

Report on

Roma Population and employment



Conclusions, recommendations and proposals



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Introducción

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The social situation of the Spanish Roma community has improved as has its standards of living over the last several decades thanks also to the fact that it has been able to benefit from advances in the welfare state. **However, still today it continues to be one of the most disadvantaged social groups and also one of the most affected by social exclusion processes and discrimination.**

The issue here is more than a group of individuals with low income levels facing difficulties integrating into the labour market or with needs in key areas such as housing, education and health. We are referring to people who form part of **Europe's principal ethnic minority (over 9 million) as well as Spain's (close to 700,000)** for whom recognition and promotion of their culture, the direct and indirect discrimination they suffer, the negative social image and the scant awareness that the society at large has of this community are all vital issues which have never been seriously addressed.

The Roma population's exclusion from the labour market is a key aspect contributing to a scenario of social discrimination and therefore, in keeping with the importance afforded this issue by the European Employment Strategy and the European Social Inclusion Strategy, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano dedicates a large proportion of its efforts to addressing this problem.

That explains why **priority is given to labour market integration in promoting the social integration of the Roma community** and this integration should not be limited to support for Roma in improving their employability but should also envisage the elimination of red tape and barriers standing in the way to access to training and paid employment so as to effectively uphold the equal opportunities principle.

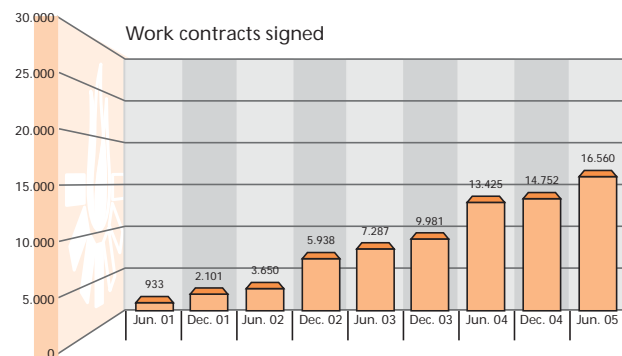
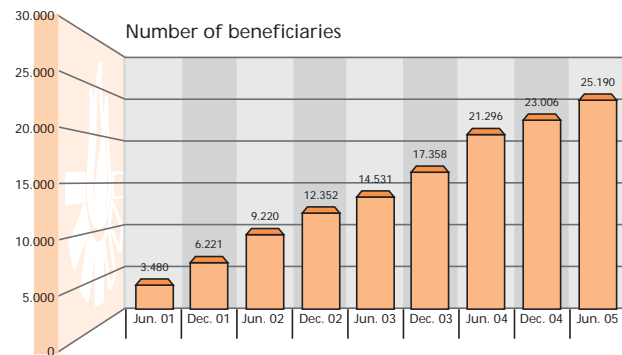
The initiatives taken with the Roma population managed by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano within the framework of the **European Social Fund's (ESF) Multi-Regional Operational Programme "Fight Against Discrimination"** – known as the **Acceder Programme** – have comprised the fundamental instrument employed by our organisation over the last five years to give impetus to a line of action aimed at improving the living standards of this community through measures favouring their access to salaried employment in the labour market.

The key aspect characterising the programme's work methodology is the **link between social and economic factors**, remaining mindful of the state and needs of the Roma population and working from the vantage point of empathy and their specific interests, guiding actions so as to offer alternatives in response to specific deficiencies. At the same time, the needs and requirements of today's labour market (skills required to get and keep a job, labour situation in the different sectors of economic activity, etc.) must be borne very much in mind.

The Programme's initial objective was to work during the period 2000-2006 seeking to serve 15,000 people and procure at least 2,500 work contracts. **As of June 2005, 25,195 people have been served and 16,560 labour contracts were signed** by 7,998 people which works out to more than 2 contracts per person. Naturally this ratio will rise during the duration of the programme reflecting more active permanence in the labour market although with multiple contracts. These figures mean that practically **one third of all programme beneficiaries found employment.**

When we implemented these actions we had grass-roots knowledge of the situation and needs of the Roma population but we were also well aware of the lack of precise and representative data concerning the employment status of the active Spanish Roma population in general.

