**Questionnaire on the protection of Roma, Sinti, Kale, Travellers United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues**

Letter dated 11/2/15

Ireland

11 March 2015

# Please provide specific information about the Roma communities living in your country. What is the estimated size of the Roma population? Are Roma communities concentrated in certain parts of the country? Please attach any relevant data.

The total number of Irish Travellers enumerated in April 2011 was 29,573 accounting for just over half of one per cent (0.6%) of the total population [Census 2011].

The Roma community in Ireland is made up of persons of Romanian, Hungarian, Polish and Czechorigin. There are no official statistics on the number of Roma in Ireland but it is estimated to be in the region of 3,000-5000.

# Does your State collect socio-economic data such as poverty and unemployment rates, healthcare data, living conditions, educational levels, income levels or rates of economic participation disaggregated by different population groups, including Roma? What does such data reveal in regard to the situation of Roma? Please attach relevant data if available. In the absence of such data what is the source of information your State relies upon to develop various measures and programmes for Roma inclusion?

The Irish State recognises that strong monitoring methods to evaluate the impact of inclusion actions in the key priority areas of health, education, employment, housing and anti-discrimination are essential to measure outcomes for vulnerable groups and to identify over time areas that require positive interventions to correct poor outcomes. While there are systems in place in the areas of education, housing, health to collect data with the aim of planning and monitoring appropriate, accessible service provision and delivery, they do not follow a consistent approach and are not currently led by an agreed set of performance indicators. Therefore, it is the intention that all relevant Government Departments and Agencies will come together to facilitate a consistent approach to the collection of data in relation to the Traveller and Roma communities, with a particular focus on implementing an agreed indicators framework to inform the collection of measurable and comparable data in all of the key priorities areas of health, education, employment, housing and anti-discrimination. To this end the Department of Justice and Equality are coordinating the development of an integrated approach to data collection for Travellers and Roma in 2015, in collaboration with all other relevant Departments and agencies. The proposed Traveller and Roma Data Collection Strategy will draw on the integration indicators framework being developed by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) in a format to be agreed with relevant Government Departments and other stakeholders.

In the meantime, an up to date assessment of need regarding support provided by the State to the Roma community is currently being undertaken to establish how best to improve State agencies’ interaction with the Roma community.

# Is there any ongoing national policy/strategy/action plan to ensure Roma inclusion in the political, social, economic and cultural life of your country? If so, please explain how these measures are developed, designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated in consultation with, and with the effective participation of Roma, including Roma women. If your State has already reported on similar issues to other international or regional organisations, please share existing relevant reports and/or documentation.

# How strategies or policy measures for inclusion take into systematic consideration the specific conditions, situations and needs of Roma women, including in the areas of access to adequate education, healthcare and reproductive rights? Please attach the most relevant information including, if applicable, specific measures taken to combat segregation and/or multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by Roma women, as well as the main measurable achievements in these areas.

Ireland’s strategies regarding the integration of the Roma Community derive from the European Commission’s Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the 2011 Programme for Government which promotes greater co-ordination and integration of delivery of services to the Traveller community across Government, using available resources more effectively to deliver on principles of social inclusion, particularly in the area of Traveller education. In drafting the National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy in 2011, Ireland adopted the Council of Europe definition of ‘Roma’ as referring to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), thereby covering the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. A copy of the current National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy and Ireland’s update to the European Commission of January 2015 is attached.

During 2014 the Department of Justice & Equality assessed the effectiveness of the structures in place for consultation with and delivering better outcomes to the Traveller & Roma Communities. Impetus for change arose with particular reference to the recommendations of the 2014 Report of Ms. Emily Logan, former Ombudsman for Children, under Section 42 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 into the circumstances surrounding the removal of two Roma children from their families. Ms Logan's Report (The Logan Report) identified a range of steps that need to be taken, including detailed issues that need to be addressed within An Garda Síochána and the HSE, the Child and Family Agency and others, as well as wider issues that relate to how public services generally engage with members of the Roma community. All of these recommendations were accepted unequivocally by Án Taoiseach Enda Kenny, T.D., the then Acting Garda Commissioner, Nóirín O’Sullivan, and the Minister for Justice & Equality. In launching the Report, the Minister stressed the need for a new culture of consultation with Roma and Traveller groups and a commitment was given to deliver on this.

