ethnic minority groups. The fund made available GBP 3 million over 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Parlamento Italiano (2006), *Disposizioni per la formazione del bilancio annuale e pluriennale dello Stato (legge finanziaria 2007)*, Gazzetta Ufficiale No 299 del 27 dicembre 2006 — Supplemento ordinario n. 244.

(2) Information of the Ethnic minorities innovation fund (EMIF) <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/publicationsabout/homelessness/informationlocal/ethnicminoritiesinnovation/>

### Healthcare policies

Policies in this area are extremely important for the well-being of ethnic minority women, in particular, and in general for the well-being of the entire minority family, considering that women are the main carers within families and use medical services more often than men.

In EU-15 and EEA countries there are generally greater amounts of resources available for policy initiatives in the healthcare sector than in eastern European Member States. Furthermore, in eastern European Member States (as for instance in the Czech Republic) health insurance is more often based on paid contributions by the employees and in some countries is restricted to permanent residents or citizens.

### Healthcare policy in the Czech Republic

#### **The Czech Republic**

Access to healthcare in the Czech Republic requires health insurance and is restricted to citizens, foreigners with permanent residence status, and foreigners who are employed or studying in the country, whose health insurance is thus covered. Women who accompany their 'economic migrant' partners to the Czech Republic or are working 'under the table' can have access only to private health insurance. The higher price of commercial insurance and the pre-payment condition for the entire insurance term are often regarded as major obstacles to the inclusion of foreigners in the health insurance system. However, a bill has been drawn up proposing that foreign citizens be allowed to pay monthly health insurance as Czech citizens do.

Source: EGGSI Network national report, 2008 of Czech Republic.

In some EU-15 countries (Italy, Portugal, Spain), emergency healthcare services are extended to illegal immigrants not covered by public or private healthcare insurance. Conversely, in other EU-15 countries such as Greece and Denmark, access is available only for legal immigrants, although in daily practice if illegal immigrants are in a life-threatening situation they are treated under the same conditions as legal immigrants. There are also policy initiatives

that have a higher impact on ethnic minority women, as policies against female genital mutilation and policy initiatives that deal with interculturality, as in Belgium and Portugal. In fact, this is an important aspect, especially for those ethnic communities in which women refuse to be treated by men gynaecologists, and in general for all ethnic minority women that feel more comfortable using their own language when talking to doctors.

### Healthcare policies dedicated to ethnic minorities in some EU-15 and EEA Countries

#### **Belgium**

Intercultural mediation and social interpretation:

Since 1999, hospitals can receive subsidies from the Federal Ministry in charge of public health to finance cultural mediation services within their structures. The tasks of the mediators include translation, cultural brokerage and providing information on health issues. It appears that in 2005, 65 000 interventions were made by mediators, mainly for Turkish and Moroccan women <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Italy**

The Immigration Act <sup>(2)</sup> states that all immigrants (legal or illegal) are entitled to basic medical care. Irregular immigrants are entitled to a special card for foreigners temporarily present which gives them the right to basic medical care and furthermore doctors cannot report their illegal presence to the police. The immigration act also forbids the expulsion of pregnant women. The national health plan also emphasises the necessity to implement specific interventions in order to promote responsible pregnancy and avoid abortion and female genital mutilations.

#### **Norway**

The action plan for combating female genital mutilation was introduced in 2000. The primary aim of the action plan is to: prevent female genital mutilation and promote social mobilisation against it; treat and rehabilitate girls/women who have undergone mutilation and build competencies at all levels in efforts to combat genital mutilation. The action plan was renewed in 2007 <sup>(3)</sup>.

#### **Portugal**

Healthcare is available for all immigrants (legal or illegal). Refusal to treat immigrants in the public or private sector is punishable by law. Programmes have been introduced designed to provide doctors with specific preparation in order to deal better with minority groups.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Fondation Roi Baudouin (2007), *Recherche sur les initiatives mises en place en matière d'inégalités socio-économique de santé 1995–2006*, Brussels.

(2) Ministero della Salute (n.d.), *Piano sanitario nazionale 2006–08*. Roma.  
[http://db.formez.it/FontiNor.nsf/edc98cc539249bcac1256da500491c81/3360B412FFBD72F7C125723D003B6C97/\\$file/PSN%202006-08%20TESTO.pdf](http://db.formez.it/FontiNor.nsf/edc98cc539249bcac1256da500491c81/3360B412FFBD72F7C125723D003B6C97/$file/PSN%202006-08%20TESTO.pdf)

(3) [http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/kilde/ud/pla/2003/0002/ddd/pdfv/197557-ud\\_kjonnslemlestelse\\_eng.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/kilde/ud/pla/2003/0002/ddd/pdfv/197557-ud_kjonnslemlestelse_eng.pdf)

### Education policies

The level of education is inextricably bound up with access to the labour market as well as social benefits and influences healthcare conditions. In fact, there is close correlation between higher education levels and better chances of finding employment, having an active social life and therefore enjoying better health conditions. Education policies are thus extremely important to integrate ethnic minorities into society and to prevent further exclusion.

In almost all the European countries education policies aimed at ethnic minorities focus mainly on language courses, which are meant to help integrate ethnic minorities in the labour market and increase their participation in society, and on bilingual edu-

cation for ethnic minorities in order to preserve their traditions; on intercultural aspects focusing on tolerance and anti-discrimination (Luxembourg); on civic integration in order to help ethnic minorities integrate better in society and prevent social exclusion (e.g. Belgium and the Netherlands).

It is notable that the Spanish and UK education policy extends beyond the intercultural logic and sets out measures to prevent gaps in the education level between ethnic majority and minority. Furthermore, the education policy focuses on bringing parents into the education process. If implemented over a long time-frame, these policies could have a positive impact on women's socio-economic situation as they improve their educational level, which could ease their access to the labour market and better paid jobs.

## Education policy in Spain and the UK

### Spain

In 2005 the government approved a new support fund for the welcome and integration of immigrants and education strengthening with the purpose of promoting and reinforcing public policies in this field under the principle of subsidiarity. In fact, of the EUR 120 million overall budget, 40 % is dedicated to education policies.

### UK

The government initiated a policy meant to raise the educational attainment of the children of ethnic minorities. The 2003 consultation 'Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils' recognises that under-achievement is not just about socio-economic disadvantage but also about policies, procedures and practices in schools. The government intends to: put in place a national framework to support pupils with English as an additional language (9.7 % of pupils in England); raise the achievement and reduce the number of exclusions of African Caribbean pupils; meet the needs of highly mobile pupils; introduce support for bilingual pupils and a curriculum that reflects cultures and identities; respect and no tolerance of racism or bullying; focus more on parental involvement (1). The ethnic minorities achievement grant offers funds to local authorities to narrow the achievement gap for pupils at risk of underachieving, especially by meeting bilingual pupils' needs.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(1) Department for Education and Skills (2003), *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*, London.

However, access to the education system in some countries depends on the legal status of ethnic minority women. While in Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and some German Landers, the compulsory public-funded education system is also open to the children of ethnic minorities irrespective of their and their parents' legal status (124), in countries such as the Czech Republic, Greece, and Portugal, the education system is open only to legal residents in the country.

### Other social inclusion policies

A remarkable social policy measure, developed in Norway but potentially relevant elsewhere too, has to do with the prevention of forced marriages (see the following box).

## Investing in social prevention for youth minorities: Norway's plan of action against forced marriages

This national plan aims at preventing young people in vulnerable groups from being subject to forced marriage. Assistance and protection is also provided to young people who have been victimised or are in danger of being so. The implemented measures include the institution of minority advisers in upper secondary schools (age 16–19) with a high percentage of students with minority background; the establishment of integration advisers, assisting the relevant Norwegian embassies; and more resources to non-governmental organisations working for the elimination of forced marriages. Furthermore, accommodation for young people exposed to forced marriages is expected to be enhanced, as well as collaboration and specific expertise within the public support services.

Source: EGGSI Network's national report for Norway, 2008.

It can be concluded that, overall, modern welfare systems respond at least partially to the needs of ethnic minority women. The socio-economic conditions of ethnic minority women tend to be better where women are supported in their education and access to employment; where social security entitlements are not only related to the length and continuity of the

employment history; where public services take into account the caring role of women; and where social benefits and public transfers are individually-based, rather than 'family'-based, where non-discrimination and gender equality policies have a long-standing tradition. It is in the Scandinavian welfare regimes that most of these criteria are met.<sup>124</sup>

(124) In most of the countries analysed, the legal status of children depends on their parents' legal status



### 3.3. Dedicated institutions and/or organisations

When it comes to **ethnic minority dedicated institutions**, the overall scenario is fragmented and fairly differentiated. While in the eastern European Member States, dedicated institutions regard mainly the recognised ethnic minority groups, in the EU-15 and EEA countries the institutional framework is mainly related to immigrants.

In the EU/EEA countries there are institutions that combat discrimination and promote equality between men and women. While in some countries equality bodies already have a long tradition behind them (for instance the British Commission for Racial Equality) <sup>(125)</sup>, with the adoption of Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC most Member States had to create a new equality body or to increase the powers of the existing one. There are a few countries (Belgium, Cyprus, Sweden, Ireland and the Netherlands) that went far beyond the requests of the directives and created equality institutions that deal with all the grounds of discrimination provided for in the two directives and/or more general human rights instruments <sup>(126)</sup>.

In addition, due to the emergence of decentralised decision-making processes and reforms in public management, in some of the EU-15 countries (Denmark, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, and Spain) the integration of migrants and refugees has shifted from a national to a local responsibility through the promotion of local governance instruments or local/regional private-public partnerships (such as in Iceland).

In some countries the bottom up approach led to the creation of institutions that involve ethnic minorities in the national decision-making process (Liechtenstein, Spain, etc). Since this governance model implies a wider range of actors, it represents a window of opportunity for ethnic minorities. How-

ever, these tend not to be gender-focused – it is general gender equality authorities that deal with ethnic minority women (in their quality of being women and not as women belonging to a certain ethnic minority group).

Transnational governance networks have also been developed, especially in the framework of the Equal European programme, for exchange of experience and knowledge with regard to the integration of ethnic minorities in society (e.g. the Netherlands is an active participant in different networks dealing with migration issues).

As for civil society, in the EU-15 countries, where the tradition of social participation and involvement in the community life has a long-standing tradition, there is an increased trend to self-representation of ethnic minority women in NGOs <sup>(127)</sup>, while in eastern European Member States no ethnic minority women's organisation is mentioned in the national reports of the EGGSI network. Ethnic minority women associations focus mainly on intercultural aspects and less on strategies aimed at preventing social-exclusion.

#### Ethnic minority dedicated institutions in some European countries

##### **Denmark**

Every municipality has a local Integration Council that forms an interaction point between immigrants' representatives and the local authorities and advises the local authorities on immigration issues.

##### **Iceland**

The Intercultural Centre (in Reykjavik and northern Iceland) represents a public-private partnership (municipalities and the Red Cross) aimed at offering different services (legal counselling, information about employment opportunities, education system, housing, etc) to immigrants.

##### **Netherlands**

Regional support centres: 17 regional support centres in each of the provinces of the Netherlands have specialised support professionals for ethnic minority groups.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(125) European Commission (2006b), *The application of Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM(2006) 643 final, Brussels. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0643:FIN:EN:PDF>

(126) European Commission (2006b), *The application of Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of Equal Treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM(2006) 643 final, Brussels. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0643:FIN:EN:PDF>

(127) See table 3.1

**Table 3: Some examples of ethnic minority dedicated institutions and relevant national institutions**

Country	Transnational and bilateral cooperation networks	Ethnic minority groups (other than Roma) organisations	Ethnic minority women organisations	Relevant national institutions
Austria	The Equal project 'Work in Progress'	Amara, association of Kurdish women in upper Austria		The Equal Treatment Commission; The Federal Chancellery; The Ministry of Internal Affairs
Belgium			<i>Steunpunt allochtone meisjes en vrouwen</i> Neither Whores Nor Submissive ( <i>Ni putes ni soumises</i> ) GAMS Belgium, (Men and Women for the Abolition of Female Genital Mutilations). The World according to Women ( <i>Le monde selon les femmes</i> ); Francophone Women's Council of Belgium ( <i>Conseil des femmes francophones de Belgique</i> ) — francophone side- and the <i>Vrouwenraad</i> -Dutch speaking side);	Institute for equality between women and men; Equal opportunities centre.
Czech Republic	La Strada	The European contact group		The Government council for ethnic minorities; The Committee of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for the integration of foreigners
Denmark				Integration council within each Danish municipality
Estonia		LÜÜRA International Association of Alliances of National Culture; Alliance of Nationalities of Estonia; Association of Slavic Educational and Charitable Societies in Estonia; Alliance of Russian National Culture Organisations in Estonia; Congress of Ukrainians in Estonia; Association of Ukrainian Organisations in Estonia; Estonian Union of National Minorities		The Office of the Ministry for Population and Ethnic; The Integration Foundation; The Legal Chancellor's Office

Country	Transnational and bilateral cooperation networks	Ethnic minority groups (other than Roma) organisations	Ethnic minority women organisations	Relevant national institutions
Finland			Immigrant associations	The advisory board for ethnic relations; The ombudsman for minorities; The advisory board for multicultural issues
Germany		Caritas (a Catholic development and social service organisation); <i>Arbeiterwohlfahrt</i> (the biggest welfare organisation in Germany) <i>Diakonische Werk</i> (Protestant social service organisation);	Federal association for migrants (women with Turkish or/and Kurdish background)	Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees
Greece	EQUAL project Ifestos); EQUAL Project FORUM; EQUAL Project MEVEL	KASAPI — Organisation of migrants from the Philippines	Turkish women's association (not legal); Pan-Hellenic migrant women's association; African women's union; Ukrainian women's association	The Ministry of Interior; The migration policy institute; The National Commission of Human Rights; Greek Ombudsman; The General Secretariat for Equality; The Centre for research on gender equality
Hungary	European inter-governmental forum for the protection of minorities	Zornica		The equal treatment authority, The standing committee for human rights, Minority and religious affairs; The Office for national and ethnic minorities
Iceland				The Committee on Immigrants within the Ministry of Social Affairs; The Intercultural Centre (in Reykjavik and northern Iceland)
Latvia		More than 250 registered ethnic minority organisations but little active cooperation with other organisations.		The Secretariat of the special assignments; The consultative board for national and social integration
Liechtenstein		24 foreigners' organisations form the Conference of Foreigners' Association; The Liechtenstein women's information and contact office ('Infra')		The Commission for Promoting Equal Opportunities; The Association for Intercultural Education; The Working Group on the Integration of Muslims in Liechtenstein
Lithuania		The Polish women assembly in Lithuania and the Jewish women organisation (WIZO).		The Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad

Country	Transnational and bilateral cooperation networks	Ethnic minority groups (other than Roma) organisations	Ethnic minority women organisations	Relevant national institutions
Luxembourg		The association for the support of immigrant workers		Centre for equality treatment; The National Council for Foreigners; The Consultative Commission on Human Rights;
Malta		The Emigrants Commission The Maltese Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)		The Ministry for Social Policy; The organisation for the integration and welfare of asylum seekers (OIWAS)
Netherlands	The International metropolis network; Eurocities' working group migration and integration; European network cities for local Integration policy; The European Network of Rehabilitation areas; The European Anti Poverty Network; FEANTSA	Netherlands Centre for Foreigners; Committee for the participation of Turks; Public consultation partner for southern European communities; Public consultation partner for Moluccans; Confederation of Moroccan organisations in the Netherlands; Public consultation partner for Dutch Caribbean; Surinamese consultation partner; Confederation of organisations for refugees in the Netherlands; Consultation partner for Chinese people; The Netherlands acknowledges colour North African organisation; Support for refugees; Confederation of associations for support to refugees		The Ministry of housing, spatial planning and environment; Ministry of education, culture and science; Regional support centres; Minorities' national consultative board; The national network for diversity management; The national office for combating race discrimination; Dutch Institute for migration; The centre for refugees and health; The national support centre for education of Moluccans
Romania	No specific network in this field	The Albanians league association in Romania; The Armenians union in Romania; The Bulgarians union in Banat — Romania; The Croatians union in Romania; The Greek union in Romania; The Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania; The German democrat forum in Romania; The Italians association in Romania; The Hungarian Democrat union in Romania; The Poles union in Romania; The Social Democrat Roma Party; The Community of the Lippovenian Russians in Romania; The Serbs union in Romania; The Slovaks and Czechs democrat union in Romania; The Democrat union of the Turk Muslims Tartars in Romania; The Democrat union of Turks-Muslims Tartars in Romania; The Turk democrat union in Romania; The Ukrainians union in Romania; The Macedonians association in Romania; The Cultural union of Ruthenians in Romania		The Department for Interethnic Relations; The Council of the National Minorities; The National council for fighting discrimination; The Ombudsman

Country	Transnational and bilateral cooperation networks	Ethnic minority groups (other than Roma) organisations	Ethnic minority women organisations	Relevant national institutions
Slovakia		The party of the Hungarian coalition (SMK)		The Governmental board for national minorities and ethnic groups; The Committee on human rights, minorities and the status of women
Spain	The European network against racism and the European urban knowledge network	Association of Moroccan workers and immigrants in Spain; Socio-cultural association Ibn Batuta (north-Africa); Volunteering Dominican Mothers —Volunteering international workers integration; Association of Peruvian refugees and immigrants; Hispanic-Ecuadorian association Ruminahui; Chinese association in Spain; Association for Bolivia-Spain cooperation; Federation of associations of Romanian immigrants in Spain Association of Bulgarian immigrants in Spain		The Forum for immigrants' integration, The Inter-ministerial commission for immigration; The Council for immigration policies
Sweden		Somali national association The National association for ending FGM		Many national institutions deal with the immigrants' integration.
UK		The Runnymede Trust; Southall Black Sisters	The Fawcett Society is a women's organisation, not exclusively for ethnic minorities — although it does cover some of their interests, too.	Equality and Human Rights Commission —was set up a few years ago by the merger of the Equal Opportunities Commission (gender), the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and expanded to cover ageism as well.

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

## 4. Good practices in social and labour market inclusion of ethnic minorities: A gender equality perspective

This chapter provides an overview of the good practices presented in the national reports of the EGGSI Network, related to the following areas of intervention: labour market integration, social inclusion, education, legal counselling, housing, and cultural projects. Some projects concentrate on one of the above-mentioned fields, while others combine their activities. There are also differences according to the target group. While some of the good practices apply to ethnic minority and immigrant women in particular, others are directed to ethnic minority groups in general, but often reach ethnic minority and immigrant women, too. Some are dedicated to specific nationalities, addressing their particular needs; others, instead, give support to all ethnic minority groups.

The main project providers are the public, national or local authorities, and non-governmental organisations and associations, acting independently in cooperation or with the financial support of the governmental or local departments. Sources for financial support are usually national, regional and local funds, but also Community sources such as the European Social Fund. In the case of NGOs, private support, as from foundations or private donations, but also voluntary work, often play a substantial part in their activities.

In the following pages, special attention is given to those good practices which apply to ethnic minority women in particular or are in some respect gender related.

### 4.1. General characteristics of good practices

Good practices in the EU-15 countries are, in general, more oriented to labour market or health issues and often focus on specific groups of ethnic minority women, while in the eastern European Member States the main focus lies in promoting language courses or integration into the labour market for the recognised ethnic minorities in general.

Good practices focusing on specific groups of ethnic minority women are presented, for example, in Sweden on Somali women, or in Greece on Turkish women; but also in the case of Slovakia, some projects

concentrate especially on the Roma (see Part 2 of this report for a focus on the Roma).

Projects dedicated to specific issues, for example, legal counselling or healthcare, often show an orientation towards particular problems affecting ethnic minorities in general. There are, however, also examples of projects that specifically target ethnic minority women, as for example in the case of the health sector as regards breast cancer or pregnancies.

Projects for vocational training, directed to ethnic minority groups in general, might also be relevant for disadvantaged ethnic minority women, as they are often in a more disadvantaged position than the men. Such is the case, for example, in the UK project 'POEM' <sup>(128)</sup> orientated to non-working partners, or Norway's 'New Chance', a vocational training initiative addressed to immigrants in general, but where the majority of project attendants are ethnic minority and immigrant women. The Czech Republic's project 'Be Integrated' likewise addresses immigrants and ethnic minorities in general, but it also includes gender-related aspects.

### 4.2. Governmental and NGO good practices

Differentiating by type of provider, the good practices can be divided into programmes implemented by the governmental institutions, and projects implemented by non-governmental organisations. While both cover interventions and provide support to labour market integration, education, housing and social inclusion, even though different approaches are implemented, there are differences in the level of their outreach. Governmental programmes tend to have a wider national outreach and are less time-limited, while the NGO projects are nearly always implemented at the local level and are much more limited in time and financial endowments.

**Governmental national programmes** mainly concentrate on labour market and social integration, often in combination with language courses, as well as healthcare provision for disadvantaged ethnic minorities and immigrants. The nationwide programmes include, for example, the 'Introductory Act' implemented by the Norwegian Government, where female as well as male immigrants participate in the 'Introduction programme', which creates courses for language education and

(128) [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/doc/150814.doc](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/doc/150814.doc)



support for labour market integration <sup>(129)</sup>. Health care programmes, as the French 'State medical aid (AME)', which provides nationwide healthcare access to excluded persons, foreigners being the most affected, also reach women.

Good practice **projects at the local and regional public level** are conducted by the regional and local authorities and cover different action fields (labour market integration, health, social integration), in line with national policies on ethnic minorities. These local efforts contribute to the government's national targets. Financial support can be sustained or is guaranteed for a longer period than for small-scale and privately financed NGO projects. In some cases the projects are implemented in cooperation with local non-governmental organisations. This is, for example, the case in Austria, where the 'Marhama' project for female migrants' healthcare is conducted by an NGO, but is sponsored by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, or the 'Intercultural Centre' in Iceland, which finances its activities by signing contracts with the local municipalities. The 'Mother Centres' in the Netherlands also work together with the municipalities.

**The NGO projects** address all action fields and often combine them; these projects sometimes concentrate on particular groups of ethnic minority women. In some cases NGO projects complement governmental programmes, covering social assistance and filling gaps not covered by the national or local authorities. Minorities or immigrant groups not specifically reached by government's programmes are often assisted by NGO projects. For instance, this is the case in Germany, with the '*Bleiberecht*' (right-to-stay) project, which supports the 'tolerated refugees', an excluded group of ethnic minorities, without legal status according to the German right of residence; or the Austrian 'Counselling Centre' supporting persons with asylum status. This is also the case of the 'Jesuit Refugee Service' in Malta, giving support and legal assistance to asylum-seekers in detention centres and forcibly displaced persons.

The advantage of the NGOs is in their ability to address the specific needs of ethnic minority and immigrant women and their capacity to reach women who might be difficult to reach with governmental

programmes. The 'Tupper care' project in Belgium, for example, offers education in different fields (for example health education). This project relies on ethnic minority women volunteers who visit women of their communities in their homes. The Swedish 'Iftiin' concentrates on Somali women, providing assistance for their labour market integration; the Czech 'Counselling centre for refugees' provides support to ethnic minority women and mothers, and helps them to integrate into society.

In Austria special healthcare projects focus on elderly ethnic minority and immigrant women, who have never completed breast cancer screening, or on Bosnian, Croatian and Turkish women with no German language knowledge. The main features of these projects consist in offering information in foreign languages, but also on training for healthcare workers (nurses, doctors) in order to increase their cultural sensitiveness.

#### 4.3. Main areas of intervention

##### Labour market inclusion/integration

Good practice examples related to labour market integration for disadvantaged ethnic minority and immigrant women are widespread in all the European Member States.

Some good practice projects or programmes provide general support to labour market integration, such as job search support, information on work permits and on the labour market situation (as in the examples of Denmark, Norway or UK). They also give support to education, such as language education and qualification training, or offer childcare support. Besides the language courses and training schemes, thematic seminars help orientation on cultural and traditional customs, in order to reduce social and cultural barriers (as in the examples of Austria, Denmark and Norway). NGOs often combine their activities with related social activities, as in the Norwegian 'Quo Vadis project', or specifically address disadvantaged ethnic minority women, such as the already cited 'Iftiin' project in Sweden. Projects in Austria, Germany and Norway focus on the labour market inclusion of women refugees or asylum seekers, though also directed to disadvantaged ethnic minority men.

(129) For specific details on the listed examples, please consult the tables in the following sections.

