



Bundesministerium  
des Innern  
und für Heimat

## **Tackling Antigypsyism, Ensuring Participation**

### **National Strategic Framework to Implement the EU Roma Strategic Framework in Germany**

2022

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## Preliminary remarks

The Federal Government, having taken office on 8 December 2021, submits this National Strategic Framework, entitled “Tackling Antigypsyism, Ensuring Participation”, in compliance with the European Commission’s request that Member States communicate, by autumn 2021, national Roma strategic frameworks on the implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030.<sup>1</sup>

The new Federal Government’s Cabinet decision to adopt the National Strategic Framework in February 2022 marked the end, for the time being, of a broad-based coordination process begun by the previous Federal Government following the adoption of the Council Recommendation in March 2021 and which involved federal ministries, the *Länder*, leading local government associations and civil society representatives. It at the same time highlights the importance of the National Strategic Framework as the tie-in to Germany’s expanded social cohesion policy.

It is in Germany’s very particular interest to ensure that all efforts – especially attempts to find solutions proposed in the new area of action of “tackling antigypsyism” – are included in the overall assessment of Member States’ national strategic frameworks which the EU Commission announced would be conducted in summer 2022.

Implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030 at national level is based on an open concept which aims to incorporate current developments initiated by the new Federal Government and new experience gained in the coming years and to then update the relevant programmes accordingly. This is especially true of measures announced in the new Coalition Agreement 2021–2025 aimed at ensuring diversity and combating group-based enmity. Germany’s National Strategic Framework already makes reference to specific points addressed in the new Coalition Agreement. One example is the appointment of a Federal Government Commissioner for Antigypsyism who will, among other things, be responsible for coordinating activities in relation to tackling antigypsyism and for implementing and developing the National Strategic Framework based on the central demands made by the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism. The Commissioner will also act as contact person as regards all those concerns raised by Sinti and Roma

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<sup>1</sup> Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation (OJ C 93/01, 19.3.2021).

communities. That includes the establishment of a National Roma Contact Point to Implement the EU Roma Strategic Framework and setting up of a civil society monitoring and information office to record antigypsyist attacks below the threshold of criminal liability.

## A. Summary

The Federal Government's National Strategic Framework – entitled “Tackling Antigypsyism, Ensuring Participation” – on the implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework carries forward and expands upon previous efforts to integrate Sinti and Roma in Germany. The focus of future delivery will be on equal access to education, employment, health and housing, effectively fighting antigypsyism and promoting equal participation.

The Federal Government's integration policy pursues a broader-based approach of “integrated sets of measures” which are open to all migrants. The instrument used to develop integration measures together with the *Länder*, leading local government associations and civil society is its National Action Plan on Integration. Its overarching objectives are to improve the living situation of migrants and their families and to strengthen social cohesion. This generalised strategy is complemented – particularly when it comes to implementing the new cross-cutting issues – by targeted measures and programmes for Sinti and Roma at federal, state and local level.

Fighting racism and antigypsyism is a top political priority. The non-binding international working definition of the term “antigypsyism” adopted during Germany's Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was subsequently also adopted at national level by the Federal Cabinet in March 2021.

The work of the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism sets another important milestone in the systematic analysis of the fight against antigypsyism. Its extensive report, delivered in June 2021, contains numerous recommended policy actions for achieving this objective. The Independent Commission on Antigypsyism's report also launched a much-needed, wide-ranging social policy dialogue which must continue throughout the 20th electoral term.

The Cabinet Committee on combating racism and right-wing extremism's set of measures contains further actions which support the goal of effectively combating discrimination and racism against Sinti and Roma, and thus represents an update of the National Action Plan Against Racism which was adopted in 2017. The establishment of the National Roma Contact Point as an interministerial coordination office has a key role to play in this. Important tasks of the National Roma Contact Point will include acting as an interface to the EU level as well as being involved in close exchange with civil society Sinti and Roma representatives. Further, an independent civil society monitoring body currently being set up will make a valuable contribution by recording antigypsyist attacks below the threshold of criminal liability and thus to addressing a key concern raised during consultations with civil society.

Both networking activities and civil society empowerment play a key role in the Federal Government's strategy for preventing and fighting antigypsyism, because a vibrant civil society is an essential part of a vigilant and resilient democracy. The "Living Democracy" federal programme, for example, promotes diverse activities for preventing extremism, promoting democracy and shaping diversity at local, regional and national level. In this context, support is, for instance, provided to the Antigypsyism Competence Network, which pools information from across the country, provides specialist advice and aims to guarantee the transfer of successful prevention measures at federal, state and local level.

Promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction measures forms part of the new ESF+ Federal Programme. It ensures equal access for all disadvantaged groups and explicitly includes marginalised communities such as Sinti and Roma. The *Länder* and local authorities also have their own action plans and other measures for combating poverty and promoting social participation.

Besides the new horizontal targets, the previous targets set in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 – i.e. combating the socio-economic marginalisation of Sinti and Roma by promoting their equal access to education,

employment, health and housing – will continue to form key elements of Germany's National Strategic Framework and will be supported through programmes and measures at federal, state and local level.

In order to be able to evaluate progress made and assess further needs for action, the Federal Government has launched various measures which will help continuously refine the National Strategic Framework. The indicator-based integration monitoring conducted at federal and *Länder* level, as well as antigypsyism research, for instance within the frame of the Racism Monitor, are key building blocks of this evaluation process. Great importance is attached to civil society participation. A discussion forum with civil society organised by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (*Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes*), in consultation with the National Roma Contact Point, will seek to find viable solutions which are to contribute to the evaluation of the National Strategic Framework and which, by taking account of the national context, do justice to the sensitive issue of data gathering.

Implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030 at national level sets a framework for action which is to be further developed in a process of dialogue with civil society. In addition to the numerous recommendations made by the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism (including on Sinti and Roma participation in inclusion advisory councils), account will also have to be taken of the findings of antigypsyism research. Moreover, Germany will continue to update the European Commission on progress made at national level as part of regular reporting cycles.



## **B. New EU Roma Strategic Framework**

The European Commission's new EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2020–2030<sup>2</sup> ("EU Roma Strategic Framework") was communicated on 7 October 2020. It was presented, together with the Commission, at a joint high-ranking online conference as part of Germany's EU Council Presidency. This new 10-year plan builds upon the previous EU Framework for National Roma Integration strategies up to 2020 ("EU Framework up to 2020") and places the focus on promoting socio-economic inclusion (in the fields of education, employment, housing and health) as well as on equality and participation.<sup>3</sup>

Another target of the new 10-year plan is for Member States to increase commitment to and the effectiveness of their national measures and to use indicators and measurable targets to evaluate and monitor the efficacy of measures pursued.

This National Strategic Framework is based on insights gained from the evaluation of the EU Framework up to 2020. This evaluation, conducted by the Commission, and the conclusions drawn from it by the Council, the European Parliament and several European and national civil society organisations, revealed both that measures previously pursued have not yet achieved the desired targets of putting an end to the discrimination and marginalisation of Roma people and a need to renew and strengthen the commitment to achieving Roma equality. The EU Roma Strategic Framework takes full account of this need.

The European Parliament's accompanying resolution of 17 September 2021 calls on Member States to step up efforts to integrate Sinti and Roma and to combat negative attitudes to people with a Romani background.

The aim in placing increased focus on tackling antigypsyism and discrimination is to reinforce, but not to replace, the approach to integration adopted under the EU

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<sup>2</sup> See COM (2020) 620 final.

<sup>3</sup> See COM (2011) 173 final.

Framework up to 2020. This is to help individual Member States set individual priorities within their national implementation processes taking account of their specific context. The Federal Government fully endorses the EU Roma Strategic Framework placing more emphasis on tackling antigypsyism – including as a horizontal cross-cutting issue. The EU's joint efforts to effectively combat antigypsyism were also demonstrated at the digital High-Level Conference during Germany's EU Council Presidency in 2020.

In the Council Recommendation of 12 March 2020 on Roma equality, inclusion and participation<sup>4</sup> – which was initiated under Germany's and adopted during Portugal's EU Council Presidency – the Member States reaffirmed this objective. The Member States are called to adopt national Roma strategies and/or integrated sets of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies or to update their national strategic framework and sets of measures and to communicate them to the European Commission.

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<sup>4</sup> See OJ C 93/01, 19.3.2021.

## C. Sinti and Roma in Germany and Europe

At European level, the word “Roma” is used as an umbrella term to refer to heterogeneous groups whose members share certain characteristic features such as language, culture and history but which can also differ, quite considerably in some cases, owing to their different experiences, customs and regional specificities. These unique characteristics need to be preserved because they enrich Europe’s cultural diversity. Europe will succeed in maintaining a rich and varied social and cultural life if all sections of society – minorities and the general population – live together peaceably.

Larger Roma communities can be found in various Central and Eastern European countries. In the light of current demographic trends it is worth noting that Roma represent the youngest European demographic group in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the size and importance of this European demographic, large parts of mainstream society know little or nothing about Roma history, culture and language. Prejudice and lack of knowledge about minorities often foster an environment of intolerance, ignorance and marginalisation. According to the findings of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Roma are the most stigmatised, discriminated against and persecuted demographic group in Europe.<sup>6</sup> This frequently leads to social deprivation and limited opportunities for equal access to education, employment, health and housing are frequently the consequence. Such multiple marginalisation represents an obstacle which is difficult to overcome, especially for women and girls. That is why the actual living conditions of many Roma often conflict with European values such as tolerance, justice and solidarity.

It is against this backdrop that the Federal Government feels that strengthening social participation and critically engaging with and tackling antigypsyism is a specific challenge of the highest political priority.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.welt.de/debatte/die-welt-in-worten/article13792393/Die-Roma-sind-Europas-verschwendete-Minderheit.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See EU-MIDIS European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, First Report in the Series “Summary of Data” Roma (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), p. 2.

According to rough civil society estimates, between around 70,000 and 150,000 members of the national minority of German Sinti and Roma and more than 100,000 Roma migrants live in Germany.<sup>7</sup> In the 1990s, more than 50,000 Yugoslav Roma came to Germany in the course of the war in the Balkans, for instance; in the 2000s tens of thousands of Roma arrived primarily from Bulgaria, Romania and Moldavia.<sup>8</sup> These are only estimates, though, as Germany does not record any population statistics or socio-economic data related to ethnicity, there are no non-official sources of such information and it is not possible to undertake a representative survey as part of official sample surveys.

As a national minority in Germany, German Sinti and Roma enjoy protection under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The treaty, which entered into force in 1998, prohibits any form of discrimination on account of a person belonging to a national minority as well as their assimilation against their will. Moreover, Contracting Parties undertake to protect the civil liberties of national minorities. The members of the national minority of German Sinti and Roma are German nationals and have the same rights and obligations as members of German mainstream society. Some Roma migrants have acquired German nationality; the legal status of others who are nationals of another EU Member State or of a third country is determined by their residence status.

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<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/bundesregierung/staatsministerin-fuer-kultur-und-medien/kultur/kunst-kulturfoerderung/foerderbereiche/unterstuetzung-minderheiten>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.unicef.de/blob/9412/179d119f221b7c27f794b097e0a84058/i0092-roma-europa-2007-pdf-data.pdf>.

## D. German integration policy

### I. Objectives and inclusive approach

The overarching objective of Germany's national integration policy is for all people living here legally to be able to realise their own potential and bring it to bear in society regardless of whether they were born here or not. That objective applies in equal measure to all Sinti and Roma living in Germany. Integration policy thus simultaneously fulfils the principles and rights of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which places the focus on the right to equal treatment and equal opportunities as regards employment, social protection, education and access to public goods and services, and calls for the promotion of equality of opportunity for under-represented groups.

To strengthen social cohesion, a society needs to observe both statutory rules and the fundamentals of social relations and to respect the personal freedom of everyone to choose how they live their life under the broad framework of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, GG). To achieve that objective, federal integration policy applies the principle of "give and take". The state and society provide ample resources and offers of support to that end. Integration is both an offer to and an obligation on each individual. The Federal Government understands integration policy to mean granting rights as well as defining expectations to be made of individual newcomers and society as a whole.

Crucial to social cohesion are regulatory systems which enable equality of opportunity and actual participation and are non-discriminatory – in all areas, especially in social, economic and cultural life. The Federal Government also fosters an understanding and acceptance of diversity in society and takes a firm stand against discrimination, racism and right-wing extremism, as well as all other forms of group-focused enmity in order to strengthen equal opportunities in society in conformity with constitutional values. And so integration policy can make a contribution to safeguarding good social coexistence and prosperity in Germany.

