



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

A8-0314/2015

30.10.2015

REPORT

on cohesion policy and marginalised communities
(2014/2247(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on cohesion policy and marginalised communities (2014/2247(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Articles 151, 153, 162 and 174 to 176 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to European conventions protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, notably the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and the related case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the European Social Charter and the related recommendations of the European Committee of Social Rights, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- having regard to the ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries,
- having regard to the EU anti-discrimination directives, Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Protocol No 12 to that convention,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention of 5 January 2011 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (hereinafter ‘the CPR’)¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006²,

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 289.

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 437/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 amending Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme for the period 2014 to 2020³,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived⁴,
- having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/ 2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 26 February 2014 on the European Commission’s 7th and 8th progress reports on the EU Cohesion Policy and the Strategic Report 2013 on programme implementation 2007-2013⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2013 on the progress made in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 June 2013 on social housing in the European Union⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2011 on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2010 on the contribution of the cohesion policy to the achievement of Lisbon and the EU2020 objectives¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2009 on the social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU¹¹,
- having regard to the Commission’s sixth report on economic, social and territorial

¹ OJ L 132, 29.5.2010, p. 1.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 470.

³ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 62.

⁴ OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 74, 14.3.2014, p. 1.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0132.

⁷ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0594.

⁸ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0246.

⁹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0092.

¹⁰ OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 120.

¹¹ OJ C 87 E, 1.4.2010, p. 60.

cohesion of 23 July 2014 entitled ‘Investment for jobs and growth: promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union’,

- having regard to the Commission’s Thematic Guidance Fiche of 27 February 2014 on Roma and Marginalised Communities (Thematic objective 9 – Social Inclusion and Poverty),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 2 April 2014 entitled ‘Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies’ (COM(2014)0209),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 21 May 2012 entitled ‘National Roma integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework’ (COM(2012)0226),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 8 December 2010 entitled ‘European Union Strategy for Danube Region’ (COM(2010)0715),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 12 December 2010 entitled ‘The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion’ (COM(2010)0758),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2010 entitled ‘Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
 - having regard to Council recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States¹,
 - having regard to the Commission's 'Guidance Note on the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in tackling educational and spatial segregation (Draft)' of 1 July 2015,
 - having regard to the question for written answer to the Commission of 24 February 2015 on funding for marginalised communities (E-002782-15),
 - having regard to the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on ‘Roma integration strategies’²,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0314/2015),
- A. whereas cohesion policy is aimed at enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion, reducing social disparities, including the reduction and eradication of poverty and exclusion, which calls for the prevention of segregation and for the promotion of

¹ OJ C 378, 14.12.2013, p. 1.

² OJ C 114, 15.4.2014, p. 73.

equal access and opportunities for all citizens, including the most marginalised communities as well as groups and individuals of all ages facing poverty and social exclusion and lacking access to education, employment, housing and healthcare systems;

- B. whereas cohesion policy, as defined in the 1986 Single European Act, is about reducing disparities between the various regions, and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions; whereas the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union adds another facet to cohesion, referring to ‘economic, social and territorial cohesion’;
- C. whereas the objective of social cohesion calls for a European role in policies for the inclusion of marginalised communities, and requires Member States to use their competences in this area to take supportive action and action also under transnational cooperation as well as national programmes;
- D. whereas funding opportunities for marginalised communities were introduced into the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 2010; whereas the legislative framework for cohesion policy 2014-2020 offers a strategic approach;
- E. whereas Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013¹ stipulates that the ESF benefits people, including disadvantaged groups such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, marginalised communities and people of all ages facing poverty and social exclusion;
- F. whereas at least 23.1 % of the Cohesion Policy budget will be allocated to investments under the ESF during the 2014-2020 programming period; whereas the ERDF and the ESF play a specific and significant role, with at least 20 % of the ESF earmarked in each Member State for the specific objective of promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination, thus representing a crucial tool in the promotion of greater inclusion of marginalised communities;
- G. whereas Regulation 1303/2013 lays down a number of preconditions related to non-discrimination, gender and disability that need to be complied with²;
- H. whereas the sixth report of the Commission on economic, social and territorial cohesion has shown that the economic crisis has increased poverty and social exclusion;
- I. whereas the economic crisis and resulting budget cuts and austerity measures have led to numerous problems, often resulting in severe budgetary problems for municipalities, leading to a lack of options when dealing with marginalised groups and seeking to improve their inclusion and prevent segregation, as such policies are chiefly, and sometimes solely, dependent on European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) funding;
- J. whereas the consequences of the economic crisis and the cutbacks in public services

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

² Part II of Annex XI of Regulation 1303/2013.

have exacerbated the situation of women within marginalised communities;

- K. whereas women in marginalised communities suffer more intense multiple discrimination, and have a much lower employment rate, than do men in those communities and than do other women;
- L. whereas a large number of public and private actors at different levels and sectors, including civil society representatives, are involved and often play an important role in implementing inclusion policies, thus requiring a coherent and well-coordinated approach;
- M. whereas there is no definition of marginalised community at present at European Union level; whereas understanding the report begins by understanding marginalisation based on an analysis of specific attributes and characteristics of marginalised groups, which takes into account their specific situation and needs, such as living and working conditions, limited access to education and health care systems and employment, early school leaving, accompanied by structural and systemic exclusion and aims at ensuring their effective socio-economic inclusion;
- N. whereas the Commission has not provided a definition of marginalised communities, leaving Member States the responsibility of deciding on a definition on the basis of their national indicators; notes, however, that marginalisation can be established by looking at a set of relevant indicators such as social exclusion, high long-term unemployment, a low level of education, (extremely) poor housing conditions, a high level of discrimination, and excessive exposure to health risks and/or lack of access to healthcare, i.e. those populations considered to be most vulnerable and most in need of help;
- O. whereas marginalisation is a social phenomenon in which individuals or communities are socially excluded and systematically blocked from participating in, or denied access to, social and political processes that are essential to their social integration; whereas ‘marginalised communities’ refers to diverse groups and individuals, such as minorities, Roma, people with disabilities, people living below the poverty line or at risk of poverty, migrants, refugees and socially excluded groups in society; whereas racism, patriarchy, homophobia, economic disadvantages and other discriminatory factors contribute to creating layers of inequality and a dynamic of disempowerment for women within marginalised communities;
- P. whereas common characteristics shared by marginalised communities include communities of places, such as marginalised communities living in rural areas and disadvantaged neighbourhoods; communities of interests, such as refugees and asylum seekers, and ethnic and linguistic minorities; and people with disabilities, elderly people, homeless as well as indigenous peoples; whereas different types of marginalised communities share common difficulties and all suffer from multiple forms of stigmatisation and discrimination;
- Q. whereas there are a large number of marginalised groups in Europe; whereas among them the Roma people, a term which is understood differently across Europe, is Europe’s largest ethnic minority and one of the most marginalised communities;

