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GREEN, PINK & SILVER?

The Future of Labour in Europe



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9. POLICY PUZZLES WITH THE EMPLOYMENT OF ROMA

*VERA MESSING**

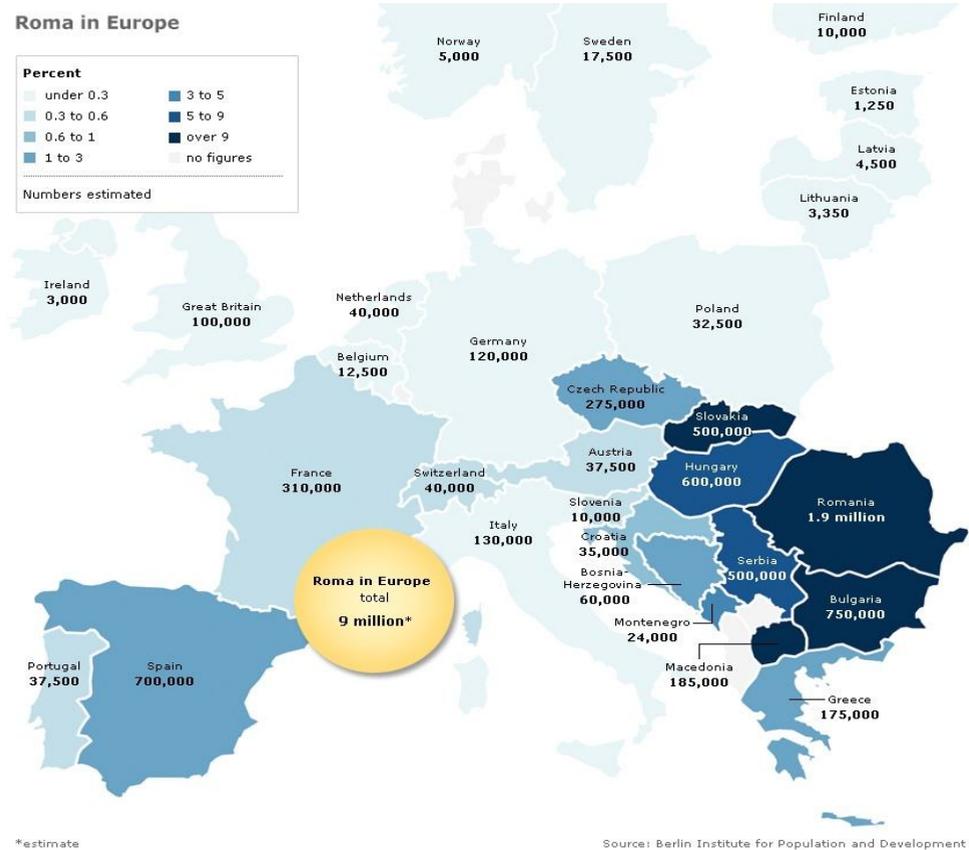
Roma are the largest non-migrant ethnic minority group in Europe and an extremely vulnerable one. Their population is estimated to be between 9 and 12 million (roughly equal to the population of Belgium) and in comparison with the rest of the continent, it is a young population with a higher-than-average share of working-age individuals.¹ In contrast with other ethnic minority groups, they have no historical homeland and live spread across most European countries, but they are particularly concentrated in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Spain, Serbia and Slovakia, which are home to over half of Europe's Roma.²

In some European countries, the widespread exclusion of Roma from the primary labour market adds considerably to the challenge of meeting the Europe 2020 target of an employment rate of 75% for those aged 20-65. The estimated economic and fiscal costs of the exclusion of Roma from the formal labour market are staggering, ranging from €231 million in Serbia to €887 million in Romania.³ Furthermore, Roma are a young population with relatively high fertility rates, and therefore can and should be regarded as an important resource in ageing European societies. However, in spite of numerous ways and funds to support the Roma population in European societies, their labour market situation has not improved significantly. Most of the programmes are not efficient and do not actually reach out to vulnerable Roma. In this chapter, therefore, we examine the most important factors behind the poor employment situation for Roma and potentials for active labour market policies (ALMPs) to influence

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opportunities for unemployed Roma in five European countries: Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

