Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria

Thematic report on the situation of Roma

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1. Introduction

1.1. Policy relevance of the analysis in regard to Roma in Bulgaria

This report was drafted as part of the project 'Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights', funded under the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014 – 2021 (EEA FM), call BGLD-3.001, programme 'Local development, poverty reduction and enhanced inclusion of vulnerable groups'. It analyses the situation of Roma in Bulgaria in the year preceding the development of the new national Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation (up to 2030). The analysis is based on data from a representative survey conducted by the Bulgaria's National Statistical Institute (BNSI) complemented with information from other sources.[1]The report aims to:

- Outline the key challenges the Roma in Bulgaria face reflecting their socio-economic characteristics and discrimination, harassment and victimisation experience capturing the impact of multiple risks and disadvantages;
- Based on the results of the analysis, inform the policies for implementation of the national Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation and suggest areas for priority policy attention reflecting Bulgaria's Roma specifics with indicators and targets for monitoring progress.

Most of indicators analysed in the report can be used as a baseline for monitoring the progress of Roma inclusion against the targets set in the Framework.

This report uses the definitions of "vulnerable groups", "discrimination", "harassment" and "violence", as well as the indicators for their monitoring, as they are presented in the summary report "Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria"[2] elaborated in the framework of this project. Most of indicators follow the list in the Portfolio of indicators the European Commission suggested in 2020.[3]

The report also refers to specific pieces of Bulgaria's legislation that negatively and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups increasing the risk of multiple deprivation and (institutional) discrimination. It does not claim to present comprehensive analysis of the gaps in the legal framework of Roma inclusion but highlights some key areas in which urgent legislative changes are needed for the reduction of the growing social inequalities, social exclusion and discrimination against vulnerable groups, such as Roma, to be sustainable.

The structure of this report, the calculation of indicators disaggregated by ethnicity and/or other features and the analysis of the data follow FRA's requirements, set in the *Handbook on EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation monitoring indicators calculation*

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[1] Until 2015, Bulgaria was not collecting administrative and sample survey statistical information disaggregated by ethnicity. Official data on the demographic processes, the socio-economic status, the educational attainment, the place of residence and the living conditions of the representatives of the large ethnic communities are collected and published by the BNSI only for the years of the census. Since 2015, question about ethnicity has been included in the Bulgarian questionnaire of the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The BNSI publishes data disaggregated by ethnicity yearly in Bulgarian and English.

[2] BNSI, FRA (2021), Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria.

[3] European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council 'A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation' {SWD(2020) 530 final}, Annex 2, COM(2020) 620 final.

methodology - adapted for BNSI and the draft report *Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria,* compiled within the project 'Novel Approaches to Generating Data on Hard-to-reach Population at Risk of Violation of Their Rights'.

1.2. The survey in a nutshell

The representative survey designed and implemented specifically for the project BGLD-3.001-0001 Project "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights. The survey (referred to in the report as "BNSI/FRA 2020 survey") was conducted between 19 May and 17 September 2020. It collected information on the situation of over 26,600 individuals aged 15 and over and 3,600 children up to 14. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and despite the complicated situation in the country due to the measures introduced to combat the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, the response rate reached 80.6 %.

The sample of the households surveyed was designed by applying two-stage stratified cluster sampling with random probabilities proportional to size. The sample contained 15,000 private households in 2,500 clusters representing the Bulgarian population living in private households without oversampling. The data was weighted to the population as of 31 December 2019 using "calibration methods": design weights (the inverse of inclusion probabilities of the sample units) was adjusted with the non-response, then calibration was applied at the individual level to represent the population as of 31 December 2019 using age groups, sex, type of residence and district.

All members of the households aged 15 and over were interviewed. Proxy interviews were not allowed. Questions referring to children younger than 15 were included in the interviews with the children's mothers; if this was not possible, another legal representative (parent or guardian) provided the information. Data were collected through face-to-face computer-assisted interviews.

The survey focused specifically on four groups identified as at high risk of poverty, social exclusion and fundamental rights violations:

- the Roma community (people who self-identify as Roma)
- children (people below the age of 18)
- older people (people who are 65 or older)
- people with disabilities (people who answered that they were limited or severely limited in their usual activities in the six months before the survey owing to health problems).

This report is one of the series of four thematic reports analysing the situation of each of these four groups in Bulgaria. In line with BNSI's instruction during the fieldwork of the survey, the report applies the ethnonym "Roma" only for those who self-identify in this way to make the data comparable with the data from the censuses and all other BNSI surveys.

1.3. Roma in Bulgaria – demographics and dimensions of social exclusion and discrimination

Bulgaria is among the **EU countries with the largest share of Roma population**. According to official data from the last three censuses (1992[4], **2001** and **2011**), the share of self-identified Roma is about 4-5%. Roma population is younger, has higher fertility rate than the non-Roma (although declining in the last

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[4] Natsionalen Statisticheski Institut [National Statistical Institute]. (1994). Prebroyavane na naselenieto i zhilishtniya fond kam 4 dekemvri 1992 godina. Rezultati ot prebroyavane na naselenieto. Tom I. Demografski harakteristiki. [Population and housing census as of 4th December 1992. Population census results. Vol. I. Demographic characteristics], pp.106

decade)[5] and lower live expectancy.[6] The age differences between the big ethnic groups (those who self-identified as Roma, as Bulgarians and as Turks), the changes in the share of the large ethnic communities' fertile contingent and the differences in their fertile behaviour predetermine the changes in the ethnic composition of the population in the country in the long-term perspective (Figure 1). The economic welfare in Bulgaria will be increasingly determined by the education and qualification of current and future cohorts of children from the large minority communities, by their health status and by the degree and speed of social inclusion of ethnic minorities in all areas of life.

Figure 1. Distribution of Bulgaria's population by age and self-declared ethnicity in 2011 (%)
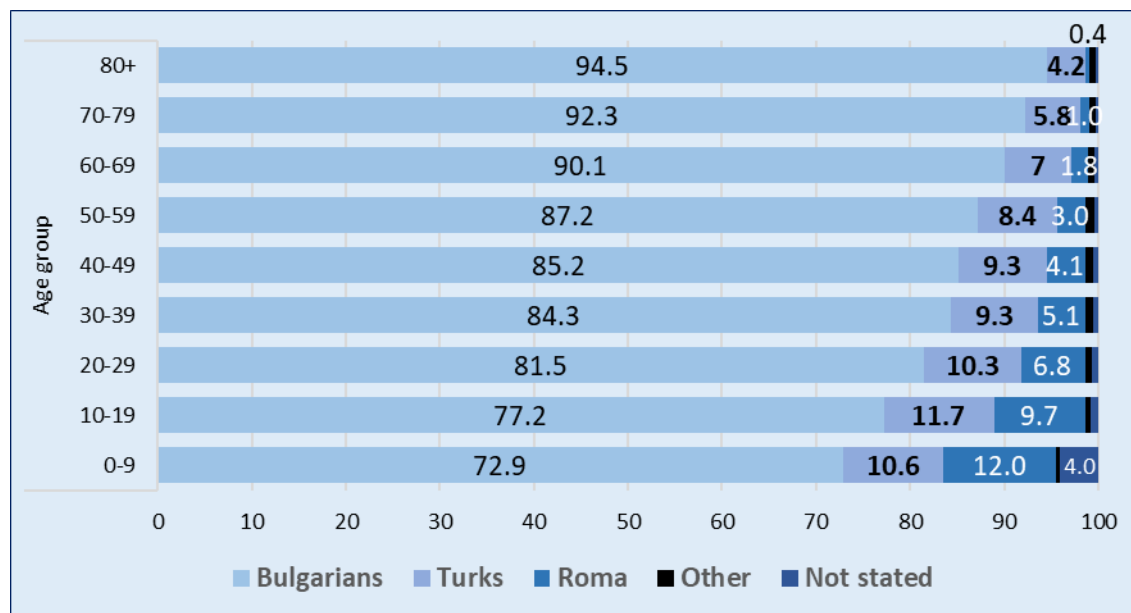
Source: NSI, 2011 Census, p. 33.

The Council of Europe refers to Roma as an umbrella term The term "Roma" encompassing, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.[7] In Bulgaria, the range of people who fall under the umbrella term of 'Roma' is also broad and includes people who self-identify as 'Millet', as 'Turks' or as 'Rudary', 'Lingurary', 'Kopanary', who often prefer to be called 'Wallachians' or 'Romanians[8] as well as those who self-identify as Dzhourevtsi[9] but insist to be called (and treated as) ethnic Bulgarians by the majority population and by the state institutions' staff.[10]

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[5] Ilieva, N., Kazakov, B. (2014), Projection of the Roma population in Bulgaria (2020-2050).

[6] World Bank (2014), Diagnostics and policy advice for supporting Roma inclusion in Romania, p.158.

[7] Council of Europe (2012), Descriptive Glossary of terms relating to Roma issues.

[8] See Kolev, D., T. Frumova, A. Krasteva, N. Nedelchev, D. Dimitrova, 2004. Kniga za uchitelya (Teachers' Manual), (p. 23).
[9] *Dzhorevtsi* sub-group are descendents of mixed marriages between Roma and Bulgarians. However their comparatively good economic status, they are equally rejected by both Roma and Bulgarians. Most of them identify themselves as Bulgarians and take it as an insult if somebody calls them Roma/Gypsies. They are usually better educated compared to the rest of Roma. The level of unemployment among them is one of the lowest for the Roma in the country.
[10] In the survey, four people (including a one-year old child) chose "Other" identity declaring "Kopanary".

Those people have always been labelled by the surrounding population as Roma/Gypsies[11] and face prejudice regardless of the way they self-identify. The same applies to Muslims living in slums who rarely self-identify as 'Roma' and are perceived by the surrounding population as "Turkish Gypsies" – they often face even higher risk of marginalization.

In addition to ethnicity, religion and mother tongue are additional facets of Roma identity defined as umbrella term. In the 2011 census, 36.6% of those who identified themselves as Roma declared that they were Eastern Orthodox Christians, 10.1% indicated affiliation with various evangelical churches, and 18.3% identified themselves as Muslims (NSI 2011). The rest either did not indicate their religion or explicitly stated that they were not religious and did not feel belonging to a particular denomination. As regards language, for the majority of self-identified Roma (85.0%) the mother tongue is one of the chief Romani dialects, for about 6.7% of them it is Turkish, and for 0.6% - Romanian. Only 7.5% of those who identify themselves as Roma declare "Bulgarian as their 'mother tongue'. It should be noted however, that in 2011, 9.8% of the respondents did not answer the voluntary question about their mother tongue.[12]

Given the overlap and complementarity of various facets of Roma identity, this report (in line with BNSI's approach when presenting data disaggregated by ethnicity) analysed the data on the situation of Roma vis-à-vis the other two big biggest ethnic groups in Bulgaria, namely Bulgarian and Turkish. Respectively, most discrimination indicators are calculated on "all grounds" of discrimination and on three grounds (ethnicity, or skin colour or religious beliefs). In that way, the indicators capture better the multidimensionality of 'Roma' as umbrella term.

Another factor that has a significant impact on increasing the risk of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria is the place of residence (and segregated living in particular). It largely determines the possibility of finding a job and generating a decent income, access to quality medical services and good education reinforcing marginalization further. As a result, it contributes to framing Roma as a demographic, cultural and social threat in media and part of the political discourse.[13] This framing fuels the negative feelings towards Roma and fears on the side of the general population contributing to the increase of the majority's ethnocentrism or ethnicization of social inequalities.[14]

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[11] Marushiakova, E., V.Popov, (1993). Tsiganite v Bulgaria (The Gypsies in Bulgaria). Sofia: "Club 1993"; Tomova I. (1995). The Gypsies in the Transition Period. Sofia: IMIR; Tomova, I. 'Konstruirane na romskata identichnost v Bulgaria' (The Roma identity construction in Bulgaria), Sociologicheski Problemi, v. 3-4, 2005 (pp. 187–214), Pamporov, A. (2006). Romskoto vsekidnevie v Bulgaria (Roma Everyday Life). Sofia: IMIR; Kolev, D., T. Frumova, A. Krasteva, N. Nedelchev, D. Dimitrova, 2004. Kniga za uchitelya (Teachers' Manual).

[12] BNSI (2012), 2011 Census. Vol. 1, population. Book 2, demographic and social characteristics, p. 34.

[13] In 2011, 9.8% of the respondents did not answer the voluntary question about their mother tongue. Here, again, the highest share of non-respondents is observed in children aged 0-9 and in young age groups (NSI 2012).

[13] Georgiev, J., Tomova, I., Grekova, M., Kanev, K. (1993). Nyakoi rezultati ot izsledvaneto „Etnokulturnata situatsiya v Balgariya – 1992" (Some results of the study "Ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria - 1992). Sociological Review (3). Sofia. 55-81.; Lazarova, G. (2002). Obrazat na romite. Edno izsledvane na savremenniya balgarski pechat (The image of the Roma. A study of the modern Bulgarian press). Sofia. SEGA; Pamporov, A. (2009). Sotsialni distantsii i etnicheski stereotipi za maltsinstvata v Balgariya (Social distances and ethnic stereotypes towards minorities in Bulgaria). Sofia. Stoytchev, L. (2012). Movement of prices, unemployment rate and the Roma content in the Bulgarian press in the dailies, August 2010-February 2011. Nasselenie Review (3-4), 128-141; BHC 2001-2020.

[14] See ECRI Report on Bulgaria (fourth (2008) and fifth (2014) monitoring cycle); Daftory, F., F. Grin (Eds.) (2003). Nation Building, Ethnicity and Language Politics in Transition Countries. ECMI and OSI. Budapest. Mitev, P.-E. (1994). Relationships of compatibility and incompatibility in everyday life between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria - a sociological study, In: Zhelyazkova, A. (ed.) Relationships of compatibility and incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria). Sofia. IMIR; Schuler, S. (2009). Aspekti na marginalizatsiyata na romite v Rumaniya i Balgariya (Aspects of Roma marginalisation in Romania and Bulgaria). Nasselenie Review (3-4). Sofia. (79-96); Tomova, Stoytchev (2013). Roma representations in the district of

2. Education

Highlights

- The data summarised in this chapter of the report shows that only 27.7% of Roma children aged 0-4 were attending kindergarten or nursery – way below the 46.0% of ethnic Bulgarian children.
- The share of Roma children who attend early childhood education in the age between 3 and 6 years is 58.3% (compared to 83.0% of ethnic Bulgarian and 77% of Turkish children).
- Only 86.2% of Roma children aged 7-15 attend formal education (compared to 96.6% of both ethnic Bulgarian and Turkish children).
- Early school leaving is particularly worrying: only 28.0% of Roma aged 20-24 have completed at least secondary education – with considerable gender gap (31.8% among Roma men and 23.4% among Roma women).
- Segregation in education is a major factor contributing deprivation in education and a violation of fundamental rights. 63.5% of Roma children aged 6-14 are attending schools and kindergartens where all or most of schoolmates are Roma.

2.1. Background

The European Pillar of Social rights states that all children have the right to affordable education and care of good quality. A number of national normative acts identify quality, affordable and inclusive education as their priority.[15] Positive results are visible in the modernization of the education and training system, in the improvement of teaching profession's attractiveness, and in the increase in the labour market relevance of the vocational education and training. The most serious challenges that still persist include the

- deterioration of the **quality of public education** at all educational levels (exposed in external assessments[16]), the difficulties to transit from education to employment;[17] and indirectly - the increased emigration of whole families, motivated by the desire of parents and/or young people to receive a higher education quality;[18]

Razgrad, Nasselenie Review (5-6). 175-186; Kanushev, M. (2018). Stigmatiziranata deviantnost, ili kak se konstituira mnozhestvena izklyuchenost. (Stigmatised deviance, or how multiple exclusion is constituted). In: Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost. (Inequalities and Social (Dis)Integration: In Search of Togetherness. Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M., Ivanov, M. (ed.). Sofia. Iztok-Zapad; etc.

[15] Pre-school and School Education Act 2015, National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2020" and "Bulgaria 2030", National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2030), Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, training and Learning in the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030, Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers 2013-2020, etc.

[16] European Commission (2019). Education and Training Monitor 2019: Bulgaria; National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2030", National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030.

[17] Employment rate of recent Bulgaria's graduates by educational attainment (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year ISCED 0-8) was 73.6% in 2009 and reached 78.6% in 2018, but is still below the EU average of 81.6%. (European Commission 2019).

[18] In 2017, an average of 11.6% of higher education graduates were "mobile" in the EU, i.e., studied partially or entirely abroad: 8% studied at foreign universities part-time, and 3.6% studied full-time in another country. Compared to the average values for academic mobility in the EU, Bulgaria is an absolutely atypical country: only 1.4% of Bulgarian students were credit-mobile

- **educational inequalities –** Bulgaria's educational system still reproduces and strengthens the social inequalities in the country through limited access to quality education and high risk of early school leaving for the majority of the children in the families with low incomes and especially in the rural area and the segregated schools where Roma children prevail[19]
- Insufficient progress in the **development of technological skills** and competences of more than half of the learners to deal with new information and communication technologies (ICT)[20] and low quality of foreign language teaching in a large part of public schools;[21]
- low opportunities for **lifelong learning** and for the inclusion of young people and adults in quality ICT trainings; [22]
- poor results in the **formation of democratic and humanistic attitudes** and beliefs in children and youth through civic education at all educational levels.[23]

On the positive side, Bulgaria made progress in some indicators in education after the country's accession to the European Union. Between 2016 and 2019, enrolment of Roma and children from other vulnerable groups increased – both in early childhood development and care and in primary, secondary and higher education.[24] Absenteeism and early school leaving of Roma children also seems to have declined.[25]

Despite the progress, a number of challenges remain, particularly regarding segregated education, both of preschools and schools. Bulgaria's governments and local authorities' attempts to address school segregation are fragmented and often lead to 'secondary segregation' of the schools where a large number of Roma children are placed as a result of 'white flight' (i.e., Bulgarian and Turkish children

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graduates in 2017, while 8.1% of Bulgarian students received their university degrees (ISCED 5-8) in another country (European Commission 2019, Education and Training Monitor 2019 - Country analysis: Bulgaria).

[19] The results of the external evaluation (PISA 2012-2018) show that about two-fifths of Bulgarian children aged 15 do not meet the minimum requirements for reading, mathematics and science, with underachievement rates above 60% among disadvantaged students (OECD, 2016). Early school leavers among Roma aged 18-24 were 67% according to FRA 2016 report and remain close to this share – see
See also: Gortazar, Herrera-Sosa, Kutner, Moreno and Gautam (2014). How Can Bulgaria Improve Its Educational System? An Analysis of PISA 2012 and Past Results. Working Paper 91321. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

[20] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030; National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2030".

[21] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030

[22] National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2030"

[23] See Mitev, P. (2016). Balgarite: Sotsiologicheski pregledi. [The Bulgarians: Sociological Reviews] Sofia. Izdatelstvo „Iztok-Zapad" [In Bulgarian]; Mitev, P. (2012). Noviyat chovek i periferniyat kapitalizam. [The New Human-being and the Peripheral Capitalism] Doklad, predstaven na vatreshen seminar na Instituta „Ivan Hadzhiyski" na 14 may 2012 g. v SU „Sv. Kliment Ohridski". Sofia; Tomova, I., Stoytchev, L., Ivanov, M. (2020). Demographic imbalances and social inequalities between the large ethnic groups in Bulgaria. Bulgarian Academy Of Sciences, Institute for Population and Human Studies Sofia, pp. 181-212.

[24] During transition, more than three-quarters of Roma children were unable to attend kindergarten due to households' financial difficulties to pay kindergarten's fees. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, in the crisis year of 1997, for example, only 5% of Roma children aged 3-6 attended kindergarten, and by 2001 their share had risen to a modest 16%. According to the 2008 BNSI multi-purpose household survey (the year with the best macroeconomic indicators for the country before the financial and global economic crises affected Bulgaria), only a quarter of the Roma preschool children attended kindergartens and preschool preparation groups. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2011 the share of kindergarten attendees among children aged 3-6 among children of Roma origin was 30.9% (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015). According to FRA 2016 report, two thirds of Roma children attend kindergarten in 2016. According to the data from the current survey, they are 58.3% in 2020 (see
). See also Trust for Social Achievement (2020). National Survey on Roma Educational Attainment and Employment. Sofia.

[25] Trust for Social Achievement (2020). National Survey on Roma Educational Attainment and Employment. Sofia.

leaving these schools, which transform into 'Roma" schools).[26] The working examples of programmes for gradual closure of segregated schools in large urban slums and the admission of students to integrated schools that have proven to work are not replicated or scaled up.[27] The concept of "school integration" is rather narrow. It is often limited to enrolling Roma children in a public school where children from other ethnic groups study with no preparation work with the children and parents of the non-Roma families. In recent years, hate speech, political and media discourse have also hampered the process of school desegregation. No effective measures are taken to change public attitudes towards providing quality education to all children in an integrated school environment.[28] The provisions of the 'Protection against Discrimination' Act also make it difficult to challenge segregation in courts (see Box 1).

The Preschool and School Education Act (Enacted on 01/08/2016) stipulates the inadmissibility of racial segregation within educational establishments: having children of different ethnicities attending separate groups or classes defined by their ethnicity is against the law.[29] However, **the law does not declare inadmissible the existence of ethnically segregated schools** if the settlement has the possibility for children of minority origin to be enrolled in other public schools.

Box 1: Segregation in education – in line with the law?

In Bulgaria, racial segregation is prohibited, according to art. 5, Protection against Discrimination Act (PDA). However, the accepted definition of "racial segregation" (para. 1, item 6 of the PDA) is "issuance of an act, execution of an act or omission that leads to **forced** separation, differentiation or distinguishing of a person on the basis of their race, ethnicity or skin colour"[30]. The definition does not fully comply with the requirements of Council of the European Union's Directive 2000/43. The word "**forced**" applied in the Bulgarian Act in practice legitimises the existence of territorial segregation (slums in large cities) and of the *de facto* segregated Roma schools through the presumption that the enrolment of children in these schools is a result of the free choice of families and parents – and not of unlawful discrimination. The argument usually is that Roma prefer to live in separate neighbourhoods in order to be among their relatives.

Such presumptions do not take into account the inability of the vast majority of Roma to buy or rent housing outside Roma neighbourhoods due to their poverty. They also do not take into consideration the parents' fears of sending their children far from 'their' neighbourhood or the lack of informed choice for

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[26] Grekova, M. (2018). Zashto e neuspeshna politikata na „obrazovatelna integratsiya na detsata i uchenitsite ot etnicheskite maltsinstva". [Why the policy for "educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities" is unsuccessful.] In: Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost. (Inequalities and Social (Dis)Integration: In Search of Togetherness. Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M., Ivanov, M. (ed.). Sofia. Iztok-Zapad; etc.; Grekova, M. (2007). Etnicheski predrazsadatsi i diskriminatsiya: ot segregatsiya kam „obrazovatelna integratsiya" na detsa ot romski proizhod v Balgariya. [Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination: from Segregation to "Educational Integration" of Children of Roma Origin in Bulgaira] V: Inovativna sotsiologiya. [Innovative Sociology] Sofia. Publishing house „St. Kliment Ohridski"; National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030, Център за междуетнически диалог и толерантност „Амалипе" (2020). Без сегрегация: Дейности за предотвратяване на училищната сегрегация спрямо ромите на место ниво.

[27] There are at least two successful exceptions - desegregation and school integration in the town of Kavarna under the leadership of former mayor Tsonko Tsonkov, declared a good European practice, as well as in the rural municipality of Tundzha, Yambol Province.

[28] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030; Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS. (2020) Otsenka na integratsionnite politiki kam romite v Balgariya v perioda 2012-2019 g. [Evaluation of the Roma Integration Policies in Bulgaria, 2012-2019]

[29] See art. 62, (4) and art. 98 (4, 6) Preschool and School Education Act.

[30] Protection against Discrimination Act (PDA), 2004, Art. I, point 6.

the better education of children that enrolment in schools outside the segregated neighbourhoods would provide. In this way, the resistance on the part of the majority to the actual integration of Roma in schools and residential neighbourhoods gets lower weight in lawsuits against school segregation compared to other factors. As a result, the courts usually accept that there is no segregation as a prohibited form of discrimination and students of Roma origin attend segregated schools are educated at their – or their parents' free choice.

Based on Tomova, Stoytchev, Ivanov 2020; the legal analysis is by D. Mihailova.[31]

One of the most severe consequences of prolonged segregation, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion is the development of learned helplessness – the belief that no individual effort would change the personal or family situation.[32] This partly explains why in many families from vulnerable ethnic groups, parents see no point in investing money and time in children's education. In addition, the discrimination they face when looking for work (or being the first to lose their jobs) regardless of their education demotivates them to support their children's efforts in education further.[33]

2.2. Results

Early childhood education and care

Despite the decrease of the number of children in Bulgaria's population over the past three decades, the shortage of kindergartens in the capital and in major cities is a serious problem not only for the single parent families and the families of low-income working parents, but also for the families with children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian (i.e., for the majority of Roma and Turkish families). The families with lower than the average incomes are particularly affected because they cannot enrol their children in private childcare facilities.[34]

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[31] Tomova, I., L. Stoytchev, M. Ivanov. (2020). Demografski disbalanci I sotsialni neravenstva mezhdu golemite etnicheski grupi v Bulgaria [Томова, И., Л. Стойчев, М. Иванов (2020). Демографски дисбаланси и социални неравенства между големите етнически групи в България. София: Издателство на БАН „Проф. Марин Дринов"] (Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities Between the Large Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria). In August 2021, the BHC announced that it had won a case against a school principal who had announced that he would not accept Roma students. The Supreme Administrative Court ruled that the announcement constituted discrimination on ethnic grounds. According to the lawyer representing the BHC, "this is one of the first, if not the first, cases of racial segregation since the enactment of the Protection against Discrimination Act."

[32] Cassio, L.G., Blasko, Z. and Szczepanikova, A. (2021), Poverty and mindsets, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

[33] P.-E.l Mitev, I. Tomova, L. Konstantinova. The Price of Procrastination? The Social Costs of Delayed Market Transition in Bulgaria. In: *Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender During Market Transition.* Ed. R. Emigh and I. Szelenyi, PRAEGER, Library of Congress, 2001 (pp. 33-67), Milenkova, V. (2004) Otpadaneto ot uchilishte [Dropping out from school]. Sofia: Marin Drinov PH; Grekova, M. (2007). Etnicheski predrazsadatsi i diskriminatsiya: ot segregatsiya kam „obrazovatelna integratsiya" na detsa ot romski proizhod v Balgariya. [Ethnic Prejudice and Discrimination: from Segregation to "Educational Integration" of Children of Roma Origin in Bulgaira] V: Inovativna sotsiologiya. [Innovative Sociology] Sofia. Publishing house „St. Kliment Ohridski"; Tilkidjiev, N., V. Milenkova, K Petkova, N. Mileva (2009). Roma Dropouts. Sofia: OSI; Tomova, I. (2013) Bulgaria: The Persistent Challenges to Roma Education. In: *SUDOSTEUROPA Mitteilungen*, 06/ 2013 (34-47); Grekova, M. (2018). Zashto e neuspeshna politikata na „obrazovatelna integratsiya na detsata i uchenitsite ot etnicheskite maltsinstva". [Why the policy for "educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities" is unsuccessful.] In: Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost. (Inequalities and Social (Dis)Integration: In Search of Togetherness. Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M., Ivanov, M. (ed.). Sofia. Iztok-Zapad; Tomova, I., L. Stoytchev, M. Ivanov (2020) Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities between the Large Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria. Sofia: Prof. Marin Drinov PH; Trust for Social Achievement (2020). National Survey on Roma Educational Attainment and Employment. Sofia.

[34] National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2030".

The results of BNSI/FRA 2020 survey show that in 2020, the share of children aged 0-4 who went to kindergarten or nursery was 40.8% - significantly lower than the EU average. Only 27.7% of Roma children and 31.3% of Turkish children in this age group were enrolled in early childhood education and care institutions, which seriously slows down the mastery of the official Bulgarian language and the skills needed for the transition to compulsory education (Figure 2). In an attempt to increase pre-school enrolment of children of parents with low/irregular incomes, in 2020, Bulgaria's National Assembly amended the Act on Preschool and School Education reducing compulsory preschool education from 5 to 4 years of age. The change should have become effective in 2021/2022 school year for municipalities that have enough places in kindergartens for all 4-year-old children. The rest of the municipalities are expected to provide the necessary conditions for full coverage of children from 4 to 6 years of age by the start of the 2023/2024 school year.[35]

Figure 2: Proportion of children aged 0-4 attending kindergartens or creches by ethnicity (%)
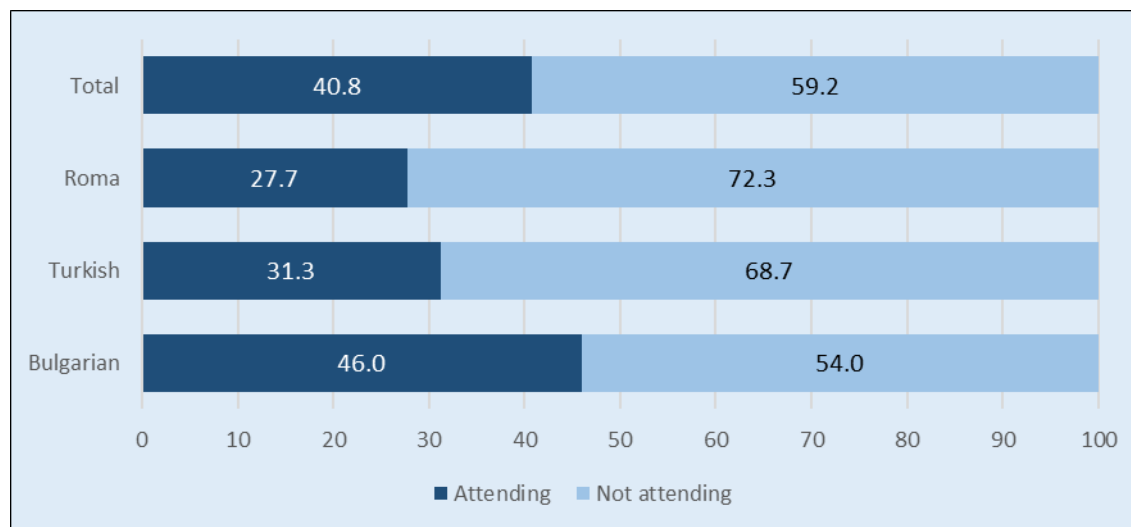
Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 0-4 years (n = 986); weighted results.

[b] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
[c] Based on question "Is (child's name) currently attending kindergarten or nursery?"