- R. whereas cohesion policy should address marginalised communities in their diversity, taking into account specific needs; whereas the inclusion of marginalised communities in funding requires that efforts be made at all levels, involving a long-term, integrated and coherent approach, permanent solutions, empowerment, building on experience and capacity building, including for women and girls within marginalised communities, transition from institutional to community-based care, in order to end segregation and reach normalisation;
- S. whereas European cohesion policy strategies for empowering women in marginalised communities must take into account the situation of aging women, women with disabilities, women carers and women with mental health problems;
- T. whereas arts and culture-based projects promoting intercultural exchanges, empowerment of participants, development of creative and social skills and active participation in the life of the local community are among the most effective tools for addressing social inclusion and integration;
- U. whereas education, both formal and informal, is instrumental in overcoming marginalisation and multiple discrimination, in terms of creating dialogue, openness and understanding between communities, and in terms of empowering marginalised communities; whereas a gender perspective in education, and its role in empowering women and girls in marginalised communities, must not be forgotten;

General principles

1. Recalls the urgent need to tackle the issue of marginalised communities; underlines the important role of cohesion policy in supporting their economic, social and territorial inclusion;
2. Recalls that marginalised communities were introduced as a focus of cohesion policy measures because of the growing concern about, and commitment to combat, social exclusion, including concern about the situation of Roma and the longstanding demand to improve their living conditions;
3. Calls on the Commission to issue guidance on the definition of marginalised communities, specifying a set of attributes and characteristics of marginalised groups, taking into account the specific situation, challenges and needs of each potential target group with the aim of promoting their socio-economic inclusion, and involving representatives of those communities; emphasises that such guidance would further increase the effectiveness of cohesion policy in strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion throughout the European Union;
4. Welcomes the fact that the legislative framework for cohesion policy 2014-2020 introduced new elements which consolidate the initial approach by extending funding opportunities and inserting mechanisms to ensure that support for marginalised communities complies with European values and objectives and takes into account the need to involve those groups in the whole process;

5. Calls on the Commission to provide detailed information about the take-up of funding opportunities for marginalised communities; asks for an analysis that allows appropriate conclusions to be drawn and obstacles that prevent further take-up or the best possible results to be identified;
6. Calls on the Commission to monitor the effective use of the European Code of Conduct with regard to the partnership principle and the involvement of civil society; recalls that the horizontal principles in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) – which embody fundamental rights such as the promotion of equal opportunities, the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of sustainable development – must be applied when preparing and implementing programmes under the ESIF; recalls that all Member States' actions, which are funded under the EU cohesion policy, should respect fundamental rights principles and must never contribute to segregation in any way;
7. Emphasises that equal opportunities and non-discrimination are embodied in the ESIF funding rules for the purpose of eradicating the systemic causes of inequality, whether economic, social or based on gender, as well as concerning the access to culture and education; highlights that understanding, and raising awareness about, systemic xenophobia and racism should be a focal point when analysing the roots of exclusion;
8. Recalls that equality between women and men constitutes a principle that applies horizontally to cohesion policy; deplores the multiple discrimination suffered in particular by women, migrants and persons with disabilities within marginalised communities;
9. Highlights that the implementation of the cohesion policy must tackle the crucial challenge of poverty and exclusion of young people and children, adults and people with disabilities, including the transition from institutional to community-based care and services; urges the Member States concerned to take appropriate action and measures to develop and implement strategies towards this end, applying the integrated approach;
10. Points out that, in developing policies addressed to specific target audiences following the principle of 'explicit but not exclusive targeting', care must be taken not to exclude other groups in similar socio-economic circumstances, so as to avoid triggering defensive reactions; emphasises that this principle is only a first step in recognising the need to pay attention to some of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities and individuals;
11. Stresses that accountable, transparent and democratic structures should be in place to fight corruption and the fraudulent use of funds to ensure the inclusion of marginalised communities;
12. Regards access to public services as one of the major goals when addressing inclusion of marginalised groups; calls on the Member States to improve the provision of tailored health-information material and the development of disease-prevention strategies and community-health initiatives in marginalised communities; calls for the creation of specialised structures, such as clearing points advising on issues related to access to healthcare, labour market and education; demands that action be taken to effect a shift in public administrations from a demand-driven approach to a welcoming service

approach;

13. Calls for better coordination and stronger links between national strategies for marginalised communities, including National Roma Inclusion Strategies, National Poverty Reduction Strategies, strategies for the inclusion of other marginalised or less favoured communities, and gender equality strategies with cohesion policy;
14. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to regard children as a priority when implementing the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies, and reiterates the importance of promoting equal access to housing, healthcare, education and dignified living conditions for children;
15. Calls on Member States and local authorities to encourage the use of ESF funding to support informal learning and lifelong learning projects, as well as culture-based projects, in order to reach the objectives of investing in new skills for innovation and combating unemployment, poverty and social exclusion;
16. Recalls – bearing in mind the growing regional disparities, the demographic challenges and the situation faced by the growing number of young people who have left or are currently planning to leave their country of origin – that in the 2014-2020 budgetary cycle less funding is available for cohesion policy; believes that cohesion policy still has the potential to add value to the work already under way in Member States, and that – by focusing on improving employment opportunities, participation in society and investment in skills, particularly in those regions that need it most – cohesion policy will result in, among other benefits, greater social inclusion and poverty reduction by allowing appropriate flexibility to enable the Member States to implement individualised support in line with local needs and ensure that funding is used in those areas in which unemployment is highest and where funding is most needed;
17. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the Member States comply with these principles during the implementation of operational programmes; invites the Commission to include its analysis in its reporting, including on National Roma Integration Strategies;
18. Stresses that budget cuts for public services in some Member States during the crisis have led to heightened unemployment, a lack of social security, a difficult housing situation and health problems; calls on the Member States to use ESF support more efficiently in order to improve the quality of, and equal access to, public services for marginalised communities, and to combat any form of discrimination;
19. Calls for a human-rights perspective to be taken into account when designing actions supported by cohesion funds, and stresses that cultural, economic and social rights should be integrated into policies aimed at recognising women from marginalised communities as active citizens in their own right, and that racism, both open and invisible, should explicitly be addressed in every action and policy design;

