Background context

The half-yearly meeting of the EURoma Network brought together 68 people to discuss a wide range of topics related to Roma and Structural Funds which are currently on the European agenda. Participants included Structural Funds Managing Authorities and the public bodies in charge of Roma policies, representing 12 EU Member States, European Commission’s representatives (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and DG Regional Policy) and the Technical Secretariat (Fundación Secretariado Gitano).

Furthermore, representatives from a number of relevant stakeholders as the Roma Education Fund (REF), the Open Society, the World Bank and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency were invited to provide feedback to relevant topics debated during the two-day meeting.

The main objectives of this meeting were the following:

- Review how Structural Funds are supporting the educational advancement of Roma students in the different countries
- Analyze how Roma inclusion is approached within the EC Proposals for future regulations
- Foresee how Structural Funds will contribute in the upcoming National Roma Integration Strategies.

Welcoming Words

Mr. Tamás Palicz, Head of Human Resources Programme Managing Authority from the National Development Agency, together with Mrs. Katalin Langerné Victor, Head of Department, from the State Secretariat for Social Inclusion, Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, and Mr. László Berényi vice-chairman of the National Roma Council (NRC) were in charge of opening the session, providing us with an overall picture of the Hungarian context and welcomed the participants to the meeting.

After this panel, the Technical Secretariat presented the Agenda for the session.
Roma education - the role of Structural Funds:

This part was divided into two segments: the first one gave an overview of the policy framework regarding educational goals within the EU2020 Strategy which sets a really concrete goal regarding early drop-out, the EC Proposal for future regulations of the SF (2014-2020) and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies; followed by a summary of the main lines of intervention in education funded by SF in each of the countries of the Network, based on a questionnaire previously sent to the partners.

The questionnaire was sent to all the EURoma MS and 8 countries provided the information requested before the gathering in Budapest. The most relevant conclusion that this information made available is that education is becoming a priority gradually in OPs and that in the majority of the countries the Roma approach is included in more general programmes, usually targeting excluded groups. The most common lines of action are mainly: a) improving the quality of the educational systems (training for teachers, desegregation initiatives, actions for equal access to education, etc.) or b) improving the educational level of the Roma students (mainly through after school classes, initiatives to prevent or combat early school leaving and other supporting programmes).

All the measures implemented have a very clear focus: the transition of Roma students from the educational system to the labour market, indeed, the increase of the Roma employability, which highlights the relevance of the economic dimension of the approach.

After a round of comments from MS, there was a consensus on the relevance for SF on focusing on education in the current and upcoming programming period.

The second segment presented concrete experiences from Hungary, Greece, Romania and Spain, providing participants the opportunity to reflect on concrete experiences in the field of education and analyzing in this sphere the added value of the Structural Funds. Following the main ideas previously presented with the information provided by the Member States (through the questionnaires), the presentations delivered focused mainly on the improvement of the educational system (Greece and Hungary) and on the advancement of the educational level of the Roma students (Spain and Romania).

The experiences presented were the following:
**Desegregation programme**: Mr Iván Sörös, State Secretariat for Social Inclusion, Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, Human Resources Development OP, Hungary

**Promotion of inter-cultural education**: Mrs Chrisoula Arcoudis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Multi-cultural education OP, Greece

Tackling Roma early school leaving: Mr Humberto García, FSG. PROMOCIONA Programme, OP Fight against Discrimination, Spain

**School after School**: Mr Florin Nasture, Roma Education Fund (REF), Human Resource Development OP, Romania

After each of the presentations, there was a questions and answer debate to clarify relevant issues of the initiatives and served to identify keys for intervention for future projects.

All the information gathered within the questionnaires, which were answered by EURoma Member States, the contributions from the presentations carried out (Greece, Hungary, Spain and Romania) and the lively debate generated afterwards, will serve as a base for the Technical Secretariat to produce a document on the potential of the Structural Funds in supporting educational initiatives towards the Roma students.

**Evaluation of the use of the Structural Funds**

Dominique Be, Deputy Head of Unit, ESF Coordination, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion presented the most relevant conclusions and recommendation included in the *Evaluation of ESF support for enhancing access to the labour market and the social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities*. This research was recently carried out by request of the European Commission.

