



THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND AND ROMA



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IMPORTANT NOTE

The information in this brochure is taken from a broader study, produced by Bernard Brunhes International (BBI, www.bb-international.eu) under the contract "Reporting on ESF interventions in the EU". The background report "ESF and Roma" was drafted by Livia Di Nardo and Eva Koncokova and is available in English at <http://ec.europa.eu/esf>

Understanding the Complex Dynamics of the Situation of Roma

The last decade has seen a debate over the scope of the term “Roma”, and on how it can be accurately used both in policy documents and in everyday situations in various Member States. Ethical and political considerations have had their impact on estimating the total number of the Roma population across the EU, and even on who recognises her/himself or is recognised as a Roma in different national circumstances and legislations. Studies indicate that there are between 15 and 30 million Roma worldwide, with more than 10 million living in Europe. This makes up the continent’s largest ethnical minority population.

While recognising the specific cultural identities of all Roma, the EU institutions use “Roma” as an umbrella term that also incorporates other groups of people who share more or less similar cultural characteristics and a history of marginalisation in European societies, such as Sinti, Travellers, Ashkali, Camminanti, etc.

What most Roma communities in Europe also have in common is that they are still subjected to structural discrimination and segregation in the fields of employment, education, training and housing. Numerous European and national surveys demonstrate that a substantial proportion of European citizens take a negative view of the Roma population, which is rooted mainly in stereotypes and prejudice. Within this context, the media play a significant role in emphasizing Roma related stereotypes.

The European Social Fund in a Nutshell

The European Social Fund is devoted to promoting employment in the EU. It helps Member States make Europe's workforce and companies better equipped to face new and global challenges. It co-finances interventions supported by national public and private funds. The ESF strategy and budget is negotiated and decided between the EU Member States, the European Parliament and the Commission. On this basis, seven-year Operational Programmes (OPs) are planned by Member States and approved by the European Commission.

Operational Programmes 2000-2006: total expenditure claimed (in € million) per Member State (situation on 2 September 2008)

Member State	Expenditure	Member State	Expenditure
Austria	1,326	Latvia	115
Belgium	2,416	Lithuania	166
Cyprus	22	Luxembourg	47
Czech Republic	297	Malta	9
Denmark	779	Poland	1,776
Estonia	71	Portugal	7,145
Finland	2,365	Slovakia	241
France	12,204	Slovenia	60
Germany	20,930	Spain	17,388
Greece	4,783	Sweden	2,661
Hungary	288	The Netherlands	2,458
Ireland	1,778	United Kingdom	13,285
Italy	12,909		

ESF Facts and Figures

Most information in this brochure relates to the 2000-2006 period. In 2000, the ESF was open to the then 15 EU Member States. Additional programmes started in 2004 to accommodate the priorities of 10 new Member States. A few figures to illustrate the size of the ESF interventions:

2000-2006

- + Over 200 OPs together spent a total of € 105 billion: just over half (€ 54 billion) of this was paid for by the ESF, while the public and private sectors in the Member States invested the remaining € 51 billion.
- + More than 75 million people were involved in ESF activities. This corresponds to about 24% of the total population between 15 and 64 years in the EU.
- + The ESF is committed to equal opportunities. Overall, the involvement in ESF-funded actions was balanced: 52% were women and 48% men.
- + ESF helps prepare young people to find suitable work: 37% of all participants were between 16 and 25 years of age.
- + Supporting initiatives to keep people in the labour market is key to the ESF, in particular when workers are getting older: seven percent of ESF participants were over 55 years old.
- + Overall, 54% of ESF participants were unemployed, 38% were employed and 8% were inactive, i.e. not readily available to get and stay in a job.
- + Evaluations and monitoring data show that approximately half of the unemployed participants found employment within 12 months after completing an intervention. The range is 40 to 80%.

2007 onwards

- + Data available on 75% of the current programmes show that at least 6 million people benefited from ESF supported interventions in 2007 and 2008.
- + 13% of these participants belong to vulnerable groups such as migrants, minorities, people with disabilities, Roma, etc.

