



# COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA POPULATION IN SPAIN IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY 2018

COMPARED WITH THE SITUATION OF THE GENERAL POPULATION



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## INTRODUCTION

This detailed report on the employment situation of the Roma population comes in response to the need for data broken down by ethnicity to increase our understanding of the situation of severe inequality affecting Roma people in comparison with the general population; and the need to guide political responses in order to guarantee equality of opportunity.

The lack of such disaggregated data for general indicators relating to employment and social circumstances conceals the reality of life for Roma people, which means that in many cases an appropriate public policy response is lacking.

For this reason, at the Fundación Secretariado Gitano we have been supporting studies like this one over many years. This report presents the results of the third study dealing specifically with employment in the Roma population, based on the firm conviction that employment is one of the most powerful drivers of social inclusion. This is not only because it increases the resources available to families, but also because it brings Roma people into closer contact with the general population, allowing them to gain a higher profile and break down negative stereotypes about their community.

The first study was carried out in 2005<sup>1</sup> at a time of ample job opportunities, with unemployment at its lowest point in recent Spanish history. The second study, in 2011<sup>2</sup>, was performed in a completely different economic and employment context due to the devastating effects of the 2008 crisis on the Spanish job market.

This third report presents the results of a study carried out in 2018, at a time when the employment picture was complex.

On one hand, a significant number of the jobs destroyed during the recent economic crisis had returned. However, this recovery has been happening very unevenly, among other reasons because the end of the crisis coincided with a time of profound changes in employment due to technological developments. We are seeing very clear evidence of the emergence of *winner*s and *loser*s in the job market along with this technological change, and people located in the middle and lower ranges in terms of professional qualifications are those who are losing out most in the technological revolution.

Precisely for this reason, the rate of long-term unemployment has quadrupled since the crisis, as a substantial number of people who lost their jobs in the crisis have seen their situation become

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<sup>1</sup> *Población gitana y empleo. Un estudio comparado* (Roma population and employment. A comparative study) Madrid: FSG, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Población gitana, empleo e inclusión social 2011. Un estudio comparado: población gitana española y del este de Europa* (Roma population, employment and social inclusion 2011. A comparative study: Spanish and Eastern European Roma populations) Madrid: FSG, 2012.

chronic. This group certainly includes many people over 45 with a low level of education, but also includes young people who have not progressed beyond compulsory education.

This is the socioeconomic context in which we must understand the data and findings presented in this report, along with the comparisons made with the two previous studies. Socioeconomic complexity and uncertainty have increased over the last years of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, obliging us to rethink our response to challenges which were perhaps less pressing in the past. As will be seen in this report, the need to achieve adequate levels of education is one of these challenges.

This third study, like the previous two, uses indicators from the EPA (*Encuesta de Población Activa* - Labour Force Survey) so that comparisons can be made with the general population and the scale of inequalities can be made clear. Another aim of the study is to show trends over time so that we can see how the social and employment situation of Roma people has changed.

In this third report, as well as continuing the quantitative examination of the main demographic, social and employment characteristics of the Roma population, we also explore three elements which were not covered in the previous studies.

**First**, we present a detailed study of the factors determining the employment situation of the Roma population. We present and discuss both the main factors affecting a Roma person's chances of having a job, and the factors which make it likely that he or she will remain out of the labour force. In particular, we identify the characteristics of the Roma population (in comparison with the general population) which are most influential on the question of whether a Roma person has a job or finds him/herself outside the labour force.

**Second**, we analyse the reasons for the differences between the employment situation of the Roma population and that of the general population in Spain. In other words, we will answer the question of whether the employment differences between these groups are due to measurable characteristics, some of which are amenable to intervention (such as level of education), or to unmeasurable or intangible characteristics.

**Finally**, the third part of the report uses detailed information about Roma households in order to perform an exhaustive analysis of household poverty in the Roma population, following standard definitions of poverty and including analysis at regional level.

This report concludes with a series of recommendations derived from the various analyses presented. Achieving the overall objective of improving the employment situation of the Roma population requires the achievement of a range of more detailed objectives, such as improving level of education, increasing salaried work, expanding the number and type of jobs in which Roma men and women work, and improving working conditions. Only through progress on all these fronts will we see real alignment between the social, economic and employment conditions

of the Roma population and those of the general population. This study aims to set out the fundamental principles which will help us to define policies to guarantee equality of opportunity and to reach this state of alignment.

This report was produced in line with the recommendations of European institutions and international organisations such as the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Council of Europe, which call on Member States to gather data broken down by ethnicity in order to understand the specific situation of the Roma population; make comparisons with the general population; and formulate effective political measures for the inclusion of the Roma population. The surveys of the Roma population carried out by the FRA at European level, EU-MIDIS I (2008) and EU-MIDIS II (2016), are part of this effort to collect specific data and measure progress.

In addition, this study fulfils one of the obligations established by the *Estrategía Nacional de Inclusión Social de la Población Gitana en España 2012-2020* (National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020), to carry out “statistical studies which will allow the fulfilment of objectives identified in the Strategy to be checked”. Specifically, “we foresee the repetition of the employment study, already carried out twice, on indicators to be compared with the *Encuesta de Población Activa* (Labour Force Survey)”, the initial study having provided a basis for setting the objectives of the Strategy.

The population of interest for this research study consisted of Roma people aged 16 or over. Given the lack of a census of the Spanish Roma population, in order to define this population we used the *Mapa sobre Vivienda y Población Gitana* (Study-Map on Housing and the Roma Population) 2015, which put the total Roma population at 516,862 people. However, as stated later in that report, this figure does not constitute a census of Roma people as it included only those living in neighbourhoods with a high concentration of Roma people, and left out those Roma people who were more dispersed. For this reason, the real total figure for the Roma population is, in all probability, significantly higher.

The final study sample consisted of 1,492 completed questionnaires which provided information on the social, economic and employment situation of 1,492 individuals, along with basic information on a total of 6,015 Roma people living with the 1,492 individuals who completed questionnaires. This extra basic information was obtained by means of a specific questionnaire collecting information on the composition and characteristics of the household in which the respondent lived.<sup>3</sup>

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano has counted with a team of specialised researchers of the Fundación Iseak (Initiative for socio-economic analysis and knowledge) with a wide experience

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the methodology, see the “Methodology” chapter in the full Study (to be released in English soon).

in social research, led by Sara de la Rica, a Professor of Economics at the *Universidad del País Vasco* (University of the Basque Country - UPV/EHU), as well as an associate researcher for several leading national and international research centres.). She has collaborated on projects with Basque and Spanish labour institutions, as well as with the European Commission on projects to help unemployed people access the labour market. Her previous studies in similar areas include studies on Gender, Immigration, Unemployment, Employment institutions and the Future of Employment.

## 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMA POPULATION

### A very young population with low levels of education

As was observed in previous studies (2005, 2011) the Spanish Roma population shows considerable differences compared with the general population.