**Table 4.1: Good practice examples for labour market integration**

Country	Good practice	Description	Target	Range
Austria	Counselling centre for male and female migrants www.migrant.at	Labour-market-oriented counselling of (female) migrants, foreign employees and family members; vocational and educational counselling for persons granted (political) asylum. Includes specific projects for female migrants.	Further education for immigrants and immigrant women	Local
Austria	abz* Austria 'BIMM' www.Abzaustria.at	Conception and realisation of labour-market-oriented projects in the area of women's advancement and gender mainstreaming, training courses, occupational integration and mentoring, notification and qualification. Includes specific projects for female migrants.	Occupational integration and mentoring for female migrants	Local
Denmark	Ministry of Integration '44 point=Work' www.nyidanmark.dk	Initiative in the field of training, education, practical qualification, learning about Danish society, acquiring points with courses. After reaching 44 points participants are guaranteed a job in the low-paid sector.	Work integration of ethnic minority women.	Local
Denmark	'Step-model' <sup>(130)</sup>	Integrating and reducing marginalisation for disadvantaged ethnic minority women with a step-model: 1. mainly language training and introduction to the Danish labour market, 2. workplace introduction, 3. an ordinary job at the place for training (or elsewhere) with economic support from the active labour market policy. 50 % of the women got a job.	Integration of disadvantaged ethnic minority women	National
Germany	Forum Immigration and Caritas  'Bleiberecht' (right to stay)	This project gives tolerated refugees job-search assistance. In cooperation with institutions, who are working with refugees, ethnic minorities have access to individual consultation about their labour market prospects and opportunities.	Refugees and ethnic minority groups	Local
Italy	Insegreg	Innovative tools for labour market integration of marginalised immigrant women, especially those working in the assistance of non self-sufficient elderly. Vocational training for specific competences on assistance care for older people, creation of innovative training methods and the improvement of their professional skills through on-the-job training.	Integration of immigrant women and men working, women working as assistants of the elderly	Multi-Local
Norway	'New chance' programme of the national government	Based on the model of the introductory programme, it focuses on migrants outside the labour market and depending on social benefits. The aim is to give more immigrants a permanent position on the labour market. Women in particular profit from the programme.	Qualification of immigrants outside the labour market	National
Norway	Quo Vadis www.quo-vadis.no	Programme on job training and qualifications, basic language training, math and IT. The women can participate in a textile workshop, work in a shop, catering, café and participate in job search training.	Training for ethnic minority women	Local
Norway	A network of mentors	Networking between workless immigrant women with working immigrant women. The mentor supports the integration of the mentee in the labour market and society more generally.	Private assistance for immigrant women by a mentor	National
Sweden	Iftiin	Support for Somalis to enter the labour market in order to improve their integration and participation. A cooperation model has been developed in the local community, where the business world, municipality, the state, the university and voluntary organisations participate. Personal development and study circles in business start-ups are provided.	Special attention to Somali women	Local
UK	JobCentre Plus and Department for Work and Pensions Partner Outreach for Ethnic Minorities (POEM) <sup>(131)</sup>	The aim is to provide job search support for persons who face barriers to employment. The Centre offers help to find culturally sensitive childcare, English for speakers of other languages, soft skills and mentoring to help labour market integration.	Non-working partners of low-income families.	National

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(130) Liebig, T (2007), *The labour market integration of immigrants in Denmark*. OECD, Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers No 50, Paris, OECD. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/28/38195773.pdf>

(131) Department for Communities and Local Government (2006), *Tackling ethnic minority homelessness*, London. [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/doc/150814.doc](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/doc/150814.doc)

## Health

One widely represented action field in the EGGSI Network National reports is the health sector. This intervention area mainly addresses problems related to the lack of language knowledge, and specific health problems of disadvantaged ethnic minority and immigrant women.

The most common problem for access to healthcare systems is the lack of language proficiency, which leads to communication difficulties between ethnic minority patients and health workers. Additional barriers are related to the lack of knowledge on the part of ethnic minority women about their rights to access basic health services, and cultural barriers related to aspects of religion, culture or tradition, as for example the fact of not being allowed to be examined by a male doctor.

Good practices presented in this field thus often provide support to women with no or little language

proficiency or distribute information material in different languages, as for example the 'women's health centres' in Austria. Other projects give multicultural training for cultural mediators and social and health workers, in order to reduce language and cultural barriers and facilitate access to the healthcare system for ethnic minority and immigrant women. The Austrian project 'Marhama' has produced a handbook on 'Muslim women in hospital' and also encourages ethnic minority women to take on jobs in the healthcare sector. The Italian project 'Mother's health' provides multi-language information on health issues and promotes health literacy among migrant women.

Some focus on specific health problems, like HIV infections, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, violence or mental health problems (such as in Belgium), mammogram screening for disadvantaged women or cardiovascular disease (as in the Austrian project), or health risks due to female genital mutilation as in the case of Somali women in Sweden.

**Table 4.2: Good practice examples in the health sector**

Country	Good practice	Description	Target	Range
Austria	Women health centre F.E.M. south <a href="http://www.fem.at/FEM_Sued/femsued.htm">www.fem.at/FEM_Sued/femsued.htm</a>	Performs the task of improving the access of disadvantaged groups to the healthcare system. Counselling and information materials in different languages are provided to female migrants. Multicultural and cross-professional team of psychologists, psychotherapist, pharmacists, doctors, gynaecologists, midwives and social workers.	Female migrants from Bosnia, Croatia, Turkey	Local
Austria	Rot-Grünes-Projekt, 'Ich bleib' gesund — Sağlıklı kalacağım' (I keep well and fit) <a href="http://www.wien.gv.at/integration/rtf/ws04-vortrag.rtf">www.wien.gv.at/integration/rtf/ws04-vortrag.rtf</a>	Helps to reduce the speech barriers between doctor and patient, providing health information, and facilitating better access to the healthcare system. A Turkish female doctor accompanies the patient during the medical examination, explains the findings of the examination and gives help to find specialised doctors. Turkish psychosocial counselling.	Special attention to Turkish women	Local
Austria	Mammogram screening — 'Ich schau auf mich' (I look at myself) <sup>(132)</sup>	Realisation of the 'European guidelines for quality assurance in breast cancer screening and diagnosis'; enhancement of the utilisation of mammogram examination; native language support to women whose results were suspect or positive, psycho-oncology support, awareness-raising on breast cancer.	Disadvantaged women, migrants and women who have never done breast cancer screening or who did it a long time ago; age group: 50–69 years.	Local
Austria	Marhama <sup>(133)</sup>	Support to female migrants and Muslims in the field of healthcare (especially in hospitals). Training for intercultural receptiveness (concerning staff, treatment/care and bureaucratic matters). Realisation of guidelines on the treatment of Muslim patients.	Special attention to Muslim women. Patients, staff, and management	Local

(132) Information from the Wiener Gebietskrankenkasse. [http://www.wgkk.at/esvapps/page/page.jsp?p\\_menuid=66353&p\\_pageid=221&p\\_id=3](http://www.wgkk.at/esvapps/page/page.jsp?p_menuid=66353&p_pageid=221&p_id=3)

(133) Marhama (2006), *Musliminen in unserem Spital*, Graz.

France	The State medical aid (AME)	It aims at improving access to the healthcare system for undocumented immigrants who can prove that they are in France for at least three month (rights are restricted to emergency care). The AME gives right to free medical care and hospitalisation.	Foreigners	Location: National Financing: The State
Greece	Short-term pilot project	Pilot intervention aiming at raising awareness about migrant women's health needs and cultural diversities. Preparation, distribution and assessment of information booklets on migrant women to health professionals in two gynaecological hospitals in Athens.	Special attention to ethnic minority women	
Italy	Mothers Health Health operators of the Tuscany region	Mum Health aims to install a sense of responsibility for personal health, reproductive health in this particular case, among migrant women, to the greater benefit of child and adult well-being, given the women's role as nurturers. Training sessions are given for sociomedical operators in health centres of the Tuscany region. Production of multimedia material on reproductive health in several different languages.	Special attention to migrant women and mothers, involving migrant communities.	Local
Italy	San Gallicano Hospital Preventive Medicine on Migration	The social research activities of the SGH focus on investigating the appropriate cultural tools needed to provide effective healthcare. Activities include clinical investigation plus social and behavioural assessment to provide the correct set of tools needed for proper, ethical and effective cultural mediation. Linguistic-cultural mediators are available. Special attention to HIV infection, tuberculosis and sexually-transmitted diseases.	Women's health.	Local
Portugal	Miguel Bombarda Hospital, Lisbon, in cooperation with immigrant associations	Training courses for health professionals on the different minorities' cultural values and practices in order to achieve a better response, mainly regarding African women.	African women	Local
Sweden	RISK (Riksföreningen Stoppa Kvinnlig könsstympning)	Organisation working against FGM ( <a href="http://www.risk.se">www.risk.se</a> ) with a board of ten members from different countries in Africa and Sweden. The organisation trains personnel who can spread information in their own language. They inform about the health risks of FGM and at the same time inform about women's and children's rights.	Somali women, African women	Local

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

### Social inclusion

Problems or difficulties in social integration are often related to general cultural and social misunderstandings, to religious aspects or lacking family support. Projects in this field aim to strengthen women's social integration by helping them to overcome problems relating to insufficient language skills and limited knowledge of specific norms and basic rights, traditions and habits of the receiving culture.

Reducing women's marginalisation, taking into account the mediation between the cultural customs, the psychological and legal support, and the possibility to put women in contact with other ethnic minority women in order to combat isolation are important initiatives to support social inclusion.

The good practice project 'Be In, in integration' in the Czech Republic, for example, provides support to social inclusion, also with activities for labour market integration. The 'counselling centre for refugees' organises regular meetings for disadvantaged ethnic minority women in order to give information on the host society and provides additional support to overcome cultural barriers for better social integration. This is also the case in the Greek 'integration project' or the Norwegian 'introduction programme'. The 'intercultural centre' of Iceland combines social and legal counselling with language training and/or support for housing. Projects strengthening neighbourhood activities, such as the Dutch 'women's studios', help to overcome women's isolation and discrimination by sustaining socialisation activities. The Spanish 'social intercultural mediation service' and the programme *Mujeres acojedoras* promote social participation and activities on the neighbourhood level.

**Table 4.3: Good practice examples for social inclusion**

Country	Good practice	Description	Target	Range
Czech Republic	Counselling centre for refugees — civic association <sup>(134)</sup> Multicultural women's group	Regular meetings of foreign women living in the Czech Republic with the aim of increasing information and awareness about the social and cultural environment in the country. Women learn, through natural interaction with employees and other participants, about sociocultural customs in the country.	Focusing on foreign women	Local
Czech Republic	Be In, in Integration! <a href="http://www.ekscr.cz/o-projektu-8/">http://www.ekscr.cz/o-projektu-8/</a>	Education on gender equality and intercultural sensitivity, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudices, xenophobia, effective communication, different methods and approaches to integration, community development and planning.	Ethnic minorities and migrants	Local
Greece	Integration project of the Van Leer Foundation	The programme aims to integrate Turkish-speaking women and their children. Psychological support, legal counselling and health visits, language skills, sewing workshop, creative occupation of children and assistance with school work are provided.	Turkish speaking women and mothers	Local
Iceland	Intercultural Centre <a href="http://www.ahus.is">www.ahus.is</a>	The centre provides services for individuals in need of information and assistance concerning residence and work permits, insurance, schools, housing and other issues concerning basic rights. Moreover, it provides legal counsel for immigrants, free of charge and it offers Icelandic lessons for immigrants.	Immigrants and immigrant women	Local
Netherlands	Women's studios of foundation Cleo Patria <a href="http://www.cbsdeakker.nl/documenten/cleopatria.htm">www.cbsdeakker.nl/documenten/cleopatria.htm</a>	Promotion of participation, emancipation and integration of women in the neighbourhood. In order to achieve this aim, several women's 'studios' were organised in several neighbourhoods within the city of Rotterdam.	Ethnic women from 30 nationalities	Local
Netherlands	Mothers centre <a href="http://www.integratie.net">www.integratie.net</a>	Activation of ethnic minority women — bridging between family and society. Participation in society is the central aim of the project. In two centres in the municipality of Zoetermeer educational activities and multicultural activities are organised for mothers in the neighbourhood.	Ethnic minority women and mothers	Local
Norway	The Introduction programme (established by the Introductory Act)	Applies to refugees and family members reunited with them, in addition to persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds and family members reunited with them. The programme provides basic skills in the Norwegian language and insight into Norwegian society, and prepares for participation in working life and/or further education.	Refugees and family members reunited with them	National
Spain	Social intercultural mediation service (SIMS). Madrid city council	SIMS is a public service to foster intercultural coexistence by facilitating immigrants' access to general public services, promoting their social participation and obtaining information about their current needs and problems.	Attention to all immigrants	Local
Spain	Program 'Mujeres Acogedoras'. Badalona Town Council	The programme seeks to ensure that all the associations of women and neighbourhood associations achieve awareness of the specific problems of immigrant women and implement certain activities, mainly through volunteer work, for the promotion of their social inclusion. Activities include language courses, informal seminars and workshops, and promotion of a transversal gender approach by the public institutions.	Women and immigrant women	Local

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.

(134) Counselling centre for refugees. <http://www.uprchlici.cz/cs/aktualne/aktualni-projekty.html>

## Education and training

Good practice projects and programmes related to education and training activities are presented in many EGGSI Network national reports. While some good practices concentrate on language courses in general, others combine language training with qualification training, informal seminars, workshops or information on the host society, or discuss specific gender issues.

The Belgian 'Tupper care' project focuses on the training of ethnic minority women through home-based discussions in order to create neighbourhood networks. In Portugal, the 'Intercultural education project' aims to train professionals dealing with ethnic minority groups and increase awareness of the problems and needs of disadvantaged ethnic minority and mi-

grant women. In Slovakia, the national 'Completing elementary school and completing the final year of secondary school' programme offers the possibility of completing elementary education.

Educational projects dedicated to ethnic minority children, such as in Estonia, Liechtenstein and Sweden, might have indirect effects on their mothers, too. In Liechtenstein one project addresses foreign children and adolescents by providing language courses. In Estonia, language camps for Non-Estonian youth (5–17 years) were activated, and participants had the possibility to live in an Estonian family for two weeks in order to improve their language skills. The Swedish summer school projects, of the Iftiin NGO, support the better integration of ethnic minority children and organises regular meetings with their parents.

**Table 4.4: Good practice examples for education and training**

Country	Good practice	Description	Target	Range
Belgium	De Eenmaking vzw, coordination: Liesbet Van Eeckhaut  'Tupper care'	Network-building. Successful method 'Tuppercare' to reach women from ethnic minorities not reached by associations. Training to animate discussions on different issues such as education, drug use, growing up in a different culture, relations between men and women, support structures in case of problems, etc.	Ethnic minority women from North Africa and Turkey	Local
Estonia	Estonian language camps and family-study model	Special camp for non-Estonian and Estonian youth, with the aim of reducing linguistic and cultural barriers, developing communicative skills and raising motivation and interest in learning the Estonian language.  In a family exchange project, non-Estonian young people can spend an average of one week in an Estonian family and actively take part in their daily life.	Special attention to ethnic minority youth	National
Liechtenstein	"Education — School and profile development at secondary level I (SPES I)"	Schools aim to better mix students of different social and national backgrounds.  Additionally, the age of selection for the various types of secondary school will be increased. As research shows, the opportunities of children and adolescents are less dependent on the educational level of their parents if the decisions on continuing schools are made at a later stage. Later selection is therefore likely to benefit children and young people from educationally disadvantaged migrant families.	Children from educationally disadvantaged migrant families.	National
Portugal	Intercultural education projects	Training professionals who directly deal with minority groups: teachers, health-related and social welfare professionals. Most training courses for professionals comprise a set of subjects related to multiculturalism.	Training of professionals who directly deal with ethnic minorities	National
Slovakia	'Completing elementary school and completing the last year of a secondary school'	The project 'Completing elementary school' offered the possibility of completing elementary education and thereby facilitating the entry or return to the labour market for those that were excluded due to insufficient or no education.	Persons who have not finished school	National
Sweden	'Summer School'	Project for children who had not reached the goals of the school curriculum. In order to facilitate the communication between the teachers and parents and encourage parents to participate in meetings and discussion about the child's development in school, special dialogue meetings have been arranged between parents and schools, especially with Somali parents.	Ethnic minority children and their parents	Local

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008.



## Legal Counselling

Another important intervention field is legal support. Projects with this aim are presented in the EGGSI Network national reports of Belgium and Malta. They provide legal counselling and give information of basic or specific rights related to work inclusion, legal residence, housing, and access to healthcare. The Belgian 'Support point'

gives counselling on marriage law, offering legal support to couples of foreign nationality or origin, while the initiative by the gender equality cell of the local government in cooperation with the NGO Amazone provides training for public servants in order to raise awareness on the Moroccan family code. In Malta, the Jesuit refugee service addresses disadvantaged ethnic minority groups as refugees or migrants in closed detention centres.

**Table 4.5: Good practice examples of legal counselling**

Country	Good practice	Description	Target	Range
Belgium	Support point (Point d'appui) for women	The support point provides legal information and advice on family law to migrants confronted with the interaction between different legal systems.	Immigrant women	Local
Belgium	Interactions between Moroccan and Belgian civil law Gender equality cell and Amazone ASBL	The project is part of a wider project provided by the Gender equality cell (local authority) and the NGO Amazone ASBL, which aims to train and raise awareness of public civil servants dealing with population, civil issues and social assistance services on the content of the new Moroccan family code (Moudawana) and the interaction between both Moroccan and Belgian civil matrimonial law. It is comprised of courses on Islam from an historical and anthropological point of view.	Bi-national couples, with one Moroccan partner.	Local
Malta	Jesuit refugee service (JRS) www.jrsmalta.org	The JRS serves and lobbies for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and forcibly displaced people in Malta. In line with their mandate to go where the need is greatest and where no one else is working, in Malta, JRS works mostly with asylum-seekers in detention. It raises awareness among young people in schools for the integration of vulnerable ethnic minorities into Maltese society.	Disadvantaged migrants: displaced, asylum seekers. There is no specific attention to ethnic minority women, but women are included in the activities.	National

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008

## Housing

Good practice projects related to housing issues often support women and their children in finding shelter (single apartments, flat-sharing communities) or support women who have suffered violence, for example with houses for

women. The EMIF programme in the United Kingdom supports initiatives in the housing sector for preventing homelessness for disadvantaged ethnic minority and immigrant women. The project DOWAS in Austria gives support to women in finding an accommodation, but is not specially addressed to ethnic minority women in particular.

**Table 4.6: Good practice examples for housing**

Country	Good practice	Description	Target	Range
Austria	DOWAS www.dowas-fuer-frauen.at	Social support for women and their children looking for flats and work: the aim is to create appropriate facilities like flats or apartments, raising awareness, establishing assisted flat-sharing communities. The information centre is open to all women looking for flats and employment. The association is non-profit-oriented and conditioned by subsidies, voluntary contributions, other benefits and membership fees.	Special attention to women and mothers.	Local
UK	Local government with local organisations Ethnic minorities innovation fund (EMIF)	The aim of the EMIF is to identify good practices and support local authorities and their partner stakeholders in developing innovative ways to tackle and prevent homelessness amongst their ethnic minority populations. Cooperation with agencies such as local authorities, registered social landlords and voluntary and community sector organisations. Different groups of ethnic minority women are supported.	Asian and African women, ethnic minority women in general.	Multi-local

Source: EGGSI Network's national reports, 2008

## Culture and art

Also noteworthy are projects with the aim to support cultural or artistic activities, as in Finland, where they are directed to ethnic minority women, or in Latvia, addressing the promotion of ethnic minority culture without gender-specific attention. The recognition of specific cultural expression forms can be considered as positive not only as a way to defend the identity of ethnic minorities and women, but also to enrich the host countries by making different cultural heritages accessible.

One good practice in Latvia is orientated to the majority population with the aim to give information on the culture of ethnic minority groups and to create a positive image of the ethnic minority groups living in the country. The project plans to publish information about Ukrainian, Polish Belorussian, Latgallian, Russian and Jewish cultural associations, national traditions and language in the regional newspapers, and to develop and distribute presentation material to national cultural associations.

**Table 4.7: Good practice examples in the cultural sector**

Country	Project provider/ Project name	Project description	Target	Project range
Finland	Monita	Provides training and collaboration opportunities. It builds networks between native Finnish and ethnic minority artists. Monita encourages artistic talents from different cultural backgrounds in many ways. The practical work is largely shaped by the participants themselves, who are involved in the planning and implementation of the art events.	Women and women artists from ethnic minorities	Local
Latvia	Rezekne city council, in cooperation with the national cultural associations and organisations	Informative campaign about the culture and traditions of national minorities living in the Rezekne region. One of the activities is the creation and implementation of an informative campaign in the Latvian electronic mass media about national minority organisations. It also plans to publish information about Belorussian, Jewish, Latgallian, Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian cultural associations, national traditions and language in the regional newspapers, and develop presentation materials.	Ethnic minority women and men	Local

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008



# Part 2: Roma minority women in Europe <sup>(134)</sup>

## 5. Definitions and distribution of Roma communities in Europe: an overview

In order to contextualise the specific socio-economic dimensions characterising the condition of Roma women throughout Europe it is essential to provide a brief overview of the main traits of the Roma population. The Roma are not a homogeneous population: throughout Europe the Roma community is composed of several sub-communities differentiated by settlement model, culture and religion, legal status, language and period of migration. These differences impact strongly on the status of women, their opportunities, and quality of life. The main differences between Roma communities can be summarised as follows:

- Settlement model: Roma can be mobile persons, or sedentary, such as many of the Sinti of the first migration waves, residing permanently in specific areas of EU-15 Member States (such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain). The vast majority of Roma living in Europe are sedentary. Roma can also live either in the suburbs of major urban areas (such as in Austria, Germany), or in rural areas (as in Ireland, the UK) or in both (as in Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, etc);
- Culture and religion: Most of the Roma communities are Christian (Catholic or Orthodox) but a sizeable group of Roma are Muslim. In Bulgaria for example 44 % of the Roma are Orthodox Christians, 39 % are Muslim, 15 % are Protestants and less than 1 % are Catholic <sup>(136)</sup>;
- Language: Roma communities generally speak Romani (ranging from 50 % in the Czech Republic and Hungary to 90 % in Estonia, Greece, Italy,

Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, apart from Spain and the UK where less than 1 % speak Romani <sup>(137)</sup>) but a specific differentiation is between the older communities that also speak the language of the country where they live and the communities that do not. This has a significant impact on the level of integration of the communities in the broader national community;

- Area of origin: Most of the Roma communities scattered over Europe migrated from eastern European Member States, such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia. Another large group comes from the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, such as Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo (towards Germany). Other groups come from Moldavia and Hungary (towards Slovakia), from Ireland (towards the UK), from Finland (towards Sweden);
- Period of migration: The first wave of migration of the Roma communities arrived in some countries such as Belgium, Italy, Slovakia, and the UK around the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century. After this first migration numerous others followed over the centuries until the most recent, associated with the socio-economic instability of the Balkan area during the 90's and European enlargement;
- Legal status: The marked differentiation of legal status among the Roma is analysed in section 5.1.

According to recent estimates, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania are the eastern European Member States with the largest Roma communities (which account for about one fourth of the overall Roma population in Europe); in western Europe it is especially Spain which has a large Roma population.

(135) This part of the study was carried out only in those countries where a Roma community of a certain size exists: this is not the case of Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway. It must nevertheless be noted that in Norway the Roma are one of five national minorities and both Romani and Romanes are acknowledged as minority languages in Norway.

(136) UNDP (2003), *Avoiding the Dependency Trap: The Roma in central and eastern Europe*, A Regional Human Development Report. <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/62BBCD48-F203-1EE9-BC5B-D7359460A968>

(137) *Rombase, Didactically edited information on Roma*, <http://romani.uni-graz.at/rombase/index.html>

## Who are the Roma in Europe: A heterogeneous community

### **Austria**

In Austria five major groups of Roma can be distinguished: Sinti, Burgenland Roma, Lovara, Kalderash and Arlije. The autochthonous Roma emigrated from different countries, in different periods and settled in different areas of Austria. Most of them are residents of Burgenland but also of other regions and urban areas of Vienna, Salzburg and Linz. The Roma that immigrated later came from Budapest in 1956 (Lovara), from Serbia (Kalderas) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Arlije) as migrant workers (Gastarbeiter) and from central and eastern Europe after 1989. They settled largely in the urban area of Vienna as well as other urban areas, mainly in the east part of Austria (1).

### **Belgium**

The first migration flow dates back to the 15–16th century. It is composed of Manouches and Sinti, who live mainly in caravans or shacks, while some also live in houses. Second migration wave: the Roma arrived from western Europe at the end of the nineteenth century mainly from regions that are currently part of Romania. They have maintained a nomadic way of life, and are more or less traditionally dressed. Third migration wave: the Roma population from Central and eastern Europe dates from the 1960s and particularly after 1989. Generally, they are illegal in Belgium, speak Romani and the language of their origin country. The 'mobile persons' or *Gens du voyage* are a group of 'traders', with a nomadic culture living in caravans or houses.

### **Bulgaria**

The Roma community in Bulgaria is made up of many traditional subgroups dispersed evenly throughout the country. More than half of those Bulgarian citizens, who identify themselves as Roma by ethnicity and language, live in urban centres like the capital city of Sofia, and other major cities where they are concentrated in ghettoised neighbourhoods (*mahalas*) which often lack running water, sewage systems, and electricity. Most of the rest live in poor isolated Romani villages scattered throughout the country. With regard to religious affiliation, 44 % of Roma are Orthodox Christians, 39 % are Muslim, 15 % are Protestants and less than 1 % are Catholic (2).

### **Czech Republic**

Given the impact of the Holocaust here, the majority of the Roma living in the Czech Republic today are originally from Slovakia or are members of the originally nomadic Olah or Vlachiko.

### **Finland**

It has been estimated that there are approximately 10 000 Roma living in Finland and 3000–4000 Finnish Roma in Sweden.

### **Germany**

Nearly all the German Sinti are non-nomadic and have been resident since the late 1970s. 70 000 out of the 200 000 Sinti and Roma living in Germany are counted as national minority, being German citizens with different ethnic backgrounds; the only official empirical statistics explicitly mentioning Roma are on asylum-seekers. According to these, among the group of first asylum applicants between the year 2002 and 2006, 11.7 % came from Serbia and Montenegro and of these 42.5 % were Roma (3). It is further estimated that more than 50 000 Roma refugees from ex-Yugoslavia have fled to Germany since 1990.

### **Greece**

Although according to the Greek state a substantial percentage of the Muslim minority of Thrace are Roma, as the DEPOS (4) study noted, practically all the Roma living in the prefecture of Evros with the exception of those living in the municipality of Didimoteicho do not identify as Roma but proclaim a Turkish ethnic identity (5). This also applies to the 'Roma' of the municipality of Alexandroupolis, which, however, is a member of the ROM Inter-Municipal Network (6). Similar issues (relating to self-based and other identification) arise in relation to other communities perceived as Roma (7). As a result, and given the lack of even a working definition of what constitutes a Romani identity, estimates as to the size of the Roma community in Greece should be treated with caution.

### **Hungary**

Concerning the ethnic background 93 711 women and 96 273 men indicated the gipsy, romani or beás ethnicity, which are the three types of Roma population living in Hungary (8).

