



PAVEE POINT  
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

# IRISH TRAVELLER AND ROMA CHILDREN

## *Shadow Report*

A RESPONSE TO IRELAND'S CONSOLIDATED THIRD AND FOURTH REPORT  
TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



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## Summary of Key Recommendations

- Introduce an ethnic identifier across all administrative systems in line with the human rights framework in order to develop responsive and adequate inclusion policies, and monitor and assess their impact on Traveller and Roma children.
- Develop a National Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination as a matter of urgency with strong civil society involvement at all stages in the development and implementation of the plan.
- Ensure no child is taken into State care solely on grounds relating to poor housing conditions or the financial situation of his or her family. Take appropriate measures to ensure Traveller and Roma children are not taken into care on the basis of racial profiling.
- Conduct a comprehensive enquiry into racial profiling in An Garda Síochána and introduce legislation to prohibit racial profiling by An Garda Síochána and other statutory agencies.
- Develop a new National Traveller Health Strategy, using the social determinants of health approach with clear targets, objectives, dedicated budget, clear timeframes and responsibilities building on the findings of the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study in partnership with Traveller representative organisations.
- Development of targeted interventions to address mental health and promote self-esteem for young Travellers of both sexes.
- Ensure access to basic healthcare for Roma children in Ireland.
- Develop a primary healthcare project for Roma to increase access to healthcare services.
- Ensure that Local Authorities fulfil their obligations in relation to Traveller accommodation and sanctions are applied when obligations are not met.
- Undertake an evaluation on the impact of the withdrawal of Traveller specific education supports.
- Develop an implementation plan with associated timelines, key deliverables and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy in partnership with Traveller representative organisations.
- Training on the Traveller and Roma community, and intercultural approaches should be a compulsory component of initial teacher education and continuous professional developments for primary and post primary teachers and early year practitioners.

- Traveller and Roma culture and history should be embedded in the formal curriculum.
- State should ensure that incidents of identity based bullying are recorded in schools and these records are inspected as part of the whole school evaluation process.
- The State should repeal the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2002 and provide more culturally appropriate housing and transient accommodation for Travellers in order to respect their housing and cultural rights.
- The State should recognise Travellers as a minority ethnic group as a matter of urgency.
- Develop and implement a progressive National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy, in line with human rights commitments. The development, implementation and monitoring of the strategy should be undertaken in partnership with Traveller and Roma representative organisations.
- Invest in and conduct a review and impact assessment of the habitual residence condition particularly in relation to ethnicity and gender.

## Introduction

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### **Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre**

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre was established in 1985. It is a national non-governmental organisation committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers and Roma. The organisation is comprised of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority settled population working in partnership to address the needs of Travellers and Roma as minority ethnic groups experiencing exclusion and marginalisation.

The aim of Pavee Point is to contribute to improvement in the quality of life and living circumstances of Irish Travellers and Roma by working for social justice, solidarity and human rights.

Pavee Point undertakes specific programmes in a number of key areas including health, youth, community development, education, violence against women and drugs.

### **Traveller and Roma Children in Ireland**

Travellers are a minority ethnic group, indigenous to the island of Ireland. Travellers maintain a shared history, language, traditions and culture. Nomadism was an integral part of Traveller culture, but many Travellers are no longer nomadic, either by choice or due to the lack of support for and criminalisation of nomadism. The All-Ireland Traveller Health Study establishes the Traveller population at a little over 36,000 in Ireland.<sup>1</sup> This figure represents less than 1% of the nation's population. In 2011, there were 14,245 Traveller children in Ireland. This accounted for 1.2% of the total child population and 48.2% of the total Traveller population.<sup>2</sup>

Historical and persistent experiences of anti-Traveller racism and discrimination have resulted in significant exclusion in the areas of health, accommodation, education, employment, and participation in decision making. Approximately 7 out of every 10 Traveller children (67.3%) live in families where the mother has either no formal education or primary education only (4.8% of children in general population live in families where the mother had either no formal education or primary education only).<sup>3</sup> In 2011, 84.3% of Travellers were unemployed.<sup>4</sup>

In a report on his visit to Ireland, Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that *'Travellers have been subjected to discrimination and racism in the fields of education, employment, housing, healthcare, media reporting and participation in decision making.'*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kelleher et al (2010) *Our Geels, All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, University College Dublin & Department of Health & Children.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2012) *State of the Nation's Children: Ireland 2012*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: [www.dcyia.ie](http://www.dcyia.ie)

<sup>3</sup> Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), *Growing Up in Ireland Study 2012*, Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

<sup>4</sup> Central Statistics Office, *Census 2011 Profile 7- Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers* at 32

There is an estimated 5,000 Roma living in Ireland. There is a lack of initiatives developed to support Roma and an absence of data and coherent strategy for Roma inclusion in Ireland. Many families and children live in poverty, deprivation; and precarious living conditions due to a lack of access to work and restrictive social welfare measures. For those who are unable to find employment or access supports options include reliance on charities and family or 'voluntary repatriation' to country of origin.