The Spanish Roma community continues to be one of the most disadvantaged social groups and also one of the most affected by social exclusion processes and discrimination



Therefore, within the framework of the Operational Programme, the FSG conducted and published a **study of the employment situation of the Spanish Roma population¹**, which enabled us to strike a **comparison with the employment situation of the Spanish population at large.** The most significant results of this study and the assessment made of them by the FSG in the form of "recommendations and proposals" constitute the main body of this document.



2

General Context of the Labour Market

The Government as well as social agents (Employers and Trade Unions) agree that the **Spanish labour market** faces a two-pronged problem: **insufficient volume of employment and high degree of temporality**. This concurrence in analysis in turn supports a common diagnosis of the current situation of the labour market.

Between 1992 and 2003, the working age population in Spain (15 to 64 years of age) grew from 25.8 million to 27.8 million, i.e. an average annual growth rate of 0.7% which is approximately two times EU-15 rate. This growth came about despite a decrease in the number of people emerging from the educational system into the labour market and is most likely due to the very intense acceleration in the flow of immigrants, especially over the last several years.

During this same time period, the difference in the employment rate between Spain and EU-15 fell by 5.5% but the percentage of the Spanish population working age with paid employment is below the EU-15 average and therefore **far from complying with the objectives of the European Employment Strategy**.

Moreover, as was pointed out in the Report submitted by the “Commission of Experts for Social Dialogue” to the Ministry of Labour: “Although the aggregate employment rate has risen substantially, these gains have not been distributed equally among all population groups and significant differences can still be observed; **the employment rates for women, young people and those with lower levels of education and fewer professional skills are lagging far behind the aggregate employment rate**”.

The other major problem is the **large proportion of temporary or fixed-term contracts** which also outnumber the European Union average and important differences can be observed between population groups. The fact is that **those population groups with the lowest employment rate are also affected by a larger proportion of temporary contracts**.

The diagnosis would be incomplete without making a reference to a third aspect concerning which there seems to be general consensus: **the deceleration of our economy's productivity and the latter's ensuing impact and repercussion on quality of employment**.

Pro-active training and employment policies designed to fight exclusion and discrimination affecting pockets of the population facing special difficulties continue to be vital.

Even over time, women, young people and less qualified workers, among whom the Roma population is included, are unable to acquire a reasonable degree of job stability.

This situation therefore shows that the labour market remains segmented and that **young people, women and lesser qualified workers** face many more difficulties achieving labour market integration, are more frequently subject to fixed-term contracts and a significantly higher number of them become trapped in precarious situations **keeping them from achieving a reasonable degree of job stability even after a period of time**.

Based on the above, **the need to keep active training and employment policies “focused” on combating exclusion and discrimination of population groups with particular difficulties** would appear to be justified for a number of reasons:

- Because **maximum labour potential must be exercised**; if not, productivity in our country per hour worked could fall to untenable levels while low qualification levels remain intact and our competitive capacity declines.
- Because this would represent a **solid contribution to convergence and social cohesion**.
- And especially due to **social justice and “real” equal opportunity criteria** clearly entailing explicit concentration of resources through tailored measures targeting disadvantaged groups and those with special characteristics (women, youth, immigrants, Roma, etc.).



3

**The Roma Population and
Training and Employment**

The non-existence of studies or of other sources of information furnishing representative data on the whole of the Spanish Roma working age population in respect of their labour situation has, to date, been an **obstacle standing in the way to the development of socio-labour policies addressing this community.**

All policies and measures implemented by national and international institutions focusing on employment, social inclusion and social cohesion of ethnic minorities increasingly insist on the need for objective data and indicators in order to define the situation and its problems. In this sense, the study entitled *“Población Gitana y Empleo”* (The Roma Population and Employment) provides objective and updated data on the labour situation of the Roma community with a view to defining all future policies regarding training and employment.

The main objective of this research is to **gain insight into the reality facing the Roma population with regard to employment and compare the results obtained with the situation of the overall population based on the EPA** (Encuesta de Población Activa – Active Population Survey) thus allowing for:

- knowledge of activity, occupation and unemployment rates of the Spanish Roma population;
- deeper understanding of the profiles defining each one of the different groups (employed, unemployed and inactive) from different variables of analysis;
- detection and definition of similarities or differences that may exist between the occupational situation of Roma vis-à-vis the entire Spanish population;
- measurement of the possible incidence of the “discrimination” factor in the daily task of seeking employment or throughout educational and/or training processes;
- insight into the gender perspective, i.e. detection of any differences between Roma men and women as concerns employment.