(1) Leoni T. (2004), *The Roma in Austria — A Historical Perspective*, WIFO Working Papers 222/2004.

(2) UNDP (2003), *Avoiding the Dependency Trap: The Roma in central and eastern Europe*, A regional human development report. <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/62BB4D48-F203-1EE9-BC5BD7359460A968>

(3) BAMF (2006), *Migrationsbericht 2006, Nuremberg*, pp. 101–102.

(4) DEPOS, (1999), *Draft study of a program on confronting the immediate housing problems of the Greek Gypsies*, Athens.

(5) See report of Public enterprise for town planning and housing DEPOS 1999, Annex 1, p 3. Moreover, researchers have noted that most Muslim Roma families in western Thrace tend to use Turkish even at the household level, a sign the researchers perceive as a precursor to their 'Turkicisation'. See Maze (1997), Maze E. (1997), 'Bilingualism and lesser-spoken languages in Greece', in Tsitselikis, Constatninos and Christopoulos, Dimitris (eds), *The minority phenomenon in Greece: a contribution from social science*, Athens: Kritiki (in Greek), pp. 387–388.

(6) A network of municipalities around Greece that have a presence of Roma within their administrative boundaries. Membership of this network is optional.

(7) For example the 'Roma' of the Serres Prefecture (who deny they are Roma and identify themselves as 'indigenous Greeks') or those living in the Emathia prefecture (who identify themselves as Rudars and not Roma)

(8) The Hungarian population census (2001).

**Ireland**

There is no established Roma community in Ireland, although a few Roma have arrived in Ireland recently. The Irish Travellers, however, occupy a rather similar position in society. With their own language ('*cant*' or '*Gammon*'), customs and traditions, Travellers, usually known in the past by the pejorative title 'itinerants' or 'tinkers', have been recorded in Ireland since the 17th century, although the origins of the community remain debated. While some Travellers are now permanently 'settled', others are partly or completely nomadic. The Irish Travellers identify themselves with the European Roma.

**Italy**

When discussing the Romani population in Italy, two distinctions have to be made: the first between Roma and Sinti and the second between historical Roma and Sinti (arriving in Italy from 1400 to 1950) and Roma/Sinti groups who recently immigrated to Italy in the late 1960s and after 1989 and the war in the Balkan region. While the historical groups are Christian (with some subdivisions), both Muslims (majority) and Christians can be identified among the second wave of Roma/Sinti groups. These distinctions entail different cultural, linguistic and socio-economic traditions, but in Italy they are all indiscriminately mixed up by the non-Roma people into the category of Zingari (Gypsies), which implies a series of generalised prejudices and stereotypes.

**Latvia**

Roma or Gypsies (*Čigāni*) are a long-established minority in Latvia, living there since the 16th century. This ethnic group suffered dramatically during the Second World War. The first Roma people arrived in Latvia 500 years ago from Germany and Poland, and up to the mid-20th century they largely retained their traditional way of life and pattern of seasonal movement, practising various crafts and trading in horses.

**Lithuania**

The Roma people are not homogeneous in Lithuania. Some differences may be noted according to the different regions in Lithuania.

**The Netherlands**

It is estimated that there are 6 000 Roma and Sinti persons in the Netherlands. The number of Roma descending from the inflow during the nineteen seventies can be estimated at 1 500. The 'old Roma', long established in the Netherlands and the so-called 'new Roma' should each number some 500. The 'new Roma' came mostly in the nineteen nineties as refugees to the Netherlands. Furthermore, among the labour migrants ('guest workers', formerly labelled after their nationality as Greeks, Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, Turks) some 1 000 Roma came to the Netherlands<sup>(9)</sup>. Most Roma in the Netherlands now have Dutch nationality<sup>(10)</sup>.

**Poland**

The Polish Roma community belongs to four ethnic groups, i.e. Polish Roma, Carpathian Roma (Bergitka Roma), Kelderari and Lovari. The largest number of Roma live in the rural commune of Bukowina Tatrzańska, Tatrzański Powiat, where 1.10 % of the residents declared they were of Roma nationality during the 2002 National Census. Relatively large populations of the Bergitka Roma live in the urban areas of Upper and Lower Silesia and in the city of Nowa Huta, where the Roma community members found jobs within the framework of the so-called 'policy of productivity' in the fifties. Most of the Roma who belong to the three remaining groups used to lead a nomadic life. Nowadays, members of these groups live mainly in the major Polish cities and in a number of smaller towns.

**Portugal**

The first record of the Gypsies' history in Portugal dates back to the sixteenth century. In northern Portugal, most Gypsy communities are sedentary (settled), while in the south — due to better atmospheric conditions — there are still some nomadic groups. In general, about 90 % of Portuguese Gypsies lead a sedentary life. Most Portuguese Gypsy communities have their origins in the cale people, from India, and only a small part come from the Romani people. This may be the reason why Gypsies are not referred to as Roma people in Portugal. Even though society refers to the Gypsy social category as a uniform social group, there are great differences and marked heterogeneity within this group.

**Romania**

From a cultural point of view, the Roma in Romania are a heterogeneous group but have problems in common related to the low standard of living, with numerous families living in poverty with little or no employment prospects due to low educational levels and lack of qualifications, lack of identity documents, reduced access to public goods and services, and poor housing conditions (overcrowding, poor infrastructure). The Roma account for approximately 2.5 % of the population.

**Slovakia**

The Roma in Slovakia can be seen as a settled native population, which has existed on the territory since as early as the 14th century. After 1989 the Roma chose to state affiliation with Slovak ethnicity — up to 80 % of the Roma — while about 20 % declared themselves to be Hungarian. Approximately 50 % of the Roma population live among the majority population and are integrated with them. More than 50 % of the Roma live in the eastern part of the country. The Roma population in Slovakia is not an ethnically homogenous community. The largest share — at least two-thirds — is accounted for by Servika Roma (Slovak Roma), the population traditionally settled in the country. The other Roma sub-groups are Ungarika (Ungrike Roma or Hungarian Roma). Servika and Ungrike Roma sub-groups are located due to their historical development in the southern and in eastern parts of Slovakia. Very specific is the group of Vlachika Roma, which came to Slovakia from Moldavia and Romania in the 19th century. A small group is made up of German Sinti who survived the Holocaust.

(9) Hovens P. and Weiss L. (2002), *Sinti en Roma anno 2002*, in: Jorna, P. (ed.) *Terug naar Auschwitz. Een gedenkwaardige reis van Nederlandse Roma and Sinti Utrecht*, FORUM, 2002, p. 1920.

(10) Cebeon (2002), *Monitor maatschappelijke en economische positie woonwagenbewoners*, Amsterdam.



### **Slovenia**

The historical records mention Roma living in the territory of today's Republic of Slovenia as early as the 15th century, but there is an increasing amount of data on them as from the 17th century. The Roma living in Slovenia today came from three different directions: the ancestors of the Roma living in Prekmurje came to this region across Hungarian territory, the Dolenjska group of Roma came across Croatian territory, and in Gorenjska there were small groups of Sinti that came from the north across Austrian territory. Even though these groups were primarily nomads or semi-nomads, and in the past frequently shifted their settlements, we can now speak of specific regions where these groups have settled indefinitely: in Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Bela krajina and Posavje. In these regions the Roma ethnic community lives traditionally, historically, and has maintained more or less permanent and specific settlement.

### **Spain**

The Spanish Roma population is within a range of 650 000–750 000 inhabitants with a high degree of concentration in the region of Andalusia (45 % of the Spanish Roma <sup>(11)</sup>). In comparison with the rest of Europe, these figures signify that approximately one out of ten European Roma lives in Spain.

### **Sweden**

The Roma population in Sweden is not homogeneous. It includes descendants of the Roma groups referred to back in the 16th century, but also Roma who moved to Sweden during the second half of the 20th century. Among the oldest groups are the about 3 200 Finnish Kalé Roma. Some of them move back and forth between the two countries. Also the mobile persons, estimated at about 20 000, have their roots back in the 16th century. The Roma community in Sweden also includes the 2 500 or so Swedish Kelderash Roma whose forefathers and foremothers came here as immigrants some 100 years ago. The majority of the country's Roma, the 'non-Nordic' Roma, estimated at about 15 000 arrived in Sweden in the 1960s or later. Some came as immigrant labour, for instance as refugees from the former Yugoslavia or elsewhere. As a result of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, at least 5 000 Roma, many of them from Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been granted asylum in Sweden. This means that almost half of the Roma are relatively newly arrived immigrants.

### **UK**

The Gypsy and Traveller population in the United Kingdom has a long tradition: the Gypsy population dates back to the 1500s, and an Irish Traveller population came to England in the 1800s. In Scotland there is also a Scottish Traveller community. In England these communities tend to be referred to as Gypsies and Irish Travellers; in Scotland as Gypsy/Travellers. Gypsies and Travellers are distinctive groups but they share a similar nomadic culture and tradition. The population is less nomadic today: a large proportion still lives in caravans on mobile and settled sites, but most now live in settled housing. In addition there is a population of new immigrant Roma who have recently come to the UK from other European countries such as the Czech Republic, but the exact numbers are unclear.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(11) Fundacion segretariado Gitano (2008), La Comunidad Gitana en Andalucía, Documentos, Madrid. <http://www.gitanos.org/zonas/andalucia/index.html>

## 5.1. The legal status of Roma communities: relevant definitions at the national level

The legal status of the Roma communities is highly differentiated across European countries and within each country, according to the specific group considered. As in the case of other ethnic minorities, the main distinction is between *national citizens* (who may have the status of ethnic minorities or national minorities), *asylum-seekers and refugees*, and *immigrants* (legal or illegal). In all European countries Roma women enjoy the same legal status and have the same legal obligations as the Roma men of their community living in the country. It is certainly true that Roma women belonging to illegal communities live in a much more precarious situation than women who enjoy the full rights of citizenship. The precariousness of their legal status implies an additional burden for Roma women (and men) who must deal with related problems, such as the continuous risk of eviction, expulsion from the country, and constant worry about losing their children in the case of forced eviction during school hours or in the case of problems evidenced by social services.

- In most EU countries many Roma groups of early migration are *citizens* of the countries where they live, in particular in Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Finland and Sweden. In Ireland Travellers <sup>(138)</sup> have Irish citizenship and are thus considered full Irish nationals; in Spain, the Roma community has acquired the full right to citizenship. In some countries the Roma are recognised as *national minorities* such as in Sweden and in Germany, where almost one third of all are in this condition while the others are considered refugees and do not have residence permits. In other countries, the Roma have the status of *ethnic minority*; this applies to the whole community, as for example in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia, or only some of the Roma communities as in Austria, where the Roma survivors and descendants of victims of the Holocaust are numbered

(138) Even if Travellers in Ireland and Great Britain are ethnically distinct from the Roma/Sinti/Kale, the Council of Europe recommended including them under the 'Roma and Sinti' nomination, as they share many characteristics with the nomadic Roma groups. This is why they have been considered in this study. See: Council of Europe (2006a), *Roma and Travellers Glossary*. [www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/source/GlossaryRoma.doc](http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/source/GlossaryRoma.doc)

among the autochthonous minority representing an officially recognised ethnic minority. In the UK Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised as a minority ethnic group by English law.

- In some cases, the Roma are considered *asylum-seekers/refugees* or applicants for asylum/refugee status. This is the case of Germany, Belgium and Greece and some communities from Bosnia in Sweden for example.
- In many countries, quite a large number of Roma are *nationals of countries now members of the European Union* such as Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia: they are entitled to free circulation as European citizens, but in some Member States they do not have full rights as workers <sup>(139)</sup>.

- However, many of the Roma are without birth certificates or identity documents, and thus *not registered in the civil status register*, or fail to fulfil all the conditions for obtaining citizenship and are considered *illegal immigrants* (for example some Roma groups in the Czech Republic, the third migration wave in Belgium that came in with tourist visas for a short stay period, many Roma communities in Italy and Lithuania, etc).

The 2005 report of the Network of independent experts on fundamental rights 'The protection of minorities in the European Union' <sup>(140)</sup> identified statelessness, the lack of status in the country, as well as problems with documentation such as lack of identity cards, birth certificates, etc. as major barriers in accessing to a wide range of rights (healthcare, education, social benefits, etc).

## The legal status of Roma across Europe

### Belgium

Most of the Sinti or Manouches have Belgian nationality, Les Roms have Belgian nationality (or generally another European nationality), while the Roma from Eastern and Central Europe are generally illegal in Belgium. The 'mobile persons' or *Gens du voyage* are Belgian nationals or have another European nationality and are part of the Manouches and Roma. The third migration wave of the Roma population in Belgium is composed mainly of illegal migrants <sup>(1)</sup>: some came in with a tourist visa or a short-stay period (less than 3 months), some applied for a residence permit <sup>(2)</sup> or an asylum/refugee status but did not obtain it. They were supposed to leave the country but still remain on Belgian territory.

### Bulgaria

'There is no policy document addressing the national minority groups. The Parliament ratified the Framework convention for the protection of national minorities (Council of Europe) in 1999, and in 2003 the Protection against discrimination act (2003) was ratified.' <sup>(3)</sup> Largely due to the prejudice against Roma <sup>(4)</sup> they often tend to identify themselves either as Turks or as Bulgarians. Since the early 1990s the more politically correct word *romi* has also been used to refer to the Bulgarian Roma <sup>(5)</sup>.

### Czech Republic

After 1993, when Czechoslovakia split to become the Slovak and Czech Republics, the Roma who were long-term residents in the Czech Republic were given Czech nationality. At the time of the Czech Republic's preparations for EC accession, they were recognised as a distinct ethnic minority.

### Germany

70 000 out of 200 000 Roma living in Germany are German citizens belonging to a national minority. More than 50 000 Roma have been refugees from ex-Yugoslavia subsequent to 1990, 33 000 of which have been denied a regular residence permit <sup>(6)</sup>. One-third of Roma families have a residence permit, which is the condition for social integration and participation. In contrast, two-thirds of the Roma families are tolerated refugees, which means they are non-legal residents. The toleration status entails that families are subject to special administrative restrictions and conditions which make social integration more difficult.

### Ireland

Irish Travellers have no distinct legal status except to the extent they are explicitly given protection within equality and anti-discrimination legislation. Irish Travellers have Irish citizenship and are thus full Irish nationals.

(1) A minority of them were regularised in 2000 on the basis of their long-term stay in Belgium.

(2) Can be granted for exceptional and medical reasons.

(3) Council of Europe (2002–08), *Compendium country profiles*. Strasbourg.

(4) The Bulgarian word for Roma is *tsigani*, which is usually seen as pejorative when used by non-Roma.

(5) *Roma* is the Romani word for 'people' in the plural-masculine gender, with a strong connotation of 'men' or 'husbands'.

(6) Deutscher Bundestag (2007): *Zur Situation von Roma in der Europäischen Union, in den EU-Beitrittsländern und im Kosovo*. Entschließungsantrag von Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Drucksache 16/5784.

(140) European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of independent experts on fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels.

(139) Barriers to free movement of workers should be removed by 1 May 2009.

### **Greece**

In Greece the Roma are not recognised as an ethnic or national minority group. Gypsies in Greece are officially registered as Greek citizens with no reference to their origin. Given the lack of even a working definition of what constitutes Romani identity, estimates as to the size of the Romani community in Greece should be treated with caution.

### **Spain**

The Roma community has acquired the full right to citizenship according to article 14 of the Constitution, which contains the clause on equality before the law, but there is no explicit acknowledgment of their status as a minority group or cultural community. The Spanish legal system has not adopted any concept of 'people' as entities with differentiated characteristics according to ethnicity, religion or identity. Spanish Roma citizens are hence considered as Spanish nationals with no reservations or inclusion in a legally recognised cultural or national minority.

### **Italy**

Approximately 60 % of all Roma and Sinti are Italian citizens. Those who do not have Italian citizenship (even if born in Italy or if they have lived in Italy most of their lives) only have short-term residence permits and in some cases no residence permits at all. There are also a few hundred stateless Roma children currently living in Italy. Those Roma and Sinti populations who do not have Italian citizenship face some difficulties when applying for the issue of stay permits or for their naturalisation.

### **Latvia**

The Roma population is recognised as an ethnic minority in Latvia, in accordance with the law 'on general convention on protection of national minorities' (?).

### **Lithuania**

A considerable part of the Roma has no Lithuanian citizenship due to lack of appropriate documents. Some of the Roma had expressed no wish to obtain citizenship before 1991, and now, having no citizenship, are unable to comply with the stricter requirements, which came into force after 1991. According to the data of the Department of Migration in 2004, there were 1870 Roma with Lithuanian citizenship and 150 were issued permits to live in Lithuania.

### **Hungary**

Roma are recognised as national and ethnic minorities. Hungary has a wide-ranging institutional framework for the protection of minorities and the promotion of cultural and educational autonomy. The Minorities act (1993) granted considerable cultural, educational, and linguistic rights to Hungary's recognised ethnic and national minorities including Roma<sup>(8)</sup>. All 13 national and ethnic minorities listed in the act on 'the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities' profess dual identity, which applies to the Roma people, too. Irrespective of their culture or language the Roma population is Hungarian, and has both strong Hungarian and ethnic ties.

### **The Netherlands**

Roma and Sinti have no specific legal status in the Netherlands. The community can be divided into five groups: Dutch nationals; Stateless people; Political refugees; Non-Dutch EU citizens; Non-EU citizens. Due to political and social pressure associated with the settlement of a new group of Roma towards the end of the nineteen seventies (1978), a general possibility to obtain Dutch nationality was offered to the Roma community. In terms of civil rights, the Netherlands offers voting right at the local level to all people having legal residence in the Netherlands for at least five years. As for social rights, the Netherlands offers in principle the same rights to all its legal residents, regardless of their status.

### **Austria**

Roma currently living in Austria can be differentiated between the autochthonous Austrian ethnic minority and the allochthonous<sup>(9)</sup> minority. Roma survivors and descendants of victims of the Holocaust are numbered among the autochthonous minority that represents an officially recognised ethnic minority ('*Volksgruppe*') of Austria. Allochthonous Roma, the groups that have come to Austria seeking jobs after 1950, are estimated to be much more numerous than the Roma that have lived in Austria for a longer period of time. Current estimates show that of 25 000/40 000 Roma living in Austria only 5 000 are Austrian Roma<sup>(10)</sup>.

### **Poland**

The Roma are an ethnic minority, i.e. a group of Polish citizens in the following conditions: 1) numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the Republic of Poland; 2) significantly different from the remaining citizens in language, culture or tradition; 3) striving to preserve their language, culture or tradition; 4) aware of their own historical, national community, and inclined to express and protect it; 5) their ancestors have been living in the present territory of the Republic of Poland for at least 100 years; 6) they do not identify with a nation organised as their own state.

(7) *Law Par Vispārējo konvenciju par nacionālo minoritāšu aizsardzību*, Riga 31 May, 2005.

(8) Council of Europe, (2002–08), *Compendium country profiles*. Strasbourg.

(9) Literally meaning 'originating from another country'. It is the opposite of the word *autochthonous* literally meaning 'originating from this country'. Allochthonous Roma are the groups of Roma that have come to Austria searching for work after 1950. They are not recognised ethnic minorities (Volkgruppen).

(10) Halwachs (2001), *Roma and Romani in Austria*, Romani Project, [http://romani.uni-graz.at/romani/download/files/ling\\_rom\\_at\\_d.pdf](http://romani.uni-graz.at/romani/download/files/ling_rom_at_d.pdf)

**Portugal**

According to the Portuguese Constitution, all Gypsy people with legal residency and/or born in Portugal are considered 'Portuguese citizens' (art. 4), sharing the same social rights and dignity before the law (art.13.1) as any other citizen. The Constitution also states that 'No one can have privileges, benefits, limits, be deprived of any right or excused from any duty for reasons such as family ascendancy, gender, race, language, origin, religion, political or ideological convictions, instruction, economic or social status.' (art.13.2).

**Romania**

'Ethnicity is based on self-identification, according to the national Constitution. Roma are a recognised ethnic minority' <sup>(11)</sup>. The ethnic group of origin is defined by self-identification in the Census: the Roma in Romania are residents but according to a survey <sup>(12)</sup> 6 % of them have no valid identity documents and 5 % have no birth certificate.

**Slovenia**

The ethnic community is protected by the Slovenian Constitution but does not enjoy the same level of minority protection as the other two recognised minority communities — Italian and Hungarian. The official division is also established with various expressions — Italian and Hungarian communities are officially called 'national communities' while the Roma community is called 'ethnic community'. Even further distinction was introduced by the government in the 90s and sustained in many policy measures ever since — between 'autochthonous' (traditionally settled) and 'non-autochthonous' ('new', immigrant) Roma.

**Slovakia**

The current government in its Manifesto defines the Roma using various terms, such as Roma community, Roma national minority and Roma ethnic group. In 1970 and 1980 affiliation to the Roma ethnic group was assessed for Census purposes in several ways such as Roma language, level of housing/accommodation, way of life, anthropological features, etc. In the 1991 census, when the Roma were for the first time able to freely claim their affiliation to Roma identity, only 75 802 persons claimed this option.

**Finland**

The Roma are Finnish citizens, enjoy full civil rights and are subject to the civic duties these entail. Roma have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. This was also bolstered by the Decree on Children's Daycare, which enabled support for Romani language and culture, and by the Basic education act, which confirmed the place of the Roma language as a mother tongue.

**Sweden**

Most of the Roma in Sweden are Swedish citizens or, if later arrivals, permanent residents of Sweden. This means that Roma people have the same rights as other citizens or permanent residents: they have social rights in relation to the social security system and social services. In February 2000 Sweden ratified the Council of Europe's Framework convention for the protection of national minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. As a result the Roma, together with the Sami, Swedish Finns, Tornedalers and Jews, are considered national minorities and Romany Chib (all forms), Sami, Meänkieli and Yiddish are considered official minority languages.

**UK**

Although Gypsies and Irish Travellers are not included as an ethnic minority for the purpose of the census, they are recognised as a minority ethnic group in English law. Case law established Gypsies as a recognised ethnic group in 1988 and Irish Travellers in England and Wales in August 2000. These cases recognised them as having a shared culture, language and beliefs. This status means that they are entitled to protection by the 1976 Race Relations Act (RRA) and are covered by the 2001 amendment to the RRA which places on public authorities the duty to promote racial equality by eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and promoting good race relations. In Scotland the status of Gypsy Travellers is still undecided as no test case has yet established a legal precedent. However, the Scottish Parliament's equal opportunities committee has stated that Gypsy Travellers are a minority ethnic group and should be treated as such until a legal case establishes this.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(11) Council of Europe, (2002–08), *Compendium country profiles*, Strasbourg.

(12) Soros Foundation Romania (2007), *Roma inclusion barometer*, Bucharest.

## 5.2. Dimension and distribution of the Roma communities in European countries

*Precise and complete official data on Roma women* are lacking across Europe. Analysis of the condition of Roma women is challenging due to the lack of data disaggregated by sex and of quantitative as well as of qualitative studies on both Roma in general and Roma women in particular. In many countries (such as Belgium, Germany, Finland, Sweden) ethnic registration is not allowed. In other countries,

official statistics contain no information on ethnicity or self identification. In other European countries still, there is no accurate estimate of the size of the Roma population as they are an integral part of the national population and are not, therefore, recorded separately in the general censuses. Only a few EGGSI Network national reports therefore present data on the Roma female population <sup>(141)</sup>.

(141) Where data and figures on Roma women are present, they are not comparable: in some national reports only census data are provided, in others only estimations.

'It is estimated that there are possibly over 10 million Roma in Europe <sup>(142)</sup>: their incidence in the resident population ranges, according to official data, from a minimum of 0.01 % in the Netherlands to a maximum of 4.7 % in Bulgaria, and according to estimations, from a minimum of 0.05 % in Poland to a maximum of 13.6 % in Romania. Many European countries

estimate the *dimension* of the Roma communities by pooling different information regarding the ethnic origin and/or language spoken (such as the case of Bulgaria, where citizens may identify themselves as Roma by ethnicity and language), while others refer to asylum-seeker, Traveller or immigrant statistics; finally, yet others apply self-identification.

**Table 5.1: Official data and estimates on the dimension of the Roma communities <sup>(143)</sup>**

Country	Official data on Roma population	Estimations on Roma population	Minimum-Maximum percentage of Roma population
Belgium	n.a.	20 000 (according to estimations presented in the national report)	0.19 % (according to estimations)
Bulgaria	370 908 (Census)	550 000 to 1 million (according to estimations presented in the national report) <sup>(144)</sup>	4.7 % (according to official data)–10.13 % (according to estimations)
Czech Republic	32 903 people declared themselves Roma according to the 1991 census (16 031 women and 16 872 men); 11 746 persons declared themselves Roma according to the 2001 census (5 597 women and 6 149 men)	160 000–200 000 (3)	0.11 % (according to official data)–2.91 % (according to estimations)
Germany	85 000–120 000 in the mid-nineties <sup>(145)</sup>	Around 200 000 <sup>(146)</sup>	0.10 % (according to official data)–0.24 % (according to estimations)
Ireland	22 400 (according to the most recent census)	n.a.	0.53 % (according to official data)
Greece	7 429 (according to the 1951 official census); 120 000–150 000 (according to the Greek delegation: statement at the 2001 OSCE meeting)	According to different sources: 160 000–200 000 <sup>(147)</sup> ; 350 000 <sup>(148)</sup>	1.08 %–2.5 %
Spain	n.a.	680 000 (2)	1.70 % (according to estimations)
France	n.a.	250 000–300 000 (3)	0.66 % (according to estimations)
Italy	n.a.	120 000–150 000 (according to public authorities estimations and to other estimations) <sup>(149)</sup>	0.20 %–0.26 % (according to estimations)
Latvia	8 205 (according to the 2000 census) (2)	12 000–13 000 (according to Roma leaders) (1)	0.36 % (according to official data)–0.57 % (according to estimations)
Lithuania	n.a.	According to estimations of Tscherenkow, and Laederich between 5 000 to 6 000 <sup>(150)</sup>	0.1 % (according to estimations)
Hungary	190 046 (according to the 2001 census) of which 93 711 women and 96 273 men (2)	570 000 in 2003 according to Kemény's estimations <sup>(151)</sup>	1.88 % (according to official data)–5.64 % (according to estimations)

(142) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, Brussels.