- ✓ It has a radically different profile in terms of age compared with the national population, the Roma population being much younger than the general population. This demographic difference is key to understanding the differences in employment between the two groups.

#### Demographic pyramid – Roma population and general population

- ✓ The Roma population is much younger than the general population, with **66% of the population being under 30**, while only 30% of the general population in Spain is below this age.
- ✓ The households of the Roma population are significantly larger in size: **almost 50% live in households of two adults with children**, compared with 32% of the total population.
- ✓ Regarding level of education, **only 17% of Roma people have finished compulsory secondary education, compared with 77% of the general population.**

#### Composition of the Roma population and the general population by educational level and gender

- ✓ A gender gap can be observed in educational level in the Roma population: fewer Roma women finish compulsory secondary education, at 15.5% compared with 19% of men. Illiteracy affects 13.8% of Roma women compared with 5.6% of men (2% in the case of women in the general population).

As will be observed throughout the report, these educational differences between the populations, along with the **educational gender gap within the Roma population**, are behind

many of the differences between the employment situation of the Roma population and that of the general population.

### ✓ Trends in educational levels reached by the Roma population

Analysing trends since 2005, we can see a positive development, which is the clear decline in the number of Roma people without any education, from 71% in 2005 to 36.5% in 2018, along with a significant increase in the proportion of Roma people completing secondary education or even going beyond it: from 6.4% in 2005 to 17.4% in 2018. We also see progress in the number of Roma people reaching higher education, with a figure in 2018 of 3.2% compared with 1.1% in 2005.

## 2. THE ROMA POPULATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

### High levels of unemployment and job insecurity and a marked gender gap

As has been shown in previous studies, the employment situation of the Roma population differs significantly from that of the general population. In particular, a significant amount of the work done by Roma people is carried out in the family environment and is normally classified as “unpaid family support”, a category of work which is barely visible in the general population. This report, however, focuses on work performed outside the family environment, with the aim of following trends over time and of performing an exhaustive analysis of the factors which may lead a person to do types of work other than family support, whether in salaried employment or on a self-employed basis.

The following data show that the distribution of the Roma population in terms of employment is very different to that of the general population: **the number in work is much lower in the Roma population, unemployment is much higher and the gender gap is much wider.**

The following table presents the main figures gleaned from this study, compared with the general population figures extracted from the *Encuesta de Población Activa* (EPA - Labour Force Survey) for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018.

#### Comparison of the Roma population and the general population

	ROMA POPULATION	GENERAL POPULATION
IN LABOUR FORCE	56,6%	58,6%
IN WORK	29,9%	50,01%
UNEMPLOYED	52%	14,5%

SALARIED WORK	53%		84%	
TEMPORARY WORK	68%		27%	
	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
IN LABOUR FORCE	76,2%	38,5%	64,4%	53,1%
IN WORK	44,1%	16,8%	56,2%	44,5%
UNEMPLOYED	47,4%	60,4%	12,8%	16,2%
SALARIED WORK	49,1%	61,8%	80,6%	88,3%
TEMPORARY WORK	75,5%	68,1%	26,2%	27,5%

✓ **In relation to the active Roma population:**

One of the first issues to highlight is that the Roma population presents an economic activity rate very close to that of the general population, with 56.6% being in the labour force compared with 58.6%. However, looking at the data by gender, age and educational level, we can see significant differences between the Roma population and the general population.

We can see considerable disparity in the activity rate by gender in the Roma population, clearly much greater than that observed in the general population. For example, there is a difference in activity rates between Roma men and women of 38 percentage points, while the difference between men and women in the general population is of 11 percentage points.

**The Roma population joins the labour market at an earlier age** than the general population. This difference in age of entry to the labour market corresponds to a notable difference in levels of education between the two populations.

**Distribution of the working population by age - Roma population and general population**

Another issue to highlight is the **low rate of salaried work among working Roma people, at 53%** compared with a rate of salaried work among the general population of 84%.

**The number in work among the Roma population, at 30%**, is very much lower than that among the general population (50%), but **rises substantially as educational level increases**. In fact, Roma people with secondary or higher education have in-work rates very close to the rates found among the general populations.

Jobs held by Roma people are **often of a temporary nature**, a symptom of the job insecurity they face. While the rate of temporary work is close to 70% for working Roma people, in the case of the general population the rate is below 28% - although this is still one of the highest rates in Europe.

## Distribution of salaried workers by type of contract: permanent versus temporary contracts – Roma population and general population

The Roma population is concentrated in sectors and occupations in which family businesses predominate, often operating at low levels of profit and outside formal economic structures. Examples are market trading or street selling, particularly common in the case of men (50% of those in work), or routine and manual jobs such as cleaning in the case of women.

There is a considerable gender gap among Roma people in the labour market. For Roma women, participation in the labour market is much less likely than for Roma men, with an **economic activity rate of 38%** compared with 76% among men, and an **in-work rate of 17%** as opposed to 44%. On the other hand, the activity rate of Roma males is clearly higher than in the total population.

### **For Roma women, participation in the labour market is much less likely than for Roma men**

The proportion of young people under 30 in Spain who are neither in work nor in education is 15%, which is a substantially higher figure than that observed in other European countries. However, the problem is particularly acute in the Roma population, with **63% of young Roma men and women neither in work nor in education**. Furthermore, noticeable differences between men and women are observed: the majority of Roma women who neither work nor study are in this situation because they are engaged in work inside the home (58%).

We see high rates of chronic unemployment among Roma people, as evidenced by the fact that **long-lasting unemployment<sup>4</sup> affects 70% of unemployed Roma women and 76% of unemployed Roma men**. Moreover, figures for **very long-term unemployment** (lasting for more than 4 years) are also high, reaching **30% among unemployed Roma women and 42% for men**. The differences in these rates compared with those for the general unemployed population are very significant, even when we take into account that Spain has one of the highest rates of long-term employment in Europe, at almost 50% of the general population.

### ✓ **The inactive Roma population**

The percentage of inactive people in the Roma population is very similar to that found in the general population. It is in the composition of this inactive population, particularly when broken down by gender, that we find substantial differences between the Roma population and the general population, with a much wider gender gap.

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<sup>4</sup> Long-term unemployment is unemployment lasting more than one year.



Having a higher level of education, particularly **having finished compulsory secondary education and higher education, makes inactivity much less likely in the Roma population**, with hardly any Roma people at such levels of education being inactive.

Roma women are largely excluded from the labour market, whatever their age, while for Roma men this occurs mainly among those who are older. The main **reason for inactivity among Roma women is that they have family responsibilities**. This element is key to understanding Roma women's exclusion from the labour market, just as it explains women's lower participation in the labour market in the general population. Moreover, 17% of Roma women do not look for work because they do not believe they will find it, compared with just 0.6% of men.