The above interventions and expenditure do not cover the EQUAL Community Initiative which was also funded by the ESF in 2000-2006.

Forms and Scope of ESF Support to Roma

The study which forms the basis for this brochure has looked at the ESF-funded activities involving Roma. The overall findings also contain information from over 100 projects targeting Roma that have been financed through Development Partnerships (DP) in the Community Initiative EQUAL. Some concrete achievements are illustrated on pages 8-11 of this brochure.

A significant number of Member States do not identify Roma as an ethnic minority and as a result do not report on them systematically. In this case, Roma may indeed benefit from ESF interventions due to their social or economic disadvantage, but not on the grounds of ethnicity as such. In this respect, it is worth noting that the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion adopted by the Council of the EU in 2009 underscore the need for explicit but not exclusive targeting.

The Integrated Approach to Roma Inclusion - the Common Denominator of ESF Interventions

The Roma are discriminated in all spheres of life and need to gain access to social services on equal terms and to enjoy the same opportunities as other groups in society.

Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional process that implies the lack or denial of certain resources, rights, goods or services, as well as the incapacity to take part into the normal relations and activities at hand to most people within the society, no matter if these belong to the economic, social, cultural or political sphere. In order to be effective, policies and projects therefore need to tackle not only one problem at a time, but to adopt an integrated approach to the integration of Roma: in the labour market, in the educational system and in general in the society providing help for health and living conditions and fighting discrimination through community development and promoting the acceptance of Roma culture.

Thematic Overview of ESF and Equal Interventions (2000-2006)

MS	Employment	Training	Education	Antidiscrimination and community development	Capacity building and improving infrastructures	Health	Studies and research
AT	✓	✓		✓	✓		
CZ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
DE(*)	✓		✓	✓			
ES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
FI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
FR	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GR	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
HU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
IE	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
IT	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
LT(*)	✓						
NL(*)	✓						
PL	✓			✓			
PT(*)	✓		✓			✓	
SE(*)				✓			
SI(*)	✓		✓		✓		
SK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UK(*)						✓	

Source: Data compiled by BBI on the basis of ESF Operational Programme reports 2000-2006 and on information gathered from National Managing Authorities. (The information above is not exhaustive).

(*) Equal only

Thematic Overview of ESF Interventions (2007-2008)

MS	Employment	Training	Education	Antidiscrimination and community development	Capacity building and improving infrastructures	Health
BG	✓	✓	✓			✓
CZ	✓	✓	✓		✓	
ES	✓	✓		✓	✓	
FI	✓				✓	
GR	✓	✓			✓	✓
HU	✓	✓	✓	✓		
IE		✓	✓			
IT	✓			✓		
PL	✓			✓		
RO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SI		✓	✓			
SK	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Source: Data compiled by BBI on the basis of ESF Operational Programme reports 2007-2013 and on information gathered from National Managing Authorities. (The information above is not exhaustive and it refers to the first two years of implementation).

At a Glance:

Support of ESF and EQUAL to Roma between 2000 and 2006

- + 11 Member States programmed activities targeting Roma (among other vulnerable groups) during the 2000-2006 programming period, in which they invested € 3 billion.
- + The interventions took place within the framework of 81 measures in 57 Operational Programmes. A total of 3.3 million people benefited from measures targeting Roma among other vulnerable groups.
- + Among the above interventions, Hungary, Ireland, Slovakia, and Spain programmed interventions in ten measures directly aimed at Roma communities. Their total expenditure amounted to € 806 million (€ 506 million from Community funds and € 300 million from national private and public funding). These measures recorded over 2 million participants. Among these, about 100,000 participants have been explicitly identified as Roma.
- + In the framework of the EQUAL programme, 109 Development Partnerships in 18 Member States (see table on page 5) addressed also Roma. Half of these initiatives were entirely dedicated to Roma, which represents 3% of all EQUAL initiatives.