The research targeted the **Spanish Roma population (both men and women) from 16 and older.** Following consultation of different sources and once necessary adjustments and debugging were done, it was determined that **475,000 Roma nationwide** fell into that category.

The survey **sample size was 1,500 units** with a greater volume of data collected on gender and age structure of the entire Roma population based on information from 6,854 individuals. The drafting of the questionnaire was based largely on the content of the EPA so that the final results of our survey would be as comparable as possible to the EPA survey. It was broken down into the following sections: Data regarding Status / Activity / Employed / Unemployed / Other, containing a total of 45 variables.

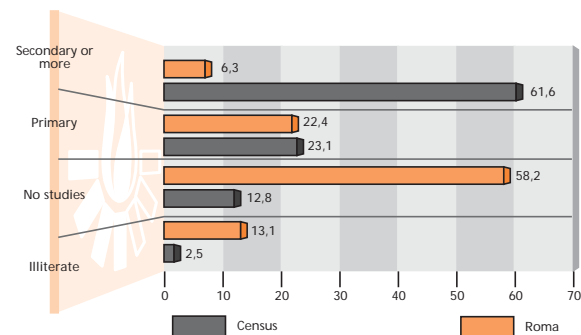
The study entitled “The Roma Population and Employment”, provides objective and updated data on the labour situation of the Roma community with a view to defining all future policies regarding training and employment.

Main results of the survey

Analysis of the data obtained provided the following results characterising the reality faced by the Roma population today in respect of training and employment:

1. DATA CONCERNING THE SITUATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMA POPULATION AGE 16 AND OLDER:

- The Spanish Roma population age 16 and older totals **475,000** accounting for 69.9% of the total population with 50.8% women and 49.2% men and an average age of 35.
- **7 out of every 10 Roma over the age of 15 are either completely or functionally illiterate.** The figure representing Roma who are completely illiterate is 4.6 times higher than that same figure among the general population.
- Among the general population there are 3.6% more single people than among the Roma population.
- Two thirds of the Roma population over the age of 15 claim to have a son or daughter. With an **average of three children, Roma are 1.24 percentage points above the overall average according to the 2001 census of Spaniards with children.**



7 out of every 10 Roma over the age of 15 are either completely or functionally illiterate

2. DATA CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF THE ROMA POPULATION:

The active Roma population:

The following table shows the main figures from our survey and the corresponding figures taken from the Active Population Survey (EPA) from the fourth quarter of 2004 for the entire Spanish population.

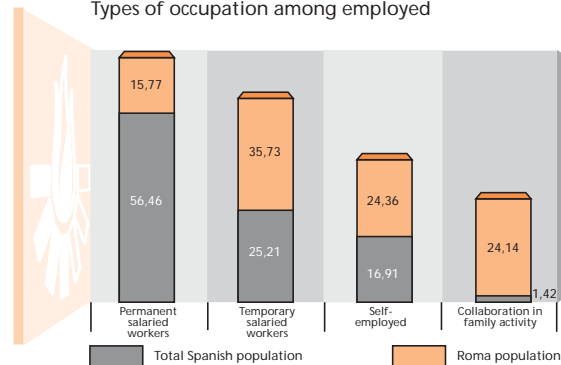
	Total Spanish Population	Roma Population
Population age 16 and over	34,474,300	475,000
Activity rate %	56.1	69.3
Unemployment rate %	10.4	13.8
Employment rate %	50.3	59.7
Working in Industry %	18.0	4.7
Working in Services %	64.6	75.9
Temporary employment rate %	30.9	70.9
Part-time employment rate %	8.5	42.0

The following facts were derived from the comparative summary and the data furnished by the 45 variables comprising the said survey:

Of the working Roma population, 25% describe their activity as "collaboration in the economic activity of the family" which, at best, is indicative of a precarious or not at all "standard" situation.

- ✓ Regarding the employed segment of the population:
 - The Roma population enters the labour market at an earlier age than the rest of the population and therefore has a longer working life.
 - The difference between the age at which the Roma population enters the labour market and the age for the Spanish population in general accounts for the differences in educational levels between the two. While 5 out of every 10 active Spaniards complete at least secondary education, not even 1 out of every 10 active Roma reaches this same educational level.
 - 51.5% of working Roma has salaried employment compared with 81.6% for the Spanish population on the whole.
 - 48.5% of Roma workers are self-employed (nearly half of the total number employed) while only 18.3% of the general Spanish population is self-employed.
 - It is very important to stress that of the working Roma population, close to 25% describe their activity as "collaboration in the economic activity of the family" which, at best, is indicative of a precarious or not at all "standard" situation. In clear contrast, only 1.4% of the general Spanish population works in that activity.

