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**Ireland: Progress on Roma Integration**

**European Commission Questionnaire**

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# Dialogue with regional and local authorities

***Could you please share information on progress made on the dialogue with and the involvement of local and regional authorities in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) since 2012?***

***In particular regarding:***

* ***Translating the NRIS into regional and local agenda (e.g. through local action plans);***
* ***Providing financial support to regional and local authorities;***
* ***Supporting the capacity building of regional and local authorities;***
* ***Supporting the exchange of experience and mutual learning between local and regional authorities.***

## Position in General

The current structures for consulting with and improving outcomes for the Traveller community in Ireland have their basis in the Report of the 1995 Task Force on the Traveller Community and the 2006 Report of the High Level Group on Traveller issues (HLG). At national level, the Department of Justice & Equality monitors progress across Government via the National Traveller Monitoring & Advisory Committee (NTMAC), which comprises members from relevant Government Departments/Agencies, An Garda Síochána, Traveller representatives, private industry, and the HLG comprising senior officials from relevant Government Departments/Agencies.

At local level, following recommendations of the 2006 Report of the HLG, Traveller Inter-Agency Groups (TIGs) were established in each local authority area with a Traveller population involving membership drawn from relevant statutory bodies and the Traveller community.

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 integration of the Traveller and Roma communities. Consultation is currently underway with relevant Government Department and Traveller/Roma representatives with a view to implementing change during 2015, including the establishment of a new National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy Steering Group to monitor the NTRIS on an ongoing basis (by amalgamating NTMAC and the HLG).

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). DECLG deliver 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.

Furthermore, 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 TIGs. 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. The Department of Social Protection is a key stakeholder and funding source in addition to the Department of Justice and Equality and Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

## Policing – Position in An Garda Síochána

Direct consultation and access to Garda management by Traveller groups, Government and non-Government officials and local authorities continues to garner trust and build confidence between An Garda Síochána and members of the Traveller community. To this end, Garda Management takes cognisance of the principles of Traveller inclusion when making policing decisions that relate to the Traveller community.

An Garda Síochána’s Diversity Strategy emphasises that Gardaí must recognise and respect the needs, rights and dignity of all minorities in the State.

## Position in the Education Sector

All children may access pre-school, primary and post-primary education and are required to attend school from age 6 - 16 years or until the completion of three years at secondary school whichever is the latter. In the context of integration, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) published its Intercultural Education Strategy in September 2010. The aim of the strategy is twofold. It is firstly to ensure that all students experience an education that "respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership" this is from the Education Act 1998. Secondly it aims to assist providers at all levels to create a learning environment where inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment are the norm.

The Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy covers, in a very comprehensive manner, aspects of Traveller Education from pre-school right through to further and higher education within a lifelong learning context. The principle of inclusion is at the core of the Strategy and, accordingly, the focus of current provision is on the development of a more inclusive school environment through the whole school planning process, teaching practice, admissions policies, codes of behaviour and whole school evaluation. In keeping with this principle, additional resources provided in the education system are allocated on the basis of identified individual educational need rather than that of ethnic or cultural background.

A key objective of the Strategy is the phasing out of segregated Traveller provision and the inclusion of Traveller children and young people in mainstream education.

## Position in the Health Sector

A strong cohesive structure exists within the Health Service Executive (HSE) to coordinate priority actions in Traveller and Roma health. The HSE National Traveller Health Advisory Forum comprises representation from HSE staff, Traveller Health Units and Traveller representatives. Actions agreed by this committee may 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.

Traveller Health Units continue to forge and maintain strong links with other statutory and voluntary agencies in their areas, including significant engagement with local authorities and associated structures.

The Department of Health, through the Health and Wellbeing Programme is working with the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government on embedding health and wellbeing into new structures and arrangements in local government, as well as into environmental planning and strategy development. ‘Health and Wellbeing’ is now positioned as a theme in the local economic and development planning process underway. The Programme has also established direct links with the City and County Managers Association.

## Position in the Employment Sector

The initiatives previously reported and taken in 2012 and 2013 to open the Irish Labour market ahead of the required time frame to Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia will have been of some significance to Roma populations from these countries wishing to come and work in Ireland. This has continued to be the case.

Our National Employment Rights Authority continues to ensure the full application of Irish employment rights protections to non-Irish nationals with a right to work here is communicated in multiple languages including Romanian and Bulgarian.

A more recent development has been the roll out of the new 31 Local Enterprise Offices over the past year in particular. In the context of supporting the capacity building of local and regional authorities the establishment of the Local Enterprise Offices is a significant development which has been rolled out during 2014. The Local Enterprise Office is the *First Stop Shop* for anyone seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in Ireland. The Local Enterprise Office provides advice, information and support to persons starting up or growing a business. With 31 dedicated teams across the Local Authority network in Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices offer a wide range of experience, skills and services.

The Local Enterprise Office is for people interested in starting up a new business or already in business including; entrepreneurs, early stage promoters, start-ups and small business looking to expand.

Their role is:

* to drive the development of local enterprise, putting local micro and small business at the heart of job creation in Ireland.
* to drive and support business start-ups and promote a ‘can-do’ business culture.
* to increase the job potential of new and existing micro and small businesses.
* to increase the number of innovative businesses with potential to export.
* to be proactive in response to the needs of our clients.

In their dealings with customers, LEOs ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation are upheld. The LEO does not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, family status, race, religious belief, sexual orientation and membership of the traveller community.

LEOs also promote equality of treatment within enterprises , for example, by promulgating guides such as “EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION GUIDE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESSES” that emphasise the importance for employers to operate in a manner consistent with the need to provide equal opportunities to their employees and to work with people on the basis of individual merit and without regard to gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community.

## Position with Children & Young People

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020 contains a range of commitments relating to Traveller and Roma children and young people.