(143) Main sources of the following figures: (1) EGGSI Network national reports; (2) European Parliament (2006b), *Economic Aspects of the Condition of Roma Women*; (3) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, Brussels.

(144) Rossen Vassilev, (2004) *The Roma of Bulgaria: A Pariah Minority*, The Global Review of Ethnopolitics, Vol. 3, No 2, January 2004, 40–51.

(145) Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin (2007), *Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse einer Studie „Zur Lage von Kindern aus Roma-Familien in Deutschland*, Unicef, Berlin; European Roma Rights Centre.

(146) Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin (2007), *Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse einer Studie „Zur Lage von Kindern aus Roma-Familien in Deutschland*, Unicef, Berlin; European Roma Rights Centre.

(147) Minority Rights Group International (1997), *World Directory of Minorities*, Minority Rights Group International, London.

(148) European Roma Rights Centre (2003), *Country Report on Greece, Cleaning Operations: Excluding Roma in Greece*. Bucharest.

(149) Statistical Dossier Immigration Caritas/Migrantes. Elaboration on different sources.

(150) Tscherenkow, L, Laederich, S. (2004): *The Rroma*. Basel, Schwabe, 2004.

(151) Kemény István-Janky Béla- Lengyel Gabriella (2004) *A magyarországi cigánység 1971–2003*, Bp., Gondolat.



Netherlands	2 000 (according to the 2002 annual report integration policy of ethnic minorities) (1)	6 000 (according to the Anne Frank Foundation report 'Monitor Racism and Extreme Right')	0.01 % (according to official data)–0.06 % (according to estimations)
Austria	6 000 people speaking Romani, according to the 2001 census	40 000 Roma people <sup>(152)</sup>	0.07 % (according to official data)–0.48 % (according to estimations)
Poland	12 900 (according to the 2001 census quoted in (3))	20 000 (3)	0.03 % (according to official data)–0.05 % (according to estimations)
Portugal	21 831 (according to a 2001 survey based on the questionnaires of 186 city halls) (2)	20 000–50 000 (1); 40 000 (3)	0.21 % (according to official data)–0.66 % (according to estimations)
Romania	535 250 (according to the 2002 census)	1.4–2.5 million inhabitants; minimum 730 174, medium 851 048 and maximum 968 275 (according to a World Bank study) (1) 1–1.5 million persons (according to international institutions); 2.5 million persons (3)	2.43 % (according to official data)–13.64 % (according to estimations)
Slovenia	3 246 (according to the 2002 census)	7,000–10,000 (according to the Roma Union of Slovenia) (3)	0.16 % (according to official data)–0.60 % (according to estimations)
Slovakia	89 920 according to the 2001 census	378 950 (based on 2001 census and projections to 2005) (3)	1.67 % (according to official data)–6.85 % (according to estimations)
Finland	n.a.	10 000 Roma in Finland and around 4 000 Finnish Roma in Sweden (1)	0.09 %– 0.19 % (according to estimations)
Sweden	n.a.	40 000–50 000 <sup>(153)</sup>	0.44 %–0.56 % (according to estimations)
UK	n.a.	200 000–300 000 (3)	0.33 %–0.50 % (according to estimations)

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008

## 6. Roma-specific social disadvantage and exclusion: A gender perspective

### 6.1. A comparative profile of the socio-economic condition and main risks of social exclusion faced by Roma and, more specifically, Roma women

Throughout Europe, the Roma communities are the groups most risking marginalisation, and are confronted with a range of common socio-economic problems: widespread social inequality and discrimination, poor living standards with numerous families living in poverty, little or no employment prospective, poor health and housing conditions, and reduced access to public services. In many European countries, a large proportion of the Roma live on social services and assistance (see for example the case of Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Slovakia and Spain in the box 'The access of Roma to social benefits', p.116). Roma women are even more disadvantaged than Roma men and members of other ethnic minority groups in almost all dimensions considered.

Data on the situation of Roma women are particularly scarce. Most of the sociological studies however show that Roma women experience greater social exclusion than Roma men, on the one hand, and the women of the majority community on the other. They are particularly disadvantaged in accessing employment, education, health and social services, a result of multiple causes, including also the gender roles that persist in the Roma community. In some countries over the last few years (especially in eastern European Member States, but also in Italy, for example) the living standards of Roma women have declined. In other countries (such as Finland, Sweden and the UK) there is some initial evidence of improvements given the greater attention to equal opportunities and the activities carried out by NGOs specifically addressing the Roma population and Roma women (see the section on policies and best practices).

Life expectancy among Roma men and women is usually lower than that of the majority of the population in most of the EU Member States, due to their living conditions and limited access to health services: most EGGSI Network national reports highlight this phenomenon. In those EU countries where data disaggregated by sex are available, the incidence of the female population over the total Roma population is

(152) Leoni, T. (2004), 'The Roma in Austria — A Historical Perspective', WIFO Working Papers 222/2004, 2004A

(153) Ministry of Justice (2003), *Sweden's Roma. A National Minority. Fact Sheet*. Regeringskansliet, Stockholm.



lower than that of men, contrary to their incidence in the majority population: this may be considered an indicator of a lower life expectancy for Roma women than both for Roma men and non-Roma women (such as, for example, in Spain and Slovakia). In other cases the composition of the population by sex is more balanced (as for example in Poland and Bulgaria).

All the social phases in life occur much earlier for Roma women than for the majority population and other ethnic minorities. The average age at marriage is usually around 15–16 years for the girls (or lower in some communities) while it is around 18 years for boys, with the birth of their first child shortly after and the other children (many, usually) following a little later. Romani girls are expected to grow up quickly and to take on adult caring roles from the age of about 11. In Slovakia, for example, the number of Roma girls in the 15–19 age group that are married is more than twice compared with the number of married girls in the non-Roma population.

Throughout Europe, the Roma families are differentiated from other families by certain specific demographic features: high fertility and high mortality rates and consequently a large child population with, conversely, a smaller number of senior citizens. In Austria, for example, the Roma households are more extensive than the Austrian households. On average, the former have 3.49 members, while the latter number 2.41 members<sup>(154)</sup>.

In a 2005 report on equality and non-discrimination in Europe<sup>(155)</sup>, the European Commission underlined that all the national surveys and studies indicate that the Roma, and in particular Roma women, have lower levels of education, higher rates of unemployment, lower levels of income and poorer health than the rest of the population. The analysis on these issues presented here covers information on 22 countries<sup>(156)</sup>.

(154) European Parliament (2006b), *Economic Aspects of the Condition of Roma Women*, Brussels.

(155) European Commission (2005c), *Equality and non-discrimination, Annual Report 2005*, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Brussels.

(156) This part of the study was carried out only in those countries where a Roma community of a certain size exists: this is not the case of Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway. It must nevertheless be noted that in Norway the Roma are one of five national minorities and both Romani and Romanes are acknowledged as minority languages in Norway.

### 6.1.1. Educational level and access to the education system

Roma communities are characterised by low educational levels with a high rate of illiteracy and poor school attendance by the children, in particular as far as the girls and women are concerned. In contrast to the rest of the population, Roma girls show poorer educational attainment than Roma boys. They normally leave school earlier than the boys due to their family responsibilities and the Roma culture, which does not allow girls to be exposed to the outside culture and considers women as the custodians of traditional values: some communities consider education and the integration that school promotes as a threat to their traditional lifestyle and cultural heritage. A considerable variation in the level of education of Roma women is observed according to the location of the Roma community: where the community is placed in segregated areas, this consequently leads to stronger maintenance of the traditional role imposed by Roma society<sup>(157)</sup>. In Greece, for example, 'illiteracy is higher among women than men: this is partly due to the fact that Roma men have more opportunities to be exposed to an environment where they might learn how to read or write'<sup>(158)</sup>.

The lack of education in the case of Roma women is identified<sup>(159)</sup> as one of the key factors for the social exclusion and poverty of Roma women. The low educational level of Roma women is particularly negative because it affects future generations, as the children of mothers having had more years of education are more likely to attend school than children with mothers having low educational levels. Education is therefore, an effective tool for social integration and promoting mutual respect and tolerance among Roma and non-Roma communities.

(157) Trans-national Conference: Integration of the Greek Roma in Active Forms of Labour-Policy-Suggestions-Experience, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2–3 March 17. <http://www.roma-net.org/assets/conference/minutes.pdf>

(158) *Pan-Hellenic Research Study of the social and housing conditions and needs of the Greek Gypsy citizens*, 2000.

(159) European Parliament (2006a), *European Parliament resolution on the situation of Roma women in the European Union*, Brussels. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2006-0244+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>; European Commission (2005a), *The protection of minorities in the EU*, E.U. Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental rights, Thematic comment No 3, Brussels. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/doc/thematic\\_comments\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/cfr_cdf/doc/thematic_comments_2005_en.pdf); European Commission (2005c), *Equality and non-discrimination, Annual Report 2005*, Fundamental rights and anti-discrimination, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Brussels. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1608&langId=en>

The EGGSI Network national reports highlight some additional problems for Roma children in relation to educational systems.

1. Roma children start later than the children of the majority population, since they do not attend pre-school classes.
2. Roma children participate in education irregularly, having a high drop-out rate at around the age of 12–14. This is especially the case for girls due to economic and cultural reasons (child labour and responsibility of the mothers and the sisters to take care of their children and siblings), greater mobility between places for some Roma communities and scant consideration for education and family support.
3. Roma children have greater challenges in adapting to school rules and higher learning difficulties, not only because of language problems, but also because of the lack of awareness among teachers and schools of their specific needs in addition to the racism and bullying that persist against them.
4. Roma children are more likely than other children to be segregated in special schools or classes, due to their greater learning difficulties, the reluctance of schools to enrol Roma children, the pressure of the majority parents not to have Roma children in class with their children and the isolation of Roma settlements.

### Examples across Europe: Education and school attendance from a gender perspective

#### **Austria**

52 % of Roma women between the age of 55 and 59 and 53 % of Roma women between 20 and 23 have only completed compulsory education. These numbers for Roma men are 42 % and 45 % respectively. The differences between female and male Roma are therefore characterised by the higher share of women with only compulsory education (almost 10 percentage points higher for women than for men). Roma women also more often have higher school qualifications (upper secondary schooling and above). In contrast young Roma men have a higher share of vocational qualifications with more direct contact with the labour market <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### **Belgium**

Roma children do not attend pre-school as their mothers are supposed to look after them. They generally drop out from school at the age of 12 to 14, which is the age of access to secondary school. Those that continue follow technical and vocational education (e.g. mechanic, clothing, hairdressing schools): the paths of girls and boys correspond to traditional labour market segregation. A study on the position of Roma in Brussels points out that while in primary and secondary school there are equal numbers of girls and boys, the number of girls drops as from the age of 16 years: the hypotheses is that they marry <sup>(2)</sup> or prepare to marry, and so the parents do not invest in their girls' future.

#### **Bulgaria**

The illiteracy rate of the Roma is 15 times higher than that of the non-Roma <sup>(3)</sup> and the share of illiterate Roma women is twice that of illiterate Roma men, while the share of Roma women with secondary education is a third that of Roma men.

#### **Germany**

Girls and women often face particular difficulties in attending school or participating in vocational training, because of the traditional way of living of some Roma families, which means that early marriages and early pregnancies are common. In addition, women take on the role of housewife earlier, on the one hand, and on the other they do not participate in public affairs: both aspects have the effect that young women often leave school early without any secondary school qualifications or do not start any professional training after receiving secondary school qualifications, which makes their labour market participation difficult.

#### **Greece**

According to estimates included in the government's Integrated action plan for the social integration of Greek Gypsies (IAP), 60 % of the Roma in the 18–50 age group had never attended school and were found to be illiterate, with a further 22 % deemed to be functionally illiterate, having sporadically attended primary school <sup>(4)</sup>. Only the remaining 18 % attained educational certificates (only from primary school). According to the same report, 'the percentages of illiteracy among elderly Roma, women and those living permanently or temporarily in settlements, are tragically high.' It is interesting to note a certain variation presented by the

(1) Policy Department Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs (2006) <http://www.pedz.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-ma/ep/06/pe365970-en.pdf>

(2) At the age of 12, girls are considered as young women preparing to be married.

(3) According to data of Roma NGO *Amalipe*.

(4) Hellenic Agency for local development and local government (EETAA) (2001), IAP- Integrated action plan for the social integration of the Greek Gypsies (in Greek), p. 6. The figures were taken from the Study on the financial, social and cultural condition of the Gypsies in Greece, conducted under the auspices of the University of Ioannina.

statistics with reference to the location of the Roma community: while 41 % of the Romani women in Athens were found to be organically illiterate according to the survey, the corresponding percentage for Romani women in Thessaloniki was 70 %<sup>(5)</sup>. This is due to the fact that the Roma women of Thessaloniki generally live in 'ghettoes' which consequently leads to the maintenance of their traditional role imposed by Roma society.<sup>(6)</sup>

#### **Italy**

In various Roma communities the educational levels reached by the girls are still notably low. In many cases, they leave school before the boys, and the latter usually achieve higher educational levels as a result.

#### **Romania**

A 2004 report points out the fact that in the case of Roma, the gender differences in terms of school participation are more obvious indicating a clear disadvantage for women<sup>(7)</sup>. At the general level, the gender differences concerning participation in education are not significant. Following Roma cultural traditions, the girls usually marry early and give birth at an early age, abandoning school around the age of 13–15. The acceptance of the primarily domestic role of women (even if not married, Roma girls are expected to do housework or look after their younger brothers or sisters) and doubts about the importance of education result in a high incidence of school abandonment and perpetuate the economic dependency of Roma women. The recent legislation on child protection has provisions for marriage between underage persons and is expected to reduce school drop-out and encourage equal responsibilities and career development for both women and men.

#### **Slovakia**

The role of mothers in the education of their children is very important. Nevertheless, the educational level of Roma women themselves is negatively influenced by their very early motherhood. A relatively strict gender role in Roma community influences the position of women and girls in a Roma family, which confine the female role entirely within the framework of the woman's own family or, possibly, extended family. In a Roma community the onset of partnered relationships at an early age, often synchronous with sexual maturity, also brings about recognition of the social maturity of young males and young females alike. Such an approach leads to omitting a period dedicated to acquiring vocational training, notably in the case of young women who become mothers very early.

#### **Spain**

80 % of the Roma students enrolled in secondary education drop out of school before the end of this stage. Roma girls are more likely to quit their studies in the transition between primary and secondary education, whereas Roma boys do so some years later. A worrying tendency from the gender perspective is the fact that the share of students expecting to get married and exclusively perform housework is much higher among girls in the Roma community than among the rest of the students (16.9 % against 5.2 %)<sup>(8)</sup>.

#### **UK**

In contrast to the rest of the population, Gypsy girls' educational performance is poorer than boys'. Few Gypsy and Traveller girls enter secondary education; they will normally leave in the age of 11 to 13<sup>(9)</sup>. If they do enter secondary education, girls are less likely than boys to be excluded, but their attainment is poorer than boys'. There is a perceived failure by schools to provide support for girls in the education system<sup>(10)</sup>. Girls of secondary school age are often responsible for caring for other children and older family members and can therefore often not attend school or find it hard to meet the demands of home and school work. Also, concerns are raised in the Gypsy community about leaving girls unsupervised in the non-Gypsy culture. A common perception is that education will expose girls to too much outside culture (involving sex and drugs) and that this will make them less 'marketable' as wives. Some girls are taken out of education so that they don't attend sex education classes; this can lead to permanent withdrawal<sup>(11)</sup>. Staying on in secondary education can come at a high personal risk, for example, isolation or even exclusion from the traditional community<sup>(12)</sup>. Gypsy Traveller girls are also subject to racist bullying which is often more subtle than boys' bullying, involving name-calling, ostracising and stealing<sup>(13)</sup>. This is harder for schools to identify and deal with. One solution would be to educate Gypsy and Traveller girls in single-sex schools<sup>(14)</sup>. However such schools are often over-subscribed and enrol only very high achievers.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(5) DIKADI-ROM, (2007), Action 1: Conduct of surveys and research, Euroergasiaki Centre for Vocational Training, Menemeni, pp. 8–13. <http://www.roma-net.org/assets/conference/kokotsakis.pdf>

(6) See minutes of the *Trans-national Conference: Integration of the Greek Roma in Active Forms of Labour-Policy-Suggestions-Experience*, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2007, p. 43. <http://www.roma-net.org/assets/conference/minutes.pdf>

(7) Ministry of Education and Research (2001), *The Romanian Education System*, Bucharest.

(8) Fundación secretariado Gitano (2006), *El acceso del alumnado gitano a la enseñanza secundaria*. Madrid.

(9) YWCA (2006), *A Long Way To Go: Young Gypsy and Traveller Women Research Briefing*, Oxford.

(10) Levinson, M. and Sparkes, A. (2005), *Conflicting Value Systems: Gypsy females and the home-school interface*, *Research Papers in Education* 21(1), p. 79–97.

(11) YWCA (2006), *A Long Way To Go: Young Gypsy and Traveller Women Research Briefing*, Oxford.

(12) Levinson, M. and Sparkes, A. (2005), *Conflicting Value Systems: Gypsy females and the home-school interface*, *Research Papers in Education* 21(1), p. 79–97.

(13) YWCA (2006), *A Long Way To Go: Young Gypsy and Traveller Women Research Briefing*, Oxford.

(14) Ureche, H. and Franks, M. (2007), *This is Who We Are. A study of the experiences of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller children throughout England*, The Children's Society, London.

A different perspective is offered by a large-scale study carried out in Bulgaria in 2004 on the educational status of Roma women <sup>(160)</sup>. The study revealed some interesting considerations in contrast with general perceptions and prejudiced positions: the number of early marriages is decreasing; young Roma women prefer to continue their education or work until they reach the age of 18; families with one or two children are numerically predominant; the majority of women have primary or secondary education; and the percentage of women either illiterate or with elementary education only, is relatively low, even if the main reason for Roma girls to leave school is still early marriage. In particular:

- 84 % of the women interviewed think that education is very important in order to have a job;
- 95 % of them think that a good education helps Roma women;
- 80 % of them are ready to continue their education and obtain higher educational qualifications;
- for 76 % of the women interviewed good education will be useful for their families and 45 % expect that the family will support them.

The study reported that most of the participants agreed that education is equally good for both boys and girls and for Roma women in general. The survey results prove that for Roma people in Bulgaria education has significant value and they are ready to educate their children if the necessary conditions (economic, organisational, cultural, etc) allow it.

### 6.1.2. Housing conditions

A report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2007) 'Trends and developments 1997–2005 — Combating ethnic and racial discrimination and promoting equality in Europe' <sup>(161)</sup> identifies the bad housing condition of Roma people as one of the major factors underpinning Roma exclusion: 'Roma continue to be one of the minorities most affected by inadequate housing conditions. Across Europe they are not only those living in segregated neighbourhoods and settlements with substandard infrastructure, but are also

those who are most discriminated against in the housing market. The intertwining of the bad housing factors affects other areas such as education, work and health.'

The Roma usually live in segregated, isolated districts: either in assigned residential homes in socially poor areas (urban ghettos), with poor access to public transportation and social services (as for example in Germany), or in shanty camps in the periphery of urban areas (as in Italy, Spain and some eastern European Member States). They may also end up in caravan sites (in Italy, the UK and Belgium, for example), in 'centres d'accueil', asylum seekers' hostels or overcrowded housing. This type of housing isolation is exacerbated by the difficulties in finding sufficiently large accommodation for the frequently large Roma families. As a consequence, living conditions in Roma settlements are frequently poor, showing problems of extreme overcrowding, lacking basic facilities, such as running water and electricity. In these settlements Roma also face high risks of eviction. These difficulties make the domestic workload and isolation particularly onerous and stressful for Roma women, who spend most of their lives in these accommodations; this also contributes to decline in their health conditions. Moreover, the lack of a safe and stable place to live undermines Roma women's feelings of health and well-being: young women can feel vulnerable and unsafe, fearing the invasion of their privacy. A different case is Latvia and Finland, where most of the Roma live in privately or publicly owned houses.

The provision of settled housing may not always be the policy answer to these problems. As evidenced in the UK report (but not in other EGGSI Network national reports), 'increasing numbers of Gypsies and Irish Travellers are living in settled housing, yet there have been significant issues arising from their residency in conventional housing: racial harassment; psychological distress associated with no longer being mobile; and an increased sense of social exclusion, since they are isolated from their family and kin.' <sup>(162)</sup>

The resistance that Roma encounter in their search for adequate accommodation often results in provisional solutions and difficulties with neighbours. The prejudices of the majority population and the weaker economic position of the Roma make it hard for them to find accommodation on the private housing market. One of the major problems Roma encounter is the lack of formal land ownership or property titles for houses.

<sup>(160)</sup> Kyuchkov H. (2006), *Educational Status of Roma Women*, Sofia.

<sup>(161)</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2007), *Trends and Developments 1997–2005 — Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality*, Vienna. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends\\_en.pdf](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Trends_en.pdf)

<sup>(162)</sup> Commission for Racial Equality (2006), *Common Ground, Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*, Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales, London, p. 210.

## Examples across Europe: Housing conditions of the Roma population

### **Belgium**

Having an address is important for the Roma as this is the prerequisite to apply for a 'residence permit' and it also opens up some rights to social assistance and urgent medical assistance. The Roma people live in the most deprived neighbourhoods of cities with a high density of ethnic minorities. In the majority of cases, the Roma families live in one room unfit for habitation, paying far too high a rent with no protection against eviction.

Asylum seekers have access during the examination of the admissibility of their applications to some 'Centres d'accueil' or local initiatives.

### **Bulgaria**

Usually the Roma people live in separate districts on the outskirts of large Bulgarian cities or in rural areas. In either case they live in densely populated neighbourhoods where they create for themselves their — quite often illegal — housing, in most cases transformed into real ghettos where the available living space is extremely limited and the living conditions are very poor: the dwellings are built in a very primitive way, sometimes even lacking basic, elementary furniture and facilities. According to the 2002 UNDP survey database <sup>(1)</sup> 77 % of Roma households do not have a toilet inside the dwelling, and 72 % do not have shower or bathroom inside. Despite the implementation of numerous programmes and projects to improve living conditions for Roma people in recent years the housing situation remains very problematic, with very little progress.

### **Finland**

The prejudices of the majority population and the weaker economic position of the Roma make it hard for them to find accommodation on the private housing market. It is especially difficult for the young adults to get accommodation in the cities. Between 1975 and 1981 the living conditions of the Roma were improved through special government housing loans, with subsidised loans to both the local authorities and individual members of the Roma community, but in recent years the housing market has become much tighter throughout the country, and the transfer of local authority rented housing to private housing companies compounds the housing problems facing Romani people. The social problems and the discrimination the Roma people face are reflected by homelessness, evictions, unpaid rents and disturbances, aggravated by the financial problems the Roma often come up against due to long-term unemployment.

Conflict between Roma families may result in the obligation to leave: the whole family of the person responsible for the incident is forced to move away and not allowed to visit places or events where the family members of the victim are present. This causes abrupt moves among Roma families with no time for accommodation applications. The women in particular need help in arranging the new life for their children and family in the new town.

### **Germany**

Tolerated refugees and asylum seekers cannot choose their accommodation but are assigned to asylum-seekers' hostels or residential homes, where the housing and living conditions are decidedly poor. The Roma are often assigned to residential homes in socially poor areas with scant access to public transport and public institutions. This and the often very basic furnishing and poor social assistance make integration more difficult, as the main factors for integration such as education, health or work are not readily available. Since 2003 some towns and communities have changed their integration criteria for refugees. In some cases tolerated refugees are allowed to move into rented flats. Some good practices have been evidenced in this respect.

Roma families have difficulties in finding adequate and affordable flats because landlords/landladies meet them with reservation and prejudices.

### **Italy**

Approximately one-third of the Roma and Sinti, both citizens and non-citizens, are living in conditions of practical segregation from the rest of society in camps, in many cases without access to the most basic facilities.

### **Spain**

Housing is one of the key factors in the process of social inclusion for the Roma population in Spain. According to the Roma secretariat foundation (2007), the persistence of shantytowns and sub-standard housing, the concentration of the Roma population in segregated districts, the deterioration of housing infrastructures and the environment as well as discrimination in access to rental services are some of the obstacles that the Roma community must overcome to assert their equal rights. There are significant territorial disparities within the country concerning the type and housing conditions held by the Roma community.

### **Slovakia**

Housing conditions among the Roma population are very different: about half the Roma community live scattered and integrated among the majority population. The other half live in backward settlements, which are located mainly in eastern and central Slovakia. Worst of all is the situation among jobless households. This is especially the case of Roma families where unemployment has reached extremely high figures. Many jobless families left their flats and returned to the village settlements where housing costs are much lower. This transfer has resulted in increasing numbers of overcrowded and illegal Roma settlements. Between 2003 and 2004 a highly complex sociographic survey <sup>(2)</sup> was carried out, mapping the living conditions of the Roma population. Accordingly, Roma

(1) See the website: *Vulnerable groups in central and eastern Europe* <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>

(2) Juraskova, M., Kriglerova E. and Rybova J. (2004), *Atlas rómskych komunit na Slovensku (The Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia)*, Bratislava.



settlements can be divided into three types: municipal communities (ghettos in towns), settlements located on the periphery of urban areas and isolated settlements distant from the town or from the village. Segregated settlements are situated on the periphery, without available drinking water and the proportion of illegal shacks is over 20 %. 46 settlements virtually lacking any infrastructure were identified in the survey, 12 settlements having no electricity. More than 4 000 people live in such conditions.

