



**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITE EUROPEEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX**

27 April 2015

Case Document No. 6

European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) v. Ireland
Complaint No .100/2013

**GOVERNMENT'S ADDITIONAL
OBSERVATIONS ON THE MERITS**

Registered at the Secretariat on 16 April 2015



16 April 2015

Henrik Kristensen
Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECSR
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by electronic transmission only

European Roma Rights Centre v. Ireland, complaint no. 100-2013
Our file ref: 530/1129

Dear Mr Kristensen

I refer to Complaint 100/2013 against Ireland which is currently under consideration by the Committee. By way of Supplement to Ireland's Observations in the Rejoinder ("the Government's Rejoinder"), Ireland wishes to inform the Committee of recent developments relevant to the Collective Complaint as well as to matters referenced at Paragraph 134 of the ERRC Replies.

The 2014 Strategic Assessment

Paragraph 134 of the ERRC Replies makes reference to the Report of the Children's Ombudsman. The Report of the Children's Ombudsman, Emily Logan ("the Logan Report"), which was published on 1 July 2014, and contained a number of recommendations with a view to improving consultation with the Roma Community. Following these recommendations, Ireland's Department of Justice and Equality conducted an extensive Strategic Assessment into the structures currently in place for consulting with and improving the outcomes for the Roma and Traveller Communities. It made, *inter alia*, the following recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the State's consultative mechanisms with those communities, including:

- (a) That the National Traveller Monitoring Advisory Committee and the High Level Group on Traveller Issues should be amalgamated into a new body which would be called the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy (NTRIS) Steering Group in order to facilitate better communication between all stakeholders including from the Traveller and Roma communities;¹

¹ Travellers are included in the EU Definition of Roma under the 2011 EU Framework for the Implementation of Roma Integration Strategies in Member States. That framework has identified the areas

- (b) That this body should ensure that priority is given across Government to making progress on the NTRIS with particular regard being given to the recommendations of the European Commission in its 2014 Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies;
- (c) That the NTRIS Steering Group should be chaired by the Minister of State for Equality, and should comprise senior officials from all relevant Government Departments and Agencies as well as Traveller and Roma representatives;
- (d) That all Government Departments and Agencies should revise their Traveller and Roma Integration Strategies immediately and, following an inter-departmental consultation process and consultation with Traveller interests, should seek Government approval for actions arising;
- (e) That the NTRIS Steering Group should monitor the NTRIS on an ongoing basis, having regard to the Council of Europe's 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma (and Traveller) Inclusion, focussing on assessing impacts, identifying shortcomings in implementation and channelling conclusions into policy development. The Group would report to the Senior Officials Group on Social Policy;
- (f) That the Traveller Policy Unit in the Department of Justice and Equality should be re-designated the "*Traveller and Roma Integration Unit*" and act as a driver of NTRIS policy to ensure effective implementation with the lead being taken by the National Roma Contact Point within that Unit
- (g) That the Traveller and Roma Integration Unit should work closely with the Social Inclusion Office of the Department of Social Protection with a particular focus on the Roma and Traveller communities benefitting from measures funded under the objective of social inclusion, and that a representative of that Office should sit on the NTRIS Steering Group;
- (h) That a Cross-Agency Traveller and Roma data strategy should be developed to allow for improved measurement of policy outcomes for Traveller and Roma communities, including assessing the impact of mainstream measures. This would form part of the data strategy under the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion;
- (i) That, as part of the data strategy, an assessment of need should be conducted for the Traveller community as well as for the Roma community;
- (j) That a National Strategic Framework should be developed and implemented to provide strategic direction for the existing Traveller Inter-Agency Groups with a view to increasing effectiveness of the inter-agency framework in accordance with the recommendations of POBAL and the framework provided by the Council of Europe's 10 Common Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion.

These recommendations have now been accepted by the Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality and, following a consultation phase with relevant Government Departments and Traveller Organisations, they are now being implemented.

In particular, the NTRIS Steering Group has been established and was held for the first time on 1 April 2015. A paper to inform the consultation process is with the Steering Group for consideration and observations by 20 April 2015. The Steering Group will oversee a public consultation process during 2015 to develop a revised National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy and submissions will be sought in relation to a number of key policy areas, including: education, employment, health, anti-discrimination, housing and Traveller and Roma societal status, as well as with regard to the proposed data collection strategy (in respect of which a paper has been prepared for the Senior Officials Group on Social Policy and is with relevant Government Departments for their consideration and observations by 20 April 2015). It is intended that the revised Inclusion Strategy will be approved by Government during 2015 for implementation from 2016.

Once implemented, the proposed Traveller and Roma Data Collection Strategy will facilitate consistent data collection across all relevant Government Departments and agencies in the areas of housing, education, employment, health and anti-discrimination. The strategy will be guided by the integration indicators framework currently being developed by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency ("*FRA*"), and the Department of Justice and Equality have joined the FRA's Working Group on Roma Integration Indicators. The proposed Assessment of Need will also be undertaken and this will gather comprehensive data on the needs of Travellers and Roma across these key priority areas.

In addition, Traveller Inter-agency Groups are currently considering a draft National Strategic Framework. A conference is planned for late May to agree a way forward for the Traveller Inter-agency Groups, including discussing and agreeing the Framework.

These developments reflect Ireland's commitment to the continuous improvement in every area of the State's interactions with both the Traveller and Roma communities. In particular, the Committee will note the ongoing measures to improve data collection.

Yours sincerely



Peter White
Agent for the Government of Ireland