**17% of Roma women do not look for work because they do not believe they will find it**

✓ **Expectations regarding future employment among the Roma population**

In this study, after analysing the situation of Roma people in the labour market, we also wanted to discover what expectations Roma people had regarding their chances of being in work in one year, and what they thought those around them (family members and friends) expected them to be doing:

- ✓ **50% of those interviewed hope to have a job**, although when asked what they think they will be doing in one year, the percentage drops to 30%.
- ✓ This expectation **was higher for young people aged between 20 and 29**.

There is an almost perfect correspondence among Roma men between their expectations and the expectations of those around them, whereas among Roma women there is a difference of 14 percentage points between what they hope for and what they think those around them expect them to do.

When we look more closely at unemployed people who are not looking for work because they feel discouraged for some reason, we also find important gender differences as regards their expectations to find a job in future:

- ✓ While 41% of Roma men "believe that they would not find work, having previously searched for a job", in the case of Roma women, the main reason for not looking for a job is that they "have personal or family responsibilities" (40%).

✓ **Employment trends in the Roma population – 2005, 2011 and 2018.**

The first study focusing specifically on the employment situation of the Roma population was carried out in 2004, at a time of particularly low unemployment in Spain over recent decades. The two subsequent studies, however, were carried out at times when Spain found itself deep in recession as a result of the greatest financial crisis of the democratic era (2011), and while the consequences of this crisis were still being felt, especially by the most vulnerable groups in society (2018). As has already been discussed, the situation of Roma people in the labour market was greatly impacted by the crisis, with a clear worsening on all indicators relating to labour market participation. We can see that economic recovery has still not reached vulnerable groups such as the Roma population, who the figures show still find themselves a long way from the position they were in before the financial crisis began.

### **The situation of Roma people in the labour market was greatly impacted by the crisis**

In conclusion, then, while it is true that there has been a recovery in the job market since 2015, it is also true that groups with low levels of education still find themselves trapped in a situation of long-term unemployment, as in the **Roma population where 8 out of 10 people do not progress beyond compulsory education**. Another factor to bear in mind is technological change, which brings with it changes in the demands of the job market which have a particularly severe impact on people with low levels of education.

The proportion of the Roma population in salaried work was greatly affected by the financial crisis and the destruction of jobs. Some recovery in this figure was seen in 2018, but only in terms of temporary contracts, given that the number of permanent contracts has been steadily falling since 2005.

However, when we observe the figures for working in a family business or in domestic work, categories in which the line between paid work and family support is more blurred, we find that a large number of those who described themselves as workers in a family business (normally without remuneration) in 2005 and 2008, classified themselves instead as domestic workers in 2018, these categories representing a high proportion of Roma women.

### 3. FACTORS DETERMINING EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN THE ROMA POPULATION

Educational level is the key factor determining employment status.

It is necessary to improve our understanding of the factors relating to greater or lesser participation in the labour market by Roma people, and of how this picture compares with the one observed for the general population. Understanding this will help us to clarify the differences between the two population groups and their probabilities of being in work, economically inactive or self-employed<sup>5</sup>.

**The Roma population is half as likely as the general population to be in work** (36.6% as opposed to 62.8%), but the factors which determine whether a Roma person is in work compared with a member of the general population are very similar.

- Among the Roma population, women are half as likely to be in work as men.
- Having a higher level of education increases the likelihood of being in work (when compulsory secondary education or higher education is completed), but this progress is hampered in the case of Roma women once they have children. In other words, **completing compulsory secondary education greatly increases the chances of being in work for women, until they become parents. This difference is not seen in the case of Roma men**, whose chances of being in work are higher if they have completed compulsory secondary education whether they have children or not.

Turning to the likelihood of economic inactivity and the factors affecting it, the overall probability of being inactive stands at 31.6% for the Roma population as opposed to 26.4% for the general population, with similar factors being important in each population.

In conclusion, **the characteristics which make it most difficult for a Roma person to access the labour market are those of being a woman, being illiterate, and having children.**

### 4. FACTORS EXPLAINING THE GAPS OBSERVED BETWEEN THE ROMA POPULATION AND THE GENERAL POPULATION.

Discrimination and other cultural factors as a cause of differences.

As we have seen, the Roma population shows rates of being in work which are notably lower than those in the general population, bearing in mind that the characteristics of the two populations are significantly different: the Roma population is much younger and has educational levels much lower than those found in the general population. We therefore wish

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<sup>5</sup> The analysis performed in this section used maximum likelihood estimation, probit model. For more information on the methodology used, see “Chapter 2, Employment market. Factors determining employment status” in the full Study.

to explore<sup>6</sup> how much of this difference in employment rates is explained by known factors such as sex, age, educational level etc, and how much is due to other unmeasured factors relating to the people interviewed. In other words, to what extent a group drawn from the general population with the same known characteristics as the Roma population would have a similar probability of being in work, and to what extent the gaps are due to factors not visible in the data.

- ✓ The difference in the probability of finding a job in the Roma population and in the general population is 54% due to known characteristics such as age or educational level, while **46% cannot be attributed to those characteristics**, and could have various explanations. One is the **discrimination suffered by the Roma population**. Later in this report we will see that 40% of Roma people interviewed stated that they felt they had experienced discrimination in the past year, this discrimination reducing their chances of being in a job. A second possible explanation lies in cultural factors, while finally it could be due to unmeasured factors such as a lack of information or lower levels of social inclusion, among others.
- ✓ In the **case of Roma men, 55%** of the initial gap in the probability of being in a job is due **to differences in unmeasured factors such as discrimination** suffered when trying to access the labour market.
- ✓ In the case of Roma women, 60% of the initial gap in the probability of being in work is explained by known differences such as educational level, age or marital status, while **40%** could be explained by the other characteristics already mentioned.

## 5. DISCRIMINACION AGAINST THE ROMA POPULATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Discrimination continues to be an obstacle to the inclusion of Roma people in the labour market.

Discriminatory attitudes towards the Roma population appear to be common, as is shown by the fact that **40% of the Roma men and women interviewed have noticed some form of discrimination** in the past year:

- ✓ The percentage of Roma men who say they have felt discriminated against is higher than that of women in most situations, but especially in those related to work, for example job interviews, where 53% of Roma men felt they had experienced discrimination as opposed to 42% of Roma women.

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<sup>6</sup> This analysis was carried out using a statistical breakdown technique, following the *Inverse Probability Weighting* methodology. For more details see the full Study: Block 2, Labour market. Disaggregation.

- ✓ Roma women have most commonly felt discriminated against in health centres and when using social services. This gender difference probably reflects the different environments in which women and men are most commonly exposed to possible discrimination in their daily lives, and chimes with the data presented earlier which show men's greater participation in the labour market.

When asked, the unemployed Roma people interviewed for this study explained what they believed were the reasons for their lack of employment. We found that perceptions differed according to gender:

- ✓ The main factor Roma men thought responsible for their lack of employment was discrimination, while Roma women tended to refer to factors such as not having education or training, and their lack of employment networks and contacts.