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The data from BNSI/FRA 2020 survey show that in the 2019/2020 school year, the net enrolment rate for children from 3 to 6 years of age in kindergarten or preschool prep groups reached 77% with considerable differences between the ethnic groups (Figure 3). This is lower than the EU average indicators but it should be taken into account that Bulgaria had started from very low levels of enrolment by the year of its accession to the European Union in 2007.

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[35] Pre-school and School Education Act.

Figure 3: Share of children in the age between 3 years and compulsory school who attend early childhood education by ethnicity (%)
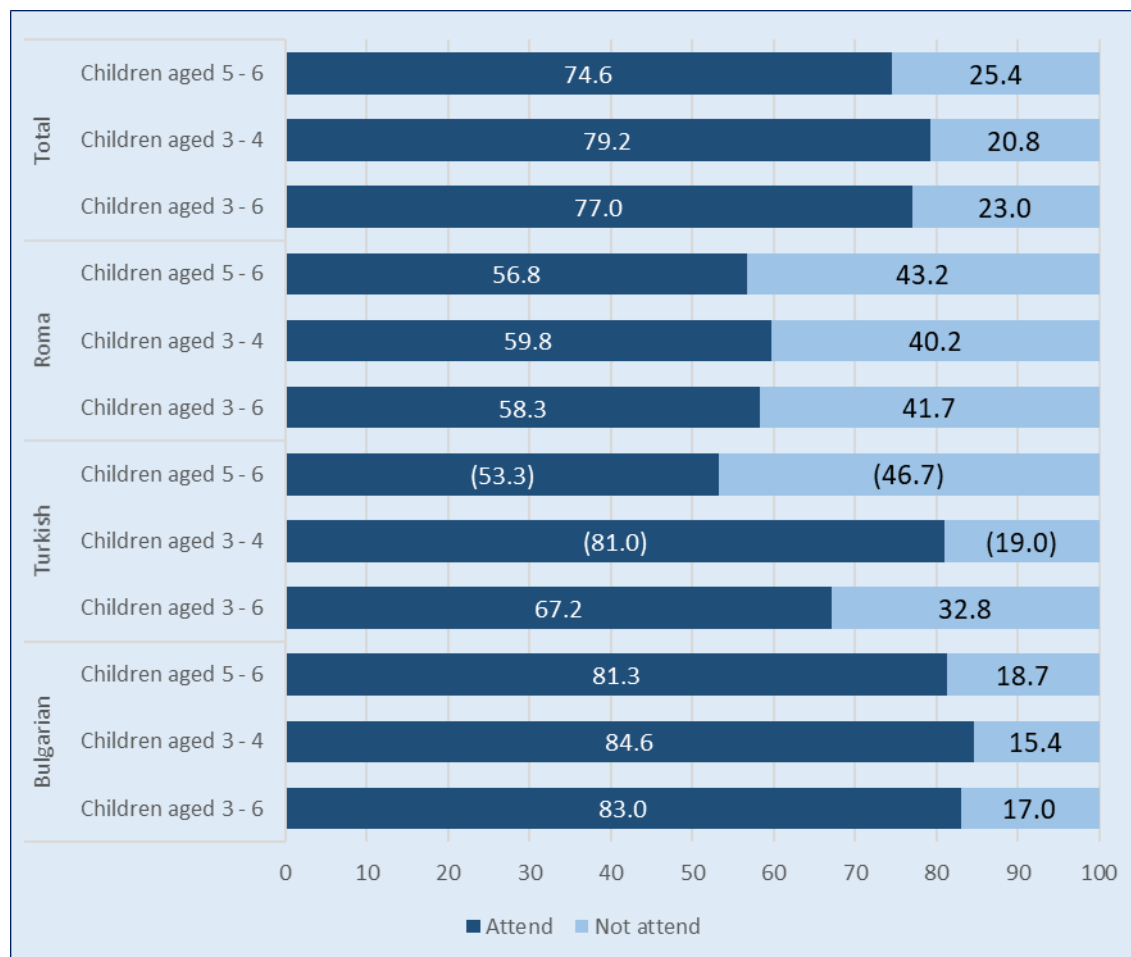
Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 3-6 years (n =880), aged 3-4 (n=419), aged 5-6 (n=461); weighted results.
[b] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
[c] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (published in brackets).
[d] Based on question "Is (child's name) currently attending kindergarten or nursery?"

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Attendance of institutions for early childhood education and care significantly differs among the large ethnic groups in the country. The data from BNSI/FRA 2020 survey show that one-sixth of the children of ethnic Bulgarians, one-third of the Turkish children and over two-fifths of the Roma aged 3-6 do not go to kindergarten or a preschool group.

Worth noting is the drop of enrolment rate in pre-school age for the age group 5-6 compared to that of 3-4 years old (about three percentage points for Bulgarian and Roma children). This decline may be due to the fact that the survey was conducted in 2020 (the first year of COVID-19 pandemic). Schools hosting compulsory pre-school groups were closed for a longer period than kindergartens. It is also possible that more parents who have the opportunity to look after their children in their homes have chosen not to send them to school being afraid of infection, as there is a high concentration of many children of

different ages in schools. The results for the children from Turkish families are based on low number of observations and do not allow for drawing definite conclusions.

The survey data suggest the gender of children does not affect their enrolment in early childhood development and/or preschool groups among ethnic Bulgarians - the shares of boys and girls enrolled are almost equal. Things are more complicated for Roma children: the risk of not attending compulsory preschool groups increases among boys.

Educational status

Census data suggests that the Roma are the only ethnic group in the country whose educational status deteriorated in the early years of post-communism, 1990-2000. During this period, the share of illiterate Roma increased by 4 percentage points, and the share of elementary and primary school graduates remained relatively stable.[36] After 2001 the educational status of the three major ethnic groups - Bulgarians, Turks and Roma, has increased; the smallest increase, however, was among the Roma. Thus, the gap in the level of educational attainment between Roma and non-Roma has been widening, in parallel with an increase of social inequalities and distances, negative prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma. The risk of transmitting poverty and social exclusion to future generations in the Roma community is increasing.[37]

According to the data from the survey conducted for the purpose of the project, the Roma remain the group with the lowest enrolment rate and participation in education in all general educational levels. In the 2019/2020 school year (captured by the survey), 96.6% of ethnic Bulgarian children aged 7 to 15 attended school. The share of Roma children in the same age group attending school is 86.2% (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Share of children aged 7-15 who attend formal education at present by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Studying	Not studying
Bulgarian (n = 2,282)	96.6	3.4
Turkish (n = 243)	96.6	(3.4)
Roma (n = 631)	86.2	13.8
Total (3,221)	94.6	5.4

Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 7-15 years (n =2,480); weighted results.
[b] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses. Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s).
[c] Based on question "Is the person studying at present?" from the household members module
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The difference between the Roma children attending school and those of the majority in the elementary and primary school is about 10 percentage points. The huge increase in early leavers among Roma children occurs during the transition from primary to secondary education and during secondary education. This becomes clear from Figure 4, which shows that just over a quarter of Roma aged 20-24 have completed at least secondary education – with considerable gender gap (the share of those with

[36] НСИ (2021), Преброяване на населението и жилищния фонд през 2011 година. Том 1, Население. книга 2, Демографски и социални характеристики. This statement is based on data from the 1992 and 2001 censuses.
[37] See NSI results from the censuses in 1992, 2001 and 2011.

completed at least secondary education is 31.8% among Roma men and only 23.4% among Roma women).

Figure 4: Share of people aged 20-24 who completed at least upper secondary education by ethnicity (%)

The data from BNSI/FRA 2020 survey suggest that the share of leaving school early among the Roma in Bulgaria remains very high with considerable differences between girls and boys. The share of Roma girls aged 18-24 who left school early is almost 10 percentage points higher than the share among boys in the same age group (Figure 5). In relative terms, the most serious gender gap in the educational attainment is observed in the group of those who self-identify as Turks.

Figure 5: Early leavers from education and training, 18-24 years, by ethnic group and gender (%)
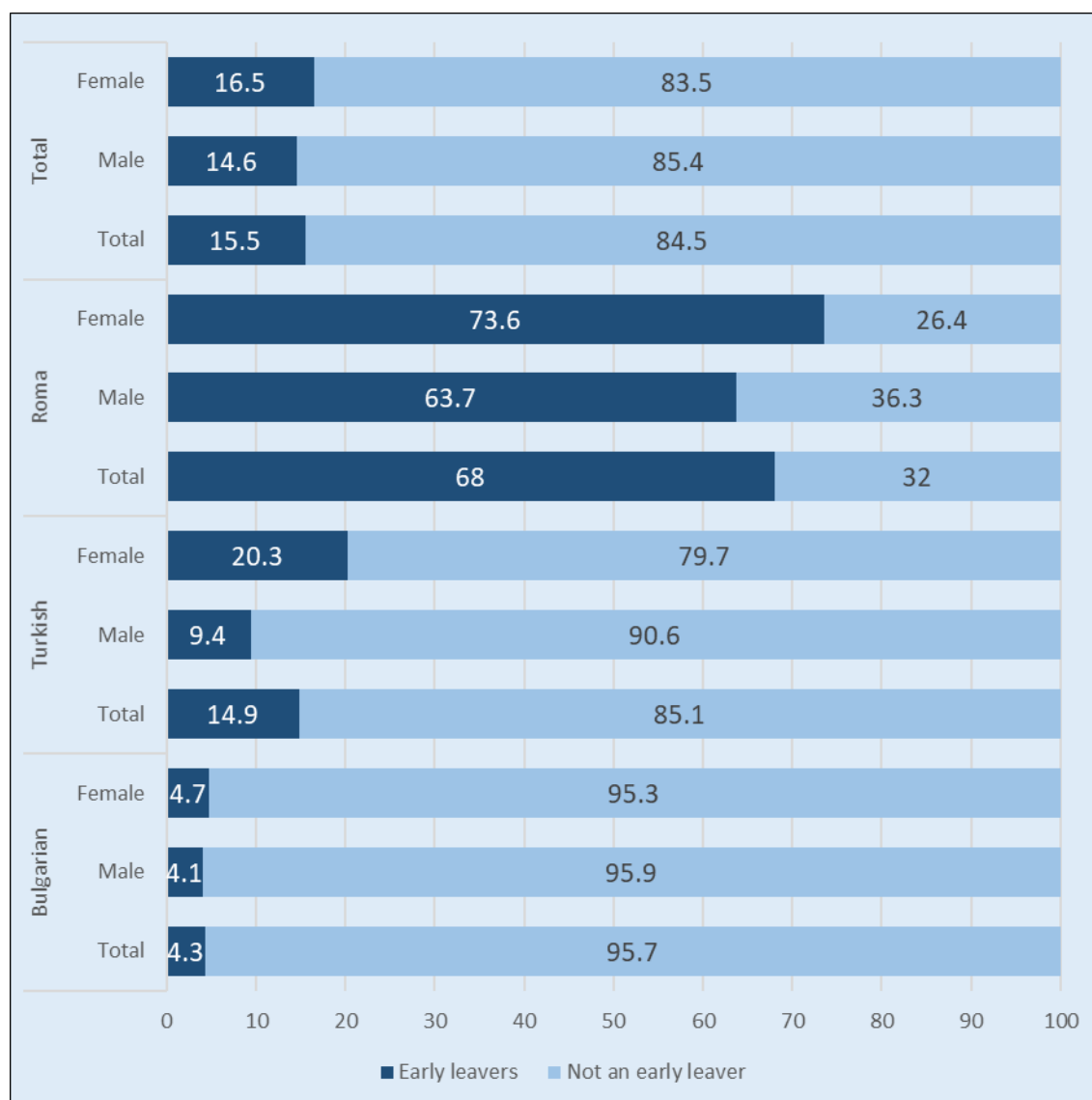
Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 18-24 years (n =1,845); weighted results.

[b] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

[c] Based on questions "Is the person studying at present?" from the household members module; "What is the highest degree of education you have completed?"; and "How would you describe your current employment status?"

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The situation in the last years seems to be improving. A recent **TSA representative survey** show that the share of Roma who have never attended school or who have completed only primary education has decreased and a trend of an increase in the share of Roma who have completed basic, secondary and tertiary education can be observed[38].

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[38] Trust for Social Achievement (2020). National survey on Roma educational attainment and employment: Key findings from a nationally representative study or the Roma community in Bulgaria.

COVID-related lockdowns and the transition to distance learning additionally increases the risk of early school leaving. An analysis by the Ministry of Education and Science from July 2021 notes that long-term distance learning could have an adverse effect on about one-third to two-fifths of students, primarily among children from families at risk of poverty and those living in rural areas. One of the major reasons was the lack of the necessary devices for distance and online learning and the Internet,[39] as well as the inability of a significant part of the parents/guardians in these families to help children cope with the learning material and/or to join online learning.[40] School mediators distributed printouts of lessons and assignments to children who could not participate in distance learning, helped them master the missed material, and developed children's digital skills in Roma families where possible.

The data from BNSI/FRA 2020 survey show that 77.5% of those aged 6-18 have either computer or a laptop in the household. When the data is disaggregated by self-declared ethnicity, only 27.8% of the Roma children aged 6-18 have computer/laptop in their households compared to 90.7% of their ethnic Bulgarian counterparts and 80.9% of the counterparts who self-identified as Turks.

Discrimination and bullying

The results of BNSI/FRA 2020 survey indicate that the overall share of people who have felt discriminated against in the past 12 months when in contact with school authorities is, on average, 1.4% of the population – but reaches 10.6% among Roma (see Table 12 in "Discrimination" chapter). These results however may not capture fully the magnitude of prejudice and antigypsyism in the area of education – of which bullying on ethnic ground is an important component.[41] In the survey year (2020), students studied remotely/online for months, due to COVID-19 infection prevention measures. A significant proportion of Roma children did not have access to the Internet and a computer/tablet or were not permanently in contact with students from other ethnic groups, which also reduces the risk of direct or social networks' bullying. Also, asking about bullying only children aged 16 and older reduces the coverage and misses considerable part of school children that might have experienced bullying.

Segregated education

Attendance of **segregated preschools and schools** predetermines unequal access to quality education. Most segregated schools offer very low quality of education, high levels of absenteeism and bear high

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[39] Mediapool. MON: Onlayn obuchenieto zadalbochi obrazovatelnite neravenstva. [MES: Online learning has deepened the educational inequalities] FRA analysed digital access of Roma and Travellers based on two FRA surveys conducted in 2016, covering 9 Eastern and Southern European (BG, CZ, EL, ES, HR, HU, PT, RO, SK) and 5 Western European member states (BE, IR, FR, NL, SE). Survey results show that in 2016 only 36% of Roma households in Bulgaria had access to the Internet; 39% of households had a personal computer or tablet at home. 41% of Roma school-age children had access to a computer or tablet. Due to financial difficulties, 25% of Roma households in Bulgaria, compared to 3% of Bulgarian households, could not afford to buy a computer or tablet.

[40] According to a report from Centre Amalipe, in the summer of 2020, the Ministry of Education purchased 16 thousand personal computers and laptops, but they were distributed among schools based on the number of students in them. Thus, small rural and in-service (that serve more than one settlement) schools, in which the majority of children did not have the necessary devices, received almost nothing. At the same time, elite schools in the capital and large cities, where almost all children have personal computers, tablets or laptops, received a large number of purchased equipment. In addition, in many poor Roma families, parents have refused to accept and take responsibility for expensive computers, especially since in many villages and Roma neighbourhoods the situation is no Internet access or the connection is poor and unsuitable for online learning. The same problems occurred again in the summer of 2021, when computers were purchased with the funds of the European instrument to combat COVID-19 (Amalipe 2021).

[41] The report of the European Commission "Education and Training Monitor 2019 - Country analysis: Bulgaria" cites data from the OECD from 2016, according to which 14% of students report that they have been victims of bullying. According to FRA, in the same year, 6% of Bulgarian respondents reported bullying/harassment at school.

risk of early school leaving.[42] The concentration of children from vulnerable ethnic groups in segregated schools and in those in which the majority of their classmates are children from families with low social status (i.e., schools that middle-class children do not attend), increases the risk of low quality of education[43] and early school leaving. According to Gortazar and his colleagues, this structural feature of the educational system in Bulgaria is the most important factor that negatively affects the development and educational achievements of children in such schools.[44]

The results of BNSI/FRA 2020 survey support these findings and show that segregated schools are still predominant for Bulgaria's Roma – 63.5% of them attend schools where 'all or most' of schoolmates are Roma' (Figure 6). It should be noted here that a significant part of the currently segregated schools in villages and small towns became segregated Roma schools after 1990 mainly for political and demographic reasons (see Box 2).

Box 2: Emergence of segregated schools after 1990

Due to the forced assimilation policy against the Turks of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1980s, some 360,000 Bulgarian Turks emigrated to the Republic of Turkey in 1989 following the violent suppression of their peaceful protests to restore their basic ethnocultural rights. The mass emigration of Bulgarian Turks continued in the first half of the 1990s, albeit on a limited scale. The remaining young Turkish families with children in Bulgaria left the villages en masse and settled in nearby towns.[45]

As a result, the former mixed rural schools gradually turned into predominantly Roma.

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[42] Revenga, A., Ringold, D., Tracy, W. (2002). Poverty and Ethnicity – A Cross-Country Study of Roma Poverty in Central Europe. Washington D.C.: The World Bank; Ringold, D., M. Orenstein, E. Wilkens. (2003). Roma in an Expanding Europe: Breaking the Poverty Cycle. Washington D.C. The World Bank; Gortazar, L., Herrera –Sosa, K., Kutner, D., Moreno, M., Gautam, A. (2014), Gatenio Gabel, S. (2009). The growing divide: the marginalisation of young Roma children in Bulgaria. International Journal of Social Welfare 2009: 18: 65–75; Gatti, R., S. Karacsony, K. Anan, C. Ferre, and C. de Paz Nievez. (2016). Being Fair, Fairing Better: Promoting Equality of Opportunity for Marginalized Roma. Directions in Development. Washington, DC: World Bank; Milanovic, B., Ersado, L. (2008). Reform and inequality during the transition: An analysis using panel household survey data, 1990-2005. MPRA Paper No. 7459.; Tomova 1995, 2008, 2009; Milenkova 2004; Tilkidzhiev et al. 2009; Tomova, Stoytchev, Ivanov 2020.

[43] Wilson, W.J. (1999). When Work Disappears. The World of the New Urban Poor. University of Chicago Press; Willms, J. D. (1999). Quality and Inequality in Children's Literacy: The Effect of Families, Schools, and Communities. In Keating, D.P., Hertzman, C. (Eds.). Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations. New York: Guilford Press; Wilkinson, R., Pickett, K. (2009). The Spirit Level. Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger. Penguin Books; Ventura, S.J., Mathews, T.J., Hamilton, B.E. (2002). Teenage Births in the United States: Trends, 1991-2000, an Update. National Vital Statistics Reports; United Nations Development Program. (2019). Human Development Report 2019. Beyond Income, Beyond Averages and Beyond Today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century. New York; Revenga, A., Ringold, D., Tracy, W. (2002). Poverty and Ethnicity – A Cross-Country Study of Roma Poverty in Central Europe. Washington D.C.: The World Bank, etc.

[44] The report "How can Bulgaria improve its education system? Analysis of the results of PISA 2012 and previous years" emphasises that the most significant factor for low quality education and early school leaving is the social origin of children and the concentration of children from families at risk of poverty and social exclusion in school (Gortazar, Herrera-Sosa, Kutner, Moreno and Gautam 2014). Such are the segregated schools in the large Roma neighbourhoods and in the segregated urban slums, the in-service (that serve more than one settlement) and preserved schools in the rural areas, part of the "integrated" schools in small and medium-sized cities, where children for whom the Bulgarian language is not maternal, are the majority. Bulgarian government declares its will to fight school segregation but the outcomes and the results are too modest. See Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS. (2020) Otsenka na integratsionnite politiki kam romite v Balgariya v perioda 2012-2019 g. [Evaluation of the Roma Integration Policies in Bulgaria, 2012-2019]

[45] Vassileva, D. 1992. Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return. International Migration Review, vol.26, N 2, Summer 1992; Tomova, I. 1998. The Migration Process in Bulgaria. In : Opalski, M. (ed.) 1998. Managing Diversity in Plural Societies: Minorities, Migration and Nation-Building in Post-Communist Europe. Canada: Forum Eastern Europe; Румен Аврамов (2016), Икономика на "възродителния процес". Център за академични изследвания, София.

In the cities 'white flight' drives the segregation process: the increase in the share of Roma children in a school leads to the rapid departure of Bulgarian and Turkish children from school and to secondary segregation in this type of school. Apart from them, there are numerous schools in segregated Roma neighborhoods and in large urban slums, where the majority of the population self-identifies as "millet" or "Turkish", but which the surrounding population perceives as Roma / Gypsies. The vast majority of students in these schools are usually unable to meet the minimum requirements for external assessment of knowledge of Bulgarian language, mathematics and science.

Figure 6: Share of children, 6-14 years old, attending schools and kindergartens where 'all or most of schoolmates are Roma' as reported by the respondents by ethnicity (%)
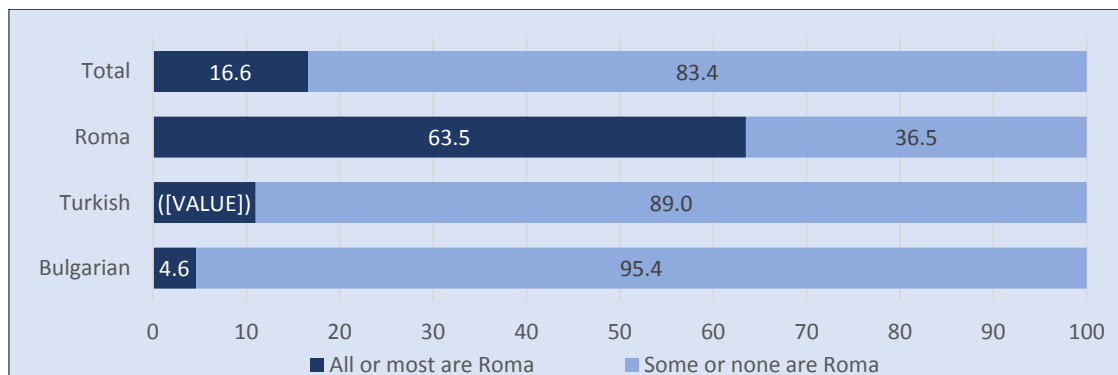
Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 6-14 years (n =1,871); weighted results.
          [b] Based on question "Now think about the school (kindergarten) that (child's name) attends. For how many of the students (children) would you say that are of Roma origin?"
          [c] Results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
          [d] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

3. Employment

Highlights

- The data summarised in this report shows that the share of Roma aged 15-29 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) is 53.6% compared to 11.7% of ethnic Bulgarians and 22.5% of ethnic Turks. Data reveals considerable gender gap also in this area: 69.8% of the young Roma women are NEETs compared to 39.5% of young Roma men.
- Family plays a pivotal role to being a NEET, given the fact that 5.3% of the young ethnic Bulgarians from families with low joblessness intensity are NEETs compared to 26.4% of young Roma from similar background. In the group of the families with the highest joblessness intensity 80.9% of the young Roma are NEETs compared to 56.7% of the ethnic Bulgarians in the same age group.
- The majority of the Roma aged 20-64 (52.8%) are still unemployed/dropouts from the labour market despite the relatively low unemployment levels and declared labour shortages in recent years, including the shortage for low-skilled labour. For comparison, among ethnic Bulgarians of the same age (20-64 years) the share of those who are not in paid work or out of the labour market is 19.8%, and among Turks - 34.9%.
- The gender gap in the paid work rate is particularly wide among Roma – 32.2 percentage points compared to 6.7 and 18.1 among Bulgarians and Turks respectively.

3.1. Background

The **National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030** prioritizes social inclusion and puts a specific focus on the situation of unemployed, economically inactive, and discouraged working-age individuals. The analysis of the implementation of the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020 and the **National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020** shows that employment rates of the general population are close to the EU average rates. The economic activity and the employment rates in Bulgaria in 2019 reached 56.6% and 54.2% respectively.[46] In 2019, the unemployed rate fell from 5.2% to about 4.2% of the labour force.[47] However, these results are not distributed equally between groups – and Roma are not benefitting from emerging employment opportunities as other groups do.

3.2. Results

Paid work

According data from the survey conducted for the purpose of the project show that the majority of the Roma aged 20-64 (52.8%) are still unemployed/dropouts from the labour market despite the relatively low unemployment levels and **declared labour shortages in recent years**, including the shortage for low-skilled labour. For comparison, among ethnic Bulgarians of the same age (20-64 years) the share of those who are not in paid work or out of the labour market is 19.8%, and among Turks - 34.9% (Figure 7).

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[46] National Statistical Institute (2020), Infostat: Employment rates by place of residence and age groups, November 2020.
[47] National Statistical Institute (2020), Infostat: Population, labour force, employed persons, unemployed persons and persons not in labour force aged 15 years and over by place of residence and age groups, April 2020.

Figure 7: Share of people who self-declared their main activity status as 'paid work' (including full-time, part-time, ad hoc jobs, self-employment and occasional work or work in the past four weeks), 20-64 years by ethnicity (%)

In Bulgaria, the share of Roma in paid work is not only much lower than that of the Bulgarian Turks and ethnic Bulgarians, but they also occupy the most precarious and unattractive jobs on the labour market: most of them have temporary/casual jobs and/or work part-timeoften without an employment contract.[48] This means that they face higher risk than the rest of the Bulgarian citizens of not being paid (in full) for their work, to work with no social or health insurance (as shown in "Health" section).

The unemployment dropout of a large proportion of Roma women is of particular concern. They are particularly vulnerable both because of negative stereotypes and prejudices against Roma in general and the discrimination against them in the labour market, especially in years with reduced labour demand, and because of their gender. Seven out of ten Roma women (69.2%) were not in paid jobs in the month before the survey compared to 23.2% among ethnic Bulgarian women and 43.9% among Turkish women (Table 2).[49] The gender gap in employment among Roma is 4.8 times the gender gap among ethnic Bulgarians. Various factors contribute to Roma women's low employment rate: low education and

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[48] Based on data from the studies: Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender during Market Transition, 1999, Yale University; Gender and Generation Study 2004 and 2007, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Rostock and BAS; Poverty in Bulgaria: Ethnic Dimensions of Poverty", The World Bank 1999; Health and the Roma Community: the Situation in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain 2008, FSG; The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States, 2012, FRA and UNDP; NSI: EU-SILC 2016-2021.

[49] The results in the table are calculated on the basis of those men and women from the three large ethnic groups who declared that they had worked in the last 4 weeks before the survey.

qualification,[50] ethnic discrimination as well as patriarchal order in many Roma subgroups[51]. The conservative views and norms that became increasingly common in Bulgarian media and political discourse in the last years also play a role.[52]

Table 2. Difference in the paid work rate between women and men by gender and ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Male		Female		In paid work gap
	Not in paid work	In paid work	Not in paid work	In paid work	
Bulgarian (n = 14,007)	16.5	**83.5**	23.2	**76.8**	6.7
Turkish (n = 1,455)	25.8	**74.2**	43.9	**56.1**	18.1
Roma (n = 1,587)	37.0	**63.0**	69.2	**30.8**	32.2
Total	19.4	**80.6**	29.5	**70.5**	10.1

Note: a Out of respondents aged 20-64 (n =17,308) who experienced discrimination (in any area, on any ground) in the past 12 months; weighted results.
b Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?". The General population employment rate [lfsa_ergan] is based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) concept: Employed population, 20-64 years, consists of those persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.
c Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Box 3: what explains high unemployment among Roma?

The usual explanation of the high share of unemployed and economically inactive among Roma is their low education and qualifications. However, it's only part of the explanation. Prejudice also plays a role, as a number of surveys have shown.[53] "Lazy" was the third most frequently mentioned stereotype of the Roma in 2000 (after "prone to crime" and "do not value education")[54] and the second most frequently mentioned (after theft) according to Pamporov[55] and Dimitrov[56]. It's worth noting that in the early 90's it

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[50] See BNSI data from the population censuses in Bulgaria (NSI 1994[Error! Bookmark not defined.], 2001 and 2011)

[51] The World Bank (2014). Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion: Perspectives from Four Roma Communities in Bulgaria. Working Papers.

[52] BHC, (2015-2020). Human rights in Bulgaria (2014-2020) r. Sofia. Reports in English can be found here. In Bulgarian, all BHC reports are available here.

[53] Data from the surveys 'The ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria – 1992', The Office of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria 1992, 'Relations of compatibility and incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria' 1994 and 1997, The Office of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria 1994, IMIR 1997; Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender During Market Transition, 1998-2000, Yale University; Ethnic relations in the Army, 2000; Culture of Peace and the Balkan Youth, 2002, IMIR; Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minorities in Bulgaria, 2009, OSI; Stereotypes and Prejudices about the Roma in the Press, 2012;

[54] Tomova, Yanakiev 2002. Etnicheskite otnoshenia v armiyata [The Ethnic Relations in the Army]

[55] Pamporov, A. (2009). Sotsialni distantsii I etnicheski stereotipi za maltsinstvata v Bulgaria (Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minoritirs in Bulgaria) [Пампоров, А. (2009). Социални дистанции и етнически стереотипиза малцинствата в България. София: Институт „Отворено общество"].

[56] Dimitrov, N. (2020). Sotsialni distantsii I stereotipi kam seksualnite I etnicheskite maltsinstva v Bulgaria [Social distances and stereotypes about gender and ethnic minorities in Bulgaria] (Димитров, Н. (2020). Социални дистанции и стереотипи към сексуалните и етническите малцинства в България). Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344874359

ranked much further back[57]. Still, ethnic discrimination on the labour market' is rarely used as an explanation of Roma unemployment high levels in Bulgarian political and media discourse.[58] Roma themselves have started to claim that this is the main reason for their dropping out of the labour market only since the mid-1990s.[59]

The data from the BNSI and FRA project "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights" show that 26.7% of the Roma felt discriminated when looking for a job compared to 15.7% of the ethnic Bulgarians and 10.3% of the Bulgarian Turks. The gaps between the large ethnic groups are similar when we compare the shares of those who felt discriminated against when at work: 11.3% of the Roma compared to 1.5% of ethnic Bulgarians and 2.8% of Turks (see Table 12 in "Discrimination" chapter).

NEETs

Bulgaria reports higher than the average EU share of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). In 2019, the country ranked forth among the EU members states according to its share of NEETs.[60] The share of NEETs is much higher among Roma than among non-Roma – more than half of Roma young people remain NEETs compared to one tenth of the ethnic Bulgarians. (Figure 8).