Within Germany's federal structure integration policy and fostering participation are a joint federal, state and local task. That is why integration and participation always need to be regarded as a cross-cutting task which relate to various policy areas at federal and

*Länder* level. The *Länder* have adopted overall integration policy strategies and guidelines which combine and dovetail their various individual measures. Ultimately, it is at local level that integration and participation play out, which is why local authorities have a key role to play as integration policy actors. Independent towns and cities, counties and municipalities likewise face up to the challenges posed by integration by investing their human and financial resources. The federal, state and local levels thus cooperate closely in line with their specific competence.

## **II. Promoting integration at federal level**

Federal integration promotion measures are based on a modular and inclusive range of activities aimed at various target groups comprising building blocks within the remits of nearly all government departments. They encompass, among other things, language teaching, integration in training, work and education, as well as social integration. Language is the prerequisite for and key to integration.

All these measures are as a matter of principle open to all legal migrants in Germany, regardless of national, ethnic or religious affiliation. They cover the following three areas:

- language teaching,
- integration in training, work and (tertiary) education, and
- social integration.

A broad range of tried and tested basic offerings are available in these areas: integration courses designed to teach basic language skills and values; intermediate and advanced vocational language courses; and the instruments available under Book Two of the Social Code (*Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch*, SGB II) and Book Three of the Social Code (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch*, SGB III) aimed at training and work integration. These are all regulated by law and are in principle available nationwide. Incentives such as easier naturalisation for migrants after passing their integration course (after seven years legal residence in Germany rather than eight) can promote voluntary participation

in or facilitate access to these basic services. Under certain conditions, courses are mandatory for migrants, in particular if they are receiving state benefits to secure their livelihood or there are other special interests affecting society as a whole.

There are also numerous more in-depth or complementary programmes. These are generally voluntary and supplementary or additional to basic services. They thus reflect the subtly different integration needs of different newcomers and close existing gaps in provision. Some programmes are closely aligned with business and business associations and thus ensure they are highly practical in nature.

Furthermore, the Federal Government supports the many volunteers and paid staff and their organisations in civic society who demonstrate a sense of responsibility, initiative and commitment. Much of the help and support available draws on many years of experience gained from projects aimed at people with a migration background which were and are also open to and expanded to include new migrants.

### **III. National Action Plan on Integration**

Integration policy is a joint task of the Federation, *Länder* and local authorities. It must be regarded both as a subject-specific and a cross-cutting task and will only be a success if business, society and those concerned are also involved. The National Action Plan on Integration (NAP-I) is the instrument used to further develop federal integration measures in cooperation with the *Länder*, leading local government associations and civil society. It was adopted by the Federal Government and is coordinated by the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. Its overarching objectives are to improve the life situation of migrants and their families and to strengthen social cohesion. The Federal Government applies these objectives to Roma migrants, too. The NAP-I is oriented to the five phases of immigration and coexistence.

Phase 1 – “Before migration: Managing expectations – Providing guidance” – for the first time sets out how integration policy can be used as a framework within which migrants can be prepared for life in Germany before they actually leave their home country so as

to make integration in Germany easier right from day one. Phase 2 focuses on “Initial integration”, that is the period immediately after new migrants arrive in Germany which is key to their integration: they have to find their feet in new surroundings, learn German, need guidance and support settling in Germany. Phase 3 shows how important and also how demanding social participation is. Besides open access and support in regard to employment, early childhood education and civil society engagement, appropriate support at local level is needed to build social participation skills. Phase 4 – “Growing Together” – focuses on refining the framework and diversity strategies, be that in regard to organised sports, health policy, urban development and housing or the fields of culture and the media. During Phase 5 the Federal Government focuses on tackling discrimination, racism and all other forms of group-focused enmity on a lasting basis. Issues such as naturalisation, civic education, participation and diversity in business are also addressed. More than 110 core Federal Government projects have been elaborated under the NAP-I.



## **E. National Strategic Framework**

### **I. Combining integrated and targeted measures**

The EU Framework Strategy carries on the previous integration approach in the fields of education, employment, health and housing. The Federal Government implemented the EU Framework up to 2020 by launching sets of measures as part of a broad-based policy strategy on integration which is open to all migrants.

Besides integration and inclusion, equality and participation also have a key role to play under the new EU Framework Strategy, in particular tackling antigypsyism and discrimination. The Federal Government fully endorses these targets at EU level, too.

Implementation at national level is based on a combination of integrated and targeted measures. The policy strategy of integrated sets of measures open to all migrants which has been pursued so far will be continued in the fields of education, employment, health and housing. The approach will be expanded – especially when it comes to delivering on the new cross-cutting targets – to include targeted measures and programmes for Sinti and Roma at federal, state and local level. Examples of measures at federal level include the setting up of a civil society monitoring and information office responsible for the recording, documentation and analysis of antigypsyist incidents in Germany. Examples at state level include Berlin's Action Plan to Include Foreign Roma, launched in 2013, which delineates additional areas of action. At local level, more general measures are flanked by specific offers such as the use of educational support staff drawn from the Roma community, for instance as part of the Dortmund Overall Strategy on Migration, especially where empowerment, self-organisation, the promotion of cultural identity and dialogue between Roma and non-Roma are concerned.

### **II. Tackling antigypsyism; equal participation**

#### **1. Equality: preventing and fighting antigypsyism and discrimination**

Fighting racism in general and antigypsyism in particular is one of the Federal Government's key policy priorities – including and precisely because racism,

marginalisation and violence are on the rise again today. The racist attack in Hanau in spring 2020 in which nine people, including Sinti and Roma, were killed, is sad proof of this trend. But hate speech and antigypsyism on the internet and in social media also reinforce the trend.

Owing to its specific historical responsibility, Germany is under a particular obligation to take a determined stand – at political and social level – against ongoing antigypsyism in Europe. Stepping up measures to tackle antigypsyism was also one of the declared objectives of Germany's EU Council Presidency programme. The Federal Government pursues an overarching approach to fighting racism which at the same time incorporates specific elements for explicitly fighting racism directed at Sinti and Roma.

The Federal Government's adoption of the IHRA's working definition of "antigypsyism" underscores joint efforts to combat antigypsyism at international level. Germany was the first member state to adopt the working definition at national level, too. The following is explicitly acknowledged in the National Strategic Framework in regard to preventing and fighting antigypsyism:

*Antigypsyism has existed for centuries. It was an essential element in the persecution and annihilation policies against Sinti and Roma as perpetrated by Nazi Germany, and those fascist and extreme nationalist partners and other collaborators who participated in these crimes.*

*Antigypsyism did not start with or end after the Nazi era but continues to be a central element in crimes perpetrated against Sinti and Roma. In spite of the important work done by the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and other international bodies, the stereotypes and prejudices about Sinti and Roma have not been delegitimised or discredited vigorously enough so that they continue to persist and can be deployed largely unchallenged.*

*Antigypsyism is a multi-faceted phenomenon that has widespread social and political acceptance. It is a critical obstacle to the inclusion of Sinti and Roma in broader society, and it acts to prevent Sinti and Roma from enjoying equal rights, opportunities and gainful social-economic participation.*

*Many examples may be given to illustrate antigypsyism. Contemporary manifestations of antigypsyism could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:*

- *Distorting or denying persecution of Sinti and Roma or the genocide of the Sinti and Roma.*
- *Glorifying the genocide of the Sinti and Roma.*
- *Inciting, justifying, and perpetrating violence against Sinti and Roma communities, their property, and individual Sinti and Roma.*
- *Forced and coercive sterilisations as well as other physically and psychologically abusive treatment of Sinti and Roma.*
- *Perpetrating and affirming discriminatory stereotypes of and against Sinti and Roma.*
- *Blaming Sinti and Roma, using hate speech, for real or perceived social, political, cultural, economic and public health problems.*
- *Stereotyping Sinti and Roma as persons who engage in criminal behaviour.*
- *Using the term "Gypsy" as a slur.*
- *Approving or encouraging exclusionary mechanisms directed against Sinti and Roma on the basis of racially discriminatory assumptions, such as the exclusion from regular schools and institutional procedures or policies that lead to the segregation of Sinti and Roma communities.*
- *Enacting policies without legal basis or establishing the conditions that allow for the arbitrary or discriminatory displacement of Sinti and Roma communities and individuals.*
- *Holding Sinti and Roma collectively responsible for the real or perceived actions of individual members of Sinti and Roma communities.*

- *Spreading hate speech against Sinti and Roma communities in whatever form, for example in media, including on the internet and on social networks.*<sup>9</sup>

**a. Set of measures adopted by the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism**

The Federal Government's efforts as regards fighting all forms of racism and right-wing extremism were consolidated and strengthened by the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism. It is an indication of the special importance which the Federal Government attaches to this issue at national level. At the same time, the Federal Government has recognised that it needs to join forces with civil society to confront head on the internal threat to our body politic. Numerous proposals were presented to the Federal Government during consultations with civil society, academia and the *Länder*, which fed into the Cabinet Committee's set of measures of 25 November 2020 in order to overcome right-wing extremism and all forms of racism, especially antigypsyism.

The set of measures seeks to strengthen governmental structures and institutions, to engage in prevention work, civic education and to promote democracy and research. But it also seeks to address recognition and participation, even better victim protection and the combating of online hate.

A final report, adopted by the Federal Cabinet on 12 May 2021, and the Cabinet Committee's set of measures also set important and necessary priorities when it comes to tackling antigypsyism. These measures are now being implemented. One example is the setting up of a civil society reporting office to record antigypsyist attacks below the threshold of criminal liability.

The goal in establishing this civil society reporting office is to be able to investigate and document antigypsyist incidents and trends on an ongoing basis and thus to guarantee they are systematically recorded and analysed in regard to all areas of public life.

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antigypsyism-anti-roma-discrimination>.

Discrimination is to become more visible, which is why the reporting office will be active nationwide.

Other reporting offices have already been established or are being planned in the *Länder*. For instance, the DOSTA – the Antigypsyist Documentation Office of the *Amaro Foro* registered society in Berlin – sheds light on unreported antigypsyist incidents. The Ministry for Children, Families, Refugees and Integration of North Rhine-Westphalia (*Ministerium für Kinder, Familie, Flüchtlinge und Integration des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen*, MKFFI) plans to set up a Reporting Office on Antigypsyism in the context of putting in place its coordinated reporting system. The Advisory Centre Against Racism, which also operates a hotline, was established by the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration and pursues a similar goal. It offers concrete assistance to the victims of racism and other forms of group-focused enmity and those close to them. It also refers people to other structures at federal, state and local level, meaning that it also serves as a central, national point of contact. Cases are, in addition, analysed scientifically as part of work on a Racism Barometer, the aim of which is to extrapolate what action politics, civil society and the security authorities need to take. The scientific insights gained from the Racism Barometer can also then be made available to further research projects.

The Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism's set of measures also includes research promotion. In mid-2021 Germany launched its Funding Guidelines on Current and Historical Right-Wing Extremist and Racist Movements, through which it also supports further antigypsyism research. The "Projects to Empower Migrants' Organisations in Dealing with Right-Wing Extremism and Racism" programme also forms part of the set of measures and promotes model projects aimed at supporting civil society actors and victims in dealing with racism, right-wing extremism and other forms of group-focused enmity such as antigypsyism. These and many other measures described in this section also serve to deliver on the demands made by civil society during consultations.

The appointment of a Federal Government Commissioner Against Racism also formed part of discussions in the Cabinet Committee. It was agreed that a Federal Government

Commissioner Against Racism was to be appointed in 2022. The Coalition Agreement 2021–2025 reaffirms this decision.<sup>10</sup>

**b. Recommendations of the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism/Creation of post of Federal Government Commissioner for Antigypsyism**

Both the establishment of the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism and the setting up of an Independent Commission on Antigypsyism in 2019 show that effectively fighting antigypsyism is a matter of important concern to the Federal Government.

The Independent Commission brings together expert scientists and practitioners and their considerable professional expertise. The Independent Commission was set up following the positive experience gained during the 18th electoral term with the Independent Circle of Experts on Antisemitism, a body tasked with setting and working through its agenda autonomously and independently.

The remit of the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism was essentially to highlight the diverse causes, manifestations and impacts of antigypsyism in politics and society and to draw up subject-specific recommendations for parliament and government as regards further dialogue in society.

The work of the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism sets another important milestone in the systematic analysis of the fight against antigypsyism. Its extensive report, delivered in June 2021, contains numerous recommended policy actions for achieving that objective. The Commission's central demands include the appointment of a Federal Government Commissioner for Antigypsyism, as provided for in the Coalition Agreement,<sup>11</sup> the establishment of an independent group of advisers, the setting up of a commission to study the injustice suffered by Sinti and Roma people in the Federal Republic of Germany, the recognition of Roma refugees as a "particularly vulnerable group", implementation and consolidation of participation structures, and the creation

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<sup>10</sup> See Coalition Agreement 2021–2025, p. 120.