Figure 9.1 Roma population in Europe

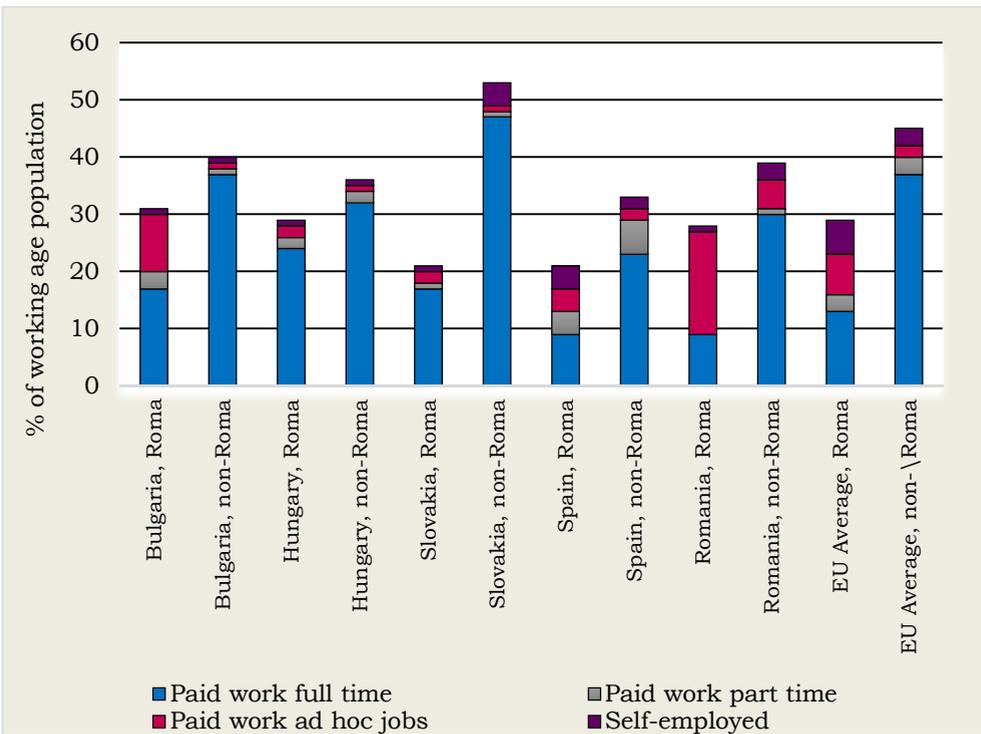


9.1 Roma face widespread exclusion from the primary labour market

The analysis of the position of Roma in the labour market is complicated by a lack of ethnic data, as well as competing definitions of who the Roma people are. What we refer to by 'Roma' or 'Gypsies' is not a politically, socially or culturally homogenous group. 'Roma/Gypsy' may be understood rather as an umbrella term denominating population groups with very different ethnic identities, languages, traditions, history or level of inclusion, even within the same country and definitely across Europe.

Many people identify Roma based on visible signs of poverty and exclusion, irrespective of whether or not the individual himself or herself identifies with the Roma people, and therefore some authors⁴ argue that the concept of Roma/Gypsy is more a construction reflecting the perceptions of the majority society than an actual ethnic community. It is also important to note that in contrast to public perceptions, the majority of Roma are indigenous minorities, meaning that they have been citizens and lived for centuries in their respective countries, and – with a few exceptions – they are settled and are by no means nomadic in today’s Europe. The common feature of Roma is that they experience a high level of social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination in all European countries.

Figure 9.2 Employment of Roma versus non-Roma living in their vicinity



Note: This figure summarises employment of Roma as measured by the FRA Roma survey in 2011, which investigated Roma living in spatial concentration. Even though the survey is not representative of all Roma in Europe and employment is measured by indicators that are not comparable with EUROSTAT indicators collected in the course of the Labour Force Survey, to date this is the only comparative source of information at a European level. The survey covered also non-Roma living in the vicinity of Roma and found that the employment gap between the two groups is significant.

Source: FRA (2011).

A pilot survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) covered Roma who fall under the broad definition of the Council of Europe (including, for example, Roma, Gipsies, *Gitanos*, *Sinti*, Travellers, *Kalé* and *Gens du voyage*), independent of their citizenship or whether their lifestyle was sedentary, semi-sedentary or mobile.⁵ According to the data, Roma citizens have employment rates well below the average of other citizens and non-Roma living in their vicinity. The maximum observed value was recorded in Bulgaria, where 30% of working-age Roma are in employment. The data point not only to the low level of employment among Roma,⁶ but also to the unfavourable employment structure for Roma in many countries. It is notable that – especially in Bulgaria, Spain and Romania – less than half of the total ‘employment rate’ consists of stable, full-time employment providing a calculable and due income. Roma are more typically involved in unstable and unsafe employment arrangements, such as part-time jobs, ad hoc jobs or self-employment, the latter frequently being a cover for an unemployed situation. In this context, it is crucial to understand what interventions are accessible and helpful to this population group.