Preparation of programmes

20. Stresses that the partnership principle must lead to involvement at all levels, and needs to be applied by Member States on an obligatory basis and not merely pro forma;

stresses the importance of implementing the code of conduct on partnership in ensuring equal participation and representation of partners, whereby specific attention should be paid to including marginalised communities so that their specific situation, and any potential challenges that they face in contributing substantially to the partnership, may be taken into account; is concerned about the poor compliance with the obligatory involvement of partners in accordance with the respective principles laid down in the CPR and the European code of conduct on partnership; urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure the involvement of partners, including those most concerned, and to implement a system of incentives and exchange of best practices, including specific support to those managing authorities and beneficiaries that have had particularly good results in this area;

21. Regrets that the Commission has accepted partnership agreements that do not include marginalised communities to a sufficient degree; asks the Commission to take measures to facilitate the inclusion of marginalised communities in the preparation, implementation and assessment of projects, as a tool for empowering the concerned communities; suggests that recommendations be presented in the context of the European Semester as a suitable way of promoting action to be taken by Member States;
22. Calls on the Member States to act on, and on the Commission to follow up closely, the country-specific recommendations issued on the social inclusion of marginalised communities;
23. Welcomes the fact that some Member States, including those receiving recommendations, choose the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities as an investment priority in their operational programmes; warns, however, that this must also be mainstreamed in policy areas such as education and employment;
24. Calls on the Member States to make full use of the funds; emphasises the need for a special focus on funding measures that go beyond targeted action under the thematic objective for social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, favouring an integrated and systematic approach;
25. Considers multi-level governance and coordination to play an important role; emphasises that the involvement of local authorities and local stakeholders is essential if the target group is to be reached, and that it requires the highest territorial proximity possible;

Implementation of programmes

26. Points to the importance of an integrated approach; is of the opinion that funds should be used in a more integrated way, including by means of multi-fund programmes, Community-Led Local Development, Integrated Territorial Investment and cross-financing, as referred to in Article 98.2 of the CPR, and that synergies should be achieved with other EU and national funding instruments; calls on the administrations and authorities concerned to strive for active cooperation at all levels, including across borders;
27. Notes that cross-financing is currently used in a limited way, to some extent caused by

complex rules described in Article 98(2) of the CPR; is of the opinion that increasing the flexibility of rules for cross-financing, particularly in reference to marginalised communities, could increase the effectiveness of the projects and bring an important added value to their impact; calls, therefore, on the Commission to conduct an analysis of the application and level of use of cross-financing;

28. Notes that marginalised communities often live in less favourable parts of cities; emphasises the importance of a genuine implementation of urban renewal and regeneration programmes for deprived neighbourhoods that combine integrated and place-based approaches and partnerships, tackle both economic, social and territorial challenges, and improve the urban environment, and that also focus on increasing connectivity with a view to giving these communities better access; considers that the future EU Urban Agenda should address, in an adequate way, the key challenges and needs related to marginalised communities in urban areas in order to prevent the establishment of ghetto areas and successfully fight segregation, poverty and social exclusion;
29. Draws attention to the specific needs that marginalised communities living in rural, mountainous and isolated areas face, including challenges related to connectivity, mobility and access to services, but also in terms of cultural and social opportunities; highlights the importance of connecting the regions in a better way; notes also that people in cross-border areas are often subject to marginalisation owing to their geographical situation and that this should be taken into consideration in a better way when cohesion policy is formulated, notably as regards the European territorial cooperation goal;
30. Underlines the need to build up the capacity of the stakeholders, including public services, administrations and civil-society bodies, with a view of empowering communities, notably by allowing them to take greater part in policy making; calls for targeted technical assistance and funding to be used also to this end;
31. Calls on the Commission to offer the technical support needed to improve the administrative capacity of bodies involved in the administration of the Structural Funds, and calls on the Member States to provide advice and administrative assistance, e.g. by organising training and by helping with aid applications and explanations, so as to make it easier for marginalised communities such as Roma to obtain information concerning European and national funding programmes in support of entrepreneurship and employment and to submit the relevant applications;
32. Stresses that the social partners must have access to technical assistance not only in order to strengthen their capacity, but also to ensure their coordination and representation in the ad hoc committees that define and implement the operational programmes;
33. Points out that, in partnership with representatives of marginalised communities, the Commission, after giving guidance on the definition of marginalised communities, should set up an ad hoc expert group for advice, and promote appropriate training for administrative staff, in order to provide specific knowledge of the difficulties facing marginalised communities, and to combat discriminatory practices, with a view to

fostering inclusion through constructive and effective dialogue, and to implementing and monitoring EU-funded projects related to marginalised communities in an integrated and effective way, thereby maximising their impact;

34. Considers it essential to include equality bodies, women's organisations and women from marginalised communities in the decision-making process on the allocation, use, implementation and monitoring of the funds, at all levels – from local and regional through Member State to EU level – and considers that the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes implemented should be regarded as a key process in enhancing the participation of women from marginalised communities;
35. Notes the approach that all strategic and operational policy arrangements, including sufficient administrative or institutional capacity, are to be in place before investments are made; encourages the Commission to monitor thoroughly the fulfilment of these conditions, and to ensure that complementary actions are taken by the Member States concerned, in particular in the field of promoting inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination;

Monitoring and recommendations

36. Points out that EU-funded projects must have a long-term perspective in order to be effective, and that the funds must support investment in the actual needs of the beneficiaries, with mechanisms to ensure that target groups are reached and to address exclusion and marginalisation; calls for qualitative evaluation and monitoring mechanisms; calls on the Commission to put in place proactive and participatory mechanisms for monitoring and observing Members States' actions in the planning and evaluation processes for funds used for marginalised communities;
37. Highlights that housing exclusion, homelessness, education exclusion and unemployment are often key elements of marginalisation; emphasises, therefore, the importance of integrated housing, educational and employment interventions, in favour of marginalised communities;
38. Recalls – bearing in mind that the recent economic and financial crisis has been felt particularly hard by those marginalised groups that face the greatest risk of losing their jobs during times of turbulence on the labour market – that education and employment are the best ways out of poverty, and that integrating marginalised communities into society and the labour market should therefore be a priority; notes with concern that members of marginalised communities are frequently excluded from society and suffer discrimination, and consequently face barriers to accessing high-quality education, employment, healthcare, transportation, information and services in general, which poses a complex problem that needs to be addressed properly through the complementary use and effective combination of ESIF and national resources; emphasises, accordingly, the need to make special efforts as regards existing EU programmes, such as the Youth Employment Initiative, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, with a view of reaching out to members of marginalised communities, accompanied by regular monitoring of the success of that outreach, in order to break the cycle of poverty and marginalisation and to boost people's professional skills and qualifications;