ESF Support to Roma in the Current Programming Period 2007-2013

Activities co-funded by the ESF and the EQUAL initiative in the current programming period are aimed at contributing with innovative ways to solving the problems of Roma communities, by creating new and effective opportunities for their social inclusion. Several Member States identified the Roma as a target of their ESF 2007-2013 programmes.

According to an analysis of the ESF 2007-2013 Operational Programmes, 12 Member States (see table on page 5) target Roma (among other vulnerable groups). Activities for Roma are funded under 59 Priority Axes in 38 Operational Programmes, which have a total budget of € 17.5 billion (including € 13.3 billion of ESF funds). Roma are targeted as possible participants under initiatives that represent 27% of their total ESF budget. In Hungary and Romania, Roma are potential beneficiaries in more than 50% of the planned interventions, while in Ireland Travellers are a potential target of 99.5% of the planned ESF supported activities for 2007-2013.

Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain have dedicated € 172 million for activities aimed solely at Roma. Projects started in several Member States in 2007 and 2008 with an overall budget of € 141 million. Almost 110,000 Roma already benefited from these interventions.

Employment Opportunities and Insertion in the Labour Market

In almost all Member States, the ESF-supported approach to social inclusion of vulnerable groups focuses mainly on employment. This also applies to the interventions related to Roma. The ESF pays particular attention to the insertion into the labour market of the most disadvantaged among the Roma: women and young people. The former are targeted by programmes aimed at the reconciliation of work and private life and young people are targeted in specific programmes.

Insight:

ACCEDER or the Success of Individual Insertion Paths in Spain

The ACCEDER programme is co-funded by ESF and the European Regional Development Fund and managed by the Foundation Segretariado Gitano in the framework of the national OP "Fight against discrimination". 13 Spanish regions and more than 40 city councils collaborate in the programme. The programme focuses on the development of grassroots interventions and actions regarding the employment of Roma. Between 1999 and 2009 47,778 persons received help from this programme, 72% of them were of Roma origin. 33,827 persons got an employment thanks to ACCEDER; 70% of them are Roma and 51.4% are women. The programme has been so successful and innovative that a project built on the experience of ACCEDER was launched in Romania in the 2007-2013 programming period. For more information on this good practice example, please visit: <http://www.gitanos.org/acceder/index.html>.

KidNet.hu in Hungary

The KidNet.hu project in Debrecen facilitated the labour market (re)integration of registered and unregistered unemployed young people of 16-26 years of age with multiple socio-cultural disadvantages who had dropped out of the schooling system and did not have any vocational qualification. 152 disadvantaged young people have been helped with individual insertion paths activities, training and tailored services. 35% of the participants found a job after completion of activities (www.kidnet.hu).

Education and Training

The Roma population has a high share of young people under the age of 20. Roma children are facing two types of obstacles in education: they experience difficulties in attending regular classes as they are often placed in special schools for children with learning difficulties or are de facto segregated in regular schools. This situation contributes to Roma children feeling excluded and therefore leaving school early. Member States have made good progress as regards enrolling Roma children in schools and dismantling segregated schooling and the ESF contributed in several ways to achieve these outcomes.

Insight:

A New Curriculum of Roma Studies in Secondary Schools in Slovakia

The Human Resources programme in Slovakia set up a € 250,000 project to develop a new curriculum on Roma Studies. In addition to the curriculum itself, the project produced guidelines for Roma language and literature, a Roma grammar book and Roma sources (Roma tradition, music, history, cuisine, art, craft). The tools were properly tested and then included in the course offer of the high schools network.

Another critical success factor for social inclusion is the link between schools and Roma communities. Various ESF interventions deploy mentors and counsellors to enhance the participation of Roma children to education. Moreover, a large part of the ESF support is dedicated to second chance education, adult education and to preventing early school leaving. In Ireland, for instance, adult education is an essential part of the Irish measure for Travellers, under which a Traveller Education Strategy was developed.