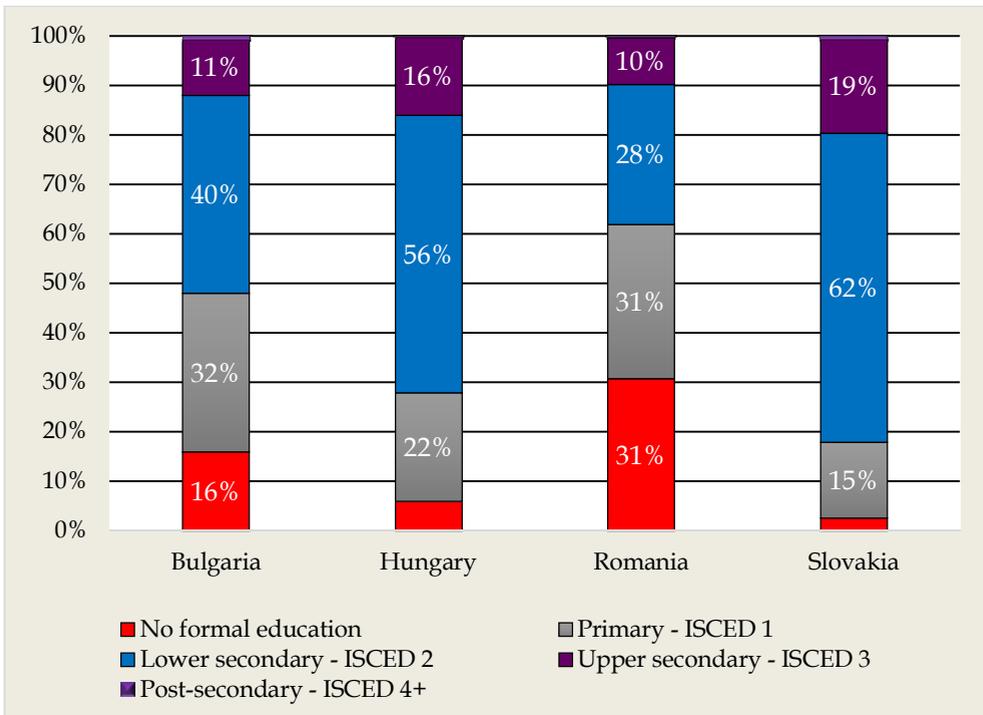
9.2 Low-skillness has different employment consequences in different countries

Several intersecting causes trigger low employment indicators, the effects of which amplify each other. Labour market disadvantage is primarily a result of the dramatically low level of education of Roma in comparison to the rest of the population forming a majority in the respective countries. The UNDP Regional Roma Survey found that self-declared illiteracy is extremely high among Roma in Bulgaria and Romania (13% and 25% of adults, respectively) and, despite some improvement, it remains significant even among young Roma adults. This is not the case in Hungary and Slovakia, however, where illiteracy is negligible and restricted mainly to the older, non-working age cohorts. The lack of essential skills – such as reading, maths and basic computer and communication skills – that are required in the labour market is an important explanatory variable for the low employment rates.⁷

The most important causes for low employment of Roma is their generally low educational levels, together with widespread racial discrimination.

The picture does not improve much when formal education is considered. Romania presents the worst situation, where a third of adult Roma have no formal educational qualifications and only a third have lower secondary or higher education. In Hungary and Slovakia, the situation is significantly better: most Roma complete lower secondary school. However, an upper secondary school qualification (ISCED 3), which can be regarded as a threshold for stable formal employment, is rare even in these two countries. The ethnic gap is immense at this stage: in contrast to 10-19% of Roma, 57-91% of the total population of the respective countries has completed upper secondary education.⁸ Although there have been substantial improvements in educational attainment, meaning that younger generations have higher educational levels than older-age groups, a lack of education in Romania and Bulgaria remains a severe problem even for the youngest age groups.

Figure 9.3 Educational levels of adult Roma in four central and eastern European countries



Note: The UNDP/WB/EC survey (FRA and UNDP, 2012) did not include Spain, while data derived from the FRA survey, which is comparative across the EU member states, did not include educational qualifications transferable to ISCED codes.

Source: UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011.

Low-skillness has different consequences in different countries and sectors of activity.⁹ In Slovakia and Hungary, a low level of education has a more powerful effect on employment opportunities than in Spain, Romania or Bulgaria.¹⁰ This discrepancy can be partly explained by differences in the structures of the national economies of the respective countries, more specifically the presence of economic sectors/branches that can absorb the low-educated Roma workforce. In Romania, Bulgaria and Spain, the construction, tourism and agriculture sectors – which employ a considerable share of low-educated workers – make up an important share of the national economies, even though the crisis since 2008 has had a significant negative effect. The Spanish economic boom of the 1990s and 2000s provided plenty of jobs for vulnerable groups, including migrants and Roma. In contrast, in central and eastern European countries, and especially in Slovakia and Hungary, the current situation is determined by the transitional shock of the early 1990s, during which the economies experienced a sharp drop in demand for low-skilled and unskilled work. This change in the economic structure also has important geographical implications: certain regions, and precisely those where a considerable share of Roma live (east and south-east Slovakia, north-east and south-west Hungary), suffered disproportionately due to the decline of heavy industry after 1989. Lasting economic depression and long-term unemployment are extremely widespread in these areas.

Labour market programmes are not equipped to tackle the issue of low-skillness, in general. It is important to understand that economic structures of the post-transition economies continue to determine the demand for qualifications of the labour force to which school systems have not adapted. Therefore, the lack of highly educated workforce and the oversupply of low-skilled workforce cannot be tackled within the framework of labour market policies, but should primarily be addressed through the system of public education. Labour market programmes are equipped to make only minor adjustments and corrections in terms of training in specific areas. Nevertheless, we have identified a few instances in which countries have attempted to deal with the inadequate educational levels of unemployed Roma. For example, in Spain and Hungary, employment offices (EOs) offered training courses tailored to the needs of the local economy.¹¹ However, the overwhelming experience was that due to inadequate design, poor targeting techniques, a lack of financial support to beneficiaries and discrimination in the selection procedure, meaningful training remained inaccessible for most Roma in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia.