39. Calls for the funds to be used to improve living conditions and to facilitate access for women in marginalised communities to high-quality, stable education, housing, health care, employment, childcare, social services, victim support services and legal systems;
40. Underlines that representatives of marginalised communities need to be actively involved, and enabled to participate as full members, in monitoring arrangements; points out that considerable experience could have been gathered at local, regional, national and transnational level; underlines the need to disseminate and capitalise on best practices; calls on the Commission and Member States to analyse all existing best practices, including innovative ones related to the inclusion of marginalised groups and individuals into society, and to initiate networking activities, including among social, youth and community workers as well as among academics and researchers; stresses the need for a network platform at EU level facilitating the exchange of best practices and joint problem solving that could serve as well as an e-learning facility for capacity building;
41. Invites the Commission to address cohesion policy and marginalised communities in its annual structured dialogue with civil society and organisations representing partners, while making sure that representatives of marginalised communities participate and facilitating a debate based on quantitative and qualitative analysis;
42. Points out that awareness of structural and systemic inclusion is not only called for on the part of society as a whole but is especially essential for the work of decision-makers and stakeholders at all administrative levels and other public bodies involved; calls on all public stakeholders and training institutes to carry out a thorough analysis of the causes of discrimination and marginalisation, and to raise awareness of the fact that xenophobia and racism, and all types of marginalisation leading to systemic exclusion, must be eliminated; calls on the Commission rigorously to enforce and monitor EU legislation on discrimination; calls on public employment services (PES) to provide high-quality, needs-based tailored services;⁴³. Highlights the need for a dual approach to helping and integrating marginalised groups, which should be done directly in conjunction with those affected through the provision of education, including education facilities, training, vocational guidance and job opportunities, and in conjunction with the local community and authorities in order to improve and/or change public perceptions by raising awareness of the effects of prejudice, improving public services and adapting social systems;
44. Stresses that education is a fundamental right enshrined in the Treaty on European Union; emphasises that ensuring equal access to high-quality education for all members of society is key to breaking the cycle of social exclusion; takes the view that formal, non-formal and informal education, characterised by education in diversity, is a first step towards the genuine political, economic and social inclusion of marginalised communities; underlines the need to implement programmes, projects and support activities for marginalised communities in order to provide for preschool education, to underpin the need for formal education, while also offering opportunities for other forms of education as well as lifelong learning, particularly in vocational skills and in ICT, and to improve access to the media, also with a view of empowering women and girls in marginalised communities;

45. Calls on the Member States, and on regional and local authorities, to encourage the use of ERDF to support SMEs and social enterprises that involve and benefit marginalised communities; points to the need to support activities for marginalised communities in order to provide aid to, and create the conditions for, micro-scale entrepreneurship, thereby preserving different ways of doing business;
46. Points out that many sectors will undergo a significant transformation in the near future, in part because of the wider use of online tools and solutions; points out that this will put both low- and medium-skilled workers under pressure, which will have a particular impact on members of marginalised communities, as at present it is they who usually find work in these sectors; highlights the importance of accessible and affordable training and services for all in the field of new technologies and sectors, with special regard to opportunities in the digital sector and the green economy, especially for the most disadvantaged groups; notes the importance of micro- and small businesses in helping to sustain jobs in rural areas, and calls, therefore, for increased emphasis on ensuring access to finance for these businesses;
47. Points to the importance of empowering women within marginalised communities by encouraging women entrepreneurs and women's participation in those communities;
48. Highlights the important role that social entrepreneurship, cooperatives, mutual associations and alternative business can play in empowering women in marginalised communities; recommends that cohesion funds, particularly the ESF, support investments in this field that have a strong gender perspective;
49. Invites the Commission to analyse the limitations of the current allocation key for determining support from cohesion policy funds based on GDP, making better use of available indicators – such as Eurostat EU-SILC data on income and living conditions – capable of identifying pockets of poverty and social fragility on the Union's territory, in order to target EU support for marginalised communities in a better way;
50. Stresses that in the EU political debate, marginalised communities are often exploited tendentiously for political ends, and that a detailed analysis of structural exclusion is required, both in partnership agreements and in the operational programmes concerned; calls on the Commission to provide coherent, consistent and clear guidance on the development, implementation and management of the EU-funded projects related to marginalised communities, including in-depth analyses, best practise examples and policy recommendations, to ensure that marginalised communities are included in EU funds also in view of the forthcoming programming period;
51. Calls for a gender perspective and an intersectional analysis to be incorporated into all EU-funded integration and social inclusion initiatives, programmes, actions and funding arrangements, so that the specific needs of women in marginalised communities can be addressed – and the variety of voices and perspectives of women in different structural positions and roles can be captured – in a better way; believes that gender impact assessments and gender budgeting are useful in evaluating the impact on women of funding priorities, the allocation of financial resources and the specifications for funding programmes; emphasises the need for gender-disaggregated data to be collected systematically and analysed regularly;

52. Invites the Member States to offer an award for exemplary dedication to the integration and inclusion of marginalised groups in implementing EU funds; suggests that such an award for outstanding work could be presented to municipalities or regions in the Member States;
53. Invites the Member States to enable and encourage networking among municipalities and cities dealing with the integration of marginalised groups; suggests that the Covenant of Mayors on Climate Change could serve as an example for such a network;
54. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Cohesion Policy is one of the strongest instruments the European Union has at its disposal with which to fight inequality and support territorial and social cohesion in its regions.

In all European societies there are groups and communities that face structural exclusion and segregation from the majority society and do not have access to even basic public infrastructure and services. Besides that, they are very often disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment and bad health conditions.

Heavy reductions in public spending during the crisis have led to an aggravation of existing problems in the Member States, such as unemployment, absence of social security, a difficult housing situation and a lack of public health services. As a consequence, the crisis has had a direct negative impact on members of marginalised communities. Also, many municipalities continue to face severe budgetary constraints which prevent them from dealing adequately with marginalisation in society.

In spite of everything, the main responsibility for changing the situation of marginalised communities lies with the Member States. While specific national circumstances, needs and solutions vary greatly across Europe, the aim of social cohesion calls for a European role in policies for the inclusion of marginalised communities.

Marginalised communities and discriminatory structures

There is no uniform EU definition of marginalised communities; instead, the term covers a broad range of concepts, such as disadvantaged neighbourhoods, most deprived or materially deprived people, people at risk of poverty, and groups in society that are disadvantaged or discriminated against.

Nonetheless, the concept of marginalised communities was introduced into the regulation on the ERDF in 2013, with the clear aim of fighting the consequences of marginalisation. So it is now the responsibility of the EU to follow up and pursue this aim in a consistent fashion.

Also, there is a wide variety of discriminatory structures in place, including sexual orientation and gender identity as well as different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds. Many people face different forms of discrimination at the same time, especially within Roma communities, which are very often marginalised within European societies.