The Department’s assessment made a number of recommendations with the aim of improving effectiveness in the structures and progressing the Department’s strategy to promote and support the integration of the Traveller and Roma communities. These recommendations are being implemented during 2015, including the establishment of a new National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy Steering Group to monitor the implementation of the National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy on an ongoing basis.

In addition, in 2014 the Department examined the operation of the Traveller Inter-Agency approach at local level and developed a National Strategic Framework aimed at supporting the Traveller Inter-Agency Groups (TIGs) to implement local strategies based on international, national, regional and local priorities, in consultation with Local County Development Committees (LCDCs). The framework sees TIGs developing strategies having conducted assessments of need, consulted with LCDCs in developing the Local Economic & Community Plan and agreeing performance measures and indicators. It also envisages the provision of training for TIG members with a view to building capacity to perform their functions, including training for TIG members from the Traveller community. Engagement has commenced with TIGs with a view to implementing the framework during 2015 and ensuring that the interests of the Traveller and Roma communities are reflected in the Local Economic and Community Plans being developed.

In parallel, the Local Government Reform Act 2014 sees major realignment of the Local Government Sector under the auspices of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). That Department delivers the ‘Local and Community Development Programme’ (LCDP) which aims to t*ackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies and people in disadvantaged communities*. A key principle of the programme is to prioritise marginalised people and social groupings within the most disadvantaged communities, by targeting those furthest from access to education, training and employment and those at highest risk of social exclusion.

Travellers are a named target group of the LCDP and some actions undertaken may be traveller specific, while others include a number of target groups including Travellers. The range of activities carried out in co-operation/collaboration with local groups, Traveller organisations, state agencies to provide supports to Travellers, include:

- access to further education and training  
 - school retention activities  
 - provision of tailored education and training  
 - primary health care and wellbeing programmes  
 - interagency collaboration  
 - after-schools and youth projects   
 - family supports  
 - community development supports  
 - employment/self-employment supports

Under the LCDP, Roma are not a named target group but do benefit from LCDP activities under the 'Non-Irish nationals', although this grouping is much broader than Roma.

A stream of funding for Traveller Community Development Projects is provided via the LCDP. The National Traveller Partnership (NTP) under the auspices of a non-Governmental organisation, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre (Pavee Point) co-ordinates the delivery of the LCDP in partnership with 14 Traveller Community Development projects by means of a community development approach, promotion of human rights and a clear recognition of Traveller ethnic identity. Through its work, the NTP seeks to tackle inequalities and promote Traveller inclusion, participation, equality and the broader cultural awareness of Traveller identity. The LCDP funding is used to meet the employment costs of 23.5 full time equivalent workers and overheads associated with the running of the 14 projects.

LCDP funding is also provided to the National Traveller Women’s Forum and to Pavee Point, whose work is centred on the following goals:

* Promoting awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services;
* Increasing access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources;
* Increasing people’s work readiness and employment prospects; and
* Promoting engagement with policy, practice, and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.

This funding contributes to the National Traveller Women’s Forum capacity to implement a wide range of actions such as promoting linkages between Traveller women and local services and supporting representation on regional committees with the view to improving representation of the issues for Traveller women at regional and national level in terms of service and support provision. The Forum supports the community in the planning and implementation of Traveller Pride Week and Traveller Pride Awards with the aim of supporting the development of Traveller pride in their Irish identity and cultural background, develop awareness and promote an understanding of the position, and highlight the contribution, of Travellers in Irish Society. They also work to promote Traveller participation in public life and policy development, focussing on the pre and post meeting support, policy training, development of appropriate position papers and administrative support to the roles. This aims to increase Traveller participation in decision making at national level on issues that affect their communities thereby helping to ensure their concerns are considered in policy development.