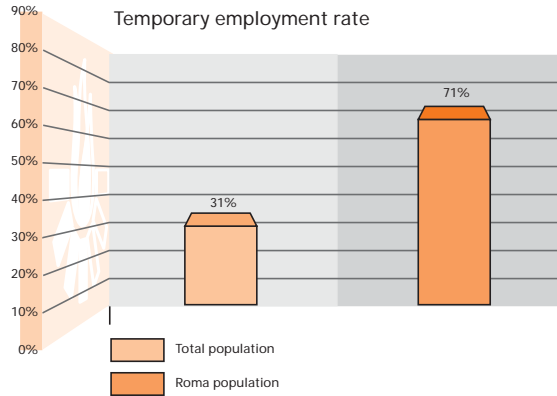
Types of occupation among employed



This "collaboration in the economic activity of the family" is a result of the characteristics of a large number of family businesses with low profit margins and scant economic formalisation where the owner is the head of the household and the other active members do not benefit from any social or labour rights from their activity since they are not able to make the corresponding social security payments. This reality may well constitute the most significant weakness in the labour structure of the Roma population and therefore all strategies must explicitly address this situation.

- An equally noteworthy aspect which must be underscored is the high degree of precariousness in employment facing the Roma population:
 - 42% of salaried Roma work part-time while this same figure for the overall Spanish population is 8.5%.
 - 71% of Roma workers have temporary work contracts compared to 31% for the Spanish labour market as a whole. This means that the number of permanent salaried Roma workers is 3.5 times less than the number of permanent Spanish workers in general.
 - 15% of Roma workers have no contract (only verbal agreements).

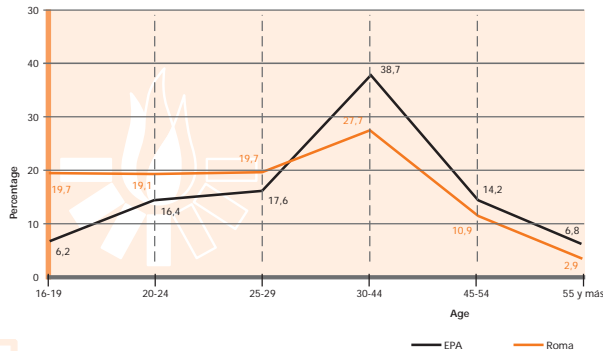
71% of Roma workers have temporary work contracts compared to 31% for the Spanish labour market as a whole.



The unemployment rate of the Roma population is 3 percentage points above that of the overall population.

✓ Regarding the unemployed segment of the population:

- Unemployment affects the Roma population more than it does the Spanish population in general with an overall rate of 13.8% compared to 10.4% respectively.
- Unemployment among the Roma population hits youth the hardest. In contrast to what occurs among the Spanish population in general, young Roma (those under 25) are most affected by unemployment (4 out of 10 Roma in this age bracket are unemployed compared with less than 2 out of ten for the overall population). This is just one more indicator of the early incorporation of Roma into the labour market.

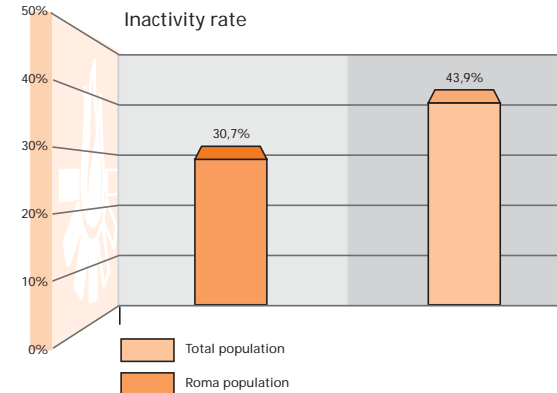


- Of the unemployed Roma, 72% are either completely or functionally illiterate while that same figure for the entire Spanish population is barely 5%.
- Furthermore, 4 out of every 10 Roma unemployed today were also unemployed one year ago.
- And lastly, 8 out of every 10 unemployed Roma feel that a training course would make it easier to find a job. This figure rises to 86% in the opinion of those who have actually participated in a course. However, only 15% of Roma workers bother to acquire or improve their labour skills with young people and women being the most interested.