<sup>11</sup> See Coalition Agreement 2021–2025, p. 120.

of a Standing Federal/*Länder* Commission. It also recommends establishing an independent German National Contact Point for Sinti and Roma based in the offices of the Commissioner against Antigypsyism and developing targeted, independent instruments for reviewing implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework. The Independent Commission on Antigypsyism's report also launched a much-needed, wide-ranging socio-political debate which will continue during the 20th electoral term. This is also evidenced by the fact that the Federal Government will be creating the post of Federal Government Commissioner for Antigypsyism, one of the demands of the Independent Commission and one of the pledges made in the Coalition Agreement now being implemented.

### **c. National Action Plan Against Racism**

The Federal Government attaches the highest political priority to the issue of social cohesion – especially at this time. An open and diverse society is at the same time an expression of a fully-functional and intact democracy. However, liberal societies face serious threats: racism and right-wing extremism, for instance, endanger internal cohesion. Fighting them and resolutely opposing all forms of group-focused enmity is thus a task for the whole of society which is of central political importance. Efforts to effectively fight these phenomena using the set of measures put forward by the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism carry forward the objectives and goals of the Federal Government's National Action Plan Against Racism.

The National Action Plan Against Racism, adopted in 2017, sets out how racism and the ideologies of inequality manifest as select forms of group-focused enmity and related discrimination. It places an explicit focus on antigypsyism as a form of group-focused enmity. The National Action Plan Against Racism also builds on the Federal Government's Extremism Prevention and Democracy Promotion Strategy, which the Federal Cabinet adopted in July 2016 with the aim of permanently and sustainably challenging extremist tendencies and championing a peaceful, democratic society.

Positions and measures in the following areas of activity form the core of the National Action Plan Against Racism: human rights policy; protection against discrimination and

prosecution of criminal offences; education, specifically civic education; social and political commitment to democracy and equality; diversity in the world of work, in education and training, and strengthening intercultural and social skills at work; online racism and hate speech; and research.

The Federal Government regards tackling antigypsyism, racial discrimination and the ideologies of inequality as a permanent task for all societal levels within Germany's federal system which the executive, legislature and judicature must continually face in their respective areas of responsibility as well as in dialogue with civil society.

The setting up of the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism means the targets set in the National Action Plan Against Racism will be continued at a higher level; they are currently being given more concrete shape. The Cabinet Committee's 2021 Final Report, including its set of measures, thus sets the current and operative/technical framework at the highest political level.

**d. *Länder* action plans and other *Länder* measures as a supplement to federal activities**

Fighting all forms of antigypsyism also forms part of the policy agendas of the *Länder*. The National Action Plan Against Racism, a federal measure, is thus complemented by actions plans adopted in the *Länder* as well as by other *Länder* measures to combat racism.

Rhineland-Palatinate, for example, has clearly positioned itself by adopting a *Land* Action Plan Against Racism and Group-Focused Enmity.<sup>12</sup> Among other things, it aims to promote a culture of equality, to strengthen democratic awareness, to firmly embed protection against discrimination in all areas of life and to enable everyone in Rhineland-Palatinate to live their life free of violence. The Action Plan pursues an overarching approach which focuses on, among things, racism, antigypsyism, antisemitism and antimuslim hostility.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://mffki.rlp.de/de/themen/demokratie/landesaktionsplan-gegen-rassismus-und-gruppenbezogene-menschenfeindlichkeit/>.



On 1 September 2020 the civil society organisation m\*power opened its Reporting Office for Xenophobic, Racist and Antisemitic Incidents in Rhineland-Palatinate. The Office collates, documents and analyses incidents relating to group-focused enmity above and below the threshold of criminal liability, including those aimed at denigrating Sinti and Roma. The data are used to draw up a civil society situation report. The Rhineland-Palatinate Association of German Sinti and Roma is involved in the corresponding networking activities. The “Solidarity against Online Hatred and Violence” programme develops, among other things, target group-specific training measures, for example for teaching staff and media professionals, which address the backdrop and alternatives to denigrating groups such as Sinti and Roma.

Schleswig-Holstein recently adopted and published its *Land* Action Plan Against Racism,<sup>13</sup> which explicitly refers to antigypsyism and thus also aims to place increasing focus on antiracism work, for example in regard to the labour market.

North Rhine-Westphalia is currently revising its Participation and Integration Act (*Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz*, TIntG), which will create the statutory basis for making antidiscrimination an explicit task at *Land* level. According to the revised Act’s Explanatory Memorandum, this will also specifically encompass antigypsyism. The new Act on several occasions makes explicit reference to antigypsyism, including in respect of updating and promoting antigypsyism activities (section 2 of the Act).

Berlin’s Action Plan on Incorporating Foreign Roma on the one hand consolidates positive measures which give Roma migrants living in precarious circumstances access to governmental regulatory systems. On the other hand, its information, advisory, interventionist and community-building approaches contribute to tackling antigypsyism and promoting participation.

The *Land* of Baden-Württemberg has set up a Research Centre on Antigypsyism at the University of Heidelberg, the first university research centre in Germany to address the topic of antigypsyism. The Research Centre on Antigypsyism deals with basic studies of

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<sup>13</sup> See [https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Landesregierung/IV/Service/Broschueren/Broschueren\\_IV/Kriminalpraevention/landesaktionsplan\\_rassismus.html](https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Landesregierung/IV/Service/Broschueren/Broschueren_IV/Kriminalpraevention/landesaktionsplan_rassismus.html).

the causes, manifestations and consequences of antigypsyism in European societies from the Middle Ages to the present day. An Antigypsyism Prevention Department was also created in Heidelberg, at the Heidelberg University of Education (*Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg*). Its goal is to challenge prejudicial structures through the targeted deconstruction of stereotypes and prejudice and the de-ethnicisation of problems in the training and advanced training of educational staff.

**e. Civic education to combat and prevent antigypsyism**

The Federal Government regards civic education as essential when it comes to preventing and fighting antigypsyism. At federal level, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, BpB*) has always pursued numerous different measures dealing with group-focused enmity. Addressing antigypsyism has a key role to play in this and the Federal Agency will continue to pay great attention to this issue. Examples worth mentioning include grants paid to civil society organisations as part of model project funding, such as to the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma (RomArchive. The Digital Archive of the Sinti and Roma; Voices of Victims – Representative of the Nazi Genocide), the *Amaro Drom* society (“Jekhipe – Together.”) and RAA Berlin (“emPower Together! Resilience Strategies against Racism”). Further, the Federal Agency for Civic Education has various (online) publications, handouts and webpages on dealing critically with antigypsyism.<sup>14</sup> One key concern is supporting those civil society forces committed to combating racism and antigypsyism.

In the context of tackling antigypsyism the Federal Government attaches equal importance to promoting historical-cultural education. The arts, culture, historical analysis and teaching of media literacy have a decisive and sustainable impact on strengthening our democratic values and social system.

Against this backdrop, the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages provide the basis for the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma

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<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/antigypsyismus>.

in Heidelberg to receive institutional funding from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg.

The Documentation Centre promotes Sinti and Roma art and culture, the Sinti and Roma associations' welfare system, youth and educational work, and academic research into the history and current situation of Sinti and Roma and their documentation. In addition, in 2019 it launched RomArchive, a digital online archive which provides an internationally accessible source of information about Roma arts and culture within the context of European cultural history.

Moreover, the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which is likewise funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, also operates a Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered Under the National Socialists. In summer 2022 an additional open-air exhibition on the history and fates of Sinti and Roma will be unveiled close to that memorial.

The Federal Government will continue to promote the art and history and historical analysis of Sinti and Roma in Germany in a structurally and financially appropriate manner.

**f. Preventive educational work for empowerment and against antigypsyism**

Under the Federal Government's strategy, networking and the empowerment of civil society play a key role when it comes to preventing and fighting antigypsyism, because a vibrant civil society is an essential element of a vigilant and resilient democracy. Besides their day-to-day social engagement, civil society organisations have an important bridging function between the general population and policy-makers.

That is why the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend*, BMFSFJ) promotes diverse measures at local, regional and national level under its "Living Democracy" federal programme in the areas of preventing extremism, promoting democracy and shaping diversity. A strong focus is also placed on preventive educational work to tackle antigypsyism. With the start of the federal programme's second funding period (in early

2020), for example, funding was for the first time provided to an Antigypsyism Centre of Excellence, which has since been expanded into a Competence Network focusing on

- awareness-raising among the general population as regards antigypsyist stereotypes and prejudice,
- supporting Sinti and Roma social participation,
- supporting empowerment structures, and
- historical-political education in relation to the persecution and murder of Sinti and Roma during the Nazi era.

Besides pooling information, providing specialist advisory services and supporting the transfer of successful preventive approaches within federal, state and local structures, the Competence Network also serves as an important networking agency for model projects receiving support under the “Living Democracy” programme by setting different content-related priorities in regard to antigypsyism prevention, empowerment and strengthening participation.

Further, the “Living Democracy” federal programme supports *Land* democracy centres in all the *Länder* which provide advisory services to victims of right-wing, racist and antigypsyist violence.

In this context, North Rhine-Westphalia is, for example, setting up contact points specifically for the victims of antigypsyism. They are to engage in special confidence-building work with Sinti and Roma communities, will be available to provide multilingual and culturally sensitive advisory services and to implement regional and supra-regional antidiscrimination programmes. Moreover, a Competence Pool on Antigypsyism was founded within these antidiscrimination structures which is tasked with expanding specialist know-how on antigypsyism and acting as a point of contact.

Saarland has, for example, prepared the ground for institutionalised work by setting up an Office and Advisory Centre in cooperation with the Saarland Association of German Sinti and Roma. At some point in the future, the Advisory Centre is set to become part of the Saarland Democracy Centre’s network.

**g. Tackling hate crime and hate speech**

In our increasingly polarised society, hate crime and hate speech are gaining ground. This calls for all antigypsyist prejudice and stereotypes to be identified early on and for something to be done against hate and hate speech towards Sinti and Roma – within an institutional framework as well as by each individual having the courage to stand up for their convictions. The media, too, have a particular responsibility for not fanning the flames of prejudice and violence through their reporting and instead conscientiously applying the freedom of opinion and freedom of the press.

Based on national case numbers for politically motivated crime in 2020, the number of reported hate crimes rose by some 20 per cent year on year, from 8,585 to 10,240 offences. “Antigypsyism” was introduced as a separate category of politically motivated crime in 2017. A total of 128 antigypsyist offences were reported in 2020, an increase of around 64 per cent compared to 2019. The Federal Government is resolutely stepping up the fight against hate crime. Statutory regulations which have increased the penalties imposed for such offences and created new criminal provisions recently entered into force.

The Network Implementation Act (*Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz, NetzDG*), which entered into force in 2017, ensures better policing of social networks. Under the Act the providers of social networks are obliged to speedily remove illegal content as defined in section 1 (3) of the Act. The requirements under the Network Implementation Act were expanded in 2021 by means of two further acts: the Act to Combat Right-Wing Extremism and Hate Crime (*Gesetz zur Bekämpfung des Rechtsextremismus und der Hasskriminalität*) introduced a reporting obligation in accordance with which the providers of social networks are required to not only delete certain especially serious illegal content but also to report it to a Central Office at the Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt, BKA*); the Act to Amend the Network Implementation Act (*Gesetz zur Änderung des NetzDG, NetzDGÄndG*) introduced an objection procedure which allows both the producers of content and applicants to take action against network providers’ decisions.

The Online Hate Speech Competence Network receives funding under the “Living Democracy” federal programme. The aim of the Network is to develop needs-based solutions to dealing with online hate speech for various target groups, especially children and youth. One of its focuses is on antigypsyism.

Funding is also currently being provided to set up a National Working Group against Online Hate Speech as part of a project under the “Living Democracy” federal programme. The project aims to link even more closely all those initiatives working to combat online hate speech with research initiatives.

In addition, the Federal Agency for Civic Education also promotes digital educational and intervention activities under the “Democracy on the Net” programme, part of the Cabinet Committee to combat right-wing extremism and racism’s set of measures. These activities either focus on digital participation or engage critically with digital forms of right-wing extremism, racism and other communication based on group-focused enmity from a preventive or interventionist perspective. The programme comprises two pillars (Prevention and Intervention; Participation) and aims to look at the risks which right-wing extremism, racism, antigypsyism and all other forms of group-focused enmity pose to democracy. At the same time, the potential of participatory online offers is to be strengthened through digital civic education work.

The *Länder* are also taking very decisive action against online hate crime. In 2019, Lower Saxony set up a Central Office for the Police’s Fight against Online Hate Crime at the *Land* Criminal Police Office, for instance. A state-level website ([www.opferschutz-niedersachsen.de](http://www.opferschutz-niedersachsen.de)) also went live. It provides the victims of discrimination, specific forms of racism (such as antigypsyism) and hate crime with information about what help is available.