### UK

There is a shortage of caravan sites for Gypsy and Irish Traveller families. A government-sponsored report estimated that over 20 % of the travelling community have no legal place to stop their caravans. These caravans are therefore classified as unauthorised encampments and are at risk of eviction (Niner 2003 <sup>(3)</sup>). Because of the shortage of legitimate sites, some illegal encampments are set up which have few resources and can be run-down. Sites are often located in undesirable locations: on the outskirts of towns with poor access to local services and amenities; on sites near industrial wasteland or close to major transport infrastructures. Facilities on sites can be poor.

The lack of a safe and stable place to live undermines Gypsy and Irish Traveller women's feelings of health and well-being. Evictions from unauthorised encampments are particularly distressing for women <sup>(4)</sup>. Poor facilities in caravan sites add to the workload for Gypsy women who carry out traditional housework and caring for children. Remote locations of sites mean that women are more excluded as they are less likely to have access to a car and are more reliant on lifts from men, walking or public transport. Women are responsible for the well-being of children; remote locations mean that it is harder for them to get children to schools or seek medical attention. Many Gypsy and Traveller women experience isolation and boredom on sites <sup>(5)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(3) Niner, P. (2003), *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London.

(4) YWCA (2006), *A Long Way To Go: Young Gypsy and Traveller Women Research Briefing*, Oxford.

(5) YWCA (2006), *A Long Way To Go: Young Gypsy and Traveller Women Research Briefing*, Oxford.

### 6.1.3. Health conditions and access to the healthcare system

The April 2000 report on the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area <sup>(163)</sup> identified inadequate healthcare as one of the main elements of the poor living conditions for Roma people. The 2003 European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia report 'Breaking the barriers — access of Roma women to public health' <sup>(164)</sup> indicated that Roma women are more subject to bad health conditions.

The main elements to be considered concerning health conditions and access to healthcare services by Roma women can be summarised as follows:

- lower life expectancy and major health risks due to socio-economic conditions,
- frequent pregnancies and abortions,
- malnutrition and bad alimentary habits,
- difficult access to healthcare services.

This picture represents the situation across Europe: every EGGSI Network national report that presented information on the situation of Roma provided evidence of the same problems.

Roma women and men have an average *life expectancy* at birth considerably lower than the rest of the population: 'The lower life expectancy of both male and female Roma, compared to the general population has been widely noted in both western and eastern Europe. In Slovakia, for instance, the life expectancy of Roma women is 17 years less than for the majority population; for men, it is 13 years less. For Irish Travellers, life expectancy is between 10–12 years less than for the settled population' <sup>(165)</sup>. This is a consequence of poor quality housing and living conditions, and the uneven access to screening and healthcare. Moreover, due to the inability to provide timely and prolonged health treatment, mortality hits Roma groups much earlier than the broader population: as described by the Open Society Foundation <sup>(166)</sup>, higher rates of illness and mortality are present among Roma than in majority populations.

(163) OSCE (2000), Report and recommendations on the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area, Warsaw. [http://www.osce.org/publications/hcnm/2000/03/31626\\_1161\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/publications/hcnm/2000/03/31626_1161_en.pdf)

(164) European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia (2003b), *Breaking the barriers — Romani women and access to public healthcare*, Vienna. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications\\_reports/pub\\_tr\\_romaniwomen\\_healthcare\\_03\\_en.htm](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/pub_tr_romaniwomen_healthcare_03_en.htm)

(165) European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia (2003b), *Breaking the barriers — Romani women and access to public healthcare*, Vienna. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications\\_reports/pub\\_tr\\_romaniwomen\\_healthcare\\_03\\_en.htm](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/pub_tr_romaniwomen_healthcare_03_en.htm)

(166) Open Society Foundation (2007), *Left Out: Roma and access to healthcare in eastern and south-eastern Europe*, public health fact sheet, Brussels.



Access to healthcare is reported as one factor shaping overall health. According to the European Roma Rights Centre 'access to medical services is made impossible in many instances of remote segregated Romani settlements where medical facilities do not exist and transportation to facilities outside the settlement is either unavailable or unaffordable to many people.'<sup>(167)</sup> Some cultural aspects of Roma communities, such as the prohibition of alcohol and tobacco among women may, at least in part, offset the negative effects of unhealthy living conditions.

Roma women experience *greater health risks* than non-Roma women because of early and multiple pregnancies and abortions, the heavy workload at home, poor housing, malnutrition, etc. In some countries (such as Slovakia and Hungary) cases of imposed sterilisation of young Roma women have been reported.

The rate of infant and *child illness* and disabilities is much higher than that of the majority population, due also to the widespread phenomenon of marriage among close relatives; again, this increases the caring workload of Roma women and girls.

Roma women, and indeed Roma men, have usually no access to correct *information on nutrition*. This is why most Roma women are unaware of the need to change nutrition habits during pregnancies.

The bad housing conditions also contribute to the bad health conditions of Roma women, who are obliged to spend more hours in the house due to their role within the Roma community. Bad housing conditions lead to a more stressful life, which affects the general health of Roma women.

Roma women use *healthcare services* less than the rest of the population. They tend to have reservations about the healthcare services because they represent the majority culture and for some Roma women medical treatment may conflict with the Roma rules of hygiene and modesty. Moreover, social disorganisation and poverty are often underlying causes for reduced access to information, especially in isolated Roma communities. Many pregnant Roma women (including underage Roma mothers) are not registered with a family physician and fail to go through pre-natal check ups (pregnant women only go for

medical check-ups when something is going wrong) because of lack of information and cultural barriers such as lack of trust in professional care and the difficulties for Roma women to discuss their health problems with strangers, especially if they are men.

Access to services is also obstructed by *language problems*. The Roma language lacks many specific words in the fields of medicine, health and social care.

Roma people also feel excluded by the negative attitudes/racism/discrimination of some healthcare workers and hospitals. According to the 2003 European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia report 'Breaking the barriers — access of Roma women to public health'<sup>(168)</sup> discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes are key factors that block access of Roma to the healthcare system.

On the other hand, Roma women are primary care providers within their families and communities and also the beneficiaries of healthcare services (going to the hospital to give birth for example) and, often, they represent the main liaising figure between their families/communities and these services. For this reason, many programmes aiming at providing social and health services to the Roma communities often involve Roma women as cultural mediators, as is the case with Romania (presented as a good practice in Chapter 8).

Access to the healthcare system is 'a prerequisite for good health without which full participation in the social, economic and political life cannot be enjoyed: it is inseparable from access to public services such as education, housing and social protection, and a precondition to accessing and maintaining employment. Ensuring access to healthcare for Roma women is thus a key element in ensuring their broader social engagement and social inclusion. For both moral and practical reasons it is in the interest not only of Roma women themselves, but their families, communities and their wider society that their good health is ensured.' (European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia report 'Breaking the barriers — access of Roma women to public health'<sup>(169)</sup>).

(167) European Roma Rights Centre (2006), *The Disgrace of Health Care for Roma in Europe*, Budapest. [http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/roma/articles\\_publications/publications/ambulance\\_20061004/ambulance\\_20061004.pdf](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/health/focus/roma/articles_publications/publications/ambulance_20061004/ambulance_20061004.pdf)

(168) European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia(2003b), *Breaking the barriers — Romani women and access to public healthcare*, Vienna. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications\\_reports/pub\\_tr\\_romaniwomen\\_healthcare\\_03\\_en.htm](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/pub_tr_romaniwomen_healthcare_03_en.htm)

(169) European monitoring centre on racism and xenophobia (2003b), *Breaking the barriers — Romani women and access to public healthcare*, Vienna. [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications\\_reports/pub\\_tr\\_romaniwomen\\_healthcare\\_03\\_en.htm](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/pub_tr_romaniwomen_healthcare_03_en.htm)

## Examples across Europe: Roma women's access to healthcare services

### Belgium

People lacking legal status in Belgium have the right to 'urgent medical assistance' which covers preventive and curative health measures such as surgery, delivery, medical examination, physiotherapy, medicines, etc. To get access to the 'urgent medical assistance', these people have to provide an address. Some are afraid of this (fear of eviction) and refuse. It should be noted that this fear is not justified as the CPAS (Public Centres for Social Action) are obliged to maintain professional secrecy and not to communicate any information to the public authorities. It seems from studies that Roma women are in contact with the specific services for children (*ONE or Kind en Gezind*). These public organisations provide free medical services for young children and vaccinations. For Roma women this is a potentially important contact point with other services, for example to the CPAS to obtain urgent medical assistance. With regard to Roma women, use of contraceptives <sup>(1)</sup> is not a usual solution. Abortions are still requested as a method of 'birth control' even if there is a tendency for this to decrease. The pregnancies of Roma women are generally not followed up well. The women do not go to the doctor for regular check-ups. This is particularly true if the scan reveals that the baby will be a girl. As in other cultures, having a boy is more important for Roma families. Pregnant women only go for medical check-ups when something is going wrong. This results in more miscarriages or malformation of children. Isolated pregnant women have nutritional problems and lack adequate vitamins (such as iron) <sup>(2)</sup>.

### Bulgaria

According to the law on health insurance registered unemployed and people receiving social benefits are insured by the state through the budget. Any Roma who for various reasons do not belong to those two groups lack health insurance rights and are obliged to pay for medical check-ups, hospital treatment and medicines. According to the Ministry of Health estimates almost half of all the Roma are not covered by health insurance. However, the legislation is not applied so rigorously and Roma people are not usually denied access to health services in these cases.

Roma women are characterised by very early marriages, birth of the first child in juvenile age and following births with short intervals in-between. Premature births are risk factors for severe congenital disorders, high child mortality in the first year of life and high mother mortality. The average life expectancy of Roma people is over 10 years less than the average for the country. Such negative tendencies (high morbidity, high mortality, low life expectancy) have been observed for over 15 years but have worsened over the last few years. A specific problem with the people of Roma origin is insufficient coverage of children with immunisation, and hence the occurrence of diseases no longer affecting ethnic Bulgarians.

Further problems arise from the negative attitudes towards Roma displayed by the staff in medical institutions. In addition the situation is further aggravated by the segregation of Roma in medical facilities. Residential segregation puts the Roma at a greater physical distance from healthcare facilities, and they often live in areas without a general practitioner in the vicinity.

### Finland

Romani culture is marked by the strength of support and security provided by the family. A person is foremost part of the near family, wider family and community. This defines his or her attitude to sickness, health and death. Romani people will consider themselves healthy so long as whatever illnesses or handicaps they suffer do not pose too much of an obstacle. It is usual for the family to provide care for sick or disabled members in preference to institutional care.

The Roma people use healthcare services less than the rest of the population: they have reservations about healthcare because it represents the majority culture, and resent medical treatment if they think it will conflict with the Romani rules of hygiene and modesty. Access to services is also hindered by language problems. The Romani language lacks many specialised words in the fields of medicine, health and social care. In many places the Roma have chosen volunteers among themselves who help the others to communicate with the authorities and healthcare professionals <sup>(3)</sup>.

### France

A recent report of Médecins du monde <sup>(4)</sup> shows that for Roma women only one in two pregnancies leads to the birth of a living baby. The average age of the first pregnancy is 17 years and only 8.3 % of pregnant women see a doctor. Only one in ten Roma women use contraception and thus many of them use abortion to limit the number of their children (43 % of Roma seen by the MDM team had abortions).

### Germany

According to the law on entitlement to benefits for asylum seekers, all foreigners living in Germany and who have no health insurance are entitled to medical and dental assistance in case of acute illness. This applies to asylum-seekers, tolerated foreigners and illegal residents. Nursing care and help from midwives is granted for expectant mothers and women in childbed. Thus foreign

(1) Regular use of medicine is difficult for Roma people, so daily contraception through medicine is not popular.

(2) This situation can drive them to have a miscarriage.

(3) Viljanen M.A., Hagert T. and Blomerus S. (2007), *Romanit suomalaisessa terveydenhuollossa: tasa-arvon ansat. Duodecim*, No 123(4), p. 458–66.

(4) MDM 2007, quoted in Chevallereau E. (2008), *Des femmes roms disent leurs maux*, Le Monde, 10 April 2008.

Roma (like all other foreigners without permanent residence permits) receive basic medical treatment but not if they are forced to leave the country, in which case they are completely excluded from social services and healthcare. If they need medical treatment they have to pay for it. Some initiatives on the local level provide support to this group of people.

### **Greece**

The health of many Roma in Greece is generally poor, due to a combination of inhuman living conditions in substandard and exposed Romani settlements, poverty among a high number of Roma, high levels of illiteracy, lack of education, and in many cases lack of funds for medical treatment. A potential indicator of the health problems the Roma face can be their life expectancy. Moreover, many Roma lack basic identity documents, making it impossible for them to claim basic healthcare and/or social benefits. The situation of Muslim Romani women in western Thrace is even more problematic. During the period 1997–2000, out of a total of 1 225 pregnant women that visited the Komotini State Hospital, 152 were 13–18-year-old mothers belonging to the Muslim minority. 28 of the mothers were under 15 years of age; only 28 out of 152 had been seeing an obstetrician regularly before childbirth<sup>(5)</sup>. Another study<sup>(6)</sup> reported that among the Romani mothers, 40 % gave birth to their first child at the age of 12–16 years and another 50 % between 17 and 21 years. Local differentiations could be observed: in a study in Athens<sup>(7)</sup> relatively few Romani women who gave birth before their 20th birthday were encountered. The Roma living in Athens (and in major urban centres in general) tend to adopt mainstream social practices faster than Roma living in the countryside, while sub-groups of Roma are characterised by different approaches to health issues<sup>(8)</sup>. Hospital staff tend to discriminate against the Roma. More specifically, staff in charge of ingoing and outgoing patients (security guards, secretaries, etc) may seek to prevent Romani women from gaining entry, raising various reasons. This can lead in turn to Romani women adopting an aggressive stance (shouting, gesticulating) that might reinforce existing stereotypes regarding the 'unruly' character of the Roma<sup>(9)</sup>.

### **Romania**

Roma women are the primary care providers within their families and communities but also beneficiaries of healthcare services and, often, the main liaising figure between their families/communities and these services. On the other hand, Roma women tend to neglect their own health while having to cope with other forms of exclusion from housing, education and other public goods. Inappropriate housing with no access to running water and poor hygiene contribute to poor health and increase vulnerability to transmissible diseases. These factors hinder the personal development of Roma women and, as a result, the development of their communities. There is very limited use of family planning services among the Roma, partly explained by cultural beliefs that discourage the use of contraception. Early and frequent pregnancies place Roma women at particular health risks, aggravated by poor access to health services and poverty, with a negative influence on the life expectancy of Roma women. In addition to health risks, early and numerous births contribute to the exclusion of Roma women from education and labour market participation. The infant mortality rate for the Roma in Romania is four times higher than the national average. Many pregnant Roma women (including underage Roma mothers) do not contribute to the health insurance system, are not registered with a family physician and fail to go through pre-natal checkups.

### **Slovakia**

The estimated life expectancy is approximately seven years less for Roma men and five years less for Roma women than for the majority population. Mortality is extremely high among both children and adults. The Roma infant mortality rate is roughly twice as high as the average in Slovakia<sup>(10)</sup>. Many Roma children have insufficient access to healthcare. In some areas of the country vaccination does not reach 90 % of the children. Insufficient hygienic conditions in segregated settlements have allowed for the reappearance of diseases which seemed to have been eliminated, like tuberculosis and infectious diseases of the upper respiratory system. A special vaccination programme was promoted in 2005 against hepatitis A for 7,500 children in the localities with extremely low hygienic standards.

In the last few years the case of alleged violent sterilisation of Roma women in a hospital located in East Slovakia has attracted huge public attention. The group of young Roma women claimed that without their permission they had been sterilised in the hospital. The investigation was carried out at various levels and took a very long time. The final judgment of the court rejected the claim of the Roma women, even though there were many doubts in this case.

(5) Pantazi et. al. (2000), *Fifth Scientific Meeting of Pediatricians of eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Aegean Islands and Cyprus*, September 2000. <http://utopia.duth.gr/~iandroul/synedrio5a.html#14>

(6) Panayote S, GHM and MRG-G. (2004), *Program for the Protection of the Health of Gypsy Children*. Glyka Nera.

(7) Alexandrakis C. and McMurray D. (2008), *Preliminary Report: Greek Roma Women and Access to Healthcare*, MERIA (Minority Equality Research).

(8) The majority of the Roma living in Athens belong to the 'Chalkidaioi' group of Roma, so called because they originated from the town of Chalkida, the capital of the Evoia Prefecture. The Chalkidaioi Roma do not speak Romani and usually do not set up their settlements close to those of the 'pure' Roma while they present many cultural traits not shared by other Roma. For example, the Romani women belonging to the 'Chalkidaioi' group appear to be pathologically obsessed with cleaning tasks, to the extent that other Romani women hold them up as a paradigm of cleanliness. Source: Greek EGSI Network national report, 2008.

(9) Another source of friction between Roma patients and hospital staff are the particularities of the former, such as the fact that the Roma patient is almost invariably escorted by numerous close relatives who also want to gain access to the hospital with him/her. Antigone (2007), *Problems of discrimination in the labour market and access to health and care sectors, proceedings of sixth roundtable discussion*. <http://www.antigone.gr/RoundTables/2007/proceedings.doc>

(10) A number of children freeze to death every winter.

Chronic illnesses affect Roma men and women in different ways: the women present a much higher prevalence of cardiovascular disorders, endocrinal disorders and infectious diseases, while the men present a much higher prevalence of disorders of the nervous system, joint and ligament disorders <sup>(11)</sup>.

### **Spain**

Life expectancy among the Roma community is 8–9 years less than the average for the Spanish population. The fact that the proportion of women among the Roma population is lower than the average may also evidence lower life expectancy among women, although this hypothesis has not yet been explicitly proved. Infant mortality is 1.4 times higher than the national average. Other aspects: a) deficient infant nutrition and vaccination; b) persistence of certain otherwise eradicated diseases (such as leprosy) and chronic diseases; c) high rates of congenital and genetic diseases, due to the high incidence of marriages between close relatives.

Early marriages and child birth among the Roma population has perceivable consequences for children and women: the clear differentiation of gender roles in this community signifies greater family burdens for women and hence certain worsening of their health conditions and early aging.

### **UK**

Gypsies and Irish Travellers are more prone to ill-health when compared to the lowest socio-economic population groups. They are 'more likely to have long-term illnesses, health problems or disability that limits their daily activities or work' and 'have a greater prevalence of self-reported chest-pain, respiratory problems, arthritis and anxiety and depression' <sup>(12)</sup>. There is also evidence of health problems due to adverse environmental conditions: accidents, gastro-enteritis, upper-respiratory infections and middle-ear infections <sup>(13)</sup>. The main explanation given for their poor health is associated with how and where they live and the degree of control they have in influencing these conditions. On the other hand there are higher levels of anxiety and depression among those living in permanent housing due to a sense of isolation. Poor health is also associated with poor access to medical services. The nomadic tradition or instances of insecure tenure on sites means that Gypsies and Irish Travellers do not register with general practitioners. The consequence is that Gypsy and Irish Travellers often use accident and emergency services at hospitals. Reference is also made to a culture which promotes 'pride in self-reliance' and 'more trust in family carers rather than in professional care' <sup>(14)</sup>. Maternal health among Gypsy and Travellers is much worse than among the UK population and other minority ethnic groups: a study by Parry et al (2007) <sup>(15)</sup> showed that Gypsy and Traveller mothers had more pregnancies and deliveries but also experienced more miscarriages and the death of children. In a sample of 150 Gypsy and Traveller women, 29 % had experienced one or more miscarriages (compared with 16 % for the comparator group) and 6.2 % had experienced the death of a child (compared with none in the comparator group) <sup>(16)</sup>. They have greater and more frequent feelings of anxiety and depression than other groups of women or men.

Most Gypsy and Travellers have modesty rules for women which say that they should not discuss sex, pregnancy and birth, their health or their bodies in front of men, children or strangers and they should not reveal their bodies to others (YWCA 2004: 5). This acts as a barrier to seeking out health services.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(11) UNDP (2006), *At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe*, Bratislava, p. 33.  
[http://europeandcis.undp.org/uploads/public/File/rbec\\_web/vgr/vuln\\_rep\\_all.pdf](http://europeandcis.undp.org/uploads/public/File/rbec_web/vgr/vuln_rep_all.pdf)

(12) Van Cleemput (2007), *Health Impact of Gypsy Sites Policy in the UK*, Social Policy and Society, No 7(1), pp. 103–17.

(13) Parry, G. et al. (2007), *Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*, Journal of Epidemiological Community Health No 61, pp. 198–204.

(14) Parry, G. et al. (2004), *The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*. Summary of a report to the Department of Health, University of Sheffield, Sheffield.

(15) Parry, G. et al. (2007), *Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*, Journal of Epidemiological Community Health, No 61, pp. 198–204.

(16) Parry, G. et al. (2007), *Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers in England*, Journal of Epidemiological Community Health No 61, pp. 198–204.

#### **6.1.4. Access to the long-term care system**

Traditionally, Roma family ties are strong and institutionalisation can be considered an extreme alternative for older family members. Normally, Roma women are first expected to care for other dependent family members in addition to other work-related or domestic responsibilities. Elderly people, men and women alike, enjoy a high social status in Roma communities. This is one of the reasons why elderly people are accustomed to remaining with the family in old age and do not apply for long-term care services, even in the cases where these services are accessible/affordable.

For example, in Spain, as in many other countries, where pensions and old-age benefits are largely linked with the employment history, the unfavourable socio-economic conditions of the Roma population create a particularly disadvantaged situation with regard to access to long-term care services, as all the costs must be borne by the family members. When the family is in no condition to afford such services, the women have to bear all the burden of assistance through personal work. Due to their unclear residential status and their difficulties in entering the regular labour market, many Roma may have difficult access to the regular pension scheme and entitlement to pensions or subsidised care,

remaining dependent on social benefits and family members. No formal difficulties appear for the Roma who are citizens or legally resident: they should be able to receive the same benefits when they are ill or old as all employees. Moreover, as the level of pension and support of older people is largely dependent on their working hours and duration of employment, women, who are often working discontinuously, part-time, in marginal employment, in the grey or black economy, frequently face additional disadvantages in their access to long-term care.

#### 6.1.5. Access to social benefits

The high inactivity and unemployment rates lead to marked dependency on social welfare benefits; in other cases informal and occasional employment prevents the Roma from accessing unemployment benefits or other social security/contribution-based benefits (i.e. child raising allowance), especially in countries where social benefits are related to the employment status and social assistance is residential. This is particularly the case for Roma women, who are more likely than Roma men to be inactive or unemployed and, if employed, to be employed in a weaker position (the black or grey economy, for example). The difficulties in accessing social care services, as women have responsibility for the family, once again leave the care burden completely on the shoulders of the Roma women: they have the final responsibility to find and provide 'subsistence' to children. As also highlighted by the 2006 European Parliament report on 'Economic aspects of the condition of Roma women' <sup>(170)</sup>, Roma women in particular are largely dependent on welfare aid, due to poverty, unemployment, underemployment and social exclusion.

EGGSI Network national reports underline the following as the main issues relating to the access to social benefits.

- a. Lack of identity documents accounts for the limited access of some Roma communities to social assistance and other benefits. Moreover children born to parents married according to traditional Roma practices and not registered with the national authority lack identity documents and are therefore not eligible for social assistance or other kinds of support.
- b. Roma women, in particular, if belonging to communities with no authorised legal status still fear that child welfare services may take away their children and so do not apply for any support even in the most dramatic situations.
- c. Access to social services is difficult due also to the physical location of many settlements which have poor access to essential services, such as schools, hospitals, public transport.
- d. Lack of knowledge about entitlement and illiteracy are other important causes of non-access to social services, as these often involve complex access procedures.
- e. Romani marriages are not always registered. This means that divorces from traditional marriages leave the women even more vulnerable and unprotected: when undeclared marriages dissolve they leave a large number of single mothers, caring for a large number of children each, with minimal financial help from the state and no effective social care.

### Examples across Europe: The access of Roma to social benefits

#### **Belgium**

Roma legally established in Belgium have access to social assistance and generally have a good knowledge of the support provided by the CPAS (Public Centres for Social Action). The support can be: cash support, assistance for families, food aid (distribution centre for food or clothing parcels). In Flanders and Brussels they can also access the CAW (Centrum for algemene welzijn — Centre for general well-being) — a centre that links up with all local social service providers. Illegal Roma do not have access to these social benefits and have difficulties in accessing centres distributing free food or social restaurants. Since 2004 a new distribution centre has been running in Brussels that provides material help to pregnant women and families with children under 12 years old. This help is provided under the condition that children are registered at school.

#### **Bulgaria**

The social assistance policy implemented to date is based on the universal principle that every Bulgarian citizen is entitled to social protection whenever unable to satisfy their basic vital needs. The existing system makes it possible to accumulate entitlements under various laws and regulations, which leads to a more favourable position among certain groups of the

(170) European Parliament (2006), *Economic aspects of the condition of Roma women, Brussels*.



population. This process of entitlements is a disincentive to work and can encourage abuse of the system: in order to solve this problem an amendment to the regulation of the implementation of the law on social assistance was introduced on 1 January 2008. According to the new regulation all unemployed persons will receive welfare benefits only if they participate in programmes for subsidised employment run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Although there is no exact information on the number of Roma receiving welfare benefits we can assume that it is significant. Between 2001 and 2002 based on an UNDP survey <sup>(1)</sup> the sources of income for Roma in Bulgaria were as follows: 49 % of the respondents had social benefits as a source of income during the last six months, 39 % mentioned pensions of the elderly, 34 % receive children allowances, and 32 % subsist through some temporary non-contracted job. Only 22 % of the respondents mention work on a regular labour contract as a source of income during the last six months and 6 % receive a regular wage without a labour contract. Like other groups, most of them prefer to have jobs rather than social assistance.