## 6. THE POVERTY DIMENSION IN THE ROMA POPULATION

### Poverty and exclusion have a dramatic effect on the majority of the Roma population

The concept of poverty has different dimensions and can be therefore be measured in various ways (de la Rica y Gorjón, 2018). Each dimension of poverty is normally measured using a different index, and each index highlights one aspect of the problem. This analysis presents results using some of the indices developed by Foster, Greer and Thorbecke (1984)<sup>7</sup>. These indices are calculated using the first three poverty thresholds (the extreme poverty threshold, the severe poverty threshold and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold).

The first dimension and the simplest to understand is the **incidence, or headcount index**, which is the percentage of individuals found to be below one of these poverty thresholds<sup>8</sup>. In other words, the index reflects how many poor people there are in society. However, this index does not include information on "how poor these poor people are". For this reason a second index was created, known as the **poverty intensity index**, which reflects the distance by which poor people fall below the threshold. To put this another way: how poor these poor people are, and how far they are from escaping poverty. This index shows the average income of poor individuals as a proportion of the poverty line; that is, how poor the average poor person is. However, this

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<sup>7</sup> This family of indices is one of the most commonly used due to its intuitive nature, the properties it exhibits and the possibility it offers of modulating concerns about poverty.

<sup>8</sup> The annex to the full Study specifies the formula used to calculate each poverty index.

index does not include information on the distribution of income among poor people. This need is satisfied by the final index: the poverty gap index.

The **poverty gap index** represents the income needed to eradicate poverty among a given population. It is usually expressed as a proportion of the total amount needed to end poverty in society as a whole. In other words, it is a relative figure, or ratio. This ratio combines the incidence and the intensity of poverty and measures how far we are as a society from ENDING poverty.

Finally, two further measures of poverty have been included: the child poverty rate and the percentage of working poor. Following the *Estrategia Nacional de Prevención y Lucha contra la Pobreza Infantil hasta 2023 (National Strategy to Prevent and Combat Child Poverty until 2023)*, the **child poverty rate** is taken to refer to the percentage of those under 18 who live in households whose equivalent incomes are below a certain threshold. Meanwhile, the **percentage of working people who are poor** is calculated; that is, of the total number of employed people, the percentage who live in a household in poverty. This can also be expressed as the percentage of working people living in a situation of poverty<sup>9</sup>.

The distribution of individual income, whether in the form of salaries, benefits or pensions shows significant differences between the Roma population and the general population. This is seen first in **the percentage of the Roma population receiving a salary or benefits, which is almost half the percentage of the general population receiving a salary or benefits**. It is also observed in the average amount received, which for salaries and pensions received by the general population is around double the average amount received in salaries and pensions by the Roma population.

One in four Roma households receive some kind of social welfare payment, including help with housing or help with the cost of school lunches or transport, etc. They receive such assistance more often and for a bigger amount, 425€ as opposed to 290€, than the general population. This difference is **explained by the different levels of poverty found in the two populations**, which we will explore more in depth further on.

And how is income distributed among households, taking household size into account?

As can be seen, the distribution of equivalent income among the Roma population is to the left of the total population, reflecting the fact that **most Roma people have an equivalent income below 500€**, the majority being below at least one of the poverty thresholds.

To find the number of Roma people who fall below each poverty threshold, we have used two measures, which are reflected in a series of indices:

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<sup>9</sup> For more details on the methodology and definitions used, see the complete Study, Block 3, Income and poverty.

Indices of poverty in the Roma population and the general population:

	<b>Roma population</b>	<b>General population</b>
<b>AROPE</b>	91.9%	29.3%
<b>At risk of poverty</b>	85.9%	22.9%
<b>Child poverty (at risk)</b>	89.1%	31.3%

**One of the measures used is the AROPE index (1)**, which shows the risk of poverty and/or social exclusion, and which indicates that **92% of the Roma population is at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion**, as opposed to 29.3% of the general population.

With these results, and with the majority of the Roma population being at risk of poverty, we wished to understand better and in more detail the situation which lies behind these overall figures, analysing not only the **incidence of poverty**, but also its **intensity and the poverty gap** using different thresholds, specifically those of **extreme poverty, severe poverty and being at risk of poverty (2)**.

Incidence and intensity of poverty and the poverty gap – Roma population:

The first result to highlight is that **46.4% of the Roma population is extremely poor**, which is to say that the equivalent incomes of more than half of the Roma population are below 310.20€, the average equivalent income of this group being 200€. Meanwhile, **65.6% of the Roma population lives in severe poverty**, with incomes of less than 413.60€ per consumption unit, and average income in this group being 248€. Regarding risk of poverty, **85.9% of families are at risk of poverty**, as was also observed in the AROPE indicator data, with incomes of less than 620.40€ and an average income of 307€,

For the **Roma population to escape extreme poverty**, an **additional income of 17.5%** would be needed compared with the amount of income those in extreme poverty currently receive; **to escape severe poverty, 21.5%** of additional income would be required by those currently in this situation. Finally, in order **to escape the risk of poverty**, those presently at risk of poverty would need **an income 30.5% higher** than the income they currently have. As would be expected, the distance from the poverty threshold increases as we look at successively higher thresholds.

### ✓ Cost of eradicating poverty

This analysis of the poverty gap allows us to perform calculations yielding an approximate figure for the **real quantity in euros that would be necessary** for all the Roma population who are currently in extreme poverty, in severe poverty or at risk of poverty to escape these situations and rise above the poverty threshold<sup>10</sup>.

- **Extreme poverty:** To close the extreme poverty gap in the Roma population, **37.5 million euros would be needed annually** in the form of salaries, benefits and social welfare payments, which is equivalent to the red striped area on the graph below. This quantity would need to be directed towards the 46.4% of the Roma population currently living in a situation of extreme poverty<sup>11</sup>.
- **Severe poverty:** The amount necessary to eradicate severe poverty is **81.2 million euros annually in the form of salaries, benefits and social welfare payments**, which is equivalent to the blue striped area on the graph below. This sum should be directed towards 66% of the Roma population; that is, the group currently living in severe poverty. Obviously, given that the percentage of the Roma population living in severe poverty is higher than the percentage living in extreme poverty, the cost of eradicating severe poverty is greater, and doing so would benefit a greater proportion of the Roma population.
- **Risk of poverty:** The cost of eradicating the risk of poverty among the Roma population would be **201.8 million euros per year<sup>12</sup> in the form of salaries, benefits and social welfare payments**. This figure is equivalent to the green area on the graph below. This amount would need to be directed towards the 86% of the Roma population currently at risk of poverty.

### ✓ Child poverty and the Roma population

In this analysis of the situation of the Roma population relating to poverty, it is necessary to look more closely at child poverty in order to discover the effects of these levels of poverty on minors.

