

French contribution about the follow-up of the European framework for Roma inclusion

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It is necessary to remind that the EU framework for Roma inclusion has induced positive elements.

- A positive trend has been initiated: European and national actors are more and more concerned and active in this field,
 - The National Contact Points community has fostered the European dialogue.
- A. The discussion on the assessment and the future of the EU framework, might be the occasion to interrogate the relevancy of the EU framework and, more specifically, its ethnic approach.

1. A problem of definition

The target "Roma" is imprecise and heterogeneous. The EU communication (2011) and recommendation (2013) refer to a generic notion encompassing different populations with diverse socio-economic characteristics: *"Roma is the term commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions, although it encompasses diverse groups that include names like Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Sinti and Boyash."* One question might be asked: **How defining a coherent and relevant frame of actions based on this blurry target?**

2. A problem of coordination between member states

The ethnic target complicates the action of certain member states and, to a greater extent, the work of the European Commission: Some member states, such as France, promote a universalist approach in their policies towards access to right and social protection. They develop strategies and answers respecting their national frame of action; some of them demonstrate difficulties to fit in the EU framework, especially those who are

unable to collect ethnic data. These difficulties, encountered by the European commission and the National Roma Contact Points, to develop a common monitoring frame - with common assessment indicators - is an illustrative example of such obstacles. It is important to note that **member states will never be able to fit in the expectations of the European Commission that will constantly ask for ethnic oriented answers.** Moreover, this perpetual request for the collection of ethnic indicators is symptomatic, confusing measuring tools and the concrete goals of a policy to be established.

3. A risk of stigmatization

This ethnic approach can provoke a dangerous process of negative stigmatization: classifying people on the basis of their real or supposed origins can block them off into a **fictional and misrepresented category.** This unwanted effect can, **paradoxically, go against one of the major European objective: the struggle against all discriminations.**

With an ethnic targeted policy, the essential subject can be supplanted: the struggle against the great poverty without any consideration on real or supposed origins.

B. Some proposals might be discussed in order to renew the EU framework towards a universalist approach.

1. The consolidation of the European level

The European scale is the one relevant to define a common framework of actions: Firstly, **this framework can play a leveraging role among member states.** Secondly, the inclusion of marginalized intra-European migrant populations is a subject that challenges the European social cohesion and calls, *de facto*, for a European answer. The answer given by the European Commission emphasizes the respect of fundamental rights and the struggle against discriminations. Without putting aside these objectives, **it might be essential to put forward questions such as social inclusion and cohesion.**

2. The renewal of the EU framework towards a universalist approach

One should **promote a universalist approach for the access to right,** in order to **improve the situation of people in extreme poverty and/or exclusion, without any distinction based on their real or supposed origins.** One may consider that this approach is particularly relevant in light of the tense and conflictual situation observed in several member states. It is crucial to remind that this approach neither abandons the struggle against

discriminations founded on the real or supposed origins, nor rejects the promotion of the culture or history of Roma people (particularly the gipsy genocide during the WWII). A renewed framework would **prioritize the struggle against homelessness and the actions for marginalized people, specifically for intra-European migrants, at the European scale.**

3. The conception of operational instruments to deal with homelessness, marginalization and social exclusion

A renewed framework would encourage member states to strengthen their policies towards homelessness, the struggle against poor housing and the social inclusion of marginalized population. This framework could focus, partly, on the following subjects: the necessary improvement of life conditions of intra-European migrant populations, the reasons of their migrations, and the conditions of their stabilization in their native countries. **This framework would offer a flexible monitoring system, respecting the principle of subsidiarity.** The creation of a specific fund, managed by member states, based on the model of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, could be elaborated in order to implement these actions.