## **2. Reducing poverty and social exclusion**

### **a. Social participation and the welfare state**

Promoting and ensuring Sinti and Roma social participation in Germany is an important political priority for the Federal Government. Accordingly, appropriate attention is paid to reducing the poverty and social exclusion of Sinti and Roma when setting national targets relating to implementation of the new EU core objective on poverty reduction up to 2030 under the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. One of the central tasks of the welfare state is to guarantee social equality and good social relations. It provides protection against life risks, supports people in specific circumstances and enables their social participation. The Federal Government's approach to social measures to reduce poverty is blind to ethnic origin and affiliation, meaning that Sinti and Roma have access to general governmental measures, too. The Federal Government is aware that discrimination may lead to exclusion from state benefits, which is why great value is attached to awareness-raising among the relevant employees. Examples worth mentioning here include the Foundation Memorials in Lower Saxony's Centre of Competence against Antigypsyism, which uses multipliers to train various groups of professionals in prejudice- and discrimination-sensitive action in order to promote Sinti and Roma participation.

The social measures, rules and projects at federal level described in the following contribute to poverty reduction.

#### Basic security benefits for job-seekers – Book Two of the Social Code

Basic security benefits for job-seekers safeguard the socio-cultural subsistence minimum for those who are entitled to benefits. Benefits aimed at securing a livelihood include appropriate accommodation costs and those designed to foster labour market integration.

Anyone who is fit to work, meets the age requirements, is ordinarily resident in Germany and in need – that is cannot, or cannot fully, cover their living costs by their own means (income or assets) – is entitled to this benefit. Foreign nationals – regardless

of their origin – are in principle entitled to basic security benefits for job-seekers under the same conditions as German nationals. Only migrants who are not fit to work are not eligible for benefits under Book Two of the Social Code during the first three months of their stay in Germany, as are migrants who have no residence permit or have only been issued with a residence permit for the purpose of seeking work.

#### Income support – Book Twelve of the Social Code (*Sozialgesetzbuch XII, SGB XII*)

People who have fallen into hardship which they cannot overcome by their own means and resources are entitled to income support under Book Twelve of the Social Code.

Income support is a nuanced range of different kinds of assistance. Social benefit assistance or basic income support for pensioners or for those who are unfit to work is available to cover living costs and thus to guarantee a decent subsistence level. People who do not have other insurance cover against illness are entitled to healthcare benefits. Those who do not or do not have sufficient insurance cover against the financial burden of long-term care receive long-term care assistance. Income support also includes assistance in specific social situations and other assistance.

Like Book Two of the Social Code, Book Twelve of the Social Code also makes provision for foreign nationals to be excluded from benefits under certain circumstances. These are the same as the exclusions presented in the above in relation to Book Two of the Social Code. Further, a person may also be excluded from benefits under Book Twelve of the Social Code if they enter the country for the purpose of drawing income support. Where migrants are in need but not eligible to receive benefits under Book Two or Book Twelve of the Social Code, they are entitled to payment of temporary benefits for up to one month once only within a two-year period in order to secure their existential needs until they leave the country. In individual cases and if further conditions apply, hardship benefits can be granted which go beyond temporary benefits in terms of content and payment period.



### Asylum Seekers Benefits Act

The Asylum Seekers Benefits Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz, AsylbLG*) regulates those benefits which are paid to people who are in the asylum process, people whose deportation has been suspended (*Geduldete*), people who are required to leave the country and other groups of people (see section 1 (1) of the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act), that is if they are in need.

Those entitled to benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act are not eligible for other social assistance such as income support under Book Twelve of the Social Code or basic security benefits for job-seekers under Book Two of the Social Code, and they generally receive lower benefits. After 18 months of uninterrupted stay in Germany, those entitled to benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act regularly receive assistance corresponding to income support (under Book Twelve of the Social Code).

### European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for Skills 2021–2027

In its new EU funding period 2021 to 2027, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for Skills will invest in the following three priority areas:

- general and vocational education and training and lifelong learning,
- effective labour markets and equal access to high-quality jobs, and
- social inclusion, health and poverty reduction.

Under the ESF+ Regulation, at least 25 per cent of total ESF+ funding will be allocated to promoting poverty reduction and social inclusion, and at least three per cent to addressing the material deprivation and social integration of the most disadvantaged people.

The mainstreaming approach was explicitly adopted for the Federal ESF so as to give all disadvantaged groups equal access to the relevant measures. Placing an emphasis on

Sinti and Roma by setting a priority or by means of a specific programme line would run counter to this idea and place other groups which are in equal need at a disadvantage.

Explicit reference is made in the ESF+'s "Inclusion" policy area to disadvantaged groups, such as those who are not gainfully employed or the long-term unemployed, children, marginalised communities such as Roma, individuals and third-country nationals in most need.

Besides promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction measures, improving the educational opportunities of disadvantaged individuals and combating all forms of discrimination which are explicitly directed at migrants, the ESF+ Federal Programme will also promote equal labour market participation. Combating discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, religion, ideology, disability, age or sexual orientation will be addressed throughout the entire process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all the ESF+ funding programmes as a "cross-sectoral principle".

Reference should be made to the following ESF+ programmes aimed at this target group:

- "EhAP Plus – Integration helps combat the marginalisation of the most disadvantaged people "

As a follow-up programme to the European Help Fund for the most disadvantaged people in Germany (EHAP) for the funding period 2014 to 2020, the "EhAP Plus" programme, as a separate priority area within the ESF+ Federal Programme, now has the objective of contributing to poverty reduction and improving social inclusion for the most disadvantaged people. It continues to focus on two groups: newly arrived EU citizens and the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, including families and children. The "EhAP Plus" programme is thus oriented to the problems faced by Roma, especially Roma from Bulgaria and Romania. The goal is to refer those concerned to help which is available at local or regional level within the regular system of help – including in order to take the burden off those municipalities which have taken in a

large number of new arrivals. This is, in particular, achieved through low-threshold, mother-tongue and one-to-one outreach and advice, as well as by accompanying people to official appointments or referring them to other help available. The conditions for facilitating social inclusion for the relevant target group are to be improved and projects funded are to be placed on a permanent footing within municipal structures.

Funding is also to be provided to a national, low-threshold model project providing outreach information services and advice on and mediation of help on social media. Support is in particular to be given to those who cannot access help in situ on account of their being in rural areas or their countries of origin. Another aim is to debunk misinformation on social media. These projects are expected to be launched as of mid-2022.

To improve access to and uptake of this range of services by the relevant target groups, “EhAP Plus” will also fund accompanying awareness-raising and (intercultural) training measures, especially for staff in the public administration, facilities within the regular system of help, as well as local social work providers in relation to the target groups’ circumstances and needs and the issues of antigypsyism and anti-discrimination.

- “WIR – Networks Integrate Refugees into the Regional Labour Market”

This programme supports measures aimed at refugees and helps them find permanent employment or training, to go (back) to school to gain school qualifications and at providing support making the transition from education to employment. Structural measures are also pursued to improve the target group’s access to the job market.

- “Win-Win – Tailored Integration of Migrants in Small and Medium-Sized (Migrant/Social) Enterprises”

This programme supports measures to help people find work or a training place – in particular young men with a migration background who are not entitled to basic social

benefits under Book Two of the Social Code or are unaware of them – in small and medium-sized enterprises to secure a livelihood for their families and children.

- “MY TURN – Successful Women with a Migration Background”

This programme aims to enable more (new) migrant women with few qualifications who are in particular need of support to take part in training and qualification programmes than has been the case in the past and to integrate more women into training and employment.

- “Offering Advice – Say Yes to Training!”

This programme seeks to improve what young people with a migration background and in difficult socio-economic circumstances know about what information, support and training is available when making the transition from school to vocational training by training those in their immediate environment (training the trainer).

- “Integration through Qualification (IQ)”

This programme promotes advisory services on the recognition of qualifications and on qualifications as well as qualification measures for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications. The programme objective is full recognition of professional qualifications and to get people into jobs which suit their qualifications, providing advice on fair integration and running accompanying measures relating to the migration of skilled workers for key labour market players.

#### **b. *Land* action plans and other measures**

Promoting and ensuring Sinti and Roma social participation is also a key concern of the *Länder*. That is why the measures pursued at federal level are complemented by action

plans adopted and other measures implemented by the *Länder* to combat poverty and promote social participation. The *Länder* resolutely pursue equal participation for Sinti and Roma in all relevant spheres of social life. They thus advocate further expanding integration services and improving access to social participation. The *Länder*, and their competence in this regard, have an important role to play in this.

The Rhineland-Palatinate Action Plan on Poverty Reduction, for instance, encompasses measures in eight areas of action: financial situation; situation in life; housing and neighbourhood; education; participation and recognition; health; help and support systems; and mobility. Focusing on people's situation in life emphasises two central pillars of Rhineland-Palatinate's poverty reduction strategy, namely interdepartmental action and the need to go beyond tackling income poverty. The overarching objective of this preventive, sustainable anti-poverty policy is to enable every citizen to participate in both economic and social life.<sup>15</sup>

Increased migration by people from South-East Europe is creating challenges for local authorities in North Rhine-Westphalia. The special South-East Europe Funding Programme aims to support the participation and integration of migrants from South-East Europe in local communities. This new programme, which is to be extended for another three years, is based on insights gained from the predecessor programme and develops its ideas further and transfers them to other local authorities. Account is taken of best practice examples which local authorities have already developed: employment projects including qualification measures such as low-threshold job-related language courses which improve people's opportunities on the first labour market; lifeworld information and support concepts which incorporate social media, for example with posts by role models with a Roma background; and concepts for promoting educational participation which incorporate members of the Roma community.

Thuringia supports a programme to promote integrated social planning processes in local authorities. A good social infrastructure is the precondition for upgrading

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<sup>15</sup> See

[https://mastd.rlp.de/fileadmin/msagd/Aktuelles/Aktuelles\\_Dokumente/Aktionsplan\\_Armutsbekaempfung\\_1122020.pdf](https://mastd.rlp.de/fileadmin/msagd/Aktuelles/Aktuelles_Dokumente/Aktionsplan_Armutsbekaempfung_1122020.pdf).

disadvantaged residential areas and making them more attractive for businesses and workers and dealing with social change processes. The City of Weimar, for instance, is realising the preventive chain concept in the context of this programme. Educational support and health promotion, social aspects, work and urban planning are tied up for those social spaces which are in particular need of development and support. This increases transparency regarding priority areas of activity and objectives within a cooperation process between the various stakeholders involved. Measures and settings incorporate people's lifeworlds so that they can be tailored to specific needs.

Schleswig-Holstein supports low-threshold social advisory services for Sinti and Roma to promote social integration and integration strategies through the German Employees Academy Kiel (*Deutsche Angestellten Akademie Kiel*) in cooperation with the Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma. The focus of this project is on Roma migrants and their families. A lawyer is available in the offices of the Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma to provide German Sinti and Roma with advice on social security law; a tax advisor is also available if needed.

### **3. Promoting participation and cooperation with civil society**

The Federal Government's declared objective is a self-confident, vibrant and democratic culture of community in which racism has no place – a society characterised by social cohesion. What is decisive when it comes to achieving this objective is for people to grow together, that is for people in Germany – whether they have a migration history or not – to develop a sense of community and to regard integration as a task for the whole of society. That also means jointly taking responsibility for how we all live together in Germany. Besides everyday social engagement, civil society organisations have an important bridging function between citizens and policy-makers.

To succeed in this, people from Sinti and Roma communities need to be represented in all areas of life. The process of growing together needs structures to be in place which provide equal opportunities as well as guidance as to how it can succeed. What is also necessary is access, opportunities for people to meet, dialogue and for everyone to be

willing to get involved. Against this backdrop, the Federal Government engages in an intensive exchange with civil society Sinti and Roma stakeholders at diverse institutional levels.

**a. National Roma Contact Point**

The coordinating role of the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) is particularly relevant when it comes to information-sharing and cooperation with diverse civil society and international partners. That is why the EU Strategic Framework requires Member States to expand and strengthen their National Roma Contact Points. This process was launched in Germany by means of the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism's set of measures. In line with the EU Roma Framework Strategy, it provides for the establishment of the National Roma Contact Point as an interministerial coordination office during the Strategic Framework's design and implementation phase. This target was recently reaffirmed in the Coalition Agreement 2021–2025.<sup>16</sup> According to the EU Roma Framework Strategy, strengthening the National Roma Contact Point is to support the following activities:

- participation in the core activities of the EU network of National Roma Contact Points,
- consultation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders,
- capacity-building to promote the active participation of civil society,
- setting up of a national Roma platform for information-sharing with civil society,
- presenting a regular progress report, and
- carrying out of evaluation and review of the National Strategic Framework.