Regulatory factors may also contribute to low chances of employment as they inform the investment decisions of multinational companies, which are important employers of the low-skilled workforce. The high cost of officially employing workers is a crucial factor in this respect. Analysing current country-specific regulations on taxes, social contributions and minimum wages, the cost of labour was calculated and sizeable differences were found across the five countries.¹² The cost of employment seems to be an important factor determining the proportion of Roma that had the opportunity to enter the labour market. In Slovakia and Spain, where the cost of employing a person at the minimum wage is higher by a factor of between two and five compared with Romania and Bulgaria, a significantly lower proportion of Roma are formally employed. Hungary is an exception to this rule to some extent: relatively high employment costs are coupled with relatively high employment rates of Roma, but this is due to the fact that beneficiaries of job creation programmes¹³ financed by the state are registered as formal employees in the labour statistics. However, public work programmes are not an inherent segment of the primary labour market and do not appear as employment in the statistics for other countries (e.g. Slovakia).

In the framework of ALMP, wage subsidies have the potential to increase formal employment of the low-skilled (and low-productivity) workforce by easing burdens of employment (social security contributions and taxes) for a certain period of time. Such measures were available in most countries but because Roma were not named as a target group and of the fact that numerous conditions were attached to such subsidies (administrative burdens and commitments to provide an employment contract beyond the period of the subsidy), employers were dissuaded from making use of such schemes and Roma typically did not benefit from this measure.

9.3 Discrimination and informal work are distinctive features of the Roma labour market

A very important factor feeding into the low employment rate of Roma is the extensive racial discrimination that Roma/Gypsy people face in central and south-east Europe. Roma are discriminated against during the selection procedure itself.¹⁴ Our empirical fieldwork research also confirmed that ethnic discrimination is not necessarily hidden; in Romania and Bulgaria, job advertisements even indicate explicitly that Roma should not apply, while in Slovakia and Hungary more concealed forms of

discrimination are prevalent, such as applicants with Roma names or racial signs being refused without further explanation. Racial discrimination is not exclusive to business employers; state employers and even stakeholders in the labour market, such as employment offices and job centres, may also act in a discriminatory way.

Although relevant legal safeguards against racial discrimination as well as an institutional framework for addressing complaints of discrimination existed in all of the countries, awareness of discrimination as well as the enforcement of anti-discrimination regulation remained weak in the field of employment. A potential way to counteract the consequences of racial discrimination is to target certain labour market programmes specifically at Roma. However, such approaches are rare, usually local in scope and project-based and therefore irregular and unstable. Spain is an exception in this respect: EU funds dedicated to social inclusion are distributed by four NGOs, one of which (the Fundació Secretariado Gitano, or FSG) is a pro-Roma organisation. This arrangement allows Roma to have a significant voice not only in the distribution of large funds dedicated to inclusion, but also in programme design and monitoring. A further consequence of this structure is that in contrast to the project-based financing prevalent in central and eastern European countries, funds dedicated to the inclusion of Roma are stable and calculable over the long run.

Discrimination, combined with high costs of employment and the fact that the recession hit the classic employment sectors of Roma disproportionately hard, results in the extensive exclusion of Roma from official employment, pushing them towards informal segments of the labour market. A number of qualitative in-depth studies¹⁵ and surveys have emphasised that employment of Roma deviates considerably from typical employment in that i) it is usually irregular, ii) it includes activities that are not considered as employment (collecting and trading with goods, waste recycling), iii) it is unstable, and iv) is outside the scope of the formal and sometimes even the legal labour market. Qualitative, in-depth investigations, as well as the EU-wide FRA Roma survey and the UNDP/WB/EC survey¹⁶ covering southern, central and eastern European countries, reinforce the notion that there is significant informal, unreported and sometimes unpaid work hidden behind the recorded low employment rates.

There is significant informal, unreported and sometimes unpaid work hidden behind the low employment rates recorded among Roma.

Here we need to refer to factors that, contrary to public perception, do not enhance the low employment rates of Roma. According to public opinion, the reason for the high unemployment of Roma is their lack of willingness to work. There is no empirical proof for such beliefs; on the contrary, the latest UNDP/WB/EC and FRA surveys reveal the opposite: Roma have an overwhelming preference for safe and regular jobs as opposed to unsafe and irregular jobs. Between 75% and 93% preferred having a secure but modestly paid job to an unsecure job with high income. Another common misconception about the causes of high unemployment is that Roma tend to exploit the welfare systems. An analysis of the financial incentives of staying employed as opposed to turning to the welfare system disproved the feasibility of such a strategy.¹⁷

9.4 Targeting programmes is an important dilemma of policy design

A crucial dilemma for experts as well as for practitioners is how best to organise active labour market policies (ALMPs). The predominant mode of targeting ALMPs is mainstreaming, which involves identifying characteristics of vulnerability and addressing them, irrespective of the ethnicity of the recipient. The most significant argument in favour of mainstreaming is that it avoids the risk of ethnicising Roma. Policies that define target groups according to factors that cause vulnerability – such as those with low education, in economically disadvantaged regions or marginalised communities, or of a certain age – would have the potential to reach Roma, given that they are overrepresented in these vulnerable groups. In contrast, promoters of ethnically targeted programmes argue that racial discrimination is the most important source of the lack of labour market opportunities, and disregarding this factor necessarily leads to Roma being overlooked by ALMPs.