Cohesion policy is a powerful tool

Cohesion policy can play a powerful role in changing these realities. Not only when looking at challenges in housing or access to public infrastructure, as is already happening in the framework of the ERDF, but by providing an integrated approach to tackling all the different forms of discrimination that marginalised communities face.

However, very often marginalised communities do not benefit from European cohesion policy. They are included neither in decision-making structures nor in the processes of implementation and monitoring of projects. This can lead to EU exacerbating the problems of

vulnerable groups, and there are several examples of misuse of funds, especially with regard to marginalised communities.

Understanding and awareness-raising of systematic forms of discrimination such as anti-Gypsyism must be the focus when it comes to analysing the reasons for exclusion.

An integrated approach: explicit but not exclusive

When dealing with integration of marginalised groups, the principle of ‘explicit but not exclusive’ has been adopted by a number of stakeholders. This principle proposes that particular target groups be focused on, while not excluding other people in similar socio-economic circumstances. Still, the simple fact of mentioning marginalised communities, such as Roma, does not ensure that specific measures are adopted to address their situation.

To this end, proper implementation of the Code of Conduct on Partnerships, which strives to ensure equal participation and representation of stakeholders, is of key importance. Big differences between Member States are reported as regards their implementation of the partnership principle, ranging from regular consultation of social partners to total neglect and ignorance of the Code of Conduct.

Furthermore, evaluation of projects during the previous programming period has shown that funding does not always target the real needs of the beneficiaries. Implementers sometimes even satisfy the criteria by simply ‘ticking boxes’, for example by involving NGOs which allegedly represent Roma people or having pseudo-consultations without any real dialogue.

There is thus a clear demand for quality evaluation and monitoring mechanisms. We need a shift towards quality monitoring so that interventions lead to long-term and sustainable results. This is a complex and time-consuming process that requires targeted and effective capacity-building of civil society organisations at local and national level, as well as empowerment of marginalised communities so that they are capable of proactively participating in designing and implementing interventions. Budget for technical assistance often remains unused and should be allocated to capacity-building projects and training programmes for civil society.

This report gives recommendations on how to overcome the problems described above. In this way, using EU funds for the inclusion of marginalised communities can become a great opportunity for promoting and supporting greater cohesion in European societies.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Regional Development

Cohesion policy and marginalised communities
(2014/2247(INI))

Rapporteur: **Ádám Kósa**

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas cohesion policy, as defined in the 1986 Single European Act, is about reducing disparities between the various regions, and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions; whereas the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union adds another facet to cohesion, referring to ‘economic, social and territorial cohesion’;
- B. whereas the Commission has not provided a definition of marginalised communities, leaving Member States the responsibility of deciding, on the basis of their national indicators; notes, however, that marginalisation can be established by looking at a set of relevant indicators such as social exclusion, high long-term unemployment, a low level of education, discrimination, (extremely) poor housing conditions, a high level of discrimination, and excessive exposure to health risks and/or lack of access to healthcare, i.e. those populations considered to be most vulnerable and most in need of help;
- C. whereas Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013¹ stipulates that the European Social Fund (ESF) benefits people, including disadvantaged groups such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, marginalised communities and people of all ages facing poverty and social exclusion;
- D. whereas Regulation (EU) No 223/2014² stipulates that the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived promotes social cohesion, enhances social inclusion and therefore

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006,

² Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

ultimately contributes to achieving the objective of eradicating poverty in the Union, and also supports Member States' actions to provide material assistance to the most deprived;

1. Recalls – bearing in mind that the recent economic and financial crisis has hit in particular the marginalised groups at greatest risk of losing their jobs when there is turbulence in the labour market – that education and employment are the best way out of poverty, and that integrating marginalised communities into society and the labour market should therefore be a priority; notes with concern that members of marginalised communities are frequently excluded from society and suffer discrimination, and consequently face barriers to accessing high-quality education, employment, healthcare, transportation, information and services in general, which poses a complex problem that needs to be properly addressed through the complementary use and effective combination of the European Structural and Investment Funds and national resources; emphasises, accordingly, the need to make special efforts as regards existing EU programmes such as the Youth Employment Initiative, Erasmus+ and Creative Europe with a view to reaching out to members of marginalised communities, accompanied by regular monitoring of the success of that outreach, in order to break the cycle of poverty and marginalisation and to boost people's professional skills and qualifications;
2. Highlights the need for a dual approach to helping and integrating marginalised groups, which should be done directly in conjunction with those affected through the provision of education, including education facilities, training, vocational guidance and job opportunities, and in conjunction with the local community and authorities in order to improve and/or change public perceptions by raising awareness of the effects of prejudice, improving public services and adapting social systems;
3. Recalls that the main objective of cohesion policy is to promote territorial development and reduce regional disparities, and stresses, therefore, that specific, cross-cutting measures should be taken as part of the implementation and management of relevant EU funds in order to achieve this objective; emphasises that the ESF should be the main instrument for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy in the fields of employment, labour market policies, mobility, education, training and social inclusion, thereby contributing to economic, social and territorial cohesion; stresses that the European Structural and Investment Funds should promote research and analysis aimed at generating knowledge about the real living conditions of marginalised communities; emphasises that cohesion policy is an important tool for moving towards results-based policymaking in order to generate smart and sustainable growth efficiently in those regions that need it most, by supporting the start-up and development of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and highlighting the importance of micro- and small businesses in helping to sustain jobs in rural and peripheral areas;
4. Recalls – bearing in mind the growing regional disparities, the demographic challenges and the situation faced by the growing number of young people who have left or are currently planning to leave their country of origin – that in the 2014-2020 budgetary cycle less funding is available for cohesion policy; believes that cohesion policy still has the potential to add value to the work already under way in Member States and that, by focusing on improving employment opportunities, participation in society and investment in skills, particularly in those regions that need it most, cohesion policy will result in,

among other benefits, greater social inclusion and poverty reduction by allowing appropriate flexibility to enable the Member States to implement individualised support in line with local needs and to ensure that funding is used in those areas in which unemployment is highest and it is most needed;

