



## **Feedback of the Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradňa) to the initiative of the European Commission setting out the EU post-2020 Roma equality and inclusion policy (March 2020)**

This feedback is provided by a grass-root NGO promoting human rights of Roma minority in Slovakia via field monitoring, strategic litigation and advocacy. There are ongoing challenges in inclusion of marginalized Roma in Slovakia and we would like to highlight selected issues that a future Roma-inclusion strategy in Slovakia should reflect:

1./ the effective measures addressing discrimination of Roma in all areas of public life should be strengthened. Marginalization and poverty that many Roma face makes it very difficult for them to mobilize themselves against discrimination. Particular attention should be given Roma women experiencing multiple, and intersecting forms of gender and racial discrimination that are especially widespread in the area of reproductive health care. Documented practices of segregation in maternity wards, racial harassment and humiliation, neglect, physical restraint and abuse during childbirth and failures related to informed consent and decision making with regard to medical treatment have to be addressed (see the [attached report](#)).

2./ the anti-discrimination legislation in Slovakia remains rarely and poorly implemented in practice. Roma experiencing discrimination face serious barriers preventing them to effectively achieve justice in courts that should be addressed. These barriers include ongoing shortcomings in decision making of courts and often extreme length of court proceedings.

3./ there is evidence to suggest that a number of Roma women in Slovakia have been subject to forced and coercive sterilization in the past and this fact cannot be ignored by the Slovak authorities. The importance to recognize and acknowledge wrongdoings against Roma minority from the past by the state authorities and to provide effective access to justice, including remedies and reparations, should also be reflected in the Roma-inclusion strategies.

4./ the discriminatory domestic legal provisions should be removed. The current Slovak legislation contains several provisions especially in the area of social security which have disproportionate negative impact on marginalized Roma, and thus constitute their discrimination. These specific legal provisions have conditioned the rates of payments of child benefit, parental care allowance and child birth allowance on compliance with other preventive measures, and if these are not met, these benefits are cut.

5./ the measures addressing discrimination of Roma children in education have to be much more ambitious to achieve tangible systemic changes. Such measures inevitably require considerably higher investments from public sources when considering the current extent and structural character of this problem in Slovakia and factual necessity to reform the whole primary educational system into inclusive. All patterns of school segregation, including segregated Roma-only schools, and their complex causes should be addressed, while recognizing that inclusive and diverse primary schools are important prerequisite for reducing antigypsyism and discrimination. Residential segregation of many marginalized Roma communities is one of the causes of school segregation, and as such it should also be addressed as a priority in the context of housing policies.

6./ representatives of state institutions and municipalities remain reluctant to take effective measures on inclusion of marginalized Roma, as these are negatively perceived by the majority

society and thus jeopardize their voting preferences. It is therefore important to thoroughly communicate and translate the majority people positive impacts of the strategy and its measures for the whole local communities and the society as such, including the importance of inclusive education and measures on desegregation and on supporting social cohesion. In addition, the state institutions have to take responsibility for addressing exclusion of marginalized Roma in localities where municipalities neglect or ignore this issue.

**Expertise of the submitting organisation:**

The Center for Civil and Human Rights (Poradňa pre občianske a ľudské práva, "Poradňa") is Slovak independent non-governmental organisation focused on the protection of human rights with an emphasis on the rights of minorities and protection from discrimination. From 2002 Poradňa has addressed the issue of discrimination against Roma minority in various areas of public life. It has also been active in the protection of reproductive rights of Roma women and protection from police ill-treatment. Poradňa pursues its mission by human rights monitoring, strategic litigation as well advocacy activities. For more information please visit us at <https://www.poradna-prava.sk/en/>

**Contact information:**

Stefan Ivanco - program coordinator of the Center for Civil and Human Rights

E-mail: [poradna@poradna-prava.sk](mailto:poradna@poradna-prava.sk)

Phone: +421 908 695 531 396