THEMATIC REPORT ON ROMA

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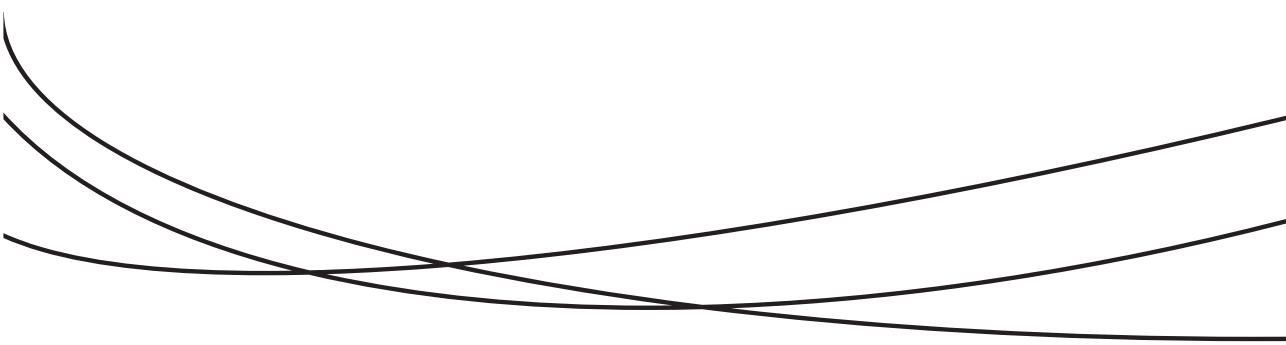at risk of violation of their rights

THEMATIC REPORT ON ROMA

Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria

Thematic report on Roma

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Introduction

Policy relevance of the analysis of Roma in Bulgaria

This report is part of the project 'Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights'. This project is funded under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014–2021, call BGLD-3.001, programme 'Local development, po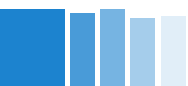verty reduction and enhanced inclusion of vulnerable groups'. It analyses the situation of Roma in Bulgaria in 2020, the year before the implementation of the new national Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation (2021–2030). The analysis is based on data from a representative survey by the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute (BNSI), complemented with information from other sources.[*] The report aims to:

- outline the key challenges Roma in Bulgaria face, reflecting their socio-economic characteristics and experience of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and capturing the impact of multiple risks and disadvantages;
- inform policies for implementation of the national Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation and suggest areas for priority policy attention, reflecting Bulgaria's Roma specificities, with indicators and targets for monitoring progress, based on the results of the analysis.

Most of the indicators used in this report can provide a baseline for monitoring the progress of Roma inclusion against the targets set in the framework.

This report uses the definitions of 'vulnerable groups', 'discrimination', 'harassment' and 'violence', and the indicators for their monitoring, presented in the report *Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Summary of main results*[1] elaborated in the framework of this project. Most of the indicators match those in the 2020 European Commission portfolio of indicators.[2]

This report refers to specific pieces of Bulgaria's legislation that negatively and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, increasing the risks of multiple deprivation and (institutional) discrimination. It does not claim to present a comprehensive analysis of the gaps in the legal framework of Roma inclusion. Rather, it highlights some key areas in which urgent legislative changes are needed for the sustainable reduction of growing social inequalities, social exclusion and discrimination against vulnerable groups such as Roma.

The structure of this report, the calculation of indicators disaggregated by ethnicity and/ or other characteristics and the analysis of the data follow the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)'s requirements. These requirements are set out in the *Handbook on EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation monitoring indicators calculation methodology – adapted for BNSI* and the report *Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Summary of main results*, compiled as part of the project 'Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights'.

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* Bulgaria did not collect administrative and sample survey statistical information disaggregated by ethnicity until 2015. The BNSI collects and publishes official data on the demographic processes, the socio-economic status, the educational attainment, the place of residence and the living conditions of the representatives of the large ethnic communities for only the census years. The Bulgarian questionnaire of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) has included a question about ethnicity since 2015. The BNSI publishes data disaggregated by ethnicity yearly in Bulgarian and English.

The survey in a nutshell

A representative survey was designed and carried out specifically for the project 'Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights' (BGLD-3.001-0001). The survey (referred to in this report as the '2020 BNSI/FRA survey') was conducted between 19 May and 17 September 2020. It collected information on the situation of over 26,600 individuals aged 15 years and over, and over 3,600 children aged 14 years and under. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Despite the complicated situation in the country because of the measures introduced to combat the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, the response rate was 80.6%.

The sample of surveyed households was generated by applying two-stage stratified cluster sampling with random probabilities proportional to size. The sample comprised 15,000 private households in 2,500 clusters representing the Bulgarian population living in private households. Oversampling was not used. The data were weighted according to the population as of 31 December 2019 using 'calibration methods': design weights (the inverse of inclusion probabilities of the sample units) were adjusted to non-response, then calibration was applied at individual level to represent the population as of 31 December 2019 using age groups, sex, type of residence and district.

All household members aged 15 years and over were interviewed. Proxy interviews were not allowed. Questions referring to children younger than 15 years were included in the interviews with their mothers; another legal representative (parent or guardian) provided the information if this was not possible. Data were collected through face-to-face computer-assisted interviews.

The survey focused on four groups identified as being at high risk of poverty, social exclusion and fundamental rights violations:

- the Roma community (people who self-identify as Roma),
- children (people below the age of 18 years),
- older people (people aged 65 years or over),
- people with disabilities (people who answered that they were limited or severely limited in their usual activities in the six months before the survey owing to health problems).

This report is part of the series of four thematic reports analysing the situation of each of the above groups in Bulgaria. The report applies the ethnonym 'Roma' only to those who self-identify as Roma, to make the data comparable with data from the censuses and all other BNSI surveys, as the BNSI requested during the fieldwork for the survey.

Roma in Bulgaria: Demographics and dimensions of social exclusion and discrimination

Bulgaria is among the European Union (EU) countries with the largest share of Roma in the population. About 4–5 % of the total population self-identifies as Roma, according to official data from censuses conducted in 1992,[3] 2001 and 2011. The Roma population in Bulgaria (but also in other countries in Europe) is younger, has a higher fertility rate (although it declined in the last decade)[4] and has a lower life expectancy than the non-Roma population.[5] The age differences between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria (those who self-identify as

Roma, ethnic Bulgarians or ethnic Turks), the changes in the share of the large ethnic communities' populations of reproductive age and the differences in their fertility behaviour predetermine long-term changes in the ethnic composition of the population (Figure 1).

Economic welfare in Bulgaria will be increasingly determined by the education and qualifications of current and future cohorts of children from the large minority communities, by their health status and by the degree and progression of social inclusion of ethnic minorities in all areas of life.

Figure 1: Distribution of Bulgaria's population, by age and self-declared ethnicity, in 2011 (%)
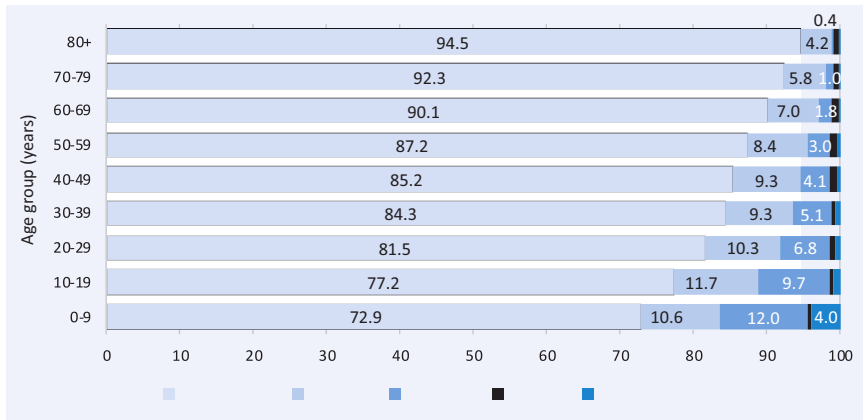
Source: BNSI, *2011 census*, p. 33

The Council of Europe uses 'Roma' as an umbrella term, encompassing Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covering the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including people who self-identify as Gypsies.[6] The range of people who fall under the umbrella term 'Roma' is also broad in Bulgaria. This category includes people who self-identify as Millet; as ethnic Turks; as Rudary, Lingurary or Kopanary, who often prefer to be called Wallachians or Romanians;[7] and as Dzhourevtsi,* who often prefer to be called (and treated as) ethnic Bulgarians by the majority population and by the staff of state institutions.** This report generally uses the stricter definition of 'Roma' as a specific ethnic group. It is noted where the umbrella term is used.

The surrounding population has, throughout history, labelled people in all the above groups as Roma/Gypsies,[8] and they have faced prejudice regardless of the way they self-identify. The same applies to Muslims living in slums, who rarely self-identify as 'Roma'. The surrounding population perceives them as Turkish Gypsies, and they often face an even higher risk of marginalisation than other Roma subgroups.

Religion and mother tongue are additional facets of Roma identity, alongside ethnicity. Of those who self-identified as Roma, 36.6 % declared that they were Eastern Orthodox Christians, 10.1 % indicated affiliation with various evangelical churches and 18.3 % self-identi-

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*The Dzhorevtsi subgroup comprises descendants of mixed marriages between Roma and ethnic Bulgarians. However, despite their comparatively good economic status, they are rejected by both Roma and ethnic Bulgarians. Most of them self-identify as ethnic Bulgarians and take it as an insult if somebody calls them Roma/Gypsies. They are usually better educated than the rest of Roma. Their level of unemployment is one of the lowest among Roma in Bulgaria.

** Four people (including a 1-year-old child) had 'Other' as their identity, declaring 'Kopanary', in the survey.
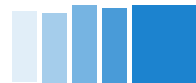
fied as Muslims in the 2011 census. The rest either did not indicate their religion or explicitly stated that they were not religious and did not feel that they belonged to a particular denomination. The majority of self-identified Roma (85.0 %) declared their mother tongue to be one of the chief Romani dialects; it was Turkish for 6.7 % and Romanian for 0.6 %. Only 7.5 % of those who self-identified as Roma declared Bulgarian as their mother tongue. However, it should be noted that, in the 2011 census, 9.8 % of respondents did not answer this optional question about mother tongue. In 2011, 9.8 % of the respondents did not answer the voluntary question about their mother tongue. Again, children aged 0–9 years and other young age groups had the highest shares of non-respondents [9]

This report (in line with the approach of the BNSI when presenting data disaggregated by ethnicity) analysed the data on the situation of Roma in relation to the other two large ethnic groups in Bulgaria, namely ethnic Bulgarians and Turks. This approach took into account the overlap and complementarity of various facets of Roma identity. Most of the discrimination indicators used in this report are based on 'all grounds' of discrimination or on three grounds (ethnicity, skin colour and religious beliefs). In that way, the indicators better capture the multidimensionality of 'Roma' as an umbrella term.

Another factor that has a significant impact on increasing the risk of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria is place of residence (and segregated living in particular). It largely determines the possibility of finding a job and generating a decent income, and having access to good-quality medical services and good-quality education, further reinforcing marginalisation. As a result, it contributes to the framing of Roma as a demographic, cultural and social threat in media and within political discourse.[10] This framing fuels negative feelings towards Roma and fear among the general population, contributing to an increase in the majority population's ethnocentrism or 'ethnicisation' of social inequalities.[11]

[1] BNSI and FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Summary of main results.

[2] European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council 'A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation', SWD(2020) 530 final, Annex 2, COM(2020) 620 final, Brussels, 7 October 2020.

[3] BNSI (1994), Population and housing census as of 4 December 1992. Population census results. Vol. I. Demographic characteristics (Prebroyavane na naselenieto i zhilishtniya fond kam 4 dekemvri 1992 godina. Rezultati ot prebroyavane na naselenieto. Tom I. Demografski harakteristiki), p. 106.

[4] Ilieva, N. and Kazakov, B. (2014), Projection of the Roma population in Bulgaria (2020–2050).

[5] The World Bank (2014), Diagnostics and policy advice for supporting Roma inclusion in Romania, p. 158.

[6] Council of Europe (2012), Descriptive glossary of terms relating to Roma issues.

[7] See Kolev, D., Frumova, T., Krasteva, A., Nedelchev, N. and Dimitrova, D. (2004), Teachers' manual (Kniga za uchitelya), p. 23.

[8] Marushiakova, E. and Popov, V. (1993), The Gypsies in Bulgaria (Tsiganite v Bulgaria), Sofia, Club 1993; Tomova I. (1995), The Gypsies in the transition period, Sofia, IMIR; Tomova, I. (2005), 'The Roma identity construction in Bulgaria' ('Konstruirane na romskata identichnost v Bulgaria'), Sociologicheski Problemi, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 187–214; Pamporov, A. (2006), Roma everyday life (Romskoto vsekidnevie v Bulgaria), Sofia, IMIR; Kolev, D., Frumova, T., Krasteva, A., Nedelchev, N. and Dimitrova, D. (2004), Teachers' manual (Kniga za uchitelya).

[9] BNSI (2012), 2011 census. Vol. 1, Population. Book 2, Demographic and social characteristics, p. 34.

[10] Georgiev, J., Tomova, I., Grekova, M. and Kanev, K. (1993), 'Some results of the study "Ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria – 1992"' ('Nyakoi rezultati ot izsledvaneto „Etnokulturnata situatsiya v Balgariya – 1992"'), Sociological Review, Vol. 3, pp. 55–81; Lazarova, G. (2002), The image of the Roma. A study of the modern Bulgarian press (Obrazat na romite. Edno izsledvane na savremenniya balgarski pechat), Sofia, SEGA; Pamporov, A. (2009), Social distances and ethnic stereotypes towards minorities in Bulgaria (Sotsialni distantsii i etnicheski stereotipi za maltsinstvata v Balgariya), Open Society Institute – Sofia, Sofia; Stoytchev, L. (2012), 'Movement of prices, unemployment rate and the Roma content in the Bulgarian press in the dailies, August 2010–February 2011', Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 128–141; Bulgarian Helsinki Committee annual reports, 2001–2020.

[11] See European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reports on Bulgaria (fourth (2008) and fifth (2014) monitoring cycles); Daftory, F. and Grin, F. (eds) (2003), Nation building, ethnicity and language politics in transition countries, Budapest, European Centre for Minority Issues and Open Society Institute; Mitev, P.-E. (1994), 'Relationships of compatibility and incompatibility in everyday life between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria – A sociological study' in: Zhelyazkova, A. (ed.), Relationships of compatibility and incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria, Sofia, IMIR; Schuler, S. (2009), 'Aspects of Roma marginalisation in Romania and Bulgaria' ('Aspekti na marginalizatsiyata na romite v Rumaniya i Balgariya'), Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 79–96; Tomova, I. and Stoytchev, L. (2013), 'Roma representations in the district of Razgrad', Naselenie Review, Vol. 5, No. 6, pp. 175–186; Kanushev, M. (2018), 'Stigmatised deviance, or how multiple exclusion is constituted' ('Stigmatiziranata deviantnost, ili kak se konstituira mnozhestvena izklyuchenost') in: Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M. and Ivanov, M. (eds), Inequalities and social (dis)integration: In search of togetherness (Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost), Sofia, Iztok-Zapad.

1. Education

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Highlights

- The data summarised in this chapter show that only 27.7 % of Roma children aged 0–4 years attend kindergarten or nursery – significantly below the 46.0 % of ethnic Bulgarian children.
- Only 58.3 % of Roma children aged 3–6 years attend early childhood education and care (compared with 83.0 % of ethnic Bulgarian and 77.0 % of ethnic Turkish children).
- Only 86.2 % of Roma children aged 7–15 years attend formal education (compared with 96.6 % of both ethnic Bulgarian and ethnic Turkish children).
- Early school leaving is particularly worrying: only 28.0 % of Roma aged 20–24 years have completed at least secondary education, and there is a considerable gender gap (31.8 % among Roma men and 23.4 % among Roma women).
- Segregation in education is a major factor contributing to deprivation in education and a violation of fundamental rights. 63.5 % of Roma children aged 6–14 years attend schools and kindergartens in which all or most of their schoolmates are Roma.

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1.1. Background

The European Pillar of Social Rights states that all children have the right to affordable and good-quality education and care. A number of national normative acts identify good-quality, affordable and inclusive education as their priority.[12] The positive results of these acts are visible in the modernisation of the education and training system, in the improvement of the teaching profession's attractiveness and in the increase in the labour market relevance of vocational education and training. The most serious challenges that persist include:

- deterioration of the **quality of public education** at all educational levels (exposed by external assessments[13]), difficulties in transitioning from education to employment[*] and, indirectly, the increased emigration of whole families, motivated by the desire of parents and/or young people to receive a higher quality of education;[**]
- **educational inequalities** – Bulgaria's educational system is still reproducing and strengthening the social inequalities in the country through limited access to good-quality education and high risk of early school leaving for the majority of children in families with low incomes and especially those in rural areas and segregated schools, affecting many Roma children;[*]
- insufficient progress in the **development of technological skills** and competences of more than half of the learners to deal with new information and communication technologies, and poor quality of foreign language teaching in a large number of public schools;
- few opportunities for **lifelong learning** and for the inclusion of young people and adults in good-quality training in information and communication technology;[14]
- poor results in the **formation of democratic and humanistic attitudes** and beliefs among children and youth through civic education at all educational levels.[15]

On a positive note, Bulgaria made progress on some educational indicators after the country's accession to the EU. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, only 5 % of Roma children aged 3–6 years attended kindergarten in the crisis year of 1997. This share had risen to 16 % by 2001 and 30.9 % in 2011. The Enrolment of Roma and children from other vulnerable groups increased between 2016 and 2019 – both in early childhood education and care and in primary, secondary and higher education.[16] Absenteeism and early school leaving among Roma children seem to have declined.[17]

Despite this progress, a number of challenges remain, particularly regarding segregated education, of both preschools and schools. The Bulgarian government's and local authorities' attempts to address school segregation are fragmented and often lead to 'secondary segregation' in the schools in which a large number of Roma children are placed as a result of 'white flight' (i.e. ethnic Bulgarian and ethnic Turkish children leave these schools, which become 'Roma schools').[18] The working examples of programmes for the gradual closure of segregated schools in large urban slums and the admission of students to integrated schools that have proven to work have not been replicated or scaled up – although there are at least two exceptions where this has been successful: (1) desegregation and school integration in the town of Kavarna under the leadership of former mayor Tsonko Tsonkov, declared a good European practice, and (2) in the rural municipality of Tundzha, Yambol district.

The concept of 'school integration' is rather narrow. It is often limited to enrolling Roma children in a public school in which children from other ethnic groups study, with no preparatory work with the non-Roma children and their parents. Hate speech and political and media discourse have also hampered the process of school desegregation in recent years. No effective measures have been taken to change public attitudes towards providing good-quality education to all children in an integrated school environment.[19] In addition, the provisions of the Protection against Discrimination Act make it difficult to challenge segregation in courts (see Box 4 in chapter 6).

The Pre-school and School Education Act (enacted on 1 August 2016) stipulates the inadmissibility of racial segregation in educational establishments: having children of different ethnicities attending separate groups or classes defined by their ethnicity is against the law.[20] However, **the law does not declare the existence of ethnically segregated schools to be inadmissible** if the settlement provides the opportunity for children of minority ethnic origin to enrol in other public schools.

Box 1: Segregation in education: in line with the law?

Racial segregation is prohibited in Bulgaria, according to Article 5 of the Protection against Discrimination Act. However, the accepted definition of 'racial segregation' (paragraph 1, item 6, of the act) is "issuance of an act, execution of an act or omission that leads to **forced** separation, differentiation or distinguishing of a person on the basis of their race, ethnicity or skin colour" (bold added for emphasis).* The definition does not fully comply with the requirements of Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. The word 'forced', applied in practice, legitimises the existence of territorial segregation (slums in large cities) and of the de facto segregated Roma schools through the presumption that the enrolment of children in these schools is a result of the free choice of families and parents and not of unlawful discrimination. The argument is usually that Roma prefer to live in separate neighbourhoods to be among their relatives.

Such presumptions do not take into account the inability of the vast majority of Roma to buy or rent housing outside Roma neighbourhoods as a result of their poverty. They also do not take into consideration parents' fears of sending their children far from 'their' neighbourhood or the lack of informed choice for the better education of children that enrolment in schools outside the segregated neighbourhoods would provide. In this way, the resistance of the majority population to the actual integration of Roma in schools and residential neighbourhoods is given a lower weight in lawsuits against school segregation than other factors. As a result, courts usually accept that any segregation is not a prohibited form of discrimination and students of Roma origin attending segregated schools are educated according to their – or their parents' – free choice.

In August 2021, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee announced that it had won a case against a school principal who had announced that he would not accept Roma students. The Supreme Administrative Court ruled that the announcement constituted discrimination on ethnic grounds. According to the lawyer representing the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, "this is one of the first, if not the first, cases of racial segregation since the enactment of the Protection against Discrimination Act".

Based on *Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L. and Ivanov, M. (*Томова, И., Стойчев, Л., Иванов, М.*) (2020),* Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria *(*Демографски дисбаланси и социални неравенства между големите етнически групи в България*), Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.* D. Mihaylova provided the legal analysis.

*Bulgaria, Protection against Discrimination Act, 1 January 2004, Article I, point 6.

One of the most severe consequences of prolonged segregation, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion is the development of 'learned helplessness' – the belief that no individual effort would change the situation of a person or family.[21] This partly explains why, in many families from vulnerable ethnic groups, parents see no point in investing money and time in children's education. In addition, the discrimination they face when looking for work (or being first to lose their jobs) regardless of their education further demotivates them in supporting their children's efforts in education.[22]

1.2. Results

Early childhood education and care

There has been a decrease in the number of children in the Bulgarian population over the last three decades. Despite this, the shortage of kindergartens in the capital city and in other major cities is a serious problem, not only for single-parent families and families of low-income working parents but also for families with children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian (i.e. the majority of Roma and ethnic Turkish families). Families with lower than average incomes are particularly affected because they cannot enrol their children in private childcare facilities.[23]

40.8 % of children aged 0–4 years attended kindergarten or nursery in 2020 – considerably lower than the EU average – according to the results of the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey. Only 27.7 % of Roma children and 31.3 % of ethnic Turkish children in this age group were enrolled in early childhood education and care institutions. Not attending such institutions has a considerable impact on children's mastery of the official Bulgarian language and the

skills needed for the transition to compulsory education (Figure 2). The Bulgarian National Assembly amended the Pre-school and School Education Act to reduce the age of starting compulsory pre-school education from 5 years to 4 years in 2020, in an attempt to increase preschool enrolment of children of parents with low/irregular incomes. This should have become effective in the 2021/2022 school year for municipalities with enough kindergarten places for all 4-year-old children. The rest of the municipalities are expected to provide the necessary conditions for full coverage of children aged 4–6 years by the start of the 2023/2024 school year.[24]

Figure 2: Proportion of children aged 0–4 years attending kindergartens or crèches, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
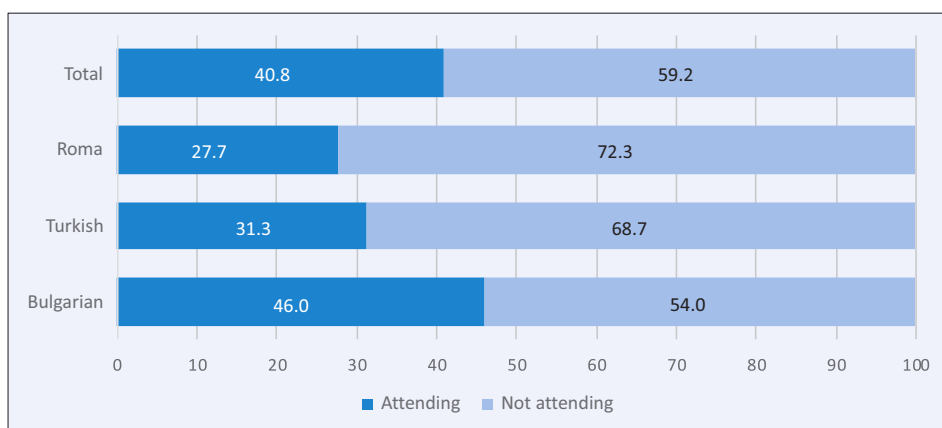
Notes: *a Out of all household members aged 0–4 years (n = 982); weighted results.*
      b Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
      c Based on question "Is (child's name) currently attending kindergarten or nursery?"
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

The net enrolment rate for children aged 3–6 years in kindergartens or preschool preparatory groups was 77 % in the 2019/2020 school year, with considerable differences between the ethnic groups, data from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey show (Figure 3). This is lower than the average EU enrolment rate, but it should be taken into account that Bulgaria started from a very low enrolment rate when it joined the EU in 2007.