Insight:

The Horsemen Project in Ireland

The aim of the Horsemen project was the development of one or more certified courses on horse care specifically geared towards Travellers and Roma. Learners who successfully completed the course may expect to find work in the equine industry. This project allowed for programme design input from the target group, i.e. the Travelling and Roma Communities. The programme was client-centred and was designed with their particular cultural needs in mind. The module reflected the shared experience of Roma and Travellers and also drew on their practical knowledge and experience. This course was piloted in Ireland, Spain and Hungary. All phases of the project were completed in 2006. It is also envisaged that this programme will act as a catalyst for Travellers and Roma people to engage in other education and training programmes at a later stage.

Capacity Building and Infrastructure for Roma Organisations and Institutions working with the Roma Community

ESF co-funded activities also improve the functioning of organisations, NGOs and other institutions dealing with the integration of Roma. Such interventions represent 18% of all Roma-related activities co-funded by ESF. In addition, seven Member States implemented Development Partnerships under EQUAL aimed at strengthening capacities of Roma organisations and NGOs. Overall, these amounted to 10% of the EQUAL activities co-financed by ESF.

Antidiscrimination, Community Development and Awareness Raising

Fighting against discrimination is part of the daily life of many Roma. Several initiatives co-funded by the ESF put a strong accent on anti-discrimination and focus on different ways to promote the Roma culture and reconcile Roma with the mainstream society.

Insight:

Platform for Roma integration in Dobrá Voda, Czech Republic

The Český západ ("Czech West") association works in the areas of humanitarian, educational, social and legal counselling and on the issue of employment. The "Community Work in Dobrá Voda" project focused on the whole local Roma population. It supported children to attend nursery, then elementary and high school via several creative educational and leisure time activities. Courses for adults were organised to develop their social competences and knowledge. In cooperation with the city employment office, the association set up an employment programme in which an employment counsellor advised people where to look for a job and how to apply for it.

Health Conditions and Access to Health

A number of ESF and EQUAL programmes include health care initiatives for Roma. Improving sanitary standards in Roma communities and ensuring their access to public health services are critical for the integration of Roma, as illustrated below.

Insight:

Socio-medical Centres in Greece

A project in Greece set up socio-medical centres aimed to help the Roma population integrate in society by encouraging and teaching them how to use public services in the fields of education, health, employment, welfare, etc. The key actions of the centres consisted of: providing social care through dissemination of information and assistance; settling ID registration issues; networking with appropriate services in the public sector; providing basic health care and vaccination of children; promoting the values of education; supporting the enrolment of children in schools; and promoting employment of Roma women in collaboration with providers of adult education. In total, 33 socio-medical centres were created in different regions. Their activities will be supported in the current programming period as well and they have a proposed target of 32,000 people.

European Social Fund 2007-2013: Investing in People

In the programming period 2007-2013, the ESF has a budget of € 76 billion to co-finance 117 Operational Programmes in all 27 Member States. National public and private funds amount to a further € 41 billion. The interventions supported are in the fields of:

- (i) adaptability of workers and enterprises;
- (ii) access to employment and inclusion in the labour market;
- (iii) social inclusion of disadvantaged people;
- (iv) reform in education and training systems;
- (v) good governance, partnership and the involvement of social partners.