#### **Germany**

Tolerated refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to benefits which are 30 % below the general income support level. This group of people have no entitlement to children's allowances, maintenance or educational grants and they are not entitled to participate in state-funded language- or integration-classes <sup>(2)</sup>. This might explain the lack of language skills some Roma people show, which then becomes a labour market barrier.

#### **Spain**

The development of the Spanish welfare state through an increasing supply of social benefits has allowed the Roma community to enhance their purchasing power and acquire a better degree of protection. The extent to which Roma families depend on such social benefits has not been addressed at the national level, although some regional studies, whose main conclusions have been gathered in the report by the MLSI <sup>(3)</sup>, may shed some light on regional disparities in this respect. In the autonomous community of Galicia (north-west) 62 % of the Roma families receive some kind of social benefits, whereas in the provinces of Zamora and León (centre) the proportion is 30 % and 50 % respectively. 34 % of the Roma population in Navarra receive support from the minimum income for insertion (a non-contributory social benefit provided by autonomous communities). The latest study at the national level, carried out in 1999, indicates that only 9.8 % of the Roma population received benefits from the minimum income for insertion. None of the studies mentioned provide for data disaggregated by sex; hence it is difficult to diagnose the disadvantage of Roma women in this respect.

#### **Romania**

The poverty rate among Roma is significantly higher than for the rest of the population. 52.2 % of the Roma (but only 9.3 % of the Romanian population) are below the severe poverty line, and 75.1 % are under the standard poverty line <sup>(4)</sup>. Moreover, high unemployment rates among Roma in general and Roma women in particular are causes of high levels of dependency on social welfare benefits. Social assistance cash benefits are an important source of income for many poor Roma families: around 16 % of the Roma are estimated to be predominantly reliant on state support for their survival.

Lack of identity documents is a very significant problem related to accessing social assistance and other benefits. Children born to parents who married according to traditional Roma practices and failed to register the marriage with the Romanian authorities lack identity documents and so officially are not eligible for social assistance or other kinds of support. Attention should also be paid to eliminating other barriers to social assistance (such as complex resource-consuming procedures that take a long time to complete) and ensuring equal coverage and access to social assistance for the Roma population living in isolated/rural areas. Difficulties in accessing social assistance benefits may cause an additional burden on Roma women, who are usually in the position to administer the family budget and find ways to stretch it further. High unemployment rates among Roma women and their specific situation on the labour market with informal, occasional employment prevent them from accessing unemployment or other social security/contribution-based benefits (e.g. child rearing allowance). The high incidence of traditional Roma marriages that are not always officially registered causes major disadvantages to Roma women in terms of spouse-based eligibility for survivor pensions and/or other related benefits.

#### **Slovakia**

According to the UNDP 'Report on the living conditions of Roma in Slovakia' <sup>(5)</sup> within the Roma population there is a very high rate of dependency on social assistance, since nearly 73 % of households receive some sort of monthly social benefit related to material needs. Despite this, Roma households do not make full use of the instruments available in the material-assistance system; a very small number of Roma households receive a housing allowance, because many Roma households do not meet the conditions for claiming benefits.

(1) see the website: Vulnerable groups in central and eastern Europe. <http://vulnerability.undp.sk>

(2) Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin (2007), *Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse einer Studie Zur Lage von Kindern aus Roma-Familien in Deutschland*, on behalf of Unicef, Berlin, p. 14.

(3) Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (2007), *Report on social condition and change trends in Roma population. A first approach*. Madrid.

(4) Commission Antipoverty and Promoting Social Inclusion (2002).

(5) Filadelfiová, J., Gerbery, D. and Škobla, D. (2006), *Report on living conditions of Roma in Slovakia*, UNDP, Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent State, Bratislava.



### **Finland**

The Roma people have severe unemployment problems in Finland due to the prejudices of employers. Because of this, the Roma are greatly dependent on social benefits that provide them with basic income and reasonable living conditions. The Roma people are entitled to the same social benefits as the rest of the population. However, insufficient knowledge of the complex Finnish welfare system often hinders the full use of these benefits for less- educated Roma people. It can also be difficult for them to apply for social benefits due to lack of reading and writing skills.

Some of the Roma are still wary of the authorities, and especially of those working for the child welfare services. The Roma are afraid that if they talk about their problems the authorities will take away their children.

In Romani culture, after giving birth a mother has a month-long period during which she and the baby cannot access the kitchen, use the family kitchenware or touch the common food supplies. This causes problems especially for single mothers. They would require home and family services which are not always available or the mothers are not aware of them. Another option is to stay in a home for unmarried mothers. The social services are not always aware of these intensive services that single Roma mothers need for the first month after having a baby.

In Finland a respected Roma woman is supposed to wear traditional Romani dress. The local authorities have different practices concerning the use of social benefits for purchase of the dress. The amount of benefit granted and the frequency with which it is granted varies from one municipality to another. This puts Roma women in different positions depending where they live.

### **UK**

Gypsy and Irish Travellers' access to public services and welfare is not routinely monitored and no data are available. However, reference is made in the qualitative research of very poor access to public services and welfare. This is attributed to the physical location of many caravan sites which have poor access to essential services such as doctors' surgeries and hospitals, schools and libraries and public transport links. It is also widely assumed that there is a low take-up of welfare benefits by Gypsies and Irish Travellers because of lack of knowledge about entitlement and illiteracy <sup>(6)</sup>.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(6) Commission for Racial Equality (2004), *Gypsies and Travellers: A strategy for the CRE, 2004–07*, London, p. 12

### **6.1.6. Access to employment, job quality and working conditions**

The 2006 European Parliament report 'Economic aspects of the condition of Roma women' <sup>(171)</sup> emphasises that:

- a. the unemployment rate among adult Roma women is higher than that of the rest of the population;
- b. Roma women face prejudice in hiring, promotion and wages; and
- c. they receive lower wages than the rest of the population.

The EGGSI Network national reports show clearly that Roma communities usually present higher levels of unemployment given the low level of education and the intermittent work habits resulting from only brief school attendance, long-term unemployment and lack of stable housing. Prejudice and discrimination in the labour market are also obstacles, with employers and co-workers often not accepting Roma workers. In addition, Roma, and Roma women in particular, have

difficulties in accessing employment services and labour market programmes due to lack of information, scant awareness on the part of the service providers of the barriers and difficulties they face, and lack of a permanent address. Roma women in particular have only limited employment opportunities.

Self-employment constitutes one of the most traditional and frequent forms of occupation among the Roma. In Spain, according to the Roma Secretariat Foundation <sup>(172)</sup>, nearly 50 % of the Roma employed reported to be self-employed or to collaborate in the family business. Since these activities are frequently performed under precarious conditions, it is important that specific measures promote entrepreneurship and the creation of sustainable businesses — especially among women, whose participation in the labour market as self-employed is much higher than in the male Roma population.

The disadvantages Roma women face on the labour market, often related to their traditional domestic role in the family and their frequent pregnancies, as well as to their lack of qualifications and the prejudice they face, are clearly reflected, for example, in

(171) European Parliament (2006), *Economic Aspects of the Condition of Roma Women*, Brussels. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=8993#search=%20roma%20>

(172) Roma Secretariat Foundation (2004), *Discriminación y barreras para el acceso de la población gitana a la formación y al empleo*. Revista Bimestral de la FSG, No 34–35, April–July 2006.

the unemployment data from Romania. It shows that the incidence of the unemployed among 25- to 54-year-old Roma women is four times higher than for women belonging to the majority population (173). Roma women's employment rate is also analysed by the peer review report 'Feeding in' and 'Feeding out', and integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities, Key lessons (174), which ascertains that the extensive unemployment of Roma women is not a temporary phase but rather a 'long-term or ongoing' situation.

The EGSSI Network national reports evidence that throughout Europe Roma women are most often

employed in auxiliary, unskilled, physically demanding work, and in seasonal and occasional labour in services (like cleaning) in the black or grey economy, which provide very low wages and deny them access to social security benefits. Begging is also predominantly performed by women and children in large urban areas, while subsistence farming is a primarily female activity in rural areas. The social costs of the lack of secure jobs are particularly serious for the most vulnerable among Roma women, namely single mothers, widowed women and women victims of domestic violence, who lack the support of the community and may find themselves caught up in prostitution and/or trafficking.

### Examples of Roma women's access to work across Europe

#### Belgium

Roma women work mainly in the informal sector, typically in jobs such as the clothing industry, cleaning, or work in small shops. Legally established Roma people in Belgium mention difficulties in accessing training and jobs due to their Roma identity, due also to the difficulty that emerges from the prerequisite of language proficiency to access training and jobs even where there is a shortage of labour. It seems more difficult for men than for women to access jobs (women work as cleaners or in hotels), though traditionally women take care of the home and the men work. If the women work it is usually because of the need to provide food for the family.

#### Bulgaria

Unemployment rates are very high for the Roma, and even more so for Roma women. It is estimated that 80 % of Roma women are unemployed and 66 % have never held a paid job, in contrast to 34 % of the Roma men. Only 7.5 % of the Roma have permanent jobs, 34 % depend entirely on social benefits and 25 % rely on the income of another household member (1). A survey (2) evidenced that 69 % of the women have no job and 31 % have a job which is very important for the family budget. More than a half of all interviewed women are long-term unemployed (for more than five years). The main reasons are as follows: lack of job, taking care of children, low level of education.

According to a recent survey (3) carried out in November/December 2007 only 15 % of the Roma population in Bulgaria work based on a full-time contract; 18 % have part-time jobs. The share of unemployed is the highest — 50 % and half of them are women. Most of those people are unemployed for more than one year. The survey also indicates some gender-related differences. As for remuneration, 59 % of all the women admit there is gender-based differentiation. This is also true for Roma women (60 %).

#### Germany

A high proportion of Sinti and Roma in Germany have no or only limited access to the formal labour market because of discrimination or because of lack of language skills, education and training, which leads to poverty, exclusion and social deprivation. Lack of school qualifications also makes labour market access very difficult for women who have grown up in Germany. Women often leave school before acquiring basic skills in writing, reading and mathematics because their families live traditional gender roles: the women are thus expected to marry and become mothers early (4).

(1) European Commission (2006a), *Gender inequalities in the risks of poverty and social exclusion for disadvantaged groups in thirty European countries*, report prepared by the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=1997&langId=en>

(2) Kyuchkov H. (2006), *Educational Status of Roma Women*, Sofia.

(3) Commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on attitudes and expectations of Roma Women in a family and work environment.

(4) Arbeitsgruppe Roma und Sinti (2007), *Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt für Roma und Sinti: Informationen zur beruflichen Integration von Roma und Sinti in Deutschland*, Berlin, p. 6, 10. [http://www.equal-asyl.de/fileadmin/dokumente/arbeitsmarkt\\_fuer\\_sinti\\_und\\_fuer\\_roma.pdf](http://www.equal-asyl.de/fileadmin/dokumente/arbeitsmarkt_fuer_sinti_und_fuer_roma.pdf)

(173) United Nations Development Program (2005), *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope*, Bratislava.

(174) Begg I. and Marlier E. (2006), *'Feeding in' and 'Feeding out', and integrating immigrants and ethnic minorities, Key lessons*, Peer review and assessment in social inclusion. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels.

### **Spain**

Most of the common indicators of the labour market show a clear disadvantage of the Roma community in the labour market, when compared to the overall population. Gender analysis of these indicators denotes a structure similar to that observed for the overall population, since both the employment and activity rates are lower among the women, whereas unemployment, temporality and part-time work yield better results among the men. The gender gap shown with each of these indicators does not provide strong evidence to support the hypothesis that Roma women are more disadvantaged than the rest of the female population in terms of the labour market. Concerning the perception of discriminatory practices in the labour market 45 % of surveyed individuals stated sensations of being discriminated at some point and 80 % perceived some kind of discrimination during the process of job search. One-third of the Roma unemployed explicitly alleged their ethnic condition as the main cause of their unemployment situation <sup>(5)</sup>.

### **Italy**

Differences between Sinti and Roma are also expressed in job typologies. Sinti communities have traditionally been horse trainers, merry-go-round-keepers, circus artists and performers. Actually, some of them have 'transformed into scrap-merchants, second-hand car dealers or sellers of artificial bonsai' <sup>(6)</sup>. The southern Italian Roma used to work primarily as blacksmiths and horse-breeders and dealers. Trying to adapt themselves to new economic demands, the Southern Roma abandoned their traditional occupations, turning to various precarious activities. Some Romanian Roma (Roma Rudari and Rumuni) are still 'occupied with the retail trade and the production of wooden articles, and the women and children chiefly sell flowers.' (Mattioli: 1989 <sup>(7)</sup>). In some of the Yugoslav, Romanian and Albanian Roma groups, and recently among poor southern Italian Roma, begging represents the principal work activity. In these groups, the beggars are almost exclusively women and small children.

### **Romania**

A recent study of the Open Society Foundation <sup>(8)</sup> carried out within the programme for Roma participation shows that 67.9 % of the Roma women are housewives and only 11 % of the Roma women are officially employed, the reason being multiple discrimination according to the answers of 58.4 % of the interviewed women; 43 % of the Roma women interviewed consider they do not have equal rights with Roma men, the reason being the difference in social status between women and men and/or traditions. Furthermore, among 83 % of the Roma women surveyed the expectations are that the man be the main contributor to the family budget. Of the Roma women who were gainfully employed, 54 % said that the employment was informal, unreported, and based only on verbal agreements with their employers.

Access to employment is still difficult for Roma women. A recent study <sup>(9)</sup> shows that 35 % of the Roma women in Romania aged between 25–54 years are not employed (the number is four times higher than that of unemployed women belonging to the majority population). The reason behind these figures is low level of education, lack of job training, but also discrimination on the employer's part. At the national level policies are developed to increase employment for the Roma including the women. Due to traditional emphasis on their domestic role and lower educational attainment Roma women are constrained even more than men to a limited range of low-paid and insecure jobs, often on the black market (street cleaning, street vendors, domestic or farm work) preventing them from access to social security benefits (unemployment benefit, maternity leave, pension). As many Roma women in Romania live in rural areas subsistence farming is the main activity and although statistically they count as 'people occupied in agriculture' in actual fact they are neither employed nor unemployed. Active labour market policies are expected to find solutions and clarify the ambiguity of their status ensuring decent pay for those who are employed or access to social assistance for those who are not.

In the absence of a secure job, Roma women who are single mothers, widows, or those who have escaped domestic violence face particularly acute problems when trying to secure the economic well-being of their household.

### **Slovakia**

The massive, very long-term unemployment of the Roma population is reaching 80–100 % in many parts of eastern Slovakia, and acquires an ethno-cultural context in local conditions. The near or even complete lack of qualification, the lack of education and the illiteracy of a considerable part of the Roma are the reasons for their serious social decline subsequent to 1989 with the deep-reaching economic changes that came about. In the course of economic transformation the Roma have gradually fallen into categories of unqualified, poorly trained jobs which are ineffective and uneconomical today.

As regards the employment of Roma women, the traditional gender division of labour is still very frequent in the Roma families. The role of women is strongly connected with child-bearing and the provision of care and young girls are brought up for this role from an early age. The position of the woman in the family is very strong and she is not expected to earn money outside home. Roma women belong to the group of non-qualified labour force and it is very difficult for them to enter the labour market. Stigmatisation of women is even strengthened by the tradition that the husband usually does not allow the wife to work outside the home.

(5) Roma Secretariat Foundation (2006), *El acceso del alumnado gitano a la enseñanza secundaria. Resumen de resultados y primeras conclusiones*, Revista Bimestral de la FSG, No 34–35, April-July 2006.

(6) Dragutinovic, R. (2000), *Kanjarija. Storia vissuta dei rom dasikhanè in Italia*, Firenze, p. 10.

(7) Mattioli G. (1989), *Romi i romologija u Italiji, in Jezik i kultura Roma. Međunarodni naučni skup* (Romani language and culture. International symposium), Sarajevo, 9–11.VI.1986, Institut za proučavanje nacionalnih odnosa, Sarajevo.

(8) Open Society Foundation (2006a), *Broadening the agenda — the Status of Roma women in Romania*, Brussels.

(9) United Nations Development Program (2005), *Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope*, Bratislava.

**Finland**

Unemployment is a major problem among the Roma in Finland. This is mainly due to the lower-than-average level of education and the widespread prejudice that the Roma face on the part of employers. Romani people work diversely in all professional fields — for instance as cooks, flight attendants, nurses, athletes, journalists, and so on. The traditional professions, such as those of artists, horse breeders and artisans, are still popular among the Roma. Many skilled Roma experience severe difficulties when it comes to recruitment, as apprenticeships or traineeships are hard to come by due to employer prejudice. Most of the working Roma people — both men and women — have jobs that are funded by either the Finnish State or the EU. Finding a job in the private sector is still a challenge to the Finnish Roma population. The Romani people continue to face greater exclusion from the job market than the majority population. It is a constant challenge to break down prejudices and allow Romani people equal opportunities to employment. The Romani women participate less in the working life than Finnish women in general as the children are usually taken care of at home. The Romani culture also attaches great value to the women's role in home maintenance. However, nowadays Romani women can participate in working life, though finding a job is not easy due to employer prejudice. Romani dress may cause problems for Roma women in finding employment. This can compromise the possibility to work in certain jobs in which the employer expects employees to wear work outfits.

**UK**

There is a long tradition of self-employment in the UK Gypsy Traveller community, finding work as licensed hawkers or pedlars, basket makers, horse dealers and seasonal agricultural labourers. These days many Gypsies and Irish Travellers are landscape gardeners, motor-trade workers, scrap-metal dealers or tree fellers<sup>(10)</sup>. Gypsies and Travellers receive little financial help or advice on setting up businesses. Reference is made in the literature to high levels of unemployment among Gypsies and Travellers but data on the employment and unemployment status of Gypsies and Travellers are scarce as they are not included in the Labour Force Survey. The Commission for Racial Equality's Gypsy and Traveller strategy (2004) highlights that unemployment is high among the community and that few of the general programmes to tackle unemployment have initiatives or schemes for Gypsies and Travellers. They rarely use the New Deal or Jobseeker Plus.

Gypsy and Traveller women's traditional role is within the home but some Gypsy women have traditionally earned their own living by hawking (travelling to sell goods in the street) and fortune-telling. Their ability to earn a living is threatened by the reduced viability of these traditional occupations. Young women can find it hard to find employment due to a lack of qualifications and prejudice on the part of employers (YWCA 2006), or find themselves manoeuvred into caring and cleaning jobs, which are poorly paid.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008

(10) Commission for Racial Equality (2006), *Common Ground, Equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers*, Report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales, London.

**6.1.7. Access to financial services**

Access to financial services is fully determined by the economic situation of individuals or families. Roma people, and particularly Roma 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 bound to be extremely 'dangerous' debtors. Moreover, their property does not offer sufficient guarantee, e.g. for mortgage. The EGGSI Network national reports also evidence discrimination/suspicion on the part of the loaning institutions which excludes many, even when they do meet the formal financial criteria.

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 the Roma encoun-

ter in 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. Despite the lack of official information, usury is widespread in the poorest Roma settlements and is frequently organised by the Roma people. Only recently have pilot projects offering micro-credit to Roma women been implemented in some countries (such as in Spain and the 'Training and enterprise creation' project in Bulgaria presented as a good practice in chapter 8).

Facilities and provisions aimed at sustaining income such as flat income tax or tax deductions differentiated according to the wage level in force in Romania, for example, are of little benefit to Roma women (and Roma in general) as they apply mainly to employees. Considering the high unemployment rates among Roma and their work on the informal labour market, the number of Roma who may get support from these measures remains small.

## 6.2. The multiple discrimination of Roma women

Discrimination in the case of Roma women is a multiple phenomenon, often being on the basis of both ethnic origin and gender.

Occurring a minority, with a culture and living habits very different from the majority of the population in EU Member States, the Roma population are subject to negative perceptions and prejudice on the part of the non-Roma population. Roma women must, in addition, cope with the usual difficulties for social inclusion borne by the female population; difficulties which are aggravated by the specific Roma culture, based on 'traditional' strictly separated gender roles within their communities which may hamper the personal development of Roma girls and women. This is particularly true in some of the Roma communities, which have, due to their historic and cultural background, maintained strict adherence to traditional habits.

The relationship between ethnicity and gender is particularly complex for Roma women and girls, as described in the UK EGGSI Network national report <sup>(175)</sup>: 'faced with extreme hostility from outside the community, some girls and women accept traditional gender roles as an integral part of their culture. In an environment where so much of their tradition is under threat, their traditional gender role is sometimes perceived as something to hold on to. At the same time many Gypsy Traveller women and activists openly challenge these traditional gender roles and the cultural taboos that surround issues such as domestic violence.'

Roma women are disadvantaged in areas such as employment, education, healthcare and housing services, although the extent to which this is the result of a discriminatory practice is not easy to assess given the lack of data and studies on discriminatory perceptions. There is, however, agreement on the persistence of discrimination on the part of the broader national community in many respects. Cases of discrimination have been reported in many EGGSI Network national reports in the following terms:

- *Access to health services* (i.e. staff prejudices or segregation in school/health units, materni-

ties): a significant example is presented in the Hungarian EGGSI Network national report <sup>(176)</sup>: 'Investigations into the relationship between Roma women and the non-Roma working in healthcare concluded that the non-Roma majority have deep prejudices against the Roma traditions, costumes, fertility pattern, etc. They mostly have the biased view that Roma women do not have the same cultural level and are not willing to control their fertility, or live simply without rules. With regard to the biased view of the Roma fertility pattern, unlawful interference has occurred on several occasions, attacking female integrity: Hungary was one of the countries where forced sterilisation has been detected, and which should give compensation for the endured loss'. Practices in Spanish and Greek hospitals and health centres against Roma women are not unusual: 'they are laughed at, told dirty comments, yelled at for being unable to read, and reprimanded for living in dirty conditions and there is a tendency of some medical personnel to segregate Romani women in the same room' <sup>(177)</sup>.

- *Access to labour market and job opportunities* due to employers' and co-workers' prejudices and to prejudiced behaviour by local institution representatives. A particular issue, reported in Finland and the UK concerns the traditional dress Roma women tend to wear, which might cause problems in finding employment: while it is important for a Roma woman to wear the traditional dress, especially if there is a chance that she might meet other Roma people during her work, this can compromise the possibility to work in certain jobs in which the employer expects employees to wear work uniforms. The main factor behind the disadvantaged position of Roma women in the labour market is discrimination, against other aspects that have been traditionally alleged such as the difference in education and training, cultural habits, male-chauvinism of Roma families or the possibility of working alternatives according to those habits.
- *Access to education*: Discriminatory practices against Roma communities are fairly frequent but

(175) YWCA (2006), *A Long Way To Go: Young Gypsy and Traveller Women Research Briefing*, Oxford.

(176) Referring to the results of the study by Neményi M. (2001), *Egy határszerep anatómiája. Védőnők a nemi, szakmai és etnikai identitás metészéspontjában*, Új Mandátum. Budapest.

(177) European Roma Rights Centre (2004), *Shadow report of the European Roma Rights Centre on the Kingdom of Spain's*. Fifth periodic report to the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW 31st Session 6–23 July 2004.



the fact that Roma girls quit education at earlier ages than boys is hardly attributable to discriminatory practices either by educators or students, but is, rather, due to the expectation of their own families, according to the gender roles in Roma society.

- *Access to the political arena:* The Roma minority in many countries is not represented in Parliament, even in countries where the Roma represent a large minority group. Roma women are generally politically underrepresented.
  - One specific feature of discrimination against Roma women reported, for example, in Bulgaria, concerns young and *well-educated Roma women* who are at the same time discriminated by the majority of the population (being Roma) and by the ethnic minority for not respecting the traditions and the customs of the Roma community.
  - The Finnish report notes that Roma women find the *prejudice* of the majority population distressing: in shops Roma women are followed and treated disrespectfully and some restaurants do not allow Roma women to enter, especially if they are wearing the traditional dress. The Polish and Spanish reports indicate that in schools, parents prevent their children from mixing with Roma children. This prejudice, however, extends to office clerks, public officers, the police, and the local or general public opinion as having a consistent prejudice against Roma.
  - *Justice and prison policy:* in Spain, a study published by the non-governmental organisation Barañí Project<sup>(178)</sup> analyses the discriminatory practices in the criminal justice system and points out that discriminatory attitudes towards Roma have a serious impact on prosecution and conviction of Romani women. The Project also documents a disproportionate overrepresentation of Romani women in Spanish prisons.
- The most significant aspect of the situation of women in the Roma community is their unequal *position within the Roma family*. The traditional Roma family is fully patriarchal: the woman occupies a subordinate position and there is a clear division of work between the tasks of men and women. Traditionally, the man provides for the family and represents the family outside home, while the woman's role is mainly that of taking care of home and family and having responsibility for the transmission of the traditional Roma culture and ethnicity between generations. Girls start taking on adult caring roles from the age of 11; they are expected to marry young and have many children in life-long marriages. These traditional home and family duties prevent Roma women from entering jobs in the 'formal' labour market and in any case make it hard to combine work and family life.
  - Relations between men and women differ between groups and nationality: in some communities young Roma men are becoming increasingly free to choose their future wives, while in others, such as Roma groups from Romania living in Belgium, the parents still choose their future daughters-in-law. *Weddings* are celebrated traditionally (but not legally) and the parents of the girls receive money from the boys' families. The girl's virginity is very important for the honour of the whole family.
  - The Slovak EGGSI Network national report presents the problem of Roma mothers whose *children are born out of wedlock*: their share is estimated up to 50 % of all children born to Roma mothers and of these 50 % are born to mothers under 18 years of age. There is therefore a very great danger of falling into an economic exclusion trap for Roma women at an early age.
  - *Divorce/separation* is not common among the Roma, especially if there are children, and in this case the women are in the weaker position. The father usually takes custody of the children or gives them to the grandparents to provide care. The children can also stay with their mother, but this decision is taken by the husband. This is why Roma women do not readily leave their husbands, even in very difficult marriages or in cases of domestic violence.