Pavee Point undertakes a range of actions to work towards creating the conditions for increased access and involvement of Travellers and Roma in a range of community and statutory services and includes supporting development of and providing legal and financial oversight of the NTP and delivering cultural competency training to a number of statutory agencies. Pavee Point works with a number of Government Departments and agencies to seek the development of a targeted training and employment strategy to support Traveller work readiness and employer Traveller readiness and undertakes actions to create Traveller access to labour market projects and initiatives such as promoting Traveller inclusion in Government initiatives to address unemployment. They also promote the inclusion of Travellers and Roma at sectoral committees and various national fora, and develop policy submissions and publish position papers on emerging issues providing the opportunity for solutions to be discussed and put in place.

The LCDP officially ended at the end of 2013 and is currently being implemented on a transitional basis to the end of March 2015. Its successor programme, the Social Inclusion Activation Programme (SICAP), will be implemented from 1 April as part of each Local Authority’s Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP). The SICAP is a key priority of Government and as a key intervention for the hard to reach in society, the Programme’s target groups include Travellers and Roma. Local County Development Committees (LCDCs) will be responsible for driving the community elements of the LECP and are required to consult the Traveller Inter-Agency Groups (TIGs) in the development and implementation of the LECP.

Further discussions are underway between the Department of Justice & Equality and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government to agree a new Traveller Inter-Agency Fund to support the work of the Traveller Inter-Agency Groups. This will be central to the successful delivery of improved outcomes for Travellers in the key areas of education, employment, health, accommodation and anti-discrimination. Such a scheme will give additional impetus to the work of developing the mechanics of better service delivery, in the context of stimulating the local Inter-Agency process, to include the link to the Local Community Development Committees in each Local Authority area.

# Is there any available information and data about violence against Roma population, especially women and children? If yes, what are the different forms of violence they experience and what measures have been taken to assist, protect, and compensate the victims?

The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) has a cross-Departmental mandate to develop, lead and co-ordinate migrant integration policy across other Government Departments, agencies and services. It’s functions include the promotion of the integration of legal immigrants into Irish society, the establishment of new structures for this purpose, the coordination of Ireland’s international reporting requirements relating to racism and integration under (e.g. the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), the management of the resettlement of refugees admitted as part of the United Nations Resettlement Programme and the administration of funding from national and EU sources to promote integration.

The Office monitors trends in racist incidents in consultation with An Garda Síochána, the Central Statistics Office and other relevant bodies including NGOs. Statistics on racist incidents and information on where to go to report a racist incident continues to be made available via quicklinks on the Home page of the Office website. The Office also makes available media reports about convictions for racially motivated offences. Statistics on racist crimes and incidents are:

**Incidents/Statistics**

**Reported Racist Crime (*Source: www.integration.ie*)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2003** | **2004** | **2005** | **2006** | **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** |
| 64 | 70 | 104 | 176 | 217 | 175 | 128 | 127 | 142 | 100 | 92 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2006** | **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** |
| Minor Assault | 40 | 50 | 45 | 30 | 37 | 44 | 25 | 16 |
| Assault Causing Harm | 20 | 18 | 12 | 13 | 7 | 21 |  | 7 |
| Harassment |  | 12 | 9 |  | 7 |  |  |  |
| Criminal Damage (Not Arson) | 39 | 43 | 29 | 22 | 23 | 18 | 16 | 9 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Public Order Offences** | **51** | **57** | **43** | **34** | **27** | **40** | **30** | **44** |
| Drunkenness Offences |  | 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prohibition/Incitement to Hatred Act - Other Offences |  | 6 | 6 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Menacing Phone Calls |  |  | 5 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prohibition/Incitement to Hatred Act - Section 2 of 1989 Act | 6 | 7 | 9 | 10 |  |  | 12 |  |
| Other Offences\* | 20 | 18 | 17 | 19 | 26 | 19 | 17 | 16 |
| **Totals** | **176** | **217** | **175** | **128** | **127** | **142** | **100** | **92** |