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[57] Tomova, I. (1992). [Etnicheski stereotipi I predrassadatsi u bulgarite]. Ethnic stereotypes and prejudices against ethnic minoritires among ethnic Bulgarians. In: Ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria Aspects. Sofia, CDR] (Томова И. (1992). (Етнически стереотипи и предразсъдъци у българите. В: „Аспекти на етнокултурната ситуация в България". София: ЦИД) and Georgiev, Tomova, Kanev, Grekova (1993). [Nyakoi resultati ot issledvaneto "Etnokulturnata situatsia v Bulgaria 1992"] (Survey "The ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria 1992" Results) Георгиев, Ж., И. Томова, М. Грекова, К. Кънев (1993). Някои резултати от изследването „Етнокултурната ситуация в България -1992". Сп. „Социологически преглед кн.3. София (55-81).

[58] Lazarova, G. (2002). Obrazat na romite. Edno izsledvane na savremenniya balgarski pechat. [The Roma's Image. A Study of Bulgaria's Contemporary Press] Sofia. SEGA [In Bulgarian]; Popova, M., Leshtanska, K. (2006). Romite v mediite prez 2003 i 2005 g. [Roma in the Media in 2003 and 2005] Sofiya [In Bulgarian]; Pamporov, A. (2009), Sotsialni distantsii i etnicheski stereotipi za maltsinstvata v Bulgaria [Social distances and ethnic stereotypes about minorities in Bulgaria]. Sofia, OSI. Available at: http://osi.bg/cyeds/downloads/ SocialDistancesReport.pdf; Stoytchev, L. (2011). Movement of Prices, Unemployment Rate and the Roma Content in the Dailies: August 2010 – February 2011. Naselenie, 3-4, IPHS-BAS; Tomova, I. (2011). Stereotipi i predrazsadatsi za romite v balgarskata presa. [Stereotypes and Prejudice towards the Roma in the Bulgarian Press] Nasselenie, kn. 3-4. Sofiya. IPHS-BAS. pp. 140-174 [In Bulgarian]; Pamporov, A. (2011). Piyanite murgavi prestapnitsi (Obrazat na romite v balgarskite pechatni izdaniya v predizboren kontekst). [The Swarth Drungken Offenders (The Roma's Image in Bulgaria's Printed Media in Elections Context)] Nasselenie, k. 3-4. Sofia. IPHS-BAS [In Bulgarian]; Indjov, I. (2012). The image of Roma in Bulgarian press – 2012. Institute of Modern Politics; Tomova, I. (2015). Obrazat na romite v shest elektronni medii. [The Image of the Roma in Six Electronic Media]. Razgrad. INTEGRO [In Bulgarian]; Kanushev, M. (2018). Stigmatiziranata deviantnost, ili kak se konstituira mnozhestvena izklyuchenost. [Stigmatized Deviance, or How Multiple Exclusion is Constructed] V: Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost. [In: Inequalities and Social Des(integration): in Search for Togetherness] Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M., Ivanov, M. (red.). Sofia. Izdatelstvo „Iztok-Zapad" [In Bulgarian], Dimitrov, N. (2020). Sotsialni distantsii I stereotipi kam seksualnite I etnicheskite maltsinstva v Bulgaria [Social distances and stereotypes about gender and ethnic minorities in Bulgaria]. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344874359

[59] Tomova, I. (2011). Different but Equal? Ethnic Inequalities in Bulgaria (in Bulgarian). *Nasselenie Review* 2011/1-2 (pp. 93-121)

[60] Eurostat (2020), Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training, April 2020 The data are not completely comparable - Eurostat refers to a different age group (20-34)

Figure 8: Share of young persons, 15-29 years old with current main activity 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET) by ethnicity (%)

Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 15-29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results.
[b] Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The present survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.
[c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Gender also plays a role considering the risk to become part of the NEETs group in addition to belonging to ethnic minority. The vulnerability of young Roma women and those who identified themselves as Turks is higher than that of the ethnic Bulgarians: 69.8% of the young Roma women are NEETs compared to 14.4% and 30.5% of the young ethnic Bulgarian and Turkish women respectively (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Share of young persons, 15-29 years old with current main activity 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET) by ethnicity and gender (%)

		NEET	Not NEET
Total	Females	24.7	75.3
	Males	14.6	85.4
Roma	Females	69.8	30.2
	Males	39.5	60.5
Turks	Females	30.5	69.5
	Males	14.5	85.5
Bulgarian	Females	14.4	85.6
	Males	9.3	90.7

Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 15-29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results.

[b] Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The present survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.

[c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Joblessness intensity in the household is associated with the risk of becoming NEETs. Only 5.3% of the young ethnic Bulgarians from families with low joblessness intensity are NEETs compared to 26.4% of young Roma from similar background. In the group of the families with the highest joblessness intensity (where more than 80% of its active members are jobless), 80.9% of the young Roma are NEETs compared to 56.7% of the ethnic Bulgarians in the same age group (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Share of young persons, 15-29 years old with current main activity 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET) by ethnicity and joblessness intensity in the household (%)

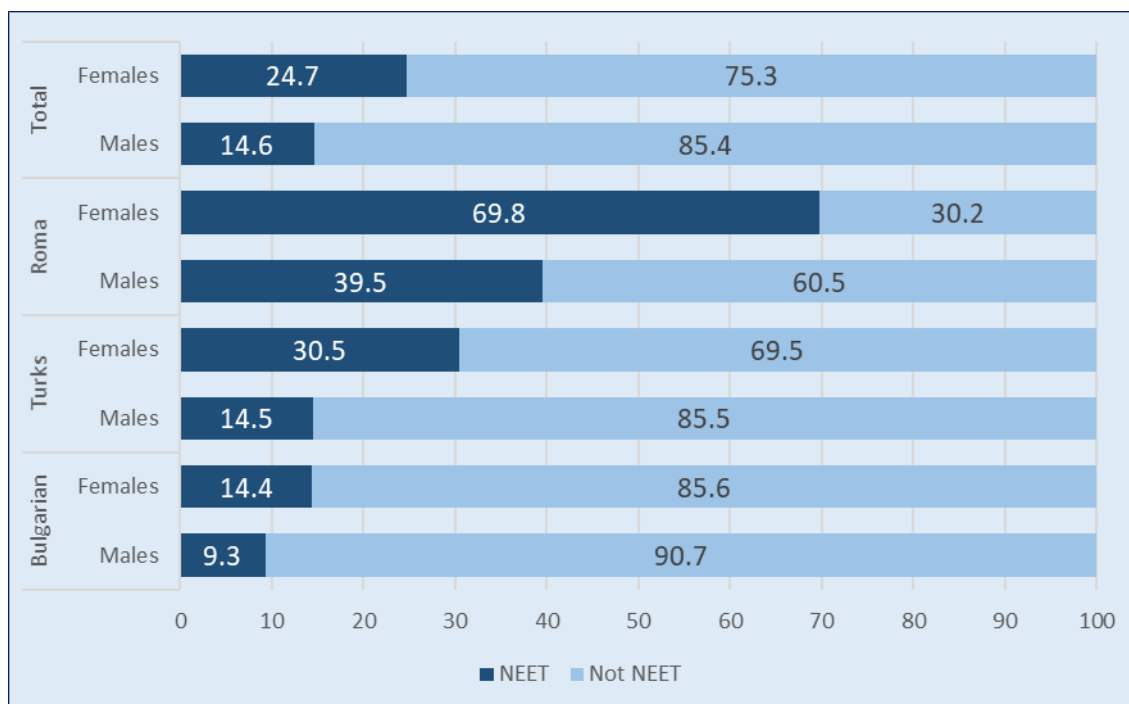Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 15-29 years (n = 3,883); weighted results.

[b] Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. BNSI/FRA 2020 survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training. The joblessness intensity in the household variable is provided by the BNSI (147 missing values, taken out of the analysis).

[c] Joblessness intensity in this context is calculated by setting the total number of non-dependent persons aged 18-59 living in a household (denominator) in relation with those of the same age who are stating that their main activity is paid work (nominator). Non-active persons in the age group between 18 and 24 years are counted as dependent children. Households composed only of children or non-active persons aged less than 25 and/or people aged 60 or more are completely excluded from the indicator calculation.

[d] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

[e] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Not using a computer or a tablet increases the risk of young people (aged 15-29) joining the NEETs group. It seems an association exists between being NEET and not using computer or tablet. This may be due both to lack of computer skills as well as lack of device at home. However, the lack of computer skills or access to a device increases the risk disproportionately between groups: 45.5% of ethnic Bulgarians

not using PC/tabled are NEET compared to 63.7% of Roma who do not use computer; one third (33.9%) of Roma with computer skills are NEET compared to 8.5% of ethnic Bulgarians with similar competence. (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Share of young persons, 15-29 years old with current main activity 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET) by self-declared ethnicity and usage of PC/tablet (%) [a, b, c, d]

Usage of PC		Not NEET	NEET
Total	Not a PC/tablet user	45.0	55.0
	PC/tablet user	89.1	10.9
Bulgarians (n = 2,969)	Not a PC/tablet user	54.5	45.5
	PC/tablet user	91.5	8.5
Turkish (n = 346)	Not a PC/tablet user	54.6	(45.4)
	PC/tablet user	(84.2)	(15.8)
Roma (n = 639)	Not a PC/tablet user	36.3	63.7
	PC/tablet user	66.1	33.9

Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 15-29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results.
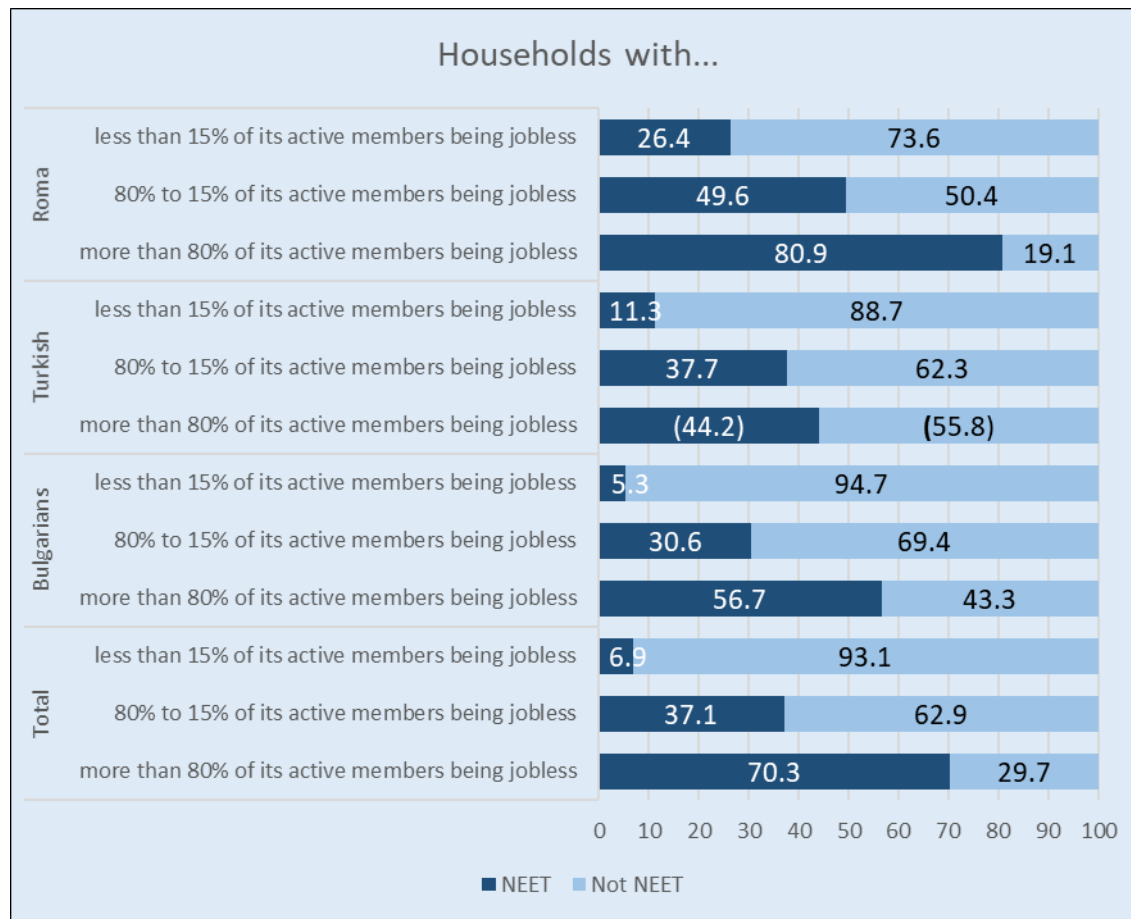[b] Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?"; "Do you use a computer or tablet?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.
[c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

4. Poverty and social exclusion

Highlights

- The data summarised in this report shows that 71.1% of Roma live at risk of poverty – compared to 16.5% of ethnic Bulgarians and 35.2% of ethnic Turks. 24.1% of Roma live in households where at least one member has gone to bed hungry at least once a month – this non-monetary indicator is a useful proxy of severe poverty.
- Poverty hits particularly hard Roma children – 77.2% of them live are at risk of poverty, compared to 30.0% of children of ethnic Turks and 13.3% of ethnic Bulgarians. 29.9% of Roma children aged 0-17 live in household where at least one person in the household gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food.
- Such extreme poverty affects particularly children's ability to develop their cognitive skills, to receive a decent education and contributes to the formation of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, ultimately locking them in the poverty cycle replicated over generations.

4.1.   Background

EU Member States apply both relative and multidimensional poverty concepts. The 'at risk of poverty' rate measures relative poverty with 60% of the yearly median household income as threshold. The related indicator 'at risk of poverty **and** social exclusion' combines three dimensions: monetary poverty (at-risk-of poverty calculated as 60% of the median income), severe material deprivation (deprivation of at least four out of nine predefined items) and low work intensity. For capturing the risk of extreme poverty among groups facing particular risks of marginalization and social exclusion, proxies of material deprivation or exposure to risk of hunger are applied to complement the standard poverty estimates.[61]

According to Eurostat data, Bulgaria has been the country with the highest rate of severe material deprivation (one of the non-monetary indicators most often used for measuring poverty) every year since 2015.[62] Respectively, the share of people at-risk-of-poverty in Bulgaria has been consistently higher than the EU average since 2007 (the year in which Bulgaria joined the EU).[63]

At national level, the poverty threshold is calculated annually on the basis of a methodology approved by the government and applying the 60% of the medial income as captured by the EU SILC from the preceding year as poverty threshold. For 2020, it was BGN 363 (approximately €186).[64]

Unemployment and low level of education are among the major factors linked to the risk of poverty.[65] Low remuneration, relatively higher number of children/dependent persons/pensioners in the

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[61] BNSI, FRA (2021). Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria.

[62] Eurostat, Severe material deprivation rate by age and sex, last update: 25-01-2022.

[63] Eurostat (2020), At-risk-of-poverty rate by poverty threshold, age and sex – EU-SILC and ECHP surveys, last update: 25-01-2022.

[64] Council of Ministers (2019), Decree No 275 of 1 November 2019 for determining the poverty line for the country in 2020 (Postanovlenie № 275 ot 1 noemvri 2019 g. za opredelyane na razmera na liniyata na bednost za stranata za 2020 g.), 5 November 2020.

[65] See BNSI EU-SILC (2016-2021)

household and regional differences in employment rates (and remuneration) may also lead to a higher risk of poverty.[66]

4.2. Results

AROP and severe poverty

According to BNSI data from EU-SILC for the period 2015-2019, on average, the share of Bulgaria's Roma who were at-risk-of-poverty was 4.4 times higher than the share of those who identified themselves as ethnic Bulgarians.[67] The data from BNSI/FRA 2020 survey are very close to those of EU-SILC: 71.1% of Roma lived at risk of poverty in 2019 compared to 16.5% of ethnic Bulgarians (Figure 11).

Figure 11: At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers) by ethnicity in 2019 (%)

Notes: [a] Out of all household members in the surveyed household (n = 30,303); weighted results.
   [b] At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3).
   [c] Results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
   [d] Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?"
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

This difference in at-risk-of-poverty rate between the three largest ethnic group in the country can be attributed to the multiple and mutually reinforcing deprivations Roma face in various areas of life: low levels of employment and education,[68] high share of working poor,[69] relatively high number of children in their households,[70] higher than the country's average share of people living in rural/underdeveloped

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[66] Ibid.
[67] BNSI EU-SILC (2016-2020)
[68] BNSI EU-SILC (2016-2021), data from the last three censuses (1992, 2001, 2011)
[69] BNSI EU-SILC (2021). According to the data of EU_SILC in 2020, "*among poor belonging to the Bulgarian and Turkish ethnic groups retired people (56.6% and 36.5% respectively) prevail, while among Roma ethnic group highest is the share of employed – 31.9%. Regarding unemployed, highest is the share of poor among Roma ethnic group – 31.6%, compared to 16.5% among Turkish and 10.4% among Bulgarian ethnic groups.*" (pp. 5-6)
[70] See BNSI results from the last three censuses 1992, 2001, 2011.

areas,[71] high share of people living in housing deprivation,[72] high share of persons with restricted access to health services and unsatisfactory health status,[73] etc.

The non-monetary indicator ''Going to bed hungry' is a useful proxy of severe poverty used by the BNSI for the purposes of this study. It is used to assess the prevalence of deep/extreme poverty– the share of persons living in household where at least one person in the household has gone to bed hungry in the past month due to lack of money to buy food. The data show that, while on average 4.2% of the population live in a household where at least one member has gone to bed hungry at least once a month, this share is 24.1% among Roma compared to 1.7% among those who self-identified themselves as ethnic Bulgarians (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Share of persons living in household where at least one person in the household gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food by ethnicity (%)
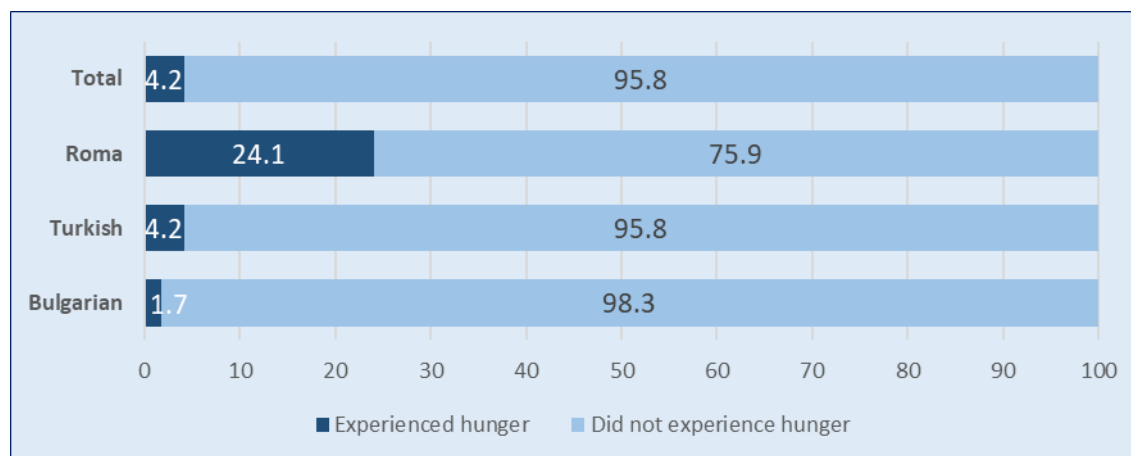
Notes: [a] Out of all household members in the surveyed household (n = 30,283); weighted results.
            [b] Based on question "In the past month, have you or someone in your household gone to bed hungry because you didn't have enough money for food? If so, how often this has happened in the last month?".
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Severe material deprivation

One of the most commonly used indicators for measuring and monitoring poverty in the European Union is "severe material deprivation". This indicator is not included in questionnaire but BNSI collects the necessary data through its EU-SILC surveys. In 2020, 19.4% of Bulgarian population was in severe material deprivation compared to the average of 5.5% in EU-27.[74] This share among Bulgaria's Roma was 62% (Figure 13).

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[71] BNSI EU-SILC (2016-2021), data from the last three censuses (1992, 2001, 2011).
[72] BNSI EU-SILC (2016-2021), data from the last three censuses (1992, 2001, 2011).
[73] Bulgaria, Council of Ministers (2020). National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030.
[74] Eurostat, Severe material deprivation rate by age and sex, last update: 25-01-2022.

Figure 13: Share of people living in household in severe material deprivation (cannot afford 4 out of 9 selected items, e.g., food, inviting friends, etc.) by ethnicity, 2019 and 2020 (%)
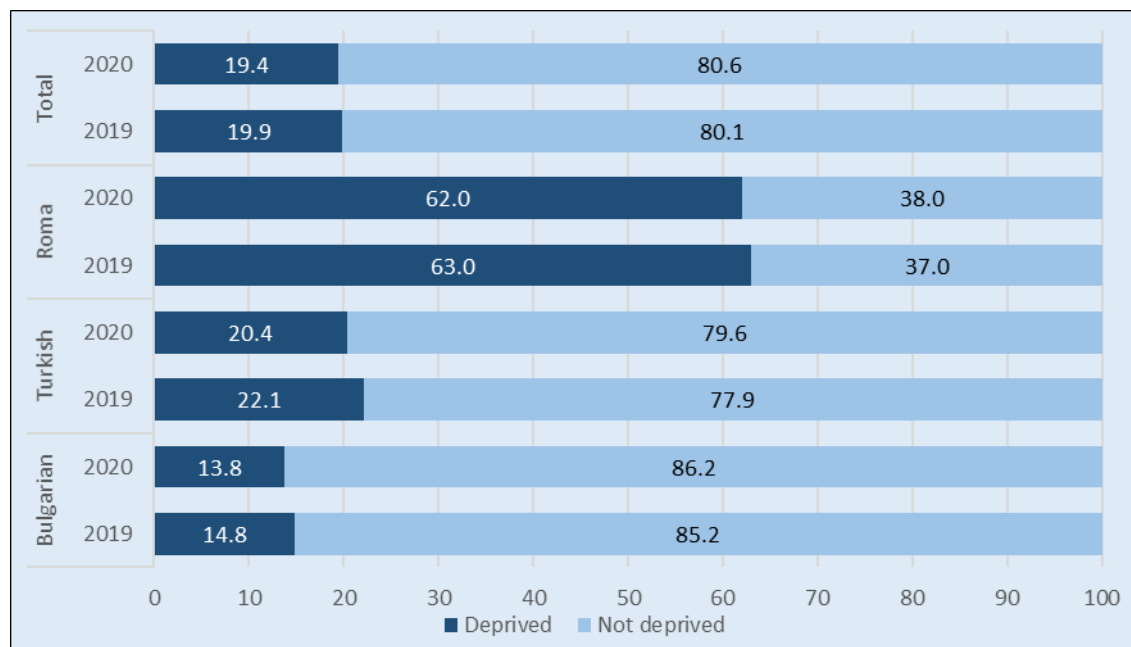
Source: NSI (2021), **Poverty and Social Inclusion Indicators in 2020**, p. 9.

Child poverty

Roma children are at the highest risk of poverty compared to children from the other major ethnic groups in the country: 77.2% of them are at risk of poverty, compared to 30% of children of ethnic Turks and 13.3% of ethnic Bulgarians (Figure 14). A childhood in poverty hinders the development of children's abilities and skills, reduces aspirations for achievement, increases the risk of early school leaving, leads to vulnerability in the labour market and low incomes when children become adults. Evaluations of the implementation of the National Development Programme "Bulgaria 2020" and the National Strategy for Roma Integration 2020 show that the Bulgaria fails to meet the challenges of reducing child poverty and, especially, the poverty among Roma children.[75]

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[75] National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030; the National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020. See also Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS (2020) Otsenka na integratsionnite politiki kam romite v Balgariya v perioda 2012-2019 g. [Evaluation of the Roma Integration Policies in Bulgaria, 2012-2019]

Figure 14: Children aged <18 years who are at risk of poverty (below 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers) by ethnicity, 2020 (%)
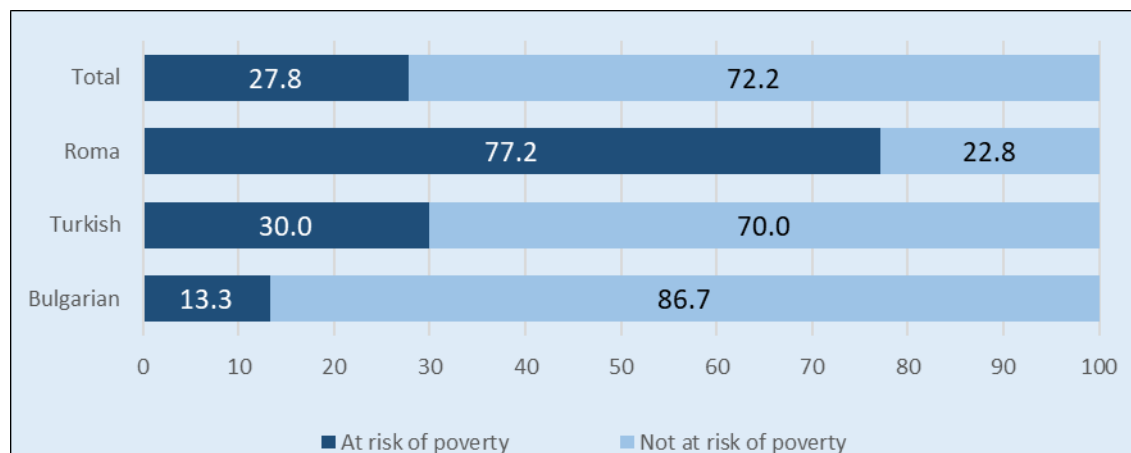
Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged under 18 in the surveyed household (n = 4,491); weighted results.

[b] At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3).

[c] Results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

[b] Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?" and the list of household members

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

National Statistical Institute data on the share of children living in material deprivation support these conclusions. In 2020 (EU-SILC), 77.8% of Roma children lived in material deprivation (lacking one or more from 13 items), compared to 45.6% of Turkish and 29.0% of ethnic Bulgarian children (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Children aged < 18 years living in material deprivation by ethnicity, 2019 and 2020 (%)
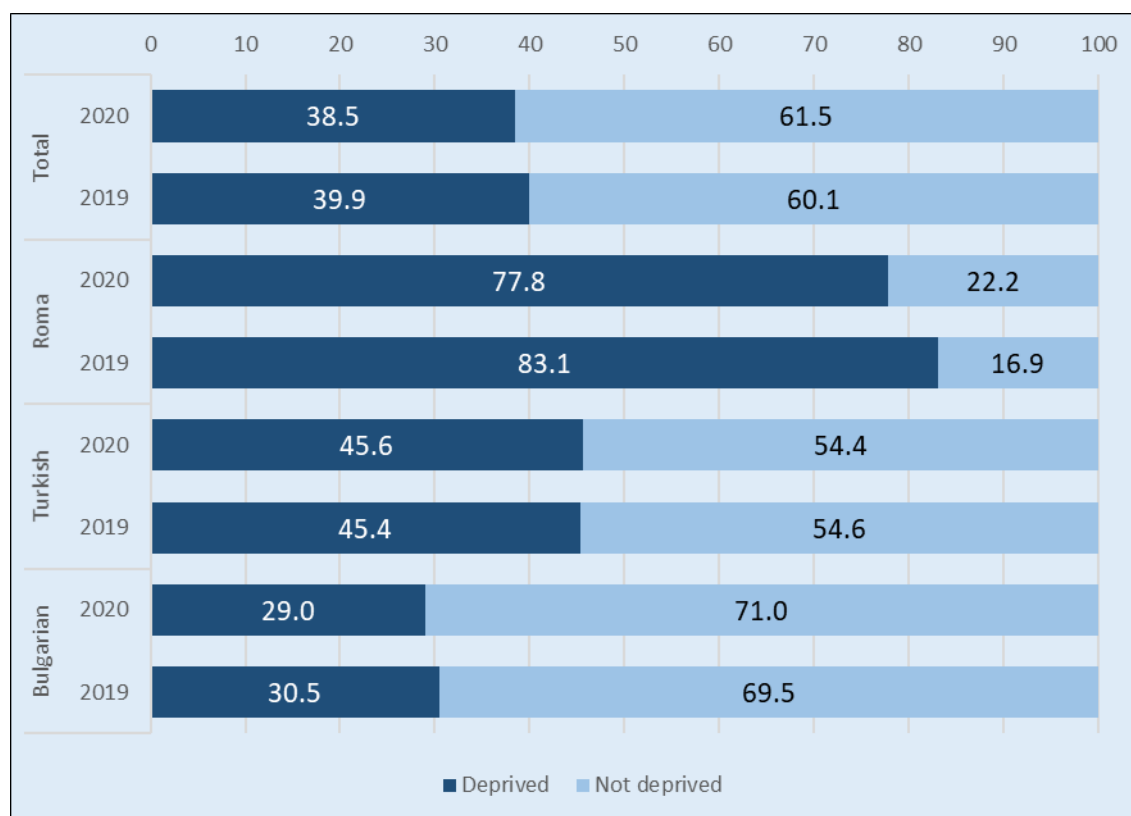
Notes: a Children with material deprivation (lacking 1 or more from 13 items)
          Source: NSI (2021), **Poverty and Social Inclusion Indicators in 2020**, pp. 14-15.

29.9% of Roma children aged 0-17 live in household where at least one person in the household gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food. Growing up in such conditions sharply reduces the chances of almost four-fifths of Roma children to receive a decent education and qualification, to develop skills and abilities that make them competitive in the labour market,[76] to protect them from (excessive forms of) exploitation and violence. One of the worst consequences for children growing up in poverty is the early formation of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, which shatters their aspirations for achievement, limits the individual's ability to cope with difficult life situations and often leads to early school leaving.

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[76] Gortazar, L., K. Herrera-Sosa, D. Kutner, M. Moreno, A. Gautam. 2014. How can Bulgaria improve its educational system? An analysis of PISA 2012 and past results. Working Paper 91321. Washington, DC: World Bank Group; Да преподаваме с мисъл за бедността: Влиянието на бедността върху детския мозък и как може училището да помогне. София: Тръст за социална алтернатива.

5. Health

- On average, for all people aged 16 and older, the share of Roma who reported long-standing limitations in usual activities due to health problems is lowest among the three groups – surprising for an ethnic group with high premature mortality (which is the case of Roma). One of the important explanations of this apparent paradox is demographic structure. Roma simply live shorter and the share of people in upper age groups (those who have more reasons to complain of limitations in usual activity due to health problems) is lower.
- Roma children face considerably higher health risks than their Bulgarian and Turkish peers. The share of Roma parents assessing their children's health as "very good or good" is lower than the share among ethnic Bulgarian and Turkish parents. This is due both to poor living conditions – but also to The lower vaccination rates. The share of non-vaccinated Roma children is 8.5% compared to 2.3% for the total children of that age.
- Health insurance is a major precondition of access to health. On average, 62.2% of Roma have it – but only 39.3 of those aged 18-65 (roughly the group whose insurance is not covered by the state, such as children, or retired persons). These shares are, respectively, 90.1 and 84.5 for ethnic Bulgarians and 78.2 and 67.4 for Turks. Informality of employment is a majour reason behind the considerable differences between the age groups 18-65.
- Roma seek specialized medical or surgical specialist advice (that GPs cannot provide) much less frequently than members of other groups. Only 13.6% of Roma used this type of service in the year before they were interviewed (27.6% of ethnic Bulgarians and 23.2 of Turks did).
- Prejudice and discrimination augment all these structural barriers to health services. 10.6% of Roma reported that they felt discriminated when accessing health services, which is approximately six times the percentage reported by those who identify themselves as ethnic Bulgarians (1.8%).