In the context of drawing up Germany's National Strategic Framework, the National Roma Contact Point held meetings and discussions with the relevant government departments, the *Länder*, leading local government associations and civil society. The

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<sup>16</sup> See Coalition Agreement 2021–2025, p. 120.

involvement of various stakeholders at various different stages of that process fed into the National Strategic Framework at hand.

The National Roma Contact Point, which is based in the offices of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (*Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat*, BMI), has a coordinating role, and specialist departments contribute to the design of the National Strategic Framework in line with their remits.

As already described in the above, the new 10-year plan builds on the previous EU Framework up to 2020 and focuses on continuing socio-economic inclusion (in the fields of education, employment, housing and health) as well as on equality and participation.<sup>17</sup>

Integration policy, promoting participation and combating racism are cross-sectoral tasks for all of Germany's political institutions. Success is only possible if they are regarded as a joint task of the Federation, *Länder* and local authorities which require with civil society involvement. That is why, besides the Federal Government, the *Länder* and local authorities are also involved at various levels during the drafting process, as they and their respective competence have a key role to play when it comes to subsequent implementation. They were thus involved in drawing up this National Strategic Framework.

Furthermore, the broad-based dialogue process, which began with representatives of the national minority and Roma migrants in the course of preparations for the EU High-Level Conference and continued during the hearing of written and oral proposals made by Sinti and Roma in relation to the new strategic framework, is to be made a permanent fixture. The Federal Government will continue this process and establish a dialogue platform involving the relevant governmental and civil society actors which will address issues, on a rotating basis, which relate to implementation of the EU Roma Framework Strategy. The aim is thereby to ensure that the process of implementation

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<sup>17</sup> See COM (2011) 173 final.



and information-sharing about it remains open so as to be able to incorporate new developments and new experience gained.

**b. Dialogue at federal level**

Moreover, those dialogue formats which have already become established at federal level are to be carried forward. To foster active participation and the representation of interests, an Advisory Committee For Matters Relating to German Sinti and Roma was set up at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community specifically with the target group of Sinti and Roma in mind. It is tasked with discussing all those issues relating to the national minority with federal policy-makers. The Advisory Committee comprises representatives of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and of the Sinti Alliance Germany, representatives of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, of the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag and the *Länder*.

Moreover, Sinti and Roma representatives are involved in the dialogue process between the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration and migrant organisations. The Federal Government Commissioner regularly holds meetings in the Federal Chancellery with migrant organisations and self-organisations on behalf of the Federal Government. These meetings offer migrant organisations the opportunity to state their positions regarding current integration policy measures. In 2021, their needs and the challenges they faced during the coronavirus pandemic were discussed at one such meeting with the then Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel.

Migrant organisations and self-organisations, including of the Sinti and Roma, are involved in other formats at federal level as part of the NAP-I and the Integration Summit, as well as other discussions organised by the Integration Commissioner. This promotes the representation of interests and participation in the integration policy debate, as well as the involvement of migrant organisations and self-organisations in federal, state and local activities and with other civil society organisations.

The principle of partnership is fundamental to the ESF+ Federal Programme. The two sides of industry and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are closely involved, in various ways, in supporting and delivering the ESF Programmes at federal and *Länder* level. Its Monitoring Committee, whose establishment is a requirement under ESF+, comprises the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*, BMAS), which is responsible for ESF implementation, and, in an advisory capacity, a representative of the European Commission, other federal ministries involved in ESF implementation, representatives of the *Länder*, leading local government associations, charitable associations and other non-profit operators, including Sinti and Roma organisations.

**c. Interstate treaties, advisory councils and integration councils at *Länder* level**

As already mentioned in the above, within Germany's federal structure integration policy and promoting participation are a joint federal, state and local task – which is why integration and participation are always regarded as a task for the whole of society. The federal, state and local levels cooperate very closely on the National Strategic Framework in line with their respective competence.

Some of the *Länder* have signed interstate treaties with the relevant *Land* associations. Examples which regulate close cooperation with Sinti and Roma include those signed in the Free State of Bavaria, in Baden-Württemberg and Hesse. Their aim is to contribute to significantly strengthening the protection of the Sinti and Roma minority. The *Land* governments also explicitly support the Sinti and Roma minority in the areas of economic, social, political and cultural life. Besides promoting the equal participation of minorities, these interstate treaties usually also regulate financial support for Sinti and Roma.

The interstate treaty signed in Baden-Württemberg provided for the setting up of a Council for Matters Relating to German Sinti and Roma in Baden-Württemberg. It comprises equal numbers of representatives of the Sinti and Roma minority and government representatives.

In addition, an Advisory Council for Matters Relating to Roma and Sinti was set up in Berlin as part of the revision of its Participation and Integration Act (*Partizipations- und Integrationsgesetz, PartIntG*). The Council is to support the administration by providing advice on all matters, measures and issues relating to Roma and Sinti living in Berlin.

Section 27 of the Local Authority Code of North Rhine-Westphalia (*Gemeindeordnung für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen, GO NRW*) provides for the appointment of obligatory integration councils and integration committees. They represent the interests of people with a migration background at local level. During recent elections, the *Land* Integration Council proactively approached those groups which were under-represented in these bodies – including Sinti and Roma – and encouraged them to exercise their right to both stand for office and vote in elections. North Rhine-Westphalia thus explicitly promotes the political participation of Sinti and Roma.

One civil society demand which is regularly heard concerns involvement in appointments to broadcasting companies' advisory boards in order to safeguard minority interests and combat antigypsyism in the media. The Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities supports national minorities' efforts to be represented in the *Länder* media authorities' broadcasting advisory boards. This is already common practice in Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg (SWR Broadcasting Board).

Although a careful assessment process generally precedes all appointments to the *Land* broadcasting boards, which is to reflect the greatest possible diversity and is reserved to the legislature, the number of members of the supervisory boards is naturally limited given how many interest groups there are in society. Regardless of their specific composition, the *Land* broadcasting boards are called to take seriously their obligation of balanced reporting and to critically examine all journalistic contributions dealing with the situation of Sinti and Roma as to their susceptibility to discrimination.

#### **d. Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency**

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency is also involved in coordinating the implementation of the EU Roma Framework Strategy. As an independent body, it has a special role to play because it can bring its own ideas to bear in discussions.

Information-sharing between the National Roma Contact Point and the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency has shown how civil society can contribute to the development of evaluation and monitoring instruments (see section F.).

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency always also incorporates, in an appropriate manner, those NGOs and institutions which are actively involved in protection against discrimination at EU, federal, state and regional level.

The Agency on principle pursues a participatory approach in its work, including in regard to Sinti and Roma. The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma is represented on its Advisory Board. Besides its statutory tasks of research and public relations work, the Agency specifically addresses those people who experience discrimination. To that end it can, in particular,

- provide information about rights under the General Act on Equal Treatment (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG*),
- indicate what legal options are available under statutory provisions concerning protection against discrimination,
- refer people to other bodies which can provide advice, and
- seek amicable arrangements between involved parties.

#### **e. Transnational cooperation**

The Federal Government is aware of its historical responsibility and is thus committed at EU and international level to working to protect and promote the interests of Sinti and Roma. In doing so, the Federal Government seeks to draw attention to the historical and current situation of Roma people and to closely dovetail various different international initiatives.

That is why the Federal Government notes with concern that the lack of acknowledgement of the genocide of the Sinti and Roma has contributed to the prejudice and discrimination which many Sinti and Roma communities still experience in Europe today.

In light of this, during its Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in 2020/2021 the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*, AA) placed the focus, at international level, on combating the playing down and distortion of the Holocaust. To strengthen and drive forward international cooperation in this area, a non-binding working definition of “antigypsyism” was adopted on 8 October 2020 jointly with delegates from the 34 IHRA member states. It defines what is classed, under the term “antigypsyism”, as a specific form of racism, marginalisation and discrimination. The working definition is, in particular, to be used in school and adult education, as well as in the education and training of the judiciary and executive. That is why it is an important tool for acknowledging and taking a firm stand against hatred towards and the discrimination of Sinti and Roma – online and offline. Germany adopted this working definition at national level in March 2021. Further, the Federal Foreign Office supports Roma organisations when it comes to their self-empowerment, elaborating Roma concerns and bringing them to bear in the EU Roma Framework Strategy and in relation to Holocaust remembrance.

Within the Council of Europe, the Federal Government continues its commitment in relation to the work of the Committee of Ministers’ rapporteur groups as part of monitoring implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages by contracting parties.

Moreover, the Federal Government is involved in the Council of Europe’s Committees of Experts on issues relating to national minorities, that is in the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (CAHROM) and in the higher-level Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI).

Promoting Roma, Europe's largest minority, was one of the priority areas addressed during Germany's Presidency of the Committee of Ministers (November 2020 to May 2021), in particular through cultural activities in cooperation with the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAN). The Federal Government will continue this work at European and international level going forward.

Further, the Federal Government supports Sinti and Roma concerns at every fitting opportunity – on the occasion of the International Roma Day in 2020, for instance – in order to draw global attention to discrimination against and the persecution of Sinti and Roma. More recently, the Federal Government placed particular emphasis on the fact that the spread of the coronavirus caused specific problems for the Sinti and Roma minority because, internationally, Roma still have very limited access to basic goods and services (medicine, hygiene, housing, water, electricity and food). In light of this, the Federal Government especially welcomes the fact that the European Commission has reviewed its programmes and reallocated funding to alleviate the acute hardship suffered by Roma people. Germany has, moreover, agreed to rededicate previously approved project funding for the benefit of vulnerable groups in Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.

Under the “New Forms of Technical Cooperation” Federal/*Länder* programme run by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung*, BMZ), Schleswig-Holstein, for instance, has since 2016 been involved in projects in the above-mentioned countries in the Western Balkans region. The goal is to provide easier access for Roma to local services, to education, healthcare and social protection, to facilitate their participation in social and political life in their countries and communities, and to give them prospects for staying in their communities. Schleswig-Holstein is cooperating on this with the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma, currently in the “Social Rights for Vulnerable Groups” (SoRi II) project under the lead responsibility of the GIZ Office in Skopje, North Macedonia. Based on the principle applied under the Agenda 2030 – “Leave no one

behind” – the project partners are to guarantee economic, social and cultural human rights to minorities such as Roma.

### **III. Equal access to education, employment, health and housing**

Alongside the new horizontal goals, the previous main objectives of the EU Framework up to 2020 – i.e. combating the socio-economic marginalisation of Sinti and Roma by promoting their equal access to education, employment, health and housing – will continue to be key elements of Germany’s National Strategic Framework.

#### **1. Access to high-quality and inclusive education**

##### **a. Education integration measures (mainstream)**

For the Federal Government and the *Länder*, high-quality education is the key to unlocking individual opportunities. It makes people more open and more tolerant and, at the same time, lays the foundation for innovation and is the precondition for sustainable development. Education is a human right; it enables people to improve their political, social, cultural and economic situation. Every child has the right to a school education; every person has the right to satisfy their basic learning needs – throughout their entire life.

That is why the Federal Government will continue to attach great importance to sustainably improving the educational participation and success of people with special educational needs in particular. It supports these objectives in line with the respective responsibilities for education of the Federation and the *Länder* and in doing so applies an equal participation approach.

Particular emphasis is placed on early childhood education and on all measures which enable young people to gain school qualifications, to successfully transition to training

or a job, and to gain professional qualifications. The same goes for promoting different talents and abilities, be that in secondary or tertiary education, or at work.

Everyone in Germany has the fundamental right to education and to non-discriminatory access to education and educational activities. Accordingly, all the educational measures offered at federal, state and local level are always open to German Sinti and Roma as well as to Sinti and Roma who have migrated from the EU and third countries, that is if they have a right to stay permanently.

In accordance with Article 3 (3) of the Basic Law, the Federal Government does not gather any population statistics or socio-economic data by ethnicity. Valid data on how many Sinti and Roma are affected by issues in the four policy areas addressed in the EU Roma Framework Strategy (education, employment, health and housing) are therefore difficult to collate at national level, and can only to a limited degree be collected at EU level. To meet the challenge of recording valid data to support evidence-based approaches, the Federal Government thus initiates and supports a process of dialogue between the associations and representatives of empirical educational research.

Improving the educational participation and educational success of people with special educational needs is a matter of important concern to the Federal Government. It will, therefore, continue to support corresponding measures. When developing future measures, the concrete educational needs of Sinti and Roma are to be incorporated more and, above all, further upstream. The Federal Government has agreed to engage in regular dialogue with civil society, among other stakeholders, to that end.

The *Länder* also have target group-specific measures to support Sinti and Roma.