The inactive Roma population:

The inactivity rate of the Roma population is below that of the general population.

- The inactivity rate of the Roma population (30.7%) is below that of the general Spanish population which stands at 43.9%.
- 70% of the inactive Roma population are women compared with 64.3% of all Spanish women.
- More than half (53.5%) of inactive Roma take care of the housework compared with 32% of the overall Spanish population.
- Only 11% of inactive Roma are retired while this category accounts for 30% of the general inactive population.
- The same trend is observed with students: the latter account for only 7% of inactive Roma while this figure stands at 16% for the overall inactive Spanish population.
- Inactive Roma are generally young – nearly 3 out of 10 are under 25.
- At the age of 54 and over category we only find slightly more than 2 out of every 10 inactive Roma while that same category accounts for 60% of the total inactive population in Spain as a whole.



3. The Roma Population and Training and Employment

3. DATA CONCERNING GENDER:

The following table shows the main variables relating to the situation of disadvantage faced by Roma women vis-à-vis Roma men in the field of employment:

	Roma Population	
	Men	Women
Population 16 and over	233,700	241,300
Activity rate %	80.89	58.01
Unemployment rate %	11.89	16.29
Employment rate %	71.27	48.56
Working in Industry %	6.2	2.5
Working in Services %	66.2	89.6
Temporary employment rate%	65.8	77.9
Part-time employment rate %	32.21	55.87

- As can be observed, **the Roma population exhibits a pattern similar to that of the overall Spanish population when it comes to the gender issue:** less activity and lower employment rate and higher unemployment rates, fixed-term contracts and part-time employment in the case of women.
- **53.5% of inactive Roma claim to be inactive because they are taking care of home responsibilities** compared to 32.5% of the general Spanish population. However, only 2.8% of Roma men take responsibility for domestic duties compared with 75.9% of the women. The proportion of inactive Roma women is also higher than the proportion of Spanish women in general.
- **93.8% of Roma women working part-time claim "family obligations"** as the main impediment standing in the way to full-time employment.
- **24.6% of inactive Roma men are retired compared with only 5% of Roma women.**
- **Women (17.6%) take part in vocational training courses more readily than men (13.1%).**

4. DATA CONCERNING THE ROMA COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION:

Discriminatory attitudes towards the Roma population seem to still be prevalent among many sectors of society given that **45.4% of those surveyed stated that at certain times they feel discriminated against. This proportion translates into 215,000 Roma who say they have suffered directly from discrimination.** The following groups have felt particular discrimination:

- 83% of those unemployed when they were seeking employment or when they were working.
- 78% of those who have looked for work in the last four weeks.
- 60% of men when seeking employment or at work.
- 19% of the young people between 16 and 19 where they study or used to study.



4

Conclusions, recommendations and proposals

215,000 Roma claim to have suffered directly from discrimination

SOME CONCLUSIONS:

The results of the research clearly show that despite recent developments in the Spanish labour market, especially concerning improvements in activity rates and reduction in **unemployment, unemployment continues to have the greatest effect on those facing greater difficulties in gaining access to the labour market, which is the case of the Roma population.**

Together with this obvious under-representation in the labour market, the results also point to **serious situations of disadvantage in the said labour market** giving rise to:

- **initial disqualification** preventing merited and desired permanence in job posts;
- a high degree of **precariousness**;
- persistence of **non-regulated activities and non-protected employment** spelling the absence of labour rights.

Despite this situation which could very well be described as discouraging, it should be stressed that **the data collected clearly lend credence to the affirmation that “the Roma population wants to work”,** thus dispelling a still prevalent prejudice that Roma are lazy, that they do not want to work and therefore are responsible for their situation.

This conclusion is clearly supported by different **data collected throughout the study** such as:

- the high activity rates among the Roma population;
- the long period of time they spend in the labour market (they start at a much earlier age and retire at a later age);
- the expectations and desires expressed by Roma today in terms of access to employment;
- the readily apparent and high degree of motivation on the part of women to receive training and find work.

These findings clearly show that this sector of the population is a **very important “potential asset” for the labour market** both in the present and the near future.