5.1.   Background

According to the OECD 2019 Report on the state of health in Bulgaria, even though the total expenditures on the healthcare system in Bulgaria doubled between 2005 and 2018 and reached EUR 1,311 per capita or 8.1% of GDP, they remain the fourth lowest in the EU and below the EU average of 9.8%. Although life expectancy of Bulgarians has increased (reaching 74.64 years in 2020[77]), it still remains the lowest in the EU (EU average 2017: 80.9 years). Out-of-pocket payments for medical care in 2017 are the highest in the EU: on average, 46.6% of the medical expenses per person are done out of pocket compared to 15.8% on average in the EU in 2017), which is mostly due to co-payments on pharmaceuticals and outpatient care.[78] High out-of-pocket payments and a lack of health insurance for a significant proportion of the population are the major barriers when it comes to access to healthcare because non-insured persons have to pay for each basic medical help they are provided.[79] Roma are

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[77] NSI (2020), Population and demographic processes 2020, p. 36

[78] OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (2019), Bulgaria: Country Health Profile 2019, State of Health in the EU, OECD Publishing, Paris/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Brussels.
[79] Health Insurance Act, Article 52(2).

especially vulnerable because they are over-represented in both groups – those without health insurance and those at higher risk of poverty.[80]

5.2.   Results

Self-assessment of the health status

The questionnaire provided three indicators that reveal the respondents' overall self-assessment of their own health and that of their children, as well as their self-assessment of whether they were limited in performing their daily activities due to health reasons. On average, or all people aged 15 and older, the share of people reporting that no limitations at all is highest among Roma (Table 4). Apparently, this is a paradox for an ethnic group with high premature mortality,[81] in which poverty and social exclusion are most common (as shown in "Poverty and social exclusion" chapter). However, when disaggregated by age, the picture is different because people who complain of limitations in usual activity due to health problems is higher in groups with a relatively higher share of adult population. This is the case of ethnic Bulgarians – but not of Roma.

Table 4. Share of persons with self-reported long-standing limitations in usual activities due to health problems by ethnicity, 15 years and over (%)[c]

Self-declared ethnicity	Severely limited	Limited but not severely	Not limited at all
Bulgarian (n = 21,844)	3.5	11.2	85.3
Turkish (n = 2,051)	4.7	10.8	84.5
Roma (n = 1,987)	2.4	8.5	89.1
Total	3.6	10.9	85.5

Notes: [a] Out of all respondents aged 15 years and over (n = 26,249); weighted results.
[b] Based on question "In the past 6 or more months, have you been limited in performing normal activities due to a health problem?"
[c] 131 INRs out of 26,380 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Table 5 provides an idea of the different groups' distinctions in reporting long-standing limitations in usual activities due to health problems by age. The share of reporting 'limited but not severe' limitations

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[80] In Bulgaria, public relations concerning the protection of citizens' health are regulated by the Health Act, the National Health Strategy, the national health programmes, the Health Insurance Act. In 1998, Bulgaria launched an important health reform related to the introduction of compulsory and voluntary health insurance. According to the Health Insurance Act, "compulsory health insurance guarantees free access of the insured persons to medical care through a certain type, scope and volume of a package of health activities, as well as free choice of a contractor (i.e., the general practitioner) who has contract with the territorial subdivision of the health insurance fund". Individuals and employers pay compulsory health insurance contributions in a ratio of 60:40, and the state covers the costs for children under 18 years of age, for full-time students (but not older than 22 years of age for high school graduates and 26-year-olds age for university students), as well as for doctoral students, pensioners, persons eligible for monthly social benefits and targeted heating benefits, if not otherwise provided, detainees and prisoners and other groups listed in the law.

[81] Due to the lack of official recent data, we recommend that readers should see the age structure of the major ethnic groups in the country (Bulgarian Turks and Roma) from the last three censuses (1992, 2001 and 2011).

is highest among Roma aged 55 and older (16.6%). The relatively low share of those reporting 'severely limited' may be due to the fact that, according to 2011 census data, only 7.1% of Roma live beyond the age of 60 (compared to 18.7% of Turks and 28.7% ethnic Bulgarians). Roma experience spike in premature mortality already in the age group 40-49, which is particularly visible among men.

Table 5: **Share of persons with self-reported long-standing limitations in usual activities due to health problems by ethnicity and age** **(%)**

Self-declared ethnicity	Severely limited		Limited but not severely		Not limited at all	
	16-30	55 and older	16-30	55 and older	16-30	55 and older
Bulgarian (n=21,844)	3.2	5.9	(1.4)	22.1	95.4	72.0
Turkish (n=2,051)	Not published	8.5	Not published	23.9	96.0	67.6
Roma (n=1,987)	Not published	5.9	Not published	26.5	97.9	67.5
Total	**2.9**	**6.2**	**(1.3)**	**22.4**	**95.9**	**71.4**

Notes: [a] Out of all respondents aged 15 years and over (n = 26,249); weighted results. For age group 16-30, n = 4 025; for age group 55 and older, n = 12 515.
[b] Based on question "In the past 6 or more months, have you been limited in performing normal activities due to a health problem?"
[c] 131 INRs out of 26,380 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
[d] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets). Results based on fewer than 20 unweighted observations in a group total are not published.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

When people are self-assessing their health, the results are similar – in total, the share of Roma assessing their health as 'very good' or 'good' is highest among the three ethnic groups. But for the age group 40 and older, the results are the opposite (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Share of persons assessing their health in general as 'Very good' or 'Good', respondents, by ethnicity and age (%)
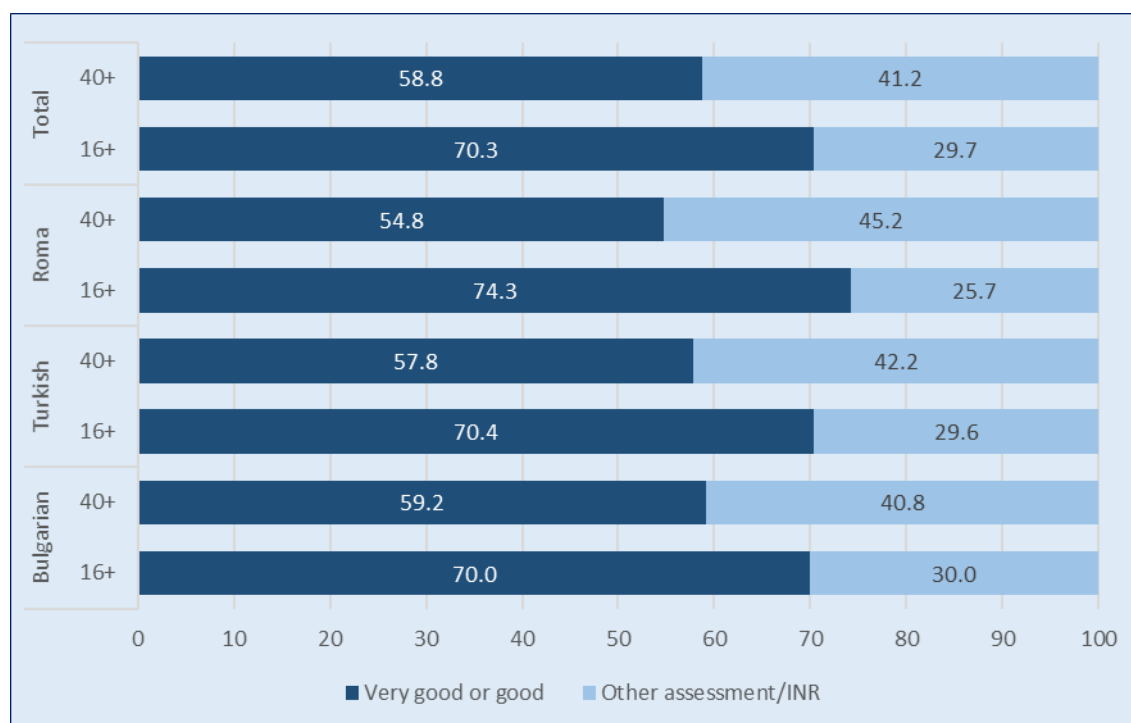
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents aged 16 years and over (n =26,380) and 40 years and over (n =19,248); weighted results.
[b] question: "How do you generally assess your health?"
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Part from the differences between the three groups is due to the relativity of perception. People tend to compare their health status with other people from their community (and not outsiders). When many of their peers die prematurely or experience severely aggravated health condition, the respondents feel relatively healthy. In many cases superstitions also influence the answers: according to many Roma, "diseases should not be mentioned so that they do not happen to us; we need not make illnesses angry, they can destroy us." Poor health culture and insufficient information is another explanation. Roma visit medical specialists who can diagnose a chronic disease and explain the risks associated with it less frequently than other groups (as shown in detail in "Usage of health services" section).

However, differences in demographic structure of the three groups is particularly worrying given the implications for Roma children. The share of Roma parents assessing their children's health as "very good or good" is lower than the share among ethnic Bulgarian and Turkish parents respectively by 3 and 2.4 percentage points (Table 6). Section "Children's health" provides more details.

Table 6: Children's health (5-14) by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	`Other assessment/INR `	`Very good or good`
Bulgarian (n = 1,884)	1.1	98.9
Turkish (n = 197)	(1.7)	98.3
Roma (n = 521)	4.1	95.9
Total for children aged 5-14	1.7	98.3

Health insurance and registration with general practitioners

In Bulgaria, the access to the basic medical services depends on three major conditions: whether the person has his/her health insurance contributions paid regularly;[82] if s/he has permanent access to a general practitioner;[83] and the financial situation of the persons and their household, because many medicines and a significant part of the medical services costs are covered by the patients themselves (out-of-pocket) regardless of their health insurance status.[84] Effective access to healthcare requires all three conditions to be met, which is often not the case for large portion of the Bulgaria's Roma.

For the needs of the analysis in this section, the BNSI received individual level data on the respondents' health insurance status from the National Revenue Agency (NRA) and the registration with a general practitioner (from the National Health Insurance Fund, NHIF). Health insurance of considerable number of Bulgarian population is covered from the state budget (namely, children aged 0-17 and the majority of retired persons). This is why the analysis below is based on two distributions – one for all members of the households surveyed and one for persons aged 18-65. The two cut-off points for the second distribution the approximate time for transiting from education to employment (18) and approximate time for retirement (65).

As Figure 17 shows, the share of health insured in the age group of 18-65 is lower that for the entire Roma population for all large ethnic groups, but this difference is greatest among the Roma. The share of health insured Roma aged 18-65 is just 39.3% - way below the 62.2% overall for the entire Roma population. This is so because insurance of people in working age is highly dependent on their

[82] Health Insurance Act, Article 109. (Amended, SG No. 110/1999, SG No. 111/2004, SG No. 101/2009, effective 1.02.2010)
(1) Any insurance entitlements of persons, who are obligated to remit insurance contributions for their own account, shall be terminated in the cases when the persons have failed to remit more than three outstanding monthly insurance contributions for a period of 36 months until the beginning of the month preceding the month of provision of medical care. Any such persons with terminated health insurance rights shall pay for medical care provided.
(2) (Amended, SG No. 48/2015, effective 28.12.2015) The health insurance entitlements of persons under Paragraph 1 shall be reinstated when the person has remitted all health insurance contributions due for the last 60 months.
[83] Health Insurance Act, Article 35 (1) 2., Any person covered by compulsory health insurance shall be entitled: … to choose a physician from a primary medical care institution that has concluded a contract with the RHIF. A general practitioner (GP) not only provides basic medical services to insured patients, but also issues referrals for consultation and treatment by medical professionals, for assessment of overall health status and working capacity (incl. employment of persons in serious health condition), as well as for hospitalisation for serious illness, when comprehensive tests are needed for an accurate diagnosis or when women give birth. GPs provide the necessary information to patients about their health, consult them on the treatment, the necessary changes in diet and overall lifestyle. GPs provide basic medical care for new-borns and children recorded in their patient lists, all mandatory vaccinations of new-borns and children, as well as mandatory and many of the voluntary vaccines for adult patients.
Those registered in a general partitioner's patient list remain patients even if they have failed to pay for three months the due health insurance contributions. The NHIF however cease from paying the doctor for medical services provided to uninsured patients.
[84] OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (2021), Bulgaria: Country Health Profile 2021, State of Health in the EU, OECD Publishing, Paris.

employment status and formality of employment. Apart from job security and pension contribution, a person working out of the legitimate labour market loses also the health insurance – which is largely the case of Roma. Data visualized in Figure 7 ("Paid work" section above) show that 47.2% of Roma older than 16 years were in paid work, compared to 65.1% among Turks and 80.2% among ethnic Bulgarians. The expectation that working members in the household will regularly pay the due monthly health insurance contributions for the unemployed appears to be overrated for persons in families at risk of poverty and for those living in severe material deprivation, and such are 71.1% and 63% of Roma (data from the present study – see "Poverty and social exclusion" chapter).

Figure 17: Share of people aged 16 and older and 18-65 with health insurance coverage (%)
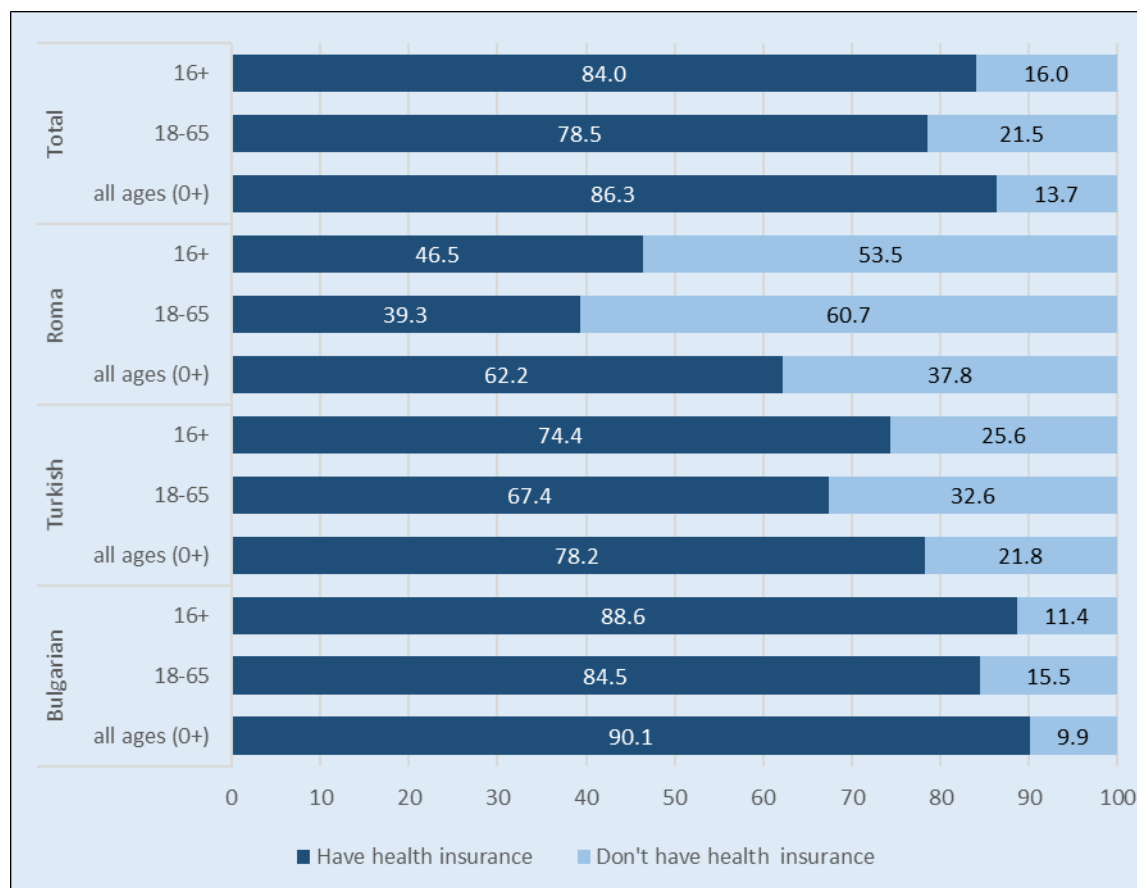
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents 16 years and over (n = 25,278), aged 18-65 (n = 17,466) and all ages 0 years and over (n = 28,879); weighted results.

[b] 1,102 out of 26,380 observations for respondents 16 years and over, 874 out of 18,340 observations for respondents 18 – 65 and 1,424 out of 30,303 observations for respondents of all ages (0 years and over) not matched/no data in the administrative source National Revenue Agency (NRA) results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and National Revenue Agency data combined

Changes in Bulgarian legislation introduced with the intention of increasing the share of health insured persons sometimes have the opposite effect.[85] For instance, from 1998 (when obligatory health insurance was launched) until 2005, the Health Insurance Fund paid the doctors for all medical services they provided, regardless of the health insurance status of the patients. During that period, a person could restore one's health insurance status paying retroactively 3 minimum health insurance monthly contributions. At that period, less that one fifth of Roma did not have health insurance. Since 2005, restoration of health insurance rights was becoming increasingly expensive – and, respectively, the share of uninsured was increasing. Table 7 summarises the changes in the last 25 years.

Table 7: Barriers to re-entry: restoration of health insurance rights over the years

Year	Number of minimum health insurance monthly contributions necessary	Share of Roma without health insurance and year of survey
1998-2005	3	18% (2004[a])
2005-2007	6	No data available for the period
2007-2010	12	26% (2009[b])
2010-2015	36	52% (2011[c])
2015 onwards	60	60.7% (2020[d])

Notes: [a] FACT Marketing, 2004. Share of Roma of working age
         [b] FSG, 2009. Share of uninsured Roma in detached Roma neighbourhoods
         [c] UNDP/the World Bank/EC, 2011. Share of Roma at risk of marginalization
         [d] BNSI/FRA 2020 survey. Share of Roma aged 18-65

As regards general practitioners, BNSI received from NHIF individual level administrative data on each respondent's registration with a general practitioner for the respondents sampled in the survey conducted for the purpose of the project. Similarly to health insurance, the analysis below is based on two distributions: for all members of the household (aged 16 and older) and the group 18-65. According to the data, one in ten Roma in Bulgaria is not registered with a general practitioner, while the share of those not registered in the age group of 18-65 is 3.56 percentage points higher (Figure 18).

Bearing in mind, that only health insured persons have the right to choose and registrate to GP and to receive the package of medical services they provide for free, the high share of Roma who have a general practitioner apparently contradicts the low share of Roma with health insurance. The reality however is more nuanced. Since 2005, the Health Insurance Fund does not pay any money to doctors who examine or treat patients without health insurance. As a result, some doctors refuse to accept such patients for examination, despite the fact that they are on their patient lists. However, many physicians in rural and small towns continue to provide health services to uninsured people driven entirely by goodwill and empathy. Data from qualitative studies conducted by IPHS, BAS between 2008 and 2018 show that doctors in remote localities with high share of Roma population serve roughly a third of their patients

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[85] It should be borne in mind that the Health Insurance Act, adopted by the National Assembly in 1998, has been amended and/or supplemented over 70 times until 01/01/2020. Frequent changes in Bulgaria's legislation led to its little or no awareness among citizens, i.e., ignorance of both their rights and obligations.

free of charge. In cities with large Roma neighbourhoods/slums the local bonds and solidarity are eroded – and, respectively, empathy is weaker making access to general practitioners more challenging.[86]

Figure 18: Share of people who are registered with a general practitioner (GP) by ethnicity (%)
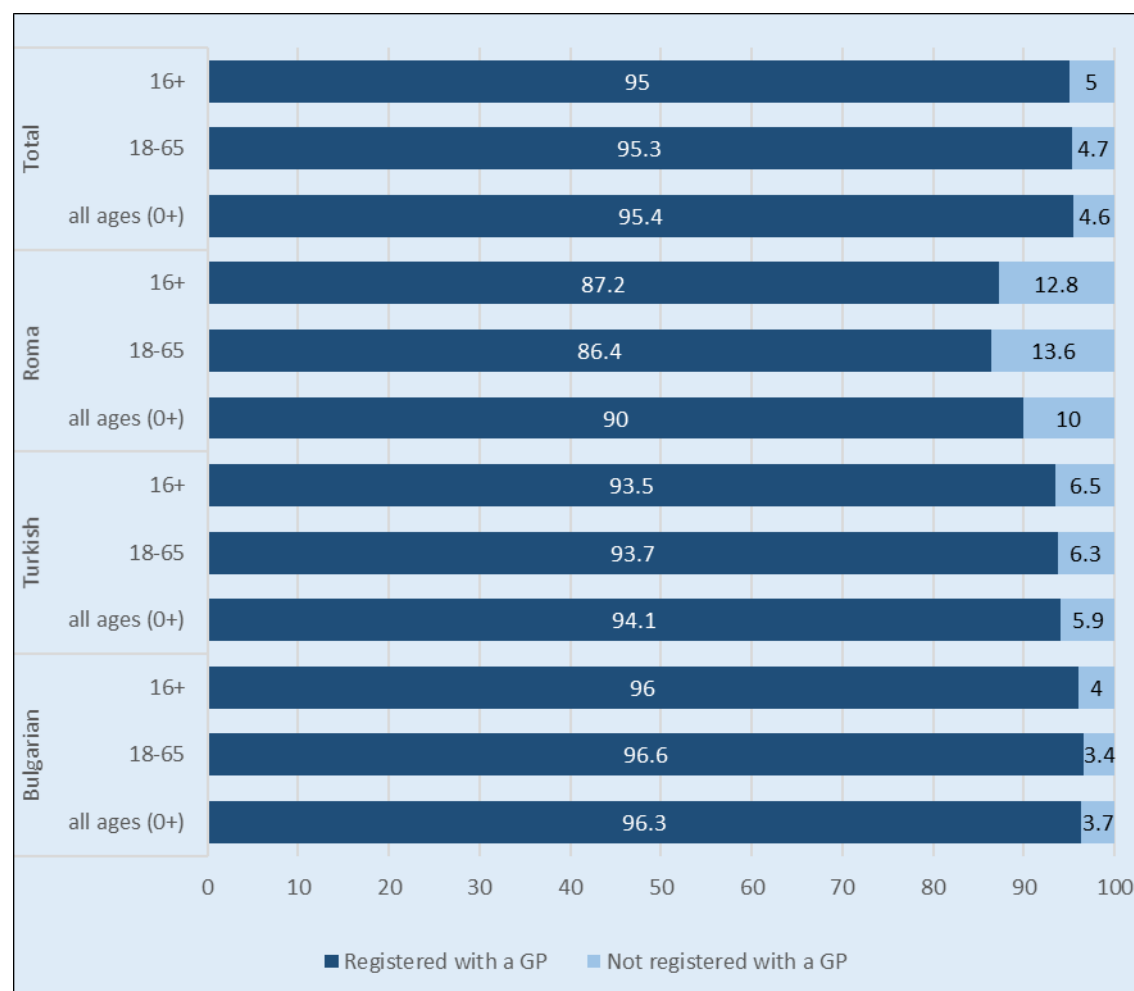
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents 16 years and over (n = 25,348), 18-65 (n = 17,500) and all ages 0 years and over (n = 28,965); weighted results.
[b] 1,032 out of 26,380 observations 16 years and over, 840 out of 18,340 and 1,338 out of 30,303 observations for respondents of all ages (0 years and over)not matched or no data in the administrative source (National Health Insurance Fund - NHIF); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and National Health Insurance Fund data combined

Usage of health services

How does the lack of health insurance, the (fragmented) coverage of Roma by the general practitioners and the high cost of medical services and medicines affect the access of to healthcare? Figure 19 shows

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[86] Томова, И., Л. Стойчев, М. Иванов (2020). Мерки за преодоляване на демографската криза в Република България. София: Издателство на БАН „Проф. Марин Дринов“.

that during the 12 months prior to the survey interview, 62.8% of ethnic Bulgarians, 57% of Turks and 41% of Roma visited their GP – and, respectively, 27.6%, 23.2% and 13.6% visited a medical or surgical specialist. Roma seek specialised medical advice (that GPs cannot provide) much less frequently than members of other groups. Only about 14% of Roma used this type of service in the year before they were interviewed. These consultations/visits are paid in full by those without medical insurance, as well as by the insured without a referral from their personal general practitioner. About a third of the Roma (30.7%) have never been to a medical specialist or surgeon in their entire life compared to 13.5% of the whole population.

Figure 19: Time elapsed since last visit to a general practitioner or a medical or surgical specialist of people aged 15 and older by ethnicity (%)

Notes: [a] Out of all respondents visiting GP (n =26,312) and visiting a medical or surgical specialist (n =25,805); weighted results.

[b] Based on questions: "When was the last time you consulted your GP about yourself?" and "When was the last time you consulted a specialist or dentist - surgeon for yourself?"

[c] 3,991 INRs on the question about visiting GP and 4,498 INRs on the question about visiting a medical or surgical specialist out of 30,303 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The data on the access to and use of dental services are presented in Figure 20. Dental care is expensive and refraining from dental services is often used as a proxy indicator of extreme poverty. Partly this is due to the fact that the Health Insurance Fund covers the cost of only a small part of them. 5.8% of all people have never used such services – but 23.1% of Roma, while six out of ten Roma have visited a dentist more than a year ago.

Figure 20: Time elapsed since last visit to a dentist or orthodontist of people aged 15 and older by ethnicity (%)
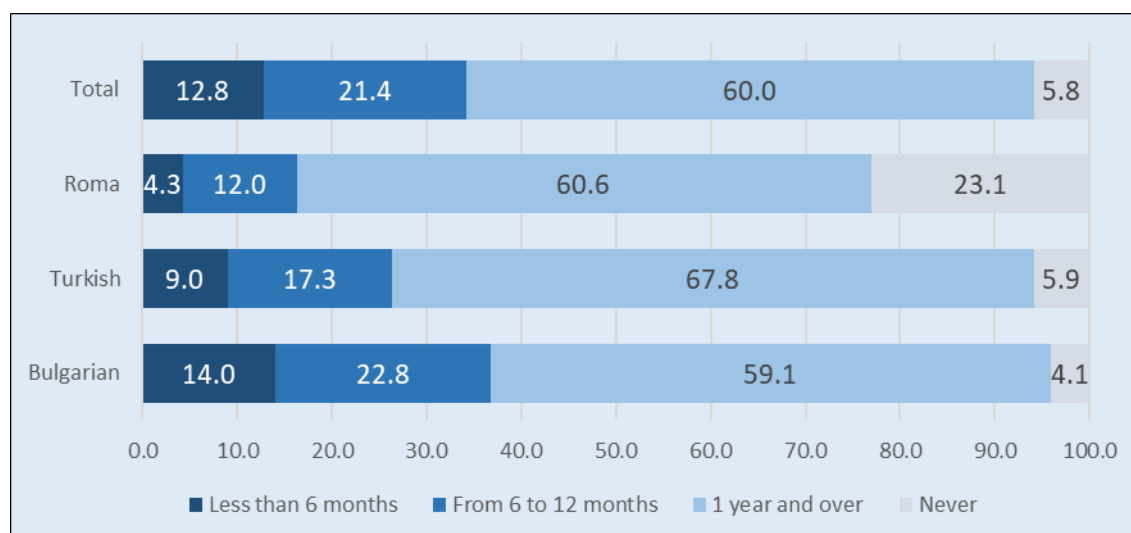
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents (n =25,920); weighted results.
[b] Based on question "When was the last time you visited a dentist or orthodontist (specialist in orthopaedic dentistry) for yourself?"
[c] 4,383 INRs out of 30,303 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Unmet medical needs

Compared to the majority, Roma more often reported that they were unable to receive the medical care they needed because of 'Financial reasons', 'Waiting list' and 'Too far to travel' (all three categories are accumulated) – see Table 8.

Table 8: Population aged 16 and over reporting unmet needs for medical care due to one of the following reasons: 'Financial reasons', 'Waiting list' and 'Too far to travel' (all three categories are cumulated) by ethnicity (%)

Self-declared ethnicity	Medical needs met	Unmet medical need
Bulgarian (n = 21,924)	97.4	2.6
Turkish (n = 2,072)	96.3	3.7
Roma (n = 1.997)	92.4	7.6
Total	96.9	3.1

Notes: [a] Out of all respondents aged 16 or older (n = 26,380); weighted results.
[b] Based on question "Was there any time during the past 12 months when you needed a medical examination or treatment but did not have one?"; if yes: "What was the main reason for not consulting a doctor? - Could not afford to/too expensive/not covered by health insurance OR Waiting list/did not have the referral letter OR Too far to travel/no means of transportation"
[c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Discrimination in access to health services

According to the survey conducted for the purpose of the project, 2.4% of the persons answered affirmatively the direct question whether they felt discriminated when they sought medical help in 12 months prior to the interview. Among all ethnic groups surveyed, the Roma most often reported that they experienced discrimination - one in ten (10.6%) reported that they felt discriminated, which is approximately six times the percentage reported by those who identify themselves as ethnic Bulgarians (1.8%). 7.6% of Roma also reported that they were unable to receive the medical care they needed because of 'Financial reasons', 'Waiting list' and 'Too far to travel' (all three categories are accumulated).

Children's health

Children in Bulgaria are subject to special protection by law.[87] The child-directed policy is framed by the provisions of the Child Protection Act[88] and was applied according to the National Child Strategy 2008-2018 until its end,[89] the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030,[90] the NHIF Programme "Child Healthcare"[91] and the Health Insurance Act[92] among others. Still, a number of barriers exist that prevent children from socially vulnerable or marginalized households (among which Roma are overrepresented) to enjoy health services they are entitled to (see Box 4).

Box 4: poverty-related barriers to enjoyment of health rights

Children in Bulgaria (0-18) have their health insurance covered by the state budget.[93] Parents do not pay a user fee for an examination by their GP/paediatrician, or (dental) specialist and for hospital treatment if they have a referral from their GP). The prophylactic examinations, the prophylactic laboratory tests of the children and all compulsory immunizations for children under 18, approved by law and listed in the NHIF Programme "Child Healthcare", are free of charge. However, if the parents/carers haven't chosen a GP/paediatrician for the child or if there is no GP/ paediatrician in the child's living place and the child is not ascribed to a GP/paediatrician list in another place, the child's parents/carers have to pay a user fee and the full fee for free medical examination/ health service to specialist/dental specialist. The same applies if the child does not have a referral from the GP. Given the fact that Roma children tend more often than the majority to live in households in which adults are without a valid health insurance or without a personal GP, they end up being exposed to such a risk more often than the majority children. Parents' low awareness of their children's rights or of the conditions to use these rights additionally increases the health risks Roma children are facing.