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<sup>10</sup> To allow us to properly understand the scope and meaning of the poverty gap, graphics are presented illustrating how the poverty gap is calculated (for a given poverty threshold). Area B represents the income (whether in the form of salary, social welfare, benefits etc) received by a group which is below the threshold. For this group to rise above the threshold, the additional income necessary is equivalent to Area A. The poverty gap is then the ratio  $A/(A+B)$  and is defined as the proportion of income which a certain group requires in order to rise above a given poverty threshold.

<sup>11</sup> It must be remembered that in order to eradicate poverty, the calculated amount should not be distributed equally among all households currently in poverty, but rather the amount distributed to each household should be determined by the total income of each household and the relevant poverty threshold, which depends on the number of people living in it.

<sup>12</sup> The exact figures obtained are 37,503,261€, 81,240,061€ and 201,848,988€. Of course, these figures must be considered approximate, subject to the veracity of the reported data and to possible sampling error.



- ✓ **89% of Roma minors live at risk of poverty**, compared with 31.3% of the general population, while *51.8% live in a situation of extreme poverty*.

**The levels of poverty in the Roma population have a particularly severe impact on minors**, as the majority of children live in larger households, which are in turn the households most likely to experience greater levels of poverty.

Turning to the percentage of workers in each type of household presented, we can see that **6.8% of Roma people in work are extremely poor**; 11.7% live in a household in severe poverty, while 19.3% of working Roma people live at risk of poverty. There appears to be a direct relationship between the percentage of poor workers and the level of poverty: the lower the poverty threshold used, the smaller the percentage of workers in that situation of poverty. Perhaps the most notable finding, however, is that there are Roma people in situations of extreme poverty, severe poverty and risk of poverty even among those who are in the labour market and who have a job.

After identifying levels of poverty in the Roma population, it is necessary to shed light on the nature of households suffering this poverty and identify its possible causes.

#### ✓ **The working poor and their households**

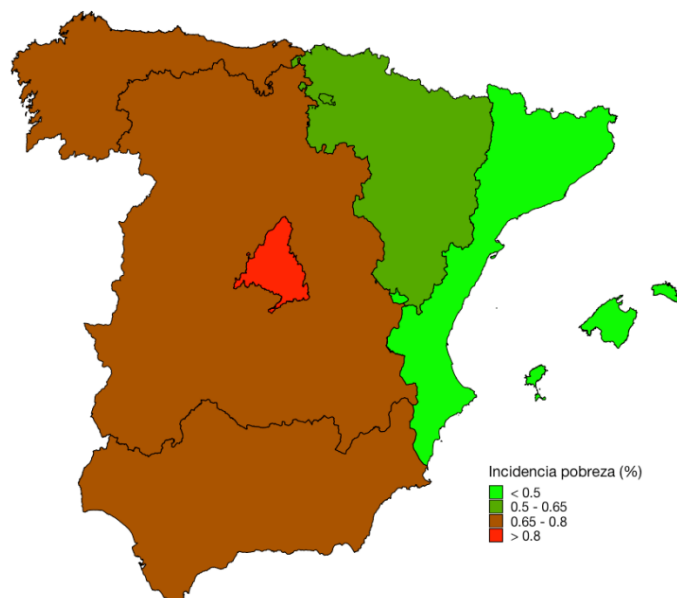
Looking at the average size of households yields a very clear result, which is that the **poorest households are the largest, and that size of household is a factor which is highly related with levels of poverty**. On average, extremely poor households contain 4.6 members and severely poor households have 3.8 members, while households that are not poor contain an average of 3.4 members.

It is also worth noting that the percentage of minors increases as households become poorer, and there is also an inverse relationship between the percentage of working people in a household and poverty: the more household members who work, the lower the level of poverty, although it must be remembered that even some households with working members are clearly in a situation of poverty.

✓ **The distribution of poverty among the Roma population by region<sup>13</sup>**

The incidence of poverty in the Roma population in each group of regions shows a clear difference between East and West, with the **Community of Madrid being the area where poverty affects the highest number of Roma families**, at more than 80%.

INCIDENCE OF POVERTY



In those regions where the incidence of poverty in the Roma population is greater, the intensity of poverty is also greater (poor people are poorer).

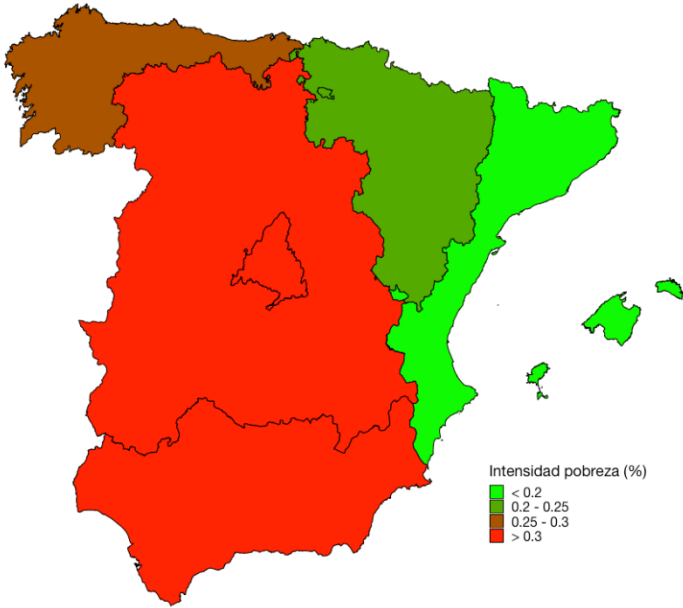
It is worth noting that the Southern group of regions, while they are not (except the Community of Madrid) the regions with the highest incidence of poverty, are the regions with the greatest intensity of poverty. Poor Roma people in these regions find themselves at a distance of more than 30% below the poverty threshold.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In order to achieve regionally representative figures, analyses have been carried out separately for each *Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)* in Spain.

The analysis focuses on the severe poverty threshold (40% of the average) as the results obtained are very similar to those obtained for extreme poverty. Regional differences relating to the 'at-risk-of-poverty' threshold have not been analysed in detail as the majority of Roma people are in this situation and there is hardly any variation in the figures.

<sup>14</sup> The results for the three poverty thresholds are included in the annex to the Study. In addition, while only indices for incidence and intensity are shown here, information about the poverty gap can also be found in the annex.

INTENSITY OF POVERTY



## 7.CONCLUSIONS

### 1 – The majority of the Roma population suffers severe inequality and lack of protection of their access to economic and social rights, compared with the total population.

The study reinforces and confirms the picture of severe inequality, lack of protection and vulnerability for the Roma population which has been sketched out by other studies in recent years (EUMIDIS II 2016; FOESSA 2013 and 2018; *Mapa de Vivienda* (Map on Housing) 2017, Education FSG 2013).

It shows the Roma population to be a very young population in which **poverty and exclusion affect more than 80%**, with a particularly severe impact on children. This is a population with a low presence in the labour market, often in insecure jobs and with weak employment protection, and with an unemployment rate of over 50%. The population suffers from a serious lack of qualifications, with only 17% completing compulsory secondary education or higher education and with Roma women at a clear disadvantage in every area because of their gender.