As identified in the Roma thematic report, main key findings are as follows:

- There is increased attention in ESF to promoting the labour market and social inclusion of the Roma in 2007-2013 compared with the 2000-2006 programming period.
- ESF expenditure to promote Roma inclusion through specific actions has increased between the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 periods, but the number of EU countries which support such measures has not increased, due to the transition towards an ‘explicit but not exclusive’ targeting approach.
Structural Funds: Investing in Roma

- In some countries, there was insufficient aggregation at programme level about expenditure on ESF disaggregated according to whether individuals had a Roma background.
- The research identified initiatives to improve reporting on the use of Structural Funds to promote Roma inclusion. The EURoma network has encouraged ESF MAs to report on expenditure at national level and across regional MAs (e.g. Italy).
- Participation in the ESF by people with a Roma background has increased between programming periods.
- While the ESF has made a positive contribution to promoting Roma inclusion, the nature and scale of the results achieved and the longer-term impacts on strengthening employability are difficult to assess.
- Through multiannual programming, the ESF has encouraged a long-term approach to promoting Roma integration and the adoption of a more integrated approach through EQUAL.
- Despite ESF interventions persistent disparities in employment and educational attainment between the majority population and Roma.
- Insufficient focus on capacity building for Roma NGO.

5 recommendations to the European Commission and 28 to the EU Member States were included in the report as regards data collection, monitoring and reporting on ESF support to the Roma; targeting approach; programme planning and design; management and implementation arrangements; implementation level and beneficiaries; thematic interventions and evaluation.

It proves that follow up and evaluation of the Structural Funds is becoming more and more important for the European Commission in order to assess the level of effectiveness and quality of interventions with this funding in order to support the level of access to the labour market and the social inclusion of minorities. This is also being delivered gradually by EU Member as it is the case of Hungary, which recently carried out the study Evaluation of the use of the Structural Funds for Roma integration in Hungary (Inception Report) delivered by Pannon Elemző Iroda. A representative from that Research Institute, Nóra Teller, introduced the first findings and methodology of the research. The most relevant finding were that the territorial targeting is not sufficient and that current policies are not capable of reaching the most disadvantaged as interventions remain as pilot initiatives and for short terms.

The most relevant conclusions included in the report are the following:

- The selected interventions only partially target and include Roma, although their tools and activities would be adequate and useful.
- Current design of calls and procedures pushes beneficiaries to stay away from including high risk-high cost groups among the final beneficiaries, among them Roma.
There is no institutional design to facilitate and guarantee inclusion of Roma, and (pro-) Roma NGOs in planning, implementation and sustaining results.

- Only mid- and long-term interventions, fostering access to quality mainstream services are adequate in tackling exclusion, still, interventions remain constrained to short-term projects, captured by the mono-funding trap, and non-coordinated open call procedures challenging sustainability of results.

- Assisted planning and supported implementation facilitate the inclusion of Roma.

**EC Proposals for future Regulations**

The European Commission provided an overview of the proposals for the future Regulations of the Structural Funds (2014-2020) which were recently presented. Commission’s representatives identified new elements proposed for the upcoming programming period, analyzed how Roma inclusion is approached and stressed the new opportunities and risks offered for social inclusion in general and Roma social inclusion in particular.

The presentations were carried out by Enrica Chiozza, from the DG Regional Policy, European Commission and Dominique Be, Deputy Head of Unit, ESF Coordination, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission.

This part was very much of the interest of the participants who received by first hand very relevant information: the new legislative proposals are designed to reinforce the strategic dimension of the policy and to ensure that EU investment is targeted on Europe’s long-term goals for growth and jobs ("Europe 2020"). Social inclusion, the fight against poverty and exclusion as well as social aspects in general are clearly reinforced in the new proposals.

The legislative package includes:

- An overarching regulation setting out common rules governing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). This will allow for the better combination of funds for a stronger impact of EU action.
- Three specific regulations for the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund.
- Two regulations dealing with the European territorial cooperation goal and the European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC).
- Two regulations on the European Globalisation Fund (EGF) and the Programme for Social Change and Innovation.
- A communication on the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF)
In this new regulation the Commission proposes a **more focused approach on the implementation of programmes** with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness of Fund.

Key proposals include:

- **Geographical coverage.** EU regions will receive support within three defined categories, instead of four, according their level of development, namely: a) Less developed regions (GDP per capita is below 75% of the Union average), will continue to be the top priority for the policy; b) Transition regions: (GDP per capita between 75% and 90% of the EU 27 average); c) More developed regions (GDP per capita is above 90% of the average). The objectives set out include a clear territorial focus, reinforcing the local level. It also reinforces the territorial cooperation among regions (cross-border, transnational and interregional), since it offers clear EU added value.