Mandatory vaccines are free of charge for children. However, 8.5% of Roma children aged 0-2 seem to be unvaccinated – and the parents/guardians of another 8.4% responded "don't know," which is more than double for the total population (2.3% and 4.8% respectively, Figure 21).

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[87] See Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Thematic report on children
[88] Child Protection Act, 13.06.2000, Article 2
[89] National Child Strategy 2008-2018. For more details, see Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria: Thematic report on children
[90] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030
[91] NHIF Programme "Child Healthcare"
[92] Health Insurance Act, Article 1
[93] Health Insurance Act, Article 40(3)

Figure 21: Proportion of immunized children aged 0-2 by ethnicity (%)
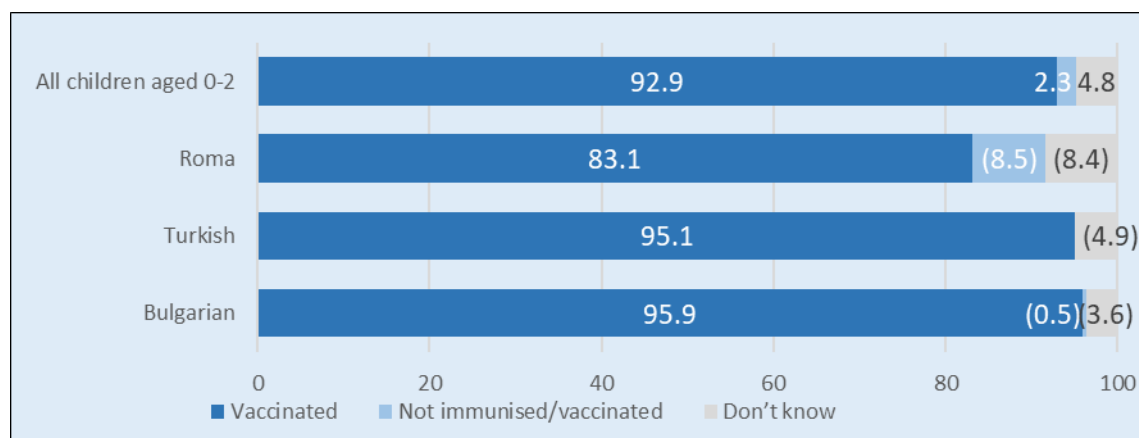
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents aged 0-2 (n =563); weighted results.

[b] Based on question "Does (child's name) get all required immunisations for his/her age?"

[c] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Previous research has shown that Roma's mistrust of institutions and fear of vaccines are among the main explanations for the persistent lower vaccination coverage of children in this ethnic group. But, apart from mistrust and attitudes against vaccination, other factors are also in play. Roma live in overcrowded neighbourhoods and homes where the risk of contagious diseases is high. Roma children aged 0-2 get sick more often than non-Roma counterparts, which often leads to delayed (or missed) vaccination. At the time when the survey was conducted, child counselling and vaccinations were also put on hold due to measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Vaccinations are related to infant mortality, the rate of which decreased from 14.6 ‰ in 1999 to 5.1 ‰ in 2020[94] (NSI 2021). In the past few years, Bulgaria achieved the lowest level of this indicator in its demographic development, although considerable differences between urban and rural populations and by regions remain – as well as the differences between the large ethnic groups.

The 2001 census data is still the only source of comparable data on infant mortality disaggregated by ethnicity. The IMR rate of 25 ‰ among Roma children is similar to that in the poorest African countries (Table 9).

Table 9. Infant and total mortality in Bulgaria by self-declared ethnicity, 2003 (‰)

	Total	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma
Infant mortality rate IMR (number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children aged 0-1)	13.4	9.9	17.8	25.0
Mortality rate (deaths per 1000 individuals per year)	14.2	15.0	10.3	7.3

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[94] НСИ и НЦОЗА (2021). Здравеопазване 2020. [Bulgaria, National Statistical Institute and National Center for Public Health and Analysis (2021). Public Health 2020]

Source: BNSI (see Tomova, 2005[95])

Early births

The Roma community is the ethnic group with the earliest marriages/family cohabitations in the country. According to a 1994 representative survey of IMIR, about 80% of them start families before reaching the age of majority.[96] More recent sociological research reveals a trend of maintaining early marriages among particular Roma subgroups and especially – among the poorest and least educated young people.[97] The Roma remain the only ethnic group in Bulgaria, in which family cohabitation usually begins in adolescence.[98] The early start of family life is generally a prerequisite for early births and for a larger number of children.

In Bulgaria, it is very difficult to obtain disaggregated by ethnicity data on all basic demographic indicators. Thus, we can only discuss here the only data available to us even though they are for 2003 (Table 10).

Table 10. Fertility by self-declared ethnicity, 2003 (‰)

	Total	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma
Crude birth rate by ethnicity of the mother (number of live births per 1000 population)	8.5	6.9	13.0	26.7
Total fertility rate	1.22	1.03	1.62	2.81
Adolescent birth rate (annual number of births to women aged 15-19 years per 1,000 women in that age group)	-	41.3	179.6	508.8
Under 15 birth rate (births per 1000 females under 15)	-	2.4	21.5	35.6

Source: BNSI (see Tomova, 2009[99])

Bulgaria holds one of the first places in Europe in regards early births[100] and data show that it is not only a 'Roma community problem' in Bulgaria (Table 11). However, Roma women and girls face much higher

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[95] Tomova, I. (2005). Demografski procesi v golemite etnokonfesionalni obshtnosti v Bulgaria [Demographic processes in the large ethnic communities in Bulgaria] (Томова, И. (2005). Демографски процеси в големите етноконфесионални общности в България. В: Демографско развитие на Република България. София: НССЕДВ към МС, БАН, НСИ, Фонд на ООН за населението.)

[96] Tomova, I. (1995). The Gypsies in the Transition Period. Sofia: IMIR.

[97] Pamporov, A. (2006). Romskoto vsekidnevie v Bulgaria [Roma in Bulgaria everyday life] (Ромското всекидневие в България. София: МЦПМКВ); Max Planck Institute, Gender and Generation Study 2007 and 2009; The World Bank (2012 and 2014). Gender dimensions of Roma inclusion;

[98] The term "adolescence" is used here conditionally. Among the very poor Roma subgroups, a very rapid transition from childhood (which is neither carefree nor particularly joyful) to adult life takes place - with early involvement of boys in family support activities and girls in starting their own families. Adolescence appeared as a specific stage in the personal development of a relatively large part of the population only in the 19th century in the industrialised countries in connection with the need for longer education and preparation for skilled activities. For a long time, it was not typical for the poor rural population and a large part of the working class. In groups, which are victims of long-term social exclusion, this important stage in personal development is still very short or missing.

[99] Tomova, I. (2009). Analysis of the situation in Bulgaria. In: Health and the Roma Community. Analysis of the Situation in Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain). Madrid 2009: FSG. (p.p, 97-108)

[100] NSI 2021. Naselenie i demografski protsesi prez 2020 godina (Population and demographic processes in 2020); NSI (2012). Census of Population and Housing in 2011 Volume 1. Population, book 8 Birth rate; Moraliyska-Nikolova, S. (2021). Otlozhenite razhdaniya v Balgariya – sashtnost, posleditsi, perspektivi (Delayed births in Bulgaria - nature, consequences, prospects). Doctoral dissertation, IPHS-BAS; Yankova, M. (2016). Sotsialni normi v romskite obshtnosti, koito vazprepyatstvat dostapa na

risk to become mothers during adolescence compared to non-Roma. Worldwide, adolescent birth rate is typical of women among all ethnic groups facing poverty and social exclusion.[101] The problem is that the share of early and extremely early births in Bulgaria remains relatively constant.

Table 11. Early and extremely early fertility (2012-2018) (%)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Early/adolescent fertility and extremely early/adolescent fertility	10.7	10.5	9.8	9.5	9.3	9.4	10.0	10.1	10.1
Extremely early/adolescent fertility (under 15)	246 (0.4%)	298 (0.4%)	324 (0.5%)	294 (0.4%)	259 (0.4%)	269 (0.4%)	252 (0.4%)	253 (0.4%)	215 (0.4%)
Early/adolescent fertility (women aged 15-19 year)	7158 (10.3%)	6670 (10.1%)	6331 (9.3%)	5980 (9.1%)	5772 (8.9%)	5769 (9.0%)	5939 (9.5%)	5992 (9.7%)	5755 (9.7%)

Own calculations based on BNSI data for 2017- 2021. The indicators for early and extremely early fertility are calculated as a share of livebirths in the respective age group out of all livebirths.

Early births are a risk factor for maternal and child health, for increasing poverty among women and children and for passing it on to future generations. Numerous studies show that children of underage mothers are at higher risk of being born prematurely and/or underweight, not healthy to survive their first year, more likely to drop out of school, commit crimes in childhood or adolescence, or they themselves become parents at an early age.[102]

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momichetata do obrazovanie i osobeno do sredno obrazovanie (Social norms in Roma communities that hinder girls' access to education and especially to secondary education). Sofia, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2016

[101] Marmot, M. (2015). The Health Gap. The Challenge of an Unequal World. Bloomsbury. Wilkinson, R., Pickett, K. (2009). The Spirit Level. Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger. Penguin Books.

[102] Wilkinson, R., Pickett, K. (2009). The Spirit Level. Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger. Penguin Books.

6. Housing

Highlights

- 65.8% of Roma live in housing deprivation (in an apartment too dark or leaking roof/damp walls, floors or no bath/shower or no indoor toilet). The share of Bulgarians living in such conditions is 11.7% and of Turks – 29.6%. 46.1% of Roma live in households with neither tap water, nor bath/shower nor toilet inside the dwelling.
- 49% list problems in their accommodation: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as: smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or pollution.
- The data captures the phenomenon of evictions: 2.7% of Roma claimed that they were forced to leave their accommodation.
- The available – inevitably fragmented – data on "Roma neighbourhoods" or areas of concentration of Roma population suggest that at least 4.2% of the Bulgarian population lives in marginalized conditions – or 1.9% of the self-identified Bulgarians, 4.2% of the Turks, 23.5% of the Roma.
- 54.6% of the people living in such neighbourhoods self-identified as Roma, 36.2% - as Bulgarians, 7.9% - as Turks, and 1.2% didn't answer or didn't state ethnicity.

6.1. Background

The **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (1966) considers the **right to adequate housing** as one of the main preconditions for a dignified life. According to Art. 34 of the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**, the Union recognises and respects the right to social and housing assistance as a means of ensuring a decent living for the people with insufficient financial resources.

Undeveloped or poorly maintained social infrastructure restricts access to quality early childhood education and care, quality education and training, diverse development of children's abilities, access to quality medical and social services, sports and cultural activities.[103] Spatial concentration intensifies the process of community closure and usually leads to difficulties in finding work for its residents, to rapid degradation of technical infrastructure and widespread and uncontrolled illegal construction in neighbourhoods, to pervasive and deepening poverty, to difficulties in translating macrosociety's values and norms.[104]

6.2. Results

The results of BNSI/FRA 2020 survey show that 7.4% of Bulgaria's population reported that they felt discriminated against on some of the observed grounds (skin colour, ethnicity, religion, etc.) when they tried to solve their housing needs. 17.7% of Roma reported that they felt discriminated against when

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[103] NSI (2003), Болгария: предизвикателствата на бедността. Регионален анализ по данни на многоцелевото наблюдение на домакинствата. [Bulgaria: The Challenges of Poverty. Analysis based on multi-purpose household surveys] National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030, National Programme for Development "Bulgaria 2030".

[104] Wilson, W.J. (1987). The Truly Disadvantaged. The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy. University of Chicago Press; Wacquant, L. (2008). Urban outcasts: A comparative sociology of advanced marginality. Polity Press, UK; Wacquant, L. (2009) Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity. Duke University Press.

looking for housing compared to 10.8% of those who identified themselves as Turks and 6.5% of those who identified as ethnic Bulgarians (see Table 12 in 'Discrimination' chapter). These figures appear underrated considering that the survey sample was based on addresses.

When examining the existing preconditions to explain why the Roma have justified reasons to feel discriminated more often than the rest of Bulgaria's citizens, it is necessary to pay special attention to the problems related to spatial segregation of Roma, to access to housing for persons with no address registration, as well as to forced evictions and demolition of (liveable) houses of Roma and residents of the large urban slums.

Housing deprivation

The 'housing deprivation' indicator estimates the share of people living in dwellings that are either too dark (insufficient daylight coming in through the windows), have leaking roof and/or damp walls or floors, have no shower or bathroom indoors, or have no toilet indoors.

Bulgaria's Roma are the only large ethnic group in the country in which the majority (two-thirds) live under the described housing deprivations (Figure 22). One-tenth of those self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians and three out of ten Bulgarian Turks live in similar conditions. Living conditions such as damp walls, etc. impact the health status of the inhabitants, can cause higher morbidity and premature mortality.

Figure 22: Share of people living in housing deprivation (in a dwelling too dark or leaking roof/damp walls, floors or no bath/shower or no indoor toilet) by ethnicity (%)
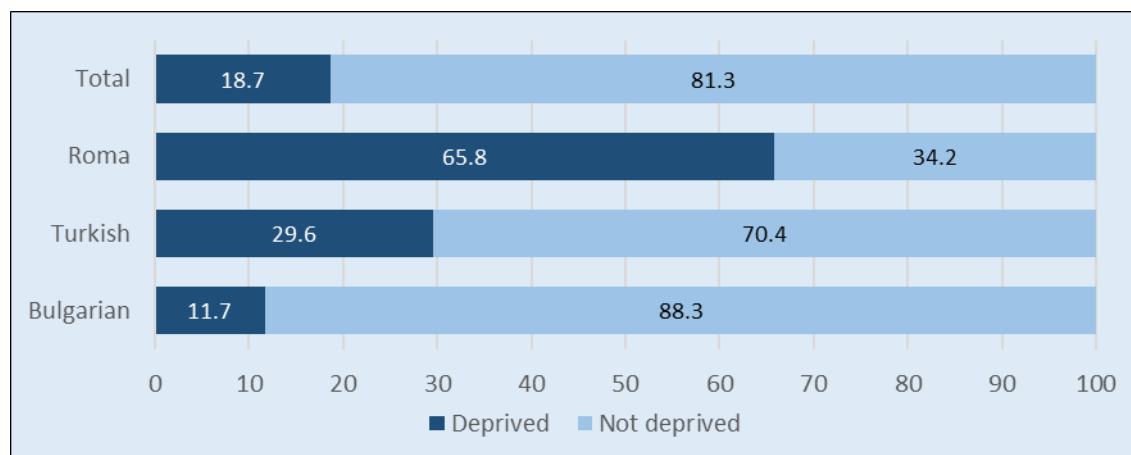
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
         [b] Based on questions: "Leaking roof or damp walls/floors/foundation or rot in window frames or floor (B18.1)?", "It is too dark (B18.3) (meaning there isn't enough daylight coming through the windows)?", "Absence of a shower/bathroom inside the dwelling (B10.2)?", "Absence of a (flushing) toilet inside the dwelling (B10.1)?"
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The requirements for observance of very good personal hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic imposed the need for reliable data on the share of households that do not have the minimum conditions for maintaining it in their home. The survey results visualized in Figure 23 illustrate the challenges in that regard.

Figure 23: Share of people living in households with neither tap water, nor bath/shower nor toilet inside the dwelling by self-declared ethnicity (%)
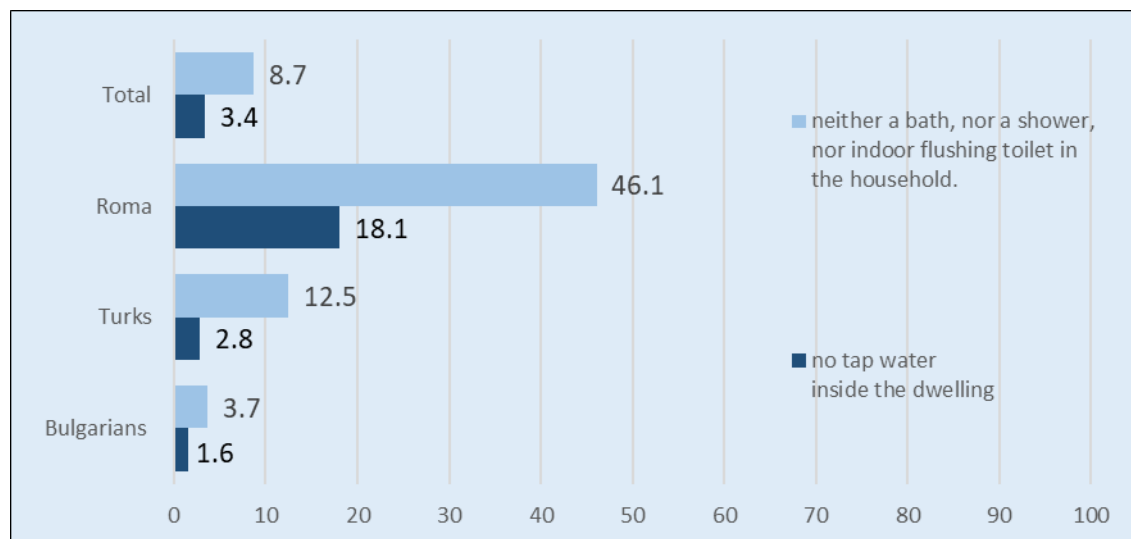
Almost one-fifth of the Roma do not have running water inside their homes. Nearly half of them have neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their dwelling. In addition, it should be taken into account that the sample was based on addresses and did not include people living in informal housing without address registration or homeless. This could mean that the situation of Roma is even worse than the survey results are showing.

Figure 24 provides information on the share of households from large ethnic groups living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of the floor. Every fourth Roma household lives under the described conditions, which pose a real threat to their health. 4.1% of Turks and 2.1% of ethnic Bulgarians also live in such conditions.

Figure 24: Share of people living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor by ethnicity (%)
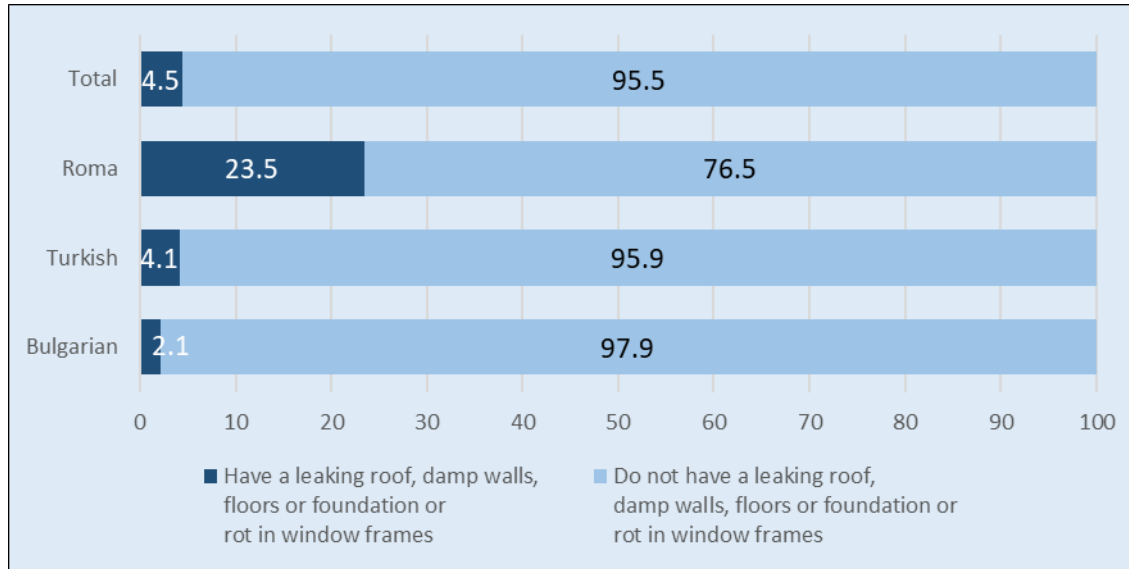
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
[b] Based on questions: "Do you have any of the following problems connected to the dwelling: Leaking roof, damp walls, foundations, etc.?", "Broken window frames".

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The survey results disclose other housing problems that are worth monitoring and improving. These are presented in Figure 25. Every second Roma and one in eight ethnic Bulgarian or Turkish households live in polluted area which increases the risks of high morbidity, especially of bronchitis, bronchial asthma or other allergic states among children, and hypertension and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease among older people – risk factors for cardio-vascular diseases and premature deaths.[105]

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[105] FSG (2009). Health and the Roma Community, Analysis of the Situation in Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain) (pp. 97-107)

Figure 25: Share of people living in households with the listed problems in their accommodation: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as: smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted by ethnicity (%)
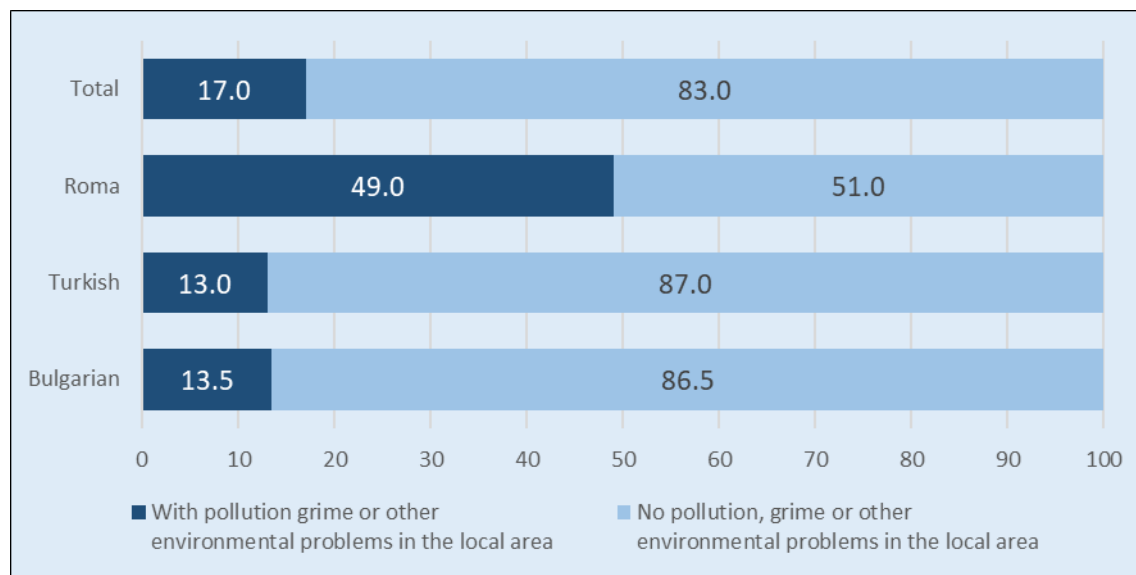
Notes: ^a Out of all respondents (n =30,301); weighted results.
^b Based on questions: "Which of the following problems related to the neighbourhood (village) in which you live do you have: Pollution, mud, dirt?".
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is another dimension of housing deprivation. According to Eurostat, in 2019, the average number of rooms per person in Bulgaria is 1.1 in cities, 1.3 in towns and suburbs, and 1.4 in rural areas. In all three degree of urbanisation categories Bulgaria stands substantially below the EU-28 average.[106] The results of BNSI/FRA 2020 survey show that seven out of ten Roma live in overcrowded housing. Such are the living conditions in about one-third of the homes of other Bulgarian citizens (Figure 26). Children in segregated neighbourhoods are particularly affected – the vast majority of them live in overcrowded conditions with all negative implications for their health and education opportunities. Addressing (even partially) the problem of room shortages and overcrowding among families of vulnerable groups with children would contribute to better and higher educational outcomes.

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[106] Eurostat (2020), Average number of rooms per person by degree of urbanisation.

Figure 26: Share of people living in household that does not have the minimum number of rooms according to the Eurostat definition of overcrowding by ethnicity (%)
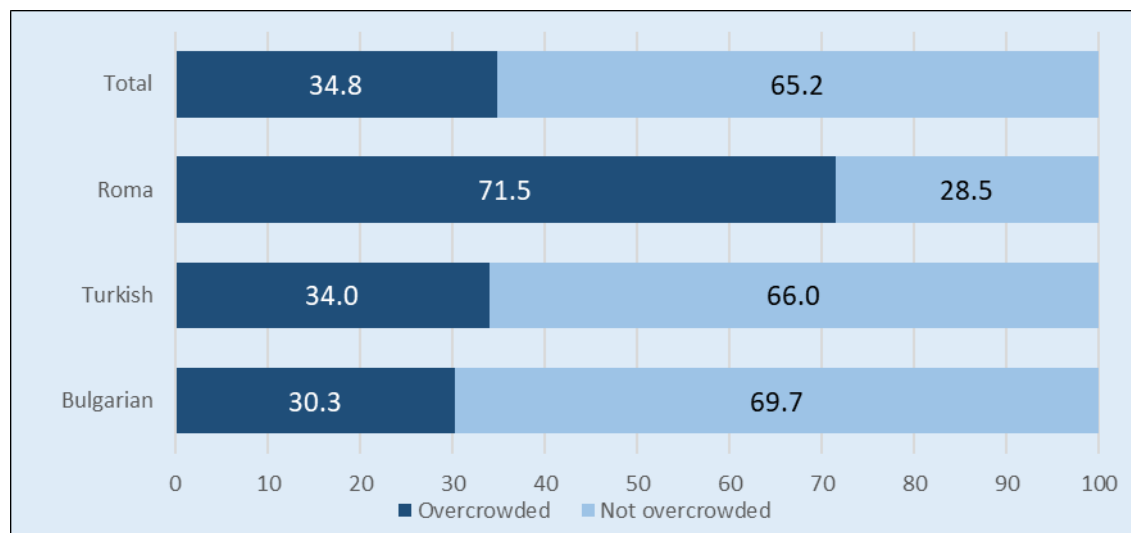
Evictions

BNSI/FRA 2020 survey asked respondent has their household been forced to leave home during the past 5 years – and if so, why? That was meant to become the informational basis for the secondary indicator *Share of people living in household that in the past 5 years has ever been forced to leave the accommodation*. A total of 180 respondents out of 30,303 answered in the affirmative to this question, most often explaining that their tenancy agreement had expired or that they could not continue to rent due to financial reasons. By ethnicity, 0.4% of the respondents claiming that they were forced to leave their accommodation were ethnic Bulgarians, 0.6% self-identified as Turks and 2.7% of Roma.

From methodological perspective, this indicator should not be considered a sound housing indicator for sampling reasons. Many of those evicted are impossible to reach through a survey because after an eviction takes place, the evicted move in other houses that are also illegal, i.e., they have no address, respectively cannot be sampled and interviewed. At the same time, the issue of the evictions of hundreds of Roma and the demolition of their houses persists. In Bulgaria, over the years, demolishing constructively safe Roma homes on the pretext that they were built illegally (years or decades ago) is not exceptional practice – even if many of these houses are the only dwellings of (large) families.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of violence instigated by politicians in Roma neighbourhoods. According to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, both in 2019 and in 2020 no legislative changes were made concerning the introduction of the principles of necessity and proportionality in the forced evictions of persons from their only homes. Such measures disproportionately affect Roma living in housing that is formally illegal. In 2019-2020, hundreds of Roma, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities, were evicted from their only homes without being provided with any alternative accommodation. Box 5 provides information on some of the most blatant cases of evictions.

Box 5: Evictions on the rise?

According to BHC, 2019 was particularly tense in regards evictions. In January 2019 in the village of Voyvodinovo, more than 100 Roma were expelled after a fight between two Roma and an ethnic Bulgarian officer from the special forces. Most of the houses of the displaced were destroyed soon after the incident. Neither the demolition orders nor the subsequent court proceedings of Roma families who wanted to return to their homes took into account the necessity and proportionality of the measures taken by the local authorities. On 24 July, 2019, 20 "illegal" houses in the Komluka neighbourhood were removed in the town of Burgas. The buildings were solid brick houses built on land intended for street infrastructure. The director of the Vazrazhdane district stated that the actions were taken after the completion of all legal procedures. Only one of the families appealed the removal order, but the court ruled in favour of the Municipality of Burgas. Over the past few years, the Municipality of Burgas has demolished over 400 illegal buildings in the Roma neighbourhood in Gorno Ezerovo, in Pobeda neighbourhood and the Roma area of the Meden Rudnik neighbourhood. In many cases, these were the only homes of their inhabitants. In the few cases of appeals against removal/demolition orders during the year, the courts as a rule did not assess the proportionality of the intervention considering the right to housing. On 12 September, 2019, 38 "illegal" buildings were demolished in the Roma neighbourhood of Maksuda in the town of Varna. Of all the residents, only one person with a disability was placed in an institution.

In 2020, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the practice of demolishing illegal Roma houses continued. On 4th of August, 2020, the municipality of Stara Zagora started forcible demolition of illegal buildings in the Roma neighbourhood of Lozenets. According to their owners, they were built more than twenty years ago. From 2015 to 2020, 205 such buildings were removed in Stara Zagora's Roma neighbourhood. On 21 July, 2020, a large-scale week-long action to demolish over 20 illegal massive and semi-massive buildings took place in the Roma neighbourhood of Stolipinovo, town of Plovdiv. Five were not demolished because people lived in them, and the district mayor's office could not provide them in municipal housing accommodation.

Based on: Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2020). Human rights in Bulgaria in 2019; Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (2021). Human rights in Bulgaria in 2020 .

If measures are not taken to legalise viable Roma houses under the strict control for prevention new illegal construction in Roma neighbourhoods, along with measures to build new social housing provided for in the National Development Programme Bulgaria 2030 and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and promoting social inclusion, a large number of Roma would be threatened with evictions, homelessness and restrictions on fundamental rights discussed above.

Box 6: Address registration and enjoyment of rights

According to data from the Minister of Regional Development and Public Works provided to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee on 30/04/2020, the number of people without a permanent address in Bulgaria is 81,360. Of these, 75,406 are Bulgarian citizens (mostly Roma) and 5,954 are foreigners. The BHC explains that 'this vicious practice is a side effect of the 2011 changes in the **Civil Registration Act**, made to avoid the so-called "travelling voters".