This is a community which, along with the typical factors which can be expected to cause socioeconomic inequality, also suffers the impact of discrimination and other cultural factors.

### 2 – A demographically very young population, which in today's society means a very vulnerable socioeconomic status.

The Roma population is much younger than the general population. 66% of Roma people are under 30 years old, and households are larger than the Spanish average and include a greater number of children.

We know that the financial crisis of the past decades has had a disproportionate impact on young people, and that the impact on households with children has exacerbated the situation of child poverty. Almost half of Roma households are made up of two adults with children.

On the other hand, only 9% of the population is aged 60 or over, and the number of retired people (and as a result the value of their mainly non-contributory pensions to their households) is small.

Household composition has a direct influence on family responsibilities, which fall mainly on the shoulders of women and determine to a large extent their educational and employment status.

**3 – The employment situation** of the Roma population has been particularly severely affected by the financial crisis, which has worsened a situation already characterised by low labour market inclusion, low numbers in work, a high unemployment rate, great job insecurity and weak employment protection.

The financial crisis has had a great impact on the employment and socioeconomic situation of the Roma population. The series of studies conducted in 2005, 2011 and 2018 demonstrates that the 2005 employment indicators, which already showed a clear inequality at that time, now indicate an even worse situation, with the gap between the Roma population and the general population growing ever wider. We are still a long way from seeing a return to the situation that existed before the crisis.

The **percentage in work** among the Roma population is 30%, which is 20% lower than for the total population, with a striking imbalance between men and women. While 44% of Roma men are in the labour market, the presence of women in the market stands at just 17%, a fact largely due to the family responsibilities which fall almost exclusively upon women.

**The unemployment rate stands at 52%**, more than three times the rate found in the general population (14.5%). Once again, the gender difference is significant, with an unemployment rate for women of 60%, and the gap between this and the male unemployment rate (47%, 13 points) being noticeably wider than the gap between women and men in the general population (3.5 points wider).

The differences in the overall **economic activity rate** between the Roma population and the general population are not significant. 56% of Roma people are either in work or unemployed, as was seen in previous studies. However, when we look at activity rate by gender we find highly significant differences. For example, the activity rate for Roma women is 38% while the rate for men is 76%, due to the fact that many women devote their time to domestic work and family responsibilities. This is a difference of 38 percentage points in the Roma population, when there is only an 11-percentage-point gender difference in the general population. At the same time, these high activity rates among Roma males are due to the low number of students (young Roma men work or are unemployed, while young non-Roma men are normally in education) and also the low number of retired people among the Roma.

There are also great differences in the composition of the working population. Among Roma people, only **53% of those in work are salaried workers** (compared with more than 80% of the general population), while **self-employed people represent 47%** (compared with less than 20% of the general population).

This high rate of self-employment is due to **the prevalence of market-selling and street-selling**, which continue to be the main forms of work for Roma people, with more than a third of working Roma people, mostly men, being involved in these activities. Roma women are also

involved in these forms of work, but women in this situation are generally not considered to be doing a job, as their work is considered to be part of their domestic duties or family responsibilities. For this reason they suffer from a greater lack of protection than men.

**Little work and conditions of job insecurity.** The large amount of freelance work and the low quality of salaried work, with rates of temporary work standing at 70% and 16% of paid workers not having a contract, together paint a picture of weak employment protection and ensuing difficulty in accessing unemployment benefits and retirement pensions, with pensions being mainly non-contributory.

It is worth highlighting that 19.3% of Roma people at risk of poverty are in the labour market and have a job, and can therefore be considered to belong to the category of the working poor.

The lack of qualifications among the great majority of Roma people entering the labour market explains the fact that they are concentrated in sectors with inferior employment protection and lower rates of pay. Since 2005, the number of unemployed people has increased. The crisis has disproportionately affected people with lower levels of education, trapping them in the ranks of the unemployed. In this way, **more than 70% of unemployed Roma people have found themselves in a situation of long-term unemployment (more than one year)** while 35% are in a situation of very long-term unemployment (more than four years).

**63% of young Roma people aged 16 to 29 are neither in work nor in education.** In the general population this percentage has decreased to 15% from the high figures seen during the worst years of the crisis.

4 – **Level of education is, by some margin, the main determinant of employment status and is therefore a determinant of the socioeconomic inequality suffered by the Roma population.**

**Only 17% of the Roma population aged over 16 have completed compulsory secondary education or higher education,** compared with 80% of the general population. This factor is responsible for a large part of the inequality gap which separates Roma men and women from the socioeconomic standards enjoyed by the rest of the population.

Education is also the factor which most influences the probability of a Roma person finding a job. Although Roma men and women who have completed compulsory secondary education are in a minority (19% of men and 15% of women), their presence in the labour market is substantially greater. 25% of working Roma men and almost a third (32%) of Roma women in work have at least completed compulsory secondary education. In other words, the proportion of the Roma population in work increases considerably as education level rises, and **Roma people who have progressed beyond compulsory secondary education have a probability of being in work which is close to that found among the general population.**

Level of education is, fortunately, the indicator which has shown the greatest progress in recent years among the Roma population. In 2005 the percentage of Roma people who had completed compulsory secondary education was only 6.4%; in 2011 it rose to 10% and in 2018 it rose even further, to 17%. This *exponential progress* over the last 7 years has been particularly noticeable among Roma men, with a rise of more than 10%, and less so among Roma women. The number of Roma people without any education has decreased markedly in recent years, halving from 71% in 2005 to 36% in 2018.

**5 – The situation of Roma women is marked by great inequality, being worse than that of Roma men and also worse than that of non-Roma women on all of the indicators examined in this Study.**

The inequality gap experienced by women is very significant, and is observed in all areas: in employment status, in educational level, in family responsibilities and also in the low expectations they face and their poor prospects of employment or promotion.

In relation to **educational level** and qualifications, the gender-based inequality suffered by Roma women is stark, as is the margin by which they lag behind non-Roma women in terms of the progress made towards gender equality in our society. **Fewer Roma women complete compulsory secondary education**, at 15.5% compared with 19% of Roma men and 95% of women in the general population. The proportion of Roma women with higher education qualifications is not even 3%, as opposed to 5% among Roma men and 52% (!) of women in general. **Illiteracy, which is almost non-existent in the general population (2%), still affects 14% of Roma women** compared with 6% of Roma men.

Although education is the indicator which has shown most progress in recent years, the rise in educational level is particularly marked among Roma men, while progress has been less marked or has slowed down among Roma women. For example, in the last 7 years, the percentage of women completing compulsory secondary education has gone from 11% to 15%, while the percentage of males in this situation, standing at 8% in 2011, has jumped to 19% over the same period.