A crucial guiding document for Roma integration in Europe is the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), which was elaborated under the imperative of EU in 2011. The document was a pioneering step because it represented an explicit political commitment to improve the situation of Roma. This framework document advocated for an ethnically targeted approach, stating that it is “crucial to [...] ensure that national, regional and local integration policies focus on Roma in a clear and specific way”.¹⁸ Implicitly, the document aims to assure the channelling of targeted solutions through mainstream institutions; namely, to ensure that Roma are explicitly named as a potential 'at-risk' or

'vulnerable' target population for mainstream measures. This is referred to in EU documents as the principle of "explicit but not exclusive targeting". Although most national social inclusion strategies and action plans follow this idea by naming Roma among the social groups with multiple vulnerabilities, our research found hardly any signs of implementation of this principle in labour market policies in the four central and eastern European countries.

The most recent EU document on Roma integration, the effects of which have yet to be seen, is the European Council's recommendation on effective Roma integration measures:

With a view to promoting the full equality of Roma in practice, take effective policy measures to ensure their equal treatment and the respect of their fundamental rights [...] This goal could be achieved either by means of mainstream measures or by means of targeted measures, including specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages, or by a combination of both, paying special attention to the gender dimension.¹⁹

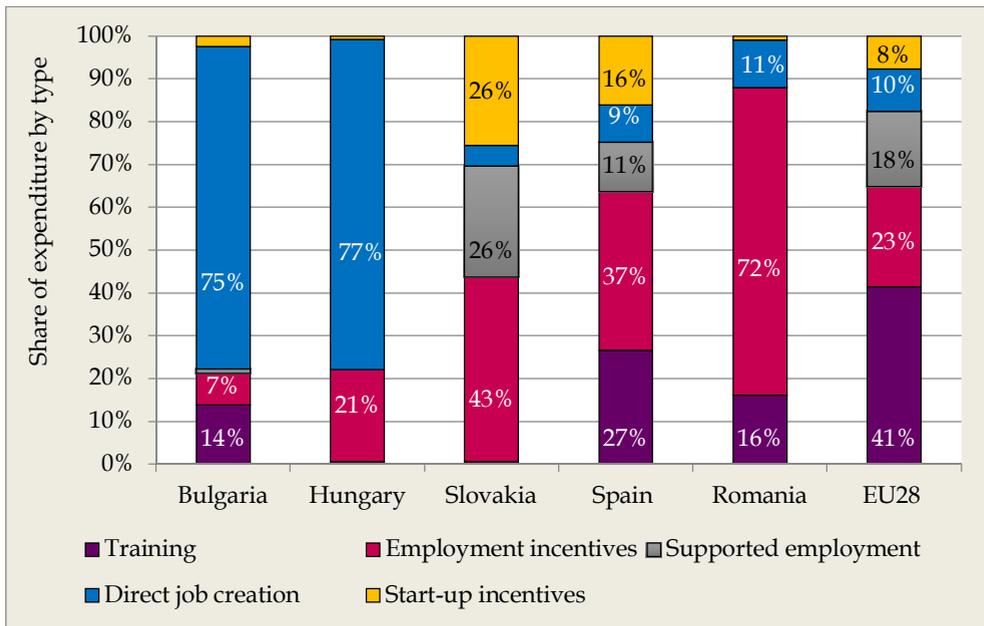
This document does not provide useful guidelines with regard to the most pressing dilemma of policy design, namely, how to reach out to vulnerable Roma and monitor the impact of policies on this segment of the population. Nevertheless, it gives equal weight to ethnically targeted and mainstream interventions.

Formulating an employment programme for the Roma population entails considerable political risk in the countries of central and eastern Europe, where prejudice and negative attitudes towards Roma are widespread, not only within the population but also among politicians and employees of public institutions. Governments are therefore reluctant to explicitly target Roma. In addition, as a result of a lack of data from monitoring activities on the ethnic background of programme beneficiaries, ethnic targeting remains weak. It is no wonder that with the exception of the Spanish ACCEDER programme,²⁰ ethnically targeted policy interventions are sporadic, local and powerless. We therefore move on from examining just 'Roma employment programmes' to identifying labour market interventions and measures that have the potential to intervene in the low employment rates of the Roma population.