5. Welcomes the fact that Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013¹, with effect from 2014, contains historic new elements intended to support the most disadvantaged; urges the Member States to include these in their operational programmes and to take concrete and immediate action to make it compulsory to develop a strategy for the transition from large institutions to community-based services, and to make an effort to adopt appropriate measures; takes the view, furthermore, that the Member States must help to promote social inclusion, to combat poverty and all forms of discrimination as enshrined in EU law, to combat hate crime directed at people from marginalised communities and to promote anti-discrimination policies, if necessary by, inter alia, adopting appropriate legislation, strengthening national anti-discrimination bodies and promoting specific training for civil servants; notes that the aforementioned regulation also integrates and/or includes marginalised communities by targeting their needs in respect of the growing challenges they face in a knowledge-based society; takes the view that, in line with the regulation, the European Code of Conduct on Partnership should be followed and applied strictly;
6. Stresses that education is a fundamental right enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, and that education and training policy should enable all members of society to benefit from high-quality education; points out that inequality still persists in European education systems and that inherited social standing is the major contributing factor; emphasises that ensuring equal access to high-quality education for all members of society is the key to breaking the cycle of social exclusion; recalls, in this connection, that investment is needed to enable all people to take part in stimulating learning experiences at any stage of their lives, and to encourage lifelong learning in order to enhance social inclusion, active citizenship and self-sustainability; recalls, in this context, the need for vocational training and basic skills development, which should take into consideration the differences between Member States' labour markets and education systems, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach; points to the necessity of a policy design framework which takes into consideration the potential innovation and entrepreneurial opportunities associated with the region's existing characteristics, and its realistic potential for diversification, so as to design appropriate strategic intervention on the basis of these features and the intended outcomes, and thus to prevent the risk of an outflow of skilled workers towards more developed regions;
7. Recalls, in this context, the need for vocational training and basic skills development for people with low or no skills or qualifications, based not on a 'one-size-fits-all' policy solutions but on tailored policy recommendations contingent on the region's existing

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

knowledge assets; emphasises the public-private policy learning agenda resulting from partnerships between civil society organisations and local authorities, which can capitalise on results/outcome indicators, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, pilots, policy experiments and test cases;

8. Stresses that particular attention should be paid to ensuring that EU funds never contribute to segregation in any way; calls on the Commission to monitor closely whether the principle of non-discrimination is respected and the related legislation complied with, and supports the Commission in starting infringement procedures against Member States that transgress the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC);
9. Calls on the Commission to offer the technical support needed to improve the administrative capacity of bodies involved in the administration of the Structural Funds, and calls on the Member States to provide advice and administrative assistance, e.g. by organising training and helping with aid applications and explanations, so as to make it easier for marginalised communities such as Roma to obtain information concerning European and national funding programmes in support of entrepreneurship and employment and to submit the relevant applications;
10. Calls, as regards the promotion of community-based services, for caregiving in the family home (for example, looking after children, the elderly or people with disabilities) to be recognised as actual work, and for systems to be established to combat undeclared work; calls for recognition of the right to welfare payments, social assistance and the acquisition of assets;
11. Calls on the Member States to act on, and on the Commission to follow up closely, the country-specific recommendations issued on the social inclusion of marginalised communities;
12. Stresses that the social partners must have access to technical assistance in order not only to strengthen their capacity but also to ensure their coordination and representation in ad hoc committees which define and implement the operational programmes;
13. Welcomes the fact that some Member States, including those receiving recommendations, choose the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities as an investment priority in their operational programmes; warns, however, that this must also be mainstreamed in policy areas such as education and employment;
14. Notes that Roma, who form Europe's largest ethnic minority and are among the most marginalised communities in the EU, suffer from poorer health than the rest of the population, and gives fair warning that, according to UN Development Programme survey data, approximately 20 % of Roma people are not covered by medical insurance or do not know whether they are covered, and that about 15 % of Roma children under the age of 14 are not vaccinated, compared with 4 % of children from non-Roma households; calls on the Member States to improve and pursue the provision of tailored health information material and the development of disease prevention strategies and community initiatives to enhance health engagement in Roma communities;
15. Calls on the Member States to take into account the multidimensional and territorial

aspects of poverty, to mobilise sufficient budgetary resources from national budget and EU programmes through the use of Community-Led Local Development, Joint Action Plans, Integrated Territorial Investments and Integrated Operations in order to achieve the objectives identified in their National Roma Integration Strategies, and to develop integrated multi-sectorial and multi-fund programmes targeting the most deprived micro-regions;

16. Draws the attention of the Member States and the Commission to the fact that after 2020, even though there will be fewer and fewer people of working age, active inclusion policies will nonetheless be needed for these people, and that there will be ever-greater competition for jobs, while the private sector will provide fewer and fewer jobs for those who are currently relatively low-skilled; recalls that even in some of the most affluent Member States (e.g. Denmark and Luxembourg), long-term unemployment is increasing alarmingly (nearly 12 million people in the EU are classified as long-term unemployed, representing 5 % of the workforce, and 59 % of them have been out of work for two years); calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to seek practical, bridging employment solutions for particularly low-skilled and unskilled workers and/or to help them find work again, which will necessitate a new approach, together with not only long-term strategies but also short-term measures, such as forms of income support, to prevent the social exclusion of the most disadvantaged groups, and the adjustment of existing tools such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the ESF in order to prevent permanent long-term unemployment, a recurrence of the recent population outflow towards more developed regions, in particular of people above the age of 50 and young people, and a lasting increase in that outflow; calls on the Commission to measure the accessibility of private-sector jobs for particularly low-skilled workers, and to establish which new jobs not requiring any qualifications could be created in the short term until 2020;
17. Calls on the Commission, in close cooperation with the social partners, equality bodies and other human rights mechanisms, rigorously to enforce and monitor EU legislation on discrimination, especially in employment, education and training; calls on public employment services (PES) to provide high-quality, tailored services to clients in vulnerable situations and to implement awareness-raising training for employment office staff in order to increase their sensitivity towards the multiple intersecting disadvantages faced by unemployed people in vulnerable situations and to eliminate prejudiced and negative attitudes towards them;
18. Points out that many sectors will undergo a significant transformation in the near future, in part because of the wider use of online tools and solutions; points out that this will put both low- and medium-skilled workers under pressure, which will have a particular impact on people from marginalised communities, as at present it is they who usually find work in these sectors; highlights the importance of accessible and affordable training and services for all in the field of new technologies and sectors, with special regard to opportunities in the digital sector and the green economy, especially for the most disadvantaged groups; notes the importance of micro- and small businesses in helping to sustain jobs in rural areas, and therefore calls for increased emphasis on ensuring access to finance for these businesses;