Figure 3: Share of children between 3 years old and compulsory school age who attend early childhood education, by self-declared ethnicity and age (%)

		Attending	Not attending
Total	5 - 6 years	74.6	25.4
	3 - 4 years	79.2	20.8
	3 - 6 years	77.0	23.0
Roma	5 - 6 years	56.8	43.2
	3 - 4 years	59.8	40.2
	3 - 6 years	58.3	41.7
Turkish	5 - 6 years	(53.3)	(46.7)
	3 - 4 years	(81.0)	(19.0)
	3 - 6 years	67.2	32.8
Bulgarian	5 - 6 years	81.3	18.7
	3 - 4 years	84.6	15.4
	3 - 6 years	83.0	17.0
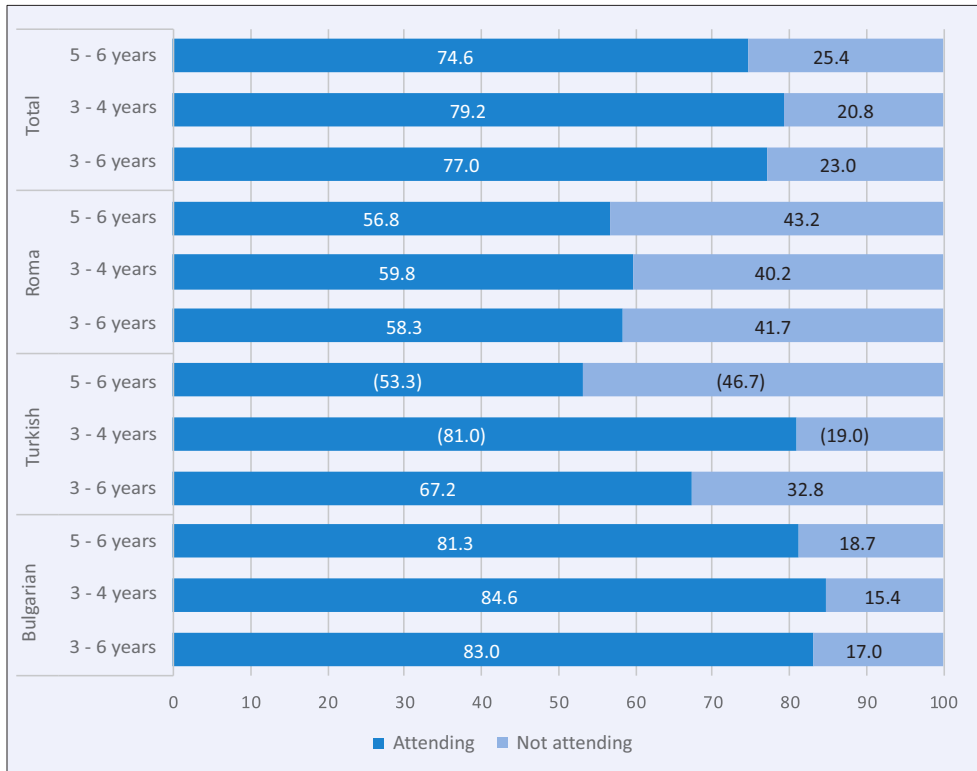
Notes:
a Out of all household members aged 3–6 years (n =880), aged 3–4 (n=419), aged 5–6 (n=461); weighted results.
b Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (published in brackets).
d Based on question "Is (child's name) currently attending kindergarten or nursery?"
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

Attendance of early childhood education and care institutions significantly differs between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria. Around one sixth of ethnic Bulgarian children, around one third of ethnic Turkish children and over two fifths of Roma children aged 3–6 years do not attend kindergarten or a preschool group, data from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey show.

Worth noting is the lower pre-school enrolment rate for children aged 5–6 years than for those aged 3–4 years (about 3 percentage points for ethnic Bulgarian and Roma children). This decline may be because the survey was conducted in 2020 (the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic). Schools hosting compulsory pre-school groups were closed for longer

than kindergartens and it possible that the parents who had the opportunity to look after their children at home might have chosen not to send them to school due to fear of infection, which is higher in schools hosting compulsory pre-school groups. The results for children from ethnic Turkish families are based on a small number of observations; therefore, definite conclusions cannot be drawn.

The gender of children does not appear to affect their enrolment in early childhood education and/or preschool groups among ethnic Bulgarians – the shares of boys and girls enrolled are almost equal, survey data show. It is more complicated for Roma children: the chance of not attending compulsory preschool groups is greater for boys than for girls.

Educational status

Roma are the only ethnic group in the country whose educational status deteriorated in the early years of post-communism (1990–2000), census data suggest. The share of illiterate Roma increased by 4 percentage points and the share of elementary (grades 1-4) and primary (grades 5-7) school graduates remained relatively stable during this period.[25] The educational status of the three major ethnic groups – ethnic Bulgarians, ethnic Turks and Roma – has improved since 2001. However, the smallest improvement is among Roma. Thus, the gap in the level of educational attainment between Roma and non-Roma has been widening, at the same time as an increase in social inequalities and distances, prejudices and stereotyping regarding Roma. The risk of transmitting poverty and social exclusion to future generations of the Roma community is increasing.[26]

Roma remain the group with the lowest enrolment rate and participation in education in all general educational levels according to data from the survey conducted for this project. 96.6 % of ethnic Bulgarian children aged 7–15 years attended school in the 2019/2020 school year (which the survey captured). 86.2 % of Roma children in the same age group attended school in that year (Table 1).

Table 1: Share of children aged 7–15 years attending formal education, by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Attending formal education	Not attending formal education
Ethnic Bulgarian, n = 2,282	96.6	3.4
Ethnic Turkish, n = 243	96.6	(3.4)
Roma, n = 631	86.2	13.8
Total	94.6	5.4

Notes: a Out of all household members aged 7–15 years (n =2,480); weighted results.
            b Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s).
            c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (published in brackets).
            d Based on question "Is the person studying at present?" from the household members module
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

The difference between Roma and non-Roma children attending elementary and primary schools is about 10 percentage points. A significantly higher proportion Roma children leave school during the transition from primary to secondary education or during secondary education. Figure 4 shows that just over one quarter of Roma aged 20–24 years have

completed at least secondary education, and there is a considerable gender gap (the share of those who have completed at least secondary education is 31.8 % among Roma men and only 23.4 % among Roma women).

Figure 4: Share of people aged 20–24 years who completed at least secondary education, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
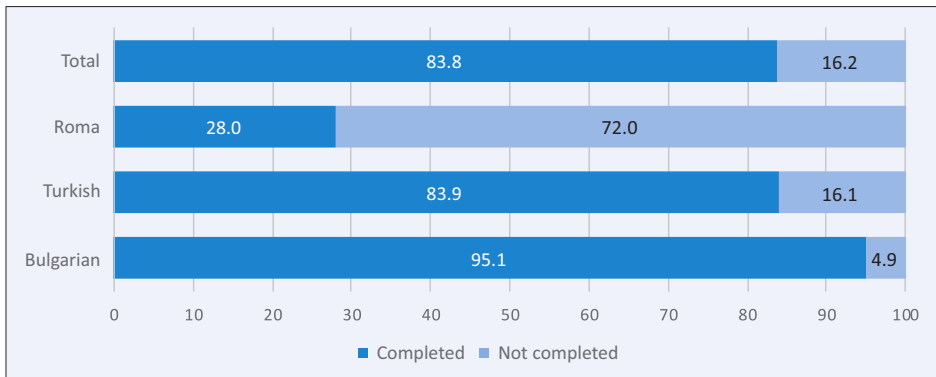
Notes: a Out of all household members aged – years (n =1,314); weighted results.
             b Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s).
             c Based on question "Highest degree of education completed" from the household members module
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

The share of early school leavers remains very high among Roma in Bulgaria, with considerable differences men and women, data from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey suggest. The share of Roma women aged 18–24 years who left school early is almost 10 percentage points higher than the share of men in the same age group (Figure 5). In relative terms, the most significant gender gap in educational attainment is observed in the group of people who self-identify as ethnic Turks.

Figure 5: Early leavers from education and training, aged 18–24 years, by self-declared ethnicity and sex (%)

Notes: *a Out of all household members aged 18–24 years (n =1,845); weighted results.*
b Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
c Based on questions "Is the person studying at present?" from the household members module; "What is the highest degree of education you have completed?"; and "How would you describe your current employment status?"

Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

This situation seems to have been improving in recent years. The share of Roma who have never attended school or who have completed only primary education has decreased, and there is a trend of an increase in the share of Roma who have completed basic, secondary and tertiary education, a recent Trust for Social Achievement representative survey shows.[27]

However, COVID-19-related lockdowns and the transition to distance learning have increased the risk of early school leaving. Long-term distance learning could have an adverse effect on one third to two fifths of students, primarily those from families at risk of poverty and those living in rural areas, a July 2021 analysis that the Ministry of Education and Science conducted shows.

One of the major reasons for this effect that the analysis noted is the lack of necessary devices for distance and online learning and the lack of internet access.[28] The inability of

many parents/guardians in these families to help children cope with the learning material and/or to join online learning is also a factor.[*] School mediators distributed printouts of lessons and assignments to children who could not participate in distance learning, helped them understand the missed learning material and helped children from Roma families to develop digital skills where possible.

Overall, 77.5 % of people aged 6–18 years in Bulgaria have either a computer or a laptop in their household, data from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey show. However, only 27.8 % of Roma people aged 6–18 years have a computer/laptop in their households, compared with 90.7 % of their ethnic Bulgarian counterparts and 80.9 % of their ethnic Turkish counterparts, data disaggregated by self-declared ethnicity show.

Discrimination and bullying

The overall share of the population who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months when in contact with school authorities is, on average, 1.4 %. This reaches 10.6 % among Roma, the results of the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey indicate (see Table 12 in chapter 6). However, these results may not fully capture the magnitude of prejudice and antigypsyism in the area of education, of which bullying on ethnic grounds is an important component.[**]

In the survey year (2020), many students studied remotely/online for long periods owing to COVID-19 infection prevention measures. A significant proportion of Roma children did not have access to the internet and a computer/tablet or were not permanently in contact with students from other ethnic groups, reducing the risk of direct bullying or bullying through social networks. In addition, asking only children aged 16 years and older about bullying reduces the coverage, missing a considerable group of schoolchildren who could have experienced bullying.

Segregated education

Attendance of **segregated preschools and schools** predetermines unequal access to good-quality education. Most segregated schools offer a very low quality of education and have high levels of absenteeism and a high risk of early school leaving.[29] There is a concentration of children from vulnerable ethnic groups in segregated schools and in schools in which the majority of their classmates are from families with low social status (i.e. schools that middle-class children do not attend). This increases the risk of low-quality education[30] and early school leaving among these children. This structural feature of the educational system in Bulgaria is the most important factor negatively affecting the development and educational achievements of children in such schools, according to Gortazar and colleagues.[***]

* The Ministry of Education and Science purchased 16,000 PCs and laptops in the summer of 2020, but they were distributed among schools based on the number of students in them, according to a report from the Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance. Thus, children attending small rural schools and schools serving several settlements (in which schools were closed for different reasons) received almost nothing although the majority of children there did not have the necessary devices. At the same time, elite schools in the capital and other large cities, where almost all children have PCs, tablets or laptops, received a large quantity of purchased equipment. In addition, parents in many poor Roma families have refused to accept and take responsibility for expensive computers, especially since there is no internet access or the connection is poor and unsuitable for online learning in many villages and Roma neighbourhoods. The same problems occurred again in the summer of 2021, when computers were purchased with the funds of the European instrument to combat COVID-19 (Amalipe, 2021).

**The report of the European Commission – Education and training monitor 2019: Bulgaria – cites OECD data from 2016, according to which 14 % of students report that they have been victims of bullying. 6 % of Bulgarian respondents reported bullying/harassment at school in that year according to FRA.

*** The report by Gortazar et al. (2014) (How can Bulgaria improve its educational system? An analysis of PISA 2012 and past results, working paper 91321, Washington, D.C., World Bank Group) emphasises that the most significant factor in low-quality education and early school leaving is the social origin of children and the concentration of children from families at risk of poverty and social exclusion in a school. This concerns the segregated schools in the large Roma neighbourhoods and in the segregated urban slums, the in-service (serving more than one settlement) and preserved schools in the rural areas, and some of the 'integrated' schools in small and medium-sized cities, in which children for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue are the majority. The Bulgarian government has declared its commitment to fight school segregation but the outcomes and results of action are modest. See Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2020), Evaluation of the Roma integration policies in Bulgaria, 2012–2019 (Otsenka na integratsionnite politiki kam romite v Balgariya v perioda 2012–2019 g.).

The results of the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey support these findings and show that segregated schools are still the predominant school type among Bulgaria's Roma children – 63.5 % attend schools in which 'all or most' of their schoolmates are Roma (Figure 6). It should be noted that a significant proportion of the currently segregated schools in villages and small towns became segregated Roma schools after 1990, mainly for political and demographic reasons (Box 2).

Box 2: Emergence of segregated schools after 1990

Some 360,000 Bulgarian Turks emigrated to Turkey in 1989 as a result of the forced assimilation policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party against ethnic Turks in the 1980s. This took place after the violent suppression of peaceful protests by the Bulgarian citizens of Turkish ethnicity to restore their basic ethnocultural rights. The mass emigration of Bulgarian Turks continued in the first half of the 1990s, albeit on a limited scale. The remaining young ethnic Turkish families with children in Bulgaria left villages en masse and settled in nearby towns.*

As a result, the former mixed rural schools gradually turned into predominantly Roma schools.

'White flight' has driven the segregation process in cities: the increase in the share of Roma children in a school leads to the rapid departure of ethnic Bulgarian and ethnic Turkish children from the school, resulting in secondary segregation. In addition, there are numerous schools in segregated Roma neighbourhoods and in large urban slums where the majority of the population self-identifies as Millet or ethnic Turkish but the surrounding population perceives them as Roma/Gypsies. The vast majority of students in these schools are usually unable to meet the minimum requirements for external assessment of knowledge of the Bulgarian language, mathematics and science.

Vassileva, D. (1992), 'Bulgarian Turkish emigration and return', International Migration Review, Vol. 26, No. 2, Summer 1992, pp. 342–352; Tomova, I. (1998), 'The migration process in Bulgaria' in: Opalski, M. (ed.) (1998), Managing diversity in plural societies: Minorities, migration and nation-building in post-communist Europe, Ontario, Forum Eastern Europe, pp. 229-239; Avramov, R. (2016). Ikonomika na vazroditelniya protses (The economy of the "revival process"). Sofia, Centre for Advanced Studies.

Figure 6: Share of children aged 6–14 years attending schools and kindergartens in which 'all or most of schoolmates are Roma' as the respondents reported, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
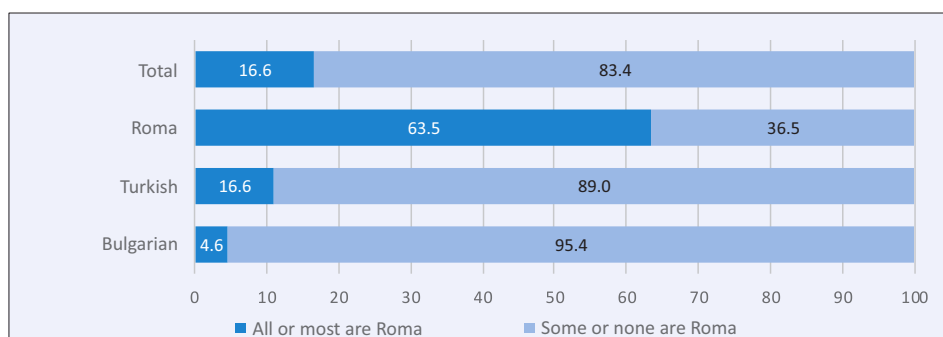
Notes: a Out of all household members aged 6–14 years (n =1,871); weighted results.

b Based on question "Now think about the school (kindergarten) that (child's name) attends. For how many of the students (children) would you say that are of Roma origin?"
c Results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
d Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

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[12] Bulgaria, Pre-school and School Education Act, 1 August 2016; national programme for development 'Bulgaria 2020' and 'Bulgaria 2030'; National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030; Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, Training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria 2021–2030; Strategy for Reducing the Share of Early School Leavers 2013–2020, etc.

[13] European Commission (2019), Education and training monitor 2019: Bulgaria; national programme for development 'Bulgaria 2030'; National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030.

[14] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030; national programme for development 'Bulgaria 2030.

[15] See Mitev, P. (2016), The Bulgarians: Sociological Reviews (Balgarite: Sotsiologicheski pregledi), Sofia, Iztok-Zapad, Sofia; Mitev, P. (2012), 'The new human being and the peripheral capitalism' ('Noviyat chovek i periferniyat kapitalizam') (Doklad, predstaven na vatreshen seminar na Instituta „Ivan Hadzhiyski" na 14 may 2012 g. v SU „Sv. Kliment Ohridski"), Sofia; Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L. and Ivanov, M. (2020), Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria, Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, pp. 181–212.

[16] Ministry of Education and Science, 2015.

[17] Trust for Social Achievement (2020), National Survey on Roma Educational Attainment and Employment, Sofia.

[18] Grekova, M. (2018), 'Why the policy for "educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities" is unsuccessful' ('Zashto e neuspeshna politikata na „obrazovatelna integratsiya na detsata i uchenitsite ot etnicheskite maltsinstva"') in: Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M. and Ivanov, M. (eds), Inequalities and social (dis)integration: In search of togetherness (Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost), Sofia, Iztok-Zapad; Grekova, M. (2007); 'Ethnic prejudice and discrimination: From segregation to "educational integration" of children of Roma origin in Bulgaria' ('Etnicheski predrazsadatsi i diskriminatsiya: ot segregatsiya kam „obrazovatelna integratsiya"" na detsa ot romski proizhod v Balgariya') Innovative Sociology (Inovativna sotsiologiya), Sofia, St Kliment Ohridski Publishing House; National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030, Centre for interethnic dialogue and tolerance "Amalipe" (Център за междуетнически диалог и толерантност „Амалипе") (2020). Without segregation: Activities for prevention of school segregation of Roma on local level (Без сегрегация: Дейности за предотвратяване на училищната сегрегация спрямо ромите на място ниво).

[19] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030; Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2020), Evaluation of the Roma integration policies in Bulgaria 2012–2019 (Otsenka na integratsionnite politiki kam romite v Balgariya v perioda 2012–2019 g.).

[20] See Art. 62 (4) and Art. 98 (4 and 6) of the Pre-school and School Education Act, 1 August 2016.

[21] Cassio, L. G., Blasko, Z. and Szczepanikova, A. (2021), Poverty and mindsets, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union (Publications Office).

[22] Mitev, P.-E. I., Tomova, I. and Konstantinova, L. (2001), 'The price of procrastination? The social costs of delayed market transition in Bulgaria' in: Emigh, R. and Szelenyi, I. (eds.), Poverty, ethnicity and gender during market transition, PRAEGER, Westport, Connecticut, pp. 33–67; Milenkova, V. (2004), Dropping out of school (Otpadaneto ot uchilishte), Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Grekova, M. (2007); 'Ethnic prejudice and discrimination: From segregation to "educational integration" of children of Roma origin in Bulgaria' ('Etnicheski predrazsadatsi i diskriminatsiya: ot segregatsiya kam „obrazovatelna integratsiya"" na detsa ot romski proizhod v Balgariya') in: Innovative Sociology (Inovativna sotsiologiya), Sofia, St Kliment Ohridski Publishing House; Tilkidjiev, N., Milenkova, V., Petkova, K. and Mileva, N. (2009), Roma dropouts, Sofia, OSI Sofia; Tomova, I. (2013), 'Bulgaria: The persistent challenges to Roma education' in: SUDOSTEUROPA Mitteilungen, pp. 34–47; Grekova, M. (2018), 'Why the policy for "educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities" is unsuccessful' ('Zashto e neuspeshna politikata na „obrazovatelna integratsiya na detsata i uchenitsite ot etnicheskite maltsinstva"' in: Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M. and Ivanov, M. (eds), Inequalities and social (dis)integration: In search of togetherness (Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost), Sofia, Iztok-Zapad; Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L. and Ivanov, M. (2020), Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria, Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, pp. 181–212; Trust for Social Achievement (2020), National Survey on Roma Educational Attainment and Employment, Sofia.

[23] National programme for development 'Bulgaria 2030'.

[24] Bulgaria, Pre-school and School Education Act, 1 August 2016.

[25] BNSI (2021), 2011 census. Vol. 1, Population. Book 2, Demographic and social characteristics. This statement is based on data from the 1992 and 2001 censuses.

[26] See BNSI results from the 1992, 2001 and 2011 censuses.

[27] Trust for Social Achievement (2020), National survey on Roma educational attainment and employment: Key findings from a nationally representative study of the Roma community in Bulgaria.

[28] Mediapool (2021), 'MES: Online learning has deepened the educational inequalities' ('MON: Onlayn obuchenieto zadalbochi obrazovatelnite neravenstva').

[29] Revenga, A., Ringold, D. and Tracy, W. (2002), Poverty and ethnicity – A cross-country study of Roma poverty in central Europe, Washington, D.C., The World Bank; Ringold, D., Orenstein, M. and Wilkens, E. (2003), Roma in an expanding Europe: Breaking the poverty cycle, Washington, D.C., The World Bank; Gortazar, L., Herrera-

Sosa, K., Kutner, D., Moreno, M. and Gautam, A. (2014), How can Bulgaria improve its educational system? An analysis of PISA 2012 and past results, working paper 91321, Washington, D.C., World Bank Group; Gatenio Gabel, S. (2009), 'The growing divide: The marginalisation of young Roma children in Bulgaria', International Journal of Social Welfare, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 65–75; Gatti, R., Karacsony, S., Anan, K., Ferre, C. and de Paz Nievez, C. (2016), 'Being fair, faring better: Promoting equality of opportunity for marginalized Roma', Directions in Development, Washington, D.C., The World Bank; Milanovic, B. and Ersado, L. (2008), Reform and inequality during the transition: An analysis using panel household survey data, 1990-2005, MPRA paper No. 7459.; Tomova, I. (1995). The Gypsies in the Transition Period. Sofia, IMIR; Tomova, I. (2008). Soziale Exklusion von Roma: Das bulgarische Fallbeispiel. Sudosteuropa Mitteilungen, (48, 04). Sudosteuropa Gesellschaft, pp. 52-67; Tomova, I. (2009). The Roma in Bulgaria: Employment and Education. Sudosteuropa Mitteilungen, (49, 02). Sudosteuropa Gesellschaft, pp. 66-87 ; Milenkova, V. (2004). Otpadaneto ot uchilishte [Dropping out of school]. Sofia, Prof Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Tilkidjiev, N, Milenkova, V., Petkova, K., Mileva, N. (2009) Otpadashtite romi (The dropping out Roma). Sofia, Open Society Institute; Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L., Ivanov, M. (2020). Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities between the Large Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria. Sofia, Prof. Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

[30] Wilson, W. J. (1999), When work disappears. The world of the new urban poor, Chicago, University of Chicago Press; Willms, J. D. (1999), 'Quality and inequality in children's literacy: The effect of families, schools, and communities' in: Keating, D. P. and Hertzman, C. (eds), Developmental health and the wealth of nations, New York, Guilford Press; Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009), The spirit level: Why greater equality makes societies stronger, London, Penguin Books; Ventura, S. J., Mathews, T. J. and Hamilton, B. E. (2002), 'Teenage births in the United States: Trends, 1991–2000, an update', National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 50, No. 9, pp. 1–4; United Nations Development Programme (2019), Human development report 2019. Beyond income, beyond averages and beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century, New York, United Nations Development Programme; Revenga, A., Ringold, D. and Tracy, W. (2002), Poverty and ethnicity – A cross-country study of Roma poverty in central Europe, Washington, D.C., The World Bank.

2. Employment

Highlights

- 53.6 % of Roma aged 15–29 years are not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared with 11.7 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 22.5 % of ethnic Turks, the data summarised in this report show. There is a considerable gender gap in this area: 69.8 % of young Roma women are NEET compared with 39.5 % of young Roma men, the data reveal.
- Family joblessness status plays a pivotal role in NEET status: 5.3 % of young ethnic Bulgarians and 26.4 % of young Roma from families with low joblessness intensity are NEETs. 80.9 % of young Roma and 56.7 % of young ethnic Bulgarians from those families with the highest joblessness intensity are NEET.
- The majority of Roma aged 20–64 years (52.8 %) are still unemployed/dropouts from the labour market despite the relatively low national unemployment levels and the labour shortages businesses report in recent years, including the shortage of low-skilled labour. For comparison, 19.8 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 34.9 % of ethnic Turks of the same age are not in paid work or are out of the labour market.
- The gender gap in the paid work rate is particularly wide among Roma: 32.2 percentage points. It is 6.7 and 18.1 among ethnic Bulgarians and ethnic Turks, respectively.

2.1. Background

The 2030 national development programme of Bulgaria prioritises social inclusion and has a specific focus on the situation of unemployed, economically inactive and discouraged working age individuals. Employment rates among the general population are close to the EU average rates, the analysis of the implementation of the 2020 national development programme of Bulgaria and the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020 shows. Economic activity and employment rates in Bulgaria reached 56.6 % and 54.2 %, respectively, in 2019.[31] The unemployed rate fell from 5.2 % to about 4.2 % of the labour force in 2019.[32] However, these results are not distributed equally between groups, and Roma are not benefiting from emerging employment opportunities to the same extent as other groups.

2.2. Results

Paid work

The results of the survey conducted for the purpose of the project show that the majority of Roma aged 20–64 years (52.8 %) are still unemployed/dropouts from the labour market despite the relatively low national unemployment levels and the labour shortages businesses reported in recent years, including the shortage of low-skilled labour. For comparison, 19.8 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 34.9 % of ethnic Turks of the same age are not in paid work or are out of the labour market (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Share of people who declared 'paid work' as their main activity status (including full-time work, part-time work, ad hoc jobs, self-employment and occasional work or work in the past four weeks), aged 20–64 years, by self-declared ethnicity (%)

Not only is the share of Bulgarian Roma in paid work much lower than that of Bulgarian Turks and ethnic Bulgarians, but they also occupy the most precarious and unattractive jobs in the labour market. Most of the Roma in Bulgaria have temporary/casual jobs and/or work part time, often without an employment contract.[33] This means that they face a higher risk than other Bulgarian citizens of not being paid (in full) for their work and of not having social or health insurance (as shown in Chapter 4).

The large proportion of employment dropouts among Roma women is of particular concern. Roma women are particularly vulnerable, both because of negative stereotypes and prejudices against Roma in general and the discrimination against them in the labour market, especially during periods of reduced labour demand, and because of their gender. Seven out of 10 Roma women (69.2 %) were not in paid jobs in the month before the survey, compared with 23.2 % of ethnic Bulgarian women and 43.9 % of ethnic Turkish women (Table 2). The gender gap in employment among Roma is 4.8 times the gender gap among ethnic Bulgarians, as shown in Table 2.

Various factors contribute to the low employment rate of Roma women: low levels of education and qualifications,[34] ethnic discrimination and patriarchal order in many Roma subgroups.[35] The conservative views and norms that have become increasingly common in

Bulgarian media and political discourse in recent years also play a role.[36]

Table 2: Difference in the paid work rate between women and men, by sex and ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Men		Women		Paid work gap
	Not in paid work	In paid work	Not in paid work	In paid work	
Ethnic Bulgarian, n = 14,007	16.5	83.5	23.2	76.8	6.7
Ethnic Turkish, n = 1,455	25.8	74.2	43.9	56.1	18.1
Roma, n = 1,587	37.0	63.0	69.2	30.8	32.2
Total	19.4	80.6	29.5	70.5	10.1

Note: *a Out of respondents aged 20–64 (n =17,308) who experienced discrimination (in any area, on any ground) in the past 12 months; weighted results. b The results in the table are calculated on the basis of those men and women from the three large ethnic groups who declared that they had worked in the four weeks before the survey. Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?". The General population employment rate [lfsa_ergan] is based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) concept: Employed population, 20–64 years, consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.*

c Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

The usual explanation for the high share of unemployed and economically inactive Roma is their low levels of education and qualifications. However, that is only part of the explanation. Data from various surveys show that prejudice plays an important role.[37] 'Lazy' was the second most frequently mentioned Roma stereotype (after theft) according to Pamporov (2009)[38] and Dimitrov (2020).[39] It is worth noting that it ranked much lower in the early 1990s.[40] Still, ethnic discrimination in the labour market is rarely used as an explanation for high levels of Roma unemployment in Bulgarian political and media discourses.[41] Roma themselves have started to claim that this is the main reason for their dropping out of the labour market only since the mid-1990s.[42]

26.7 % of Roma felt discriminated against when looking for a job, compared with 15.7 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 10.3 % of Bulgarian Turks, data from the BNSI and FRA project 'Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights' show. The gaps between the large ethnic groups are similar when comparing the shares of those who felt discriminated against when at work: 11.3 % of Roma compared with 1.5 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 2.8 % of ethnic Turks (see Table 12 in chapter 6).