- **Territorial cohesion:** there will be a clear focus on sustainable urban development with at least 5% of the ERDF resources allocated for "integrated actions" (with investment from different programmes) in this field by each Member State. In addition, the Commission will launch calls for innovative actions in urban areas and make ESF human capital investments in cities easier. Particular attention will be paid also to areas with specific natural or demographic features, with a specific additional allocation for the outermost regions and sparsely populated areas.

- **Better coordination of various EU actions.** A “Common Strategic Framework” will contain EU’s top priorities and apply to all Funds in order to guarantee an integrated use of the funds. Member States should specify how they plan to combine the Funds. In addition, they will also be allowed to combine ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund in "multi-fund" programmes to better suit their growth plans, improve coordination on the ground and achieve integrated development. The purpose is to allow the biggest impact on the ground.

- **Concentration on a limited number of investment priorities** closely linked to “Europe2020” priorities: employment, growth and territorial cooperation. European Commission also proposes 11 thematic objectives, some of them of direct relevance for the integration of the Roma community.

- **Establishment of concrete objectives and more attention paid to monitoring, evaluation and results.** A Partnership Contract will be agreed between the Commission and each EU country, bringing together all the country’s commitments to delivering European objectives and targets according to the National Reform Programmes and the delivery of their national Europe2020 objectives. They will also select some of the 11 thematic objectives in which they plan to work. Social entities can also take part in the Partnership Contracts.
• Partnership contracts will include a number of *ex ante conditions* which must be in place before the funds are disbursed (for instance, the proper functioning of public procurement systems). This way Member States will demonstrate that satisfactory strategic, regulatory and institutional frameworks are in place to ensure the funds are used effectively. Also, the release of additional funds will be contingent on the fulfilment of a number of *ex-post conditions* related to performance.

• Whenever possible, management procedures will be simplified and the IT systems will be further used; eligibility rules as well as the rules regarding management and control systems between different will be harmonised, paying particular attention to small beneficiaries.

• Possibility to have *pre-funding from the Commission* during all period: the amount of these advances will be paid in instalments and will be defined in the specific Regulations of each fund.

• 0,35 % of the global resources shall be allocated to *technical assistance* at the initiative of the Commission.

• There is a reinforcement of social affairs in general and the fight against poverty and social exclusion and the promotion of social inclusion and equal opportunities in particular:
  
  o Several of the 11 thematic objectives that Member States have to select are directly related to the integration of Roma population such as promoting employment and supporting labour mobility (number 8) ; investing in skills, education and lifelong learning (number 9) and promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (poverty target) (number 10).

  o Equal opportunities (and to a certain extent the fight against discrimination) appear as a horizontal objective for all funds.

  o There is a reinforcement of relevant objectives related to the integration of Roma population such as equal opportunities and non-discrimination; promoting social inclusion and the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

  o Support to measures to promote equal opportunities between women and men and to combat discrimination, with particular attention to groups such as Roma.

  o The ERDF regulation includes as specific objectives promoting social inclusion and combating poverty as well as promoting employment and supporting labour mobility, investing in education, skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure and supporting social enterprises.
In general terms, ESF regulation is a step forwards and reinforces social field. Main changes are included here:

- The ESF share will at least be of 25% for less developed regions, 40% for transition regions and 52% for more developed ones.
- Member States will have to concentrate the ESF on a limited number of objectives and investment priorities in line with the Europe 2020 strategy in order to increase impact and reach a critical mass.
- At least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State shall be allocated to the thematic objective “promoting social inclusion and combating poverty” of the general regulation, compared to the average of 13% that can be observed currently. This is a milestone as it is the first time that there is a quantified target related to poverty.
- A greater emphasis is placed on combating youth unemployment, supporting active ageing and on giving opportunities to the most disadvantaged individuals and groups, such as the Roma.
- The Commission proposes to make great strides forward in simplifying the management of ESF, in particular for small grants.
- Greater involvement of social partners and NGOs in implementing the ESF- especially in less-developed regions. In addition, operational programmes managing authorities should allocate an adequate amount of the funding to the NGOs capacity-building.
- A more active role of the Commission in facilitating transnational cooperation and promoting social innovation.

The Annex to the Regulation includes a list of 23 specific common output indicators regarding the persons that are benefiting directly from ESF investment and includes as indicator “migrants, people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalized communities such as Roma). These data are to be provided in the annual implementation reports. It also includes output indicators regarding the entities who implement, are targeted or are supported. Every year, in addition to the annual implementation reports, the managing authority should provide electronically structured data on each investment priority.
Next steps

The current funding programmes apply until 2013. The European Commission adopted the next proposals on 6th October, and the negotiations between the Parliament and the Council will take place in 2012 and 2013, with a view to its adoption by 2013 to allow for the start of a new generation of cohesion policy programmes in 2014.

Negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the whole EU budget will continue in parallel. The Commission has already proposed to allocate €336 billion for cohesion policy instruments in 2014-2020. For further information: follow this link

The final allocations by Member State, and lists of eligible regions by category, will only be decided after the final adoption of the package currently being discussed.

Future EURoma Practical Guide for Ops 2014-2020

As agreed in the previous Management Committee meeting (Prague, May 2011), members of the EURoma Network agreed on working on a guide to support the future preparation of Operational Programmes for the period 2014-2020. In that sense, the Technical Secretariat presented a draft proposal to be debated among the partners.

The general aim of the guide is to support the effective inclusion of Roma in the next Programming Period of the SF by providing a tool for the Member States in the planning process, in accordance with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the National Reform Programmes, their National Roma Strategies or set of specific measures, and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

Following this objective, José Manuel Fresno, Adviser to the Technical Secretariat, presented a proposal on the content and format for the guide that intends to be very practical.

In order to produce an accurate document, the structure proposed includes the following chapters:

- Ch.1. Connecting Structural Funds, National Reform Programmes and National Roma Integration Strategies or specific set of measures.
- Ch.2. Applying the Ten Common Basic Principles to the Structural Funds planning process and to the OPs, with particular reference to the principles no.2 (‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’) and no.4 (‘aiming for the mainstream’).
- Ch.3. Including Roma issues in the Common Strategic Framework and National Partnership Contracts
- Ch.4. Mainstreaming Roma in the OPs of different Structural Funds
Ch.5. Targeting Roma in Specific OPs of different Structural Funds.

Ch.6. Making effective use of other forms of implementation and options provided by the future regulations

And the calendar presented is the following:

- November 2011: Draft proposal
- December 2011: Updated draft proposal including comments
- March - April 2011: first draft for discussion
- June 2012: Second draft for discussion and adoption
- July 2012: Final draft
- September – December 2012: editing, printing and dissemination, including possible events for the presentation or specific sessions with member states, or with the involvement the Commission.

In general terms the structure, the content and the calendar was very much welcomed by the Members of the Network and after a round of comments, it was also advised that besides the Managing Authorities making contributions to the document it will be interesting to involve implementing bodies at national level in order to give feedback to the draft proposal as well.

Proposals for a more efficient use of the Structural Funds:

This part of the agenda included a presentation by Joost de Laat, from the World Bank who was in charge of introducing the research Creating poverty maps to target resources for disadvantaged micro-regions as a tool to target the poorest areas of a country/region; this presentation gave an overview of the methodology, the most relevant indicators focusing on a case study: Bulgaria.

Poverty maps are been used more and more regularly and have been identified as an useful tool to provide very disaggregated databases of poverty, inequality, average income/consumption, calories intake, and other relevant indicators identifying which areas are the most affected and giving policy makers very precise information and the opportunity to elaborate more accurate policies targeting more specifically on the most excluded groups.
Main Findings in the case example *Poverty map of Bulgaria*

- Considerable variation in poverty levels across municipalities: 3%-40% of individuals
- Considerable variation in poverty levels across municipalities *within* the same district
- Poorest areas characterized by relatively higher shares of ethnic minorities (Roma and Turkish households)
- Poorest areas characterized by lacking in:
  - human capital endowment (prevalence of people with low education attainment, or elderly pensioners), and
  - infrastructure

This was followed by a presentation on the *Hungarian Poverty Mapping* by Adam Kullman, from the Open Society, identifying the disadvantaged areas in this country, a very useful tool for the upcoming programming period.

The main ideas highlighted were the following:

- Territorial targeting can be effective in allocating funds to areas with high concentration of marginalised communities, including Roma (without allocating funds on ethnic ground)
- Without strong equal opportunities guarantees, marginalised communities and especially Roma can be excluded even from targeted programmes – well known mechanisms generate exclusion both in central administration and on local level
- **Territorial targeting should be combined with equal opportunities policy and organisational guarantees**
  - Central administration: e.g. equality unit
  - Local level: e.g. equal opportunities plans, network of experts
- Further info can be downloaded from the interim evaluation *“Where the Paved Road Ends”*

Once target areas are defined, these can be used for many fields beyond funds: E.g. some EU2020 targets (school drop-out rate, employment rate, people in poverty) can benefit marginalised communities, including Roma, if these are better focused. This better focus can be based on social and/or territorial indicators.
In order to ensure that level of equality will be increased or at least kept, the EU could monitor progress towards the EU2020 targets also in target areas, and require from member states at least the same level of progress in target areas as at national level: E.g. if school drop-out rate decreases by 5% at national level, it should decrease at least by 5% in target areas; if employment rate increases by 10% at national level, it should increase at least by 10% in target areas.