* Tackle inequalities in health outcomes for identified vulnerable groups, including Travellers, Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking children, migrants, young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), those experiencing poverty, and children and young people who are the responsibility of the State, whether in care or detention.
* Strengthen social inclusion measures and re-invigorate efforts to improve educational outcomes among, and integration of, Travellers, Roma and migrant children and young people, and all those with special needs, including gifted students, recognising an enhanced role for Early Years education in targeting these groups.
* Implement and monitor the National Travellers/Roma Integration Strategy, with a particular focus on Traveller accommodation and the engagement of Roma in education.
* Reduce discrimination and intolerance of all types experienced by marginalised groups (i.e. Travellers, Roma, migrants and asylum-seekers; children and young people with disabilities; those in care and detention; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people; and those from ethnic or religious minorities).

# Dialogue with Roma civil society

***Could you please share information on progress made on the dialogue with and involvement of civil society and Roma communities in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) since 2012?***

***In particular regarding:***

* ***Supporting the capacity building of Roma civil society;***
* ***Involving Roma civil society (including youth organisations) in the planning, implementation and monitoring of action plans/measures (e.g. through national platforms, consultations etc.);***
* ***Supporting the involvement of Roma (communities) in the implementation of the NRIS (e.g. by supporting community building efforts of local authorities/civil society).***

## Position in General

Please see information provided in 1.1. 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 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. To further the implementation of the Framework and identify inhibitors to effectiveness, a series of meetings were held with TIGs across three regions in October and November 2014 and consultations are continuing 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. Meeting local Traveller groups will form part of these consultations and arrangements are currently being made in this regard.

The Logan Report referred to in 1.1. recommended that an up to date assessment of need regarding support provided by the State to the Roma community should be undertaken to establish how best to improve State agencies’ interaction with the Roma community. In November 2014 the Department of Justice & Equality provided a grant to Pavee Point to take responsibility for carrying out the assessment and for engagement of a researcher to that end.

## Policing- Position in An Garda Síochána

Cooperation between An Garda Síochána and the Traveller community has excelled since 2012, through constant consultation and positive engagement. To this end, initiatives developed by An Garda Síochána in conjunction with Pavee Point have gone some way in providing support and reassurance to members of the Traveller community to report acts of discrimination directly to An Garda Síochána.

A number of initiatives developed since 2012 has led to:

* The acquisition by various members of An Garda Síochána of Traveller cultural techniques due to constant liaison,
* Training of Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers by representatives of Pavee Point in Traveller anti-discrimination techniques, and
* Intercultural problem-solving imperatives.

In conjunction with Garda Racial Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO), Pavee Point officials provided joint anti-discrimination seminars to 322 Ethnic Liaison Officers nationwide during 2012.

GRIDO has delivered a presentation on Cyber-Bullying to members of the Traveller community at Pavee Point Traveller & Roma Centre in Dublin during December 2014.

Other innovative initiatives which facilitate interaction and communication between local Gardaí and Traveller/Roma communities throughout the country are:

* Interaction through Sport – Ennis, Co. Clare.

Members of the local Traveller community (youth and adult) are members of the two local soccer clubs, namely Ennis Town and Avenue United. Ennis Town Soccer Club is managed by a Sergeant from Ennis Garda Station Community Policing Unit, while Avenue United is managed by a Garda also from Ennis Garda Station Community Policing Unit. Traveller participation has led to a positive interaction with the local community while sustaining robust local intercultural engagement.

* Interaction through Youth engagement – Ennis, Co. Clare.

The Ennis Youth Centre is attended by many of the local Traveller families whereupon interaction with the local community serves to lesson any divide that is perceived to exist between Travellers and other local communities. A Garda from Ennis Garda Community Policing Unit attends the centre on a weekly basis and meets with the local youths. The Garda attends to any matters of concern that youths may have thereby building trust and confidence with all who attend in Garda services that are available to all without discrimination.

* Interaction through Mediation – Finglas, Dublin.

Gardaí from Finglas Community Policing Unit constantly engage with Traveller families residing in the Finglas sub-district. The Traveller community are well integrated and well received by the locals. The greatest barrier to sustained good relations within the district is the family feuding that is taking place. Local Gardaí are meeting with three representatives of each of the feuding sides in order to endeavour to broker a peace agreement, while at the same time instilling a more participatory policing response to the Traveller community built upon constant positive Garda interaction. The aim of the mediation is to ensure that good relations between the settled community and local Travellers are not jeopardised through fearful images portrayed by violent feuding.

* Interaction through Community Participation – Finglas, Dublin.

Members of the Traveller community constantly interact with the local community while attending the Fingal Centre on Cardiffsbridge Road in Finglas. A coordinator based at the centre assists Travellers negotiate the structures of various State and non-Government agencies. Her work extends to acting as a facilitator to assist Travellers engage with all sectors of the local community. Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers from Finglas Garda Station also visit the centre and assist the coordinator in relation to Traveller community matters that may require a more sensitised policing response.

* Interaction through Community Engagement - Cork.

The Orchard Court Estate in the Blackpool district of Cork City is inhabited by a large number of Roma Gypsy families. The Blackpool Roma Network is a centre that is situated in Blackpool and caters for the needs of the Roma community. It is a meeting and social venue where the local community can interact with the local Roma families. During 2013 the local community in conjunction with Roma families joined together to undertake a ‘clean-up and de-dredging’ exercise of the local river in Blackpool that was prone to flooding upon heavy rainfall. The Roma and local community actively worked together over a number of days and cleared the river of debris and rotten timber which played a major part in preventing further flooding in the Blackpool district.

A strong bond between the local and Roma community has now been fostered. The local community association acts now also on behalf of members of the Roma community where matters come to their attention requiring concerted action.

An appointed Ethnic Liaison Officer attends at this centre once weekly to meet with the local Roma community. He deals with matters openly at the centre, however also provides a discrete confidential service to those requiring a more sensitive policing response. He has provided presentations at the centre on accessing Garda services and on road traffic legislation. He invites members from the Roma community to the local Garda station to meet with Garda management regarding best practiced in policing the Roma community.