NEET

Bulgaria reports a higher share of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) than the EU average. The country ranked fourth worst among EU Member States in terms of share of those who were NEET in 2019.[43] The share of people who are NEET is much higher among Roma than among non-Roma: more than half of young Roma (aged 15–29 years) remain NEET compared with one tenth of the ethnic Bulgarians (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Share of young people aged 15–29 years whose current main activity is NEET, by self-declared ethnicity (%)

Gender also plays a role in terms of the risk of being NEET, in addition to belonging to an ethnic minority. The vulnerability of young Roma women and those who self-identified as ethnic Turks is greater than that of ethnic Bulgarians: 69.8 % of young Roma women are NEET compared with 14.4 % and 30.5 % of young ethnic Bulgarian and young ethnic Turkish women, respectively (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Share of young people aged 15–29 years whose current main activity is NEET, by self-declared ethnicity and sex (%)

Notes: a Out of all household members aged 15–29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results.
           b Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The present survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.
           c Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

Household joblessness intensity is associated with the risk of becoming NEET. Only 5.3 % of young ethnic Bulgarians and 26.4 % of young Roma from families with low joblessness intensity are NEET. 80.9 % of young Roma and 56.7 % of young ethnic Bulgarians from families with the highest joblessness intensity (more than 80 % of members in working age are jobless) are NEET (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Share of young people aged 15–29 years whose current main activity is NEET, by self-declared ethnicity and household joblessness intensity (%)
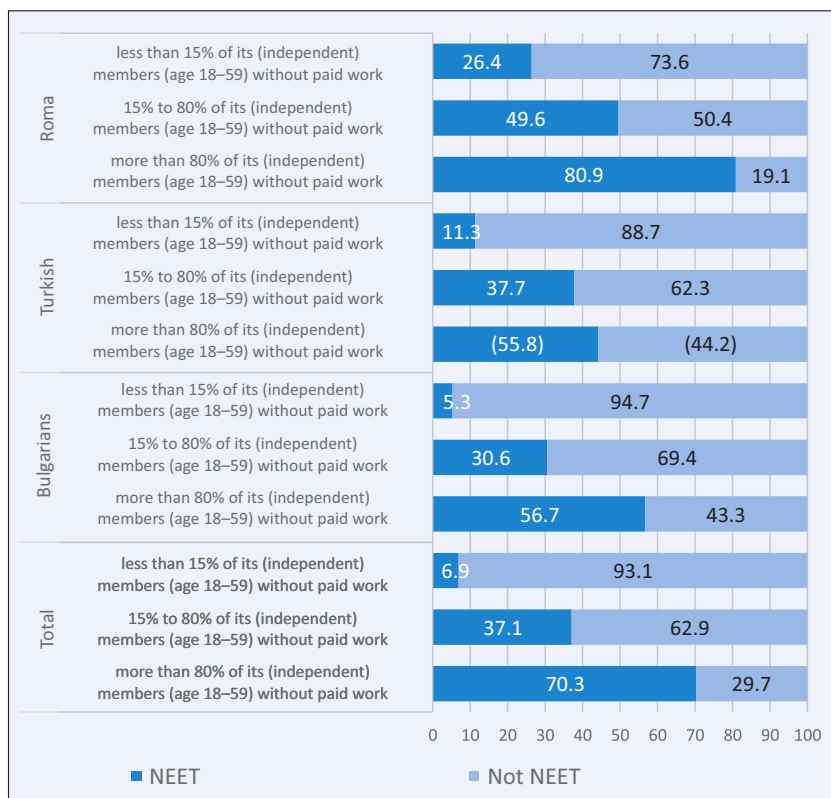
Notes:

a Out of all household members aged 15–29 years (n = 3,883); weighted results.

b Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. BNSI/FRA 2020 survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training. The joblessness intensity in the household variable is provided by the BNSI (147 missing values, taken out of the analysis).

c Joblessness intensity in this context is calculated by setting the total number of non-dependent persons aged 18–59 living in a household (denominator) in relation with those of the same age who are stating that their main activity is paid work (nominator). Non-active persons in the age group between 18 and 24 years are counted as dependent children. Households composed only of children or non-active persons aged less than 25 and/or people aged 60 or more are completely excluded from the indicator calculation.

d Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

e Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

Not using a computer or tablet increases the risk of young people (aged 15–29 years) joining the NEET group. This may be a result of both lack of computer skills and lack of devices at home. However, a lack of computer skills or lack of access to a device increases the risk disproportionately between groups: 45.5 % of ethnic Bulgarians not using personal computers (PCs)/tablets are NEET compared with 63.7 % of Roma who do not use them; one third (33.9 %) of Roma with computer skills are NEET compared with 8.5 % of ethnic Bulgarians with such skills (Table 3).

Table 3: Share of young people aged 15–29 years whose current main activity is NEET, by ethnicity and usage of PCs/tablets (%)

Computer usage		Not NEET	NEET
Total	Not a PC/tablet user	45.0	55.0
	PC/tablet user	89.1	10.9
Ethnic Bulgarians, n = 2.969	Not a PC/tablet user	54.5	45.5
	PC/tablet user	91.5	8.5
Ethnic Turks, n = 346	Not a PC/tablet user	54.6	(45.4)
	PC/tablet user	(84.2)	(15.8)
Roma, n = 639	Not a PC/tablet user	36.3	63.7
	PC/tablet user	66.1	33.9

Notes: *a Out of all household members aged 15–29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results. b Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?"; "Do you use a computer or tablet?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.*
c Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

[31] BNSI (2020), 'Infostat: Employment rates by place of residence and age groups', November 2020.

[32] BNSI (2020), 'Infostat: Population, labour force, employed persons, unemployed persons and persons not in labour force aged 15 years and over by place of residence and age groups', April 2020.

[33] Based on data from the following studies: 'Poverty, ethnicity and gender during market transition' (Yale University, 1999); 'Gender and generation study 2004 and 2007' (Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences); 'Poverty in Bulgaria: Ethnic dimensions of poverty' (The World Bank, 1999); 'Health and the Roma community: The situation in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain' (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2008); 'The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States' (FRA and United Nations Development Programme, 2012); EU-SILC (BNSI, 2016–2021).

[34] See BNSI data from the population censuses (1994, 2001 and 2011).

[35] The World Bank (2014), Gender dimensions of Roma inclusion: Perspectives from four Roma communities in Bulgaria, Washington, D.C., The World Bank.

[36] Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2015–2020), Human rights in Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. Reports for 2014–2020 are available in English on the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee website. All Bulgarian Helsinki Committee reports are also available in Bulgarian on its website.

[37] 'The ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria – 1992' (Office of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria 1992); 'Relations of compatibility and incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria' (Office of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria 1994); Relations of compatibility and incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria' (IMIR 1997; Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender During Market Transition, 1998-2000 (Yale University); Culture of Peace and the Balkan Youth (IMIR 2002); Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minorities in Bulgaria, Open Society Institute of Sofia 2009); Stereotypes and Prejudices about the Roma in the Press (2012).

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[41] Popova, M. and Leshtanska, K. (2006), Roma in the media in 2003 and 2005 (Romite v mediite prez 2003 i 2005 g.), Sofia, Prof Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Pamporov, A. (Пампоров, А.) (2009), Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minorities in Bulgaria (Социални дистанции и етнически стереотипиза малцинствата в България), Sofia, Open Society Institute; Stoytchev, L. (2011), 'Movement of prices, unemployment rate and the Roma content in the dailies: August 2010–February 2011', Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4 128-140.; Tomova, I. (2011), Stereotypes and prejudice towards the Roma in the Bulgarian press (Stereotipi i predrazsadatsi za romite v balgarskata presa), Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 140–174; Pamporov, A. (2011), 'Drunk dark-skinned offenders (the Roma's image in Bulgaria's printed media in elections context)' ('Piyanite murgavi prestapnitsi (Obrazat na romite v balgarskite pechatni izdaniya v predizboren kontekst)'), Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4; Indjov, I. (2012), The image of Roma in Bulgarian press – 2012, Sofia, Institute of Modern Politics; Tomova, I. (2015), The image of the Roma in six electronic media (Obrazat na romite v shest elektronni medii), Razgrad, INTEGRO; Kanushev, M. (2018), 'Stigmatized deviance, or how multiple exclusion is constructed' ('Stigmatiziranata deviantnost, ili kak se konstituira mnozhestvena izklyuchenost') in: Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M. and Ivanov, M. (eds.), Inequalities and social dis(integration): In search of togetherness (Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost), Sofia, Iztok-Zapad; Dimitrov, N. (2020), Social distances and stereotypes about gender and ethnic minorities in Bulgaria (Sotsialni distantsii I stereotipi kam seksualnite I etnicheskite maltsinstva v Bulgaria).

[42] Tomova, I. (2011). Different but Equal? Ethnic Inequalities in Bulgaria (in Bulgarian). Nasselenie Review 2011/1-2 (pp. 93-121)

[43] Eurostat (2020), 'Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training', April 2020.

3. Poverty and social exclusion

Highlights

- 71.1 % of Roma live at risk of poverty, compared with 16.5 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 35.2 % of ethnic Turks, the data summarised in this report show. 24.1 % of Roma live in households in which at least one member has gone to bed hungry in the past month – this non-monetary indicator is a useful proxy for severe poverty.
- Poverty hits Roma children particularly hard: 77.2 % of them are at risk of poverty, compared with 30.0 % of ethnic Turkish children and 13.3 % of ethnic Bulgarian children. 29.9 % of Roma children aged 0–17 years live in households in which at least one person in the household has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food.
- Such extreme poverty particularly affects children's cognitive development and whether they receive a decent education, and contributes to the formation of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, ultimately locking them in the poverty cycle replicated over generations.

3.1. Background

EU Member States apply both relative and multidimensional poverty concepts. The 'at-risk-of-poverty' rate measures relative poverty using 60 % of the yearly median household income as the threshold below which people are considered to be living in poverty. The related indicator 'at risk of poverty and social exclusion' combines three dimensions: monetary poverty (the at-risk-of-poverty rate), severe material deprivation (deprivation of at least four out of nine predefined items) and low work intensity. Proxies of material deprivation or exposure to risk of hunger are applied to complement the standard poverty estimates for capturing the risk of extreme poverty among groups at particular risk of marginalisation and social exclusion.[44]

Bulgaria has had the highest rate of severe material deprivation (one of the non-monetary indicators most often used for measuring poverty) among Member States every year since 2015 according to Eurostat data.[45] In addition, the share of people at risk of poverty in Bulgaria has been consistently higher than the EU average since 2007 (the year in which Bulgaria joined the EU).[46]

The poverty threshold at national level is calculated annually on the basis of a government-approved methodology and applying the threshold of 60 % of the median income from the preceding year that the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) reported. This threshold was BGN 363 (about € 186) in 2020.[47]

Unemployment and low levels of education are among the major factors linked to the risk of poverty. Low remuneration, relatively higher number of children/dependent people/pensioners in the household and regional differences in employment rates (and remuneration) may also lead to a higher risk of poverty.[48]

3.2. Results

At risk of poverty and severe poverty

On average, the share of Bulgaria's Roma who are at risk of poverty is 4.4 times higher than the share of those who self-identify as ethnic Bulgarians, according to BNSI data from EU-

SILC for 2015–2019. The data from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey are very similar to those of EU-SILC: 71.1 % of Roma were at risk of poverty in 2019 compared with 16.5 % of ethnic Bulgarians (Figure 11).

Figure 11: At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60 % of median equivalised income after social transfers), by self-declared ethnicity, in 2019 (%)

Notes: a Out of all household members in the surveyed household (n = 30,303); weighted results.
            b At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1–0.5–0.3).
            c Results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
            d Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?"
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

This difference in at-risk-of-poverty rate between the three largest ethnic groups in the country can be attributed to the multiple and mutually reinforcing deprivations Roma face in various areas of life. These include low levels of employment and education, a relatively large number of children in their households, a share higher than the country's average of people living in rural/underdeveloped areas, a high share of people living in housing deprivation[49] and a high share of people with restricted access to health services and unsatisfactory health status.[50] An issue of particular concern is the high share of working poor. According to EU-SILC data in 2020, among the poor belonging to the Bulgarian and Turkish ethnic groups, retired people (56.6 % and 36.5 % respectively) prevail, while the share of employed people is highest among the Roma ethnic group – 31.9 %. Regarding the unemployed, the share is highest among Roma ethnic group – 31.6 %, compared with 16.5 % among Turkish ethnic group and 10.4 % among the Bulgarian ethnic group.[51]

The non-monetary indicator 'going to bed hungry' is a useful proxy for severe poverty that the BNSI used for the purposes of this project. It is used to assess the prevalence of deep/extreme poverty: the share of people living in households in which at least one person has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money to buy food. While, on average, 4.2 % of the population lives in a household in which at least one member has gone to bed hungry in the past month, this share is 24.1 % among Roma compared with 1.7 % among those who self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians, the data show (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Share of people living in households in which at least one person has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
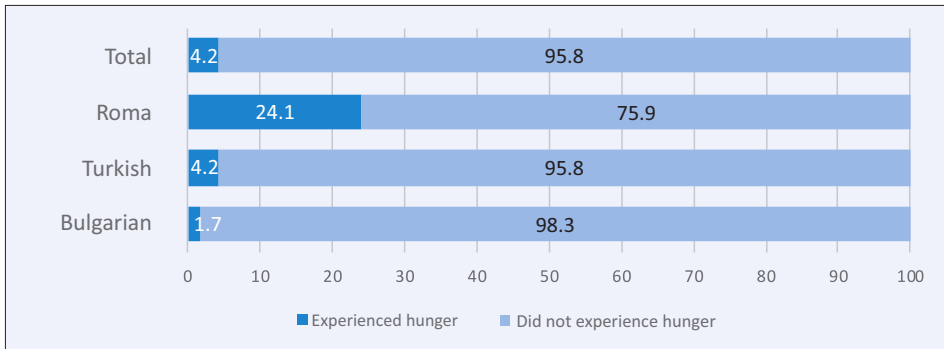
Severe material deprivation

One of the most commonly used indicators for measuring and monitoring poverty in the EU is 'severe material deprivation'. This indicator is not included in the questionnaire used in this project, but the BNSI collects the data for this indicator through its EU-SILC surveys. 19.4 % of the Bulgarian population lived in severe material deprivation in 2020, compared with the EU-27 average of 5.5 %.[52] The share among Bulgaria's Roma was 62 % (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Share of people living in households with severe material deprivation (cannot afford four out of nine selected items: food, inviting friends, etc.), by self-declared ethnicity, in 2019 and 2020 (%)
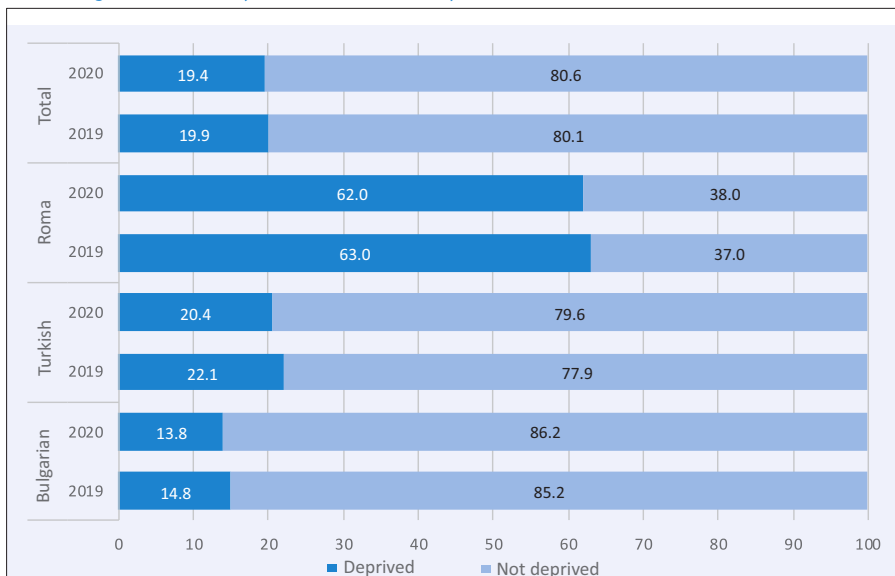
Child poverty

Roma children are at the highest risk of poverty in relation to children from the other major ethnic groups in the country: 77.2 % of Roma children are at risk of poverty, compared with 30 % of ethnic Turkish children and 13.3 % of ethnic Bulgarian children (Figure 14). Child poverty hinders the development of children's abilities and skills, reduces aspirations, increases the risk of early school leaving, leads to vulnerability in the labour market and results in low incomes when they are adults. Evaluations of the implementation of the 2020 national development programme of Bulgaria and the National Strategy for Roma Integration 2020 show that Bulgaria is failing to meet the challenges of reducing child poverty, especially among Roma.[53]

Figure 14: Children aged < 18 years who are at risk of poverty (below 60 % of median equivalised income after social transfers), by self-declared ethnicity, in 2020 (%)
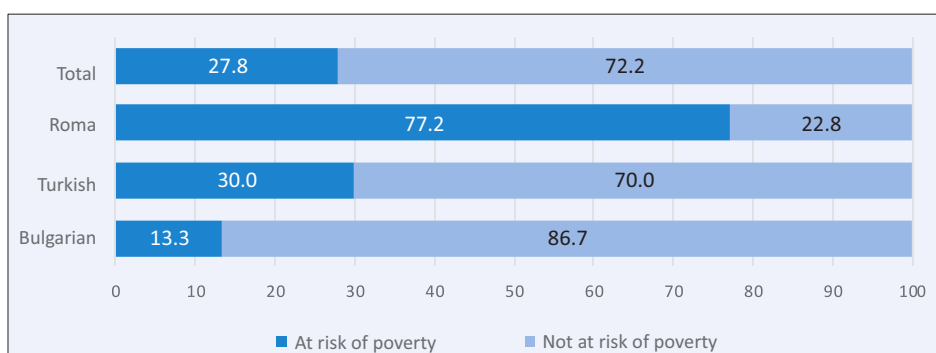
Notes: a Out of all household members aged under 18 in the surveyed household (n = 4,491); weighted results.
           b At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1–0.5–0.3).
           c Results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
           b Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?" and the list of household members

Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

BNSI data on the share of children living in material deprivation support these conclusions. 77.8 % of Roma children lived in material deprivation (lacking one or more of 13 items) in 2020, compared with 45.6 % of ethnic Turkish children and 29.0 % of ethnic Bulgarian children (Figure 15), according to EU-SILC data.

Figure 15: Children aged < 18 years living in material deprivation, by self-declared ethnicity, in 2019 and 2020 (%)
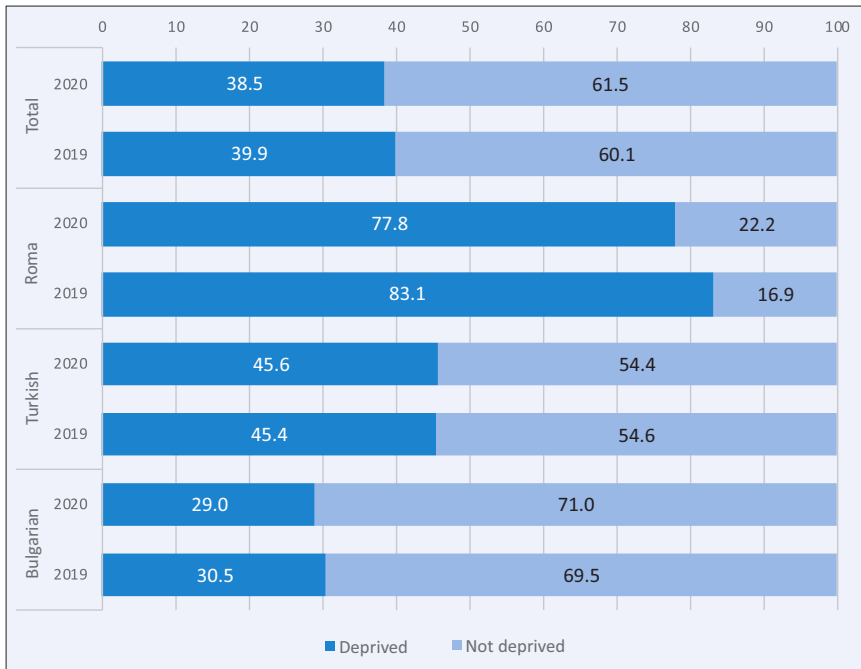
Notes: 　　 *a Children with material deprivation (lacking 1 or more from 13 items)*
Source: 　　 *BNSI (2021), Poverty and social inclusion indicators in 2020, pp. 14–15*

29.9 % of Roma children aged 0–17 years live in households in which at least one person in the household has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food. Growing up in such conditions considerably reduces the chances of children receiving a decent education and qualifications and developing the skills and abilities to be competitive in the labour market[54] and to protect them from (excessive forms of) exploitation and violence. This applies to almost four fifths of Roma children. One of the worst consequences for children growing up in poverty is the early formation of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, which shatters their aspirations, limits their ability to cope with difficult life situations and often leads to early school leaving.

44 BNSI and FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Summary of main results.

45 Eurostat (2022), 'Severe material deprivation rate by age and sex'.

46 Eurostat (2022), 'At-risk-of-poverty rate by poverty threshold, age and sex – EU-SILC and ECHP surveys'.

47 Council of Ministers (2019), Decree No. 275 of 1 November 2019 for determining the poverty line for the country in 2020 (Postanovlenie № 275 ot 1 noemvri 2019 g. za opredelyane na razmera na liniyata na bednost za stranata za 2020 g.), 5 November 2020.

48 See BNSI EU-SILC 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

49 BNSI EU-SILC 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021; data from the three most recent censuses (1992, 2001, 2011).

50 Bulgaria, Council of Ministers (2020), National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030.

51 BNSI EU-SILC (2021), pp. 5–6.

52 Eurostat (2022), 'Severe material deprivation rate by age and sex'.

53 National development programme 'Bulgaria 2030'; National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020. See also Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2020), Evaluation of the Roma integration policies in Bulgaria, 2012–2019 (Otsenka na integratsionnite politiki kam romite v Balgariya v perioda 2012–2019 g.).

54 Gortazar, L., Herrera-Sosa, K., Kutner, D., Moreno, M. and Gautam, A. (2014), How can Bulgaria improve its educational system? An analysis of PISA 2012 and past results, working paper 91321, Washington, D.C., World Bank Group; Jensen E. (2020), Teaching With Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It (Да преподаваме с мисъл за бедността: Влиянието на бедността върху детския мозък и как може училището да помогне). София: Тръст за социална алтернатива.

4. Health

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Highlights

- On average, the share of Roma aged 16 years and older who reported long-standing limitations in usual activities due to health problems is the lowest of the three largest ethnic groups in Bulgaria. This is surprising because Roma have a high premature mortality rate. One important explanation for this apparent paradox is demographic structure. Roma simply have shorter lives and therefore there is a smaller share of Roma in upper age groups (those who generally have more reasons to complain of limitations in usual activities due to health problems).
- Roma children face considerably higher health risks than their ethnic Bulgarian and ethnic Turkish peers. The share of Roma parents assessing their children's health as 'very good' or 'good' is lower than the share among ethnic Bulgarian and ethnic Turkish parents. This is due to both poor living conditions and lower vaccination rates. 8.5 % of Roma children are unvaccinated, compared with 2.3 % of all Bulgarian children of the same age.
- Health insurance is a major precondition for access to healthcare. On average, 62.2 % of Roma have health insurance. However, only 39.3 % of those aged 18–65 years (roughly the group of those for whom the state does not cover insurance) have health insurance. These shares are, respectively, 90.1 % and 84.5 % for ethnic Bulgarians and 78.2 % and 67.4 % for ethnic Turks. Informal employment is a major factor behind the considerable differences between the ethnic groups in this age range.
- Roma seek specialised medical or surgical specialist advice (that general practitioners (GPs) cannot provide) much less frequently than members of other ethnic groups. Only 13.6 % of Roma used this type of service in the year before they were interviewed (27.6 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 23.2 % of ethnic Turks did so).
- Prejudice and discrimination augment all these structural barriers to health services. 10.6 % of Roma reported that they felt discriminated against when accessing health services, which is about six times the percentage that those who self-identify as ethnic Bulgarians reported (1.8 %).

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4.1. Background

Life expectancy remains the lowest in the EU (2017 EU average: 80.9 years), despite increasing in recent years (reaching 74.64 years in 2020[55]). Bulgaria has the fourth lowest total healthcare system expenditure in the EU, lower than the average EU expenditure of 9.8 % of gross domestic product, even though it doubled between 2005 and 2018 and reached € 1,311 per capita or 8.1 % of gross domestic product in 2018, according to the 2019 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on the state of health in Bulgaria. Out-of-pocket payments for medical care in 2017 were the highest in the EU: on average, 46.6 % of the medical expenses per person are out of pocket, compared with the EU average of 15.8 % in 2017). These expenses are mostly co-payments on pharmaceuticals and outpatient care costs.[56]

High out-of-pocket payments and a lack of health insurance for a significant proportion of the population are the major barriers to access to healthcare because non-insured people have to pay for all basic medical help they receive.[57] Roma are especially vulnerable because they are over-represented in both groups most affected by this: those without health insurance and those at higher risk of poverty.[*]

4.2. Results

Self-assessment of health status

The questionnaire provided three indicators that reveal the respondents' overall self-assessment of their own health and that of their children, as well as their self-assessment of whether they were limited in performing their daily activities because of health reasons. On average, for all people aged 15 years and older, the share of those reporting no limitations at all is highest among Roma (Table 4). This appears to be a paradox for an ethnic group with a high premature mortality rate[**] and in which poverty and social exclusion are common (as shown in Chapter 3). However, the picture is different when data are disaggregated by age. There are more people who report limitations in usual activities because of health problems in groups with a relatively higher share of the adult population. This is the case for ethnic Bulgarians, but not for Roma.