The most positive finding, reinforcing the importance of the role of education, is that women who have at least completed compulsory secondary education have a much greater chance of having a salaried job. In fact, 32% of women in work have this qualification while Roma males who have completed compulsory secondary education represent 25% of working Roma men. **This means that educational level is today the best predictor we have of socioeconomic progress and participation among Roma women.**

Completing compulsory secondary education greatly boosts the chances of employment among Roma women. However, having family responsibilities, particularly for the care of children, reduces the positive impact of education on their chances of labour market inclusion.

In relation to **participation in work**, there exists a considerable gender gap between Roma males and females. Participation in work among women stands at just 38.5%, an **activity rate** much lower than that of Roma men, for whom the figure stands at 76%. The difference in activity indicators between men and women in the general population is 10 percentage points, while for Roma men and women it is nearly 40 points. In other words, Roma women face particular difficulty in accessing the job market; more than Roma men, but also much more than women in the general population.

These inequalities can also be seen in the **numbers in work**, from which we can see that just 16% of Roma women are in work as opposed to 44% of Roma men (and 44.5% of women in the general population). Unemployment also affects men and women unequally, with an **unemployment rate** of 60% for Roma women, 13 points higher than the rate for men.

The low participation in work among Roma women is associated with **domestic duties** and **family responsibilities**, which they generally assume exclusively (98% of Roma people who reported that they spent their time on domestic work in 2018 were women, the figure being 99% in 2005 and 97% in 2011). Furthermore - and this is a particularly striking finding - **this situation has not changed since the first Study in 2005**.

17% of Roma women are not looking for a job (they are inactive) because they believe they will not find one, in 36% of cases because of their **family responsibilities**. While the main barrier impeding Roma men from finding employment is their low educational level, for women, family responsibilities represent an additional barrier, and given that the number of children is significantly greater in Roma households, **this exclusive responsibility means that many women are completely prevented from accessing the labour market**.

Gender differences are also striking when we look at **expectations of employment**: although most Roma women would like to have a job, the great majority state that the people around them do not expect them to have one or to be able to get one. This stands in contrast to the situation for Roma men, for whom there is a perfect match between their expectations and what they believe the people around them expect for them.

6 – Access to the job market is greatly influenced by social and sociodemographic factors, but other factors are also highly significant, in particular **discrimination** and other cultural factors.

This Study offers a valuable analysis of the key factors determining the participation in work of the Roma population. We have already seen the evidence that education is the factor which plays the most decisive role. Our analysis of the various determining factors shows that almost 60% of the difference in the probability of having a job between the Roma population and the general population is explained by differences in sociodemographic characteristics, principally level of education. However, that leaves more than 40% of the difference which is



attributable to other factors which have a specific and disproportionate effect on the Roma population.

Discrimination experienced in accessing the job market and other services is such a factor, and it is suffered by Roma women and, particularly, by Roma men, simply because they are Roma. **Discrimination plays a crucial role for Roma people in our society, and it has not yet been sufficiently weighed up or examined in formulating the measures to be taken to help this population.**

**39% of Roma men and women feel that they have been discriminated against in the past year.** A high percentage of men (53%) and a lower proportion of women (42%) state that they have experienced discrimination specifically in job interviews. It therefore appears that access to employment is one of the most important areas in which discrimination continues to act as a barrier to social inclusion. Moreover, if we look at the data on discrimination gathered in previous studies, no progress can be observed. In 2005, 45% of Roma people said that they felt they had been discriminated against in the job market, while in 2011 47% said that they had experienced discrimination during a job interview.

There are also cultural factors influencing participation in the job market (the role that market-selling plays in family finances and in the family dynamic, for example) while, as we have already seen, the persistence of clearly demarcated gender roles affects women's access to the job market and their decisions to cut their education short.

7 – Large swathes of the Spanish Roma population, more than 80%, are affected by **high levels of poverty and social exclusion**. 46% are extremely poor, with children being particularly likely to suffer from poverty and exclusion.

This study offers much-needed description and measurement of the situation of poverty of the Roma population, which until now has been lacking.

Just **26% of Roma people receive money for working**, with an average salary of 754€, as opposed to almost 60% of the general population, with an average salary of 1,250€. Similarly, although unemployment rates are much higher for the Roma population, only 6% receive unemployment benefits compared with 13% of the general population.

Regarding social welfare payments, only **31% of households in extreme poverty and 33% of those in severe poverty receive such payments**.

The average income of households among the Roma population (for equivalent units) is significantly lower than that among the general population. The most frequent level of equivalent income is between 250€ and 300€ (1,034€ for the general population), **which reflects a high incidence of poverty:**

- 86% of the Roma population is at **risk of poverty**, with an income below 620€, as opposed to 23% of the general population.
- 66% of the Roma population live in a situation of **severe poverty**, with an income lower than 413€.
- 46% of households suffer a situation of **extreme poverty** with an income lower than 310€.

The **AROPE** indicator shows that 92% of the Roma population live in a situation of poverty and/or social exclusion, compared with 29% of the general population. Moreover, 30.5% of households simultaneously experience severe material deprivation, low work intensity and being at risk of poverty.

The levels of poverty in the Roma population are particularly severe for children, and the poorer the household, the greater the number of minors living there. **The child poverty rate is 89% compared with 30.7% in the general population.** 52% of minors live in households suffering extreme poverty while 70% live in households experiencing severe poverty.

To **escape extreme poverty**, it would be necessary for incomes in these households to increase by 17.5%. This would mean a total rise in income (or spending) of **37.5 million euros per year**. This figure is particularly worth noting in these times, when guaranteed income initiatives are being explored in order to combat extreme poverty in this country.

Employment, the number of occupants in a household and income from paid work are the factors most relevant to the reduction of poverty. Income from pensions can help people to escape extreme poverty, but is not enough to lift them out of severe poverty.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the main objectives of this study is to cast light on the social and employment situation of the Roma population and to guide the design of public policies in order to promote progress in equality of opportunities and in the protection of rights.

The data gathered in this specific study of the Roma population show the high degree of social inequality affecting Roma people in a multitude of ways, demonstrating once more that ethnic origin is a key factor in exclusion. The persistence of high levels of social vulnerability among the Roma population reveals a chronic, structural problem, exacerbating the inequality between Roma people and the general population.

To reverse this trend a **firm public policy response** is required, aiming for more inclusive growth which protects social cohesion while tackling poverty and exclusion in their various dimensions, and observing the following priorities: the **boosting** of economic activity among Roma people through effective education and employment policies; and their **protection** by means of a system

which increases the social inclusion of particularly vulnerable groups such as the Roma population.

To meet this objective, we believe that the following actions are essential:

- 1. Launch an urgent Action Plan to tackle school failure among Roma students and to ensure that all Roma boys and girls at least finish compulsory education, continuing with their studies so that in the next decade they attain educational levels similar to those found among the general population of young people in Spain.**

The study shows that for Roma people, educational level is the variable which most affects their chances of having a job. When their level of education is higher, they are less likely to be economically inactive and more likely to be working as an employee. However, the school failure rate (64%) and the dropout rate (63.7%)<sup>15</sup> in the Roma population are disproportionately high, and this perpetuates the structural social inequality of the Roma population. Education is a decisive factor when it comes to the risk of social exclusion for Roma people, as low educational level is the main factor leading to low labour market inclusion among the Roma population and, as a consequence, to the high levels of poverty they face.