**Complaints made on Race grounds under Employment Equality Acts and under Equal Status Acts (*Source: www.integration.ie*)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Legislative Grounds** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** |
| Employment Equality and Pensions Acts | 259 | 137 | 103 |
| Equal Status Acts | 24 | 26 | 31 |
| **Total** | **283** | **163** | **134** |

**Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (*Source: www.integration.ie*)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **2007** | **2008** | **2009** | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** |
| 38 | 26 | 25 | 23 | 25 | 30 |

**Office of the Press Ombudsman (*Source: www.pressombudsman.ie***)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** |
| **Truth and Accuracy** | 116 | 122 | 292 |
| **Distinguishing Fact and Comment** | 40 | 38 | 82 |
| **Fairness and Honesty** | 44 | 34 | 103 |
| **Respect for rights** | 30 | 31 | 64 |
| **Privacy** | 90 | 40 | 40 |
| **Protection of Sources** | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **Court Reporting** | 5 | 7 | 13 |
| **Prejudice** | **36** | **87** | **216** |
| **Children** | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| **Publication of Decision** |  | 1 | 2 |

# Has your Government identified the main priority areas for Roma inclusion? If yes, what are the main goals? Please provide relevant details in this respect, as well as an estimate of funds allocated on measures relating to national strategies and policies for Roma incluson.

The Department of Justice & Equality has established a National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group, Chaired by the Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality, to ensure that a renewed emphasis is given across Government to making progress on implementing Ireland’s National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy. The Minister considers that it is appropriate at this time to undertake a review of the existing Strategy with a view to making whatever changes are appropriate by early 2016. The Steering Group will have the key role in overseeing this process.

The process will involve 3 phases. Phase 1 is an initial round of consultations to identify the priority themes to be addressed in a revised National Inclusion Strategy, followed by a second phase to identify and agree specific objectives under each of the themes identified and a third phase which will focus on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of each of the objectives that emerged from Phase 2. Thereafter, a final draft proposal for a revised Strategy will be prepared for consideration by Government with a view to having a revised strategy in place from 2016.

The Department will shortly be seeking views on the priority themes that should be addressed in a revised National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy and to aid the discussion will be setting out a number of themes that they see as being key to progressing Traveller & Roma inclusion, as follows:

**Education:**

It is essential that effective and necessary supports are available to people from marginalised communities to enable them to participate in education. The Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy sets the context for action to ensure equal treatment and full access for Roma & Traveller boys and girls to quality and mainstream education.

**Employment:**

Paid employment is central to self-esteem, independence and participation in society. Ensuring equal treatment of Travellers & Roma in access to the labour market and to employment opportunities is therefore a crucial priority.

**Health:**

To ensure equal treatment in access to universally available healthcare services on the basis of general eligibility criteria:

* + - Specific actions related to the Traveller and Roma communities should be included in the HSE National Service and Operational Plans for implementation across the country, with due consideration for flexibility around local identified priority needs.
    - The health and wellbeing of Travellers and Roma should be embedded into the priorities of local health service providers and local authorities, as well as into environmental planning and strategy development, so as to ensure that ‘Health and Wellbeing’ with specific reference to Travellers and Roma will be positioned as a theme in the local economic and development planning process underway.

**Anti-discrimination:**

Consideration should be given to the need for additional measures to combat discrimination and prejudice against Roma and Travellers and to promote the social, economic, political and cultural participation of Roma and Travellers in society, including at local level.