The “Schaworalle” project is being run in Hesse, for instance. It aims to serve as a half-way house to regular schooling. It feels responsible for all those children with a Roma background who do not, or no longer, attend school on account of cultural conflicts, lack of language skills, uncertain residence status or frequent changes of address. One goal is to support them on their first day at regular school. The “Vocational Training, School Qualifications and Jobs for Roma Youth and Young Adults” project was intended to



supplement the “Schaworalle” project. It is aimed at those who no longer receive support once they reach the age of 15.

The “Vast Vasteste – Hand in Hand” school mediation project in North Rhine-Westphalia applies a coordinated concept to promote school and socio-spatial support for and the integration of children and youth with a Roma background. Based on the positive experience gained with this school mediation project, the *Land* government resolved to apply comparable approaches in primary schools across North Rhine-Westphalia. The “RuhrFutur” project in the City of Dortmund is closely related to this. From 2021/22, between eight and 12 educational support staff drawn from the Roma community are to be available in educational institutions in Dortmund. They are to help pave the way for children arriving from Bulgaria or Romania with their families to access institutional education. The “From A to B – The Path to Success: Vocational Education – More People With a Migration Background in Education and Training” project run by the City of Heilbronn has a similar aim. It supports families from Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia in successfully integrating their child into training and work. The project focuses, in particular, on the parents of juveniles in their last and penultimate year at secondary school (*Hauptschule, Werkrealschule, Realschule*).

Schleswig-Holstein is also committed to the educational participation and equal opportunities of disadvantaged children and youth. The Schleswig-Holstein School Act makes explicit reference to the integration and participation of Sinti and Roma: “Schools promote [...] the contribution which national minorities and ethnic groups make to cultural diversity in Schleswig-Holstein and respect for the Sinti and Roma minority.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See section 4 (6) of the Schleswig-Holstein School Act (*Schleswig-Holsteinisches Schulgesetz, SchulG*), December 2016.

**b. Teacher training and diversity literacy**

Democracy – the goal, subject matter and practice of historical/civic education and training – is to be realised in schools through advisory services and training courses provided by the *Länder*, with support from the Federation.

Diverse federal teacher training programmes address specific target groups, including Sinti and Roma. The “Quality Teacher Training Strategy” programme, for instance, sensitises trainee teachers to help them work successfully with heterogeneous groups of pupils and use inclusive teaching and learning methods tailored to individual pupils. The “Learning with Digital Certificates” project aims to preserve for future generations the memories of those who witnessed the persecution and extermination of Jewish, Sinti and Roma people and to make them accessible to students, pupils and visitors to museums and memorials, embedded within a pedagogical concept. Furthermore, the Integration Commissioner is initiating a dialogue process at federal level with the Federation, *Länder* and civil society which will address intercultural diversity in framework curricula and diversity literacy in teacher training and further training.

An expert discussion on “Diversity-sensitive Lessons and Teaching Values at Schools” was organised in spring 2021 in cooperation with the then Minister of Education, Anja Karliczek, and teachers, representatives of the *Länder*, academia, foundations, educational practice and migrant organisations.

At *Länder* level, the Hesse Teaching Academy (*Hessische Lehrkräfteakademie*), for instance, together with the Hesse Association of Sinti and Roma, drew up a range of educational programmes. It is aimed at teachers of history, social studies, politics and economics working in all types of school, as well as at socio-educational experts. Further, a cooperation model involving the Ministry of Culture of Hesse (*Hessisches Kulturministerium*) and the University of Marburg offers interdisciplinary seminars on “The History and Culture of Sinti and Roma in Germany”.

### **c. Knowledge transfer, promoting tolerance and preventing prejudice at school**

The Federal Government and the *Länder* aim to raise awareness of civil society engagement for democracy and tolerance in Germany and to encourage as many citizens as possible to champion democracy and social cohesion. That includes preventing and breaking down prejudice and stepping up the nationwide transfer of knowledge about Germany's autochthonous minorities. The Standing Conference of Ministers of Culture of the *Länder*, for example, is currently working together with the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Alliance for Solidarity with the Sinti and Roma of Europe to draw up recommendations for knowledge transfer about the history of the Sinti and Roma in schools. These are expected to be published in 2022. The recommendations may, in future, be expanded to include further aspects relating to the protection of minorities and minority languages.

Raising awareness about minorities begins at school. That is why schools and the education they give children are so important.

To strengthen the promotion of tolerance and prevention of prejudice – especially in regard to antigypsyism – Lower Saxony also has specific school programmes, such as “PARTS”, an evidence-based prevention programme aimed at promoting tolerance at schools in Lower Saxony. Further, the Foundation Memorials in Lower Saxony's Competence Centre against Antigypsyism is involved in fighting antigypsyism. It trains multipliers and the representatives of various professional groups in prejudice- and discrimination-sensitive action and advises them so as to improve the Sinti and Roma participation in education, business, politics and society as a whole.

## **2. Access to high-quality and sustainable employment**

### **a. Access to labour market and employment promotion**

The overarching objective of the Federal Government's employment policy is for everyone to be able to tap into their own potential and to bring it to bear in society. That is why the Federal Government's employment policy strategy applies the principle of “give and take”. A variety of different proactive employment promotion instruments are

available. They are regulated in Book Three of the Social Code (*Sozialgesetzbuch III, SGB III*) and are also applied in regard to basic security benefits for job-seekers under Book Two of the Social Code. Book Two of the Social Code also provides for other promotional instruments for those entitled to benefits. These are open to Sinti and Roma, too.

A whole range of benefits is available to people who face unemployment or are already unemployed, as well as to young people who are just starting out on working life. They are, in particular, aimed at

- increasing transparency on the training and job market, supporting professional and regional mobility, and quickly filling vacancies,
- promoting individual employability by retaining and developing skills, knowledge and abilities,
- avoiding substandard employment, and
- improving women's job situation by working to eliminate existing disadvantages and overcome a gendered training and job market.

Promoting vocational education and training is a central element of labour market policy measures, as they are particularly suited to improving the effective, equal access of Sinti and Roma to high-quality and sustainable employment.

Improvements which were recently made to the promotion of training and advanced training under the Skills Development Opportunities Act (*Qualifizierungschancengesetz, QCG*) and the Work of Tomorrow Act (*Arbeit-von-morgen-Gesetz*) when it comes to beginning in-company vocational education and training will also support Sinti and Roma in gaining qualified access to the labour market and when it comes to upward professional mobility. Further, people with no professional qualifications and those who are not working in the profession they learned now have a legal right, newly introduced to support those wishing to gain a vocational qualification, which will thus also help Sinti and Roma. The option generally available to those under 25 years of age of gaining a school leaving certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*) as part of educational measures to prepare them for work is also in principle open to Roma. Access to training promotion was first made easier and expanded for people with a migration background. As from 1

August 2019 Sinti and Roma who are not German nationals can also receive unlimited support, from the start of training right up until they have gained their qualification. Youth employment agencies, employment agencies and Jobcentres also provide young Sinti and Roma with suitable access to the aforementioned advisory and support services.

What is referred to as the “Western Balkans Rule” (section 26 (2) of the Employment Ordinance (*Beschäftigungsverordnung, BeschV*)) provides the nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia with easy access to the German job market. It also covers Sinti and Roma from these countries. Under the Western Balkans Rule, no formal qualifications are needed, only a concrete job offer. Because only few preconditions are attached, demand for visas issued under the Western Balkans Rule is very high. The Federal Foreign Office has expanded its visa application processing capacities, taking account of the local context. One measure which serves to protect against work-related discrimination in Germany means that the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA*) is required to approve each visa. It is required to check, for example, the equivalence of employment conditions. That includes reviewing whether pay is equal to what domestic employees receive. The Western Balkans Rule currently applies until the end of 2023. The new Federal Government will take a decision on whether to extend the Rule or make it permanent.

The Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration and the Federal Employment Agency have concluded a cooperation agreement with a view to specific, targeted employment promotion for migrants. Its aim is to make further progress on the labour market integration of migrants.

One specific promotional instrument used to integrate people who have to overcome barriers which are preventing them taking up employment is the ESF+, to which reference was already made in section E.II.2.a above. In the funding period 2021 to 2027, the European Social Fund Plus (“ESF+”) will be the EU’s most important funding and thus also promotional instrument for investing in people. ESF funding totals 2.28 billion euro for the ESF Federal Programme and 4.34 billion euro for the ESF *Länder* programmes. Projects will receive funding from the European Social Fund,

national federal and *Länder* co-financing, and (private) third-party funds from project organisers.

ESF+ levels the playing field in terms of access to jobs through a variety of, in some cases, low-threshold training and advanced training programmes which are in particular aimed at people with a refugee or migration background. This is done through language learning and increasing the number of people from disadvantaged groups undergoing training by providing support accessing and expanding needs-based offerings in a work context. That includes, for instance, measures to help people take up long-term employment, do a course of training, go back to school to gain qualifications and measures to support those making the transition from education to employment.

Furthermore, ESF promotional measures will continue to focus on supporting professional recognition and (skilled) migration through accompanying structural programmes, for example to develop the intercultural skills of labour market actors. This also encompasses advising people arriving from third countries on labour and social law issues, regardless of residence status. These services are also open to Sinti and Roma from third countries in the same way as they are to other people of foreign origin.

Other measures, for instance, aim to increase the number of regular measures available so as to increase the number of migrants undergoing training and on the labour market by means of

- approaching them through digital and analogue channels – signposting in support structures,
- empowerment,
- inclusive help in dealing with conflicts of roles,
- teaching basic (digital) skills,
- language practice,

- providing support finding childcare (in conformity with Book Eight of the Social Code (*Sozialgesetzbuch VIII, SGB VIII*)),
- individual support while doing training and educational courses and when integrating into training and work.

It is known that some EU migrants who are excluded from benefits in practice often face considerable difficulties. The goal should, therefore, be to support them when it comes to finding a job. Support can be provided in the context of the two planned ESF+ programmes to which reference was already made in section E.II.2.a above (“EhAP Plus – Integration helps combat the marginalisation of the most disadvantaged people” and “Win–Win – Tailored Integration of Migrants in Small and Medium-Sized (Migrant/Social) Enterprises”). The “EhAP” programme provides low-threshold advice on labour market-related issues, too, in particular to disadvantaged newly arrived EU citizens and can thus help solve acute everyday problems by providing access to and assistance in taking advantage of available help. This, for instance, includes support dealing with and contacting authorities, in particular in emergencies, accompanying (referring/handing over) participants to the relevant local institutions such as employment agencies and Jobcentres, and projects which follow on in terms of content and which offer labour market integration measures or courses promoted under the “Win–Win” programme, for instance.

**b. Labour market integration and Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers**

EU workers make an important and valuable contribution to German society. Hundreds of thousands of jobs are filled by EU citizens. The right of every EU citizen to choose which country they wish to live and work in is one of the EU’s great achievements. Especially in Germany it is important to create a body at federal level which champions equality for workers from the EU and their family members – and thus also Sinti and Roma. Germany, ultimately, benefits like no other Member State from the free movement of workers. The establishment of the Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers (*Gleichbehandlungsstelle EU-Arbeitnehmer*) opened up more opportunities to support EU workers and their family members.

The core tasks of the Office include informing, supporting and advising workers from the EU and their family members. The overarching objective is to recognise the structural limitations of the free movement of workers through close and cooperative information-sharing with practitioners and, in cooperation with other stakeholders, to find practicable ways to reduce those limitations.

How important the role of the Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers is could already be evidenced, for instance, in the “Fair Recruitment Support” project, launched in the second half of 2021 in North Rhine-Westphalia to recruit meat industry staff from Bulgaria and Romania. The Office supports the provision of information and advice via social media in order to improve integration and orientation processes. In addition, it publishes information material on topics such as labour market integration and access to healthcare.

The Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers funds the “MB 4.0 – Good Work in Germany” model project, launched in 2017, which does outreach work to provide EU citizens with information and initial advice on social media in 10 different languages. Besides the Office, EU citizens can also turn to advisory centres operated by the “Fair Mobility” project and other advisory services provided at *Land* level, for example the *Arbeit und Leben* registered society and non-governmental social welfare organisations. The multilingual services available within this supraregional advisory network, which advises mobile workers on labour and social law issues, are open to anyone regardless of origin. “Fair Mobility” now has 11 offices. It also operates telephone hotlines in five languages. *Arbeit und Leben* has 17 offices. There are also advisory centres at *Land* level which provide targeted labour and social law advice and information to Sinti and Roma, for instance advisory services provided in the Romanes language.

The “Fair Mobility” project, launched in 2011 and funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, has been put on a permanent, legal footing after being included in the Act to Implement the Posted Workers’ Directive (*Gesetz zur Umsetzung der Entsenderichtlinie*). As a result, since 1 January 2021 there has been a statutory entitlement to advisory services, which have also been significantly expanded. The additional funding is to be used to expand advisory capacities over the coming years.