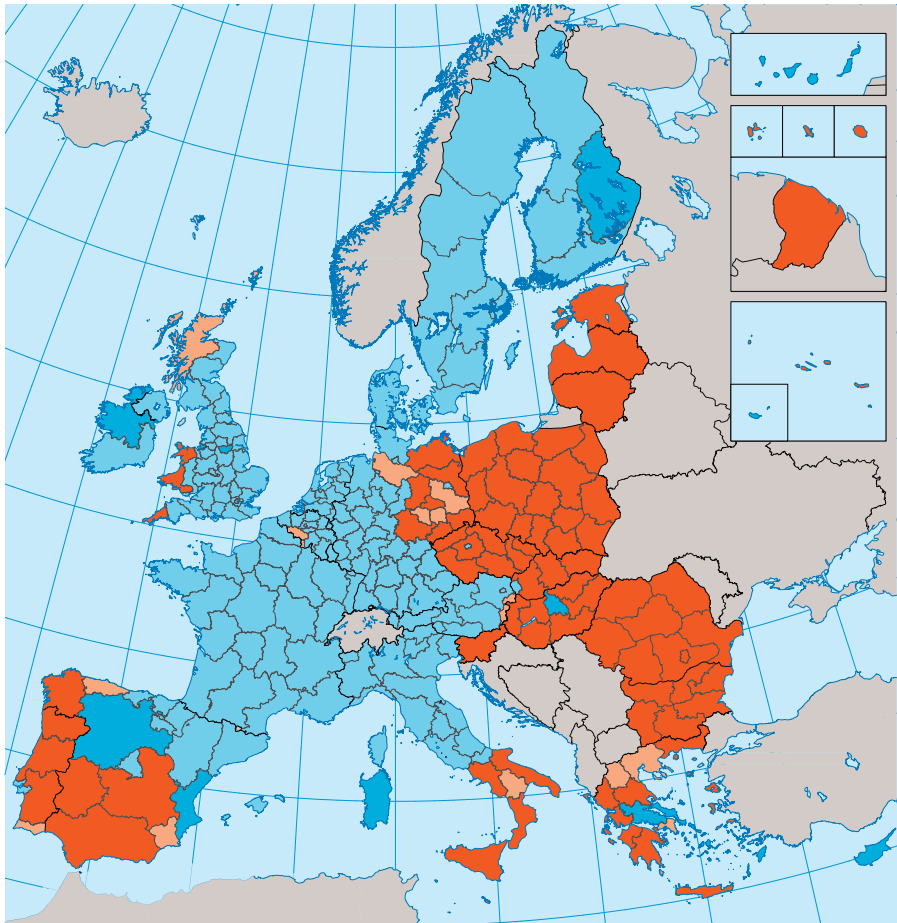
The map shows that ESF supports activities across all 27 Member States under two Objectives. Additional priorities in the so-called Convergence regions are:

- (i) lifelong learning and research and innovation;
- (ii) capacity building of public administrations and services.

Operational Programmes 2007/2013: total budget (in € million) per Member State

Member State	Budget	Member State	Budget
Austria	1,184	Latvia	657
Belgium	2,320	Lithuania	1,210
Bulgaria	1,395	Luxembourg	50
Cyprus	150	Malta	132
Czech Republic	4,436	Poland	11,420
Denmark	510	Portugal	9,210
Estonia	462	Romania	4,335
Finland	1,420	Slovakia	1,764
France	10,275	Slovenia	889
Germany	15,666	Spain	11,426
Greece	5,726	Sweden	1,383
Hungary	4,270	The Netherlands	1,705
Ireland	1,360	United Kingdom	8,598
Italy	15,321		

ESF 2007-2013 Investing in your Future



The level of ESF funding differs from one region to another depending on their relative wealth. EU regions are divided into four categories, based on their regional GDP per head compared to the EU average (EU with 27 or 15 Member States).

- Convergence regions:** with a GDP per head of less than 75% of the EU-27 average
- Phasing-out regions:** with a GDP per head of more than 75% of the EU-27 average but less than 75% of the EU-15 average
- Phasing-in regions:** with a GDP per head of less than 75% of the EU-15 average (in the period 2000-2006) but more than 75% of the EU-15 average (in the period 2007-2013)
- Competitiveness and employment regions:** applies to all other EU regions

Position as of January 2007

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What ESF does for you

ESF: active labour market policies and public employment services

ESF: adaptability of enterprises and continuing training of workers

ESF: developing human potential in research and innovation

ESF and labour mobility

ESF: education and lifelong learning

ESF: women, gender mainstreaming and reconciliation of work and private life

ESF and Roma

ESF: sustainable development and eco-technologies

ESF: migrants and minorities

ESF: urban areas and local employment

ESF and older workers

ESF and health

ESF and entrepreneurship

ESF and young people

ESF and disabled

ESF and institutional capacity

ESF and social inclusion

ESF and equality mainstreaming

ESF and social partners

ESF support to building partnerships

ESF and culture

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