9.5 Mainstream schemes: Job creation, regional development programmes and labour market services

Active labour market policies are often considered an effective tool for promoting labour market inclusion and tackling long-term unemployment, especially in times of economic crisis. For this reason, we first look at government expenditure by type of action in the five countries analysed so far. With the exception of Spain, the level of ALMP spending is well below the EU average in all countries (very close to zero in Bulgaria and Romania), despite the fact that long-term unemployment rates exceed the EU average significantly in four out of the five countries.²¹

Figure 9.4 ALMP expenditure by type of action and by member state, 2012 (% of total ALMP expenditure)*



* For Spain, the data refer to year 2011.

Source: Eurostat database.

However, it is not only the level of spending on ALMPs but the combination of the various measures that matters. According to Figure 9.4, some countries apply a true mix of ALMP measures (Spain and Slovakia), while others display a dominant preference for one measure and dedicate most of their funds to this (Hungary and Bulgaria).

Direct job creation programmes in the form of public work programmes (PWPs) and public employment programmes (PEPs)²² were the most widely available measures to unemployed Roma in Hungary,²³ Bulgaria and Slovakia,²⁴ while their implementation was significant but not overwhelming in Spain.²⁵ The scope and content of direct job creation varied significantly among the four countries, with Hungary standing out in terms of the share of the ALMP budget spent on direct job creation (more than two-thirds). However, the positive impact of direct job creation programmes on labour market inclusion was often mitigated by the very design of these programmes. Public work and public employment programmes are either a combination of labour market and social welfare policy measures (e.g. participation in public work is tied to the receipt of social welfare allowances, as in Hungary), or can be the exclusive terrain of social policy (as in Slovakia). Our fieldwork investigation²⁶ identified important weaknesses in direct job creation schemes that worked to the detriment of their efficiency and resulted in counter-effective outcomes in some cases. The most significant problems with job creation programmes can be summarised as follows:

Roma employees at employment offices improve the implementation of ALMP for Roma at the local level.

- In Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria, public work schemes trap beneficiaries (especially marginalised Roma) in the cycle of welfare support and PWPs/PEPs. These programmes proved to be extremely inefficient in supporting the return of the unemployed to the primary labour market because they did not offer any additional labour market services – such as training, orientation, job search or consultation – and no limitations were set concerning the number of occasions an individual could benefit from the schemes. Also, in most of the cases – in Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria – direct job creation programmes offered mundane, superfluous activities. Such programmes in fact became a form of mandatory work imposed on the welfare-dependent and long-term unemployed and failed to improve employment opportunities for their beneficiaries. That no outcome indicators related to labour market inclusion were formulated by the programmes reflects the fact that these programmes were not really meant to support labour market inclusion.

- Job creation following the logic of workfare enhanced local hierarchies and structures that result in the exposure and powerlessness of Roma and unemployed in other vulnerable groups. This was the case in Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria, where participation in public employment was tied to entitlement to social welfare benefits.
- In Hungary, where the scope (the number of beneficiaries) of the PEPs was too large and the range of potential beneficiaries was defined in a non-restrictive way, the programme distorted the local labour market equilibrium. Even the highly skilled temporary unemployed were addressed by job creation and as a result, public institutions replaced some of their regular workers with PEP beneficiaries.

In sum, PEPs/PWPs offered short-term solutions that did not address the causes of long-term unemployment. Job creation programmes might be an effective form of intervention in severely marginalised regions, for the most vulnerable population groups and for a restricted period of time, but only when implemented in a carefully designed manner and with a wide range of additional services offered to beneficiaries. It is important to understand that PEPs could become popular despite their poor performance because they entail significant political gains. They offer short-term employment for those with serious difficulties in the open labour market and are therefore supported both by programme participants and the local middle classes, who see them as a tool to activate the 'indolent' poor and Roma. In addition, the political elite regards them as a means of improving labour statistics, an important indicator of governmental performance in crisis-hit economies.

Public work does not address the causes of long-term unemployment.

A few programmes – typically EU-funded development programmes in Hungary and Slovakia – address the issue of regional inequalities and the explicit marginalisation of Roma. In Slovakia, marginalised Roma communities are targeted explicitly by including them as a horizontal priority in the country's development programmes. In Hungary, the most underdeveloped micro-regions with a large share of Roma receive substantial support for complex development of their economies, human resources and infrastructure. In Catalonia, geographical targeting is applied by the *Llei de Barris* (Neighbourhood Law) programme, which addresses certain impoverished urban zones. Such geographical targeting is

theoretically an appropriate way to reach out to a significant share of vulnerable Roma without ethnicising poverty and long-term unemployment. However, these programmes are complex in nature, meaning that they focus on intersecting spheres of disadvantage (such as infrastructure, housing, education and community development) and have a less explicit focus on employment. Our field research, as well as evaluation studies of the respective programmes, show that geographically targeted complex development programmes failed to reach the most disadvantaged in the course of their implementation. Lack of meaningful inclusion of Roma NGOs in the design and implementation at the local level was one of the major reasons why these programmes were likely to disregard the actual needs of the marginalised Roma communities.²⁷