For this reason it is essential, as the Spanish State has been reminded recently by various international human rights organisations (the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, The Committee on the Rights of the Child and the European Council's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance), to guarantee the right to education of Roma school students and to promote higher levels of education. To achieve this, public policies must urgently be created at state and regional level which require specific action to ensure that all Roma boys and girls at least complete compulsory education, and that they continue with their studies so that over the next decade the educational levels achieved by young Roma people are similar to those achieved by the general population of young people in Spain.

## **2. Create specific measures to eradicate extreme poverty and child poverty among the Roma population.**

Social policies should serve to protect the most vulnerable from the situations of greatest social risk and should guarantee basic rights. This requires a robust, equitable system of social protection which improves the financial security of households and increases their income, by means of an improved and more extensive use of guaranteed minimum income schemes, along with an increase in child benefit, among other measures.

However, the most serious situations, such as that of the Roma population with its high rates of extreme poverty and child poverty, also require specific measures within the wider framework of the general policies, in order to ensure these policies truly help all families. The particularly vulnerable situation of Roma people must be taken into account, along with the key factors which

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<sup>15</sup> *Estudio: El alumnado gitano en España. Un estudio comparado* (Study: Roma school students in Spain. A comparative study). FSG 2013.

keep the Roma population in this state of particular vulnerability. For this reason, we believe that the Operational Plans setting out the means of implementing the recently approved *National Strategy to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion 2019-2023* should take a differential approach to tackling the crisis of extreme poverty in the Roma population. This means offering a tailored response to Roma people's requirements and to the many ways in which this extreme poverty affects their lives.

Besides taking into account the situation of the Roma population in the general policy-setting agenda, to reduce the inequality gap in relation to the general population it is necessary to reinforce the main political instrument designed to tackle the inequalities affecting the Roma population and guarantee equality of opportunity: the *National Strategy for the Social Inclusion of the Roma Population*. This strategy ends in 2020 and is currently in the process of being re-designed and updated in terms of its objectives and proposed measures. Specific policies at state, regional and local level are vital and must serve first and foremost to redress the inequalities suffered by groups, such as the Roma population, for whom the incidence and intensity of poverty are most serious and persistent.

**3.Ensure that employment policies offer tailored solutions to ensure the labour market inclusion of the Roma population.** The employment situation of Roma people is perhaps the area in which we see the greatest inequalities relating to ethnic origin, gender and age. According to the data gathered in the study, the low labour market inclusion of the Roma population is due mainly to their lack of qualifications when they first try to access the labour market, although this is not the only factor.

Turning to public policies, it is necessary to: adapt employment policies to encourage inclusion in the labour market for Roma people in preference to other options. Economic activity should be encouraged for Roma women in particular, as their activity and employment rates are much lower than those of Roma men. It is also necessary to invest in tailored training programmes to improve the employment prospects of Roma people, with a particular focus on training in new technologies in order to close the technological skills gap. Public policymaking should also promote diversification in the sectors and occupations in which Roma men and women work, as these sectors and occupations currently tend to be those with the least protection, the lowest remuneration, the highest rates of temporary work and the greatest job insecurity. Policy responses should also guarantee protection against unemployment, which disproportionately affects Roma people, and in particular long-term unemployment. Finally, these responses should prioritise measures directed towards Roma youth, within a population in which young people form a majority (66% of the Roma population being under 30), with an activity rate similar to the general national average but in which 63% are neither in work nor in education.

In summary, to tackle the low rate of labour market inclusion among the Roma population, it is necessary to create specific measures and programmes related to training and access to the labour market, paying particular attention to women and young people, with the objective of

increasing the rate of salaried employment in the Roma population until it is equal to the rate observed in the general population.

#### **4. Adapt equality policies in order to reduce the gender gap suffered by Roma women in comparison with Roma men.**

The gender inequality which exists throughout the general population is particularly acute for Roma women. Their inequality in relation to Roma men starts in education, as is seen in their relatively high rate of illiteracy (14% of women compared with 6% of men) as well as in the final level of education reached (only 3% of Roma women have completed compulsory secondary education or higher education, compared with 5% of Roma men). This inequality is then compounded and worsened when it comes to employment: the participation in the labour market of Roma women is much lower than that of Roma men (an activity rate of 38% as opposed to 76%, and a proportion in work of 17% as opposed to 44%). A high level of economic inactivity is observed among Roma women in all age groups, regardless of level of education achieved. Moreover, the main reason for Roma women's economic inactivity and for their failure to access the labour market is one which is strongly influenced by gender: family responsibilities.

For all these reasons, it is necessary to create specific measures and programmes to ensure that Roma women have the same opportunities as men: ensuring educational success among Roma girls and young women, easing their way into participation in training and employment, and fostering shared domestic responsibility and a balance between work and family life, among other factors.

In summary, general policies relating to gender equality must take into account the realities of daily life for Roma women, being adapted to their particular circumstances and their family and social context in consultation with the entire community.

#### **5. Take measures to combat discrimination against Roma people in the labour market.**

The results of the study show that the low rate of labour market inclusion among Roma people has a considerable influence on their risk of poverty and social exclusion, and that it arises from a number of observed factors related to their social, educational and employment circumstances. However, it also shows the influence of other factors, such as the discrimination perceived by Roma people. We know that discrimination is an additional barrier to social and labour market inclusion for Roma people, and that the public authorities have an obligation to combat this discrimination in order to guarantee equality for all men and women.

To achieve this, it is essential to ensure the effective application of the protections currently offered by legislation (based on the *European directive 2000/78 relating to the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation*, and Directive 2000/43/CE relating to the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin). This requires the involvement and commitment of the

public authorities, and also of social agents, companies and unions, which need to take a more active role in promoting awareness-raising activities and measures as well as in the detection and reporting of cases in order to combat discrimination in the labour market.

Reducing inequalities, combating poverty and social exclusion, and guaranteeing decent jobs, adequate levels of education and gender equality are political commitments set out in the agenda of the European Semester and in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. In addition, they are rights firmly established in international treaties and conventions to which Spain is a signatory.

The alignment of public policies with a development strategy which is truly sustainable, inclusive and equitable requires a commitment to intense social investment, which must be maintained over time. Spending should be planned at a national level with this political priority in mind in order to tackle the social challenges posed by inequality. At the same time, we must take advantage of the opportunities offered by European funds at both regional and state level, and of the Investment Priority specifically aimed at the inclusion of the Roma population.

The review of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain, due to take place in 2020, must be the means by which we articulate and coordinate an effective response to these challenges.