Representatives from the FRA gave feedback and enriched the information on the poverty mapping as well as the following presentation on evaluation and data collection developed by Joost de Laat (WB) who gave a short review on the tools and methodologies developed within the Early Childhood Development Pilot Project, implemented by a consortium led by Roma Education Fund (REF).

The research carried out within this initiative highlighted the international evidence: Early Childhood Education has a high return investment rate.

The survey also identified that the vast majority Roma parents desire at least secondary education completion for children

The main objectives of the Report presented included the following:

◦ Provide overview of Roma preschool participation, and pre-school environment, in kindergartens and at home
◦ Identify key barriers to improving pre-school access and ways of solving them

Recommendations in the field of evaluation and monitoring for policy makers:

▷ Importance of carrying out qualitative case study work
▷ Analyze household survey data on vulnerable Roma communities and national surveys
  ◦ Identifies gaps in human development outcomes
  ◦ Points to specific policies
  ◦ Can be used for other policy questions
  ◦ Can be institutionalized: e.g. Statistical Offices carry out EU-SILC booster samples in vulnerable communities
▷ Implement pilot projects that include a rigorous counterfactual impact evaluation.

National Roma Integration Strategies. The Contribution of the Structural Funds
Reaching the end of the year, the date when EU Member States have to present to the European Commission the National Strategies for the Inclusion of the Roma, based on the European framework already set, EUroma gathering took the opportunity to have a round of presentations in order to update how the process is being developed, difficulties encountered, new elements, how the priorities of the national strategy will be included in the national Ops, the improvement of coordination mechanisms between Structural Funds Managing Authorities and the bodies in charge of the Strategies and the use of Technical Assistance.

In order to motivate the debate and the round of contributions by country, the representatives were requested to answer some proposed questions included at the agenda.

The most relevant highlights by country were the following:

**Hungary:** Representatives from Hungary indicated that the new strategy is based on the previous one from the Roma Decade Plans and the child poverty strategy, which are much broader on social inclusion. The new Strategy is aligned with the EU framework, setting 4 priority areas plus additional main issues (child welfare and youth) as well as awareness raising activities (promoting public safety, fight against discrimination). The process of elaborating the Strategy is at the following stage, the 1st draft is under public consultation (Sep-Nov) and a seminar will be organized to discuss the consultation results. There has been a broad consultation and participation of NGO, National Roma Government, interministerial consultation. Another issue that should be highlighted is that the governmental action plan for 3 years is also been developed.

**Romania:** The previous strategy covered the period 2001-2010 and at the end of that time the government started the drafting of a new strategy before the EU Communication, including apart from the priorities from the EC child care, culture and improving living conditions. In some areas, there is a mainstream approach open to other groups, not only Roma.

There is an undergoing open consultation process between NGO and the Prime Minister’s office (uploaded in ANR web page). The difficulties that appeared during the elaboration process related mainly to the following aspects: discussing indicators, products and outcomes with the different ministries. The most challenging barriers to overcome are a consequence of not having a baseline data; instead they used a poverty map from 2006 and previous reports. By the end of November it should be available and include a consistent budget.

**Spain:** representatives from the Spanish government highlighted that the EC Communication is in line with what Spain has been doing for the last 20 years, so it was difficult to build up a new strategy when there was a previous plan already approved. The process: the first draft was presented to the Roma Council (October) where Roma
NGO and Public Administration are following a process of consultation. The difficulties that have been encountered were related to achieving new commitments from ministries when the deadlines for such compromises go to 2020 as well as the horizontal coordination of the process. Furthermore, other difficulties were identified in establishing quantitative indicators and adapting the general objectives of EU2020 to the special situation of Roma. It was also highlighted the relevance of reinforcing the link between the strategy and the EU funds, the need for data and the importance to include the Roma migrants.