### 3. Health and access to high-quality health and social services

#### a. Health policy measures

The Federal Government regards the task of ensuring that all citizens in a pluralistic and ageing society have access to good medical and long-term care across the whole of Germany from the beginning to the end of their life – regardless of origin, income and postcode – to be a basic health policy issue.

That is why all the policy measures adopted by the Federal Ministry of Health (*Bundesministerium der Gesundheit*, BMG) aim to ensure equal healthcare access for all population groups. The key prerequisite for being able to access health services is either health insurance protection or the other option available in Germany of medical cover in the event of illness.

EU citizens who are permanently resident in Germany or have their place of residence in Germany based on the right of free movement have wide-ranging options, if they have statutory or private health insurance, as regards cover in the event of illness. Under EU law relating to the coordination of social security systems, EU citizens who have health insurance in another EU Member State have the option, under EU law, of receiving what are known as “in-kind benefits” from German service providers.

Other options are available, via the right to social assistance, for accessing healthcare in an emergency where it is not possible to establish whether someone has access to statutory or private health insurance on account of not being subject to EU freedom of movement rules or because it is not possible to establish at short notice in which EU Member State they have insurance cover. The same applies to people in Germany whose residence status has not yet been clarified. Here, too, emergency healthcare is guaranteed in the event of illness.

It is not only important to ensure access to insurance and healthcare services, but also to provide extensive information about those services. The Federal Government supports the *Länder* and local authorities by developing and successfully pursuing

numerous multilingual measures aimed at people with a migration background so as to improve health literacy and thus also to improve access to and successfully implement preventive, medical and long-term care services under model projects. More and better information can increase the number of people using these services and thus reduce misuse, underuse and overuse. For example, numerous multilingual brochures and information material on the following priority issues are available on the [www.migration-gesundheit.bund.de](http://www.migration-gesundheit.bund.de) web portal: health system; health and care; long-term care; and drugs and drug addiction. More information is continuously being uploaded to the portal.

Another model project aims to use bridge-builders to strengthen culture-sensitive advisory and care services in hospice and palliative care. The use of specially trained language and cultural mediators can help better reach out to and inform people with a migration background in need of long-term care in order to give them equal access to those long-term, hospice and palliative care services which are available. These are just a few examples of measures which Sinti and Roma can also take advantage of.

#### **b. Challenges using healthcare services**

The above-mentioned access routes indicate the options available in Germany when it comes to accessing medical cover in the event of illness. Nevertheless, some people do not use the routes available to access health insurance protection or do so after some delay.

Back in 2014 the Federal Government already took an in-depth look at the challenges which had arisen on account of migration within an enlarged EU: a committee of state secretaries discussed “Legal Issues and Challenges which Citizens of the EU Member States have using Social Protection Systems”. The committee concluded that the problem was not a regulatory deficit in the health system but an implementation deficit, which can only be solved by the relevant authorities at local level. A number of measures aimed at facilitating access to health insurance cover for EU citizens by, in particular, reducing the amount of red tape were adopted as part of a Cabinet decision on 27 August 2014.

There are many different reasons why people do not have health insurance cover. Some migrants living in Germany also face language barriers or lack know-how about how to use the available services. Some have a different understanding of what illness is or lack knowledge about the health system.

That is why it specifically falls to local actors on the ground, to health insurance companies and, primarily, to local authorities and the *Länder* to support these people in accessing health insurance cover. Some *Länder* are now doing this by setting up or funding what are known as “clearing offices” where people with no health insurance cover can get independent advice and support in order to get medical cover in the event of illness.

The Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers and the Federal Association of Non-Statutory Welfare work at national level to facilitate access to health insurance cover for EU workers. A brochure entitled “Access to the Health System for EU Citizens, Members of the European Economic Area and Switzerland” was published in late 2019. It is to bring advisers up to speed on this issue. Multilingual flyers were published in late 2020 in Easy Read language for EU citizens. They provide information about six priority areas: the European Health Insurance Card; access to statutory health insurance; family insurance; contributions owed; private health insurance; and people with no insurance cover. In 2020 the Office for the Equal Treatment of EU Workers and the Federal Association of Non-Statutory Welfare also introduced a number of online seminars for advisers working in these six priority areas. With an average of 200 participants they are proving extremely popular.

In some regions of Germany, non-governmental social welfare providers also offer other advisory services and support accessing healthcare on the ground.

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, its member organisations and the *Amaro Drom* charity, which is supported under the EU’s “Youth in Action” programme, by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility, Future, the Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance and the City of Berlin, provide support in an advisory capacity specifically when it comes to the concerns of Sinti and Roma. Several of the *Länder* also have

advisory centres specifically for Sinti and Roma. Some of this work is funded by the *Länder* (in Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony and Bavaria) and from ESF funding.

#### **4. Access to adequate, non-segregated housing and basic services**

##### **a. Housing policy measures**

Housing is one of the central social issues of our time. Important investments and measures to ensure housing stays affordable and to reduce building costs and secure a supply of skilled workers were launched during the 19th electoral term.<sup>19</sup> Housing policy will continue to be a top federal policy priority. This is evident, for instance, by the fact that the Coalition Agreement for the 20th electoral term attaches key importance to the issue of housing and building and thus provides for the creation of a separate federal building ministry. The Federal Government's activities in this area will help improve the housing situation for all population groups and thus also for Sinti and Roma living in Germany. It is, however, not possible to provide any valid information about the specific living situation of German Sinti and Roma and of Roma migrants, since official statistics do not differentiate by ethnicity.

##### **b. Social housing promotion**

Under the first reform of Germany's federal system, responsibility for social housing promotion was transferred from the Federation to the *Länder* with effect from 1 September 2006. The *Länder* thus hold sole responsibility as regards legislation and implementation in this area. In accordance with Article 104d of the Basic Law, the Federation has, however, since 2020 granted the *Länder* financial assistance so that significant investments can be made in social housing promotion at *Länder* and local level.

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<sup>19</sup> For further information, see <https://www.die-wohnraumoffensive.de>.

By promoting social housing the Federal Government supports those households which are unable to pay for adequate housing by their own efforts. Under its Housing Strategy, the Federation made 5 billion euro available to the *Länder* for social housing promotion in the 19th electoral term (2018–2021). Together with the funding allocated by the *Länder* and local authorities, the construction of 100,000 new social rental apartments are being/were authorised. In addition to the 1 billion euro in programme funding allocated to social housing construction, the Federation will make a further 1 billion euro available in 2022. The 1 billion euro earmarked for climate-friendly social housing construction under the Climate Action Emergency Programme will be taken out of the Energy and Climate Fund and allocated to social housing construction as well. The Federation is to continue to financially support social housing construction going forward, and total funding is to be increased. Social housing promotion is in particular targeted at low-income households, households in need with children, single parents, disabled people and other people in need. Roma migrants can be issued with a certificate of eligibility for public housing (*Wohnberechtigungsschein*) under the same conditions as others if they are entitled to stay in Germany.

### **c. Housing benefit under the Housing Benefit Act**

For more than 55 years, the housing benefit allowance has helped lower-income households renting accommodation and owner-occupiers to fully meet their housing costs. By lowering their costs, households which are entitled to the benefit are then not just reliant on a particularly cheap and thus narrow housing market segment. This helps to maintain and create stable neighbourhood resident structures and prevents the housing market splitting up, an undesirable outcome from a housing policy perspective. Entitlement to housing benefit exists regardless of nationality. Families and pensioners in particular benefit from improvements to housing benefit.

The reform of the housing allowance which took effect on 1 January 2020 means that housing benefit is adjusted to each recipient's general and specific living situation. In late 2020, some 618,000 households were receiving housing benefit, that is 1.5 per cent

of all private main domicile households. The number of households on housing benefit thus rose by some 23 per cent compared to 2019, that is by some 114,000 households.

In addition, since 1 January 2021, costs in households receiving the “CO<sub>2</sub> component” will drop despite the rise in heating costs. Average living area as a function of the number of people living in the household (known as the “reference area” within the housing cost system) are used to calculate this “CO<sub>2</sub> component”. Taking the average across all households drawing housing benefit means that this component will lead to housing benefit rising by some 15 euro per month. To cover these costs, the volume of housing benefit was increased by some 10 per cent.

Housing benefit is now indexed, meaning that every two years it is adjusted in line with rental and income developments; this was done for the first time on 1 January 2022. Regularly adjusting housing benefit ensures that it remains a strong family and social policy instrument of housing policy, as the beneficial effect of the 2020 reform of housing benefit will remain.

To provide targeted relief to those on low incomes in light of the hike in energy costs in the winter of 2021/22, the Federal Cabinet on 2 February 2022 agreed to pay a one-off heating subsidy to housing benefit recipients. Those receiving training assistance (*BAföG*), upgrading training assistance (*Aufstiegs-BAföG*), vocational training assistance and education benefit will also receive the one-off heating subsidy. The relevant legislation is set to enter into force in the summer.

#### **d. Integrated programmes for urban development for integration and participation**

The share of migrants and people with a migration background is often not evenly distributed across towns, cities and communities in Germany. The decisions people take about where to settle are often based on their networks of families and friends, as well as their financial circumstances. Many urban areas have an above-average proportion of people with a migrant background compared to the town, city or community as a whole. At the same time, they often have an above-average number of households with low

incomes which are drawing benefits. As a result, these neighbourhoods do the lion's share of the urban integration and participation work.

The Federal Government's "Social Cohesion" urban development promotion programme (formerly called "Social City") supports efforts to stabilise and upgrade those structurally weak urban districts which face specific urban development, economic and, in particular, social challenges. Taking a holistic perspective and in order to be able to pool resources, existing or planned projects on the ground, funds and stakeholders are incorporated into promoting urban districts. Key objectives are improving the integration and inclusion of disadvantaged population groups and of people with a migration background and motivating people to get involved by doing voluntary work. That is why the programme aims to get residents on board at an early stage and to promote participation structures. Local neighbourhood managements can, in addition, offer suitable moderation and mediation tools. Continuing urban development promotion, including the "Social Cohesion" programme, with a high level of funding (790 million euro federal funding in 2021) will also remain an important target in the coming years.

Further, model programmes under the interministerial "Strengthening Neighbourhoods, Together in our District" strategy give impetus when it comes to drawing together funding from various federal ministries involved in the areas covered by the "Social Cohesion" programme. They include the "Youth Migration Services in the Neighbourhood" model programme and "Equal Political Participation", which is testing civic education outreach ideas for promoting political participation and integration.

"Education, Business, Work in the Neighbourhood – BIWAQ" is a partner programme of the "Social Cohesion" urban development promotion programme. It links neighbourhood-related local and low-threshold education, business and labour market projects with urban development measures in areas which have a bearing on social cohesion. Since 2007 BIWAQ has been receiving funding from the European Social Fund and national co-financing resources. It is to continue as a federal programme with national co-financing resources under the EU funding period 2021 to 2027 and is thus to remain an important building block when it comes to implementing the new ESF+.

Besides these federal measures, there are also numerous measures at *Länder* and local level. Under Hesse's "WIR" programme, the City of Frankfurt am Main, for instance, is both promoting a culture of welcoming and recognising migrants and focusing on EU migrants in precarious living and housing situations, including Sinti and Roma from Romania and Bulgaria. The main aim is to improve their housing situation. In 2020, the City of Frankfurt am Main, in cooperation with the *Förderverein Roma* registered society, conducted a needs analysis in regard to homeless EU citizens, which included drawing up recommendations for action taking particular account of Roma people.

The City of Dortmund, for example, has adopted a Roma-specific approach when it comes to housing: its Access to Housing strategy is based on the idea of creating sufficient appropriate housing for the project's target groups, i.e. large migrant families with several children and a Roma background from EU Member States.



## **F. Monitoring and reporting**

In light of the fact that the visible success of integration policy measures is an essential factor when it comes to strengthening social cohesion, the Federal Government promotes numerous projects run by research facilities to evaluate the living situation of migrants in Germany, the aim being to be able to measure the success of its integration policy.

Nonetheless, the Federal Government is still explicitly committed to the principle of not gathering any population statistics and socio-economic data related to ethnicity. That is a lesson learned from the persecution of minorities under the National Socialists, although international law concerns also have a role to play. The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities stipulates that membership of a minority is the personal decision of each individual which a state is not to register, examine or contest.

It is the objective of the EU Roma Framework Strategy for Member States, through their national strategic frameworks, to increase commitment to and the effectiveness of measures and to use indicators and measurable targets (EU Indicator Portfolio) to evaluate the efficacy of measures pursued. The aforementioned principle of not gathering ethnicity-based data creates certain challenges when it comes to taking specific account of Sinti and Roma. The Federal Government will address these challenges through a participatory process. It is also a means of meeting one of civil society's demands, namely that issues relating to evaluation and data collection be addressed together with Sinti and Roma organisations and that civil society be involved in setting the framework.