In 2013, D. Mihaylova, a civil rights lawyer, argued that the amendments to the Civil Registration Act adopted in May 2011 create conditions for systematic violations of the constitutional right of Bulgarian citizens for free movement, work and family life, putting the Roma at a particular disadvantage, which can be referred to as ethnic discrimination. In order to limit the options for election manipulations, the

Council of Ministers, the submitter of the amendments to the Civil Registration Act (21/03/2011), proposed restrictions and additional procedural requirements concerning the registration for permanent or current address. The amended procedure requires the availability and submission of the deeds of ownership and/or tenancy agreements to the municipal civil registration services by those who request a permanent or current address, as well as declarations for consent from the property owner, certified by a notary, in case the application for registration was submitted by the tenant/occupant and not by the owner. If such deed or tenancy agreement is missing, the case is dealt with by a separate commission that is supposed to register the person. As a result, the entire procedure is more complex and intransparent making the renewal of expired ID cards difficult for people in such situations, among which Roma who live in informal housing in large urban and suburban slums are overrepresented. The situation has not changed since then making it exceedingly difficult for people living in such conditions to renew expired ID cards, which cuts them from access to administrative and social systems of the country.

Based on D. Mihaylova (2013) **Civil registration in Bulgaria - a state of uncertainty (in Bulgarian).** Sofia: OSI.

7. Discrimination

Highlights

- Discrimination with all its manifestations and deprivations in multiple areas of life Roma experience constitute a vicious circle of inequality, poverty and marginalization. The data summarised in the report outline the magnitude of the challenges Roma are facing in virtually every area of life.
- 17.9% of Roma felt discriminated on any ground in the past 12 months – and of these 17.9%, 16.5% of the Roma felt discriminated on the ground of their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs.
- 22.9% of Roma felt discriminated against when they were looking for work because of their being Roma. 11% felt discriminated against for the same reason when at work. Every tenth Roma had the same experience when in contact school authorities or when accessing health services.
- The magnitude of discrimination might be even bigger given the fact that only 33% of Roma are aware of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.

7.1. Background

Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights explicitly prohibits any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation. In Bulgaria, the principle of equality is proclaimed in Article 6 of the Constitution and safeguarded by the national anti-discrimination legislation.

Nevertheless, the new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation underlines that many of the EU Roma continue to face discrimination, antigypsyism, and socio-economic exclusion. It recognises that even though not all Roma are at risk of poverty or socially excluded, all can experience discrimination and disempowerment. Setting three horizontal objectives (in the areas of equality, inclusion and participation) in addition to the four sector-specific ones (education, employment, housing and health) aims to ensure effective equality and to close the gap between Roma and the general population.

BNSI/FRA 2020 survey asked respondents if they felt discriminated against on different grounds (skin colour, ethnic or immigrant background or ethnic origin, religion or religious beliefs, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, other reason) in the past 5 years and in the past 12 months and in different areas of life. These are: when looking for work, at work, when in contact with anyone from the school(s) as a parent or a student, when using healthcare services, when trying to rent or buy an apartment or a house, when in contact with administrative offices or public services and when trying to enter a night club, a bar, a restaurant or hotel, using public transport, being in a shop or trying to enter a shop. The information collected helps outline the magnitude of discrimination Bulgaria's Roma experience in the year preceding the elaboration the new national framework for equality, inclusion and participation of Roma up to 2030.

7.2. Results

Discrimination

According to the survey conducted for the purpose of the project, 5.0% of the general population aged 16 or over reported that in the past 12 months before the interview they felt discriminated on any ground in any area of life – education (personally or in relation to their children), when looking for a job or at the workplace, when they needed medical help, when they tried to buy or rent a home, when interacting with administrative offices or public services, when going to a bar, restaurant, hotel, shopping or in public transport. Of these 5.0%, 1.8% of the total population felt discriminated on the ground of their ethnicity, skin colour or religion, while 3.2% felt discriminated on other grounds (age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or else) (Figure 27).

Disaggregated data by ethnic group show large differences both in regards prevalence and grounds of discrimination. Roma in Bulgaria found themselves in situations where they felt discriminated against most often - 17.9% of them have felt discriminated against because of any ground in any of the areas covered in the survey. Of these 17.9%, 16.5% of the Roma felt discriminated on the ground of their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs – 2.5 percentage points increase since 2016 when the value of this indicator based on FRA's EU MIDIS survey was 14%.[107]

Figure 27: Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months in any of the covered core areas of life by self-declared ethnicity (%)
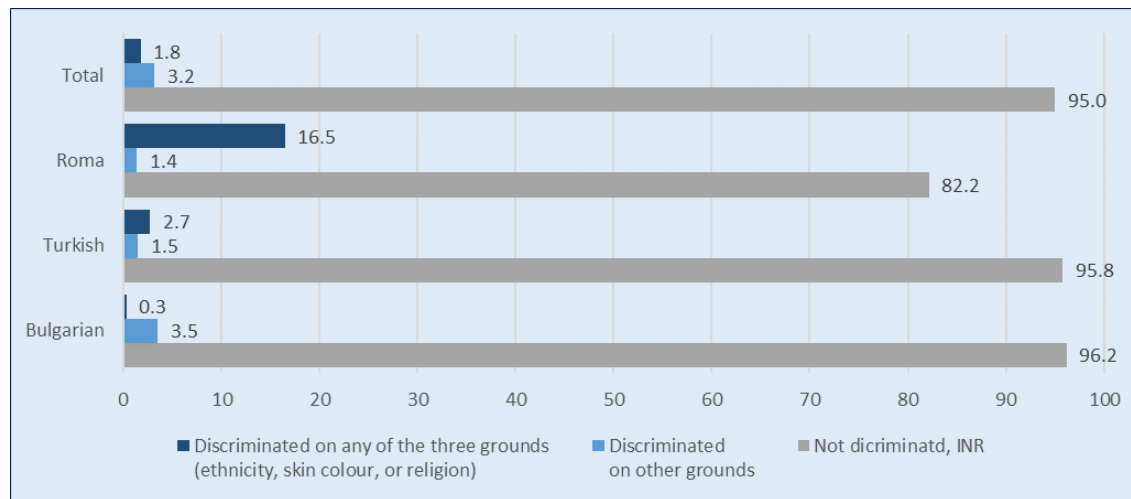
Notes: [a] Out of respondents older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months (on ANY ground) in the 12 months before the survey (n = 25,646); weighted percentages.
[b] Areas of daily life asked about in the survey: looking for work, at work, education (self or as parent), health, housing and other public or private services (public administration, restaurant or bar, public transport, shop).
[c] Based on question "In the past 12 months for which reasons you felt discriminated against? List all that apply to you". The answer options were: Skin colour; Ethnic or immigrant background/ ethnic origin; Religion or religious beliefs; Age; Gender; Disability; Sexual orientation; Gender identity; Other.

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[107] FRA (2017), Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey - Main results, p. 31.

Bulgaria's Roma declared most often that they felt discriminated against when they were looking for work (one out of four Roma), when they had to deal with the administration/public services or looking for housing (one out of six Roma). The differences between Roma and ethnic Bulgarians are large – particularly when in contact with the school authorities, when in contact with the administration, when looking for work and when accessing healthcare services (Table 12).

Table 12. Share of people who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months (on ANY ground) by discriminatory situation and self-declared ethnicity (%)

Indicator	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma	Total
when looking for a job in the past 12 months (n = 2,745)	15.7	10.3	26.7	17.2
when at work (n=13,587)	1.5	2.8	11.3	2.2
when in contact with school authorities (n=4,852)	(0.3)	(1.0)	10.6	1.4
when accessing the health services (n=17,988)	1.8	2.8	11.2	2.4
when looking for housing in the last 5 years (n=970)	6.5	(10.8)	(17.7)	7.4
when in contact with administration (n=13,771)	1.9	2.7	16.1	2.9
when at bar, restaurant, hotel, shopping, in public transport (n=21,627)	1.0	1.3	6.2	1.5

Note: a Out of respondents older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months: when looking for a job, when at work, when in contact with school authorities, when accessing the health services, when looking for housing in the past 5 years, when in contact with administration, and when at bar, restaurant, hotel, shopping, in public transport; weighted percentages, n - unweighted count in parentheses.
b Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).
d Based on question "have you ever felt discriminated against for any of the following reasons?" for each of the situations and based on any ground.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Table 13: Share of Roma who felt discriminated against in the past 12 months because of being Roma by discriminatory situation (%)

Discriminatory situation	On any ground	On the ground of ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs	On other grounds
when looking for a job (n=478)	26.7	22.9	3.8
when at work (n=778)	11.3	11.0	0.3
when in contact with school authorities (n=480)	10.6	10.6	0
when accessing the health services (n=971)	11.2	10.8	0.4
when in contact with administration (n=848)	16.1	15.4	0.7

when in restaurant, shop, transport, etc (n=1591)	6.2	5.9	0.3

Note: [a] Out of Roma older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months: when looking for a job, when at work, when in contact with school authorities, when accessing the health services, when looking for housing in the past 5 years, n - unweighted count in parentheses.
    [b] Based on three grounds (ethnicity, or skin colour or religious beliefs)
    [c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s).
    [d] Based on question "have you ever felt discriminated against for any of the following reasons?" for each of the situations based on the three grounds.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

It is necessary to bear in mind that the question captures subjective feeling of discrimination, which depends on the person's understanding what constitutes 'discrimination'. Given the orientation of the question at personal experience, it does not capture institutional or structural discrimination. With regards to education, the question of whether they felt discriminated against in their contacts with school authorities (as students or parents/guardians) may have provided an answer mainly for those who wanted to enrol their child in an integrated school but were not allowed, or for persons who studied in integrated schools or are parents/guardians of children who attend integrated schools. In such cases, the respondents can compare the attitude of the school authorities towards them and/or their children with that towards the Bulgarian children in the school or their parents. However, only one-third of the children of compulsory school age in the survey sample attend integrated schools and the share of 16 years and over year old Roma continuing their education in integrated secondary schools and higher education is very low. The vast majority of Roma parents/young people study in segregated schools.[108] Given their limited interactions with non-Roma peers, the chance that they would experience discrimination is quite low. Moreover, they have yet to sharpen their sensitivity to segregation and realise that it constitutes discrimination. The fact that the Bulgarian Act on Preschool and School Education does not consider segregation as discrimination is an example of structural discrimination (for further discussion see the Education section of this report).

Another example of structural discrimination comes from the area of healthcare. The question of whether Roma aged 16 years and over have felt discriminated against captures the explicit cases of experienced discrimination. However, large groups of population have limited access to health services because they do not have health insurance (as described in detail in 'Health' chapter). These are the self-employed, people with irregular (informal) employment or long-term unemployed whose share is particularly high among Roma. The vast majority of Roma in Bulgaria rely on irregular or temporary employment in the country or abroad. Apart from the low and irregular income, this employment modality goes hand-in-hand with lacking social or health insurance. Being unable to cover the cost of a health insurance out of their pockets, such informal labourers have their access to healthcare infringed. Given the fact that non-payment of health insurance in such cases is individual's responsibility ("free choice"), neither the informal labourers nor Bulgarian society or legislation perceives the infringed access to health services as discriminatory. The regulatory changes in the Health Insurance Act (described in more detail in the section on healthcare) increase the risk of dropping out of the health care system for a significant part of people with low and irregular incomes, who are over-represented

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[108] Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS-II (2016)); Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Bulgaria, Focusing on structural and horizontal preconditions for successful implementation of the strategy; Zahariev, B., D. Kolev (2020). 'Nosegregation: Local Action Against School Segregation Of Roma D2.5. School segregation maps in Bulgaria.

among Roma. Indicators of subjective perception of inequal treatment do not capture such cases of structural discrimination.

The information regarding respondents' perception of discrimination against when going to a bar, restaurant, hotel, shop, or public transport also captures only part of a bigger problem. Similarly to the area of education, it reflects the experience of people who had the opportunity to be discriminated. However, the vast majority of Roma in large urban neighbourhoods and slums rarely go to restaurants and bars (or even shops for everyday groceries, clothing and household goods) downtown/outside their neighbourhood. The chances of experiencing discrimination in a shop, at an open clothing market or a "restaurant" in the Roma neighbourhood where the majority (if not all) clients are also Roma are close to none. In other words, it is reasonable to assume that the share of people who felt discriminated against in various situations would have been way higher if the magnitude of segregation were lower.[109]

Data on social distances supports this hypothesis. The questionnaire contains no information regarding share of general population who do not feel comfortable with having Roma as their neighbours, but a survey conducted by Institute for Population and Human Studies in 2018 provides information on the social distances (including distancing to neighbours) of ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age (males aged 18-55 and females aged 18-50) to Roma (Figure 28).

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[109] The assumption is in line with social categorization theory, which posits that people place others into ingroups (''us'') and outgroups (''them'') (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Turner & Oakes, 1989). Once social categorization occurs, prejudice, and discrimination are more likely to follow. Prejudice might enhance personal self-esteem by creating positive associations with the ingroup and negative associations with the outgroup (Tajfel, 1981). Threats to an ingroup (e.g., loss of resources) also creates feelings of prejudice (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Tyler & Smith, 1998). When the ingroup, and ultimately the self, is threatened, people direct feelings of anger, fear, and anxiety towards outgroup members (Smith, 1993).

Figure 28: Social distances towards the Roma of ethnic Bulgarians in reproductive age. Answers to the question "Would you approve…" (%)

Question	No	Can't say	Yes
your child/grandchild to marry a Roma person?	79.6	9.3	11.1
to rent and live in a flat together with a Roma person?	71.3	8.1	20.5
a Roma person to be an officer in Bulgarian Army?	61.2	10.7	28.1
a Roma person to be a government minister?	61.3	9.5	29.2
a Roma person to be a prosecutor?	60.2	9.4	30.4
a Roma person to be your local police officer?	53.0	8.9	38.1
a Roma person to be your coach or trainer if you do/play sports?	48.7	10.3	41.0
a Roma person to teach your child(ren)/ grandchild(ren)?	46.0	10.9	43.1
to be under direct supervision at work by a Roma who has the required educational qualification	47.6	8.5	43.9
to receive medical help from a doctor who is Roma?	46.4	9.4	44.2
a Roma waiter to serve your food in a restaurant?	44.0	7.8	48.2
to be/make friends with Roma persons?	42.5	7.9	49.6
to live on a street where (several) Roma families live?	34.7	4.9	60.4
to work in the same workplace with Roma persons?	31.3	6.9	61.8
to eat in the same restaurant with Roma persons?	29.6	6.6	63.8
your child/grandchild to study in a class with several Roma children?	28.4	7.1	64.5
to sit in a common seat right next to a Roma person on the bus?	29.0	4.8	66.2

■ No   ■ Can't say   Yes

Source: Stoytchev, L. 2020. Attitudes and Distances of the Ethnic Bulgarians of Reproductive Age towards the Roma. **In:** Measures for Overcoming the Demographic Crisis in the Republic of Bulgaria, Volume V: Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities between the Large Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria. Publishing House of BAS "Prof. Marin Drinov", p.184

The results show that approximately one-third of those who identify themselves as ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age support segregation in every sphere of life (including public transport, schools, restaurants and industry / services). Close to half of the ethnic Bulgarians are against a Roma taking a superior position towards them or a member of their family in the capacity of their doctor, teacher, coach/trainer, local police officer. Nearly two-thirds of the ethnic Bulgarians categorically reject the possibility of a Roma taking a senior management position in judicial or governmental institutions. Close and intimate relations with members of the Roma community are not widely accepted. Almost half of

the Bulgarian respondents accept being friendship with Roma, but a marriage between a Bulgarian and a Roma is almost completely ruled out - only one-tenth of Bulgarians would accept it. The analysis disclosed that, unlike the Western and North European countries, education (including higher education) has little effect on reducing negative attitudes and social distances towards the Roma. The social distances are largest in small towns and regional centres with a population of less than 100 thousand people.[110]

Violence and harassment

Hate crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance or by a person's disability, gender identity and expression or sexual orientation are extreme and severe manifestations of discrimination and intolerance. In Bulgaria, there are no official statistics on hate crime and survey data are the only available source of information for the actual prevalence of bias-motivated incidents.[111]

BNSI/FRA 2020 survey recorded extremely low number of cases of violence (0.4% of the 16,283 respondents who answered this question). The number of Roma who declared that they were victims of violence is too small for in-depth analysis. The same is valid for the share of persons who were physically attacked for ethnic background/origin of all respondents who were physically attacked.

The survey registered low levels of experienced harassment by Bulgarian citizens - 3.2% of the total population aged 16 years and over declared that they were victims of harassment on any grounds in the 12 months before the survey. The share of the Roma who were harassed any grounds was 8.2% (Figure 29). Of these 8.2%, 6.3% experienced harassment on the ground of their ethnicity, skin colour or religious beliefs. The bi-variate analysis in the summary report of this project show that, apart from Roma, harassment is targeted also against the people living in households with highest completed education 'lower secondary' (5.7%) or 'lower' (5.0%)'.[112]

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[110] Stoytchev, L. (2020). Naglasi I distantsii na bulgarite v fertilna vazrast spriamo romite (Attitudes and distances of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards the Roma In: Tomova, I. Stoytchev, L., Ivanov, M. Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities between the Large Ethnic Groups in Bulgaria.) [Стойчев, Л. (2020). Нагласи и дистанции на българите във фертилна възраст спрямо ромите. В: Томова, И., Л. Стойчев, М. Иванов (2020). Демографски дисбаланси и социални неравенства между големите етнически групи в България. София: Издателство на БАН „Проф. Марин Дринов"]

[111] BNSI/ CSD/FRA. 2021. Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria. Summary of main results.

[112] Ibid.

Figure 29: Share of people aged 16 years and over experiencing harassment (overall-5 acts) because of any ground in the 12 months before the survey by self-declared ethnicity (%)
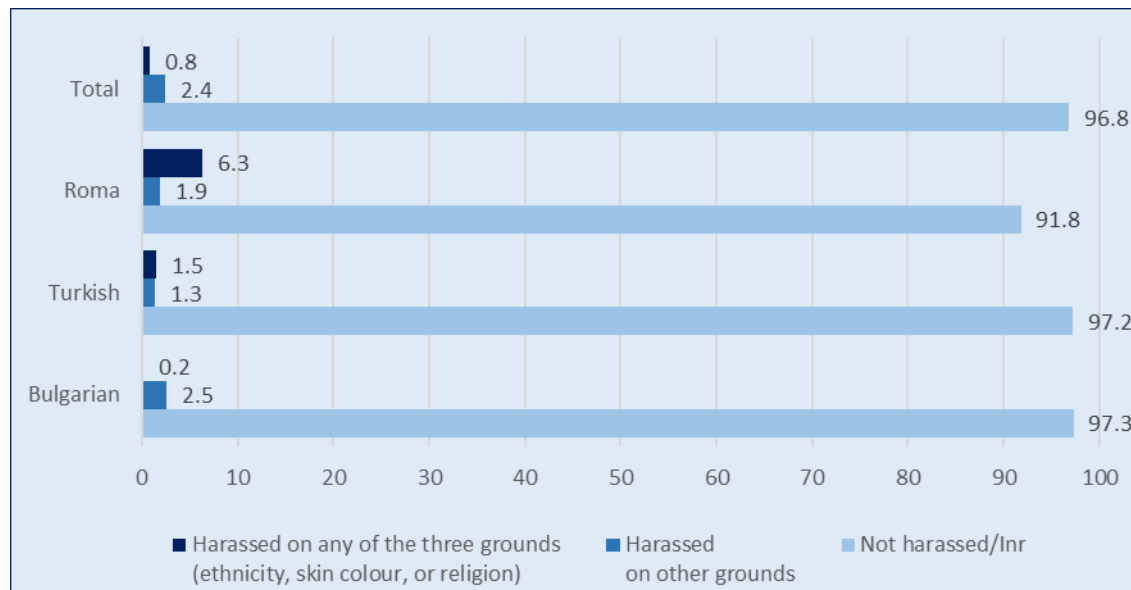
Note: [a] Out of respondents aged 16 years and over who were (out of all respondents) in the past 12 months; (n = 26,380); weighted results.

[b] Based on questions "Are there any incidents of harassment in the past 12 months?", "Was there at least one reason for harassment because of the 'skin colour' and/ or 'ethnic or immigrant background'?"

[c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

At the same time, qualitative research discloses that many Roma usually speak with pain about hate speech not only in the media and political discourse, but also in everyday life.[113]

Reporting of discrimination, violence and harassment

The share of the respondents who know how and to which institutions they can send a signal for the cases in which they have felt discriminated against or victims of violence and harassment and from which they can receive support and protection is low (See the Recommendation of ECRI Report on Bulgaria 2014). According to the survey conducted for the purpose of the project, more than one-third do not even know that there is a law that prohibits discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity or religion (Figure 30). There is a difference in awareness of the existence of anti-discrimination laws among members of the large ethnic groups: two-thirds of Roma are unaware of the existence of such a law versus almost one-third of those who identified themselves as ethnic Bulgarians and just over a half of those who identify as ethnic Turks.

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[113] Data from the surveys: Integrated model for working with vulnerable groups: Stopping the marginalization of Roma in Kyustendil by creating a model for community development. NBU. Agreement /15.01.2016 (2016-2018); Migration experience and change in attitudes towards work, education, gender and family relations of the Bulgarian Roma, funded by BAS (2017), "Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion", Contract 7162451, The World Bank, (2012-2013), Identifying and Reducing Prejudices as a Source of Conflict between Roma and non-Roma Population - Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia Compared (REDUPRE)" Grant Agreement No.: JUST/2010/FRAC/AG/1154 - 30-CE-0377112/00-32 (2011 – 2013), Empowering Women Against Intimate Partnership Violence in Roma Communities [EMPOW-AIR], 2011-2012. Daphne Project. JUST/2010/DAP3/AG/1266, etc.

Figure 30: Awareness among all respondents aged 16 years and over of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion by self-declared ethnicity (%)

Note: [a] Out of respondents aged 16 or more (n = 26,380); weighted results.
         [b] Based on question "As far as you are aware, is there a law in Bulgaria that forbids discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?"
         [c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
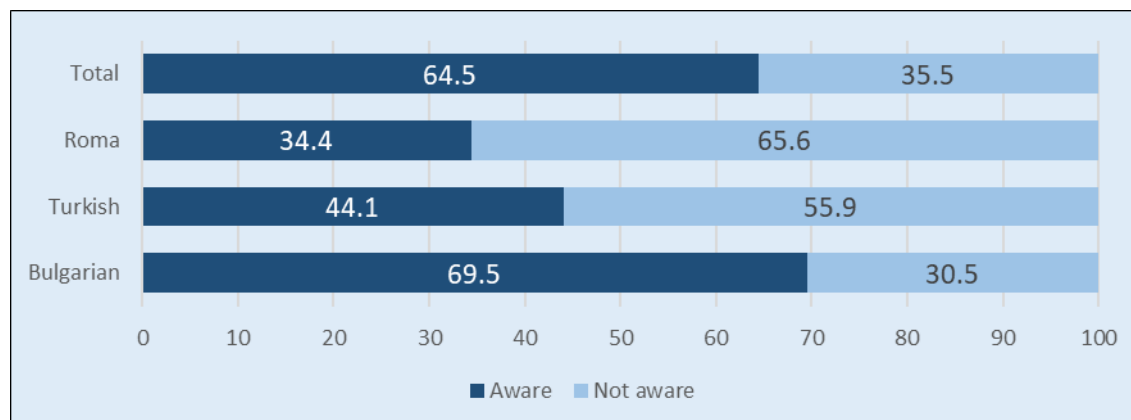Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

The data from BNSI/FRA 2020 survey confirms the findings of other sociological research that only a small number of victims of discrimination or violence tend to make public their experience or seek protection.[114] In Bulgaria, members of vulnerable groups, who are more likely to find themselves in situations of unequal or hostile treatment, rarely believe that their signals or protests would change the situation and, therefore, they rarely report discriminatory and violent acts against them or other members of their group[115]. This is particularly the case of Roma who experience hostile discourse in mass media against them.[116] This largely explains why only 8% of the Roma aged 16 and older who felt

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[114] Open Society Institute (2007). "I Can Stop and Search Whoever I Want". Police Stops of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Spain. New York.). Data are also from the surveys Integrated model for working with vulnerable groups: Stopping the marginalization of Roma in Kyustendil by creating a model for community development. NBU. Agreement /15.01.2016 (2016-2018); "Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion", Contract 7162451, The World Bank, (2012-2013), Identifying and Reducing Prejudices as a Source of Conflict between Roma and non-Roma Population - Cases of Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia Compared (REDUPRE)" Grant Agreement No.: JUST/2010/FRAC/AG/1154 - 30-CE-0377112/00-32 (2011 – 2013), Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender, Yale University (199-2001), Ethnic relations in the army. Financed by the Ministry of defence and IMIR (2000), Poverty in Bulgaria: Ethnic Dimensions of Poverty, World Bank (1998), The Rhodope Mountains in 90-es: Development Tendencies. IMIR (1998-1999) etc.

[115] Based on data from the studies: Evaluation of the Bulgarian-Swiss Programme for the Promotion of Social Inclusion of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups (ZOV Programme) (2018-2019); Social Innovations for More Effective Social Inclusion of Disadvantaged Roma Women (under project BG05M9OP001-4.001-100-C01 procedure BG05M9OP001-4.001, Transnational and Danube Partnerships for Employment and Growth under the Operational Program Development of human resources (2015 – 2017); Migration experience and change in attitudes towards work, education, gender and family relations of the Bulgarian Roma, Funded by: BAS, Program for young scientists (2015-2017); Integrated model for working with vulnerable groups: Stopping the marginalization of Roma in Kyustendil by creating a model for community development. NBU (2015-2016); Bulgarian qualitative research on labour market Exclusion of the Roma, Contract No 7171492/21.05.2014, The World Bank; The implementation of the NRIS and other national commitments in respect to Roma health in Bulgaria, IOM 2014; Regional Survey on Roma at risk of marginalization: Migration of Roma and non-Roma from CEE countries, 2011-2013, UNDP, The World Bank; "Gender Dimensions of Roma Inclusion", Contract 7162451, The World Bank, 2012-2013.

discriminated against (in any area) in past 12 months reported the last incident of discrimination (Figure 31). Of these 8%, 7.1% reported the last incident of discrimination as due to their being Roma.

Figure 31: Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against (in any area) in past 12 months and reported the last incident of discrimination by ethnicity (%)
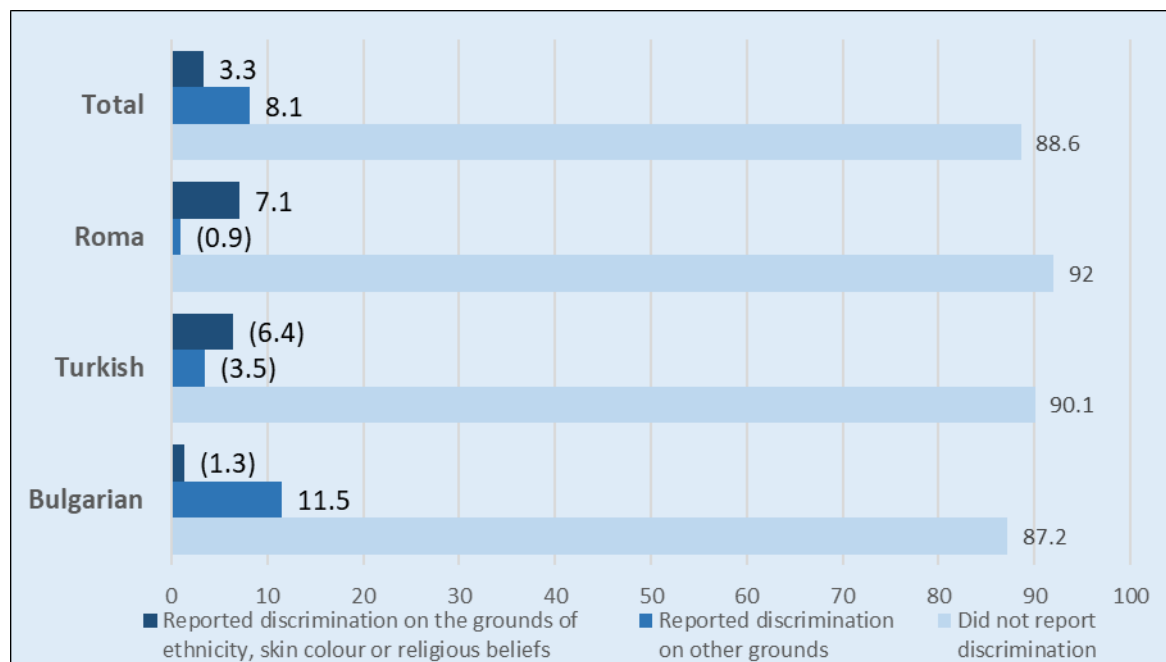
Note: [a] Out of respondents aged 16 or more (n =1,232) who experienced discrimination (in any area, on any ground) in the past 12 months; weighted results.
[b] Based on question "Did you report or make a complaint about any of these (i.e., discrimination) incidents?"
[c] Remainder to 100% includes non-responses (if any) in the underlying question(s); results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.
[d] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey

Due to low number of cases reporting violence and harassment, analysis of their reporting/non-reporting is not possible. The non-reporting cases of discrimination, violence or harassment is difficult to interpret also because respondents do not show to which institution the victim reported the discrimination, violence or harassment. Research on domestic violence in Bulgaria, for example, shows that a very small

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[116] BHC, (2015-2020). Human rights in Bulgaria (2014-2020) г. Sofia. Reports in English can be found here. In Bulgarian, all BHC reports are available here; Tomova, I. (2011). Stereotipi i predrazsadatsi za romite v balgarskata presa. [Stereotypes and Prejudice towards the Roma in the Bulgarian Press] Naselenie, kn. 3-4. Sofiya. IPHS-BAS. pp. 140-174; Pamporov, A. (2011). Piyanite murgavi prestapnitsi (Obrazat na romite v balgarskite pechatni izdaniya v predizboren kontekst). [The Swarth Drungken Offenders (The Roma's Image in Bulgaria's Printed Media in Elections Context)] Naselenie, k. 3-4. Sofiya. IPHS-BAS; Tomova, I. (2015). Obrazat na romite v shest elektronni medii. [The Image of the Roma in Six Electronic Media] Razgrad. INTEGRO [In Bulgarian]; Kanushev, M. (2018). Stigmatiziranata deviantnost, ili kak se konstituira mnozhestvena izklyuchenost. [Stigmatized Deviance, or How Multiple Exclusion is Constructed] V: Neravenstva i sotsialna (dez)integratsiya: v tarsene na zaednost. [In: Inequalities and Social Des(integration): in Search for Togetherness] Boyadzhieva, P., Kanushev, M., Ivanov, M. (red.). Sofia. Izdatelstvo „Iztok-Zapad", Tomova, Stoytchev, Ivanov (2020) Demografski disbalansi I sotsialni neravenstva mezhdu golemite etnicheski grupi v Bulgaria [Demographic Imbalances and Social Inequalities Between the Large ethnic Groups in Bulgaria].

proportion of victims seek help at all. In cases when they do, the victims most often turn to a doctor, but claim to have been injured in an accident. Some Roma respondents in qualitative research say that sometimes they report cases of harassment to relatives, friends or to the pastor, but these are not the persons and the institutions that are legally in charge to protect them. Mistrust of institutions, along with lack of knowledge of the reporting procedures, are serious obstacles to increasing institutional sensitivity to discrimination and public sensitivity to violence and harassment.[117] The low sensitivity of the general society and the institutions, as well as among many of the victims, to the discrimination and harassment to which they are exposed is also part of the problem.[118]

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[117] Zlatanova, V (2001). Domashnoto nasilie [Domestic violence]. Sofia: OSI [In Bulgarian]; Zlatanova, V. (2004). Nelegitimnoto nasilie [The illegitimate violence]. Sofia: Publishing house Kvazar.[In Bulgarian]; Tomova, I., V. Angelova (2013). Women and Violence in the Intimate Partnership in Roma Communities. Sofia: IMIR.
[118] European Commission (2019), Special Eurobarometer 493: Discrimination in the European Union.