The other important source of discrimination lies within the Roma communities and is directly connected to the role of women in Roma culture and family structure:

(178) Barañí Project (2001), *Roma women and the Spanish criminal justice system*. Madrid. <http://personales.jet.es/gea21/>



are often forced to leave school at an extremely tender age to help care for younger siblings or attend to other household responsibilities. This contributes to the difficulty of Roma women to escape from poverty.

- Roma tradition very often holds young women back from taking part in *public life*: they cannot leave the community without being watched by their female family members, who, in some Communities, are responsible for the girls' virginity. In these groups, in particular in rural communities, arranged marriage is a practice accepted by Roma women.
- The prominent patriarchal structure of the Roma community signifies in many cases a submissive role of women and *domestic violence* as a socially accepted practice.
- In the absence of a secure job, Roma women who are single mothers, widows, or have escaped from

domestic violence face particularly acute problems when trying to secure the economic well-being of their household. Some Roma women are also at the risk of resorting to prostitution or even delinquency as components of 'subsidiary survival strategies'. Roma women may also be exploited in criminal activity, which is usually some form of illegal employment or, more seriously, trafficking.

Although Roma women may be subordinate in key respects (they may hold less political and economic power), they are expected to be the mediators with the 'outside world'.

In recent years, as most reports show, changing social and economic contexts are challenging the traditional gender roles and expectations, with varying degrees of acceptance and resistance from men and women of all ages. Roma and Traveller activist women are questioning and challenging the gender roles and assumptions of the traditional culture and violence within and against the community.

## 7. Institutional framework underlying Roma social inclusion and gender equality policies

### 7.1. Introduction

Before approaching the various forms of national legislation on the Roma, some introductory remarks are called for about the broader EU scenario in this respect. The Roma are generally covered by the existing EU anti-discrimination instruments (see Chapter 3). There is, however no specific EU legislation on Roma minorities as such. Non-legislative resolutions have been developed, instead, by the European Parliament.

Especially significant in the context of this report is the 2006 'Resolution on the situation of Roma women in the EU' (2005/2164(INI)). This non-legislative resolution notes that the European policy and policymakers, despite an extensive body of law and the policies hence implemented, have not succeeded in ensuring full equality for Roma women. Furthermore, it urges national authorities to investigate allegations of human rights abuses against Roma women, to punish perpetrators and to offer compensation to the victims. The resolution also requires Member States to prevent exclusion of Roma women from healthcare, to ensure programmes for helping

Roma victims of domestic violence and to find the appropriate solutions to the problem of their high unemployment level.

Official recognition is given, here, to the fact that 'Romani women face extreme levels of discrimination, including multiple or compound discrimination, which is fuelled by very widespread stereotypes known as anti-Gypsyism' (paragraph E). It recommends Member States to develop and implement policies ensuring full equality in practise of Romani women (par. 19). 'Close consultation of Romani women' is then called for, 'in the drawing up of any programme and any project undertaken by EU institutions and/or by the Member States which may affect them' (par. 23).

### 7.2. A review of national legislation on Roma minorities

Different degrees of formal recognition are accorded to Roma minorities, and distinct national legislation addresses their condition in the countries analysed. The following table provides an overview both of their formal recognition (when it applies) and about national legislations — involving Constitutional provisions, national or local laws. Reference is also made to the broader framework of anti-discrimination and anti-racism legislation.

**Table 7.1: National legislation on Roma minorities in European countries: a comparative overview** <sup>179</sup>

Country	The recognition of Roma as an ethnic minority	Relevant national legislation	Anti-discrimination/anti-racism national legislation
Austria	Yes (applies only to autochthonous Roma)	Constitution, Minorities act (1976), regional laws	Equal Treatment Act — ETA ('Gleichbehandlungsgesetz'), Act on the Equal Treatment Commission and the Equal Treatment Office — ETC/O ('Bundesgesetz über die Gleichbehandlungskommission und Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft'), Federal — Equal Treatment Act — F — ETA ('Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz').
Belgium	No	Constitution, ordinary law provision, regional laws	A new set of laws was adopted at federal level on 10 May 2007. These laws implement <sup>(178)</sup> the EU gender directives ('recast' and 'access to goods and services' directives) and the two 2000 EU directives relating to non-discrimination.
Bulgaria	No	No specific national legislation, but Constitution provisions applying to 'citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian'	Protection against discrimination act (2003)
Czech Republic	Yes	Act on the Rights of Members of Ethnic Minorities (2001)	Anti-discrimination law currently being discussed

(179) Wuiame N., Markey L. and Jacqmain J. (2008), *L'égalité entre les femmes et les homes: la loi du 10 mai 2007 au regard de la directive 'refonte'*, Chroniques de droit social, N. 01.

Finland	Yes	Constitution, ordinary law provision	Equality act (2004), strengthening earlier anti-discrimination legislation
France	No	No specific legislation, ordinary law provision	
Germany	No	No specific legislation, but basic law and asylum and refugees law; federal states legislation	General equal treatment law (2006)
Greece	No	National Constitution and ordinary law provisions	Legislation applying European directives (2005)
Hungary	Yes	Constitutional provisions; Act on the rights of national and ethnic minorities (1993)	Act on equal treatment and the promotion of equal opportunities (2003)
Ireland	No	No specific legislation, ordinary law provision	Employment equality acts (1998, 2004), Equal status acts (2000–07), Incitement to hatred act (1989)
Italy	No	No specific legislation, ordinary law provision	The government (on the basis of lawmaking powers previously delegated for this purpose by the government) approved a decree on July 2003 containing detailed rules on discrimination in respect of race or ethnic origin (Legislative Decree 215/2003).
Latvia	Yes	General convention on protection of national minorities: <i>Law Par Vispārējo konvenciju par nacionālo minoritāšu aizsardzību</i> , Rīga May 31, 2005	The adoption of the Racial Directive (2000/43/EC) introduced changes and amendments in the national legislation in the following legislation: Law on social security, Law on The State Bureau of Human Rights, Law on public service, Law on societies and foundations, Law on education, labour law.
Lithuania	not defined	No specific legislation targeting the Roma in particular. All the legislation towards the situation of ethnic minorities affects the Roma population too.  The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees to the ethnic minorities the right to cherish their language, culture and customs.	In particular the Law on Ethnic Minorities and the Law on Equal Treatment (No IX-1826 of 18 November 2003)
Netherlands	Yes	National Constitution and ordinary law provision	General equal treatment act
Norway	Yes (as a national minority)	No specific legislation, ordinary law provision	Act on prohibition against discrimination based on ethnicity or religion (2006)
Poland	Yes	Act on national and ethnic minorities and regional language (2005)	
Portugal	No	National Constitution and ordinary law provisions	Racism and social discrimination act
Romania	Yes	National Constitution provisions; no all-comprehensive law, but manifold sectoral acts	Government Ordinance No 137/31.8.2000 concerning the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination; approved with amendments by Law No 48/2002; amended and added through the Government Ordinance nr. 77/28.8.2003.
Slovakia	Yes	National Constitution and ordinary law provisions	Anti-discrimination act (2004)
Spain	No	National Constitution and ordinary law provisions	Prohibition of any discriminatory practice in most branches of the national law
Sweden	Yes (as a national minority)	Constitution, ordinary law provision	Act prohibiting discrimination (2003)
UK	Yes (in England)	Race relations act (1976)	Race relations act (1976)

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008

**NB:** The review includes only the countries where an appreciable Roma minority has been documented, and relevant information has been provided on it.

As table 7.1 shows, in approximately half the countries under scrutiny Roma populations are recognised as a distinct national or ethnic minority<sup>(180)</sup> in their own right. Such recognition may have significant implications.

(180) See Chapter 1 of this report for a discussion of the different definitions of ethnic minority.

In eastern European Member States, where the concentration of Roma populations is generally higher, their recognition as a minority in its own right — on national, ethnic or linguistic grounds — is also more common. This is the case in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. In some countries, minority-specific legislation — or even Roma-specific legal provisions — has been developed in the framework of the process of accession to the EU. In other cases, such as Hungary, such provisions had already long been in place.

In Slovakia, for instance, the issue of national minorities — the Roma being recognised as one of them — results in multi-level and multi-field legislation, ranging from the Constitution and the general anti-discrimination law, to sectoral measures concerning education, mass-media, the use of languages, etc. In the Czech Republic, where the Roma minority is also acknowledged as such within wider-ranging ethnic minorities legislation, the ‘concept of Roma integration’ has been specially formulated by the central governments over the latest decade, in order to set a middle-term agenda for full access to equal opportunities — both with respect to the mainstream society, and in terms of gender equality — for the Roma minority (see the box on p.129).

In a few EU-15 Member States, on the other hand, official recognition of the Roma as a distinct minority seems to apply as a result of a relevant, already existing tradition of multi-ethnicity. In the UK, for instance, minority ethnic groups are protected against unlawful discrimination by a dedicated act of 1976. Under this legal framework, the public authorities have the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equal opportunities and good race relations. Both Gypsies and Irish Travel-

lers are thus recognised as distinct ethnic groups, on the grounds of their common culture, language and beliefs.

A similar approach is to be seen in the case of the Netherlands, where the Roma and Sinti stand as a specific ethnic (but not national) minority, and where there is an overall wide-ranging and non-categorical approach characterising policies. The national legal orientation to the Roma reflects pre-existing long-established minority assimilation models — albeit in quite a distinct way — in France, too.

As table 7.1 shows, in other countries, such as Belgium, there is no specific legislation concerning Roma populations. Their rights are protected on the same grounds as for other citizens and foreign communities by the Constitution and legislation against racism and discrimination. This also applies to Spain and Italy; in fact specific legislation protecting linguistic minorities has been passed in Italy (in 1999). However Roma and Sinti populations, though definitely distinct from a historical and cultural viewpoint, have been recognised no minority status — seemingly because not enduringly settled in a delimited Italian territory, but rather dispersed across it. The lack of a strict territorial identity and place, therefore, disadvantages Roma minorities, with respect to other more traditionally settled — and far more capable of lobbying and self-representing — minority collectives.

On the other hand, a robust protective legislation has been developed — albeit without dedicated, sectoral measures — in Scandinavian countries, where, apart from the case of Denmark, the Roma are regarded as a national minority of its own. Their demographic weight in these countries is, however, quite marginal.

### Recording Roma complaints about ethnic discrimination: the case of Sweden

The Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, in Sweden, is entitled to raise actions for damages on behalf of individuals who feel that they have been discriminated against. Not many Romanies, however, file complaints when they have been subjected to discrimination. The reason for this might be a lack of awareness of existing protection or a lack of trust in the authorities whose task it is to handle cases of discrimination. Many Romanies reportedly feel that the ombudsman’s power of influence on their living conditions is very limited. Between 1986 and 2002, no more than 50 complaints of discrimination had been filed by Romanies. The majority of them concerned discriminatory treatment by housing companies (30 %). The share of cases concerning refused access to shops, restaurants and hotels amounted to about 20 %. About 15 % of the complaints concern general treatment and case-handling within the social and healthcare services. Complaints against various practices within the judicial system (police and courts) make up some 10 %; other complaints are related to the labour market and the education system. Altogether, the complaints filed by Romanies amounted to more than 10 % of the total number of complaints in 2003<sup>1</sup>.

Of such cases, the shares of women and men are about the same. There is no significant difference between the sexes as to the contents of the complaints. The assumption that traditionally dressed Romani women are being more discriminated against is, therefore, not borne out by official records. There must, however, be a large number of cases still unexposed.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008 — Sweden.

(1) Ombudsmannen mot etnisk diskriminering (The Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination) (2004) *Discrimination against Romanies in Sweden* - a report on the DO project in the years of 2002 and 2003 on counteracting and forestalling ethnic discrimination against Romanies, Stockholm.

In the field of anti-discrimination and anti-racism legislations, most European Member States have developed specific legal provisions, in some cases as a result of EU directives. While monitoring discrimination on ethnic grounds as a result of the action of dedicated public authorities is ordinary practice in several countries, only in a few cases are the Roma's own complaints recorded on a separate basis. The

experience of Sweden, though involving a relatively small Roma minority, is significant here.

In a few countries, Roma-dedicated legislation also includes formal recognition by the public authorities of the victimisation they suffered during the Second World War. However, such measures have been developed only in recent years.

### **Official recognition and compensation for the Roma persecuted under Nazi regimes: the case of the Netherlands**

A specific issue for Roma and Sinti is the formal recognition by the Dutch authorities of their suffering during WWII. The first monument was built in 1978, and in 2000 a specific financial compensation was made available. This budget has to be used for individual allowances and to subsidise projects helpful to the Roma and Sinti communities.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008 — the Netherlands.

Specific gender issues are treated in the broader scope of national legislation on gender equality and on anti-discrimination — no specific legal provision for the active promotion of equality between women and men within Roma minorities has been documented by national analyses.

Summing up: on the one hand, the lack of a recognised status is not necessarily proof of unconcern for the Roma populations, as it may also reflect either their low numbers in a given country, or a policy orientation to include them in the mainstream legislation, on an equal footing with all citizens. On the other hand, the institutional recognition of their distinct minority status is likely to facilitate relatively greater investments in the maintenance and development of their peculiar cultural and linguistic heritages. Whatever the institutional orientations, the broader structuring of national welfare regimes, and the social investments they rely on, are no less relevant in accounting for the outcome of national policies.

### **7.3. Policymaking and implementation**

This section outlines the different approaches taken in gearing national policies to the Roma, both in terms of policymaking and implementation. Special attention is dedicated to strategies of intervention targeted to Roma women, gender sensitive, or — at least — capable of exerting a significant influence on their conditions and opportunities. A few national cases will be discussed in detail, by way of illustration.

From the policy perspective, addressing the condition of Roma women requires consideration of multiple,

interconnected social and economic factors that influence their daily lives: barriers of gender and traditions, discrimination, poverty and poor access to employment and education. It is worth underscoring that the scant evidence of them in official records contributes to obscuring the discrimination they are subject to.

It is in eastern Europe that, thus far, international cooperation on Roma social inclusion has made particularly significant progress, and a gender focus has been more explicitly developed, at a discursive level at least. An overall action framework for recent policy developments in the area is provided by the *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15* initiative, promoted by Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia — in cooperation with several international institutions (inter alia, the World Bank, UNDP, the Council of Europe and the Open Society Institute). The aim of the initiative is, apart from redressing the lack of relevant information on Roma minorities, to promote their social inclusion through a three-step, multi-policy process:

- defining circumscribed objectives for improving their current status in a few priority areas (see the following box) and establishing a novel information database for the purpose,
- elaborating and implementing, on a national basis, ten-year action plans consistent with such objectives; and
- regularly reviewing objective fulfilment and, if necessary, modifying national action plans.

### The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15 initiative: Key areas of concern

'The main objectives of the decade are to accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma by including Roma in the decision-making process, and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way. [...]

The decade is an international initiative, which brings together governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as Romani civil society to:

- i. launch initiatives to strengthen Roma inclusion as a high priority on the regional and European political agendas;
- ii. learn and exchange experiences;
- iii. involve Roma meaningfully in all policy-making on matters concerning them;
- iv. bring in international experience and expertise to help make progress on challenging issues; and
- v. raise public awareness of the situation of Roma through active communication.

The decade shall draw upon and maintain the joint focus of participating governments, international organisations and Roma on achieving progress toward selected outcomes over ten years. The success of the decade will be demonstrated by measuring the progress made on Roma inclusion with respect to improvements in the living conditions of Roma over the ten-year period.

The decade's priority areas shall be: employment, education, health, and housing. While focusing on these priority areas, each participating government shall in addition take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming.

Source: 'Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15 — Terms of reference', available at [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org)

This trans-national initiative is headed by an International steering committee (ISC), including representatives of participating governments, Roma organisations, international donors, and other international organisations. Overall, the strategic plan sets up broad policy aims and intervention priorities, thus supervising the states' own initiatives. Implementation of the national action plan in each country is regularly assessed by a qualified group of experts, researchers and Roma activists, associated in the Decade Watch net.

As for the key areas of concern, education is approached in terms of desegregation, integration, elevation of the educational level, better access to childcare services;

employment, with respect to integration in the labour market, training and retraining, raising the employment level of the Roma; housing, aiming at reducing local segregation; health, having as purpose better health conditions, longer life expectancies at birth, better access to the healthcare system.

Explicit (albeit occasional) reference is also made to gender mainstreaming, as one of the cross-cutting issues, but it is hard to evaluate the actual influence upon gender differences — both in access to the initiatives promoted, and in their outcomes.

A few national action plans on Roma social inclusion, however, merit further observation.

### National strategies and initiatives for Roma social inclusion: examples across eastern European Member States

#### **Czech Republic**

Roma social exclusion in the country has been explicitly targeted in policy declarations. The 'concept of Roma integration' strategy was introduced in 2005, in order to address — among other issues — the multiple discrimination of Romani women: 'The human rights perspective and approach to dealing with Roma affairs includes the aspect of multiple discrimination of Roma women, who are doubly discriminated against, once as women and once on the basis of ethnic background. [...] The main goal of the concept for Roma integration is to improve the position of the Roma in every sphere of the life of society where there are unjustifiable and unacceptable gaps between the majority society and a substantial part of the Roma population to the latter's disadvantage, and to achieve harmonious coexistence between members of the Roma communities and the rest of society'.

The concept lays down seven priorities: a) eliminating the obstacles to the integration of members of Roma communities into society, in terms of individual and group discrimination; b) eliminating 'internal obstacles' preventing the Roma from integrating into society, such as poor education and qualification levels; c) improving their sociostructural conditions in terms of unemployment, housing, health, social exclusion; d) stopping residential 'ghettoisation'; e) safeguarding the development of Roma culture and the Roma language; f) creating a broader tolerant environment, in terms of inter-ethnic relationships; g) ensuring the safety of members of Roma communities. The actual impact of evolving national social policies, however, remains ambiguous.



### **Hungary**

In this country, even before the decade programme was implemented, a national action plan on social inclusion was developed, aiming to promote and finance the social integration of the Roma in six key respects: 1) guaranteeing legal equality; 2) improving the quality of life (in terms of social safety and proper health conditions) and reducing poverty; 3) providing education and training; 4) increasing employment; 5) maintenance and development of identity; and 6) improving social communication.

A Roma Coordination and Intervention Fund has been established to provide funding to Roma self-governments initiatives or NGOs.

### **Romania**

The national authorities' commitment has resulted, with extensive financial support from international donors, in a dedicated 'Strategy to improve the situation of Roma', adopted in 2001. An action plan has been drawn up, more recently, for the 2006–08 period. The strategy focuses on five issues, overall accounting for the peculiar 'social exclusion profile' of most Roma in the country: low educational participation and early school drop-out; non-involvement in programmes of school recovery; inadequate housing conditions and infrastructures; severe unemployment; poor training alternatives; and insufficient supply of dedicated vocational courses.

As an issue transversal to these fields of intervention, the strategy emphasizes the importance of gender mainstreaming. Critical here, is the role of the national agency for the Roma, in promoting gender equality, especially in terms of equal participation of the Roma women in public and political life.

A significant number of international organisations have also been providing increasing support for Romanian initiatives targeting Roma issues. However, with some notable exceptions, much of their action has been based on short-term emergency assistance, rather than on consistent, long-term programmes.

Monitoring reports reveal little visible change, either in the general situation of the Roma population or in gender equality terms. Some progress can be identified, however, as far as welfare supply to the Roma is concerned, in three key respects: implementing educational, health and employment programmes; ensuring Roma representation at various levels of the central and local administration; and developing partnerships between government, local authorities and non-governmental institutions.

*Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.*

Shifting the focus to EU-15 Member States, a few national cases call for fuller description of the scope and results of policy-making processes with respect to the Roma minorities. As for their gender impact, the overall 'equal opportunity approach' of each national welfare state seems to be the key variable at stake.

Altogether, in the more generous and nearly universalistic welfare systems — typically in Scandinavia — social policies for the Roma seem to place strong emphasis on cultural issues (such as respect for cultural differences, the history of the Roma, their language, etc). Even in these countries, however, what is really at stake is the availability and accessibility of services to the Roma, as well as the development of their socio-economic perspectives, impinging on the factors that account for their poor life opportunities.

When considering actions to improve the situation of the Roma, the relationship between special services targeted solely to the Roma and normal services open to everyone is important. In Finland, for instance, the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs has been cautious in promoting segregated measures. Instead, the focus has been on facilitating Roma access to the ordinary provision of basic services.

Two more cases merit mention here on the grounds of their start-up of social inclusion strat-

egies specifically oriented to the Roma: Spain and Greece (see box on p.131).

Summing up, national policymaking processes with respect to Roma social inclusion may differ considerably, both in their underlying approaches (on a continuum between overall and category approaches, both showing inherent strengths and limitations) and in the social welfare domains regarded as priority. The greatest difference, however, has more to do with the pre-existing structuring of the national welfare regime — hence the significant variations in the amounts of resources, in the knowledge used and applied, in the social actors at stake, and possibly even in the resulting social outcomes, bearing in mind that the demographic weight of the Roma — in a sense, their social relevance — is highly variable from one country to another.

It must nevertheless be underlined that the peculiar state of Roma populations, on social exclusion grounds, is recognised across all European countries, even though specific knowledge of the Roma's own attitudes and perceptions is generally poor in mainstream social and health services. A key challenge lies in reconciling the individual approach inherent in personal service provision with the collectivist attitudes inherent in Roma culture. Finally, a gender-sensitive dimension — even when it is recognised as crucial — does not readily generate reliable and effective tools

for gender mainstreaming regarding Roma-oriented social interventions. Indeed, its application relies on the experience and expertise of each welfare regime.

The actual integration of Roma minorities also relies heavily on local factors, i.e. the orientations of the local authorities (and even individual public servants); opportunities to participate in training meas-

ures and labour market niches; the local activation of social projects, varying in scope and eligibility conditions; and real access to social welfare provisions — whether in education, health or social care, housing, etc. Important, too, are the self-organising capacities of Roma communities, whether in terms of mutuality, advocacy, self-representation or service provision.

### National strategies and initiatives for Roma social inclusion: examples across EU-15 Member States

#### **Sweden**

In this country, too — where relatively few Roma people are recorded as employed, and many live on disability pensions or social welfare allowances — the concern exists that their distance from the labour market may be too great for employment policies to bridge; hence, arguably, the need for dedicated activities, although in a broader framework extending well beyond the labour market.

In education, for instance, the government is promoting an extensive reading-writing-arithmetic initiative, aiming to strengthen Roma children's competence and, in the long term, to reduce the number of school drop-outs. In family policy, a voluntary municipal child-raising allowance will be developed. The expectation here is to increase opportunities for mothers to stay at home longer. However, as most Roma mothers are unlikely to have many employment opportunities, the child-raising allowance may result in a valuable source of income. This may even be positive in a gender equality perspective, although the final result may be to delay yet further the entry of Roma women into the labour market — and hence longer dependence on a very low income.

Swedish family policies rely also on a gender equality bonus. Its impending introduction is expected to improve conditions for gender equality, counter unjustified pay differentials (by allowing families a better sharing of parental leaves), and facilitate return to work. It is very hard to judge whether this may have any effect on gender equality in Roma families, since it is not known to what extent Roma women and men are employed and can use the gender equality bonus. Nor is it known how Roma families share parental leave or children care in general.

Mention must also be made of policies preventing violence against women. A new Action plan is expected in this area, which — if successful — would doubtless be beneficial to Roma women too.

#### **UK**

Approaching Roma inclusion in this country, reference must be made to the work-centred social inclusion policies developed in the last decade. The common thread lies in the attempt to 'activate' social groups affected by high levels of unemployment (e.g. the young, long-term unemployed, lone parents, older workers). Government policy has also sought to increase the employment rate overall and to encourage economically inactive women into employment.

Such policies, however, have not been specifically targeted to Roma minorities, and even less to Roma women. No data exist on the extent to which the women in these communities have benefited from mainstream labour market activation policies.

Policies have also been developed to make work pay (e.g. the minimum wage, in-work tax credits) and to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life (e.g. improvements in maternity and paternity leave, extension of childcare provision). One scheme, Sure Start, brings together education, childcare, health and family support to offer the 'best start to life' for every child. However, starting up this scheme within Roma communities has proved slow. Many factors may account for this: the mobility of the target population, hence discontinuous relationships with parents; the suspicions of the Roma communities about the programme; and the poor impact of the programme publicity, and thus limited understanding of its scope, due to the problem of illiteracy in potential Roma recipients.

#### **Greece**

The Greek government is currently implementing a nation-wide 'Integrated action plan for the social integration of the Roma people', developing along two axes: the first labelled 'structures', with the focus on housing, the second regarding 'services', covering all Roma-related education, employment and vocational-training programmes.

#### **Spain**

Roma social inclusion strategies, in this country, rely on a dedicated national programme for Roma development. This policy tool aims at promoting and financing positive actions for the social development of the Roma, as well as mediating between different public authorities and the representative organisations of the Roma community. It also pursues the strengthening and adaptation of general plans and measures regarding the overall population in order to guarantee equal access conditions for the Roma. The plan, which makes no explicit mention of gender issues, provides both for public programmes and for the financial and technical support of NGOs involved in Roma's placement and social inclusion.

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

#### 7.4. Dedicated institutions and/or organisations

When it comes to Roma (or minority) dedicated national institutions, to the role of civil societies for Roma integration, and to the Roma's own collective initiatives, the overall scenario is somewhat fragmented and diversified (see table 7.2). Public institutions with specific competence in Roma social inclusion, within the framework of national governments, exist in some eastern European Member States, namely in the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. National institutions with a broader mandate on ethnic minorities — especially authorities concerned with anti-discrimination issues — are, on the other hand, far more common. Institutional arrangements in some countries involve intermediary national bodies, with consultative functions, and with a significant participation of Roma community representatives. This applies, for instance, in Finland, Spain and Hungary. As for national civil societies, the scope for their action in Roma local inclusion — more focused on solidarity than on advocacy — seems appreciable almost everywhere.