An important prerequisite for improving the labour market inclusion of Roma is that employment offices (EOs) – the state agent assigned the mission to support the unemployed in their efforts to reintegrate into the labour market – provide high-quality, tailored services to clients in vulnerable situations. Yet, we found significant variation in this respect. In all of the central and eastern European countries, EOs were seen by unemployed Roma as purely administrative units that manage registration of unemployed status without providing meaningful support. Moreover, unemployed Roma described frequent experiences of open discrimination and humiliation by EO staff in Romania and Bulgaria.²⁸ Therefore, Roma, and especially those living in marginalised areas, are often reluctant to turn to the EOs, whose staff are unsupportive and whose services do not meet their needs. To improve the implementation of ALMPs at the local level, EOs in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain employed mediators of Roma background, who turned out to be less prejudiced and discriminatory towards Roma clients and had better communication capacities and knowledge of the community.²⁹ Consequently, Roma clients displayed greater trust towards them and the office. In Slovakia, social workers provided personalised counselling to unemployed Roma.³⁰

Geographical distance constituted an additional barrier. In all of the countries (except Spain), Roma residents of small rural settlements had difficulties in accessing the EO situated in the town serving as the centre of their micro-region. Either travel expenses were not covered (Romania and Bulgaria) or their reimbursement was delayed (Hungary), causing difficulty for the economically deprived rural Roma people to access this service. A suitable solution for bridging geographical distances was found in one Hungarian settlement, where the EO operated a mobile office with regular office hours in each settlement within its service area.

9.6 Policy implications: Monitoring, targeting and anti-discrimination

A crucial obstacle to understanding the impact of labour market support and services on unemployed Roma is the lack of employment data disaggregated by ethnicity. Collecting information and monitoring outcomes with regard to the participation of Roma in ALMPs is a key prerequisite of programme targeting and design, and the EU could play a pioneering role in this effort. The legal framework in individual countries makes it difficult to collect information on the ethnic background of ALMP beneficiaries. Nevertheless, depending on the regulatory environment, there are several options for obtaining the most important information.

Employment data disaggregated by ethnicity are crucial for the design of successful policies.

First, self-declaration of beneficiaries' ethnic background (including an option for multiple ethnic identification) could become a part of anonymised monitoring of ALMP impact in those countries where the collection of data on ethnicity is not banned. Such data would allow for an analysis at the programme, region or population group levels, or a combination of these. As such programmes are predominantly financed by EU funds, the EU is in a position to urge national governments to collect anonymised data on ALMP beneficiaries' ethnic background in a sensitive manner, respecting the right to self-identification and multiple identities.

Another data source with the potential to inform policy-makers is Roma surveys (either conducted by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency or by national governments), which should ask about participation in various types of ALMPs.

Finally, harmonisation of data collection is a truly supranational mission, so EU institutions could play an important role in encouraging national statistical bodies to collect information about self-declared ethnic background of respondents in large-scale EU-wide comparative surveys, such as the Labour Force Survey or Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). Such data collection should take into account the sensitivity and complexity of ethnic identities and offer the possibility of multiple identification. This arrangement would produce reliable data on the presence of the Roma population in ALMPs as well as some outcome indicators at an aggregate level.

The targeting of programmes is a genuine challenge for policy-makers: in addition to finding ways to identify the populations most in need of support, they must take into account political forces and public attitudes, as well as the challenges of implementation posed by the individual targeting techniques. Our research highlighted that exclusive ethnic targeting of employment programmes is rarely a feasible and efficient way to reach out to Roma, especially in countries where discrimination and anti-Roma prejudice is widespread and strong. In addition, ethnically targeted programmes have no instruments to ensure that their beneficiaries are Roma. On the other hand, with the exception of those programmes that have little or no impact on employment opportunities (such as public work schemes), mainstream programmes usually do not reach out to Roma either. However, targeting programmes according to a careful *combination of the factors* behind vulnerability (low education, age, health situation, living in marginalised regions, having small children) together with the adoption of the EU principle of “explicit but not exclusive targeting of Roma” may enable a significant number of Roma to be reached. Thus, mainstream programmes can and should identify an ethnic target about the share of Roma among beneficiaries at an aggregate level. The formulation of such targets raises the awareness of EO workers and creates an important incentive to reach out to unemployed Roma.

Improvements in the delivery of services by employment offices to marginalised Roma communities would automatically support their employment opportunities. Presently, employment offices tend to focus their efforts on administrative duties, such as registering the unemployed or publishing announcements, and fail to provide genuine support to the unemployed. Service delivery could be improved via various approaches in parallel. Where prejudiced and negative attitudes of EO servants present a substantial problem (Bulgaria and Romania), implementing awareness-raising and sensitivity training for EO servants is essential. Surveying client satisfaction in EOs, including experiences of discrimination, could also inform the development of EO services. To achieve greater outreach to and understanding of marginalised Roma communities, it is desirable to employ staff from the Roma community in EOs. However, Roma staff members should not be seen as exclusively responsible for treating Roma clients, as such a practice would ‘ethnicise’ both Roma mediators and Roma clients. The problem of geographical accessibility of EO services for Roma living in marginalised areas could be resolved with a change of logic: the services should go to the clients instead of the currently prevalent principle

that 'clients should travel to the office'. In this spirit, the development of a system of mobile employment offices providing services in smaller, marginalised settlements at established dates and times could be a beneficial step.