## Position in the Education Sector

Traveller representative groups participate in the Traveller Education Strategy Advisory Consultative Forum (TESACF) which is the forum for consultation on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy.

Key recent initiatives on which Roma/Traveller representatives have been consulted include:

* The Action Plan on Bullying– to address bullying in schools, including identity-based bullying which is of particular relevance to Travellers and Roma;
* Draft legislation on school admission – to encourage greater equality of school access;
* Data Collection – to improve the quality of data collected on a number of groups, including Roma/Travellers in order to better track their transitions and progression;
* Higher Education – Roma/Traveller representatives have been consulted on the new Access Plan for Higher Education 2014-16 which includes an increased target For Traveller participation in Higher Education.

## Position in the Health Sector

Social Inclusion – within the Primary Care Division of the HSE – holds a remit for the health and support needs of Travellers and Roma. Specific attention is paid in this briefing to the actions linked to enhancing access of Roma to health services and providing necessary supports to enable them to navigate and use these appropriately.

A strategic approach to identifying and addressing Roma health needs involves participation in a range of activities that include attention to meeting the care needs and outcomes of this vulnerable group

The HSE funds a number of agencies to carry out work on its behalf. Examples of funded agencies include Pavee Point and Exchange House. A partnership approach in working with Roma is a key principle of all efforts around Roma health.

## Position in the Employment Sector

Discussions held between the Department of Justice & Equality and the Department of Social Protection during 2014 resulted in a decision to transfer the management of the Special Initiative for the employment of Travellers project to the Department of Justice & Equality with effect from 1st January 2015. This decision was made given that the Department of Justice & Equality are moving to implement changes to the structures in place for consulting with and improving outcomes for the Traveller community, at both national and local levels (outlined in paragraph 1.1.). The transfer of the Special Initiative for the employment of Travellers project to the Department of Justice and Equality is aimed at supporting those changes with a particular focus on enhancing the Traveller inter-agency approach in the area of employment. The Initiative retains its original objective of providing Traveller Support Workers and assistance for employment and enterprise development.

# Allocating European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for Roma inclusion in the 2014-2020 period

## How will the possibilities offered by the ESIF legal framework be utilised (e.g. territorial targeting, community-led local development, and sustainable urban development)? How will an integrated approach be assured (e.g. through multi-fund programmes or mechanisms coordinating separate programmes)?

### The Irish Authorities are taking an integrated approach to putting the ESI Funds to best use. Tools such as Community-led Local Development (CLLD), Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI’s) and Sustainable Urban Development have all been considered in the formulation of the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programmes (OPs).

### Given the funding priorities identified in the OPs, at this point, there would seem to be limited scope for the use of ITIs in the delivery of these operational programmes.

### In Ireland the use of CLLD, including integrated and multi-fund CLLD, was considered nationally by the Member State and by all Managing Authorities. Of key importance are the funding priorities included in the OPs and whether or not a CLLD approach is deemed to be the most appropriate delivery mechanism. The outcome of these considerations was that CLLD will be used in the delivery of the LEADER Programme under the EAFRD and the funding of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) in the delivery of the EMFF. A mono-fund approach to CLLD will be adopted with CLLD in each fund (EAFRD and EMFF) remaining separate.

### An Urban Development Fund will be established for the 2014 – 2020 period on a competitive basis.  Bidders such as local and urban authorities will compete for funding from the fund and the list of urban areas to benefit will depend on the outcome of this process.

### In accordance with EU Regulation 1303/2013, Ireland has put in place suitable mechanisms that will ensure coordination between the ESI funds and other EU and national instruments.

### A National Coordinating Committee of the Funds (NCCF) has been established to address cooperation and demarcation issues between ERDF/ESF, EMFF and EAFRD. The NCCF will also address cooperation, complementarity, subsidiarity and implementation issues between the ESI OPs and between these programmes and other Union instruments such as Horizon 2020, COSME, LIFE, Erasmus+ etc. To ensure complementarity across the ESI Funds, each OP Managing Authority will be represented on the monitoring committees of the other OPs. In addition, the MAs for each OP will also be represented at national level on the National Coordination Committee of the Funds and the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee.

### The draft ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020 will contain a specific investment priority for the socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities.

## Which Operational Programmes - if any - have chosen the ESF*[[1]](#footnote-1)* specific investment priority "socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities such as the Roma"? What is the total amount allocated to this investment priority?

## Which other relevant ESF, ERDF[[2]](#footnote-2) or EAFRD[[3]](#footnote-3) investment priorities have been selected for specific objectives which include Roma among the main target groups? Which are the Operational Programmes involved? Can other relevant mainstream specific objectives be identified (e.g. health or education)?

### **Position in General**

### The Operational Programmes being used to implement the ESI Funds in 2014-2020 have been developed in line with the Common Provisions Regulation and specific regulations governing each Fund. Programme planning for each Programme included the undertaking of a Needs Analysis to identify key development needs, extensive consultation processes with stakeholders and the carrying of an independent ex-ante evaluation. The results of all of these processes informed the priorities included in each of the Operational Programmes and each Programme is aligned with the 11 Thematic Objectives identified in the Regulations, the National Reform Programme and relevant National Strategies.

### While no Operational Programmes in Ireland have chosen the investment priority "Socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities such as the Roma", the horizontal principles of non-discrimination and equality are respected in the implementation of all of the Operational Programmes in 2014-2020.

### The Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, education, advertising, collective agreements, accommodation, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds including membership of the Traveller Community. Inequality is also strongly linked to exclusion, as groups that tend to be subject to inequality also tend to be socially excluded, and have higher levels of deprivation.