Table 4: Share of people aged 15 years and over with self-reported long-standing limitations in usual activities because of health problems, by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Severely limited	Limited but not severely	Not limited at all
Ethnic Bulgarian, n = 21.844	3.5	11.2	85.3
Ethnic Turkish, n = 2.051	4.7	10.8	84.5
Roma, n = 1.987	2.4	8.5	89.1
Total	3.6	10.9	85.5

Notes: a Out of all respondents aged 15 years and over (n = 26,249); weighted results.
              b Based on question "In the past 6 or more months, have you been limited in performing normal activities due to a health problem?"
              c 131 INRs out of 26,380 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

Table 5 shows differences according to age between the ethnic groups in terms of those reporting long-standing limitations in usual activities because of health problems. The share of those reporting that they are 'limited but not severely' is highest among Roma aged 55 years and older (16.6 %). The relatively low share of those reporting that they are 'severely limited' may be because, according to 2011 census data, only 7.1 % of Roma live beyond the age of 60 years (compared with 18.7 % of ethnic Turks and 28.7 % of ethnic Bulgarians). Roma experience a spike in premature mortality in the 40- to 49-year-old age group, which is particularly visible among men.
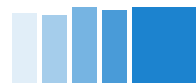
Table 5: Share of people with self-reported long-standing limitations in usual activities due to health problems, by ethnicity and age (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Severely limited		Limited but not severely		Not limited at all	
	16–30 years	55 years and older	16–30 years	55 years and older	16–30 years	55 years and older
Ethnic Bulgarian, n = 13.913	3.2	5.9	(1.4)	22.1	95.4	72.0
Ethnic Turkish, n = 1.264	Not published	8.5	Not published	23.9	96.0	67.6
Roma, n = 1.137	Not published	5.9	Not published	26.5	97.9	67.5
Total	**2.9**	**6.2**	**(1.3)**	**22.4**	**95.9**	**71.4**

Notes: *a Out of all respondents aged 15 years and over (n = 26,249); weighted results. For age group 16–30, n = 4 025; for age group 55 and older, n = 12 515.*
b Based on question "In the past 6 or more months, have you been limited in performing normal activities due to a health problem?"
c131 INRs out of 26,380 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
d Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets). Results based on fewer than 20 unweighted observations in a group total are not published.

Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

The results are similar for self-assessed health. In total, the share of Roma assessing their health as 'very good' or 'good' is the highest of the three ethnic groups. But the opposite is true for the age group 40 years and older (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Share of people assessing their health in general as 'very good' or 'good', by self-declared ethnicity and age (%)
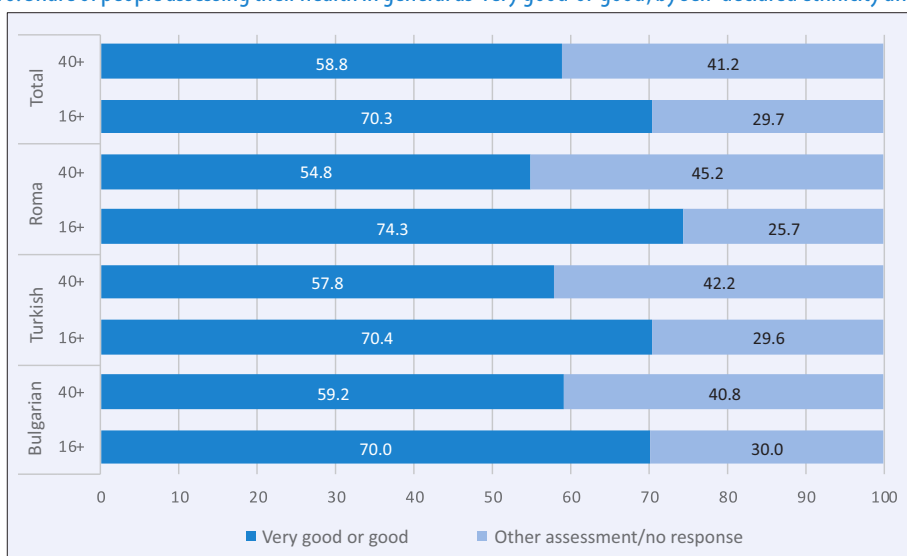
Notes: *a Out of all respondents aged 16 years and over (n =26,380) and 40 years and over (n =19,248); weighted results.*
b question: "How do you generally assess your health?"
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

The differences between the three groups can be partially explained by the relativity of perception. People tend to compare their health status with that of other people from their community (and not outsiders). When many of their peers die prematurely or experience severe health conditions, the respondents feel relatively healthy. Superstitions also influence the answers in many cases: many Roma believe that diseases should not be mentioned so that they do not happen. Poor health culture and insufficient information is another explanation. Roma visit medical specialists, who can diagnose a chronic disease and explain the risks associated with it, less frequently than other groups (as shown in detail in Section 0).

However, differences in the demographic structures of the three groups is particularly worrying given the implications of poor health for children. The share of Roma parents assessing their children's health as 'very good' or 'good' is lower than the share among ethnic Bulgarian and ethnic Turkish parents by 3 and 2.4 percentage points, respectively (Table 6). Section 0 provides more details.

Table 6: Children's health (5- to 14-year-olds), by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	'Very good' or 'good'	Other assessment/no response or missing data
Ethnic Bulgarian, n = 1,884	98.9	1.1
Ethnic Turkish, n = 197	98.3	(1.7)
Roma, n = 521	95.9	4.1
Total for children aged 5–14 years	98.3	1.7

Notes: a Out of all respondents aged 5–14 (n =2,654); weighted results.
            b Based on question "How would you describe (child's name)'s health in general? Please, answer for the health in general, by excluding any temporary health problems, such as a viral infection at the time of the interview."
            c Data set variable name: "ind_38".
            d Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

Health insurance and registration with GPs

Access to basic medical services in Bulgaria depends on three major conditions. Two of them are stipulated by the Health Insurance Act: the person should have regularly paid their health insurance contributions on time and should have permanent access to a GP.[58] The third condition is related to the financial situation of the person and their household because the costs of many medicines and a considerable number of medical services are paid by the patients regardless of their health insurance status.[59] Effective access to healthcare requires all three conditions to be met, which is often not the case for a large portion of Bulgarian Roma.

The BNSI received individual-level data on respondents' health insurance status from the National Revenue Agency and on GP registration status from the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) for the purpose of the analysis presented in this section. The health insurance of a considerable proportion of the Bulgarian population (children aged 0–17 years

and the majority of retired people) is covered by the state budget. This is why the analysis below is based on two distributions: one for all members of the surveyed households and one for people aged 18–65 years. The two cut-off points for the second distribution are the approximate age of moving from education to employment (18 years) and the approximate age of retirement (65 years).

The share of people aged 18–65 years with health insurance is lower than that for the entire population for all of the large ethnic groups, but this difference is greatest among Roma, as shown in Figure 17. Just 39.3 % of Roma aged 18–65 years have health insurance, significantly below the 62.2 % share for the entire Roma population. This is because health insurance of working age people is highly dependent on their employment status and formality of employment. A person working outside the legitimate labour market misses out on health insurance, in addition to job security and pension contributions. This is widely the case among Roma. 47.2 % of Roma aged 16 years and older were in paid work, compared with 65.1 % of ethnic Turks and 80.2 % of ethnic Bulgarians, data visualised in Figure 7 above show.

The expectation that working household members will regularly pay the monthly health insurance contributions for the unemployed members appears not always true for people in families at risk of poverty and for those living in severe material deprivation, as 71.1 % and 63 % of Roma are, respectively (data from the present report; see Chapter 3).

Figure 17: Share of people aged 16 years and older and 18–65 years with health insurance coverage, by self-declared ethnicity and age (%)
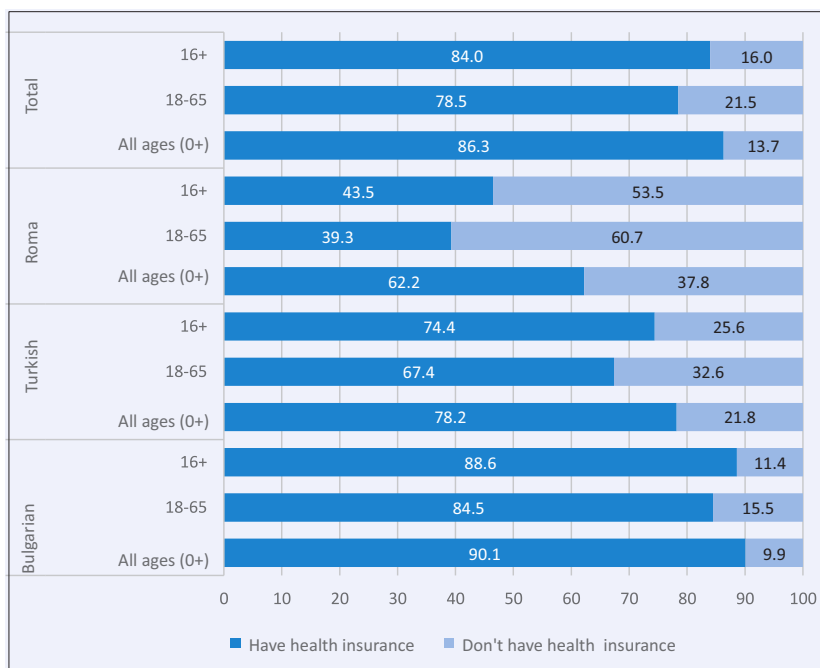
Notes: a Out of all respondents 16 years and over (n = 25,278), aged 18–65 (n = 17,466) and all ages 0 years and over (n = 28,879); weighted results.
b 1,102 out of 26,380 observations for respondents 16 years and over, 874 out of 18,340 observations

for respondents 18 – 65 and 1,424 out of 30,303 observations for respondents of all ages (0 years and over) not matched/no data in the administrative source National Revenue Agency (NRA) results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey and National Revenue Agency data combined*

Changes to Bulgarian legislation introduced with the intention of increasing the share of people with health insurance sometimes have the opposite effect.[*] For instance, the NHIF paid doctors for all medical services they provided, regardless of the health insurance status of the patients, from 1998 (when obligatory health insurance launched) until 2005. People could restore their health insurance status by retrospectively paying three minimum monthly health insurance contributions during that period. Fewer that one fifth of Roma did not have health insurance during that time. Restoration of health insurance rights has become increasingly expensive and the share of uninsured people has increased since 2005. Table 7 summarises the changes since 1998.

Table 7: Barriers to re-entry: restoration of health insurance rights over the years

Period	Number of minimum monthly health insurance contributions necessary for restoration of health insurance rights	Share of Roma without health insurance and year of survey
1998 - 2005	3	18 % (2004a)
2005 - 2007	6	No data available for this period
2007 - 2010	12	26 % (2009b)
2010 - 2015	36	52 % (2011c)
2015 onwards	60	60.7 % (2020d)

Notes: *a FACT Marketing, 2004. Share of Roma of working age*
     b FSG, 2009. Share of uninsured Roma in detached Roma neighbourhoods
     c UNDP/the World Bank/EC, 2011. Share of Roma at risk of marginalisation
     d BNSI/FRA 2020 survey. Share of Roma aged 18–65

The BNSI received individual-level administrative data from the NHIF on each respondent's GP registration status for the respondents sampled in the survey conducted for this project. The analysis below is based on two distributions, as for health insurance: all members of the household (aged 16 years and older) and the group aged 18–65 years. One in 10 Roma of all ages in Bulgaria are not registered with a GP; the share of those not registered in the age group of 18–65 years is 3.56 percentage points higher according to the data (Figure 18).

The high share of Roma registered with a GP apparently contradicts the low share of Roma with health insurance. This is because only people with health insurance have the right to choose and register with a GP and to receive the package of medical services provided by GPs without paying out of pocket. However, the reality is more nuanced. The NHIF has not paid any money to doctors who examine or treat patients without health insurance since 2005. As a result, some doctors refuse to accept such patients for examination, despite having them on their patient lists.

However, many physicians in rural and small towns continue to provide health services

to uninsured people; they are driven entirely by goodwill and empathy. Doctors in remote localities with high shares of Roma in their populations serve roughly one third of their patients free of charge, according to data from qualitative studies that the Institute for Population and Human Studies and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences conducted between 2008 and 2018. Local bonds and solidarity are reduced in cities with large Roma neighbourhoods/slums; therefore, empathy is weaker and access to GPs is more challenging.[60]

Figure 18: Share of people who are registered with a GP, by self-declared ethnicity and age (%)

		Registered with a GP	Not registered with a GP
Total	16+	95	5
	18-65	95.3	4.7
	All ages (0+)	95.4	4.6
Roma	16+	87.2	12.8
	18-65	86.4	13.6
	All ages (0+)	90	10
Turkish	16+	93.5	6.5
	18-65	93.7	6.3
	All ages (0+)	94.1	5.9
Bulgarian	16+	96	4
	18-65	96.6	3.4
	All ages (0+)	96.3	3.7
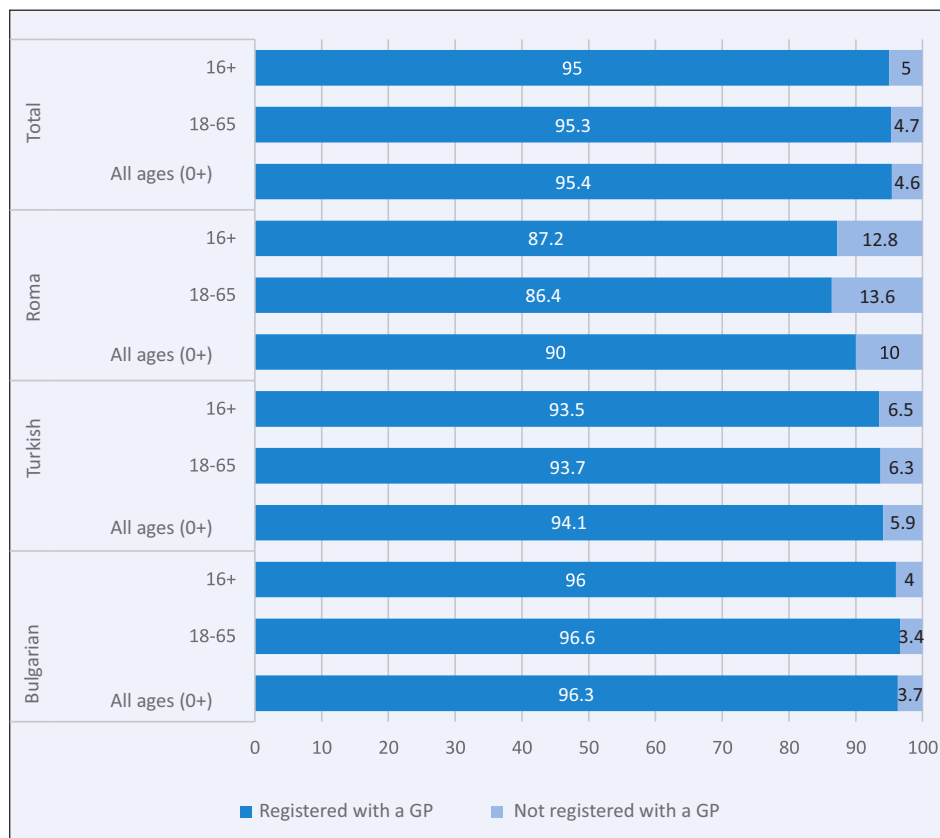
Notes: a Out of all respondents 16 years and over (n = 25,348), 18–65 (n = 17,500) and all ages 0 years and over (n = 28,965); weighted results.
b 1,032 out of 26,380 observations 16 years and over, 840 out of 18,340 and 1,338 out of 30,303 observations for respondents of all ages (0 years and over)not matched or no data in the administrative source (National Health Insurance Fund – NHIF); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and NHIF data combined

Usage of health services

How do the lack of health insurance, the (fragmented) GP coverage of Roma and the high cost of medical services and medicines affect access to healthcare? 62.8 % of ethnic Bulgarians, 57.0 % of ethnic Turks and 41.0 % of Roma visited their GP, and 27.6 %, 23.2 % and 13.6 %, respectively, visited a medical or surgical specialist during the 12 months before their survey interview, Figure 19 shows.

Roma seek specialised medical advice (that GPs cannot provide) much less frequently than members of the other ethnic groups. Only about 14 % of Roma used this type of service in the year before they were interviewed. These consultations/visits are paid in full by those without health insurance and by those who are insured but do not have a referral from their GP. About one third of Roma (30.7 %) have never visited a medical specialist or surgeon, compared with 13.5 % of the whole population.

Figure 19: Time elapsed since last visit to a GP or a medical or surgical specialist of people aged 15 years and older, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
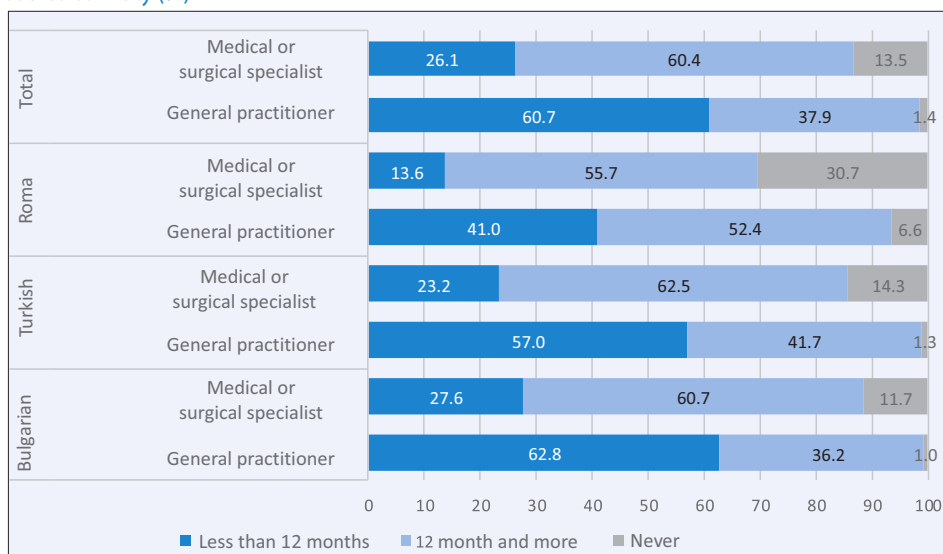
Notes: a Out of all respondents visiting GP (n =26,312) and visiting a medical or surgical specialist (n =25,805); weighted results.
            b Based on questions: "When was the last time you consulted your GP about yourself?" and "When was the last time you consulted a specialist or dentist – surgeon for yourself?"
            c 3,991 INRs on the question about visiting GP and 4,498 INRs on the question about visiting a medical or surgical specialist out of 30,303 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

Data on access to and use of dental services are presented in Figure 20. Dental care is expensive, and the NHIF covers the cost of only a small proportion of dental services. This is why not receiving dental services is often used as a proxy indicator for extreme poverty. The

data show that 5.8 % of all Bulgarians have never used such services, compared with 23.1 % of Roma, while 6 out of 10 Roma last visited a dentist more than a year ago.

Figure 20: Time elapsed since last visit to a dentist or orthodontist among people aged 15 years and older, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
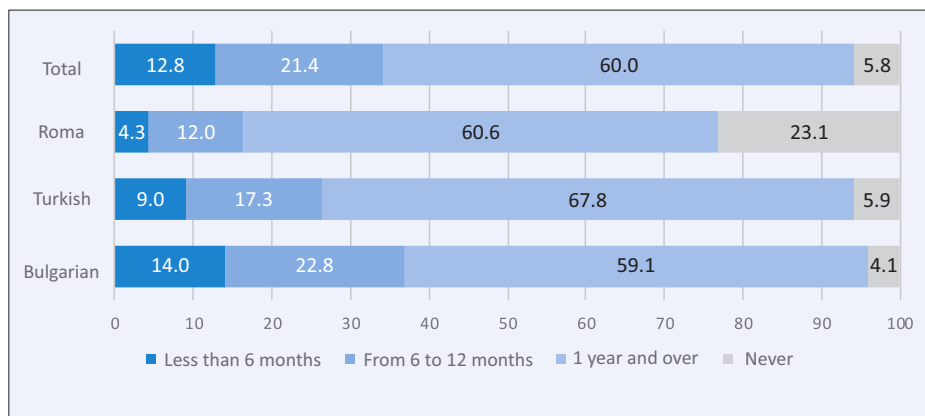
Notes: *a Out of all respondents (n =25,920); weighted results.*
             b Based on question "When was the last time you visited a dentist or orthodontist (specialist in orthopaedic dentistry) for yourself?"
             c 4,383 INRs out of 30,303 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

Unmet medical needs

Roma reported that they were unable to receive the medical care they needed because of 'Financial reasons', 'Waiting list' or 'Too far to travel' (the three categories are combined) more often than the majority population (Table 8).

Table 8: Population aged 16 years and over reporting unmet needs for medical care because of 'Financial reasons', 'Waiting list' or 'Too far to travel' (the three categories are combined), by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Medical needs met	Unmet medical need
Ethnic Bulgarian, n = 21,924	97.4	2.6
Ethnic Turkish, n = 2,072	96.3	3.7
Roma, n = 1,997	92.4	7.6
Total	96.9	3.1

Notes: *a Out of all respondents aged 16 or older (n = 26,380); weighted results.*
             b Based on question "Was there any time during the past 12 months when you needed a medical examination or treatment but did not have one?"; if yes: "What was the main reason for not consulting a doctor? – Could not afford to/too expensive/not covered by health insurance OR Waiting list/did not have the referral letter OR Too far to travel/no means of transportation"
             c Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

Discrimination in access to health services

2.4 % of participants responded that they felt discriminated against when they sought medical help in the 12 months before the interview, according to the survey conducted for this project. Roma more often reported that they experienced discrimination than the other surveyed ethnic groups: 1 in 10 (10.6 %) reported that they felt discriminated against, which is about six times the percentage of those who identified as ethnic Bulgarians (1.8 %). In addition, 7.6 % of Roma reported that they were unable to receive the medical care they needed because of 'Financial reasons', 'Waiting list' or 'Too far to travel' (the three categories are combined).

Children's health

Children in Bulgaria are subject to special protection in law.[61] The provisions of the Child Protection Act[62] frame the child-directed policy, which was applied in accordance with the National Child Strategy 2008–2018 until its end,[63] the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030,[64] the NHIF programme on child healthcare[65] and the Health Insurance Act,[66] among others. Still, a number of barriers continue to prevent children from socially vulnerable or marginalised households (among which Roma are over-represented) enjoying health services they are entitled to (Box 3).

Box 3: Poverty-related barriers to enjoyment of health rights

The state budget covers the health insurance of children (aged 0–18 years) in Bulgaria.* Parents do not pay a user fee for GP/paediatrician or (dental) specialist examinations or for hospital treatment if they have a GP referral. All prophylactic examinations, prophylactic laboratory tests and compulsory immunisations for children aged 18 years or under approved by law and listed in the NHIF programme on child healthcare are free of charge.

However, parents/guardians have to pay a user fee and the full costs of medical examinations/ health services to the specialist/dental specialist if the parents/guardians have not chosen a GP/ paediatrician for the child or if there is no GP/paediatrician in the child's area of residence and the child is not registered with a GP/paediatrician in another area. The same applies if the child does not have a referral from the GP.

Roma children are more likely than the majority population to live in households in which adults do not have valid health insurance or are not registered with a GP. Therefore, they are more likely to be exposed to this risk than the majority of children in the population. Parents' low awareness of their children's rights or of the conditions for exercising these rights also increases the health risks faced by Roma children.

*Health Insurance Act, Article 40 (3).

Mandatory vaccinations are free of charge for children. However, 8.5 % of Roma children aged 0–2 years seem to be unvaccinated, and the parents/guardians of another 8.4 % responded 'Don't know,' the total of which is more than double that of the overall population (2.3 % and 4.8 %, respectively) (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Proportion of immunised children aged 0−2 years, by self-declared ethnicity (%)

	Vaccinated	Not immunised/vaccinated	Don't know
All children aged 0-2	92.9	2.3	4.8
Roma	83.1	(8.5)	(8.4)
Turkish	95.1		(4.9)
Bulgarian	95.9	0.5	(3.6)
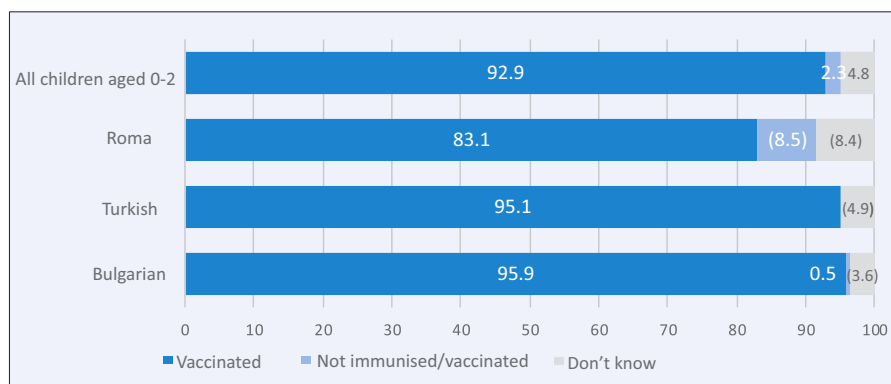
Notes: *a Out of all respondents aged 0–2 (n =563); weighted results.*
b Based on question "Does (child's name) get all required immunisations for his/her age?"
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

Previous research has shown that Roma's mistrust of institutions and fear of vaccines are among the main explanations for the persistent lower vaccination coverage of children in this ethnic group. However, there are other factors in addition to mistrust and attitudes towards vaccination. Roma live in overcrowded neighbourhoods and homes, where the risk of contracting a contagious disease is high. Roma children aged 0–2 years get sick more often than their non-Roma counterparts, which often leads to delayed (or missed) vaccination. At the time when the survey was conducted, child counselling and vaccinations were on hold because of measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Vaccinations are related to infant mortality, the rate of which decreased from 14.6 ‰ in 1999 to 5.1 ‰ in 2020.[67] Bulgaria achieved its lowest ever infant mortality rate in the past few years, although considerable differences between urban and rural populations, between regions and between the large ethnic groups remain.