The Roma population is progressing by “following in the wake” of mainstream society and is encountering a series of barriers and structural problems which, for the time being, the majority is unable to overcome

“The Roma population wants to work” and represents a very important “potential asset” for the labour market

However, as we have already pointed out, this should not conceal but rather help to highlight the problems and difficulties facing Roma men and women today in the labour market and the situation of social disadvantage they are in vis-à-vis the rest of the Spanish population.

In response to this situation the **Acceder Programme**, which has been in operation for five years now, has had a **clearly favourable effect on helping Spanish Roma gain access to salaried employment** (in light of programme results) thus representing an important step forward in eliminating all forms of discrimination standing in the way to the Roma population's incorporation into the labour market and in increasing and consolidating social cohesion.

The **multi-annual and multi-regional nature of the Acceder Programme** demonstrates that this long-term approach to intervention implemented throughout the whole of Spain is a **key to positive and successful results with a real impact over the medium and long term.**

Nevertheless the problems and difficulties detected and confirmed by means of the research conducted clearly indicate that **there is still much to be done: many roadblocks, limits and barriers to overcome and major challenges still to be met.**

The **performance of the Roma community in the area of labour**, consistent with its level of social development, reflects or in many cases is similar to a **“society at the half-way mark on its path towards development”** in contrast with a developed society (poor school results, early integration into the labour market together with late retirement, inadequate and precarious initial training and professional qualifications, high degree of subsistence family economy easily identifiable as covert unemployment, etc.).

This reflection, in practice, shows us that in general terms the Roma population is **progressing and advancing by “following in the wake” of mainstream society and is undergoing important change.**

However, in this process it is encountering a series of **barriers and structural problems which, for the time being, the majority is unable to overcome** and which are blocking the way. These barriers must be urgently addressed if we expect to make real headway allowing these individuals to step out of their secular marginalization and pick up the pace of social progress. If action is not taken to remove these barriers, progress will run the risk of being seriously hampered and, worse still, advances made over the last several years will certainly suffer setback.

In our view, the **fundamental barriers** standing in the way to training and employment include the following:

- The **scant participation** of the Roma population in **“mainstream” vocational training and employment resources** and their poor permanence in the employment circuit.
- **Early school dropout**, their failure to continue in the formalised training process and the clear repercussions that this has on their future integration into the labour market and professional career.
- **Deficient access to new technologies** and the clear need for urgent digital literacy instruction.
- The serious and persistent **“unofficial” employment problem** under the guise of family employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS:

In Spain, the 1978 Constitution was the main milestone for the real incorporation of Roma into society as full-fledged citizens. The right to equality before the Law free from any sort of discrimination enshrined in article 14 of the Spanish Constitution and the right to work in article 35 are, in and of themselves, a guarantee for the exercise of the said citizenship which, in the case of the Roma population, necessarily entails making headway in the elimination of all existing barriers if these rights are to become a reality.

It is our view that any short or medium-term action strategy whose central aim is to foster the current process of social progress in which the Spanish Roma community is involved should come within the framework and align itself with the **need to develop Cohesion Policies** which, as laid down in the European Commission's Strategic Guidelines for 2007-2013, should clearly contribute to the strengthening of economic and political integration by increasing investment in human capital, improving access to and participation in the labour market thus strengthening social inclusion and the implementation of the necessary measures and reforms in education and training systems.

In this connection, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano would make the following recommendations to address the roadblocks described above:

1. In order to substantially improve the still scant participation of the Roma population in "mainstream" vocational training and employment resources and to contribute to their consolidation in the labour circuit, in line with the European Commission guidelines which raise the need for "more and better employment", it would seem appropriate **to develop actions aimed at attracting more Roma to form part of and remain in the labour market and to modernise the social protection systems facilitating this incorporation.** In this sense it would be necessary to:
 - Continue encouraging the Roma population's **access to vocational training and to the salaried employment labour market** including **support schemes and acceptance within the family circle.**
 - Maintain and strengthen efficient and effective **guidance and labour intermediation resources** – such as the Acceder Programme – adequately tailored to the needs of this sector of the population and capable of responding to:
 - The need to "bridge the gap" and remove obstacles and barriers blocking access and to have more Roma persons present in the measures and initiatives of the Active Employment Policies without losing sight of the fact that owing to their current lack of experience in the autonomous use of these resources, a greater degree of support and accompaniment will be required;
 - The challenge of addressing situations of labour exclusion and social disadvantage from an integrated and integrating perspective joining forces in order to combine these measures with others aimed at social advancement and at solving the numerous problems still pending.
 - To promote increasingly more intensive **cooperation among public and private entities on the state, regional and local levels**, establishing a more ongoing relationship with an integral and integrated system and including this collaboration in the different Territorial Development Plans and incorporating the latter in the fight against exclusion as a key element in local and regional socio-economic development envisaging specific measures to bring this about;
 - To maintain and increase support for the **incorporation of Roma women into the labour market** by implementing specific training and employment actions as well as initiatives aimed at "reconciling work and family duties".
2. In response to early school dropout on the part of Roma children and young people, their failure to continue with formal training and the clear repercussions that this has on future employment and professional career, it is vital to guarantee a **suitable offer of education and training** which is attractive, accessible and of high quality at all levels and which envisages flexible training itineraries, a significant decrease in the early school dropout rate and higher completion rates of the upper level of secondary education. The following are needed to accomplish this task:
 - Specific measures and actions designed to **rescue those who drop out of the educational system early and who are going to continue to do so** while at the same time remaining fully aware of the seriousness of the problem and the difficulties entailed in coming up with a definitive solution. This requires programmes which do not exclude them from the system so that by applying the "social guarantee" principles (and tailoring the latter to their reality) these students can be given a second chance;
 - Reinforcement and support measures so as **to promote continuity within the educational process:**
 - Through programmes and actions targeting Roma adolescents and their families based on

awareness raising and accompaniment and thus under the umbrella of what could be called "external compensation" with the participation and collaboration of the educational system and social services in an active partnership with social entities and encompassing actions such as: training of promoters of school enrolment, training of Roma father-mother empowerers, promotion of the participation of fathers and mothers in parent-teacher's organisation and school councils, etc.;

- By means of "internal compensation" measures implemented through the schools which would have a bearing on: the school project (curriculum, etc.), teacher training (for individualised accompaniment and specialised tutoring) and would give the system greater flexibility enabling these young people to continue with their education;
 - By promoting the positive aspects of vocational training and, over the middle and long-term, access for Roma youth to mainstream vocational training beginning with measures favouring better access to information and vocational counselling;
 - By promoting frameworks and systems which clearly forge ahead in terms of recognition of qualifications and equivalence certification acknowledging non-formal and informal education and training.
3. Having regard to the Roma population's deficient **access to new technologies** and its clear implications as a new risk of decline and exclusion for this sector of the population, it must be stressed that the digital gap, i.e. the division between those who have access to and are integrated into the Information Society and those unable to do so, is a new factor contributing to social exclusion.

Not only is it a technological problem, it is also a social problem calling for social measures especially when the digital gap mainly affects groups and individuals already suffering from other exclusion factors: low level of training, unemployment, immigrant status, low income levels, family burdens, etc. Measures should therefore be devised to answer the clear need for urgent digital literacy initiatives. These initiatives should be implemented not only with the youngest members of the community (in schools and training programmes, etc.) but also with adults linking them to general literacy courses, vocational and skills training, etc.
 4. The grave and persistent **problem of "unofficial" employment** which, in many cases, arises out of a need to keep the family economy afloat (often a subsistence economy) calls for:
 - Programmes specifically tailored to their needs encouraging entrepreneurial initiative and access to financing. Specifically, impetus should be given to programmes and measures fostering self-employment of members of the Roma community in traditional activities as well as novel ones thus providing a labour alternative for young Roma and especially for Roma women. This would, therefore, entail a change of focus seeking to offer a labour alternative which is also sectorial. In this connection we would stress the methodological importance of accompaniment in the path towards self-employment throughout the stages of definition, diagnosis, definition, implementation and consolidation, assuring that initiatives are feasible and lasting over time;
 - Lines of action which meet the need for regulation, standardisation and support for the professional activities in which a large percentage of the Roma population are involved. This would most certainly entail setting up transitory systems, progressive adaptation to the rules in force, incentives, technical support, etc. thus enabling the re-emergence of certain activities conducted within the ambit of the non-regulated economy.