### **I. Indicator-based integration monitoring by the Federation**

The Federal Cabinet adopted the First Indicator-based Integration Monitoring Report on 24 March 2021.<sup>20</sup> It was then presented in the context of an expert discussion and

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<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/integrationsarbeit-in-den-bereichen/forschung-und-integration/integrationsmonitoring-1864592>.

published. Integration monitoring makes an important contribution to measuring integration, transparently presenting achievements and challenges, and thus to strengthening cohesion in our country. No other publication at federal level takes account in such depth and detail of all the data relating to integration which are regularly available.

These observations make it possible to see where integration is working well and where adjustments need to be made. As a result the Federal Government can then launch measures which amplify positive developments and counter negative trends so that everyone living in Germany – regardless of origin – is encouraged to tap into their potential and take responsibility for shaping their own life.

The integration monitoring highlights what progress has been made in the period 2005 to 2018/19, as well as what challenges still need to be tackled – in early childhood and school education, on the job market, in the health system, as well as in fighting crime and racism. It provides all the stakeholders (the Federation, *Länder*, local authorities, business, civil society and migrant organisations) with important information so as to be able to drive forward integration at all levels applying the principle of “give and take”.

One key outcome is that, considering all the indicators over time, the differences between those with no family migration history and the second generation of migrants are dwindling. That is an encouraging finding and bears witness to the huge efforts undertaken by many families with a migration history. However, the monitoring data also show how important it is to continue to apply the principle of “give and take” to integration from the outset, that is when it comes to teaching values, learning German, in education and training, or job placement. That requires the participation and involvement of all those concerned and the commitment of all integration policy stakeholders at federal, state and local level as well as in civil society.

The Federal Government supports this approach through its overall integration policy approach: monitoring delivers transparent data from a single source which show what still needs to be done in terms of integration work in Germany. The Federal

Government's NAP-I is completely aligned to this. From June 2018 to February 2021 the Federation, in collaboration with the *Länder*, local authorities and civil society, elaborated more than 100 concrete measures for strengthening integration (see section D.III). There are also plans to expand research and data collection and to institute a "Racism Barometer".

The different measures address the aforementioned challenges in a targeted fashion and contribute to strengthening social cohesion and to ensuring that Germany remains an economically strong and socially equitable country – a country in which all its 83 million inhabitants have good future prospects, can use the opportunities available to them and are able to tap into their full potential.

## **II. Integration monitoring by the *Länder***

The Federal Government's First Integration Monitoring Report already presents a very nuanced picture of the living situation of migrants in Germany from which diverse, targeted measures can be extrapolated. In addition to this federal integration report, a cross-*Länder* evaluation of progress made on integrating people with a migration background in the *Länder* has, since the Sixth Conference of Integration Ministers in 2011, also been published every two years.<sup>21</sup> Like the Federal Government's Integration Monitoring Report, the most recent 2021 report shows clearly that progress has been made in many areas when it comes to integrating people with a migration background living in Germany, but also that opposing trends can be made out. The monitoring essentially looks at indicators in relation to regards demography, legal integration, childcare and language skills, education, job market and livelihood, health, housing, criminality and intercultural openness. The monitoring is to contribute to an objective debate on how migration and integration are progressing so as then also to be able to draw conclusions about what targeted integration measures are necessary; at the same time, it also forms the basis for the individual *Länder's* integration reporting.

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<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.integrationsmonitoring-laender.de/>.

### **III. Antigypsyism research and evaluation of policy measures**

For the Federal Government, antigypsyism research and the evaluation of policy measures represent important building blocks when it comes to identifying both which measures still need to be implemented and what policy progress has been made and then to be able to make appropriate adjustments.

The independent Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency makes a very important contribution to closing data gaps as regards discrimination by commissioning and funding concrete research projects, in particular in fields such as employment, housing and services.

Taking account of the current framework and the research desiderata referred to in the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism's report, among others, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, in cooperation with the National Roma Contact Point, proposed the following ideas for antigypsyism research which are to form the subject matter of future projects:

- study of the mechanisms, functions and impacts of antigypsyism based on qualitative research methods (e.g. focusing on individual areas of life),
- study of the forms of institutional discrimination (e.g. in regard to housing or health),
- replicating the 2014 survey entitled "Between Indifference and Rejection – Attitudes to Sinti and Roma" commissioned by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency.

These proposals thus focus on applying qualitative research methods and representative population surveys to antigypsyism studies. Each study is also to place a specific focus on complying with the civil society demands made of research and data gathering relating to discrimination and antigypsyism and involving Sinti and Roma organisations in a participatory approaches.

The Federal Government is also stepping up its commitment in regard to general racism research, which encompasses antigypsyism. For instance, the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) has since 2020 received an additional 3 million euro annually to study racism in Germany. The German Centre for Integration and Migration Research uses this funding to gather representative data and helps to elaborate concepts for possible countermeasures. The goal is to draw up a “Racism Monitor”, a repeated, representative population survey which is to investigate how widespread racist prejudice and resentment are in the population and what their causes are. These insights will deliver important approaches to preventing racism in our society and for taking decisive steps to put a stop to it.

As regards the specific manifestations of antigypsyism, DeZIM’s Racism Monitor encompasses a planned study on “Antigypsyism in Schools”<sup>22</sup> and a pilot study entitled “Measuring Antigypsyism”.<sup>23</sup> These studies are to investigate how antigypsyism, racism and group-based prejudice towards Sinti and Roma can be adequately, validly and reliably measured. This is closely connected to the questions of what attitudes towards Sinti and Roma can currently be observed and what the causes of such racism and group-related prejudice are.

The various studies will receive scientific support and then be scientifically analysed. The results of the scientific analysis will be regularly made available to the public in the form of a Racism Barometer, as will research on tackling antigypsyism.

Furthermore, an empirical study entitled “Racism as a Risk to Social Cohesion in the Context of Select Socio-Institutional Fields”, launched in October 2021, is an important research project which forms part of the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism’s set of measures.

The three-year study, which is being conducted by the Research Institute on Social Cohesion (FGZ), will receive a total of 6 million euro in federal funding. One of the

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<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.rassismusmonitor.de/kurzstudien/solidaritaet-in-der-pandemie/antigypsyismus-in-der-schule>.

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.rassismusmonitor.de/kurzstudien/antigypsyismus-messen/>.

research project's central hypotheses is that racism divides both society and its organisations and poses a great threat to social cohesion.

The aim of the study is to investigate to what extent racism is a socio-political issue, its different manifestations, or rather how it is perceived, the underlying motivations and specific reasons grounds for it, and how it can be prevented. The racism study will, among other things, also look at antigypsyism in public authorities' institutional action. This is based on the observation that racism shifts and changes and that awareness of racism also shifts and changes. An interministerial project group under the lead responsibility of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community will support this research at the working level.

A three-year "Antigypsyism is Mainstream Society's Problem" project, launched in January 2020, is being carried out in the Upper Franconia region of Bavaria. The project aims to show up the different dimensions of antigypsyism in order to contribute to awareness-raising among politicians and society. By addressing local history, it aims to speak to those target groups which have so far hardly engaged in traditional educational activities.

The project objectives are to be sustainably pursued through regional networking with academic and civil society institutions.

Its project partners are the Project Office against Right-Wing Extremism and the Bavarian Association of the Association of German Sinti and Roma.

#### **IV. Civil society monitoring of antigypsyism**

Independent civil society monitoring receives funding from the Federal Government, as reaffirmed in the Coalition Agreement,<sup>24</sup> to enable the targeted study and documentation of the phenomenon of antigypsyism. In this context the Cabinet Committee for the fight against racism and right-wing extremism agreed to establish and fund an independent information and reporting office as a separate measure. Under

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<sup>24</sup> See Coalition Agreement 2021–2025, p. 120.

Germany's National Strategic Framework, this monitoring office is, among other things, to comprehensively record and analyse all antigypsyist incidents across Germany. The Berlin-based DOSTA Antigypsyism Documentation Office, launched in 2014 by the *Amaro Foro* registered society, sheds light on unreported cases of this type of discrimination.

The Federal Government is thus addressing one of the demands made by the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism and by civil society. In its report, the Independent Commission recommends "permanent funding for antidiscrimination offices in Roma and Sinti self-organisations, including monitoring offices to document racist incidents against Sinti and Roma"; further, "the regular, nationwide and *Länder*-specific monitoring, funded by the Federal Government, of the discriminatory reality of Sinti and Roma also forms part of this recommendation".

Drawing on the example of the Research and Information Office on Antisemitism, the Federal Government's goal is, therefore, to set up and build, by late 2024, a workable Reporting and Information Office on Antigypsyism to establish a civil society, national reporting structure for recording antigypsyist incidents below the threshold of criminal liability. In cooperation with a broad network of Sinti and Roma organisations and civil society partners, a reporting office, an advice referral system and a database of cases will be established and a report published annually. The Reporting Office will also introduce quality standards and launch awareness-raising training programmes for civil society organisations and governmental agencies in order to be able counteract the phenomenon of antigypsyism more precisely and sustainably in future. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency will support the development of monitoring structures by delivering legal training courses to all newly established reporting offices.

## **V. Dialogue process with civil society**

Germany currently has no comprehensive quantitative data on the living circumstances of and discrimination experienced by Sinti and Roma which could be used in the EU's proposed Indicator Portfolio to measure target achievement. Nor will it be possible to satisfactorily meet this challenge in the short term. That is why a both a participatory

process is being launched in which the options and prerequisites for gathering quantitative data can be explored over the course of the current electoral term (and perhaps beyond). This process is to be coordinated by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency.

The objective is to achieve consensus on how to gather equality data which fully respect existing legal limitations and the Sinti and Roma minority's reservations.

The following issues, among others, should be addressed by a discussion forum planned and organised by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, in cooperation with the National Roma Contact Point, involving the relevant civil society and research stakeholders:

- options and conditions for conducting community-based surveys on the living situation of and discrimination experienced by Sinti and Roma,
- setting methodological requirements (e.g. addressing target persons, sampling procedures, survey methods) and involved agencies (e.g. an implementing agency, the issue of data sovereignty, participation),
- possibly also a debate on the preconditions for Germany's future participation in surveys conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

The commissioning of a feasibility study is to form part of this process.

One key project is also to expand the promotion of research cooperation between Sinti and Roma organisations and research facilities. These are also to be able to incorporate experience gained in civil society, for example in participatory studies in the *Länder*. An example worth mentioning here is the participatory information-sharing as part of the 2021 RomnoKher Study through the setting up of a national working group with representatives from the Federation, *Länder*, local authorities, academics and foundations, as well as Sinti and Roma self-organisations. Involving Sinti and Roma self-organisations – wherever possible – in research projects on topics relevant to them leads to better research, not by controlling results but by means of having an informative consultation process.



Promoting research cooperation projects between self-organisations and research facilities is thus to make a key contribution to developing and improving methods for researching the social situation of what are referred to as “hard-to-reach groups”. This is useful because, for example, by investigating the Federal Government’s mainstreaming measures in regard to housing, employment, education and health through studies, interviews with experts, anonymised data surveys and other research studies it is possible to conduct more precise research on the extent to which Sinti and Roma in particular benefit and where adjustments may need to be made. This also corresponds to one of the concerns raised by civil society during consultations.

The regional pilot project called “ReFIT for Roma Migration”, launched in summer 2020 by the Baden-Württemberg Association of the Association of German Sinti and Roma and funded by the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg, serves as a best practice example in relation to this sectoral target. Working with the cities of Mannheim, Stuttgart, Ulm and Freiburg, and with the support of Heidelberg University of Education, the situation as regards equality, inclusion and participation of Roma migrants is being researched in the aforementioned four core areas in the four municipalities. Strategies for sustainably improving the situation will be elaborated on the basis of that research. ReFIT is thus a pilot project whose analyses and approaches could, possibly, also have an impact on other municipalities, too.

Existing federal- and *Länder*-level information-sharing with Sinti and Roma self-organisations provide an appropriate setting for together discussing and moving forward on research.

## **VI. Reporting – Progress reports**

A further element of its evaluation process the Federal Government will also at regular intervals be publishing a progress report regarding implementation of the EU Roma Framework Strategy. The Federal Government has in the past already regularly reported on progress made implementing the EU Framework up to 2020. These reports

are available (in German) on the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community's website.<sup>25</sup>

Publishing these reports supports the target of gaining an overall picture of efforts to integrate Roma in the EU. Such reporting focuses in particular on those measures which relate specifically to the integration of Sinti and Roma. Future reports will be geared to the various main policy areas referred to in the Commission's Communication and in the Council Recommendation, that is housing, health, employment, education, as well as the new areas of combating and preventing discrimination and antigypsyism, reducing poverty and social exclusion, and promoting social participation.

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<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/heimat-integration/minderheiten/minderheitenrecht/minderheitenrecht-node.html>.