**Czech Republic**: By the end of the year a set of policy measures will be presented gathering all the policies targeting Roma inclusion, which will go further than the minimum requirements set up by the Commission based on the Roma integration concept (updated in 2009-13). The Ministry of Labour is preparing a national inclusion strategy with a broader approach, not only for Roma. The process continues a path already started in coordination with the Roma Council, which includes the update of a very interesting study –dated 2006- on the situation of excluded Roma communities; The new focus of the strategy will be set in most problematic localities and will provide tools to track changes and to identify the investment of ESF in those areas. Calls for proposals will derive from this analysis.

**Poland**: The Programme for Roma community (already drafted in 2003) is currently under evaluation by the Ministry of Interior and will prepare a set of recommendations, after that, there will be a process of consultation with NGO. The amendments will be done by the beginning of next year. Currently, 8 priorities have been established including the ones set by the EU framework. Ministries are already working on future OP to focus on Roma issues. The government is working on a proposal of bringing ERDF and ESF as complementary funding.

**Finland** Has prepared a new national policy for Roma in 2010, a comprehensive policy that covers key priorities of EC Communication, and will serve as the Strategy for Finland. All relevant ministries implicated are committed to its implementation. The difficulties encountered to adapt this strategy to the EU requirements are mainly related to how to link this strategy to the EU2020 objectives and how to link the aims of the policies and establish adequate indicators.

**Sweden** The Ministry of Labour will present the strategy to the Parliament based on the work delivered by a delegation for Roma issues during 2010; this strategy is based as well on the investigation on the situation of Roma in Sweden and proposals to improve their living standards. This has also been the basis for the consultancy with NGO, and other authorities. There is a special focus for municipalities to access funds, mainstreaming and the most difficult barrier encounter in the process was how to elaborate focused on a special group.
Belgium: has set an inter-ministerial working group on Roma, responsible for drafting the strategy including the Federal, regional and local administrations plus NGO and external experts. A subgroup for cities and welfare centres will be requested to provide input to the national strategy draft. The difficulties encountered during the process were related to bringing together the work of all levels: the horizontal and vertical coordination.

Slovakia: representatives from Slovakia highlighted the participation and cooperation between NGO and Managing Authorities in the process of elaborating the strategy which includes the 4 priorities incorporated in the EU framework. Two new initiatives were highlighted: a new national programme for education targeting the Roma students and the technical assistance. Slovakia is one of the fewest countries benefiting from the technical assistance within the Structural Funds, and their experience can be of great use for other countries.

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) was invited to this meeting as the Communication An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 provided to this EU agency with a relevant role within measuring and following up the development of national strategies. Furthermore, this institution will be in charge of collecting data on the situation of Roma with respect to access to employment, education, healthcare and housing and they are already working setting a cluster of indicators for monitoring the process.

In that sense, three participants from the FRA took part in this meeting in order to exchange information with representatives from the countries that are working on their national strategies and highlighted very important elements to include in the NRSI: monitoring and disaggregated data collection.

They also requested MS which of them are addressing the issue of antygypsim / social image / discrimination in national strategies. The countries answering positively were: Spain, Hungary and Sweden.

Internal Issues

Before the closing of the meeting, the internal issues that were debated within the MCM were the following:

Spain indicated that the ESF MA will present a project to the call for proposals from the Learning Networks of the European Commission to strengthen the work of EURoma, launching a new network at high policy level.

ESF MA from Stockholm informed that they have recently granted a project to top down the tools, the activities and results developed within the EURoma Network at
national level. Some of the activities foreseen in this initiative are seminars involving the civil society and other relevant stakeholders in order to make available all the products of the Network and there was an open invitation to other MA to participate in the events.

**Slovakia** announced that they will host the next EURoma meeting in Spring 2012. Further info will be provided.

The Technical Secretariat informed Member States about the process of elaborating the **guide for local and regional authorities** using SF for Roma inclusion. The updated version will be send to MS of the Network shortly. The TS also explained that the delay in delivering this product is related to different factors including the new regulation recently presented by the Commission on Structural Funds that will also be included in the guide.

**Closing Session:**

Hungarian colleagues, represented by Tamás Jankó closed the session, thanking all the participation and contributions to this successful and very fruitful meeting. The Technical Secretariat also thanked the excellent organization of the Hungarian colleagues of this event, which facilitated very much the fine development of the meeting.

**Main Agreements:**

* Countries that have not sent already the education questionnaire will do it as soon as possible in order to prepare a common summary

* The TS will produce a document on education and Structural Funds based on the country fiches, presentations main content and the contributions gathered during the debate

* The EURoma Practical Guide for OPs 2014-2020 will be published in 2012

* Next MCM will be organized in Slovakia – Bratislava

Annex: [List of Participants](#)