Different active labour market programmes have different potential to reach out to and support vulnerable populations, and marginalised Roma in particular. The basic principle of designing ALMPs should give preference to market-compatible ways of intervention, offering incentives for employers rather than creating a secondary labour market or administratively punishing the unemployed (as is the case in several central and eastern European countries). Presently, direct job creation (public work and public employment programmes) is a key programme type in most of the countries reaching marginalised unemployed Roma. However, these programmes have failed to facilitate sustainable employment. Direct job-creation programmes for the most marginalised and vulnerable segments of the labour market may only be appropriate if they meet a number of conditions, the most important of which are the following:

- They offer meaningful activities that add value and, ideally, are operated in the form of job try-outs.
- They are part of a complex intervention including more of the following elements: tailored training, personalised mentoring and efficient job-match services.
- They are offered only to the unemployed in the most vulnerable situations and only for a limited period of time.
- Their design ensures that beneficiaries are not trapped inside the vicious circle of public work-social benefit.

Training cannot reconcile the immense ethnic gap in educational attainment, but it can make adjustments and corrections in areas where the disequilibrium in the labour market appears to be local. Still, the research has identified certain steps aimed at improving the impact of training programmes for unemployed Roma.

- The content and qualifications provided by training programmes should be regularly adjusted to the needs of the local labour market.
- Training programmes should be as practical as possible, and organised in cooperation with local firms.

- As opposed to the prevalent 'one-size-fits-all' approach of many training programmes, courses should be more personalised and adapted to the needs and capacities of unemployed individuals.

Anti-discrimination and affirmative action is a neglected approach; in central and eastern European countries the enforcement of the principle of non-discrimination is rare. Although there is an extensive academic and policy debate about the pros and cons of affirmative action, we argue for the positive impact of some measures such as i) employing Roma in public offices in charge of designing and implementing ALMPs, ii) giving preference to Roma applicants for jobs in public offices, and iii) promoting active participation of Roma NGOs in the design and monitoring of ALMPs targeting the disadvantaged long-term unemployed. The EU, as a supranational entity formed on the basis of shared values of non-discrimination and promoting human rights, could play a pioneering role in encouraging national governments, as employers of state institutions and service providers, to not only adopt but to actively implement anti-discrimination and affirmative action on their own terrain.

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¹ FRA Pilot Survey 2011

² <http://hub.coe.int/web/coe-portal/roma>

³ de Laat (2010).

⁴ McGarry and Tremlett (2013); Richardson and Ryder (2012); Csepele and Simon (2004).

⁵ FRA (2013).

⁶ It needs to be pointed out that depending on 1) the definition of who is regarded as 'Roma', 2) the method of survey sampling, 3) operationalising employment and unemployment indicators, and 4) the timeframe of the unemployed status, various surveys have published very different employment indicators (Messing, 2014).

⁷ Brüggemann (2012).

⁸ EUROSTAT- Labour Force Survey (2011).

⁹ Kureková et al. (2012).

¹⁰ Borovicova et al. (2013).

¹¹ Beremény (2013).

¹² Borovicova et al. (2013).

¹³ Job creation programmes labelled "public work programmes" reach out to approximately a quarter of the unemployed in Hungary.

¹⁴ FRA (2009).

¹⁵ Salner and Kostal (2013); Pop (2013); Köllő and Scharle (2013).

¹⁶ FRA (2014); FRA and UNDP (2012).

¹⁷ For exact calculations, see Borovicova et al. (2013).

¹⁸ European Commission (2011).

¹⁹ Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the member states (2013/C 378/01).

²⁰ ACCEDER was called to existence through the joint financing of the ERDF and ESF under the Spanish Multiregional Operational Programme (OP) 'Fight against Discrimination', being the only ESF in Spain focusing openly on the Roma population. The programme is massive: an FSG report claims that in the period of 2000-12 it has attended 70,414 people, maintaining an approximately 70% share of Roma clients; signed 47,868 work-contracts; organized 1.928 training courses; assisted 143 start-up businesses; and concluded agreements with more than 200 companies about potential internship schemes for ACCEDER users.

²¹ EUROSTAT (2012).

²² ‘Public employment programmes’ or ‘public employment’ refer to public work schemes through which the central governments (or local governments, public employment services or other actors) create publicly financed temporary jobs for unemployed. In Hungary and Spain, such employment results in employment contracts, while in Slovakia the payment is registered as a top-up to social welfare benefit and remains a part of social welfare subsidies.

²³ Public employment schemes.

²⁴ Anti-flood measures.

²⁵ Employment plans.

²⁶ Messing et al. (2013).

²⁷ Salner and Kostal (2013); OSF MtM (2011).

²⁸ Pop (2013); Pamporov (2013).

²⁹ Messing (2013b).

³⁰ Kureková and Konstekova (2013).