### The Managing Authorities of the OPs ensure integration of the Horizontal Principles of non-discrimination and equality into the design of the programmes by, for example:

* Involving bodies in charge of equality at all stages of the programmes (preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation), including the provision of advice on equality in fund-related activities and specific actions to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination.
* Taking appropriate steps in the implementation of the programme to prevent discrimination in relation to the nine categories which are protected by Irish equality legislation including membership of the Traveller Community.
* Engaging the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which has a statutory responsibility to promote equality, to offer support to intermediate bodies in assessing the impact of their measures on the nine equality grounds and incorporating an equality dimension, as appropriate, in project design and delivery.

Specifically, the ESF Programme will seek to promote sustainable and quality employment and support labour mobility. This will be done by ensuring that the education, training and upskilling systems provide targeted, labour market relevant, portable and recognised skills and qualifications to the workforce. In particular, the programmes and measures delivering these skills and qualifications will target the unemployed with a strong focus on, inter alia, re-integration of groups facing exclusion from the labour market including members of the traveller community.

### **Position in the Education Sector**

### The draft ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020 will contain specific investment priority "socio-economic inclusion of marginalised communities such as the Roma. The proposed allocation to this specific investment priority is €193.81m.

## How will ESIF be used to address policy issues raised in Roma-related Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)?

### **Position in General**

### Ireland does not have any Roma-related CSRs.

**3.3.2 Position in the Education Sector**

The new ESF Programme will provide funding for the integration of migrants, as was the case under the 2007 – 2013 ESF Programme. Travellers and migrants can apply for any of the ESF funded Measures within the new ESF Programme.

## What steps are being taken, including amounts available, to enhance implementation compared to 2007-2013 (e.g. strengthening of capacity of local and regional authorities and of civil society to implement projects)?

### **Position in General**

Training will continue to be, provided by Managing Authorities to staff involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds. Technical Assistance will be used to address the capacity development needs of the personnel engaged in programme management and implementation. This will take the form of the provision of guidance and training to Intermediary Bodies and beneficiaries to reinforce the capacity of these authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use those Funds and participation by Managing Authority staff in appropriate training programmes. Additionally, in accordance with the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP), there may be scope in the OPs for strengthening the institutional capacity of some of the newer partner organisations to effectively participate in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and the Irish Authorities will investigate this further.

In line with the ECCP and Article 5 and Article 15 (1) (c) of EU Regulation 1303/2013, extensive consultation processes were held at each stage of the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and each of the OPs. Consultations also took place with other Government Departments and agencies on potential funding priorities in the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

Monitoring Committees for existing Operational Programmes are representative of civil society. National partnership structures are being established in line with the European Code of Conduct on Partnership. At Operational Programme level, each OP will have a monitoring committee, the membership of which will also include the following partners:

1. competent urban and other public authorities,
2. economic and social partners and
3. relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

## Are you able to quantify the total amount of ESIF funds that could potentially be used for Roma integration measures (targeted and mainstream)?

It is not possible to quantify this amount.

# Reinforcing the role of the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP)

***Could you please share information on what steps have been taken to reinforce the mandate/ resources/coordination role of the National Roma Contact Point since 2012?***

***In particular:***

* ***What measures have been taken, if necessary, to increase the financial and the human resources available for the National Roma Contact Point so that it can effectively coordinate the cross-sectorial monitoring of Roma integration policies with a view to their implementation?***
* ***How has the NRCP been / is planned to be involved in decision-making processes regarding the development, funding and implementation of relevant policies?***
* ***How has the NRCP been/is planned to be involved in the programming and implementation structures of the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020?***

## National Roma Contact Point

The current structures for consulting with and improving outcomes for the Traveller community in Ireland have their basis in the Report of the 1995 Task Force on the Traveller Community and the 2006 Report of the High Level Group on Traveller issues (HLG). At national level, the Department of Justice & Equality monitors progress across Government via the National Traveller Monitoring & Advisory Committee (NTMAC), which comprises members from relevant Government Departments/Agencies, An Garda Síochána, Traveller representatives, private industry, and the HLG comprising senior officials from relevant Government Departments/Agencies.

At local level, following recommendations of the 2006 Report of the HLG, Traveller Inter-Agency Groups (TIGs) were established in each local authority area with a Traveller population involving membership drawn from relevant statutory bodies and the Traveller community.

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 integration of the Traveller and Roma communities. Consultation is currently underway with relevant Government Department and Traveller/Roma representatives with a view to implementing change during 2015. The following recommendations form the basis of this consultation process:

* A National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy Steering Group, Chaired by the Minister of State for Equality and comprising Senior Officials from all relevant Government Departments and Agencies, should be established to ensure that priority is given across Government to making progress on implementing Ireland’s National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy (NTRIS) and in particular the European Commission’s 2014 recommendations on the implementation of the NTIRS.
* All relevant Government Departments and Agencies should move immediately to revise their National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategies and following a process of inter-departmental consultation and consultation with Traveller interests seek Government approval for the agreed actions arising.
* The NTRIS Steering Group should monitor the NTRIS on an ongoing basis having regard to the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma (and Traveller) Inclusion, reporting to the Senior Officials Group on Social Policy.
* The NTRIS Steering Group should focus on assessing impacts, identifying shortcomings in implementation and channelling conclusions into policy development.
* Linked to the data strategy under the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, a Cross-Agency Traveller & Roma data strategy should be developed to allow for improved measurement of policy outcomes for Travellers & Roma communities, including measuring the impact of mainstream measures.
* NTMAC and HLG should be amalgamated to form the above-mentioned NTRIS Steering Group with a view to facilitating a fully inclusive, constructive dialogue and better communication between all stakeholders including representatives from the Traveller and Roma communities.
* The Traveller Policy Unit of the DJE Equality Division should be re-named ‘Traveller & Roma Integration Unit” and act as driver of NTRIS policy to ensure effective implementation, with the lead being taken by the National Roma Contact Point within that Unit.
* The Traveller & Roma Integration Unit should work closely with the Social Inclusion Office of the Department of Social Protection, with a particular focus on the Roma and Traveller communities benefiting from measures funded under the objective of social inclusion and a representative of that Office should sit on the newly formed NTRIS Steering Group.
* An assessment of need should be conducted for the Traveller Community [linked to the data collection strategy mentioned above], following from the assessment of need for the Roma community recommended under the Logan Report.
* A National Strategic Framework should be developed and implemented to provide strategic direction for the Traveller Interagency Groups (TIGs) with a view to increasing effectiveness of the interagency framework, in line with POBAL Recommendations and within the framework provided by the 10 Common Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion. Work has already begun on this initiative, including engaging with Departments of Social Protection and Environment, Community & Local Government regarding available funding to support the framework. In addition, TIGs are currently considering a draft Framework document.