**Housing:**

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 provides the legislative framework within which housing authorities meet the accommodation needs of Travellers. The Act represents a planned, integrated and comprehensive response to the accommodation needs of Traveller families in need of accommodation. The provisions of the Act provide for public input and consultation at all stages of the preparation and implementation of Traveller Accommodation Programmes.

**Status / Social Attitudes / Self Esteem:**

Social inclusion of people from marginalised communities depends on whether the wider environment offers supports or creates barriers. Negative attitudes or behaviours towards Travellers and/or Roma can limit their participation in mainstream society.

**Data Collection:**

There should be a consistent approach (in full accordance with the Data Protection Acts) to the collection of data in relation to the Traveller and Roma communities, with a particular focus on implementing an agreed indicators framework to inform the collection of measurable and comparable data in all of the key priorities areas of health, education, employment, housing and anti-discrimination.

# Does your Government monitor progress made in the area of Roma inclusion in the political, social, economic and culture life of the State? If so, what are the visible and measurable achievements of various efforts undertaken for Roma inclusion? Please provide details.

# In the Government’s view, if there are still persistent disparities among Roma and other population groups, what were the failures and what are the ongoing challenges to close the gap and achieve full inclusion of Roma? in which areas is there the biggest need to step up efforts?

The Department of Justice & Equality has responsibility to monitor and coordinate policy in relation to the Traveller & Roma communities across Government. However, a key challenge is a lack of reliable data regarding the Traveller and Roma communities and it is intended during 2015 to develop a Cross-Agency Traveller & Roma data strategy to allow for improved measurement of policy outcomes for Travellers & Roma communities. To further this agenda, an up to date assessment of need regarding support provided by the State to the Roma community is currently being undertaken to establish how best to improve State agencies’ interaction with the Roma community and Ireland has joined the FRA Working Party on Roma Integration Indicators.

In addition, during 2014 the Department of Justice & Equality assessed the effectiveness of the structures in place for consultation with and delivering better outcomes to the Traveller & Roma Communities. Impetus for change arose with particular reference to the recommendations of the 2014 Report of Ms. Emily Logan, former Ombudsman for Children, under Section 42 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 into the circumstances surrounding the removal of two Roma children from their families. Ms Logan's Report (The Logan Report) identified a range of steps that need to be taken, including detailed issues that need to be addressed within An Garda Síochána and the HSE, the Child and Family Agency and others, as well as wider issues that relate to how public services generally engage with members of the Roma community. All of these recommendations were accepted unequivocally. In launching the Report, the Minister for Justice & Equality stressed the need for a new culture of consultation with Roma and Traveller groups and a commitment was also given to deliver on this.

The assessment made a number of recommendations that were accepted by the Minister of State for Equality with the aim of improving effectiveness in the structures and progressing the Department’s strategy to promote and support the inclusion of the Traveller and Roma communities. Following a consultation phase with relevant Government Departments and Traveller/Roma representatives, the recommendations are being implemented during 2015, which include the establishment of a new National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group, the development of a revised National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy for implementation from 2016.

# What channels for articulating, aggregating, and representing the interests of Roma, including through body/institution/unit or other establishments do exist in your country? If applicable, please indicate how such initiatives include staff or representatives from Roma communities.

Please see information provided in points 3 and 4. In addition, in 2014 the Department of Justice & Equality examined the operation of the Traveller Inter-Agency approach at local level and developed a National Strategic Framework aimed at supporting the Traveller Inter-Agency Groups to implement local strategies based on international, national, regional and local priorities, in consultation with Local County Development Committees (LCDCs). The framework sees TIGs, on which members of the Traveller community are represented, developing strategies having conducted assessments of need, consulted with LCDCs in developing the Local Economic & Community Plan and agreeing performance measures and indicators. It also envisages the provision of training for TIG members with a view to building capacity to perform their functions, including training for TIG members from the Traveller community. Engagement is underway with TIGs with a view to implementing the framework during 2015 and ensuring that the interests of the Traveller and Roma communities are reflected in the Local Economic and Community Plans being developed.