The 2001 census data are the only source of comparable data on infant mortality disaggregated by ethnicity. The infant mortality rate of 25 ‰ among Roma children is similar to the rate in the poorest African countries (Table 9).

Table 9: Infant and total mortality in Bulgaria, by ethnicity, in 2003 (‰)

	Total	Ethnic Bulgarians	Ethnic Turks	Roma
Infant mortality rate (number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children aged 0–1 years)	13.4	9.9	17.8	25.0
Mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 individuals per year)	14.2	15.0	10.3	7.3

Source: BNSI (see Tomova, 2005[68])

Adolescent birth rate The Roma community has the earliest marriages/family cohabitations of the ethnic groups in Bulgaria. About 80 % of Roma start families before reaching the age of

majority according to a 1994 IMIR representative survey.[69] More recent sociological research reveals a trend of maintaining early marriages among particular Roma subgroups and especially among the poorest and least educated young people.[70] Roma remain the only ethnic group in Bulgaria in which family cohabitation usually begins in adolescence.* The early start of family life is generally a prerequisite for higher adolescent birth rates and for a larger number of children.

It is very difficult to obtain data disaggregated by ethnicity on all basic demographic indicators in Bulgaria. The only available data are discussed here, even though they are from 2003 (Table 10).

Table 10: Birth and fertility rates, by ethnicity, in 2003 (‰)

Rate	Total	Ethnic Bulgarians	Ethnic Turks	Roma
Crude birth rate by ethnicity of the mother (number of live births per 1,000 individuals)	8.5	6.9	13.0	26.7
Total fertility rate	1.22	1.03	1.62	2.81
Adolescent birth rate (annual number of births to women aged 15–19 years per 1,000 women in that age group)	No data available	41.3	179.6	508.8
Under 15 birth rate (births per 1,000 females under 15 years old)	No data available	2.4	21.5	35.6

Source: BNSI (see Tomova, 2009[71])

Bulgaria is among the European countries with the highest rates of births among adolescents.[72] Data show that this is not only a 'Roma community problem' in Bulgaria (Table 11). However, Roma women and girls are much more likely than non-Roma women and girls to become mothers during adolescence. Worldwide, the adolescent birth rate is typical of women among all ethnic groups facing poverty and social exclusion.[73] The problem is that the share of adolescent births in Bulgaria remains relatively constant.

Table 11: Early and extremely early fertility rates (2012–2018)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Overall early/adolescent fertility and extremely early/adolescent fertility (%)	10.7	10.5	9.8	9.5	9.3	9.4	9.95	10.1	10.1
Extremely early/adolescent fertility (girls under 15 years old)*	246 (0.4 %)	298 (0.4 %)	324 (0.5 %)	294 (0.4 %)	259 (0.4%)	269 (0.4%)	252 (0.4%)	253 (0.4%)	215 (0.4%)
Early/adolescent fertility (girls and women aged 15–19 years)	7.158 (10.3 %)	6,670 (10.1 %)	6,331 (9.3 %)	5,980 (9.1 %)	5772 (8.9%)	5769 (9.0%)	5939 (9.5%)	5992 (9.7%)	5755 (9.7%)
* Number of cases and share out of the total for the respective age group									

Own calculations based on BNSI data for 2017- 2021. The indicators for early and extremely early fertility are calculated as a share of livebirths in the respective age group out of all livebirths.

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* The term 'adolescence' is used here conditionally. There is a very rapid transition from childhood (which is often neither carefree nor particularly joyful) to adult life among the very poor Roma subgroups, with early involvement of boys in family support activities and girls starting their own families at a young age. Adolescence appeared as a specific stage in the personal development of a relatively large part of the population only in the 19th century in industrialised countries, in connection with the need for a longer period of education and preparation for skilled activities. It was not typically referred to in relation to the poor rural population and a large part of the working class until recently. This important stage in personal development is still very short or missing in groups that are victims of long-term social exclusion.

Adolescent births are a risk factor for maternal and child health, for increasing poverty among women and children and for passing poverty on to future generations. Numerous studies show that children of mothers below the age of majority are at higher risk of being born prematurely and/or underweight, not surviving their first year because of poor health, being more likely to drop out of school, committing crimes in childhood or adolescence and becoming parents themselves at an early age.[74]

[55] BNSI (2020), Population and demographic processes 2020, p. 36.

[56] OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (2019), 'Bulgaria: Country health profile 2019', State of health in the EU, Paris, OECD Publishing/Brussels, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

[57] Bulgaria, Health Insurance Act, Article 52 (2).

[58] Bulgaria, Health Insurance Act, Article 35 (1) (2). "Any person covered by compulsory health insurance shall be entitled to choose a physician from a primary medical care institution that has concluded a contract with the NHIF." A GP not only provides basic medical services to insured patients, but also issues referrals for consultation and treatment by medical professionals, for assessment of overall health status and working capacity (including employment of people with serious health conditions), as well as for hospitalisation for serious illness, when comprehensive tests are needed for an accurate diagnosis, or when women give birth. GPs provide the necessary information to patients about their health, consult them on treatment and necessary changes in diet and overall lifestyle. GPs provide basic medical care for newborns and children recorded in their patient lists, all mandatory vaccinations of newborns and children, and mandatory and many of the voluntary vaccinations for adult patients. Those registered in a GP's patient list remain patients even if they have failed to pay the due health insurance contributions for three months. However, the NHIF stops paying the doctor for medical services provided to uninsured patients.

[59] OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (2021), 'Bulgaria: Country health profile 2021', State of health in the EU, Paris, OECD Publishing/Brussels, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

[60] Tomova, I., L. Stoytchev, M. Ivanov, 2020. Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities between the Large Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria (Мерки за преодоляване на демографската криза в Република България). Sofia: Prof. Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

[61] See BNSI and FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Thematic report on children.

[62] Bulgaria, Child Protection Act, 13 June 2000, Article 2.

[63] National Child Strategy 2008–2018. For more details, see BNSI and FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Thematic report on children.

[64] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030.

[65] NHIF programme on child healthcare.

[66] Bulgaria, Health Insurance Act, Article 1.

[67] BNSI and National Center for Public Health and Analysis (НСИ и НЦОЗА) (2021), Public Health 2020 (Здравеопазване 2020).

[68] Tomova, I. (Томова, И.) (2005), 'Demographic processes in the large ethnic communities in Bulgaria' ('Демографски процеси в големите етноконфесионални общности в България') in: Demographic development of the Republic of Bulgaria, Sofia, NCCEDI to the Council of Ministers, BAS, NSI and UN Population Fund.

[69] Tomova I. (1995), The Gypsies in the transition period, Sofia, IMIR.

[70] Pamporov, A. (2006), Roma everyday life (Romskoto vsekidnevie v Bulgaria), Sofia, IMIR; Max Planck Institute, Gender and generation study 2007 and 2009; The World Bank (2012 and 2014), Gender dimensions of Roma inclusion.

[71] Tomova, I. (2009), 'Analysis of the situation in Bulgaria' in: Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Health and the Roma community, analysis of the situation in Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Madrid, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, pp. 97–108.

[72] BNSI (2021), Population and demographic processes in 2020 (Naselenie i demografski protsesi prez 2020 godina); BNSI (2012), Census of population and housing in 2011, Vol. 1 (Population), book 8 (Birth rate); Moraliyska-Nikolova, S. (2021), Delayed births in Bulgaria – Nature, consequences, prospects (Otlozhenite razhdaniya v Balgariya – sashtnost, posleditsi, perspektivi), doctoral dissertation, Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; Yankova, M. (2016), Social norms in Roma communities that hinder girls' access to education and especially to secondary education (Sotsialni normi v romskite obshtnosti, koito vazprepyatstvat dostapa na momichetata do obrazovanie i osobeno do sredno obrazovanie), Sofia, United Nations Children's Fund.

[73] Marmot, M. (2015), The health gap: The challenge of an unequal world, London, Bloomsbury; Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009), The spirit level: Why greater equality makes societies stronger, London, Penguin Books.

[74] Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009), The spirit level: Why greater equality makes societies stronger, London, Penguin Books.

5. Housing

Highlights

- 65.8 % of Roma live in housing deprivation (in accommodation that is too dark or has a leaking roof/damp walls or floors or no bath/shower or no indoor toilet). 11.7 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 29.6 % of ethnic Turks live in such conditions.
- 46.1 % of Roma live in households without tap water, a bath/shower or a toilet inside the dwelling. 3.7 % of ethnic Bulgarians and 12.5 % of ethnic Turks live in such conditions.
- 49 % of Roma list problems in their accommodation: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area, such as smoke, dust and unpleasant smells.
- The data capture the phenomenon of evictions: 2.7 % of Roma claimed that they were forced to leave their accommodation.
- The available – but inevitably fragmented – data on Roma neighbourhoods or areas with a high concentration of Roma suggest that at least 4.2 % of the Bulgarian population lives in such marginalised conditions, or 1.9 % of self-identified ethnic Bulgarians, 4.2 % of self-identified ethnic Turks and 23.5 % of self-identified Roma.
- 54.6 % of the people living in such neighbourhoods self-identified as Roma, 36.2 % as ethnic Bulgarians and 7.9 % as ethnic Turks, and 1.2 % did not answer or did not state their ethnicity.

5.1. Background

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) considers the **right to adequate housing** one of the main preconditions for a dignified life. According to Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union , the Union recognises and respects the right to social and housing assistance as a means of ensuring decent living conditions for people with insufficient financial resources.

Undeveloped or poorly maintained social infrastructure restricts access to good-quality early childhood education and care, good-quality education and training, diverse development of children's abilities and access to good-quality medical and social services, sports and cultural activities.[75] Spatial segregation intensifies the process of community closure and usually leads to difficulties in finding work for the residents of neighbourhoods affected by this, to rapid degradation of technical infrastructure and widespread and uncontrolled illegal construction, to pervasive and deepening poverty, and to difficulties in translating the wider society's values and norms.[76]

5.2. Results

7.4 % of Bulgaria's population reported that they felt discriminated against on some observed grounds (skin colour, ethnicity, religion, etc.) when they tried to have their housing needs met, the results of the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey show. 17.7 % of Roma reported that they felt discriminated against when looking for housing, compared with 10.8 % of those who self-identified as ethnic Turks and 6.5 % of those who self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians (see Table 12 in chapter 6). These figures appear understated considering that the survey sample was based on addresses and therefore did not include people living in informal housing without a registered address or homeless people.

It is necessary to pay special attention to the problems related to spatial segregation of Roma,
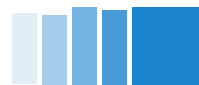
to access to housing for people with no registered address, and to forced evictions and demolition of (liveable) houses of Roma and residents of large urban slums when examining the existing preconditions to explain why Roma have justified reasons to feel discriminated against more often than the rest of Bulgaria's citizens.

Housing deprivation

The housing deprivation indicator estimates the share of people living in dwellings that are too dark (insufficient daylight coming through the windows) or have a leaking roof and/or damp walls or floors, or have no shower or bath, or have no indoor toilet.

Bulgaria's Roma are the only large ethnic group in the country in which the majority (two thirds) live in such housing deprivation (Figure 22). One tenth of those who self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians and 3 out of 10 Bulgarian Turks live in similar conditions. Living conditions such as damp walls have an impact on the health of the inhabitants and can cause higher morbidity and premature mortality.

Figure 22: Share of people living in housing deprivation (in a dwelling that is too dark or has a leaking roof/damp walls or floors or no bath/shower or no indoor toilet), by self-declared ethnicity (%)
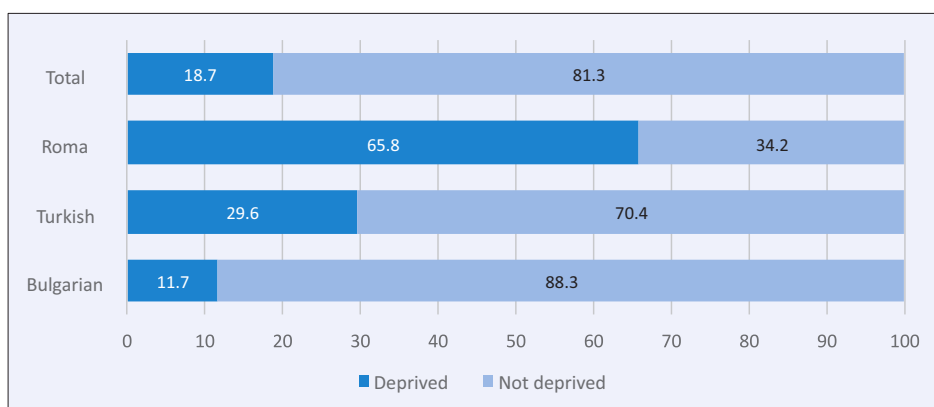
Notes: a Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
            b Based on questions: "Leaking roof or damp walls/floors/foundation or rot in window frames or floor (B18.1)?", "It is too dark (B18.3) (meaning there isn't enough daylight coming through the windows)?", "Absence of a shower/bathroom inside the dwelling (B10.2)?", "Absence of a (flushing) toilet inside the dwelling (B10.1)?"
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

The requirements for observance of very good personal hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic imposed the need for reliable data on the share of households that do not have the minimum conditions for maintaining such hygiene. The survey results shown in Figure 23 illustrate the challenges in this regard.

Figure 23: Share of people living in households with neither tap water, nor bath/shower nor toilet inside the dwelling by self-declared ethnicity (%)
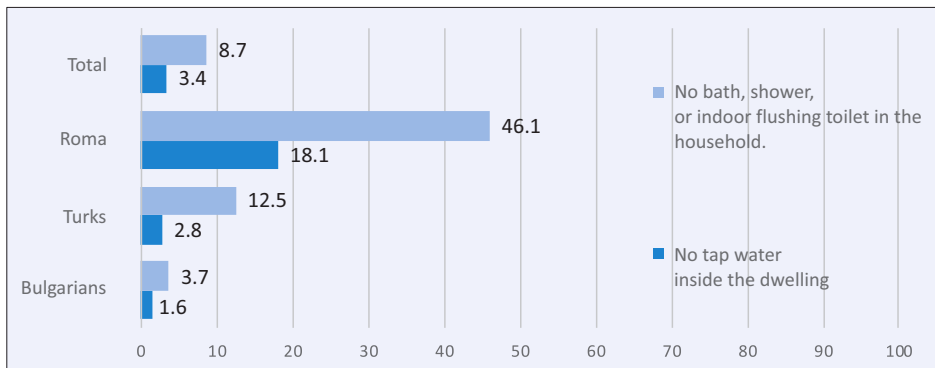
Almost one fifth of Roma do not have running water inside their homes. Nearly half of Roma do not have a bath/shower or indoor flushing toilet in their dwelling. In addition, it should be taken into account that the sample was based on addresses and therefore did not include people living in informal housing without a registered address or homeless people. This could mean that the situation of Roma is even worse than the survey results show.

Figure 24 provides information on the share of households living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundations, or rot in window frames or floors. One in four Roma households live in the conditions described, which pose a real threat to their health. 4.1 % of ethnic Turks and 2.1 % of ethnic Bulgarians also live in such conditions.

Figure 24: Share of people living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundations, or rot in window frames or floors, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
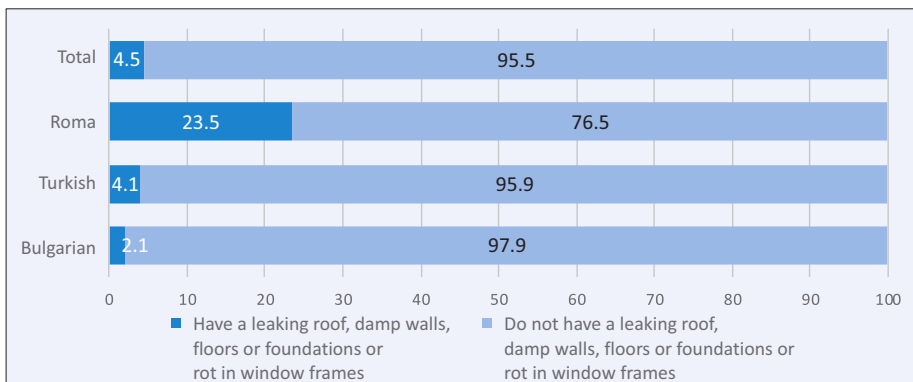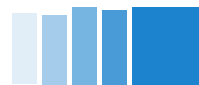
The survey results reveal other housing problems that are worth monitoring and improving. These are presented in Figure 25 . Half of Roma households and one in eight ethnic Bulgarian or ethnic Turkish households live in polluted areas. Living in polluted areas increases the risk of high morbidity, especially bronchitis, bronchial asthma and allergic conditions among children, and hypertension and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease among older people. These conditions among older people are risk factors for cardiovascular diseases and premature deaths.[77]

Figure 25: Share of people living in households with the listed problems in their accommodation (pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as smoke, dust and unpleasant smells), by self-declared ethnicity (%)
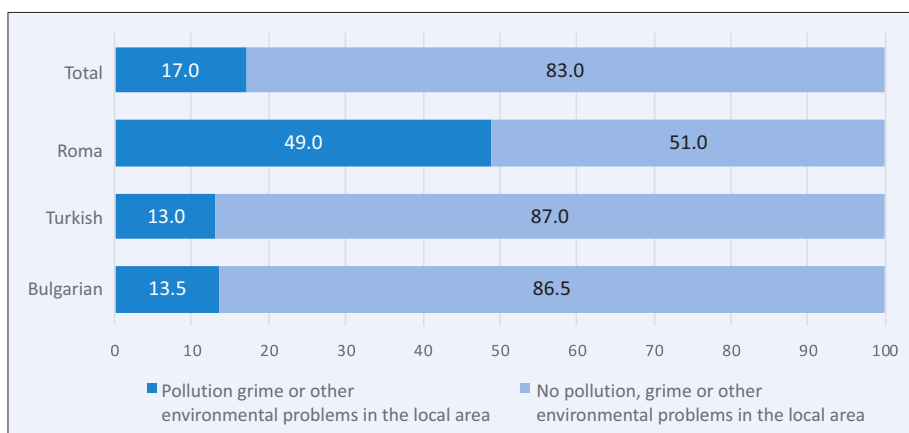
Overcrowding

Overcrowding is another dimension of housing deprivation. The average ratio of rooms to people in Bulgaria was 1:1 in cities, 1:3 in towns and suburbs, and 1:4 in rural areas in 2019, according to Eurostat. Bulgaria stands substantially below the EU-27 average in all three of these categories.[78]

Seven out of 10 Roma live in overcrowded housing, the results of the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey show. About one third of the homes of other Bulgarian citizens are overcrowded (Figure 26). Children in segregated neighbourhoods are particularly affected: the vast majority of them live in overcrowded conditions, with negative implications for their health and education opportunities. Addressing (even partially) the problem of room shortages and overcrowding among families with children from vulnerable groups would contribute to better educational outcomes.

Figure 26: Share of people living in households that do not have the minimum number of rooms according to the Eurostat definition of overcrowding, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
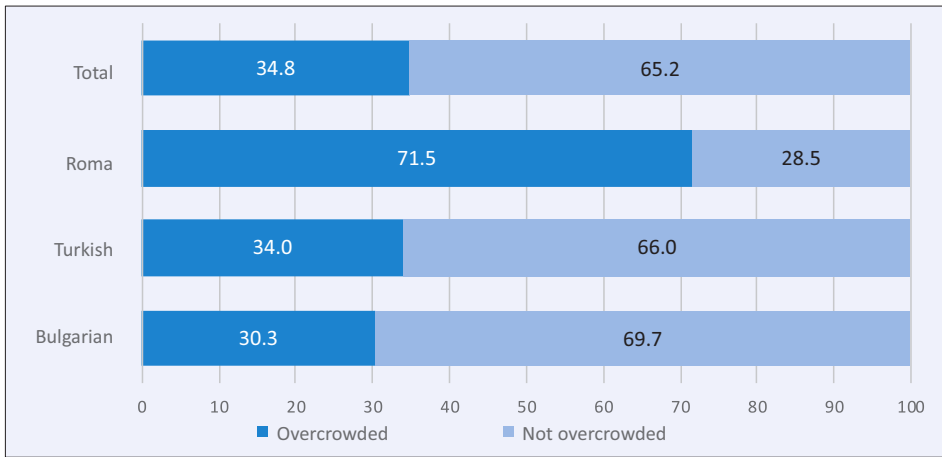
Notes: a Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
             b Based on questions "What is the number of rooms in the dwelling?" and "How many of them do you
             use in your daily life?"
Source: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey

Evictions

The 2020 BNSI/FRA survey asked respondents whether their household had been forced to leave their home during the past 5 years and, if so, why. The results of this question were intended to become the informational basis for the secondary indicator 'share of people living in a household that in the past 5 years has been forced to leave the accommodation'. A total of 180 respondents out of 30,303 answered that they had been forced to leave their home during the past 5 years, most often explaining that their tenancy agreement had expired or that they could not continue to rent for financial reasons. By ethnicity, 0.4 % of ethnic Bulgarians, 6 % of ethnic Turks and 2.7 % of Roma claimed that they were forced to leave their accommodation.

This indicator should not be considered a sound housing indicator for sampling reasons. Many of those evicted are impossible to reach through a survey because after being evicted they move to other illegal accommodation (i.e. they have no address and therefore cannot be sampled and interviewed). However, the issue of the eviction of hundreds of Roma and the demolition of their houses persists. The demolition of structurally safe Roma homes on the pretext that they were built illegally (years or decades ago) is not exceptional in Bulgaria, despite many of these houses being the only dwellings of (large) families.

There has been an increase in the number of incidents of violence that far-right politicians instigated in Roma neighbourhoods in recent years. No legislative changes were made in 2019 or 2020 concerning the introduction of the principles of necessity and proportionality in the forced evictions of people from their only homes, according to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. Forced evictions disproportionately affect Roma living in illegal housing. In 2019–2020, hundreds of Roma, including children, older people and people with dis-

abilities, were evicted from their only homes without being provided with any alternative accommodation. Box 4 provides information on some of the most notable cases of eviction.

Box 4 : Are evictions on the rise?

2019 was particularly tense regarding evictions, according to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. More than 100 Roma were expelled from the village of Voyvodinovo after a fight between two Roma and an ethnic Bulgarian officer from the special forces in January 2019. Most of the houses of the displaced were destroyed soon after the incident. Neither the demolition orders nor the subsequent court proceedings of Roma families who wanted to return to their homes took into account the necessity and proportionality of the measures that the local authorities took.

Twenty 'illegal' houses in the Komluka neighbourhood in the town of Burgas were removed on 24 July 2019. The buildings were solid brick houses built on land intended for street infrastructure. The Mayor of the Vazrazhdane district stated that the actions were taken after the completion of all legal procedures. Only one of the families appealed against the removal order, and the court ruled in favour of the Municipality of Burgas.

Over the past few years, the Municipality of Burgas has demolished over 400 illegal buildings in the Roma neighbourhood in Gorno Ezerovo, in the Pobeda neighbourhood and in the Roma area of the Meden Rudnik neighbourhood. In many cases, these were the only homes of their inhabitants. The courts as a rule did not assess the proportionality of the intervention considering the right to housing in the few cases of appeals against removal/demolition orders in 2019. 38 'illegal' buildings were demolished in the Roma neighbourhood of Maksuda in the town of Varna on 12 September 2019. Of all the residents, only one person was provided with alternative accommodation: one person with a disability was placed in an institution.

The practice of demolishing illegal Roma houses continued in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Municipality of Stara Zagora started forcible demolition of illegal buildings in the Roma neighbourhood of Lozenets on 4 August 2020. They were built more than 20 years ago, according to their owners. 205 such buildings were removed in Stara Zagora's Roma neighbourhood from 2015 to 2020. A large-scale week-long operation to demolish over 20 illegal massive and semi-massive buildings took place in the Roma neighbourhood of Stolipinovo in the town of Plovdiv on 21 July 2020. Five were not demolished because people lived in them and the district mayor's office could not provide municipal accommodation.

Based on Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2020), *Human rights in Bulgaria in 2019*; Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2021), *Human rights in Bulgaria in 2020*.

A large number of Roma will continue to be threatened with evictions, homelessness and restrictions on fundamental rights, as discussed above, if measures are not taken to legalise viable Roma houses under the strict controls for the prevention of new illegal construction in Roma neighbourhoods. These threats will also remain if measures to build new social housing provided for in the 2030 national development programme of Bulgaria and the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020 are not implemented. Box 5 provides further information.

Box 5: Address registration and enjoyment of rights

A total of 81,360 people in Bulgaria do not have a permanent address, according to data from the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works provided to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee on 30 April 2020. Of these, 75,406 are Bulgarian citizens (mostly Roma) and 5,954 are foreigners. The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee explains that 'this vicious practice is a side effect of the 2011 changes in the Civil Registration Act, made to avoid the so-called travelling voters'.*

D. Mihaylova, a civil rights lawyer, argued in 2013 that the amendments to the Civil Registration Act adopted in May 2011 create conditions for systematic violations of the constitutional rights of Bulgarian citizens for free movement and work , putting Roma at a particular disadvantage, which can be referred to as ethnic discrimination. The Council of Ministers, the submitter of the amendments to the Civil Registration Act (21 March 2011), proposed restrictions and additional procedural requirements concerning the registration for a permanent or current address to limit the possibility of electoral fraud.

The amended procedure requires those who request a permanent or current address to submit deeds of ownership and/or tenancy agreements to the municipal civil registration services. It also requires property owners to provide declarations of consent, that a notary has certified, in cases in which the tenant/occupant, rather than the owner, submits the application for registration. A separate commission for registering people deals with cases of missing deeds or tenancy agreements. As a result, the entire procedure is more complex and non-transparent, making the renewal of expired ID cards difficult for people in such situations, among which Roma living in informal housing in large urban and suburban slums are over-represented.

The situation has not changed since 2013, making it exceedingly difficult for people living in such conditions to renew expired ID cards. This prevents them from accessing administrative and social systems of the country.

Based on D. Mihaylova (2013), *Civil registration in Bulgaria – A state of uncertainty*, Sofia, Open Society Institute of Sofia.

* BHC. 2020. A huge number of people in Bulgaria are without address registration (Огромен брой хора в България са без адресна регистрация)

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75 BNSI (2003), Bulgaria: The challenges of poverty. Analysis based on multipurpose household surveys (България: предизвикателствата на бедността. Регионален анализ по данни на многоцелевото наблюдение на домакинствата); National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030; national programme for development 'Bulgaria 2030'.