In addition, following discussions with the Department of Social Protection during 2014 it was decided to transfer the management of the Special Initiative for the employment of Travellers project from that Department to the Department of Justice & Equality with effect from 1st January 2015. This decision was made given that the Department of Justice & Equality are moving to implement changes to the structures in place for consulting with and improving outcomes for the Traveller community, at both national and local levels. The transfer of the Special Initiative for the employment of Travellers project to the Department of Justice and Equality is aimed at supporting those changes with a particular focus on enhancing the Traveller inter-agency approach in the area of employment. The Initiative retains its original objective of providing Traveller Support Workers and assistance for employment and enterprise development.

# Fighting discrimination effectively

***Could you please describe the main measures taken since 2012 to fight discrimination in the four key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing?***

***In particular:***

* ***What policies and measures have been put in place to combat segregation at national, regional and local level?***
* ***What measures have been implemented to combat discrimination and prejudice against Roma?***
* ***What steps have been taken to promote the social, economic, political and cultural participation of Roma in society, including at local level?***

## Position in General

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 introduces a positive duty on public bodies to have due regard to human rights and equality. The Commission will assist public bodies to comply with the positive duty by producing guidelines and codes of practice. The idea is to create a positive duty on public bodies to conduct their business in a manner that is consistent with individual human rights. The Commission will have an important role in developing this model of positive duty and in achieving a key tool which will be meaningful and effective in actively promoting equality and human rights across the public sector. Training as well as preparation of codes of practice will be important elements of what the Commission can offer. The duty set out in the Act requires public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of its employees and service users.

On 1 September 2014, the Commission published a new e-learning course for front-line staff in the public sector. “Delivering Equality in Public Services: An Introduction for Front Line Staff” provides public sector staff with the essentials they need to know about Irish equality law in their work. The course is available free and takes about 40 minutes. It is an e-learning course which is being made available in a number of ways. Individual officers in public sector bodies can access [Delivering Equality in Public Services](http://www.ihrc.ie/deliveringequality) on the IHREC’s website.

NTMAC

The National Traveller Monitoring & Advisory Committee (NTMAC) was established to give concentrated attention to developing a more integrated approach towards the provision of services for the Traveller community, and to improve communication between Travellers and the settled community. During the course of its work since 2012, NTMAC has:

* Formed sub-Groups to make recommendations in the areas of Engaging Traveller Men, Mental Health and asking Traveller Men to say stop to Domestic Violence;
* Facilitated a meeting between Traveller Organisations (members of NTMAC) with a working Senator regarding improving the political participation of Travellers;
* Written to all political parties regarding the approach taken by candidates in local elections expressing concerns related to the danger of the issue being used in a manner which could be interpreted as reflecting prejudice against the Traveller community. All parties were asked to highlight to candidates going forward for election the importance of avoiding any form of comment or statement which might be said to promote direct or indirect discrimination (or a perception of discrimination) against Travellers, or any group, in their campaign efforts.
* Engaged with National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee on the issue of the experience of Travellers in Private Rented Accommodation.
* Engaged with An Garda Síochána on the manner of the recording of Travellers on the Garda PULSE System.
* Engaged with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission on the issue of training in the implementation of Traveller polices by front-line staff.

Traveller Pride Week

The Department of Justice and Equality endeavours to promote  
positive communications in relation to the Traveller Community. One of the  
activities the Department sponsors in this context is the annual Traveller Pride Week which aims to promote Traveller culture and achievements, including to the wider population.

## Policing – Position in An Garda Síochána

During 2014, An Garda Síochána launched localised information training sessions to cater for Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELOs) and Community Garda members in conjunction with Roma community specialist trainers/facilitators. These sessions provide instructions on policing strategies to be employed in policing Ireland’s Roma Gypsy population and have specific focus on integration, equal protection and mutual respect. It is proposed to continue the roll-out of these training sessions.

## Position in the Education Sector

The main policies and measures which have been put in place to combat segregation in education of Travellers and Roma in Ireland are as follows:

* Cessation of Segregated Provision

A key objective of the ‘Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy’ is the phasing out of segregated Traveller provision and the inclusion of Traveller children and young people in mainstream education.

Since 2012 the phasing out of remaining segregated provision has been progressed with student places being incorporated in mainstream provision. It should be noted that some resources previously allocated to Traveller-specific programmes, have been reallocated to mainstream provision in keeping with the recommendations of the Traveller Education Strategy – e.g. additional pupil capitation and teaching resources continue to be provided to support the transfer of Traveller children to mainstream provision.

* Teacher Education

Both Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers are tailored to meet the needs of teachers and schools so as to enable them deal with the teaching and learning needs of all students regardless of their cultural background and provide a general focus on inclusion and support for pedagogical practices which promote inclusion.

Initial teacher education course providers aim to prepare their student teachers to meet the diverse needs of all their pupils. The Teaching Council’s Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers, published in 2011, stipulate mandatory elements of study including:

* Inclusive Education (Special Education, Multiculturalism, Disadvantage, etc.)
* Literacy
* Numeracy
* Parents in Education – Co-operation and Collaboration
* Behaviour Management
* The Teacher as Professional//Reflective Practitioner/Researcher
* The School as a Learning Community
* Continuing Professional Development

The Department of Education & Skills Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) provides a comprehensive system of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers. These programmes are tailored to meet the needs of both teachers and schools to enable them deal with the teaching and learning needs of all students, regardless of their individual circumstance or ability. They provide a general focus on inclusion and support for pedagogical practices which promote inclusion.

