



The European Commission decides to refer SLOVAKIA to the Court of Justice of the European Union for not sufficiently addressing discrimination against Roma children at school

Brussels, 19 April 2023

Today, the European Commission decided to refer Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union for failing to effectively tackle the issue of segregation of Roma children in education.

The EU rules on racial equality ([Directive 2000/43/EC](#)) strictly prohibit discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin in key areas of life, including education. In Slovakia, however, Roma children are often placed in special schools for pupils with mild mental disabilities. Many Roma children who attend mainstream education are also segregated, in separate classes or schools.

The Commission started an infringement procedure against Slovakia in 2015 and sent a [reasoned opinion](#) in 2019. Since then, Slovakia has undertaken a series of legislative reforms and adopted several strategies and action plans to foster Roma inclusion in education. However, after carefully assessing those measures and monitoring the situation on the ground, the Commission concluded that the reforms undertaken so far are insufficient.

The discrimination of Roma children in education in Slovakia continues to persist, as confirmed in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' [Roma Survey](#). In Slovakia, 65% of 6-15 years old Roma pupils attend schools where all or most pupils are Roma, which is a 5 percentage-point increase compared to 2016. This makes Slovakia the EU Member State with the highest share of Roma segregation in education.

Background

Although some improvements have been made in the EU – predominantly in the area of education – Europe still has a long way to go to achieve real equality for Roma. Marginalisation persists and many Roma continue to face a combination of discrimination, anti-gypsyism and socio-economic exclusion in their daily lives.

The [EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030](#), which the Commission adopted in October 2020, was the first direct action implementing the [EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#). It underlined that a strengthened commitment was necessary to tackle persistent discrimination, including anti-gypsyism, and to improve the inclusion of Roma people in education. The Framework includes objectives such as cutting at least in half the proportion of Roma children attending segregated primary schools (in Member States with significant Roma population) to ensure that by 2030 less than one in five Roma child attend schools where most or all children are Roma.

In January 2023, the Commission published its [Assessment report of the Member States' national Roma strategic frameworks](#), where it stressed that on desegregation in education and housing, national plans do not appear to be sufficient to successfully address the full extent of the problem.

For More Information

[EU legislation combating racial or ethnic discrimination](#)

[Infringement Decisions database](#)

[EU infringement procedure](#)

[Link to April 2023 infringements package](#)

Press contacts:

[Christian WIGAND](#) (+32 2 296 22 53)

[Cristina TORRES CASTILLO](#) (+32 2 29 90679)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)