19. Calls on the Commission, without further ado, to submit a comprehensive package of rules and guidelines to promote the access and inclusion of people with disabilities;
20. Draws the Commission's attention to the fact that greater efforts are needed to ensure that the positive impact of technological innovations on the labour market genuinely makes itself felt, and at the same time believes that the Member States need to be provided with more support to prepare their education and training systems to ensure that in future relatively disadvantaged workers are better able to acquire more complex, flexible and competitive knowledge, in order to raise the employment level; calls on the European institutions to devote more attention in future to drawing up labour market forecasts which also take into account innovative, more advanced technologies, one point of departure for which could be the new research project launched by Parliament¹, and also encourages the Commission to have similar research conducted;
21. Calls on the Member States, while prudently balancing their budgets, to take particular account of the social impact of economic measures, to commit themselves to providing more and sufficient funding and to take effective, focused measures to ensure that disparities in development within geographical regions (both rural and urban) are not passed on in the form of social inequality and inequality of opportunity which already manifest themselves at an early age; believes that this should not be allowed to happen at later stages either, and that it is therefore necessary, on the basis of social and economic indicators, to identify the areas (small localities or parts of settlements) in which economic, social and other disadvantages are concentrated; stresses that greater attention should be devoted to helping these areas to catch up; notes with concern that children from disadvantaged families are unjustifiably over-represented in special needs schools; underlines, in this context, the importance of needs being recognised and of early childhood development, non-discrimination, equal access to high-quality education, and family stability;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the high levels of youth unemployment experienced by marginalised groups, in particular Roma, by using existing mechanisms such as the Youth Guarantee and specialised training programmes, such as the Erasmus+ programme, to ensure access to early education for Roma children, and, by supporting lifelong learning programmes, to facilitate the access of Roma adults to the labour market; calls, furthermore, for the effective use of other EU instruments, e.g. the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme, to promote quality and sustainable employment, to guarantee adequate and decent social protection and to combat poverty and social exclusion;
23. Recognises that most Roma are employed in undeclared jobs, and, given the need to ensure the sustainability of social security systems, calls on the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners, to tackle this problem effectively by making full use of the European platform to enhance cooperation in tackling undeclared work;
24. Calls on the Commission to monitor and assess the feasibility of implementing the regulations concerning EU funds, given that the aspect of Roma people's living conditions

¹ The 'Impact of Digitalisation on the labour market' project was adopted by the Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel and Bureau meetings on 30 April 2015.

which requires the most urgent solution – improving the situation of people living at segregated locations in poor conditions – can only be tackled in a complex manner (by means of an integrated approach), and that the implementation of such programmes consequently requires measures of the types covered by both the ESF (human) and the ERDF (infrastructure);

25. Points out that Roma women face double discrimination, as gender gaps in employment and pay are very high in Roma communities; stresses, therefore, the need to ensure that specific measures for women's rights and gender mainstreaming are included in the National Roma Integration Strategies;
26. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to regard children as a priority when implementing the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies, and reiterates the importance of promoting equal access to housing, healthcare, education and dignified living conditions for children;
27. Stresses that budget cuts for public services in some Member States during the crisis have led to heightened unemployment, a lack of social security, a difficult housing situation and health problems; calls on the Member States to use ESF support more efficiently in order to improve the quality of, and equal access to, public services for marginalised communities and to combat any form of discrimination.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	23.6.2015
Result of final vote	+: 42 -: 7 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Laura Agea, Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Viliija Blinkevičiūtė, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Marian Harkin, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Emilian Pavel, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Sofia Ribeiro, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Ulla Tørnæs, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Jana Žitňanská, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitutes present for the final vote	Maria Arena, Georges Bach, Heinz K. Becker, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Paloma López Bermejo, António Marinho e Pinto, Edouard Martin, Tamás Meszerics, Csaba Sógor, Helga Stevens, Monika Vana, Tom Vandenkendelaere
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Branislav Škripek

15.7.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Regional Development

on cohesion policy and marginalised communities
(2014/2247(INI))

Rapporteur: Ernest Urtasun

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas marginalisation is a social phenomenon in which individuals or communities are socially excluded and systematically blocked from, or denied access to, participating in social and political processes which are essential to their social integration; whereas 'marginalised communities' refers to diverse groups and individuals, such as minorities, Roma, people with disabilities, people living below the poverty line or at risk of poverty, migrants, refugees and socially excluded groups in society; whereas racism, patriarchy, homophobia, economic disadvantages and other discriminatory factors contribute to creating layers of inequality and a dynamic of disempowerment for women within marginalised communities;
- B. whereas the poverty that affects marginalised communities affects women, children and men differently, in that women and children tend to find it more difficult to access social services and to receive a decent income;
- C. whereas that marginalisation and the double discrimination that affects women in those groups impede women's access to services, information and public and non-governmental organisations working in the field of equality;
- D. whereas women play a crucial role in marginalised communities both in economic terms and as regards education and care; whereas the crucial role of women needs to be addressed by specific actions in order to overcome the barriers to inclusion and equal participation of women in decision making, to improve women's living conditions and to give them the training they need to participate actively in the social and economic life of the country;

- E. whereas the consequences of the economic crisis and the cutbacks in public services have exacerbated the situation of women within marginalised communities;
 - F. whereas women in marginalised communities suffer more intense multiple discrimination and have a much lower employment rate than the men in those communities and other women;
 - G. whereas overcoming marginalisation and multiple discrimination requires direct grassroots engagement with the communities in question, socially, politically and economically, including stakeholder, civil society, and citizen involvement in policy-making processes; whereas a gender perspective must always be included in these processes, with a view to empowering women facing multiple discrimination to participate in them and have their voices heard in the public sphere;
 - H. whereas education, both formal and informal, is instrumental in overcoming marginalisation and multiple discrimination, in terms of creating dialogue, openness and understanding between communities, and in terms of empowering marginalised communities; whereas a gender perspective in education, and its role in empowering women and girls in marginalised communities must not be forgotten;
 - I. whereas the representation of women in marginalised communities in arts and culture and in the media is important for overcoming marginalisation, stereotyping and multiple discrimination;
 - J. whereas European cohesion policy strategies for empowering women in marginalised communities must take into account the situation of aging women, women with disabilities, women carers and women with mental health problems;
 - K. whereas the Member States play a decisive role in creating an environment that defines and shapes marginalisation, and whereas they must take account of the needs of marginalised communities and include their interests in the drafting and argumentation of operational programmes submitted to the Commission;
1. Points out that women within marginalised communities face multiple discrimination, putting them at even greater risk of poverty and social exclusion, especially in accessing employment, education, health and social services;
 2. Calls for a gender perspective and an intersectional analysis to be incorporated into all EU-funded integration and social inclusion initiatives, programmes, actions and funding arrangements so that the specific needs of women in marginalised communities can be better addressed and the variety of voices and perspectives of women in different structural positions and roles can be better captured; believes that gender impact assessments and gender budgeting are useful in evaluating the impact on women of funding priorities, the allocation of financial resources and specifications for funding programmes; emphasises the need for gender-disaggregated data to be systematically collected and regularly analysed;
 3. Calls on the Commission to take on board affirmative action while drafting regional programmes in order to prevent the further decline of women in marginalised

communities below the poverty line and to pre-empt child poverty at an early stage;