The PDST is responsible for supporting primary and post primary schools in the implementation of the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum. A core element of the SPHE Curriculum at primary level is the fostering and development of the positive attitudes towards diversity and celebrating difference through the strand unit "Myself and the Wider World". Support is provided on request for teachers through facilitated staff inputs, in class modelling of lessons, local workshops and a range of support materials available on www.pdst.ie (primary) and also on www.sphe.ie (post primary). Through the support given at school level these issues are addressed both through the formal and informal curriculum specifically with regard to promoting a positive school culture and climate that respects individual difference.

* National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)

The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) provides an interactive workshop that focuses on the classroom environment and classroom planning to support inclusion. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are given an opportunity to reflect on their own individual values, behaviours and attitudes which will determine inclusive practice in their classrooms. Emphasis is placed on how to develop strategies to ensure that all pupils/students are included.

In terms of measures that have been implemented to combat discrimination and prejudice against Travellers & Roma, since 2012 a number of measures have been implemented in the education sector to combat discrimination and prejudice against all students in Ireland including Travellers and Roma:

* Anti-Bullying Procedures

These procedures are designed to give direction and guidance to school authorities and school personnel in preventing and tackling school-based bullying behaviour amongst its pupils. They place a strong focus on education and prevention strategies to deal with bullying behaviour including, in particular, cyberbullying and identity based bullying such as homophobic and transphobic bullying. The procedures make clear that the focus of any prevention and education awareness measures in schools about cyber-bullying should be on educating pupils on how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The procedures also recognise that parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

* + The Action Plan on Bullying (2012) encourages individual school authorities to identify, and participate in, anti-bullying programmes which best meet the needs of their particular school and the context in which it operates. There is a number of alternative programmes available to schools and the Department does not endorse any one particular programme, but leaves it to schools to use the programme which has the best potential to address the challenges faced by individual schools.
  + The Action Plan favours an approach whereby a climate of respect for all, regardless of their identity or background. More generally, the Department supports a range of interventions to encourage an inclusive school environment – ranging from initial teacher education and continuing professional development to curriculum reform and supports such as the NCCA’s Intercultural Guidelines for Schools. The Department is also committed to the reform of school admissions policies and encouraging increased pluralism in school patronage.
  + The Department has provided funding for anti-bullying training and awareness programmes for pupils, teachers and parents, including Traveller and Roma parents. In relation to identity-based bullying, the Action Plan on Bullying outlines an approach which promotes respect and tolerance for all, regardless of their background, ethnic or other identity.
* Education (Admissions to School) Bill 2014

The objective of new legislation scheduled for introduction in 2015 is to provide an over-arching framework to ensure that how schools decide on who is enrolled and who is refused a place in schools is more structured, fair and transparent. The Bill includes provision for both the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to designate a school place.

## Position in the Health Sector

Funding is directed towards a range of initiatives designed to support the Roma community in accessing health care. In this regard, consideration is accorded to the socioeconomic determinants of health model, with a portion of funding applied towards provision of general support in activities of daily living.

The success of the Roma health project in Tallaght, County Dublin offers a useful example of a project where impact in respect of improving access to health services by members of the Roma community has been significant. The trust built via this project has encouraged increasing numbers of Roma to access the clinic as a first point of contact, as well as being “signposted” to other essential services.

**Thematic seminars focused on identified priority issues**: The HSE has supported Pavee Point in conducting seminars attended by Roma service users and a range of service providers. Two publications aimed at promoting an understanding of the barriers faced by many Roma in Ireland and informing policy and practice in relation to such issues were published subsequently i.e. **Roma Communities in Ireland: Child Protection Considerations and Challenging Barriers and Misconceptions: Roma Maternal Health in Ireland**

## Position with Children and Young People

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020 contains a range of commitments relating to Traveller and Roma children and young people.

* Tackle inequalities in health outcomes for identified vulnerable groups, including Travellers, Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking children, migrants, young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), those experiencing poverty, and children and young people who are the responsibility of the State, whether in care or detention.
* Strengthen social inclusion measures and re-invigorate efforts to improve educational outcomes among, and integration of, Travellers, Roma and migrant children and young people, and all those with special needs, including gifted students, recognising an enhanced role for Early Years education in targeting these groups.
* Implement and monitor the National Travellers/Roma Integration Strategy, with a particular focus on Traveller accommodation and the engagement of Roma in education.

Reduce discrimination and intolerance of all types experienced by marginalised groups (i.e. Travellers, Roma, migrants and asylum-seekers; children and young people with disabilities; those in care and detention; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people; and those from ethnic or religious minorities).

# Monitoring transformation and enabling policy adjustment

***Could you please share information on what steps have been taken since 2012 to further develop a robust monitoring system of the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS)?***

***In particular:***

* ***Please, briefly describe the monitoring mechanism and how the different stakeholders are involved in this monitoring structure;***
* ***Please, give examples of key indicators used to monitor progress towards the targets of the NRIS;***
* ***Please, briefly describe how the monitoring is linked to the monitoring of the European Structural and Investment Funds in the 2014-2020 period.***

## Position in General

Please refer to paragraphs 1.1. and 4.1. for information regarding the current monitoring and coordination role of the Department of Justice and Equality as well as the proposals to transform structures that are currently the subject of consultation. In addition, the Department of Justice and Equality has commenced a process (in consultation with the national statistics office, the Central Statistics Office) to develop a data collection strategy. Furthermore, with a view to further informing the shaping of structures and improving outcomes for the Traveller and Roma communities, the National Roma Contact Point within the Department of Justice and Equality has now joined the Fundamental Rights Agency’s Working Party on Roma Integration Indicators.