8. Territorial dimensions of deprivation. The 'Roma slums'

Highlights

- At least 4.2% of the Bulgarian population live in marginalized conditions (perceived by the the surrounding population as "Gypsy neighbourhood".
- The ethnic composition of such localities is complex. Although most of the people living within their boundaries self-identified as Roma (54.6%), 36.2% self-identified as Bulgarians and 7.9% - as Turks.
- The living conditions in such localities are considerably worse than the conditions outside them. But deprivation is distributed unequally. Those who identify as Roma are scoring much worse than those who declare a different ethnicity (Bulgarian or Turkish).
- The gap between those 'within' and those 'outside' is biggest in regards discrimination. In this area, 'Roma neighbourhood stigma' additionally augments the prejudice and antigypsyism Roma in general face.

8.1. Background

The phenomenon of Roma slums (or "Roma neighbourhoods") is a challenge in many countries of Eastern Europe – but is particularly pronounced in Bulgaria, where areas of concentration of Roma population are still commonly referred to as "Gypsy mahalla". According to the results of 2011 census, the share of self-identified Roma in Bulgaria is about 4%-5%.[119] However, many people are perceived by the general population as "Roma/Gypsies" even if they don't identify as "Roma." The risk of social exclusion, marginalization and discrimination is higher if a person lives in a locality with no basic infrastructure in the outskirts of the village (or encapsulated in a "slum" in a big city).

Despite the severity of the problem, data on such localities' size, composition and territorial distribution is fragmented. Bulgaria doesn't have a comprehensive mapping of such settlements, most of which are unregulated and with poor or non-existent technical infrastructure, sanitation or roads. According to Yale University survey 'Poverty, ethnicity and gender' from 2000, the share of Roma and those people who are labelled by the others as Roma/Gypsies living in segregated neighbourhoods and slums was 68%[120] - significant increase compared to the 48% in 1980.[121] A report produced under an EU-funded project BG 051PO001-6.2.11 "Development of comprehensive measures for integration of the most marginalized communities among ethnic minorities with a focus on Roma," among other deliverables, produced a list of 320 "micro-zones with the most marginalized communities," of which 290 were

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[119] BNSI, **2011 Census results**

[120] Ladányi, J.; Szelényi, I. (May 30, 2006). Patterns of Exclusion: Constructing Gypsy Ethnicity and the Making of an Underclass in Transitional Societies of Europe. New York: East European Monographs.

[121] Dimitrov, D., B. Chakalov, I. Georghieva, K. Dechev (1980). Utvarzhdavaneto na sotsialisticheskia nachin na zhivot sred bulgarskite grazhdani ot tsiganski proizhod. Centralen Komitet na BKP. Sofia. [The establishment of the socialist way of life among the Bulgarian citizens of Gypsy origin] (Утвърждаването на социалистическия начин на живот сред българските граждани от цигански произход).

labelled as "Roma" and 30 as "other."[122] A number of local level in-depth studies also exist (e.g. mini-censuses in particular localities with high number of Roma living in marginalized or segregated setting).[123] These data however do not allow for in-depth analysis of the severity of deprivation people living in such neighbourhoods face.

A comprehensive map of localities with marginalized Roma population still does not exist. The existing terminological inconsistency and unclarity of definitions are not helpful either. The variety of terms in use include "segregated settlements," "micro-zones with marginalized communities," "Roma neighbourhoods," "areas of compact Roma population," "Roma ghettoes" or "Roma slums" – all with different combinations of social, ethnic, and technical infrastructure criteria – also does not help for the implementation of such research. At the same time, experience from Czechia[124] or Slovakia[125] suggests that investing in such mappings is paramount for informing Roma inclusion policies.

In an attempt to outline the magnitude of these challenges, the project team in cooperation with the Open Society Institute – Sofia matched the data from the BNSI/FRA 2020 survey with the mapping of settlements that are still commonly referred to as "Gypsy neighbourhoods" – OSI-Sofia conducted in 2008-2010 and periodically updated throughout the years until 2021.[126]. The mapping has geocoded 890 polygons outlining the boundaries of such localities (see Annex 5 for the description of the methodology).

8.2.   Results

The matching of the two datasets shows that 4.2% of the Bulgarian population live in marginalized conditions (perceived by the outsiders as "living in Gypsy neighbourhood"). Broken down by ethnicity, 1.9% of the population that self-identified as Bulgarians live in such conditions, 4.2% of the Turks, 23.5% of the Roma and 1.5% of those who didn't answer or didn't state ethnicity). The ethnic composition of the "Gypsy neighbourhoods" is very different though: most of the people living within their boundaries self-identified as Roma (54.6%) followed by Bulgarians (36.2%), Turks (7.9%) and 1.2% who didn't answer or didn't state ethnicity.

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[122] Consortium "S.E.G.A. - ISIM - Prime Consulting Ltd. (2013), Identifying the most marginal communities among ethnic minorities based on territorial criteria (mapping) and specific issues on the main directions of integration policy (health, education, employment, income and living standards, housing conditions, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, etc.). Annex 3, "List of the identified micro-zones with the most marginalized communities. Detailed description of problems and needs and systematized data on their condition".

[123] Pamporov, A. (2021). Zhilishtni potrebnosti I naglasi na seleystvata v kvartali s kontsentratsia na bednost v obshtina Targovishte I obshtina Sliven [Housing needs and attitudes of families in neighborhoods with poverty concentration in Targovishte municipality and Sliven municipality.] (Пампоров, А. (2021). Жилищни потребности и нагласи на семействата в квартали с концентрация на бедност в община Търговище и община Сливен. София: Фондация „Хабитат България".)

[124] . Čada, K., Büchlerová, D., Korecká, Z., Samec, T. (2015). **Analysis of Socially Excluded Localities in the Czech Republic**.

[125] UNDP (2014), **ATLAS rómskych komunít na Slovensku 2013**; Ravasz, Á., Kovács, L., Markovič, F. (2020), **Atlas rómskych komunít 2019**.

[126] OSI team merged the polygons into one file in QGIS and uploaded the polygons to Google maps. At the next step, the addresses in the sample were also uploaded and geocoded in Google to compare them with the QGIS polygons and see which of them are inside or outside the polygons. Out of the total 15,000 addresses in the survey sample, 445 addresses (households) fall within the borders of the polygons. For the methodology of OSI's mapping see Annex 5.
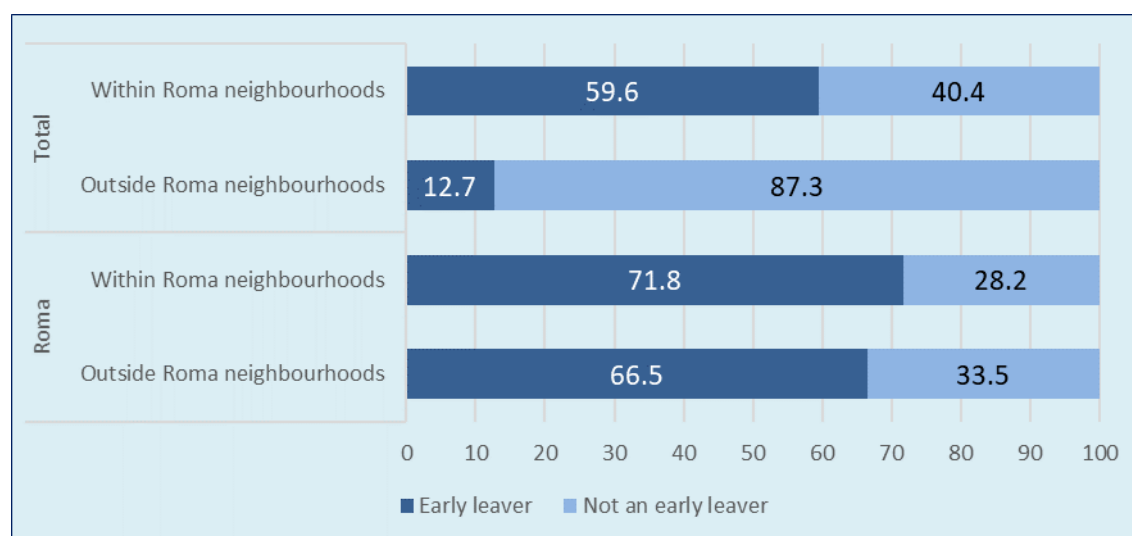
The results confirm earlier research[127] suggesting the ethnic profile of people living in "Roma neighbourhoods" goes beyond those who self-identify as "Roma." In fact, this population fits closely into the definition of "Roma" as umbrella term that goes beyond a single ethnicity. If this concept is applied (and not strict "single choice of ethnicity"), the share of "Roma as umbrella term" population living in segregated setting and marginalized conditions is much higher than 23.5% and is closer to 30%. But even this estimate is most probably underestimated. First, the sample of the survey is representative for the total population. It was not boosted for Roma neighbourhoods, which have higher population density. Second, new spots of marginalization may have emerged in the last years that were not in the initial OSI list – or the population of the existing 'Roma neighbourhoods' might have increased in the last years due to internal migration to such localities triggered by evictions and demolition of informal housing in recent years(see Box 5 in "Housing" chapter).

The matching of the data from the survey with OSI's mapping of "marginalized localities" perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods" provides interesting insights on the situation of Roma living within and outside the boundaries of such locations. Some of the results were confirming initial expectations (e.g. the differences in regards indicators of housing conditions). Others however seem counterintuitive – but in fact hint at the complex underlying mechanisms that shape the perceptions of the slums, the population living there and its impact on their survival strategies.

Education

The impact of living in marginalized setting is particularly visible also in the area of education and transition from education to employment. The share of Roma leaving school early "within" and "outside" the Roma neighbourhoods is, respectively, 71.8% and 66.5% (Figure 32). The share of early school leavers of all ethnic groups living is Roma neighbourhoods (59.6%) is 6.9 percentage points lower than the share among Roma living there suggesting considerable differences on this indicator between different groups.

Figure 32: Early leavers from education and training 18-24 years, by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood)

[127] Tomova, I. 'Konstruirane na romskata identichnost v Bulgaria' (The Roma identity construction in Bulgaria), Sociologicheski Problemi, v. 3-4, 2005 (pp. 187–214), Pamporov, A. (2006). Romskoto vsekidnevie v Bulgaria (Roma Everyday Life). Sofia: IMIR; Kolev, D., T. Frumova, A. Krasteva, N. Nedelchev, D. Dimitrova, 2004. Kniga za uchitelya (Teachers' Manual).

Employment

Paid work rate is lower among people living in a Roma neighbourhood than among those outside. The share of Roma "not in paid work" is higher among people living in such conditions than outside them (respectively, 57.1% and 51.5%, Figure 33). Ethnicity however also plays a role: the value of the indicator considerably differs between groups. In the case of Roma, the paid work rate for those 'outside' is lower than the rate for Bulgarians and Turks living 'within' the boundaries of the neighbourhood.

Figure 33: Share of people who self-declared their main activity status as 'paid work' (including full-time, part-time, ad hoc jobs, self-employment and occasional work or work in the past four weeks), 20-64 years by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood)

Note: ^a Out of respondents aged 20-64 (n =17,308) who experienced discrimination (in any area, on any ground) in the past
           12 months; weighted results.
           ^b Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks,
           have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?". The General population employment rate [lfsa_ergan] is
           based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) concept: Employed population, 20-64 years, consists of those
           persons who during the reference week did any work for pay or profit for at least one hour, or were not working but
           had jobs from which they were temporarily absent.
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma
           neighbourhoods"

NEET rates "within" and "outside" reveal similar picture. For Roma, the rate is, respectively, 59.9% and 51.7% (Figure 34). The rate for Bulgarians living in a Roma neighbourhood is 24.4% - and only 11.4% among those outside. For the Turkish population the rates are respectively 28.8% and 22.2%.

Figure 34: Share of young persons, 15-29 years old with current main activity 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET) by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood)

Notes: [a] Out of all household members aged 15-29 years (n = 4,030); weighted results.
         [b] Based on the questions: "How would you describe your current employment status?"; "During the past 4 weeks, have you done any work for a fee in cash or other income?"; "Is the person studying at present?". Comparability with the Eurostat NEET rate is restricted due to a different definition. The Eurostat NEET rate is based on the ILO concept, which refers to having worked at least one hour in the past week. The present survey also did not ask on participation in non-formal education or training.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

AROP and severe poverty

The high rates of poverty in Roma neighbourhoods are not surprising. 84.8% of Roma living within in a Roma neighbourhood are at risk of poverty compared to 74.2% of those outside (Figure 35). On this indicator however the differences between the three groups are particularly pronounced. AROP among Bulgarians living in such conditions is more than twice lower than that of Roma (35.3%).

Figure 35: At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers) by ethnicity in 2019 and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)

Notes: [a] Out of all household members in the surveyed household (n = 30,303); weighted results.
           [b] At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3).
           [c] Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?"
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Child poverty goes hand-in-hand with overall poverty. The gap on this indicator (share of children living in households in poverty) is also worrying. 90.5% of Roma children living in Roma neighbourhoods are at risk of poverty. The value for children of parents self-identified as Bulgarians and living in a Roma neighbourhood is twice lower (44.7%, Figure 36).

Figure 36: Children aged <18 years who are at risk of poverty (below 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers) by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood), 2020 (%)

Notes:
[a] Out of all household members aged under 18 years in the surveyed household (n = 4,491); weighted results.

[b] At-risk-of-poverty are all persons with an equivalised current monthly disposable household income below the twelfth of the national 2019 SILC at-risk-of-poverty threshold (published by National Statistical Institute; 413.04 BGN). The equivalised disposable income is the total income of the household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3).

[c] Based on question "What is the net monthly income of your household?" and the list of household members

[d] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

High rates of poverty are also associated with hunger. The share of persons living in a Roma neighbourhood and in household where at least one person in the household has gone to bed hungry at least once in the past month due to lack of money to buy food is 17.4%. This share however reaches 28.6% among Roma households in such neighbourhood (Figure 37).

Figure 37: Share of persons living in household where at least one person in the household gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)

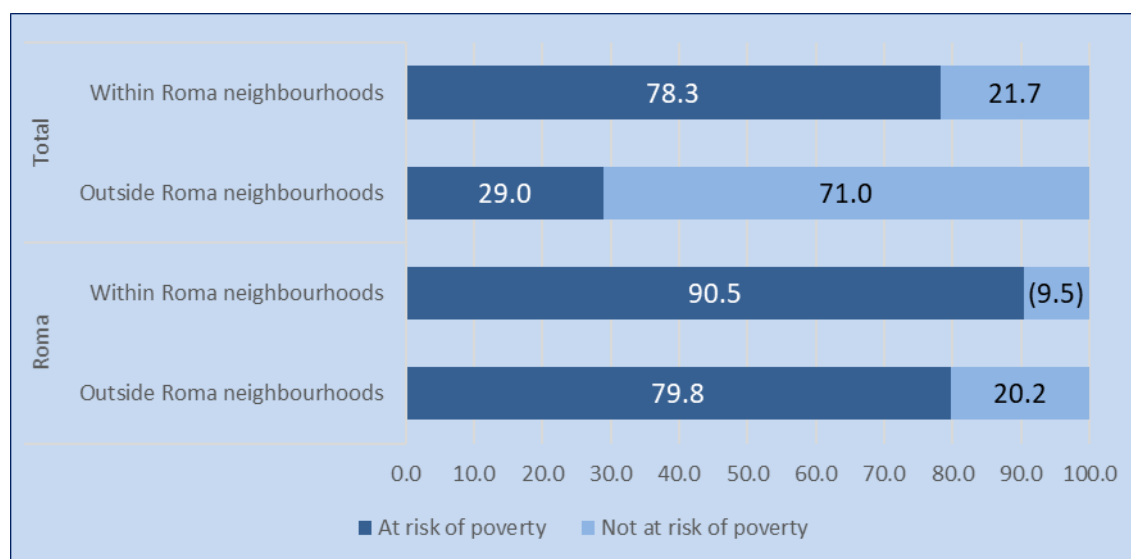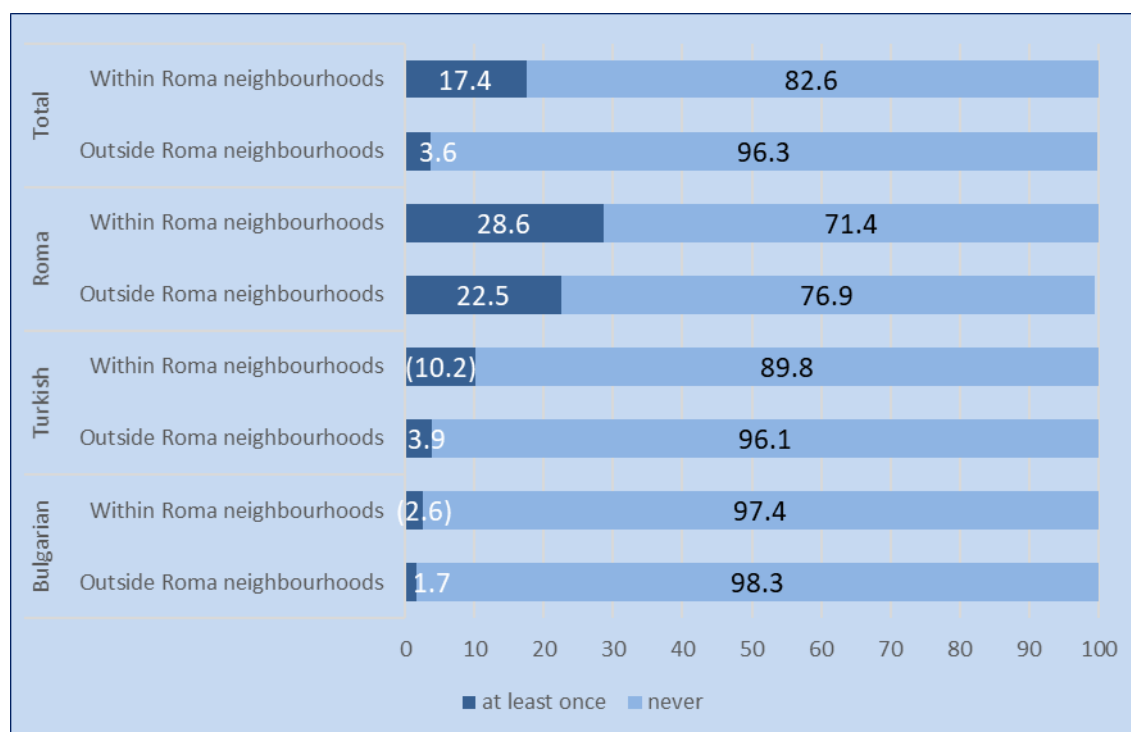Notes: [a] Out of all household members in the surveyed household (n = 30,283); weighted results.

[b] Based on question "In the past month, have you or someone in your household gone to bed hungry because you didn't have enough money for food? If so, how often this has happened in the last month?".

[c] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Health

Health is an area in which the differences between groups are among the lowest. This might be due to the fact that the Roma neighbourhoods are located mostly in towns and big cities and people in such neighbourhoods might have better access to health facilities and medical professionals. The data suggest that people living in marginalized setting tend to visit GP and other health specialists more frequently than those outside (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Worth noting is that the share of Roma ssessing their health in general as 'Very good' or 'Good', 16 years and over is lower among people in such neighbourhoods compared to those outside by almost seven percentage points higher – 69.2% and 76.4% respectively (Figure 38). One possible explanation might be better awareness of the real health status (associated with more frequent visits to doctors).

Figure 38: Share of persons assessing their health in general as 'Very good' or 'Good', respondents, by ethnicity, age and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)
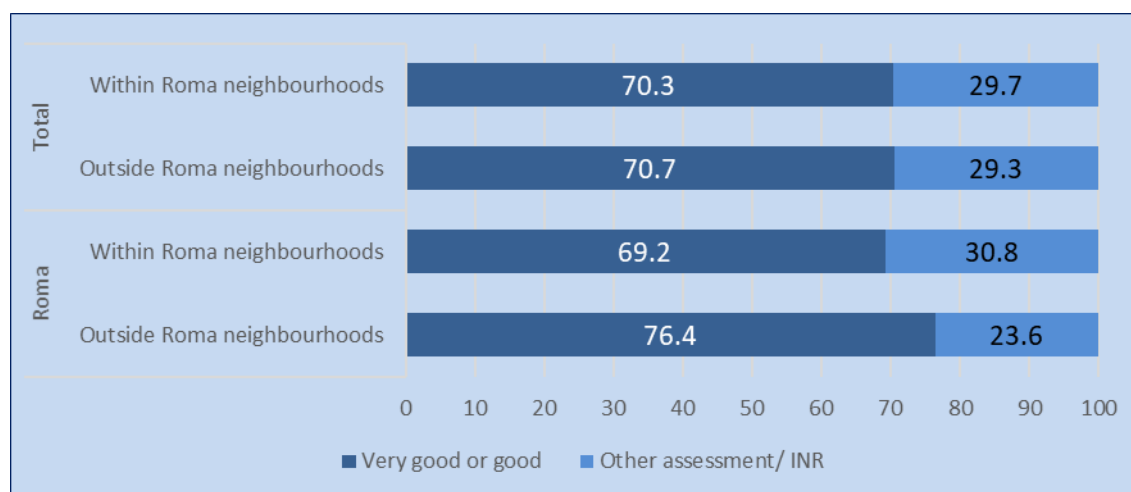
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents aged 16 years and over (n =26,667); weighted results.
         [b] Based on question "How do you generally assess your health?"
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Figure 39: Time elapsed since last visit to a general practitioner or a medical or surgical specialist of people aged 15 and older by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)

Notes: [a] Out of all respondents visiting GP (n =26,312) and visiting a medical or surgical specialist (n =25,805); weighted results.

[b] Based on questions: "When was the last time you consulted your GP about yourself?" and "When was the last time you consulted a specialist or dentist - surgeon for yourself?"

[c] 3,991 INRs on the question about visiting GP and 4,498 INRs on the question about visiting a medical or surgical specialist out of 30,303 observations are omitted; results for ethnicities different from Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma are also not included because of their low count.

[d] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Housing

The fact that the living conditions in "Roma neighbourhoods" are worse than outside them is not particularly revealing – but the magnitude of differences on some indicators is surprising. The share of Roma living in households without tap water inside the dwelling within the boundaries of such neighbourhoods is 25.0% compared to 15.9% outside. The gap on this indicator between the different groups living in a Roma neighbourhood is among the most considerable (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Share of people living in households without tap water inside the dwelling by self-declared ethnicity (%)
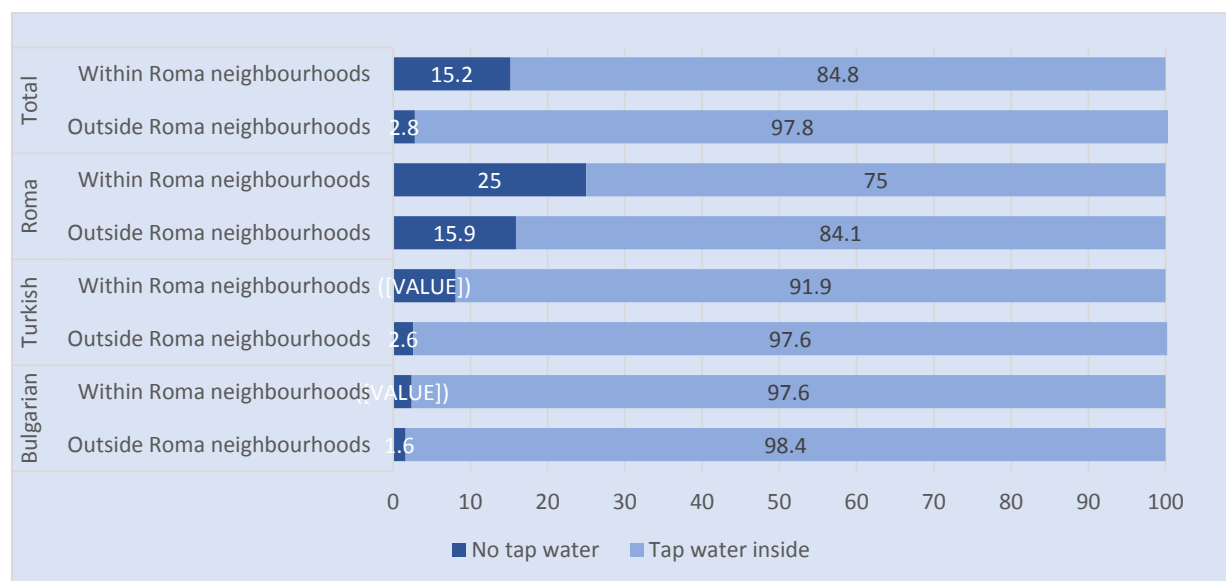
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
         [b] Based on questions: "Do you have tap water inside the dwelling?".
Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 surveyThe poor quality of the housing stock on Roma neighbourhoods is also not surprising. The share of Roma living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor is 29.2 within the neighbourhoods while outside them it's 21.8 – way higher than for the other groups (Figure 41). On the other hand, the close values for Roma "inside" and "outside" Roma neighbourhoods show that the living conditions of Roma living in segregated and in non-segregated conditions are similarly bad. However, the differences in the share of population with no access to electricity are surprising (5.5% within the boundaries of the Roma neighbourhoods and 0.6%

outside them). It might suggest much higher propensity of informal or illegal housing there. As regards differences between groups, only Roma face such poor living conditions in the Roma neighbourhoods. This is the case also for the other two housing indicators – overcrowding (Figure 42).

Figure 41: Share of people living in housing deprivation (in a dwelling too dark or leaking roof/damp walls, floors or no bath/shower or no indoor toilet) by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)
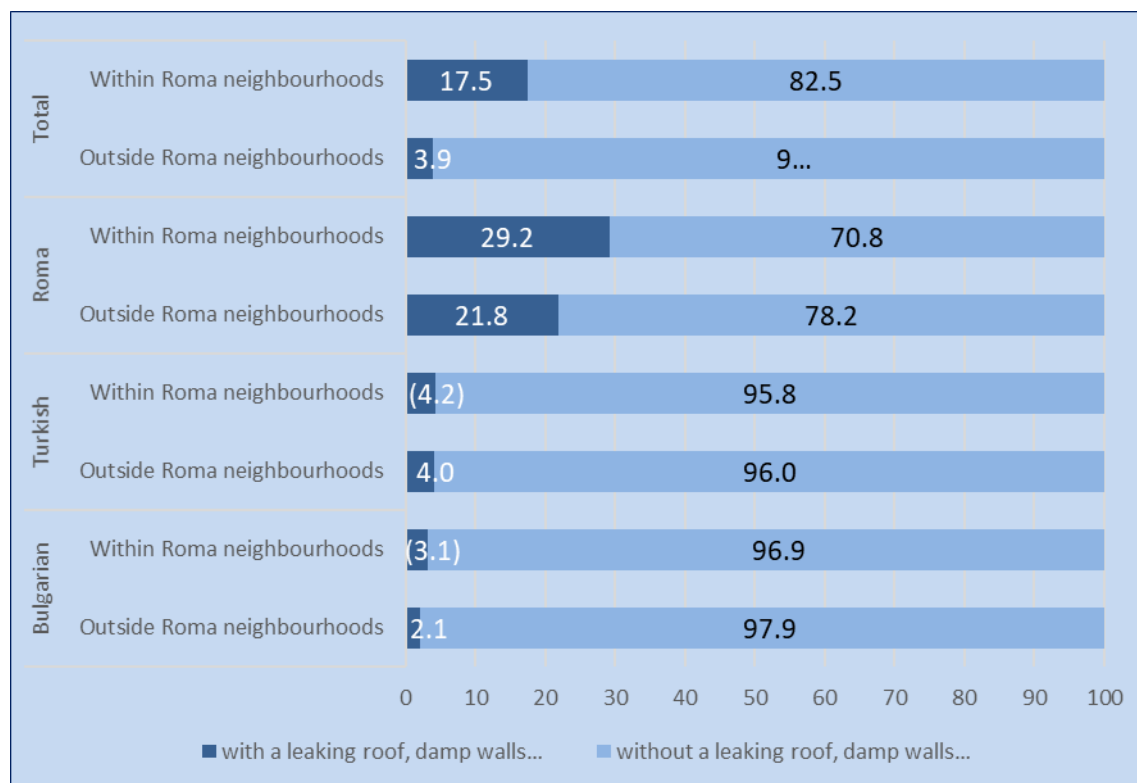
Notes: [a] Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
[b] Based on questions: "Leaking roof or damp walls/floors/foundation or rot in window frames or floor (B18.1)?", "It is too dark (B18.3) (meaning there isn't enough daylight coming through the windows)?", "Absence of a shower/bathroom inside the dwelling (B10.2)?", "Absence of a (flushing) toilet inside the dwelling (B10.1)?"
[c] Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Thus, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total – or based on less than 20 individual cell count – are flagged (the value is published in brackets).