76 Wilson, W. J. (1987), The truly disadvantaged. The inner city, the underclass and public policy, Chicago, University of Chicago Press; Wacquant, L. (2008), Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality, Cambridge, Polity Press; Wacquant, L. (2009), Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity, Durham, NC, Duke University Press.

77 Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2009), Health and the Roma community, analysis of the situation in Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Madrid, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, pp. 97–107.

78 Eurostat (2020), 'Average number of rooms per person by degree of urbanisation'.

6. Discrimination

Highlights

- Discrimination, with all its manifestations and deprivations in multiple areas of Roma life, constitutes a vicious circle of inequality, poverty and marginalisation. The data summarised in this report highlight the magnitude of the challenges Roma are facing in virtually every area of life.
- 17.9 % of Roma felt discriminated against on any grounds in the past 12 months. Of this group, 16.5 % felt discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs.
- 22.9 % of Roma felt discriminated against when they were looking for work because of being Roma. 11 % felt discriminated against for the same reason when at work. One in 10 Roma had the same experience when in contact with school authorities or when accessing health services.
- The magnitude of discrimination may be even bigger given that only 33 % of Roma are aware of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.

6.1. Background

Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union explicitly prohibits any discrimination based on any ground such as "sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation". Article 6 of the Bulgarian constitution sets out the principle of equality, and national anti-discrimination legislation safeguards it.

Nevertheless, the new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation underlines that many Roma in the EU continue to face discrimination, antigypsyism and socio-economic exclusion. It recognises that, even though not all Roma are at risk of poverty or are socially excluded, all can experience discrimination and disempowerment. Setting three cross-cutting objectives (in the areas of equality, inclusion and participation) in addition to the four sector-specific ones (education, employment, housing and health) aims to ensure effective equality and to close the gap between Roma and the general population.

The 2020 BNSI/FRA survey asked respondents if they felt discriminated against on different grounds (skin colour; ethnic or immigrant background or ethnic origin; religion or religious beliefs; sex; age; disability; sexual orientation; gender identity; and other reason) in different areas of life in the past five years and in the past 12 months. These areas of life are when looking for work, when at work, when in contact with anyone from school(s) as a parent or student, when using health services, when trying to rent or buy an apartment or house, when in contact with administrative offices or public services, when trying to enter a nightclub, bar, restaurant or hotel, when using public transport and when in a shop or trying to enter a shop. The information collected helps outline the magnitude of discrimination Bulgaria's Roma experienced in 2020, the year before the launch of the public consultations on the new national Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation (2021–2030) adopted on 5 May 2022.

6.2. Results

Discrimination

5.0 % of the general population aged 16 years and over reported that they felt discriminated against on any grounds in any area of life in the 12 months before the interview, according to the survey conducted for this project. The areas of life are when looking for work, when at work, when in contact with anyone from school(s) as a parent or student, when using health services, when trying to rent or buy an apartment or house, when in contact with administrative offices or public services, when trying to enter a nightclub, bar, restaurant or hotel, when using public transport and when in a shop or trying to enter a shop. Of this 5.0 % of the general population, 1.8 % felt discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity, skin colour or religion, while 3.2 % felt discriminated against on other grounds (age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or something else) (Figure 27).

Data disaggregated by ethnic group show large differences in both prevalence and grounds of discrimination. Roma in Bulgaria are most likely to find themselves in situations where they feel discriminated against: 17.9 % felt discriminated against on any grounds in any of the areas of life covered in the survey. Of this 17.9 %, 16.5 % felt discriminated against on the grounds of their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs. The value of this indicator has increased by 2.5 percentage points since 2016, when, based on FRA's European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, it was 14.0 %.[79]

Figure 27: Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months in any of the core areas of life covered, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
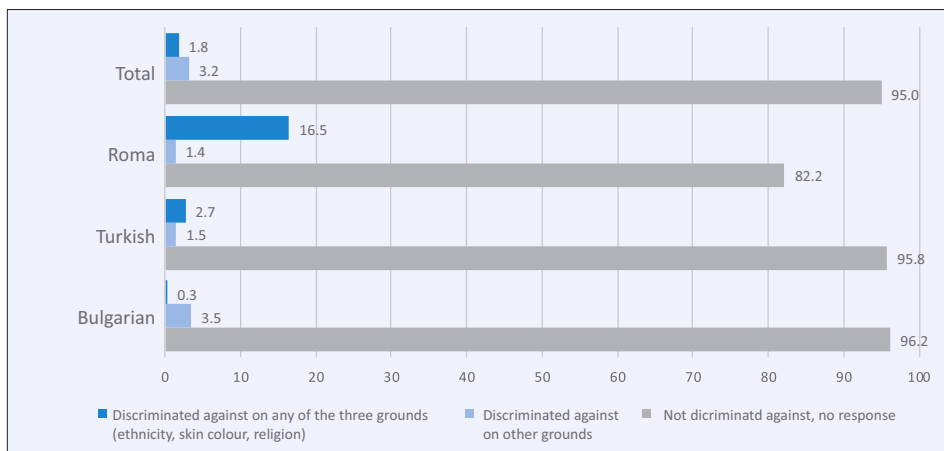
Notes: *a Out of respondents older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months (on ANY ground) in the 12 months before the survey (n = 25,646); weighted percentages.*
b Areas of daily life asked about in the survey: looking for work, at work, education (self or as parent), health, housing and other public or private services (public administration, restaurant or bar, public transport, shop).
c Based on question "In the past 12 months for which reasons you felt discriminated against? List all that apply to you". The answer options were: Skin colour; Ethnic or immigrant background/ethnic origin; Religion or religious beliefs; Age; Gender; Disability; Sexual orientation; Gender identity; Other.
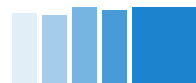
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

Bulgaria's Roma declared most often that they felt discriminated against when they were looking for work (one out of four Roma), when dealing with the administration/public services and when looking for housing (one out of six Roma for both). The differences between Roma and ethnic Bulgarians are large, particularly in the areas of contact with school authorities, contact with the administration, looking for work and accessing health services (Table 12). As regards grounds of discrimination, Roma felt discriminated primarily due to their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs (Table 13).

Table 12: Share of people who felt discriminated against (on any grounds), by discriminatory situation and ethnicity (%)

Discriminatory situation	Ethnic Bulgarians	Ethnic Turks	Roma	Total
When looking for a job in the past 12 months, n = 2,745	15.7	10.3	26.7	17.2
When at work in the past 12 months, n = 13,587	1.5	2.8	11.3	2.2
When in contact with school authorities in the past 12 months, n = 4,852	(0.3)	(1.0)	10.6	1.4
When accessing health services in the past 12 months, n = 17,988	1.8	2.8	11.2	2.4
When looking for housing in the last 5 years, n = 970	6.5	(10.8)	(17.7)	7.4
When in contact with the administration in the past 12 months, n = 13,771	1.9	2.7	16.1	2.9
When at a bar, restaurant or hotel, when shopping and when on public transport in the past 12 months, n = 21,627	1.0	1.3	6.2	1.5

Note: *a Out of respondents older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months: when looking for a job, when at work, when in contact with school authorities, when accessing the health services, when looking for housing in the past 5 years, when in contact with administration, and when at bar, restaurant, hotel, shopping, in public transport; weighted percentages, n – unweighted count in parentheses.*
        b Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
        c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).
        d Based on question "have you ever felt discriminated against for any of the following reasons?" for each of the situations and based on any ground.
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

Table 13: Share of Roma who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months because of being Roma, by discriminatory situation (%)

Discriminatory situation	On any grounds	On the grounds of ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs	On other grounds
When looking for a job, n = 478	26.7	22.9	3.8
When at work, n = 778	11.3	11.0	0.3
When in contact with school authorities, n = 480	10.6	10.6	0.0
When accessing health services, n = 971	11.2	10.8	0.4
When in contact with the administration, n = 848	16.1	15.4	0.7
When at a bar, restaurant or hotel, when shopping and when on public transport, n = 1591	6.2	5.9	0.3

Note: *a Out of Roma older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months: when looking for a job, when at work, when in contact with school authorities, when accessing the health services, when looking for housing in the past 5 years, n – unweighted count in parentheses.*
b Based on three grounds (ethnicity, or skin colour or religious beliefs)
c Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s).
d Based on question "have you ever felt discriminated against for any of the following reasons?" for each of the situations based on the three grounds.

Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

It is necessary to bear in mind that the question captures the subjective feeling of discrimination, which depends on the person's understanding of what constitutes 'discrimination'. The question focuses on personal experience, and therefore does not capture institutional or structural discrimination. Regarding education, the question of whether people felt discriminated against in their contacts with school authorities (as students or parents/guardians) may capture discrimination experienced by people who wanted to enrol their child in an integrated school but were not allowed, and by those who studied in integrated schools or are parents/guardians of children who attend integrated schools. In such cases, respondents can compare the attitude of the school authorities towards them and/or their children with their attitude towards the ethnic Bulgarian children in the school and/or their parents.

However, only one third of the children of compulsory school age in the survey sample attended integrated schools, and the share of Roma aged 16 years and over continuing their education in integrated secondary schools and higher education is very low. The vast majority of Roma parents/young people study in segregated schools.[80] The chance of them experiencing discrimination is quite low given their limited interactions with non-Roma peers. Moreover, children and young people have yet to sharpen their sensitivity to segregation and realise that it constitutes discrimination. The fact that the Pre-school and School Education Act does not consider segregation to be discrimination is an example of structural discrimination (see Chapter 1 for further discussion).

Another example of structural discrimination comes from the area of healthcare. The question of whether Roma aged 16 years and over have felt discriminated against captures the explicit cases of experienced discrimination. However, large groups of the population have limited access to health services because they do not have health insurance (as described in detail in Chapter 4). These are the self-employed, people with irregular (informal) employ-

ment and the long-term unemployed, who form particularly high percentages of Roma. The vast majority of Roma in Bulgaria rely on irregular or temporary employment in the country or abroad. This employment modality goes hand in hand with lacking social or health insurance, in addition to low and irregular income. These informal workers have restricted access to healthcare because they are unable to cover the cost of health insurance out of pocket.

Neither the informal workers nor Bulgarian society or legislation perceives the restricted access to health services as discriminatory because non-payment of health insurance in such cases is the individual's responsibility ('free choice'). The regulatory changes in the Health Insurance Act (described in more detail in Chapter 4) increase the risk of a significant proportion of people with low and irregular incomes, who are over-represented among Roma, dropping out of the healthcare system. Indicators of subjective perception of unequal treatment do not capture such cases of structural discrimination.

The information regarding respondents' perception of discrimination when at a bar, restaurant or hotel, when in a shop or when using public transport also captures only part of the bigger problem. It reflects the experience of people who had the opportunity to be discriminated against, similarly to the area of education. However, the vast majority of Roma in large urban neighbourhoods and slums rarely go to restaurants and bars (or even shops for everyday groceries, clothing and household goods) in the city centre/outside their neighbourhood. The chances of experiencing discrimination in a shop, at an open clothing market or at an eatery in a Roma neighbourhood where the majority of (if not all) customers are also Roma are close to none. In other words, it is reasonable to assume that the share of people who felt discriminated against in various situations would have been much higher if the magnitude of segregation had been lower.[*]

Data on social distances support this hypothesis. The questionnaire provided no information regarding the share of the general population who do not feel comfortable having Roma as neighbours, but a survey that the Institute for Population and Human Studies conducted in 2018 provides information on the social distances (including distancing of neighbours) towards Roma by ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age (males aged 18–55 years and females aged 18–50 years) (Figure 28).

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[*] The assumption is in line with social categorisation theory, which posits that people place others into ingroups ('us') and outgroups ('them') (Oakes, P.J., Haslam, S.A., and Turner, J.C. (1994). Stereotyping and social reality. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell; Turner, J. C. , Oakes, P. J. (1989). Self-categorization theory and social influence. In P. B. Paulus (Ed.), The psychology of group influence (2nd ed., pp. 233-275). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. Once social categorisation occurs, prejudice and discrimination are more likely to follow. Prejudice might enhance personal self-esteem by creating positive associations with the ingroup and negative associations with the outgroup. Threats to an ingroup (e.g. loss of resources) also create feelings of prejudice (Pettigrew, T. F., Meertens, R. W. (1995). Subtle and blatant prejudice in Western Europe. European Journal of Social Psychology, 25(1), 57–75; Tyler, T. R., & Smith, H. J. (1998). Social justice and social movements. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), The handbook of social psychology (pp. 595–629). McGraw-Hill. When the ingroup, and ultimately the self, is threatened, people direct feelings of anger, fear and anxiety towards outgroup members (Smith, E. R. (1993). Social identity and social emotions: Toward new conceptualizations of prejudice. In D. M. Mackie & D. L. Hamilton (Eds.), Affect, cognition, and stereotyping: Interactive processes in group perception (pp. 297–315). Academic Press).

Figure 28: Social distances towards Roma by ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age (answers to the question 'Would you approve of...' (%)
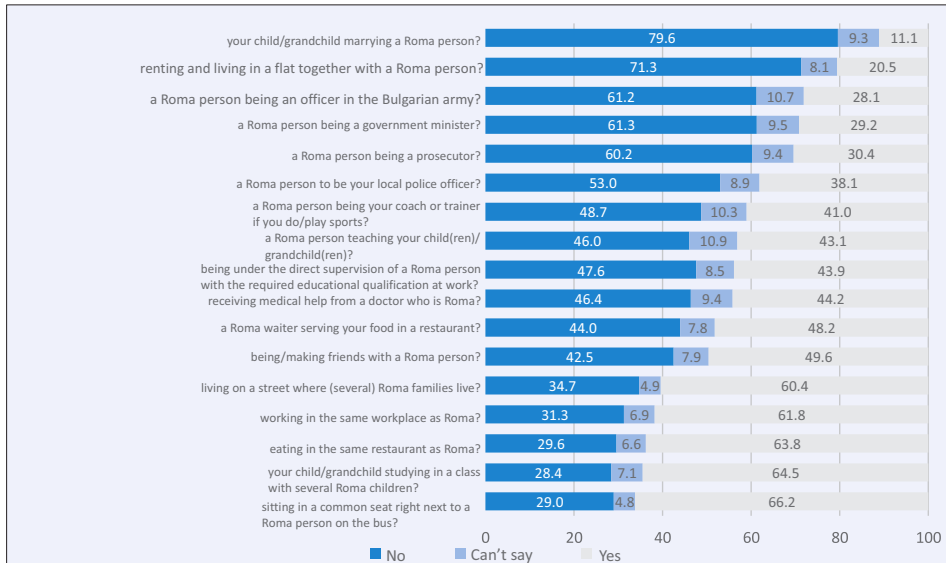
Source: Stoytchev, L. (2020), 'Attitudes and distances of the ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age towards the Roma' in: Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L. and Ivanov, M., *Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria* , Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, p. 184

About one third of those who self-identify as ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age support segregation in every sphere of life (including public transport, schools, restaurants and industry/services), the results of the Institute for Population and Human Studies survey show. Close to half of the ethnic Bulgarians are opposed to a Roma person being in a position superior to them or a member of their family as their doctor, teacher, coach/trainer or local police officer. Nearly two thirds of the ethnic Bulgarians categorically disapprove of a Roma person occupying a senior management position in judicial or governmental institutions. Close and intimate relations with members of the Roma community are not widely accepted. Almost half of the ethnic Bulgarian respondents approve of being friends with Roma, but a marriage between an ethnic Bulgarian and a Roma is almost completely ruled out: only one tenth of ethnic Bulgarians would accept it.

Education (including higher education) has little effect on reducing negative attitudes and social distances towards Roma, which is unlike the situation in western and northern European countries. Social distances are largest in small towns and regional centres with a population of fewer than 100,000 people.[81]

Violence and harassment

Hate crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia or religious intolerance or by a person's disability, gender identity and expression or sexual orientation are extreme and severe mani-

festations of discrimination and intolerance. There are no official statistics on hate crime in Bulgaria. Survey data are the only available source of information on the actual prevalence of bias-motivated incidents.[82]

The 2020 BNSI/FRA survey recorded an extremely small number of cases of violence (0.4 % of the 16,283 respondents who answered this question reported violence). The number of Roma who declared that they were victims of violence is too small for in-depth analysis. So is the percentage of all respondents who were physically attacked who attributed it to their ethnic background/origin.

The survey registered low levels of harassment experienced by Bulgarian citizens: 3.2 % of the total population aged 16 years and over declared that they were victims of harassment on any grounds in the 12 months before the survey. 8.2 % of Roma reported being harassed on any grounds (Figure 29). Of this 8.2 %, 6.3 % experienced harassment on the grounds of their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs. The bivariate analysis in the summary report of this project shows that harassment also targets people living in households in which the highest completed education level is 'lower secondary' (5.7 % experienced harassment) or 'lower' (5.0 % experienced harassment).[83]

Figure 29: Share of people aged 16 years and over experiencing harassment (five acts of harassment combined) because of any ground in the 12 months before the survey, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
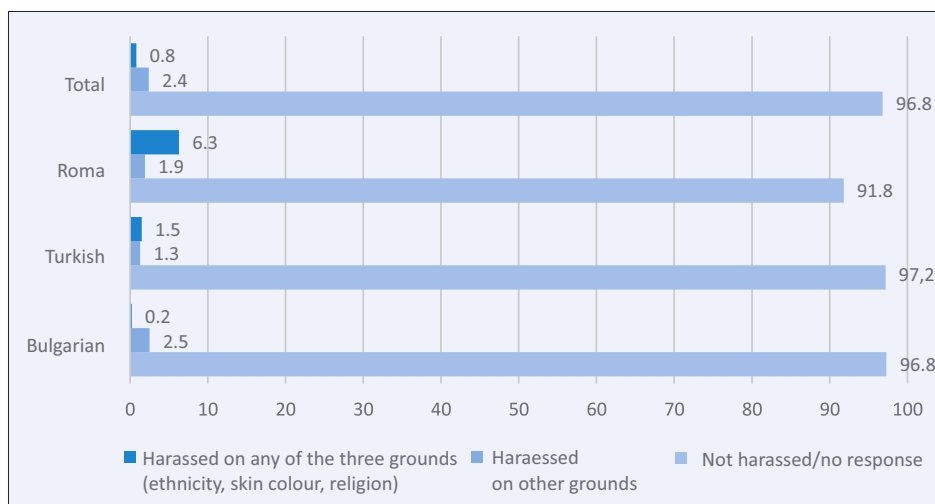
In addition, many Roma are negatively affected by hate speech, not only in the media and political discourse, but also in everyday life, qualitative research discloses.[84]

Reporting of discrimination, violence and harassment

Only a small share of respondents know how and to which institutions they can report cases in which they have felt discriminated against or in which they have been victims of violence and harassment, and which institutions can support and protect them (see the 2014 recommendation of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Bulgaria[85]). More than one third of respondents do not even know that there is a law that prohibits discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity or religion, according to the survey conducted for this project (Figure 30). There are differences between the large ethnic groups in awareness of the existence of anti-discrimination laws: two thirds of Roma are unaware of the existence of such laws versus almost one third of those who self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians and just over half of those who self-identified as ethnic Turks.

Figure 30: Awareness among all respondents aged 16 years and over of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion, by self-declared ethnicity (%)
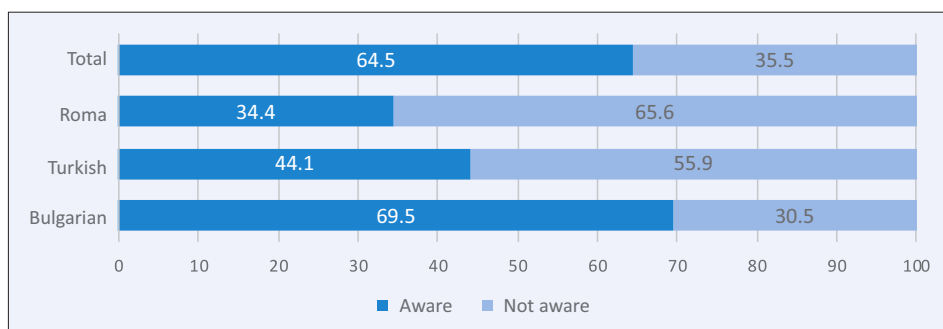
Note: *a Out of respondents aged 16 or more (n = 26,380); weighted results.*
             b Based on question "As far as you are aware, is there a law in Bulgaria that forbids discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?"
             c Remainder to 100 % includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey*

The data from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey confirm the findings of other sociological research that only a small number of victims of discrimination or violence report their experience to public authorities or seek protection.[86] Members of vulnerable groups in Bulgaria, who are more likely to find themselves in situations of unequal or hostile treatment, rarely believe that their signals or protests would address the challenges they face. Therefore, they rarely report discriminatory and violent acts against them or other members of their group.[87] This is particularly the case for Roma, who experience hostile discourse in mass media.[88] This largely explains why only 8 % of Roma aged 16 years and older who felt discriminated against (in any area of life) in the past 12 months reported the last incident of discrimination (Figure 31). Most of this 8 % (7.1 % of all Roma informants) stated that the last incident of discrimination was because of being Roma.

Figure 31: Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against (in any area of life) in the past 12 months and reported the last incident of discrimination, by self-declared ethnicity (%)

Analysis of the cases in which violence and harassment were reported or not is not possible because of the small number of such cases.

Some Roma respondents say that they sometimes report cases of harassment to relatives, friends or a pastor, rather than the institutions that are legally in charge of protecting them, as qualitative research shows. Mistrust of institutions and lack of knowledge of the reporting procedures are serious obstacles to increasing institutional sensitivity to discrimination and public sensitivity to violence and harassment.[89] The low level of sensitivity among general society and institutions, as well as among many of the victims, to exposure to discrimination and harassment is also part of the problem.[90]

[79] FRA (2017), Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey – Main results, Luxembourg, Publications Office, p. 31.

[80] FRA (2016), Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey; European Commission, Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Bulgaria: Focusing on structural and horizontal preconditions for successful implementation of the strategy; Zahariev, B. and Kolev, D. (2020), Nosegregation: Local action against school segregation of Roma: D2.5. School segregation maps in Bulgaria.

[81] Stoytchev, L. (Стойчев, Л.) (2020), 'Attitudes and distances of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards the Roma' ('Нагласи и дистанции на българите във фертилна възраст спрямо ромите') in: Tomova, I. Stoytchev, L. and Ivanov, M., Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria, Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

[82] BNSI and FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Summary of main results.

83 BNSI and FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Summary of main results.

84 Data from the following surveys: Integrated Model for Working with Vulnerable Groups: Stopping the Marginalization of Roma in Kyustendil by Creating a Model for Community Development, New Bulgarian University, agreement of 15 January 2016 (2016–2018); Migration Experience and Change in Attitudes towards Work, Education, Gender and Family Relations of the Bulgarian Roma, funded by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2017); Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion, contract 7162451, The World Bank (2012–2013); Identifying and Reducing Prejudices as a Source of Conflict between Roma and non-Roma Population – Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia Compared (REDUPRE), grant agreement No. JUST/2010/FRAC/AG/1154 – 30-CE-0377112/00-32 (2011–2013); Empowering Women against Intimate Partnership Violence in Roma Communities (2011–2012); Daphne Project, JUST/2010/DAP3/AG/1266; etc.

85 Council of Europe (2014). ECRI Report on Bulgaria (fifth monitoring cycle).

86 Open Society Institute (2007), "I can stop and search whoever I want". Police stops of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Spain, New York, Open Society Institute. Data are also from the surveys Integrated Model for Working with Vulnerable Groups: Stopping the Marginalization of Roma in Kyustendil by Creating a Model for Community Development, NBU, agreement of 15 January 2016 (2016–2018); Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion, contract 7162451, The World Bank (2012–2013); Identifying and Reducing Prejudices as a Source of Conflict between Roma and non-Roma Population – Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia Compared (REDUPRE), grant agreement No. JUST/2010/FRAC/AG/1154 – 30-CE-0377112/00-32 (2011–2013); Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender, Yale University (1999–2001); Ethnic Relations in the Army, financed by the Ministry of Defence and IMIR (2000); Poverty in Bulgaria: Ethnic Dimensions of Poverty, The World Bank (1998); The Rhodope Mountains in 90-es: Development Tendencies, IMIR (1998–1999); etc.

87 Based on data from the following studies: Evaluation of the Bulgarian–Swiss Programme for the Promotion of Social Inclusion of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups (2018–2019); Social Innovations for More Effective Social Inclusion of Disadvantaged Roma Women (under project BG05M9OP001-4.001-100-C01, procedure BG05M9OP001-4.001); Transnational and Danube Partnerships for Employment and Growth under the Operational Program Development of Human Resources (2015–2017); Migration Experience and Change in Attitudes towards Work, Education, Gender and Family Relations of the Bulgarian Roma, funded by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, programme for young scientists (2015–2017); Integrated Model for Working with Vulnerable Groups: Stopping the Marginalization of Roma in Kyustendil by Creating a Model for Community Development, NBU (2015–2016); Bulgarian Qualitative Research on Labour Market Exclusion of the Roma, contract No. 7171492/21.05.2014, The World Bank; The Implementation of the NRIS and Other National Commitments in Respect to Roma Health in Bulgaria, International Organization for Migration (2014); Regional Survey on Roma at risk of marginalization: Migration of Roma and non-Roma from CEE countries, United Nations Development Programme, The World Bank (2011–2013); 'Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion', contract 7162451, The World Bank (2012–2013).

88 Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2015–2020), Human rights in Bulgaria, Sofia, Bulgarian Helsinki Committee. Reports for 2014–2020 are available in English on the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee website. All Bulgarian Helsinki Committee reports are also available in Bulgarian on its website. See also Tomova, I. (2011), 'Stereotypes and prejudice towards the Roma in the Bulgarian press' ('Stereotipi i predrazsadatsi za romite v balgarskata presa'), Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4. pp. 140–174; Pamporov, A. (2011), 'Drunk dark-skinned offenders (the Roma's image in Bulgaria's printed media in elections context')' ('Piyanite murgavi prestapnitsi (Obrazat na romite v balgarskite pechatni izdaniya v predizboren kontekst)'), Naselenie Review, Vol. 3, No. 4; Tomova, I. (2015), The image of the Roma in six electronic media (Obrazat na romite v shest elektronni medii), Razgrad, INTEGRO; Kanushev, M. (2018), 'Stigmatized deviance, or how multiple exclusion is constructed' ('Stigmatiziranata deviantnost, ili kak se konstituira mnozhestvena izklyuchenost') in: Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M. and Ivanov, M. (eds.), Inequalities and social dis(integration): In search of togetherness (Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost), Sofia, Iztok-Zapad; Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L. and Ivanov, M. (2020), Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria, Sofia, Professor Marin Drinov Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

89 Zlatanova, V. (2001), Domestic violence (Domashnoto nasilie), Sofia: Open Society Institute; Zlatanova, V. (2004), The illegitimate violence (Nelegitimnoto nasilie), Sofia, Kvazar; Tomova, I. and Angelova, V. (2013), Women and violence in the intimate partnership in Roma communities, Sofia, IMIR.