## Policing – Position in An Garda Síochána

Within a ‘lessons learned’ approach, An Garda Síochána is now pursuing a programme of monitoring of local level innovative strategy application. This will entail monitoring of all local Garda projects which are designed to encourage Traveller/Roma integration through site visits, assessment of outcomes and advice/assistance where necessary.

## Position in the Education Sector

The Department of Education and Skills is improving its arrangements for the collection and collation of data on Traveller pupils through the Primary Census form for primary pupils and through the Post-Primary Pupil Database for post-primary pupils. This will facilitate improved monitoring of progression and attainment of Travellers across the primary and post-primary school sectors.

The Primary Online Database (POD) will replace the current annual census of primary schools, and will involve schools maintaining and returning data on pupils to the Department at individual pupil level on a live web-based system. The database will allow the Department to more closely monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes of pupils at primary level, to validate school enrolment returns for grant payment and teacher allocation purposes, and to follow up on pupils who do not make the transfer from primary to post primary level.

Traveller representative groups are aware of these developments through their participation in the Traveller Education Strategy Advisory and Consultative Forum and these developments will assist with tracking progress for Traveller children and young people to upper secondary level. It is important to note that data collected throughout the education system is based on self-identification, accordingly the actual number of Travellers in education may be higher than stated.

Transfer of Pupil Information by Schools

To assist students in the transition from primary to post primary (from September 2012) all primary schools are required to provide information on students moving to second level schools. This sharing of information is aimed at ensuring that a rounded picture of children's ability and achievement at primary school is available to their new school. This is a particularly important development for Travellers where making the transition from primary to post-primary school can be an issue.

## Position in the Health Sector

A strategic action focuses on implementation of ethnic equality monitoring and associated rollout of an ethnic identifier. Such collection and application of disaggregated data is designed to inform evidenced based planning and monitoring to ensure equal access of members of all groups to health services. Progress in this area has been slow, but a number of projects are underway in relation to this, including imminent rollout of an online ethnic equality monitoring training package for HSE staff.

Although overall priorities are identified, each Traveller Health Unit carries out activities based on locally identified needs. A wide range of activities are effected in this way, with reporting becoming increasingly tailored towards measuring outputs rather than descriptive inputs. Various innovative projects have been supported too, with built in reporting criteria aimed at informing on-going adaptation, learning and potential replication across all THUs. It is in this way that such initiatives as the Asthma Education programme, Travelling to Wellbeing (Suicide prevention) and other projects aimed at enhancing mental health service delivery are supported and funded.

# Main challenges and successes

***Please give an example of a key challenge the NRCP is facing and a key success achieved related to any of the above areas.***

## Position in General

A key development is adoption of a series of proposals aimed at improving the effectiveness of structures for consultation with and improving outcomes for the Traveller and Roma communities, to further the National Traveller & Roma Integration Strategy (referred to in paragraphs 1.1. and 4.1.). However, a key challenge facing the NRCP is a lack of reliable data regarding the Traveller and Roma communities. As part of the proposals to improve structures for consultation with and improving, it is intended to develop a Cross-Agency Traveller & Roma data strategy to allow for improved measurement of policy outcomes for Travellers & Roma communities. To this end, the NRCP has joined the FRA Working Party on Roma Integration Indicators.

## Policing – Position in An Garda Síochána

Regional Roma Anti-Discrimination Training Seminars for Garda Management – These seminars, of two-hour duration, were devised to increase the understanding of Garda management in relation to responding appropriately to the sensitivities of the Roma community. These training sessions are hosted by GRIDO and Roma trainers, and include an opportunity for Garda management to learn first-hand from Roma about their perceptions of An Garda Síochána.

During 2014, seminars were held throughout Ireland for Garda management in the Western, Northern, South-Eastern, Eastern, and Southern Regions. During 2015, it is planned to deliver training for senior management in the Dublin Metropolitan Region.

NASC (The Irish Immigrant Support Centre) – European Integration Fund (EIF) – NASC were granted funding from EIF to develop training, in the context of a larger project around raising awareness of racism and promoting the reporting of racist incidents. GRIDO acted as a referee in the application, and agreed to assist. To this end, NASC and GRIDO cooperated in the development and delivery of anti-discrimination training focused primarily on the Roma community, and two training sessions were held in Cork during 2014, which were co-facilitated by An Garda Síochána.

## Position in the Education Sector

A key success is the fact that progress to date on the integration of Travellers in mainstream education in accordance with the recommendations in the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy has been achieved. Travellers are now included in the valid enrolment for all schools, for the purposes of allocating additional teaching resources in DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) schools and for the purposes of allocating additional teaching resources under the General Allocation Model (GAM) for high incidence special educational needs. Early Years provision for Travellers has also mainstreamed which is a very important development at this key juncture in the education continuum.

Engagement of some Travellers with second-level education remains a challenge due to Traveller elements of the traditional Traveller lifestyle, such as early school leaving for marriage in the case of girls, and the pursuit of traditional Traveller employment and enterprise in the case of boys. A new integrated service delivery model for Educational Welfare Services being developed by the Child and Family Agency will facilitate improved services for all children at risk of early school leaving, including Traveller children.

## Position in the Health Sector

Positive steps have been effected towards improving Traveller health outcomes. The overall structure of the HSE National Traveller Health Advisory Forum – comprising health service staff, THU representatives and Traveller representation, continues to provide a strategic and operational framework towards promotion of a consistent approach across Traveller Health Units to addressing Traveller health priorities identified in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study. At the same time, efforts are promoted in respect of aligning primary care health work within the THUs with existing clinical programmes. Work around diabetes is one example of this approach.

Targeted interventions are planned in those geographical locations where Roma are based, i.e. Dublin, Waterford/ Wexford and Limerick. Examples of initiatives progressed during 2013 – 2014 include:

* **Expansion of Tallaght Roma Integration Project:** Increasing demand for this mobile GP clinic has resulted in expansion of the service from 1 afternoon to 2 afternoons each week. During the 3rd quarter of 2014, the service was used by 180 individuals and 56 individuals used the service more than once. Approximately 37% of individuals using the service were children under 12 years.