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

and access to sanitation (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 42: Share of people living in household that does not have the minimum number of rooms according to the Eurostat definition of overcrowding by ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)
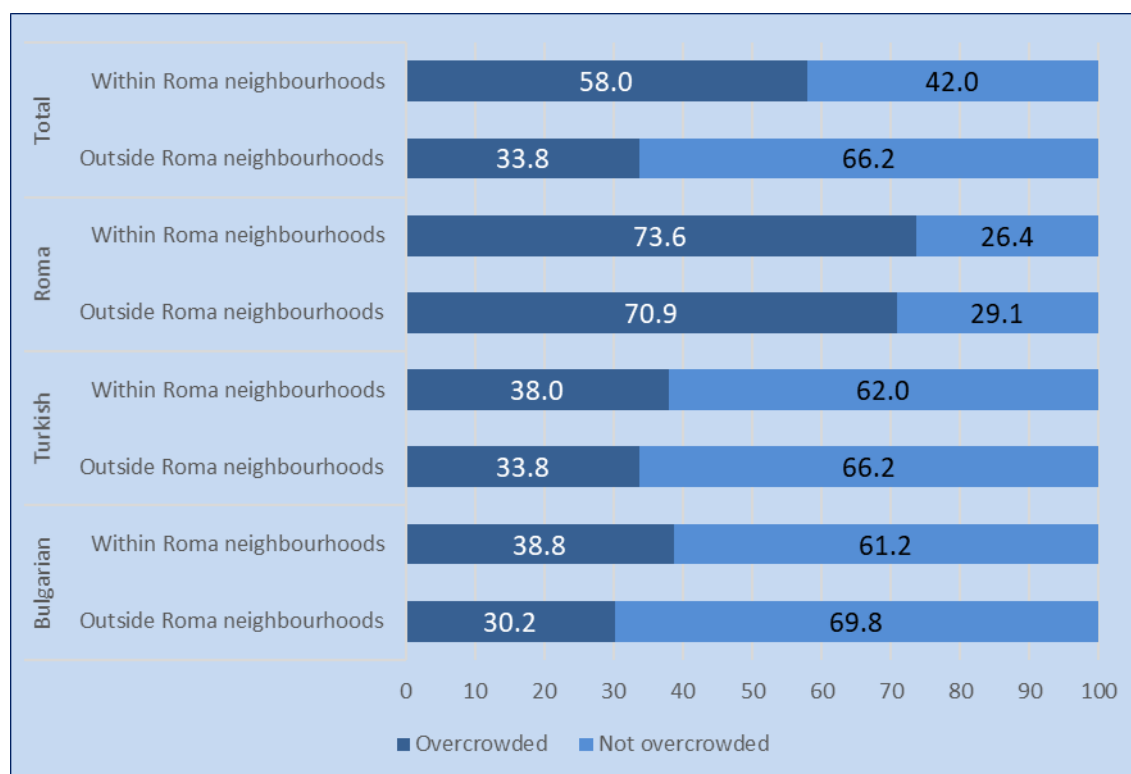
Notes:
[a] Out of all respondents (n =30,303); weighted results.
[b] Based on questions "What is the number of rooms in the dwelling?" and "How many of them do you use in your daily life?"

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Discrimination

A key factor contributing to the differences outlined above might be discrimination based on the fact that people living in marginalized setting are perceived as marginalized. The results summarised in Table 14 suggest that regardless how you self-identify yourself (as Bulgarian, Turk, Roma, or else), the very fact of living in a slum puts you at much higher risk of discrimination and creates a powerful feedback loop: attributing 'underclass' characteristics to people living in marginalization diminishes their chances in life and translates into de facto deprivation fuelling discriminatory attitudes further. This is a key reason why addressing the challenge of "Roma neighbourhoods" is a key policy priority.

Table 14: Key discrimination indicators by type of locality (Roma neighbourhood)

Indicator	Living outside a Roma neighbourhood	Living within a Roma neighbourhood
Share of Roma who felt discriminated past 12 months	11.5	15.6
Share of Roma aware of laws prohibiting discrimination	36.4	28.1

Share of Roma who reported last incident of discrimination	11.4	0.0
Experiences of discrimination because of being Roma in the past 12 months	8.7	19.0
At work (n=13,587)	7.2	19.4
when using health care services (n=17,988)	7.9	22.6
in contact with education authorities (self or parent) (n=4,852)	13.4	24.7
in contact with administration (n=13,771)		

Notes: [a] Out of respondents older than 16 years who have felt discriminated against out of those who were at risk of being discriminated in the past 12 months: when looking for a job, when at work, when in contact with school authorities, when accessing the health services, when looking for housing in the past 5 years, when in contact with administration, and when at bar, restaurant, hotel, shopping, in public transport; weighted percentages, n - unweighted count in parentheses.

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

Poor awareness of one's rights and of what constitutes discriminatory action contributes to poor understanding and underreporting of discrimination. The awareness of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is low among Roma and Turks – but also among Bulgarians living in Roma neighbourhoods (Figure 43). The results are similar in regards awareness of equality bodies. In total, the share of people who heard of at least one equality body is 84.6% of those living outside of Roma neighbourhoods – and only 50.8% of those living within.

Figure 43: Awareness among all respondents aged 16 years and over of laws prohibiting discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion by self-declared ethnicity and type of locality (Roma neighbourhood) (%)
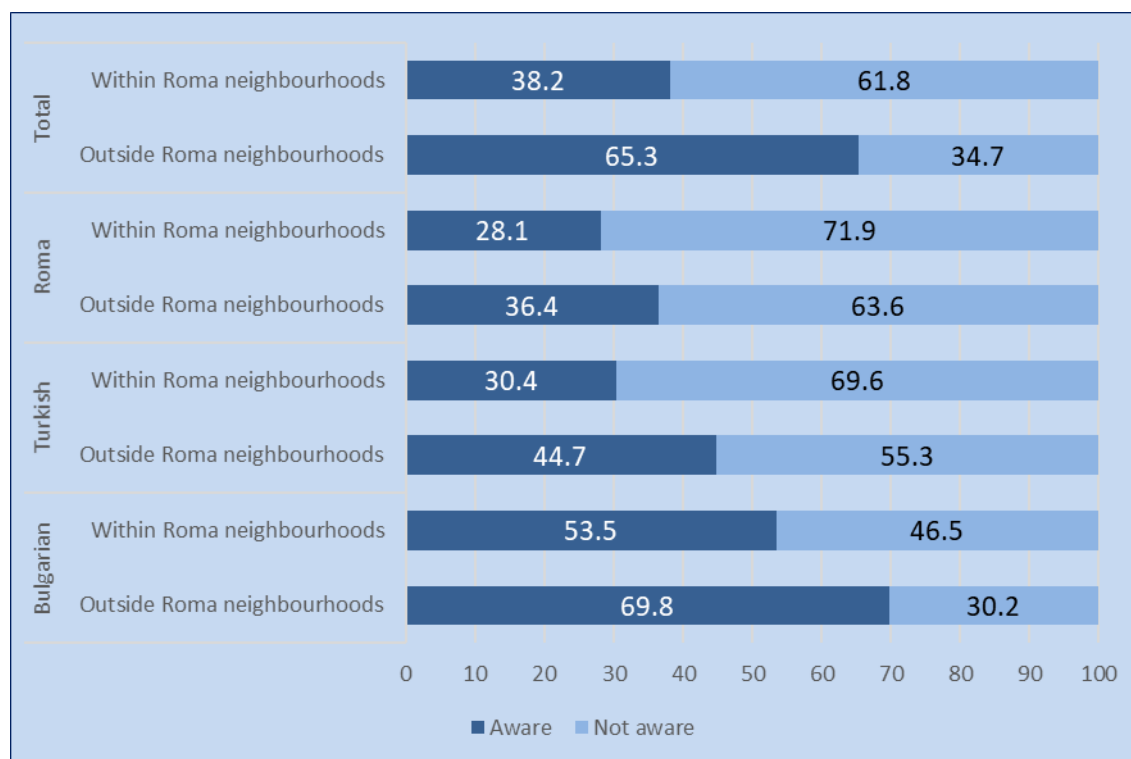
Note: [a] Out of respondents aged 16 or more (n = 26,380); weighted results.
[b] Based on question "As far as you are aware, is there a law in Bulgaria that forbids discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?"

Source: BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and OSI-Sofia Mapping of marginalized localities perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods"

9. Conclusions and recommendations

The preparatory, pilot and testing research prior to the survey conducted in the "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on Hard-to-Reach Populations at risk of violation of their rights" project show that the strategic documents aiming to reduce social disparities between Roma and non-Roma rarely rely on data and indicators.[128] The current report aims to suggest options for filling this gap.

The report outlines the primary challenges that Bulgaria's Roma face in terms of their socio-economic status, their exposure to discrimination, harassment and violence, and their impact on the risk of multiple deprivation. Complimentary national-specific indicators are proposed, necessary for the monitoring of the reduction of the social inequalities and the social inclusion of the Roma in Bulgaria during the next programming period. Most of the indicators included in the study correspond to the indicators adopted by the European Commission for monitoring the results of the implementation of the EU Roma strategic framework for equality inclusion and participation and can be used as a baseline for measuring progress in regards Roma inclusion. In order to make these indicators operational, the Government might set explicit targets for key areas of Roma inclusion, as suggested in the Council Recommendation from March 2021. In addition, the set of legislative changes and sector-specific recommendations outlined below would make the process of Roma inclusion more effective and efficient.

The current report outlines the multidimensional nature of the deprivations that Bulgaria's Roma face. The combination of poverty, marginalization, low education and exposure to discrimination, harassment and violence reproduces the vicious circle of exclusion and replication of multidimensional poverty over generations.

The primary objective of the project was to test novel approaches in regards data on the situation of populations at risk of poverty, social exclusion and marginalization and violation of their rights. The data summarised in this report go beyond confirming that Roma are the group at highest risk in that regard. The analysis puts the survey data in broader context aiming to better understand the drivers leading to the deprivations Roma face and inform policies that should address them.

In December 2021, the Bulgarian Government submitted to the European Commission its updated National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma (2021-2030). Commenting on the specific policies envisaged in the Strategy goes beyond the scope and purpose of this report (apart from the general "allocate resources and do it!"). The recommendations below outline several preconditions necessary for the Strategy to meet its objectives.

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[128] Ilcheva, M. and Kuneva, I. (2019). Overview of the legal and policy framework addressing 'vulnerability' to poverty, social exclusion and violation of fundamental rights in Bulgaria. Sofia, NSI (report developed under BGLD-3.001-0001 Project "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights"); Markov, D. and Kuneva, L. (2019), Overview of data and indicators for monitoring "vulnerability" of groups at risk in Bulgaria (Преглед на данните и индикаторите за мониторинг на „уязвимостта" на рисковите групи в България), Sofia, National Statistical Institute (report developed under BGLD-3.001-0001 Project "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights"); FRA report "Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria".

Close loopholes in important legislation

As stated in the report, a number of loopholes in legislative acts implicitly legalise discrimination against Roma in the respective areas. Addressing these loopholes would allow populations in deprived situation to effectively enjoy their fundamental rights.

'Protection Against Discrimination' Act

The definition of 'segregation' as "forced separation" applied in the Act does not fully comply with the requirements of Council of the European Union's Directive 2000/43 and in practice legitimises the existence of territorial segregation (slums in large cities) and the school segregation. Amendment of this provision would reinforce the legal basis for challenging segregation.

'Civil Registration' Act

Some procedures concerning the applications for registration for permanent or current address in the 'Civil Registration' Act (and, in particular, the rules on registration of people who cannot present of deeds of ownership and/or tenancy agreements) create conditions for violations of the constitutional right to free movement, work and family life. Moreover, they make renewal of expired ID cards difficult for people with no deeds of ownership or the tenancy/lease agreements for the properties. Revision of this provision would close the loopholes allowing tens of thousands of Bulgarian citizens and their children to live in perpetual informality on the margins of the society without basic identification documents and with no access to administrative, educational, health and other services of the state.

'Health Insurance' Act

The provisions of the Health Insurance Act regarding restoration of insurance rights effectively prevent considerable number of Roma from accessing basic health services. Re-adoption of the previous wording of Art. 109 of the Act (as it was until 2015, when health insurance rights were regained after the due contributions for the last 36 months were paid. (From 2015, the Act states that contributions for 60 months should be paid) would pay off in better access to health – and lower cost for the health care system in the long run.

Establish robust and reliable monitoring system

The preparatory, pilot and testing research prior to the survey conducted for the purpose of the project reveals that the strategic documents aimed at reducing social disparities between Roma and non-Roma rarely rely on data and indicators.[129] A lot of data however exist and more will be generated in the coming years. The challenge is to improve their quality apply in relevant indicators.

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[129] Ilcheva, M. and Kuneva, I. (2019). Overview of the legal and policy framework addressing 'vulnerability' to poverty, social exclusion and violation of fundamental rights in Bulgaria. Sofia, NSI (report developed under BGLD-3.001-0001 Project "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights"); Markov, D. and Kuneva, L. (2019), Overview of data and indicators for monitoring "vulnerability" of groups at risk in Bulgaria (Преглед на данните и индикаторите за мониторинг на „уязвимостта" на рисковите групи в България), Sofia, National Statistical Institute (report developed under BGLD-3.001-0001 Project "Novel Approaches to Generating Data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights"); FRA report "Key social inclusion and fundamental rights indicators in Bulgaria".

Update the targets of the Strategy

The National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma (2021 - 2030) has 24 outcome indicators, of which only 10 have "yes" in the column "possible to disaggregate by ethnicity". The data from the survey conducted for the purpose of this project allows for populating the remaining indicators – and expanding the list. Moreover, they can serve as baseline against which the progress towards the targets set in the Strategy can be monitored. It is recommended that the Government plans in advance for the mid-point data collection (in line with the mid-term assessment of the progress of the implementation of the EU Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation the European Commission plans for 2025).

Fill the data gaps in regards territorial segregation

Ample research outlines the spatial segregation many Roma face. The matching of data on the situation of people living in marginalized setting tested in this report shows both the need and potential of robust data on territorial dimensions of vulnerability – a phenomenon that affects particularly Roma understood as 'umbrella term'. The survey may have underestimated its magnitude given the sampling methodology based on address registration. Territorial dimensions of vulnerability should be addressed and establishing a reliable mapping of segregated settlements in urgent need of intervention is recommended. Such mapping may be used for sampling purposes in future research, so that people living in such conditions don't fall out of the scope of regular data collection and statistics. Moreover, it can inform the measures for infrastructure investment in marginalized Roma communities (namely, access to sanitation, water, transport and garbage collection) as well as regularization of the informal dwellings. One simple step might be including a variable "type of neighbourhood" in EU SILC and LFS.

Capture discrimination comprehensively

Currently, discrimination is captured through its perception by the populations at risk of violation of their rights – based on direct survey questions about perception of (a feeling) that a person has been discriminated against "because of being Roma". Questions on personal feeling of discrimination could be complemented with projective questions such as "Do you have a relative (family member, relative, friend, neighbour) who has been a victim of discrimination/violence/harassment." To some extent, this avoids the inconvenience/shame of the respondent to share to an unknown person that s/he has been a victim. It is recommendable that additional qualitative surveys should be conducted to disclose the situations and the conditions that make Roma vulnerable. As regards the grounds of discrimination, in the case of Roma, asking about "because of being perceived as Roma" instead of "because of being Roma." Such approach would be in line with the definition of Roma as "umbrella term."

Optimise the process of data collection

Single-source survey – as the one conducted for the purpose of the project – allows correlating various characteristics related to vulnerability and outline their drivers. This is an important benefit from policy perspective, but it comes at the cost of complexity and long duration interview with risks for the data quality. For the purpose of monitoring progress, collecting the data for individual thematic areas through thematic modules in existing standard statistical instruments might be more robust and efficient that through one (long and complex) integrated survey. Sector-specific data (e.g. on poverty, employment or labour market participation) can come from EU SILC and – potentially – from LFS if it includes questions on ethnicity, as EU SILC does. These surveys already include questions on ethnicity and generate important data in the respective thematic areas. Complementing their standard questionnaires with

short thematic modules on discrimination and harassment in the respective areas would save costs and allow for higher-frequency monitoring.

It does not mean that the custom Roma surveys would become obsolete. Even the opposite: they can go deeper into issues of cooperation, trust (particularly in the police and the judiciary), participation, survival strategies etc. They can also contain thematic modules to collect information necessary for estimating life expectancy (tested by FRA).

Ideally, in all such instruments, the modules on ethnicity should go beyond just one question on self-identification. They should allow choosing a second identity with which the respondent identifies herself (successfully applied by Czechia, Hungary, and Slovakia) as well as questions on language spoken at home and religion. Triangulation of such data would allow for more precise identification of ethnic identity for the purpose of policy process.

Measure antigypsyism and social distance

Prejudice and antigypsyism is a key driver of discrimination. Respectively, the new EU Roma Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation reflects this aspect in the suggested Portfolio of Indicators. Thus, it is highly recommendable to include questions on social distance in the thematic add-on modules to the standard surveys as well as other relevant indicators mirroring those in the European Values Study.

10.   Annexes

Annex 1: Baseline indicators for monitoring Roma equality, inclusion and participation

The indicators in the table below follow the list the European Commission suggested in the Portfolio of Indicators (annexed to the 2021 Communication from the Commission). In some cases, the definition of the indicators for Bulgaria slightly differs from the suggested in the Portfolio due to specific circumstances of the data collection in Bulgaria. These cases are marked under "Comments".

Objective 1: Fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination

#	Indicator	Type	Baseline value	Comment, source
1	Share of people who felt discriminated against because of being Roma in any of the areas covered in the survey in the past 12 months.	Headline	16.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
2	Share of general population who feel uncomfortable having Roma as their neighbors	Headline	34.7	IPHS 2018
	Share of Roma aged 16 years and over who have experienced hate-motivated harassment at least 5 acts because of being Roma in the 12 months before the survey	Secondary	6.3	BNSI/FRA 2020

* Answer "no" to the question "would you accept to live on a street where (several) Roma families live?" Source: survey conducted by the Institute for Population and Human Studies in 2018

Objective 2: Reduce poverty and social exclusion

#	Indicator	Type	Baseline value	Comment, source
3	At-risk-of-poverty rate (below 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers)	Headline	71.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
3.1	Children< 18 at risk of poverty	Headline	77.2	BNSI/FRA 2020
4	Share of people living in a household in severe material deprivation (cannot afford 4 out of 9 items, e.g. food, inviting friends, etc.)	Headline	62.0	EU-SILC, 2020
4.1	Children < 18 living in material deprivation (lacking 1 or more from 13 items)	Headline	77.8	EU-SILC, 2020
	Share of people living in a household where at least one person has gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food	Secondary	24.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of children aged 0-17 living in a household where at least one person gone to bed hungry in the past month because there was not enough money for food	Secondary	29.9	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people living in a household that is only able to make ends meet with (great) difficulty	Secondary		Not included in the 2020 survey
	Share of people who do not have a bank account	Secondary	50.8	BNSI/FRA 2020

Objective 3: Promote participation by means of empowerment and building cooperation and trust in public institutions

#	Indicator	Type	Baseline value	Comment, source
5	Share of people who felt discriminated against (in any area) in the past 12 months and reported the last incident of discrimination as due to their being Roma	Headline	7.1	BNSI/FRA 2020

6	Active citizenship and participation indicator	Headline		Not included in the 2020 survey
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who did NOT report the most recent incident of harassment because as due to their being Roma (of all people who experienced harassment)	Secondary	26.4	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who did NOT report the most recent incident of physical attack as due to their being Roma	Secondary	(100)	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of Roma aged 16 years and over who had heard of at least one equality body, national human rights institutions or Ombudsperson office	Secondary	46.0	BNSI/FRA 2020

Objective 4: Increase effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education

7	Share of children aged from 3 up to the age of starting compulsory primary education who attend early childhood education and care	Headline	58.3	BNSI/FRA 2020
8	Share of people aged 20-24 who have completed at least upper secondary education	Headline	28.0	BNSI/FRA 2020
9	Share of children aged 6-14 who attend schools where 'all or most schoolmates are Roma' as reported by the respondents	Headline	63.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of children of compulsory-schooling age (5-18) who attend education, household members*	Secondary	81.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months, when in contact with school authorities (as a parent/guardian or a student).	Secondary	10.6%	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Early leavers from education and training, 18-24 years old	Secondary	68.0	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 30-34 who have completed tertiary education	Secondary	0.0	BNSI/FRA 2020

* The indicator is calculated for age group 5-16, which is the compulsory school age in Bulgaria

Objective 5: Increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment

10	Share of people aged 20-64 who self-declared their main activity status as 'paid work' (including full-time, part-time, ad hoc jobs, self-employment and occasional work or work in the past four weeks)	Headline	47.2	BNSI/FRA 2020
11	Share of young people aged 15-29* whose current main activity is 'neither in employment, education or training' (NEET)	Headline	53.6	BNSI/FRA 2020
12	Gender employment gap: Difference in the paid work rate between women and men aged 20-64	Headline	32.2	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months when at work	Secondary	11.0	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 12 months when looking for a job	Secondary	22.9	BNSI/FRA 2020

Objective 6: Improve Roma health and increase effective equal access to quality healthcare services

13	Difference in life expectancy at birth (general population vs. Roma)*	Headline		Current population statistics 2021 census
14	Share of people who have restricted access to health and social services:			BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of persons self-declared as Roma with unmet medical needs	Headline	7.6	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people self-declared as Roma registered with a general practitioner (GP), aged 18-65	Headline	86.4	BNSI/FRA 2020 and National Health

				Insurance Fund
	Proportion of immunized children self-declared by their parents as Roma aged 0-2	Headline	83.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over self-declared as Roma who assess their health in general as 'very good' or 'good'	Secondary	74.3	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over self-declared as Roma with medical insurance coverage	Secondary	46.5	BNSI/FRA 2020 survey and National Revenue Agency
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who have felt discriminated against **due to their being Roma** in the past 12 months when accessing the health services	Secondary	10.8	BNSI/FRA 2020

* To be calculated based once the results of the 2021 population census data are available

Objective 7: Increase effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services

15	Share of people living in housing deprivation (in an apartment that is too dark or has a leaking roof, damp walls or floors or does not have a bath/shower or indoor toilet)	Headline	65.8	BNSI/FRA 2020
16	Share of people living in a household that does not have the minimum number of rooms according to Eurostat's definition of overcrowding	Headline	71.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
17	Share of people living in a household without tap water inside the dwelling	Headline	18.1	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people living in a household without a toilet, shower or bathroom inside the dwelling	Secondary	46.1	BNSI/FRA 2020.
	Share of people living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor	Secondary	23.5	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people living in a household that in the past 12 months has ever been forced to leave the accommodation or halting site	Secondary	2.7	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Share of people aged 16 years and over who have felt discriminated against due to their being Roma in the past 5 years when looking for housing	Secondary	(17.7)	BNSI/FRA 2020
	Residential segregation. Indicator(s) reflecting the geographic aspects of Roma situation. Access to basic services and infrastructure in the area (health services, public transports, schools, child care, etc.) because of distance, opening times or lack of service. Share of people living in illegal or unregulated housing	Secondary		Will be developed and added once the Census 2021 results are available

Objective 7-a: Fighting environmental deprivation, promoting environmental justice

	Share of Roma living in a household with the following listed as problems in their accommodation: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area such as: smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted water	Secondary	49.0	BNSI/FRA 2020

Annex 2: Possible targets of the National strategy for Roma equality, inclusion and participation

The proposed list of targets reflects the outcome indicators the European Commission suggested in the Portfolio of Indicators (annexed to the 2021 Communication from the Commission). It builds on the targets suggested in the National Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma (2021 - 2030)

Annex 3: Interviewed persons by self-declared ethnicity

District	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma	Other, did not declare or did not wish to answer	Total
Blagoevgrad	1237	11	59	60	1367
Burgas	1133	217	210	16	1576
Varna	1358	70	171	10	1609
Veliko Tarnovo	883	23	77	37	1020
Vidin	273	-	77	0	350
Vratsa	678	4	85	4	771
Gabrovo	415	4	-	4	423
Dobrich	640	71	86	2	799
Kardzhali	169	431	26	10	636
Kyustendil	530	1	83	3	617
Lovech	556	21	34	1	612
Montana	406	2	139	9	556
Pazardzhik	1185	30	45	13	1273
Pernik	517	-	33	16	566
Pleven	788	28	102	3	921
Plovdiv	2425	157	275	49	2906
Razgrad	188	305	76	15	584
Ruse	872	141	116	6	1135
Silistra	253	174	15	12	454
Sliven	589	35	148	3	775
Smolyan	413	45	-	44	502
Sofia	1099	-	63	4	1166
Sofia (capital)	5024	44	271	37	5376
Stara Zagora	1257	14	213	97	1581
Targovishte	168	219	22	6	415
Haskovo	892	83	132	8	1115
Shumen	370	237	79	2	688
Yambol	333	14	155	8	510
Grand Total	**24651**	**2381**	**2792**	**479**	**30303**

Annex 4: Survey sample

District	Clusters			Households		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Blagoevgrad	63	37	100	378	222	600

Burgas	116	33	149	696	198	894
Varna	125	23	148	750	138	888
Veliko Tarnovo	56	28	84	336	168	504
Vidin	21	14	35	126	84	210
Vratsa	34	24	58	204	144	348
Gabrovo	35	8	43	210	48	258
Dobrich	43	19	62	258	114	372
Kardzhali	20	30	50	120	180	300
Kyustendil	33	15	48	198	90	288
Lovech	31	19	50	186	114	300
Montana	28	20	48	168	120	288
Pazardzhik	57	31	88	342	186	528
Pernik	34	11	45	204	66	270
Pleven	55	31	86	330	186	516
Plovdiv	160	54	214	960	324	1284
Razgrad	21	21	42	126	126	252
Ruse	68	18	86	408	108	516
Silistra	17	18	35	102	108	210
Sliven	46	22	68	276	132	408
Smolyan	22	19	41	132	114	246
Sofia	48	36	84	288	216	504
Sofia(capital)	461	19	480	2766	114	2880
Stara Zagora	86	33	119	516	198	714
Targovishte	21	17	38	126	102	228
Haskovo	62	26	88	372	156	528
Shumen	42	24	66	252	144	396
Yambol	32	13	45	192	78	270
Grand total	**1837**	**663**	**2500**	**11022**	**3978**	**15000**

Annex 5: Methodology of the mapping of "marginalized localities" perceived by surrounding population as "Roma neighbourhoods" conducted by OSI-Sofia

Objective of the mapping

The primary objective of the exercise was to capture the territorial distribution of people living in segregated setting who are vulnerable not just to poverty, social exclusion and material deprivation – but also to discrimination on the basis of their perceived belonging to the place they live. For that purpose, localities were screened to identify and delineate areas that are visibly marginalized, lack basic infrastructure and access to services, have predominantly dilapidated and/or informal housing units and are often physically detached from the rest of the city, town or village.

The mapping of such settlements is important for two reasons. First, it allows for addressing territorial vulnerability (lack of basic infrastructure or access to social services). Moreover, it disentangles the issue

of "marginality" from "ethnicity". As a first step, it identifies visibly marginalized areas in which people live in deprived conditions. As a second step, it provides an idea of the ethnic composition of the populations living in such conditions without equating 'ethnicity' to 'marginality'.

Definitions and methodology

"Marginalized locality" is defined as a local settlement/community comprised of at least 30 compactly living households belonging to a marginalized community, either self-identifying as Roma or living in deprived conditions usually associated with 'Roma'.

"Key Informants" are the people working with Roma and other vulnerable populations at local and community level. These included local Roma NGOs and CBOs, community workers and activists, social workers in the municipalities where the respective settlement is located, health, education and employment mediators, local police inspectors.

"Field workers" are the experts who were directly involved in collecting the information. Most field workers had not had prior professional engagement with data collection: they belonged to the same professional categories as key informants. They were designated by their organizations or personally volunteered to participate in data collection. Field workers were instructed by the staff of OSI-Sofia on applying the data collection methodology.

Fieldwork

The mapping was conducted between 2008 and 2011 and periodically updated up until the end 2021. It was done in two stages. During the first stage, the marginalized settlements were identified based on external expert assessment from different sources and data from the Census 2011. The results of the external observations were plotted on maps on which the boundaries of the settlements/communities were outlined based on names of streets and addresses in case when the latter were available. In small rural settlements and settlements with high levels of informality where addresses were not available, other territorial features have been used to mark settlements' boundaries on the maps. These included buildings, green- and brownfields and other elements of the local infrastructure or landscapes.

At the second stage, detailed information on the settlement conditions (infrastructure, population density, detachment from or integration in the respective city/town/village) was collected. For that purpose, the Key Informants filled in standardized card (observational questionnaire). The questionnaire incorporated brief panels on basic demographic situation, housing, employment, education, emigration and immigration, security issues, and the social capital. Later on, the field workers involved triangulated the information and revised/complemented it in case if significant discrepancies or gaps.

The field work was purely observational and did not involve face-to-face interviews with local residents. By its nature, the registered information is the Key Informants' expert assessment based on their knowledge, professional experience and daily work in the relevant settlements and communities. Once collected, results from the mapping were discussed with and verified by a broader set of experts from local public institutions, municipalities, schools and civil society organizations.

Results

The core of the database includes 890 geocoded polygons outlining the boundaries of settlements inhabited by marginalized communities still commonly referred to as "Gypsy neighbourhoods", includes 21 villages included also in a sample produced by NSI and FRA in which at least 50% of local residents are Roma (in some of them the share is 100%).

The information collected included basic data on population and housing, employment, education, emigration and immigration, security issues, social interactions and inter-institutional partnerships that occur in the respective marginalized localities.

Subsequent updates of the database after 2011 relied also on further confirmatory expert assessments as well as on data from household surveys and increasingly on satellite imagery, pictures and videos such as Google Street view. A non-exhaustive list of projects which contributed to the updates of the database include:

- **Bulgarian Longitudinal Inclusive Society Survey 2010-2013 (BLISS)**, Implemented by OSI-Sofia in cooperation with the World Bank.

- A survey called "100 Roma neighborhoods", implemented by OSI-Sofia in 2012.

- **Roma Early Childhood Inclusion in Bulgaria (RECI+) 2020**, implemented by OSI-Sofia in 2020.

- Assessment of the urban housing situation of Roma and other marginalized groups, implemented by OSI-Sofia in 2020, commissioned by the World Bank.

- **Two successive surveys carried out in 2020-2021 by OSI-Sofia with a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the attitudes towards vaccination in 10 Roma communities**, which were selected from a much longer list of potential places for data collection.

Ethnic composition of the population

The people living in the respective settlements perceived by the general population as "Gypsy neighbourhoods" were not asked about their ethnicity. The estimation of the ethnic makeup is based on field workers' and key informants' assessment – which does not mean it is wrong. Ample research suggests that the 'Roma universe' in Bulgaria is extremely diverse comprised of various groups and sub-groups. Moreover, considerable number of sharing the socio-cultural characteristics similar to these of Roma self-identify as Bulgarians, Turks, Millet etc. This complexity is reflected in the approach adopted by the Council of Europe and the European Commission using "Roma" as an umbrella term.

Seen from this perspective, the mapping gives an estimate of the number and territorial distribution of Roma (understood as umbrella term) living in marginalized situation. Although far from claiming to provide the "number of all Roma", it's robust estimate of the people living in ghettoized conditions and perceived by surrounding population as Roma (and thus being at risk of discrimination as "Gypsies" and object of antigypsyism).

Worth noting is that the number of people living in marginalized settlements is close to the **Council of Europe's average estimate of 'Roma population' as umbrella term** (for Bulgaria - 750,000 or 9.94% in 2012). The methodology behind the CoE's 'expert assessment' seems also to be close to the one applied in the mapping (based on a combination of external identification and subsequent verification by key stakeholders).

Annex 6 - bibliography

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