90 European Commission (2019), 'Special Eurobarometer 493: Discrimination in the European Union'.

7. Territorial dimensions of deprivation: 'Roma slums'[*]

Highlights

- At least 4.2 % of the Bulgarian population live in marginalised conditions (which the surrounding population perceives as 'Gypsy neighbourhoods').
- The ethnic composition of such localities is complex. Although most of the people living within their boundaries self-identified as Roma (54.6 %), 36.2 % self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians and 7.9 % as ethnic Turks.
- The living conditions in such localities are considerably worse than the conditions outside them. But deprivation is distributed unequally. Those who identify as Roma live in poorer conditions than those who declare a different ethnicity (ethnic Bulgarians or ethnic Turks).
- The biggest gap in discrimination is between those 'within' and those 'outside' such neighbourhoods. 'Roma neighbourhood stigma' adds to the prejudice and anti-gypsyism Roma in general face.

7.1. Background

The phenomenon of Roma slums (or 'Roma neighbourhoods') is a challenge in many eastern European countries. It is particularly pronounced in Bulgaria, where areas with concentrations of the Roma population are still commonly referred to as 'Gypsy mahalla'. Four to five per cent of the total population self-identifies as Roma according to the results of 2011 census.[91] However, the general population perceives many people as 'Roma/Gypsies' even if they do not identify as 'Roma'. The risk of social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination is higher if a person lives in a locality with no basic infrastructure, for example on the outskirts of a village or in a 'slum' in a big city.

Data on such localities' size, composition and territorial distribution are fragmented, despite the severity of the problem. Bulgaria does not have a comprehensive mapping of such settlements, most of which are unregulated and with poor or non-existent technical infrastructure, sanitation or roads. 68 % of Roma and those people whom others label Roma/Gypsies live in segregated neighbourhoods and slums, according to the Yale University survey 'Poverty, ethnicity and gender during market transition'.[92] This is a significant increase from the 48 % recorded in 1980.[93]

A report published under the EU-funded project 'Development of comprehensive measures for integration of the most marginalised communities among ethnic minorities with a focus on Roma' (BG051PO001-6.2.11), among other deliverables, produced a list of 320 "microzones with the most marginalised communities", of which 290 were labelled as 'Roma' and 30 as 'other'.[94] A number of local-level in-depth studies also exist (e.g. mini-censuses in particular localities with large numbers of Roma living in marginalised or segregated settings).[95] However, these data do not allow for in-depth analysis of the severity of deprivation people living in such neighbourhoods face.

A comprehensive map of localities containing a marginalised Roma population still does not exist. The existing terminological inconsistency and unclarity of definitions are also not helpful for research. The variety of terms in use include 'segregated settlements', 'microzones with marginalised communities', 'Roma neighbourhoods', 'areas of compact Roma

population', 'Roma ghettos' and 'Roma slums'. These terms all imply different combinations of social, ethnic and technical infrastructure criteria. At the same time, experience from Czechia[96] and Slovakia[97] suggests that investing in such mapping is paramount for informing Roma inclusion policies.

The project team, in cooperation with the Open Society Institute of Sofia (OSI Sofia), matched two datasets in an attempt to outline the magnitude of these challenges. These datasets were from the 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and the mapping of settlements that are still commonly referred to as 'Gypsy neighbourhoods' that OSI Sofia conducted in 2008–2010 and periodically updated until 2021.* The mapping geocoded 890 polygons outlining the boundaries of such localities (see Annex 5 for a description of the methodology).

7.2. Results

The matching of the two datasets shows that 4.2 % of the Bulgarian population lives in marginalised conditions (which outsiders perceive as 'Gypsy neighbourhoods'). 1.9 % of the population self-identifying as ethnic Bulgarians, 4.2 % of those self-identifying as ethnic Turks, 23.5 % of those self-identifying as Roma and 1.5 % of those who did not answer or did not state their ethnicity live in such conditions. However, the ethnic composition of the 'Gypsy neighbourhoods' is very different: most of the people living within their boundaries self-identified as Roma (54.6 %), followed by ethnic Bulgarians (36.2 %), ethnic Turks (7.9 %) and those who did not answer or did not state their ethnicity (1.2 %).

The results support the results of previous research[98] suggesting the ethnic profile of people living in 'Roma neighbourhoods' goes beyond those who self-identify as Roma. In fact, this population closely fits the definition of 'Roma' as an umbrella term that goes beyond a single ethnicity. The share of the Roma (as an umbrella term) population living in segregated settings and marginalised conditions is much higher than the 23.5 % stated above – closer to 30 % – when this concept is applied (rather than the strict 'single choice of ethnicity' approach). But even this percentage is most probably underestimated. First, the survey sample is representative of the total population. It was not boosted for Roma neighbourhoods, which have higher population density. Second, new spots of marginalisation that were not in the initial OSI Sofia list may have emerged in recent years, or the population of the existing Roma neighbourhoods may have increased because of internal migration to such localities as a result of evictions and demolition of informal housing in recent years (see Box 4).

The matching of the data from the survey with OSI Sofia's mapping of 'marginalised localities' that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods' provides interesting insights into the situation of Roma living within and outside the boundaries of such locations. Some results confirmed initial expectations (e.g. the differences regarding indicators of housing conditions). Others seem counterintuitive, but actually hint at the complex underlying mechanisms that shape the perceptions of the slums, the population living in them and the impact of living in such conditions on Roma's survival strategies.

Education

The impact of living in a marginalised setting is particularly visible in the area of education and in the transition from education to employment. The shares of Roma leaving school early within and outside Roma neighbourhoods are 71.8 % and 66.5 %, respectively (Figure 32). The share of early school leavers in all ethnic groups living in Roma neighbourhoods

(59.6 %) is 12.2 percentage points lower than the share among Roma living in Roma neigh-
bourhoods. Therefore, this indicator shows considerable differences between ethnic groups.

Figure 32: Early leavers from education and training aged 18–24 years, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality
(i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods)
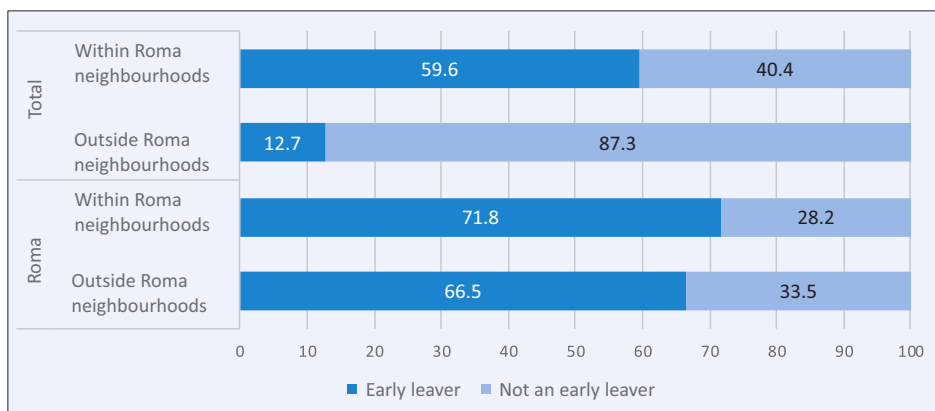
Notes: a Out of all household members aged 18–24 years (n =1,845); weighted results.
            b Based on questions "Is the person studying at present?" from the household members module; "What
            is the highest degree of education you have completed?"; and "How would you describe your current
            employment status?"
Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding
            population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

Employment

The paid employment rate is lower among people living in Roma neighbourhoods than
among those living outside them. The share of Roma not in paid work is higher among
those living in such conditions than outside them (57.1 % and 51.5 %, respectively) (Fig-
ure 33). Ethnicity also plays a role: the results of the indicator considerably differ between
groups. The paid employment rate for Roma living outside Roma neighbourhoods is lower
than the rates for ethnic Bulgarians and ethnic Turks living within the boundaries of such
neighbourhoods.

Figure 33: Share of people who declared 'paid work' as their main activity status (including full-time work, part-time work, ad hoc jobs, self-employment and occasional work or work in the past four weeks), aged 20–64 years, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods)

NEET rates within and outside Roma neighbourhoods reveal a similar picture. The rates are 59.6 % and 51.7 %, respectively, for Roma (Figure 34). The rates are 24.4 % and 11.4 %, respectively, for ethnic Bulgarians living in Roma neighbourhoods and 28.8 % and 22.2 %, respectively, for the ethnic Turkish population living in Roma neighbourhoods.

Figure 34: Share of young people aged 15–29 years whose current main activity is NEET, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods)

Notes: a Out of all household members aged 15–29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results.

    b Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The present survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.

Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

At risk of poverty and severe poverty

The high rates of poverty in Roma neighbourhoods are not surprising. 84.8 % of Roma living within in a Roma neighbourhood are at risk of poverty, compared with 74.2 % of those outside (Figure 35). The differences between the three groups on this indicator are particularly pronounced. The at-risk-of-poverty rate among ethnic Bulgarians living in such neighbourhoods (35.3 %) is more than half that of Roma (84.8 %).

Figure 35: At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60 % of median equivalised income after social transfers), by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods), in 2019 (%)
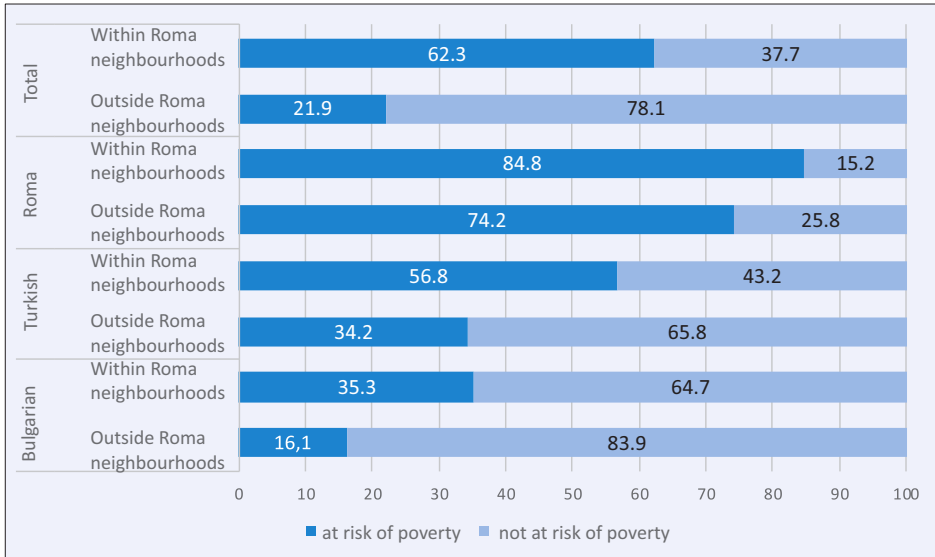
Notes: *a Out of all household members in the surveyed household (n = 30,303); weighted results.*
               b At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1–0.5–0.3).
               c Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?"
Sources: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'*

Child poverty goes hand in hand with overall poverty. The differences between ethnic groups on this indicator (share of children living in households in poverty) are also worrying. 90.5 % of Roma children living in Roma neighbourhoods are at risk of poverty (Figure 36). This is more than double the value for children of parents who self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians and living in a Roma neighbourhood (44.7 %).

Figure 36: Children aged < 18 years who are at risk of poverty (below 60 % of median equivalised income after social transfers), by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods), in 2020 (%)
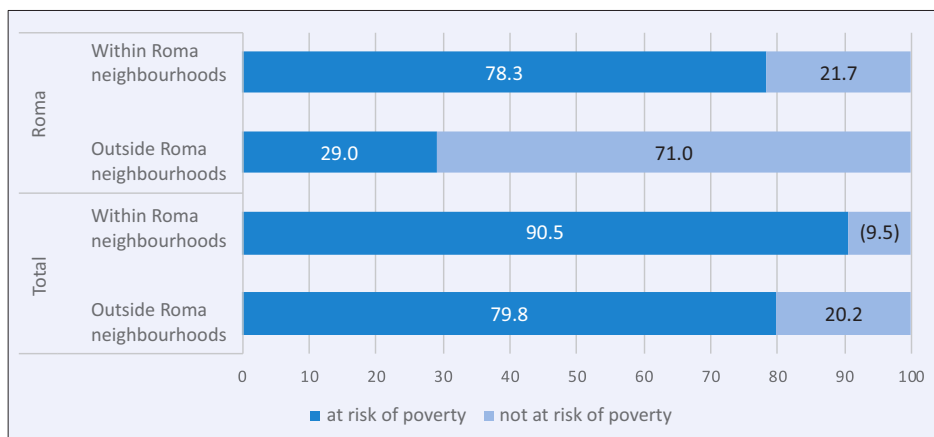
Notes: a Out of all household members aged under 18 years in the surveyed household (n = 4,491); weighted results.

b At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1–0.5–0.3).

c Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?" and the list of household members

d Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

High rates of poverty are also associated with hunger: 17.4 % of people who live in a Roma neighbourhood also live in a household in which at least one person has gone to bed hungry at least once in the past month because there was not enough money to buy food. This share is 28.6 % among Roma households in such neighbourhoods (Figure 37).

Figure 37: Share of people living in a household in which at least one person has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)

Health

Among the smallest differences between groups are in the area of health. This may be because Roma neighbourhoods are mostly located in towns and big cities, and people in such neighbourhoods may have better access to health facilities and medical professionals. Worth noting is that the share of Roma aged 16 years and over assessing their health in general as 'very good' or 'good' is lower among those living in Roma neighbourhoods (69.2 %) than among those living outside them (76.4 %) by more than 7 percentage points (Figure 38). One possible explanation is better awareness of real health status (associated with more frequent visits to doctors) among those living inside Roma neighbourhoods. The data suggest that Roma living in marginalised settings tend to visit GPs and other health professionals more frequently than those not living in such settings (Figure 39).

Figure 38: Share of people assessing their health in general as 'very good' or 'good', by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)

Total
- Within Roma neighbourhoods: 70.3 | 29.7
- Outside Roma neighbourhoods: 70.7 | 29.3

Roma
- Within Roma neighbourhoods: 69.2 | 30.8
- Outside Roma neighbourhoods: 76.4 | 23.6

Legend: ■ Very good or good   ■ Other assessment/no response

Notes: *a Out of all respondents aged 16 years and over (n =26,667); weighted results.*
                b Based on question "How do you generally assess your health?"
Sources: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding*
                population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

Figure 39: Time elapsed since last visit to a GP or a medical or surgical specialist for people aged 15 years and older, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)

Total
- Within Roma neighbourhoods: 55.6 | 42.1 | 2.4
- Outside Roma neighbourhoods: 60.9 | 37.7 | 1.4

Roma
- Within Roma neighbourhoods: 50.9 | 44.6 | (4.5)
- Outside Roma neighbourhoods: 37.9 | 54.9 | 7.2

Turkish
- Within Roma neighbourhoods: 50.5 | 48.5 | (1.0)
- Outside Roma neighbourhoods: 57.3 | 41.4 | 1.4

Bulgarian
- Within Roma neighbourhoods: 62.2 | 37.8
- Outside Roma neighbourhoods: 62.9 | 36.2 | 1.0

Legend: ■ Less thom 12 months   ■ 12months and more   ■ Never

Notes: *a Out of all respondents visiting GP (n =26,312) and visiting a medical or surgical specialist (n*
                =25,805); weighted results.
                b Based on questions: "When was the last time you consulted your GP about yourself?" and "When
                was the last time you consulted a specialist or dentist – surgeon for yourself?"
                c 3,991 INRs on the question about visiting GP and 4,498 INRs on the question about visiting a

d Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Sources: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'*

Housing

The results showing that the living conditions in Roma neighbourhoods are worse than those outside them are not particularly revealing, but the magnitude of differences on some indicators is surprising. 25.0 % of Roma in households living within the boundaries of such neighbourhoods do not have tap water inside their dwelling, compared with 15.9 % living outside such neighbourhoods. The gap between the different groups living within Roma neighbourhoods on this indicator is among the most considerable of all th eindicators (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Share of people living in households without tap water inside the dwelling, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)
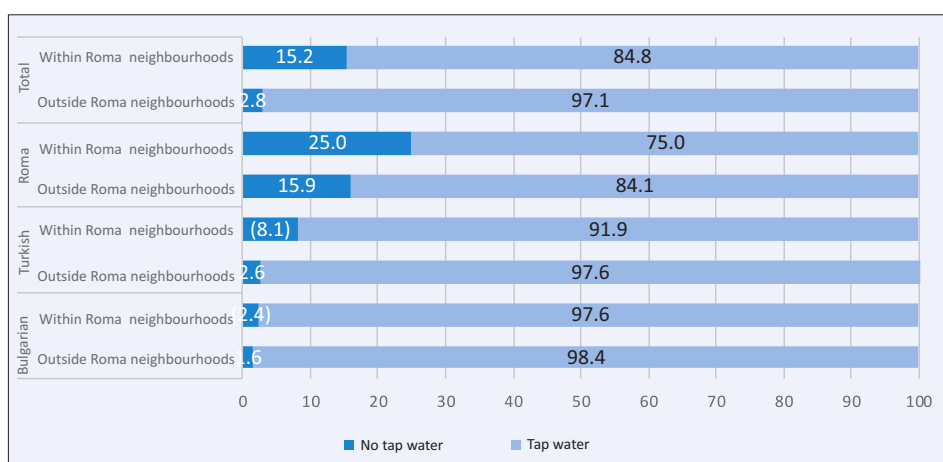
Notes: *a Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.*
*b Based on questions: "Do you have tap water inside the dwelling?".*
Sources: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'*

The poor quality of the housing stock in Roma neighbourhoods is also not surprising. 29.2 % of Roma living within a Roma neighbourhood live in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundations or rot in window frames or floors, compared with 21.8 % of those living outside such neighbourhoods. These percentages are significantly higher than those of the other ethnic groups (Figure 41). On the other hand, the similar values for Roma living inside and outside Roma neighbourhoods show that the living conditions of Roma living in segregated and in non-segregated conditions are similarly poor. However,

the difference between the shares of the population with no access to electricity is surprising (5.5 % within the boundaries of the Roma neighbourhoods and 0.6 % outside them). This difference may suggest a much higher prevalence of informal or illegal housing in Roma neighbourhoods.

As regards differences between ethnic groups, only Roma face such poor living conditions in the Roma neighbourhoods. This is also the case for the other two housing indicators: overcrowding (Figure 42) and access to sanitation (Figure 43).

Figure 41: Share of people living in housing deprivation (in a dwelling that is too dark or has a leaking roof/damp walls or floors or no bath/shower or no indoor toilet), by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)
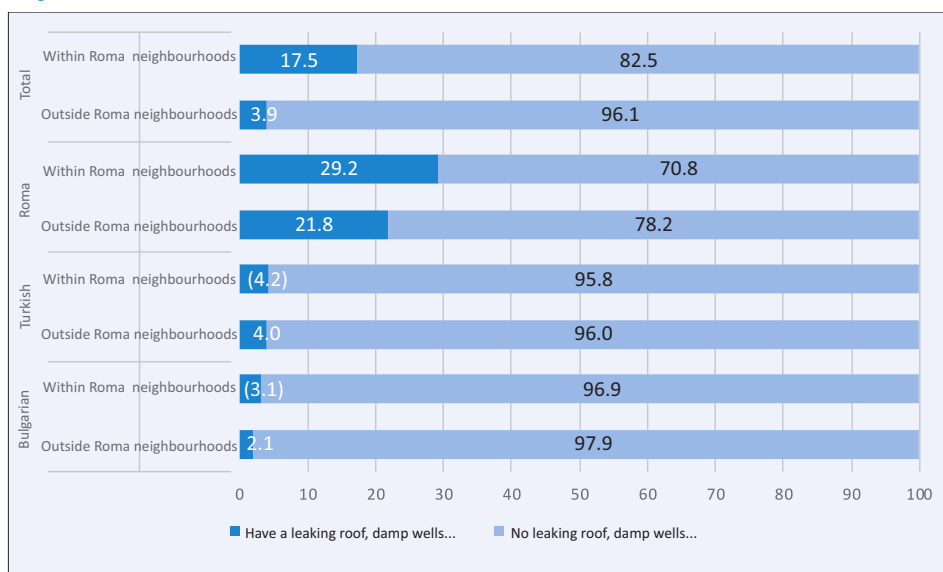
Notes: a Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
            b Based on questions: "Leaking roof or damp walls/floors/foundation or rot in window frames or floor (B18.1)?", "It is too dark (B18.3) (meaning there isn't enough daylight coming through the windows)?", "Absence of a shower/bathroom inside the dwelling (B10.2)?", "Absence of a (flushing) toilet inside the dwelling (B10.1)?"
            c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).
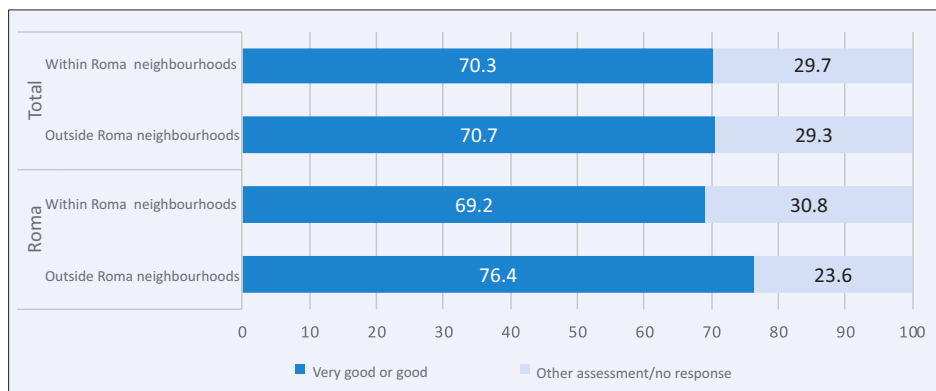Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

Figure 42: Share of people living in a household that does not have the minimum number of rooms according to the Eurostat definition of overcrowding, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)
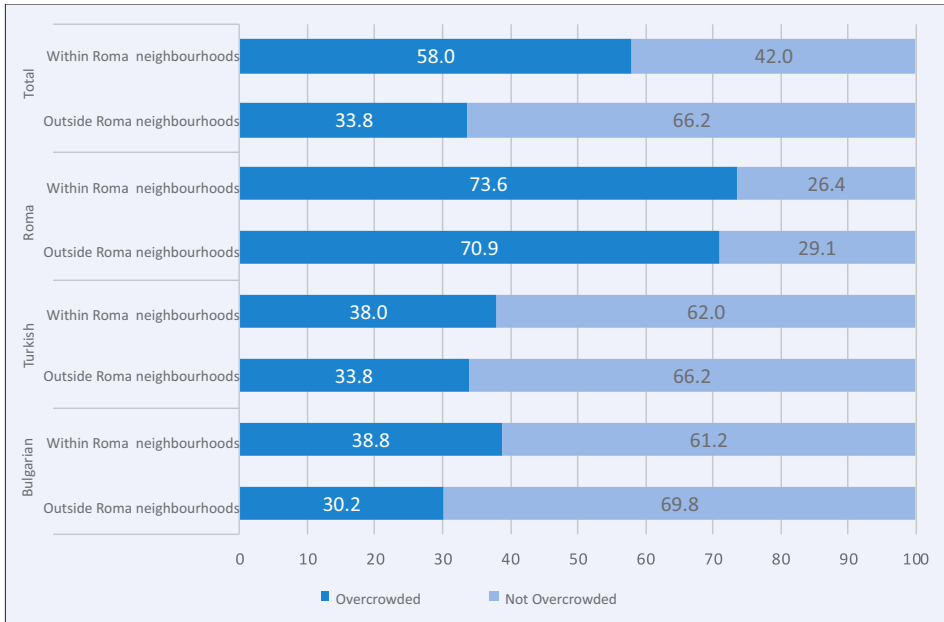
Notes: a Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
b Based on questions "What is the number of rooms in the dwelling?" and "How many of them do you use in your daily life?"

Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities perceived by surrounding population as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

Figure 43: Share of people living in households with neither tap water, nor bath/shower nor toilet inside the dwelling by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)
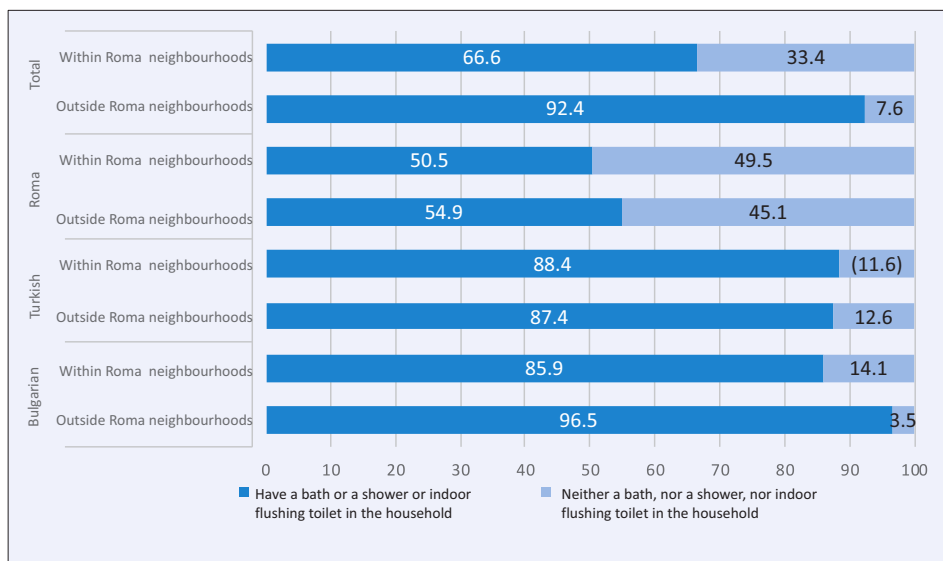
Notes: a Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
              b Based on questions: "Is there a water supply system in the dwelling?", "Are there in the dwelling: bathroom with a shower or bathtub; toilet with a running water?".
Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities perceived by surrounding population as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

Discrimination

Discrimination is a key factor that may contribute to the differences outlined above. This is based on the fact that people living in marginalised settings are perceived as marginalised. The results summarised in Table 14 suggest that regardless how people self-identify (as ethnic Bulgarian, ethnic Turk, Roma or otherwise), living in a slum itself puts them at much higher risk of discrimination and creates a powerful feedback loop: attributing 'underclass' characteristics to people living in marginalisation diminishes their chances in life and translates into de facto deprivation, further fuelling discriminatory attitudes. This is a key reason why addressing the challenge of Roma neighbourhoods is a key policy priority in Bulgaria.