And lastly, **all of this should go hand-in-hand with an intensification of the fight against discrimination and the promotion of acceptance of diversity at the workplace:** seeking greater impact for "positive messages" in contrast to discrimination, overcoming resistance emanating from social sectors clinging to racist and discriminatory attitudes especially with regard to employment and basing efforts on a stra-

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tegy envisaging training and awareness-raising with the whole-hearted participation of local communities, businesses and workers.

In short and by way of conclusion, all of these recommendations and proposals are based on the belief that the **fight against discrimination should not be limited to defence** against a phenomenon violating the fundamental rights of individuals but **should also envisage a pro-active approach clearly including the Roma population's active exercise of their right to training and employment** as a gateway paving the way to other rights and full citizenship.

This process will take some time and will require positive role models, a great degree of motivation, investment in skills development, an end to prejudice, social commitment on the part of governments, businesses and social agents, etc. Based on this we have confirmed the vital importance of **multi-regional, long-term projects with an ample degree of institutional recognition** enabling greater impact on the Roma population and improvements in their standard of living. We must bear in mind that this will only be possible if these initiatives are really demanded, valued and well-received by the Roma community, i.e. if Roma are the **real active subjects and receivers** of these initiatives.



5

Summary Table

C O N C L U S I O N S , R E C O M E N D A T I O N S A N D P R O P O S A L S

Most important barrier	Measure	Actions
THE SCANT PARTICIPATION OF THE ROMA POPULATION IN “MAINS-STREAM” VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES AND THEIR PRECARIOUS PERMANENCE IN THE EMPLOYMENT CIRCUIT.	SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE THE STILL MINIMAL PRESENCE OF THE ROMA POPULATION IN “MAINSTREAM” VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES AND ENCOURAGE ITS CONSOLIDATION IN THE LABOUR CIRCUIT IN LINE WITH THE GUIDELINES LAID DOWN BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR “MORE AND BETTER EMPLOYMENT”.	<p>Continue encouraging the Roma population's access to vocational training and to the salaried employment labour market including support schemes and acceptance within the family circle.</p> <p>Support and strengthen efficient and effective guidance and labour intermediation resources – such as the Acceder Programme – adequately tailored to the needs of this sector of the population.</p> <p>Promote increasingly more intensive cooperation among public and private entities on the state, regional and local levels, establishing a more ongoing relationship with an integral and integrated system.</p> <p>Maintain and increase support for the labour market integration of Roma women.</p>
EARLY SCHOOL DROPOUT, FAILURE TO CONTINUE IN THE FORMALISED TRAINING PROCESS AND THE CLEAR REPERCUSSIONS THAT THIS HAS ON FUTURE INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER.	<p>RESCUE THOSE WHO DROP OUT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM EARLY AND WHO ARE GOING TO CONTINUE TO DO SO.</p> <p>REINFORCEMENT AND SUPPORT TO KEEP STUDENTS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.</p>	<p>Programmes which do not exclude them from the system so that by applying the “social guarantee” principles, but tailoring the latter to their reality, these students can be given a second chance.</p> <p>Programmes and actions targeting Roma adolescents and their families based on awareness-raising and accompaniment.</p> <p>“Internal compensation” measures implemented through the schools.</p> <p>Promote the positive aspects of vocational training and, over the middle and long-term, access for Roma youth to mainstream vocational training.</p> <p>Recognition of qualifications and equivalence certification acknowledging non-formal and informal education and training.</p>
DEFICIENT ACCESS TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND THE CLEAR NEED FOR URGENT DIGITAL LITERACY.	CLOSE THE DIGITAL GAP BY PROVIDING ACCESS TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES.	Measures devised to answer the clear need for urgent digital literacy initiatives. This initiative should be implemented not only with the youngest members of the community (in schools and training programmes, etc.) but also with adults linking it to general literacy courses, vocational and skills training, etc.
THE SERIOUS AND PERSISTENT “UNOFFICIAL” EMPLOYMENT PROBLEM UNDER THE GUISE OF FAMILY EMPLOYMENT.	SUPPORT THE REGULATION OF NON-DECLARED ACTIVITIES AND FOSTER SELF-EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES AND THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT.	<p>Programmes specifically tailored to their needs encouraging entrepreneurial initiative and self-employment and access to financing.</p> <p>Lines of action which meet the need for regulation, standardisation and support for the professional activities in which a large percentage of the Roma population works: establishment of transitory systems, progressive adaptation to the rules in force, incentives, technical support, etc.</p>