4. Calls for improvements to be made in the quality and training of specialised social services (including probation officers) working with marginalised families;
5. Calls on the Commission to take account of Council Recommendation 92/441/EEC, which recognises ‘the basic right of a person to sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity’, an essential issue for women, who are more at risk of poverty than men; points out that it is important to establish a common method for calculating a subsistence threshold in cost-of-living terms (a ‘shopping basket’ of goods and services), so as to be able to draw on comparative measurements of poverty levels and determine means of social intervention, including a minimum income scheme, which is vital in order to achieve economic and social cohesion for people living in different areas of the European Union;
6. Considers it essential to include equality bodies, women's organisations and women from marginalised communities in the decision-making process on the allocation, use, implementation and monitoring of the funds, at all levels, from local and regional authorities through to Member States and EU institutions, and considers that the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes implemented should be regarded as a key process in enhancing the participation of women from marginalised communities;
7. Points to the importance of empowering women within marginalised communities by encouraging women entrepreneurs and women’s participation in those communities;
8. Calls on the Commission to enhance its efforts to foster sustainable and comprehensive capacity building for women within marginalised communities;
9. Stresses that all European funding opportunities for supporting marginalised communities, and women in particular, should be used in an integrated way with a view to increasing synergies and complementarities between the Structural Funds and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme; calls on the administrations and authorities concerned at all levels of governance to seek active mutual cooperation;
10. Draws attention to the fact that society does not acknowledge the marginalisation of certain communities such as women in precarious working conditions, the ‘working poor’, single mothers and disadvantaged elderly female pensioners; calls on the Member States to clearly identify these groups and to adopt programmes targeting the improvement of living conditions, access to health care and basic services;
11. Strongly criticises the fact that gender has not been taken into account in the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy for sustainable, smart and inclusive growth, the aims of which include better use of EU funds to support social inclusion, with 20 % of the European Social Fund being put towards combating poverty and social exclusion;
12. Calls for support for an exchange of good practices and networking amongst women in marginalised communities at all levels of governance; stresses the need to promote women in leadership positions within these communities and to involve them in

awareness-raising and dissemination of public services and programmes designed to combat the marginalisation and discrimination of women;

13. Urges the funds to be used to improve living conditions and to facilitate access for women in marginalised communities to high-quality, stable education, housing, health care, employment, childcare facilities, social services, the legal system and victim support services;
14. Within the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy, calls on the Commission and the Member States to focus on regions with severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, as referred to in point 4 of Article 121 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and to develop special provisions with possibilities for alternative employment and occupation for the marginalised group of women in those communities, which are characterised by high poverty levels, lack of employment prospects, voluntary abandonment of education, lack of social services and social isolation – and the resulting higher risk of child poverty;
15. Calls for a human rights perspective to be taken into account when designing actions supported by cohesion funds and stresses that cultural, economic and social rights should be integrated into policies aimed at recognising women from marginalised communities as active citizens in their own right and that racism, both open and invisible, should be explicitly addressed in every action and policy design;
16. Emphasises how important it is that special attention be paid to the specific circumstances and needs of the most vulnerable groups of women in marginalised communities such as elderly women, women with disabilities, women who are the victims of violence and human trafficking, immigrants, women belonging to ethnic minorities, refugees, etc., in all EU-funded programmes, initiatives and actions;
17. Recognises that improved participation of women in enterprise and growth can be achieved by funding SME support services and financial services which meet the needs of women starting and developing businesses;
18. Emphasises that special attention must be given to removing barriers to access to employment faced by women in marginalised communities, as well as any gender-based pay and pension gaps in these communities;
19. Emphasises the importance of carefully and consistently monitoring how financial resources earmarked for marginalised communities are being used;
20. Emphasises that women in marginalised communities are more at risk of falling victim to gender violence and suffering other violations of their fundamental rights; calls for the fight against all forms of violence against women to be a key factor in integration programmes for marginalised communities and in allocating EU funding;
21. Highlights the important role social entrepreneurship, cooperatives, mutual associations and alternative business can play in empowering women in marginalised communities; recommends that cohesion funds, particularly the European Social Fund, support investment in this field with a strong gender perspective;

22. Recalls the decision of the European Ombudsman in Case OI/8/2014/AN on the respect of fundamental rights in the implementation of the EU cohesion policy; strongly emphasises the need for all Member State cohesion programmes to fully comply with the Charter of Fundamental Rights; agrees that civil society, including women's organisations, should be given a platform to report abuses of funds and Charter violations;
23. Stresses the importance of lifelong learning for improving equality in education and training, particularly in vocational skills and in ICT; recognises the need for flexibility in delivering education and training to women in rural areas;
24. Emphasises the need to strengthen regional, national, and European networks of women in marginalised communities, particularly in the fields of business, entrepreneurship, science and technology, education, media, and civic and political leadership;
25. Calls for European cohesion funds, and particularly the European Social Fund, to support formal and informal educational programmes, including vocational training and lifelong learning, with a view to empowering women and girls in marginalised communities;
26. Calls for cohesion policy funds to support arts, culture and media projects that empower women in marginalised communities and that strive to break down stereotypes, stigmatisation and multiple discrimination.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	14.7.2015
Result of final vote	+: 21 -: 1 0: 9
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Catherine Bearder, Malin Björk, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Viorica Dăncilă, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Mary Honeyball, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Angelika Niebler, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Liliana Rodrigues, Jordi Sebastià, Michaela Šojdrová, Ernest Urtasun, Elissavet Vozemberg, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Jana Žitňanská, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitutes present for the final vote	Biljana Borzan, Louise Bours, Stefan Eck, Linnéa Engström, Julie Girling, António Marinho e Pinto, Dubravka Šuica, Marc Tarabella
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Nedzhmi Ali, Therese Comodini Cachia

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	15.10.2015
Result of final vote	+: 35 -: 3 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Pascal Arimont, José Blanco López, Mercedes Bresso, Steeve Briois, Andrea Cozzolino, Edward Czesak, Rosa D'Amato, Tamás Deutsch, Bill Etheridge, Anna Hedh, Ivan Jakovčić, Marc Joulaud, Constanze Krehl, Iskra Mihaylova, Andrey Novakov, Younous Omarjee, Konstantinos Papadakis, Stanislav Polčák, Julia Reid, Terry Reintke, Liliana Rodrigues, Maria Spyrali, Ruža Tomašić, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Kerstin Westphal, Joachim Zeller
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Buda, Viorica Dăncilă, Andor Deli, Elena Gentile, Josu Juaristi Abaunz, Jan Olbrycht, Bronis Ropè, Julie Ward, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Enrique Calvet Chambon, Boris Zala