Table 14: Key discrimination indicators, by type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)

Indicator	Outside Roma neighbourhoods	Within Roma neighbourhoods
Share of Roma who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months	11.5	15.6
Share of Roma aware of laws prohibiting discrimination	36.4	28.1
Share of Roma who reported last incident of discrimination	11.4	0.0

Indicator	Outside Roma neighbourhoods	Within Roma neighbourhoods
Share of Roma who experienced discrimination because of being Roma in the past 12 months		
At work, n = 13,587	8.7	19.0
When using health services, n = 17,988	7.2	19.4
In contact with education authorities (self or parent), n = 4,852	7.9	22.6
In contact with administration, n = 13,771	13.4	24.7

Notes: *a Out of respondents older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months: when looking for a job, when at work, when in contact with school authorities, when accessing the health services, when looking for housing in the past 5 years, when in contact with administration, and when at bar, restaurant, hotel, shopping, in public transport; weighted percentages, n – unweighted count in parentheses.*

Sources: *2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities perceived by surrounding population as 'Roma neighbourhoods'*

Poor awareness of one's rights and of what constitutes discriminatory action contributes to poor understanding and underreporting of discrimination. Awareness of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is low among Roma and ethnic Turks, but also among ethnic Bulgarians living in Roma neighbourhoods (Figure 44). The results regarding awareness of equality bodies are similar. In total, 84.6 % of people living outside Roma neighbourhoods and only 50.8 % of those living within such neighbourhoods have heard of at least one equality body.

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Figure 44: Awareness among all respondents aged 16 years and over of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion, by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (i.e. within or outside Roma neighbourhoods) (%)
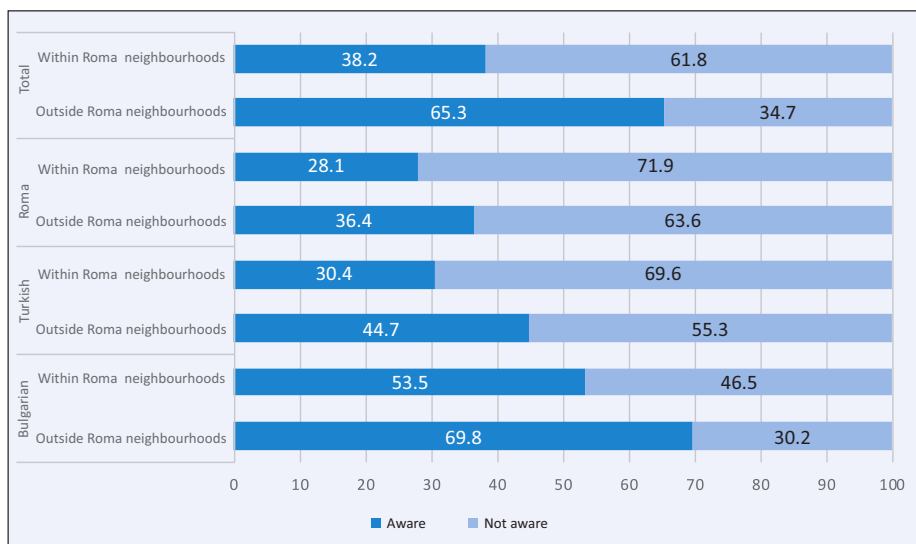
Note:
a Out of respondents aged 16 or more (n = 26,380); weighted results.
b Based on question "As far as you are aware, is there a law in Bulgaria that forbids discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?"

Sources: 2020 BNSI/FRA survey and OSI Sofia mapping of marginalised localities perceived by surrounding population as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

[91] BNSI, '2011 census results'.

[92] Ladányi, J. and Szelényi, I. (2006), Patterns of exclusion: Constructing Gypsy ethnicity and the making of an underclass in transitional societies of Europe, New York, East European Monographs.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Strategic documents aiming to reduce social disparities between Roma and non-Roma are rarely based on data and indicators. This is shown by the preparatory, pilot and testing research carried out prior to the survey conducted for the project 'Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights'. The current report aims to suggest options for filling this information gap.

The report outlines the primary challenges that Bulgaria's Roma face in terms of their socio-economic status, their exposure to discrimination, harassment and violence, and the impact of these on the risk of multiple deprivation. Complementary country-specific indicators are proposed. These are necessary for monitoring the social inclusion of Roma and the reduction in social inequalities in Bulgaria during the next programming period of the Structural Funds.

Most of the indicators included in this report correspond to the indicators that the European Commission adopted for monitoring the results of the implementation of the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, and can be used as a baseline for measuring progress in Roma inclusion. The government may set explicit targets for key areas of Roma inclusion to make these indicators operational, as suggested in the Council Recommendation of March 2021. In addition, the set of legislative changes and sector-specific recommendations outlined below would make the process of Roma inclusion more effective and efficient.

This report outlines the multidimensional nature of the deprivations that Bulgaria's Roma face. The combination of poverty, marginalisation, low level of education and exposure to discrimination, harassment and violence perpetuates the vicious circle of exclusion and replication of multidimensional poverty over generations.

The primary objective of the project was to test novel approaches regarding data on the situation of populations at risk of poverty, social exclusion, marginalisation and violation of their rights. The data summarised in this report go beyond confirming that Roma are the group at highest risk in that regard. The analysis puts the survey data in broader context, with the aim of providing a better understanding of the drivers leading to the deprivations Roma face and informing policies to address these drivers.

The Bulgarian government submitted its updated National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma (2021–2030) to the European Commission in December 2021. Commenting on the specific policies envisaged in the strategy goes beyond the scope and purpose of this report (apart from the general comment of 'allocate resources and do it!'). The following recommendations outline several preconditions necessary for the strategy to meet its objectives.

Close loopholes in important legislation

A number of loopholes in legislative acts implicitly legalise discrimination against Roma in the areas they address. Closing these loopholes would allow populations in deprived situations to effectively enjoy their fundamental rights.

Protection against Discrimination Act

The definition of 'segregation' as 'forced separation' applied in the act does not fully comply with the requirements of Council Directive 2000/43/EC[99] and, in practice, legitimises the existence of territorial segregation (slums in large cities) and school segregation. An

amended of this provision would reinforce the legal basis for challenging segregation.

Civil Registration Act

Some procedures concerning applications for registration for permanent or current address in the Civil Registration Act (in particular, the rules on registration of people who cannot present deeds of ownership and/or tenancy agreements) create conditions for violations of the constitutional right to free movement and work and family life. Moreover, they make renewal of expired ID cards difficult for people without deeds of ownership or tenancy/lease agreements. Revision of this provision would close the loopholes currently allowing tens of thousands of Bulgarian citizens to live in perpetual informality on the margins of society without basic identification documents and with no access to administrative, educational, health and other services of the state.

Health Insurance Act

The provisions of the Health Insurance Act regarding restoration of insurance rights effectively prevent a considerable number of Roma from accessing basic health services. Going back to the previous wording of Article 109 of the act would result in better access to health services and lower the cost for the healthcare system in the long run. Until 2015, it stated that health insurance rights could be regained after due contributions for the previous 36 months were paid; since 2015, the act has stated that contributions for 60 months must be paid.

Set up a robust and reliable monitoring system

Strategic documents aiming to reduce social disparities between Roma and non-Roma are rarely based on data and indicators. This is shown by the preparatory, pilot and testing research carried out prior to the survey conducted for this project.[100] However, a lot of data exist, and more will be generated in the coming years. The challenge is to improve their quality and use the data for populating relevant indicators.

Update the targets of the strategy

Only 10 of the 24 outcome indicators of the National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma (2021–2030) can be disaggregated by ethnicity. The data from the survey conducted for this project make it possible to populate the remaining indicators and expand the list of indicators. Moreover, these data can serve as the baseline against which progress towards the targets set in the strategy can be monitored. It is recommended that the government plan in advance for the and allocates resources for the mid-point data collection (in line with the mid-term assessment of the progress of the implementation of the EU framework for equality, inclusion and participation that the European Commission plans for 2025).

Fill the data gaps regarding territorial segregation

Ample research outlines the spatial segregation many Roma face. The matching of data on the situation of people living in marginalised settings carried out for this project shows both the need for and the potential of robust data on territorial dimensions of vulnerability, which is a phenomenon that particularly affects 'Roma' understood as an 'umbrella term'.

The survey may have underestimated this phenomenon's magnitude as a result of the sampling methodology based on address registration. Territorial dimensions of vulnerability should be addressed, and establishing a reliable mapping of segregated settlements in urgent need of intervention is recommended. Such mapping may be used for sampling purposes in future research, so that people living in such conditions do not fall out of the scope of regular data collection and statistics. Moreover, it can inform the measures for infrastructure investment in marginalised Roma communities (namely access to sanitation, water, transport and waste collection) and regularisation of informal dwellings. One simple step could be including the variable 'type of neighbourhood' in EU-SILC and the European Union Labour Force Survey.

Capture discrimination comprehensively

Discrimination is currently captured through its perception by the populations at risk of violation of their rights. This is based on direct survey questions about the perception (a feeling) that a person has been discriminated against 'because of being Roma'. Questions on personal feelings of discrimination could be complemented with projective questions such as "Do you have a relative (family member, relative, friend, neighbour) who has been a victim of discrimination/violence/harassment?" To some extent, this avoids the inconvenience/shame of the respondent telling a stranger that they have been a victim. It is recommended that additional qualitative surveys be conducted, to reveal the situations and conditions that make Roma vulnerable. As regards the grounds for discrimination for Roma, asking about "because of being perceived as Roma" instead of "because of being Roma" would be in line with the definition of Roma as an 'umbrella term'.

Optimise the process of data collection

Single-source surveys – such as the one conducted for this project – make it possible to correlate various characteristics related to vulnerability and outline their drivers. These are important benefits from a policy perspective, but they come at the expense of complexity and long-duration interviews, which pose risks to data quality.

Collecting data for individual thematic areas through thematic modules in existing standard statistical instruments may be more robust and efficient for the purpose of monitoring progress than using one (long and complex) integrated survey. Sector-specific data (e.g. on poverty, employment or labour market participation) can come from EU-SILC and – potentially – from the European Union Labour Force Survey if it includes questions on ethnicity, as EU-SILC does. These surveys already include questions on ethnicity and generate important data in the relevant thematic areas. Complementing their standard questionnaires with short thematic modules on discrimination and harassment in the respective areas would reduce costs and allow for higher-frequency monitoring.

This does not mean that custom Roma surveys would become obsolete. On the contrary: they can go deeper into issues of cooperation, trust (particularly in the police and the judiciary), participation, survival strategies, etc. They can also contain thematic modules to collect information necessary for estimating life expectancy (which FRA tested).

Ideally, modules on ethnicity in all such instruments should go beyond just one question on self-identification. They should allow a second identity with which the respondent self-identifies to be selected (which Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia have successfully intro-

duced) and should contain questions on language spoken at home and religion. Triangulation of such data would allow more precise identification of ethnic identity for the purpose of the policymaking process.

Measure antigypsyism and social distance

Prejudice and antigypsyism are a key driver of discrimination. The new EU Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation reflects this driver in the suggested portfolio of indicators. Thus, it is highly recommended that the thematic add-on modules of the standard surveys include questions on social distance as well as other relevant indicators. That would mirror the surveys of the European Values Study.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Baseline indicators for monitoring Roma equality, inclusion and participation

The indicators in the table below follow the list the European Commission suggested in the Portfolio of Indicators (annexed to the 2021 Communication from the Commission). In some cases, the definition of the indicators for Bulgaria slightly differs from the suggested in the Portfolio due to specific circumstances of the data collection in Bulgaria. These cases are marked under "Comments".

Objective 1: Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination

#	Indicator	Type	Baseline value	Comment, source
1	Share of people who felt discriminated against because of being Roma in any of the areas covered in the survey in the past 12 months.	Headline	16.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
2	Share of general population who feel uncomfortable having Roma as their neighbours	Headline	34.7	IPHS 2018
	Share of Roma aged 16 years and over who have experienced hate-motivated harassment at least 5 acts because of being Roma in the 12 months before the survey	Secondary	6.3	BNSI/FRA 2020

* Answer "no" to the question "would you accept to live on a street where (several) Roma families live?"
Source: survey conducted by the Institute for Population and Human Studies in 2018

Objective 2: Reduce poverty and social exclusion

#	Indicator	Type	Baseline value	Comment, source
3	At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60 % of median equivalised income after social transfers)	Headline	71.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
3.1	Children< 18 at risk of poverty	Headline	77.2	BNSI/FRA 2020
4	Share of people living in a household in severe material deprivation (cannot afford 4 out of 9 items, e.g. food, inviting friends, etc.)	Headline	62.0	EU-SILC, 2020
4.1	Children < 18 living in material deprivation (lacking 1 or more from 13 items)	Headline	77.8	EU-SILC, 2020
	Share of people living in a household where at least one person has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food	Secondary	24.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of children aged 0–17 living in a household where at least one person gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food	Secondary	29.9	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people living in a household that is only able to make ends meet with (great) difficulty	Secondary		Not included in the 2020 survey
	Share of people who do not have a bank account	Secondary	50.8	BNSI/FRA 2020

Objective 3: Promote participation by means of empowerment and building cooperation and trust in public institutions

#	Indicator	Type	Baseline value	Comment, source
5	Share of people who felt discriminated against (in any area) in the past 12 months and reported the last incident of discrimination as due to their being Roma	Headline	7.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
6	Active citizenship and participation indicator	Headline		Not included in the 2020 survey
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who did NOT report the most recent incident of harassment because as due to their being Roma (of all people who experienced harassment)	Secondary	26.4	BNSI/FRA 2020

	Share of people aged 16 years and over who did NOT report the most recent incident of physical attack as due to their being Roma	Secondary	(100)	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of Roma aged 16 years and over who had heard of at least one equality body, national human rights institutions or Ombudsperson office	Secondary	46.0	BNSI/FRA 2020

Objective 4: Increase effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education

7	Share of children aged from 3 up to the age of starting compulsory primary education who attend early childhood education and care	Headline	58.3	BNSI/FRA 2020
8	Share of people aged 20–24 who have completed at least upper secondary education	Headline	28.0	BNSI/FRA 2020
9	Share of children aged 6–14 who attend schools where 'all or most schoolmates are Roma' as reported by the respondents	Headline	63.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of children of compulsory-schooling age (5–18) who attend education, house-hold members*	Secondary	81.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months, when in contact with school authorities (as a parent/guardian or a student).	Secondary	10.6 %	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Early leavers from education and training, 18–24 years old	Secondary	68.0	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 30–34 who have completed tertiary education	Secondary	0.0	BNSI/FRA 2020

The indicator is calculated for age group 5–16, which is the compulsory school age in Bulgaria

Objective 5: Increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment

10	Share of people aged 20–64 who self-declared their main activity status as 'paid work' (including full-time, part-time, ad hoc jobs, self-employment and occasional work or work in the past four weeks)	Headline	47.2	BNSI/FRA 2020
11	Share of young people aged 15–29* whose current main activity is 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET)	Headline	53.6	BNSI/FRA 2020
12	Gender employment gap: Difference in the paid work rate between women and men aged 20–64	Headline	32.2	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months when at work	Secondary	11.0	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months when looking for a job	Secondary	22.9	BNSI/FRA 2020

Objective 6: Improve Roma health and increase effective equal access to quality healthcare services

13	Difference in life expectancy at birth (general population vs. Roma)*	Headline		Current population statistics 2021 census
14	Share of people who have restricted access to health and social services:			BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of persons self-declared as Roma with unmet medical needs	Headline	7.6	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people self-declared as Roma registered with a general practitioner (GP), aged 18–65	Headline	86.4	BNSI/FRA 2020 and National Health Insurance Fund
	Proportion of immunised children self-declared by their parents as Roma aged 0–2	Headline	83.1	BNSI/FRA 2020

Share of people aged 16 years and over self-declared as Roma who assess their health in general as 'very good' or 'good'	Secondary	74.3	BNSI/FRA 2020
Share of people aged 16 years and over self-declared as Roma with medical insurance coverage	Secondary	46.5	BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and National Revenue Agency
Share of people aged 16 years and over who have felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months when accessing the health services	Secondary	10.8	BNSI/FRA 2020

* To be calculated based once the results of the 2021 population census data are available

Objective 7: Increase effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services

15	Share of people living in housing deprivation (in an apartment that is too dark or has a leaking roof, damp walls or floors or does not have a bath/shower or indoor toilet)	Headline	65.8	BNSI/FRA 2020
16	Share of people living in a household that does not have the minimum number of rooms according to Eurostat's definition of overcrowding	Headline	71.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
17	Share of people living in a household without tap water inside the dwelling	Headline	18.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people living in a household without a toilet, shower or bathroom inside the dwelling	Secondary	46.1	BNSI/FRA 2020.
	Share of people living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor	Secondary	23.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people living in a household that in the past 12 months has ever been forced to leave the accommodation or halting site	Secondary	2.7	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who have felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 5 years when looking for housing	Secondary	(17.7)	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Residential segregation. Indicator(s) reflecting the geographic aspects of Roma situation. Access to basic services and infrastructure in the area (health services, public transports, schools, child care, etc.) because of distance, opening times or lack of service. Share of people living in illegal or unregulated housing	Secondary		Will be developed and added once the Census 2021 results are available

Objective 7-a: Fighting environmental deprivation, promoting environmental justice

Share of Roma living in a household with the following listed as problems in their accommodation: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as: smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted water	Secondary	49.0	BNSI/FRA 2020

Annex 2: Interviewed persons by self-declared ethnicity

District	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma	Other, did not declare or did not wish to answer	Total
Blagoevgrad	1237	11	59	60	1367
Burgas	1133	217	210	16	1576
Varna	1358	70	171	10	1609
Veliko Tarnovo	883	23	77	37	1020
Vidin	273	-	77	0	350
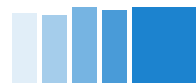
Vratsa	678	4	85	4	771
Gabrovo	415	4	-	4	423
Dobrich	640	71	86	2	799
Kardzhali	169	431	26	10	636
Kyustendil	530	1	83	3	617
Lovech	556	21	34	1	612
Montana	406	2	139	9	556
Pazardzhik	1185	30	45	13	1273
Pernik	517	-	33	16	566
Pleven	788	28	102	3	921
Plovdiv	2425	157	275	49	2906
Razgrad	188	305	76	15	584
Ruse	872	141	116	6	1135
Silistra	253	174	15	12	454
Sliven	589	35	148	3	775
Smolyan	413	45	-	44	502
Sofia	1099	-	63	4	1166
Sofia (capital)	5024	44	271	37	5376
Stara Zagora	1257	14	213	97	1581
Targovishte	168	219	22	6	415
Haskovo	892	83	132	8	1115
Shumen	370	237	79	2	688
Yambol	333	14	155	8	510
Grand Total	**24651**	**2381**	**2792**	**479**	**30303**

Annex 3: Survey sample

District	Clusters			Households		
	Urban	**Rural**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Rural**	**Total**
Blagoevgrad	63	37	100	378	222	600
Burgas	116	33	149	696	198	894
Varna	125	23	148	750	138	888
Veliko Tarnovo	56	28	84	336	168	504
Vidin	21	14	35	126	84	210
Vratsa	34	24	58	204	144	348
Gabrovo	35	8	43	210	48	258

Dobrich	43	19	62	258	114	372
Kardzhali	20	30	50	120	180	300
Kyustendil	33	15	48	198	90	288
Lovech	31	19	50	186	114	300
Montana	28	20	48	168	120	288
Pazardzhik	57	31	88	342	186	528
Pernik	34	11	45	204	66	270
Pleven	55	31	86	330	186	516
Plovdiv	160	54	214	960	324	1284
Razgrad	21	21	42	126	126	252
Ruse	68	18	86	408	108	516
Silistra	17	18	35	102	108	210
Sliven	46	22	68	276	132	408
Smolyan	22	19	41	132	114	246
Sofia	48	36	84	288	216	504
Sofia(capital)	461	19	480	2766	114	2880
Stara Zagora	86	33	119	516	198	714
Targovishte	21	17	38	126	102	228
Haskovo	62	26	88	372	156	528
Shumen	42	24	66	252	144	396
Yambol	32	13	45	192	78	270
Grand total	**1837**	**663**	**2500**	**11022**	**3978**	**15000**

Annex 4: Methodology of the OSI Sofia mapping of 'marginalised localities' that the surrounding population perceives as 'Roma neighbourhoods'

Objective of the mapping

The primary objective of the exercise was to capture the territorial distribution of people living in segregated settings who are vulnerable, not just to poverty, social exclusion and material deprivation, but also to discrimination on the basis of their perceived belonging to the place they live. For that purpose, localities were screened to identify and delineate areas that are clearly marginalised, lack basic infrastructure and access to services, have predominantly dilapidated and/or informal housing and are often physically detached from the rest of the city, town or village.

The mapping of such settlements is important for two reasons. First, it allows territorial vulnerability (lack of basic infrastructure or access to social services) to be addressed. To achieve this, it identifies clearly marginalised areas in which people live in deprived conditions. Second, it disentangles the issue of 'marginality' from 'ethnicity'. To achieve this,

it provides an overview of the ethnic composition of the populations living in such conditions without equating 'ethnicity' with 'marginality'.

Definitions and methodology

A 'marginalised locality' is defined as a settlement/community comprising at least 30 households in close proximity that belong to a marginalised community, with members either self-identifying as Roma or living in deprived conditions usually associated with 'Roma'.

'Key informants' are the people working with Roma and other vulnerable populations at local and community levels. These include local Roma non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, community workers and activists, social workers in the municipalities where the settlement is located, health, education and employment mediators, and local police inspectors.

'Fieldworkers' are the experts directly involved in collecting the information. Most fieldworkers did not have prior professional experience of data collection: they belonged to the same professional categories as the key informants did. Either their organisations designated them or they personally volunteered to participate in data collection. OSI Sofia staff instructed fieldworkers on applying the data collection methodology.

Fieldwork

The mapping was conducted between 2008 and 2011 and periodically updated until the end of 2021. It took place in two stages.

During the first stage, the marginalised settlements were identified based on external expert assessment from different sources and data from the 2011 census. The results of the external observations were plotted on maps on which the boundaries of the settlements/communities were outlined based on addresses, or street names when addresses were available. In small rural settlements and settlements with high levels of informal housing, where addresses were often not available, other territorial features were used to mark settlements' boundaries on the maps. These include buildings, greenfield and brownfield sites, and other elements of the local infrastructure or landscapes.

During the second stage, detailed information on the settlement conditions (infrastructure, population density, detachment from or integration in the respective city/town/village) was collected. For that purpose, the key informants filled in a standardised observational questionnaire. The questionnaire contained brief sections on basic demographic information, housing, employment, education, emigration and immigration, security issues and social capital. The fieldworkers involved then triangulated the information and revised/added to it in cases of significant discrepancies or gaps.

The fieldwork was purely observational and did not involve face-to-face interviews with local residents. By its nature, the registered information is the key informants' expert assessment based on their knowledge, professional experience and daily work in the relevant settlements and communities. A broader set of experts from local public institutions, municipalities, schools and civil society organisations discussed and verified results from the mapping after they had been collected.

Results

The core of the database includes 890 geocoded polygons outlining the boundaries of set-

tlements that marginalised communities inhabit, which are still commonly referred to as 'Gypsy neighbourhoods'. These include 21 villages included in a sample that the BNSI and FRA produced, in which at least 50 % of local residents are Roma (the share is 100 % in some).

The information collected includes basic data on each marginalised locality: population and housing, employment, education, emigration and immigration, security issues, social interactions and interinstitutional partnerships.

Subsequent updates of the database after 2011 also relied on further confirmatory expert assessments, on data from household surveys and increasingly on satellite imagery, pictures and videos, such as those in Google Street View. Projects that contributed to the updates of the database include:

the Bulgarian Longitudinal Inclusive Society Survey 2010–2013, which OSI Sofia carried out in cooperation with The World Bank,

a survey called '100 Roma neighbourhoods', which OSI Sofia carried out in 2012,

the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion in Bulgaria 2020 survey, which OSI Sofia carried out in 2020,

an assessment of the urban housing situation of Roma and other marginalised groups, which OSI Sofia carried out in 2020, and which The World Bank commissioned,

two successive OSI Sofia surveys carried out in 2020–2021 with a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the attitudes towards vaccination in 10 Roma communities, which were selected from a much longer list of potential places for data collection.

Ethnic composition of the population

The people living in the settlements that the general population perceives as 'Gypsy neighbourhoods' were not asked about their ethnicity. The estimation of the ethnic makeup of these settlements is based on fieldworkers' and key informants' assessments, which does not mean it is wrong. Ample research suggests that the 'Roma universe' in Bulgaria is extremely diverse, comprising various groups and subgroups. Moreover, a considerable number of people with socio-cultural characteristics similar to those of Roma self-identify as ethnic Bulgarians, ethnic Turks, Millet, etc. This complexity is reflected in the approach of the Council of Europe and the European Commission: using 'Roma' as an umbrella term.

Seen from this perspective, the mapping gives an estimate of the number and territorial distribution of Roma (understood as an umbrella term) living in marginalised situations. It does not claim to provide the 'total number of Roma', but rather provides a robust estimate of the number of people living in ghettoised conditions and those whom the surrounding population perceives as Roma (and thus who are at risk of being perceived as 'Gypsies' and of being the object of antigypsyism).

It is worth noting that the number of people living in marginalised settlements is close to the Council of Europe's estimate of the Bulgarian 'Roma population', understood as an umbrella term (about 750,000 or 9.94 % of the population in 2012). The methodology behind the Council of Europe's 'expert assessment' seems similar to the one applied in this mapping (based on a combination of external identification and subsequent verification by key stakeholders).

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