Still unclear, however, are two salient issues, namely their distinctive capabilities in gender mainstreaming (which are likely to vary from one national context to another, depending on the broader welfare arrangements), and their prevailing patterns of interaction with the Roma's own initiatives.

As for Roma self-developed collective initiatives, in nearly every national context some significant cases can be identified, mostly concerned with advocacy issues, or with social and cultural activities. Less frequent is the case of Roma organisations legitimated by national mainstream institutions and directly involved in service provision to the Roma communities themselves (mainly with respect to social care). The existence of such organisations has been documented in Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

While many grassroots local organisations exist, in most countries nation-wide associations have also been documented, as well as — in a few cases at least — 'umbrella' initiatives, attempting to coordinate and represent different Roma social groups. The latter have been especially developed in Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden. Far less widespread are, with a few notable exceptions, the Roma organisations with a female leadership (see the following table).

Mention must also be made of the Roma's own international organisations, and outstandingly the International Romani Union.

As for the level of transnational cooperation for Roma social inclusion, apart from the actions promoted in the framework of the Council of Europe, the most remarkable initiative developed so far — in terms of the partners' importance, the resources mobilised, the impact on national contexts — is the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–15, described earlier.

**Table 7.2: Relevant institutions and civil society initiatives for Roma social inclusion: a comparative overview**

Country	Relevant national institutions	Roma-representative institutions	Majority society NGOs promoting Roma inclusion	Roma associations	Roma women associations
Belgium			Several national NGOs in education, research, social care		
Bulgaria	National council on ethnic and demographic issues, coordinating policies for ethnic minorities			Several associations; advocacy and cultural activities	A few of the former, esp. one, promoting equal opportunities and active participation of Roma women
Czech Republic	Government council for Roma affairs, advisory body				1 Roma women's group; advocacy, education, cultural activities
Denmark			Organisations for human rights protection and local integration		
Germany		Central Council of German Sinti and Roma; advocacy, representation		Several associations at state or local level; social care, training	

Country	Relevant national institutions	Roma-representative institutions	Majority society NGOs promoting Roma inclusion	Roma associations	Roma women associations
Ireland	Equality authority			1 main nation-wide organisation; advocacy	1 dedicated Roma women's forum, reportedly inactive
Spain	State Council for Roma People, a representative, advisory body	Roma Secretariat Foundation; advocacy, service provision on a national scale		Large number, mainly in advocacy and service provision	
France	National Travellers advisory commission advisory body		National federation of associations for solidarity actions with Gypsies and Travellers		
Italy	National office against racial discrimination		A few autochthonous associations; service provision and advocacy		
Hungary	Roma anti-discrimination client service network; Equal treatment authority	Roma council: forum of interest representation		Several organisations recently developed; advocacy	Very few of the former, less influential ones
Netherlands	Forum: a consultative body gathering municipalities, Ministry representatives and Roma associations	No formal consultation of Roma national organisations in policy-making	Large number of NGOs and state-sponsored initiatives in integration, anti-discrimination and anti-racism issues	2 main nation-wide organisations; advocacy, service provision, cultural activities	One of the former is women-led
Austria	Department of ethnic minority affairs			Several associations; advocacy and cultural activities	
Poland	Roma governmental commission	No direct political representation in Parliament		Large number, mainly in self-representation and advocacy	
Portugal	High commissariat for immigration and ethnic minorities, coordinating policies to ethnic minorities				1 association reported, advocacy
Romania	National agency for the Roma		Large number, concentrated in urban areas	160 Roma organisations	3 Roma women organisations
Slovakia	Office of the plenipotentiary for Roma communities, implements government strategies for the Roma	Many Roma ethnic political parties. Fragmentation, marginal influence	Large number, in social work, training, education, community development, cultural activities. Only a few oriented specifically to Roma women		
Finland	Advisory board on Romani affairs; consultative national body representing both central government and the Roma minority, influencing legislation and policies			A few national organisations; cultural activities, advocacy	
Sweden	Delegation for Roma Questions	Council of Roma issues: advisory body, representation		National umbrella organisation, advocacy and cultural activities	Started only pilot initiatives on state proposal
UK	The Commission for Racial Equality (not Roma-specific), which was merged 3–4 years ago into the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which covers gender, race/ethnicity, religion, age...		Several charities active in the field	Several advocacy and cultural activity associations	One of the former, women-led and targeted, promoting advocacy, cultural activities, local integration

*NB:* The review includes only the countries where an appreciable Roma minority has been documented, or information about relevant institutions or organisations has been provided.

## 8. Good practice examples: labour market participation and social inclusion of Roma women

In most national contexts, even if not all of them, EGGSI experts have been able to identify some examples of ‘good practices’ in Roma inclusion that may be relevant, and gender-appropriate, at least on a local scale.

*Education* — involving both girls and women — is by far the more recurrent domain of practice within this framework. Education, as a prerequisite for any inclusion strategy, applies here both to schooling — especially in promoting children and youth integration in the school system — and to adult life-long learning. Only a few programmes are directly addressed to girls and women, although girls and women in particular appear to benefit from them. Since the increasing education and training of mothers improves the health and education investments of their children, the impact of these programmes is not only on the well-being of Roma women, but also on the new Roma generations. An example worth mentioning here is a national scholarship programme in Poland, which allows for access to university education of Roma youth who have successfully finished secondary schools.

A relatively widespread field of intervention concerns *social mediation*, enhancing the mediating role Roma women usually have between their com-

munity and social (and especially health) services. The Dutch ‘Care consultants’ project, presented in the following table, is an interesting example as women are trained to promote healthcare and to act as intermediaries between their community and healthcare institutions. Another widespread programme in Romania concerns Roma women as health mediators: there are around 500 health mediators, mostly Roma women who identify health problems and associated social problems, prepare registration with family doctors, prepare vaccination campaigns, disseminate information regarding the health system, hygiene, contraception and family planning; they also deal with issues related to the lack of birth certificates or identity papers and signal social problems to the local authorities. In Romania, the role of school mediators in reinforcing the right to education for Roma girls is also worth mentioning; it has already produced positive results. The training programmes for school mediators include actions to support Roma girls and women through education on human rights, exercise of free choice and personal development, and self-confidence building with the emphasis on the importance of education for girls. School mediators promote parent-school relations and also sensitise teachers on gender dynamics in the local Roma community, while ensuring that stereotypes and prejudices shared by some teachers — in particular lower expectations of Roma children in general and of Roma girls in particular — are eliminated.

**Table 8.1: Good practices in social inclusion of Roma women: some key examples concerning education and social mediation <sup>(181)</sup>**

Country	Good practice	Short description	Target and gender focus	Project range
Belgium	School mediation project <i>Brugfiguren</i>	Area of intervention: Education In a nursery and primary school with a high incidence of Roma children, the project deals with social mediation with their families — in schooling, health and dietetic education	Special attention to Roma children’s mothers	Local
Hungary	<i>Cserehát</i> regional development pilot programme	Area of intervention: Access to social services and training Development activities stimulating the economy, expanding employment, human resource development, improvement of educational facilities, developing the communities and improving access to social and health services, dissemination of information technologies	In a local village, pilot initiative for kindergarten-like services for Roma children, and training for their parents (esp. women) in the community centre for jobs that can support them in getting a livelihood.	Regional

(181) The following table offers an essential description of a few good practices, among those highlighted in EGGSI national reports. This summary should not be understood, therefore, as a representative sample of all the national projects analysed by country reports, nor of the whole range of welfare inclusion strategies for the Roma, implemented in European states.

Country	Good practice	Short description	Target and gender focus	Project range
The Netherlands	Care consultants	Area of intervention: Health Project focused on health promotion among Sinti and Roma. Women are trained to act as consultants and as intermediaries in relation to healthcare institutions	Focused on women in terms of both participation in training and as final beneficiaries	National
Poland	50 scholarships yearly for Roma youth who successfully finished secondary education, enabling them to enter tertiary education — funded by the Polish government.	Area of intervention: Education The beneficiaries are following programmes of studies at various Polish higher education institutions (mostly private with tuition fees). The innovative aspect of the project is to enable Roma youth, both girls and boys, to enter higher education institutions	No specific gender focus, but the project is more popular amongst girls than boys	National
Romania	School mediation	Area of intervention: Education School mediators promote actions to support Roma girls and women through education on human rights, free choice and personal development, and self-confidence building with the emphasis on the importance of education for girls.	School mediators to reinforce the right to education for Roma girls.	National
Romania	Development of Roma-sensitive health mediation	Area of intervention: Health There exists a network of some 500 health mediators, mostly Roma women, started by an NGO and then taken over by the government. Concerned with identifying health (and related social) problems; preparing registration with family doctors and vaccination campaigns; disseminating key health information	None, although more contacts are developed with Roma women than with their male counterpart	National
UK	E-learning and mobility projects (E-LAMP)	Area of intervention: Education It aims to bridge the gap between home and school for pupils from Travelling families who have interrupted schooling. The project delivers this by providing ICT technology in the form of laptops and data cards to Traveller pupils, in primary and secondary education, and their families	No specific gender focus, but the scheme benefits female pupils and their sisters, mothers and female extended family.	Multi-local

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

Another relatively widespread field of intervention is *employability* development.

Employment programmes are mainly aimed at providing specific training to Roma women in order to enable them to access better jobs. The more effective ones usually combine different measures such as training, job mediation, assistance services and empowerment, and micro-credit. The main risk of

such programmes, usually funded by the European Social Fund, is their lack of continuity if they are not internalised within ordinary welfare provision. Among the good practices emerging in this perspective, the Swedish local programme 'The Roma in Sweden' aims in particular at enhancing employability for young Roma women, building on their own active involvement in planning and starting small businesses.



**Table 8.2: Good practices in social inclusion of Roma women: some key examples concerning training, enterprise creation and labour market inclusion <sup>(182)</sup>**

Country	Good practice	Short description	Target and gender focus	Project range
Bulgaria	Training in small business and entrepreneurship	Area of intervention: training; enterprise creation  Training for a dozen unemployed Roma women, designed and organised by the national centre for professional education with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in Sofia. All the participants developed their own business plans with the support of business consultants. As a next step the most successful business ideas will receive financing through micro-credits.	Dedicated to women	Local, but easily replicable in other urban areas
Czech Republic	Supporting Roma in Prague in the areas of education and employment (EQUAL Project)	Area of intervention: Training; Labour market inclusion  Support for life-long learning and methods facilitating the employment of Roma people. Training courses in three key areas:  self-confidence and communication; how and where to look for jobs; how to apply for a job	Activities include motivational courses for unemployed Roma women and women on maternity leave.	In the capital city, but could be replicated elsewhere
Romania	Assessment of the needs and opportunities of employment; Professional qualification; Job mediation, for Roma women in Bucharest	Area of intervention: Training; Labour market inclusion  Main activities: selection of Roman women to benefit from the qualification courses; analysis of the labour market demand for handicrafts in Bucharest; qualification courses; job mediation in the local labour market	Specifically focused on Roma women	In the capital city, but could be replicated elsewhere
Spain	Regularisation process of undeclared activities. <i>'Proyecto Clavel'</i>	Area of intervention: Training; Labour market inclusion  Process of regularisation of some economic activities performed by Roma women. Main activities: feasibility plan for activity regularisation; selection and training of beneficiaries; design of sales spots; technical assistance to beneficiaries; information campaign.	Preferably oriented to Roma women	Local, but could be replicated elsewhere
Sweden	Roma in Sweden — from south to north	Area of intervention: Training; Labour market inclusion  Project started by an organisation of young Roma women, aimed at enhancing their employability. Main activities: individual employment development plans; subsidised employment activities; start of an autonomous small business	Especially aimed at young Roma women	Local

Source: EGGSI Network national reports, 2008.

(182) The following table offers an essential description of a few good practices, among those highlighted in EGGSI national reports. This summary should not be understood, therefore, as a representative sample of all the national projects analysed by country reports, nor of the whole range of welfare inclusion strategies for the Roma, implemented in European states.

More generally, two broader aims underline most effective inclusion practices: promoting self-organisation capabilities and facilitating community integration.

The grassroots start of autonomous organisations, involving Roma women, is a promising channel to foster their empowerment, their appropriate interaction with welfare institutions and their capacity building. At the same time, social support initiatives should provide an integrated answer to different 'basic need' domains (social care, health, housing, etc). Effective coordination with local civil society stakeholders, along with local authorities, is also crucial for a 'good practice' to have a significant middle-term impact. Whether, and under which circumstances, a local good practice may be successfully replicated on a wider Roma population is, however, still a contentious issue.

While the evidence on good practices may be uneven and not necessarily representative (nor always indicative of transferable actions), two common assumptions pervade most national analyses. The first: advocacy and campaigning in the non-Roma environment, to lessen

mistrust and prejudices against the Roma, is a complementary strategy (with respect to Roma-addressed actions) that warrants further investments.

Second: addressing primarily Roma women, besides being a legitimate positive action option in its own right, has much wider and important implications. As already mentioned, targeting women may have a twofold, long-term impact — not only on them but also on other family members, especially children. Besides producing positive changes in the life of Roma women, specifically focussed and tailored policies may make them more aware of the importance of good health, education, employment for their children and families. It is the Roma women who are primarily in charge of child-raising and the mediation between Roma families and local institutions. Involving them to a significant degree in programme designing contributes to their support in programme implementation in areas such as child protection, education, healthcare. Investing in Roma women, in other words, may lay the foundations for a longer-term and effective inclusion of future Roma generations.



## Overall conclusions

Women represent a sizeable component of ethnic minorities in European countries, especially due to the increasing feminisation of migration flows. Ethnic minority and Roma women have specific needs and difficulties in the countries of residence, which call for gender-sensitive policy approaches, and their role in raising the new generations makes them an even more important target for social inclusion policies. However they are usually invisible both in data collection and in research and policymaking.

The report highlights the main difficulties women from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and especially Roma women face in their everyday life and the policies adopted in European countries. It also shows the importance of adopting a gender mainstreaming approach in implementing policies targeting the social inclusion of disadvantaged ethnic minority women and the need to consider the differences in the social and economic conditions of women among and within ethnic minorities and across European countries.

### Gender and ethnicity: the different dimensions of social exclusion

Throughout Europe no precise and complete official data are available relating to ethnic minority and Roma women: there is a lack of data disaggregated by sex and of quantitative as well as qualitative studies on both ethnic minorities and Roma people in general and on women belonging to these groups in particular. In many countries ethnic registration is not allowed, while in other countries the official statistics contain information on neither ethnicity nor self identification.

Notwithstanding the lack of adequate data and information, different areas of exclusion are considered in the report: access to education, housing, social benefits, health services, employment and financial services, highlighting some important features of the socio-economic conditions of ethnic minority and Roma women in European countries.

Ethnic minorities and the Roma are *not a homogeneous population*. Even if disadvantaged minorities present some common features across the European countries, there are significant differences in relation to their model and period of settlement, culture and religion, and legal status. These differences impact strongly on women's socio-economic conditions, op-

portunities and quality of life. Overall Roma women seem to be the most disadvantaged among ethnic minority women.

The *legal status* of ethnic minorities and Roma communities is a relevant factor in explaining access to citizenship rights and welfare benefits. The absence of a legal status and/or the complexity and duration of the procedures to acquire citizenship or residence and work permits have particular effect on stateless minorities, temporary and illegal immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees who have to cope with the continuous risk of eviction and expulsion from the country.

Overall, ethnic minority and Roma women experience greater *social exclusion* than the men from their own community or the majority women, especially in accessing employment, education, health and social services, also as a result of the gender roles that persist in some ethnic minority communities (such as the Roma). Linguistic and cultural barriers, family-care responsibilities, lack of information and, for illegal immigrants and/or stateless communities, lack of legal status reduces the women's access to social, financial and healthcare services and to the labour market. The extent to which this is the result of discrimination is not easy to assess, given the lack of data and studies on discriminatory perceptions and practices, but existing analysis shows the greater likelihood of these women to be subject to multiple discrimination and hence severe social exclusion.

*Religion and cultural traditions* are particularly relevant in affecting women's conditions in some ethnic minority communities. Roma women and women from ethnic minority communities where traditional forms of gender roles prevail often face discrimination and seclusion both from the majority population (on account of their sex and ethnicity) and within their own communities and households (on account of their sex). On the other hand, ethnic minority women with religious and cultural values closer to those of the majority population have problems related to their access to the labour market and to a secure income, often being lone mothers or family breadwinners.

Disadvantaged ethnic minority and Roma women tend to show poorer educational attainment than ethnic minority men and majority women. The lack of education is, in fact, one of the main factors behind the social exclusion and poverty of disadvantaged ethnic minority and especially Roma women, due to its influence on the employment status and the quality of

work, on the housing conditions, and also on access to healthcare. However some ethnic minority women (especially from eastern European countries) tend to have a higher educational level than the women of the host country, but their qualifications are not usually fully recognised in the labour market.

Disadvantaged ethnic minorities tend to live in segregated low-income neighbourhoods with poor *housing* conditions and overcrowding, which increase the isolation and domestic workload for women. The poor socio-economic conditions and difficult access to healthcare services impact negatively on *women's health*. Access to health services is also hampered by cultural and language barriers, besides lacking knowledge of rights and in some cases the lack of legal status, which in some countries is necessary to access these services. Housing and health conditions are particularly negative for Roma women, who usually live in degraded camps or caravan sites devoid of basic facilities and have much lower life-expectancy than the majority population and other ethnic minorities.

In the *labour market*, women from disadvantaged groups usually show lower employment rates and a higher level of dependency on social welfare benefits, in comparison with both the minority men and the majority women. When employed, they are more likely to work in informal or occasional low-wage jobs, usually in domestic care services, which reduce their eligibility for unemployment benefits or other contribution-based benefits, especially in countries where social benefits are related to employment status and social assistance is residual. Roma women and women from communities where traditional forms of gender roles prevail are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market, due to their role in the family and their frequent pregnancies, but also to the lack of qualifications and prejudice on the part of employers. On the other hand, highly educated women of foreign origin are more likely to be over-qualified for the job they hold than the men and majority women because their qualifications are not fully recognised or valued.

Disadvantaged ethnic minorities and Roma people have limited access to *financial services*, and the women face even greater difficulties, because they do not have regular, secure and registered employment and their property does not offer sufficient guarantee. The EGGSI Network national reports also evidence discrimination on the part of loan institutions, especially in relation to single women of foreign origin and the

very limited diffusion of other forms of credit, such as micro-credit.

Women in disadvantaged ethnic minorities are more likely to suffer multiple discrimination than other women due to prejudice and discrimination on the part of the host societies, and to discrimination as women in male-dominated ethnic communities. These forms of discrimination are, however, hard to recognise, as are domestic violence, forced marriages and human trafficking, due to the economic dependency of women on the family and communities (especially in the case of immigrant women), and the scant knowledge of their rights and of the supporting services.

In the last few years in some countries (as, for example, the UK and Scandinavian countries) there is some initial evidence of improvements, especially among second-generation women, given the greater attention to equal opportunities in welfare and educational systems and the activities carried out by public authorities and NGOs specially addressing ethnic minority women.

### **Assessing the legislative and policy approaches adopted by European countries**

The legislative and policy responses analysed in the report show that the European countries are developing a certain degree of convergence in their approaches due to the common socio-demographic pressures, the European directives and the coordination of social inclusion strategies, as well as the exchange of experiences and good practices, often supported by the European structural funds.

However, the national differences remain considerable, reflecting both the specific characteristics and dimension of the residing disadvantaged ethnic minorities and the structure of national welfare regimes. In addition, the overall equal opportunity approach of each country partly explains the gender differential outcome in the welfare interventions implemented.

In terms of the legislative framework, *anti-discrimination and anti-racism* legislations are an important area of intervention, while specific gender issues are treated under the wider national legislations on gender equality. All the countries have developed specific legal provisions in these respects, in some cases as a result of adopting European directives. However, the legislative framework is still little implemented, especially

in those countries which do not have a long-standing tradition in non-discrimination and gender equality policies<sup>(183)</sup>.

The recognition of a specific *legal status for ethnic minorities* is particularly important for accessing social services and benefits. In some European countries (especially eastern EU Member States) this recognition supports the implementation of minority-specific legislations and is likely to facilitate the gathering of information and data on ethnic minorities and investments in the maintenance and development of their peculiar cultural and linguistic heritages. However, in some cases legislation meant to protect the culture and traditions of recognised ethnic minority groups may further discriminate women if there are no proper judicial or constitutional safeguards in place.

In the EU-15 and EEA countries, where disadvantaged ethnic minorities are mainly accounted for by persons with an immigrant background and asylum-seekers, the *legislation on immigration* is relevant, especially for women. Access to social benefits and services depends on obtaining a work permit, which is possible only if there is a regular work contract. Moreover, the renewal of temporary residence is also usually tied to having a work contract. This especially affects women, who more often than men work in non-regulated sectors (such as the domestic sector) and in the black economy, and who risk losing their right to temporary residence due to difficulties in showing continuous employment. The recent tightening of eligibility conditions for residence and work permits and for access to welfare benefits in some EU-15 countries may therefore pose difficulties to third-country immigrants and disadvantaged minorities, in particular for the women, as they are usually more dependent on these benefits. In some cases measures aimed at improving the living conditions of migrants, such as legislation on family reunification, may nevertheless reinforce women's dependence on men, since in the case of divorce this right is lost in most countries.

In terms of the policy framework, European countries adopt specific *integration and inclusion policies* targeting ethnic minorities and immigrants, even if with little, albeit increasing, attention to gender differences. Most integration policies are aimed at newly

arrived immigrants and emphasise language courses, job-orientation, affirmative action and positive discrimination. The few evaluations made show that while these policies have a positive impact for newly arrived immigrants, this diminishes rapidly over time and does not solve the main, durable disadvantages that ethnic minorities, and especially women, suffer in terms of social and economic exclusion. In addition, given the specificities of ethnic minority women, social inclusion and gender equality policies do not necessarily affect them in the same way as men or native women, and may not always reach them.

There are however some countries with gender-oriented inclusion policies for ethnic minorities. Besides policies addressing human trafficking, gender violence (including forced marriages and 'honour' killings), and protection of pregnant women, good practices have been carried out in the field of social and healthcare services, labour market policies and legal counselling, sometimes combining different interventions and tackling the cultural barriers and prejudices which are at the basis of discriminatory practices. Some of these programmes support the cultural mediation role women may have between their communities and the social and health services.

As anticipated, the integration and inclusion policies adopted by the various European countries differ considerably, reflecting the national welfare structure and the characteristics and dimension of the residing disadvantaged minorities.

The individualised, equal opportunity approach adopted by the universalistic welfare regime characterising Scandinavian countries (experiencing humanitarian immigration since the 1970s) such as Sweden, Denmark and Norway, combines generous income support with the right to social and care services and support for women's educational and labour market participation. These structures appear to answer at least some of the growing needs of women belonging to disadvantaged ethnic minorities, even if the difficulties in reaching and involving these women in activation programmes are evident.

On the other hand some countries (such as Italy and Greece) which have only recently been experiencing large net inflows of migrants (often illegal) show a shortage of resources devoted to social policies and services for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups, which are usually left to the local activation of NGOs and local administrations, and

(183) European Commission (2007a), *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: an urgent call for better social inclusion*, Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Brussels. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=766&langId=en>



thus fragmented and highly differentiated at the local level, due to the lack of expertise and tradition among the public administrators.

The ethnic minorities settled in the European countries with a colonisation history behind them, such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK, are mainly from former colonies and speak the host country language (with the main flows dating back to the 1960s and 1970s). In these countries there is a long-standing tradition of policies targeted at ethnic minorities, usually based on means-tested assistance measures, which provide income support and housing benefits, but are lacking in care services. The current strengthening of the *workfare approach* to increase disadvantaged women's participation in the labour market would however require adequate care and support services.

European countries with a long migration history, such as Germany, Luxemburg and Austria have, on the other hand, experienced significant inflows of foreign workers recruited to compensate for labour shortages since the 1960s. These countries have in the past adopted guest worker programmes aimed mainly at temporary male immigrants, which had then to be reformed in order to cope with the increasing presence of ethnic minority women and families permanently based in the host country. Also these countries are now strengthening a *workfare approach* to reduce dependence on social benefits and increase women's participation in the labour market.

The eastern European Member States, after the large migration outflows following the collapse of the socialist regimes, now seem to be experiencing migration inflows from bordering countries and non-EU countries, together with a drastic reduction in care services and the need to reform their welfare system. In those countries (such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia), where the concentration of Roma communities is generally higher and more long-standing than in other EU countries, their recognition as a minority is more widespread,

thus supporting the implementation of targeted social inclusion policies, sometimes with a specific gender focus.

From the policy perspective, the comparative analysis presented in the report shows the importance of adopting both a gender mainstreaming approach in all policies targeting the social inclusion of disadvantaged ethnic minorities and specific policies addressing the differentiated needs of disadvantaged ethnic minority women facing multiple discrimination. Addressing the living conditions of ethnic minority and Roma women means considering their different needs and the multiple interaction of social and economic factors that influence their daily lives — barriers of gender inequalities and different cultural or religious traditions, discrimination, racism, poverty and poor access to employment and education. Not only is the scope of the policies relevant, but especially their implementation, which interacts with the structural social conditions of most ethnic minorities, with the prevailing attitudes in the majority societies, and even with their own traditionally prevailing lifestyles.

Various other issues with relevant policy implications emerge from the comparative analysis presented in the report, namely: the relevance of educational systems supporting the integration of second- and third-generation immigrants; the importance of complementing workfare approaches with targeted support policies especially when addressing ethnic minority women; the lack of knowledge of the specific needs of women in different ethnic minority communities; the difficulty of reaching the most disadvantaged among ethnic minority women and of defining reliable and effective tools of gender mainstreaming when it comes to designing, implementing and evaluating social interventions addressed to disadvantaged ethnic minorities. The role of the local authorities and NGOs, together with the women and ethnic minorities associations, appears to be particularly important in this respect, due to their closer links with disadvantaged communities at the local level.

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