Individuals using the Roma GP bus are in contact with the cultural mediators and support workers when arriving to use the service as well as when they are leaving the service. The role of the workers is to create a welcoming and warm atmosphere and also to help individuals to understand health related issues where there may be differing cultural understandings. The workers can also provide interpreting to Roma and to Romanian service users.

This model of service provision has proved very successful, both in terms of quality service delivery as well as in sign-pointing Roma to other services, such as education, birth registration and social welfare offices. Planning is currently underway to move the clinic from a mobile bus to a clinic room close to acute hospital services.

* **Establishment of other clinics**: Low threshold clinics for Roma (and other vulnerable service users) are in place in central Dublin and in Limerick. These clinics offer access to GP services to marginalised service users who are not generally able to use mainstream services.
* **Support for Roma Outreach work**: The HSE has provided funding to a range of projects aimed at supporting Roma to engage with health services, identify general health needs and support access to information and services. Interagency work has also been undertaken. This includes work undertaken with Tusla to prioritise community needs, particularly in respect of Roma children.
* **The HSE Service and Operational plans for 2015** provide a clear picture of agreed actions to be carried out in respect of Traveller and Roma health in 2015. These are listed below:

**Traveller and Roma health**

Implement actions aimed at improving Traveller and Roma health:

* Roll out the asthma education programme in 3 further Traveller Health Units in partnership with the Asthma Society of Ireland.
* Work within the context of the Diabetes Clinical Programme and in collaboration with local Diabetes Services to ensure Travellers are supported to access appropriate services and supports.
* Deliver an education programme aimed at reducing the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease in the Traveller community (2 Traveller Health Units).
* Work in partnership with the National Office for Suicide Prevention to reduce incidence of Traveller suicides and to implement actions aimed at improving mental health of this cohort.
* Apply findings of Tallaght Roma Integration report and associated seminar reports produced by Pavee Point towards further targeted projects aimed at improving Roma health.
* Address relevant recommendations of the Ombudsman enquiry/ report into removal of Roma children in partnership with Children First Lead.
* Additionally, given the emphasis on the importance of measuring outcomes, a new metric has been introduced from 2015: No of people who received awareness raising and information on type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular health, with a target of 20% of the population in each THU.

Please find a link to the Asthma pilot rollout fyi…http://www.paveepoint.ie/asthma-education-pilot-project-for-travellers-2/

# Additional information

***You are invited to share any additional information or concern (regarding for instance measures taken in response to the assessment by the Commission in its report of June 2013, not mentioned before).***

## Position in General

Conflict & Mediation

The presence of, or potential for, conflict means that there is a need for services such as policing, health-care, council repairs to houses, as well as likely services in the area of Courts, Prisons and Probation Services. The assessment of whether to appoint a mediator in individual cases has regard to the public good balanced with costs associated with the provision of such services. However, the MTCMI initiative (described below) has proven to be very successful in dealing with Traveller conflict.

The Midlands Traveller Conflict and Mediation Initiative (MTCMI) has mostly operated in the midlands area (Longford/Westmeath) but due to its success they have also dealt with cases in Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Limerick, Wicklow and Galway. The service which commenced in 2009 has been part-funded by the Department of Justice and Equality. This is a pilot project under the aegis of four midlands Traveller Interagency Groups (TIGs) which put in place mediators, on a full-time basis, to deal with recurring violent incidents involving extended Traveller families.

The MTCMI Steering Group comprises a cross-section of personnel from the four interagency groups, local Travellers and the Gardaí. The strategy is based on a co-ordinated approach to tackling the underlying drivers of conflict and recognizes that neither Travellers themselves nor those working with them have the capacity/skills to manage and resolve the underlying conflict. The strategy is based on a view that (i) an effective response to conflict requires a joined up approach that brings a mediation/conflict resolution approach to bear in tandem with a clear policing and enforcement strategy and (ii) addresses a range of issues which contribute to and exacerbate conflict between Travellers and between Travellers and the Settled Community.

The ultimate aim is for the Traveller community to have the capacity within itself to prevent disputes from escalating. The Traveller community has to develop and adopt alternative means of conflict resolution, both for its own sake and that of the wider society. Traveller Policy Division sees the MTCMI as leading that process and believes that lessons learned from this initiative on alternative dispute resolution will have wider application in approaching the problem of disputes among Traveller families which now exist nationally. In addition, the Department of Justice and Equality is in consultations with the Council of Europe regarding bringing its mediation programme, ROMED, to Ireland during 2015.

The Logan Report

Referenced in paragraph 1.1., the Report of the Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the removal of two Roma children from their families was published in July 2014. The inquiry was conducted by Ms Emily Logan under Section 42 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (as amended). Ms Logan's 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, Minister Fitzgerald stressed the need for a new culture of consultation with Roma and Traveller groups themselves and a commitment was also given to deliver on this.

An Implementation Group was set up to report back to Minister Fitzgerald by the end of the year on how the recommendations are being implemented. The Group met on four occasions in total, with the final meeting held on 9th December. The report of the Implementation Group will be published shortly.

## Position in the Health Sector

**Healthy Ireland**: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025 was approved by Government in February 2013.

The Healthy Ireland Framework is informed by international evidence and thinking on ‘health in all policies’ and the WHO strategic approaches to tackling risk factors for non-communicable diseases, as well as the social determinants of health and health inequalities. Healthy Ireland takes a ‘whole of government’ and ‘whole of society’ approach to generating more effective, coherent and joined-up responses to these complex issues.

Healthy Ireland’s goals are to:

* Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life;
* Reduce health inequalities;
* Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing; and
* Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

1. European Social Fund [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. European Regional Development Fund [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development [↑](#footnote-ref-3)