Recent cases involving Roma have also pointed to racial profiling. In two incidents in 2013 Roma children were removed into state care on the grounds of having fair skin and hair, unlike their parents. In both cases it was later discovered that these children were living with their biological families and the children were returned. This followed the high profile case of the young Roma girl, Maria in Greece, who had been taken into care. It is clear that wider stereotypes about Roma and negative media reporting provided a context in which these children were removed.<sup>6</sup>

### **Current context in Ireland**

In its previous concluding observations in 2006, the Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that it remained concerned that:

*'...adequate recognition, action and positive measures have not yet been taken to enhance the enjoyment of the rights of children belonging to the Traveller community and in particular to facilitate their access to education, housing and health services.'*<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately it would appear that in the intervening period the Irish State has continued to relegate Traveller and Roma children's rights.

The breaking of the economic and social crisis in 2008 prompted a dramatic and devastating disinvestment by the Irish State in the Traveller community. The scale of these cuts, undertaken in the name of austerity, was completely disproportionate and appears to have been undertaken without any attempt at human rights proofing and with scant regard to the principle of non-discrimination.

Using the government's own figures, it is possible to identify the scale of the austerity cuts on key areas that directly impact on Traveller and Roma children. It is important that these cuts are considered in comparison to the overall reduction in government spending of -4.3% during the period 2008-2013.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ombudsman for Children (2014) Garda Síochána Act 2005 (Section 42) (Special Inquiries relating to Garda Síochána) Order 2013. <http://specialinquiry.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Special-Inquiry-July-2014.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> UN CRC Committee (2006) *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Ireland*. CRC/C/IRL/CO/2, para. 78.

<sup>8</sup> Harvey, B.(2013) *Travelling with Austerity: Impacts of cuts on Travellers, Traveller Projects and Services*. Dublin: Pavee Point Publications.

<b>Programmes for Travellers</b>	
Interagency activities	-100%
Traveller specific education supports	-86.6%
Traveller accommodation	-85%
Equality	-76.3%
National Traveller organisations	-63.6%
FÁS Special Initiative for Travellers	-50%
National Traveller Partnership	-32.1%
Traveller SPY youth projects	-29.8%
Health	-5.4%

**Table 1: Harvey B. (2013) *Travelling with Austerity*, p1.**

Of further concern has been the reluctance on the part of the State to monitor and identify the possible impacts of these cuts on Traveller and Roma children. An ethnic identifier has not yet been introduced across all administrative systems; this renders it impossible to monitor the impact, positive or negative, of policies and legislation on Traveller and Roma children.

These cuts should also be viewed in the wider context of cuts to social welfare payments which were made during this period. Child benefit was cut several times from 2010 to 2014; simultaneously unemployment benefits and social assistance payments were squeezed.

More generally, a 2014 UNICEF report<sup>9</sup> found that the recession had had a disproportionately negative impact on Irish children. Of the 41 countries included in the report, Ireland had one of the most significant increases in child poverty from 2008 -2013.

A calculation of the impact of the crisis on the median income of households with children suggests that, between 2008 and 2012, Ireland lost a full decade of progress.<sup>10</sup>

In Ireland, the poverty rate for children is higher than it is for adults; in 2011 children were 1.6 times more likely to be in consistent poverty<sup>11</sup> compared to adults.<sup>12</sup>

According to a report published by the European Commission in 2014:

*'Resources devoted to the most disadvantaged children - the ethnic minority children and those in jobless households – have been cut back and there is no particular prioritising of such children in existing measures.'*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF Office of Research (2014). *'Children of the Recession: The impact of the economic crisis on child well-being in rich countries'*, Innocenti Report Card 12, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Consistent poverty is an Irish national indicator which consists in being both income poor and suffering basic deprivation.

<sup>12</sup> Daly, M. (2014) *Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage, A Study of National Policies, Country Report – Ireland*, European Commission; European Union.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



Taken collectively, this information paints a rather depressing picture in which the Irish State continues to fail to protect and prioritise the rights of some of the most marginalised children in the State - Traveller and Roma children.

## 1. General Measures of Implementation

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### Data Collection

There is a significant gap in reliable and comprehensive data on the socioeconomic situation and needs of Traveller and Roma children due to lack of data disaggregated by ethnicity. Disaggregated data is crucial to monitoring the impact of policies and legislation on minority children. The absence of data makes it difficult to measure the impact of national strategies on Traveller and Roma children, for example Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (the national policy framework for children and young people).

Pavee Point welcomes the State's introduction of an ethnic identifier at primary level education and would urge it to expedite this at post primary level. Currently, at post primary level only Traveller students are required to identify their ethnicity this is wholly unacceptable, in contravention of human rights principles and only serves to make young Travellers feel further singled out.

Evidence shows that there has been an extraordinary and disproportionate level of disinvestment by the Irish State in the Traveller community since 2008.<sup>14</sup> Decisions made in the context of austerity have been made without human rights proofing or working from the principle of non-discrimination. There is a reticence by the State to identify and monitor discrimination, exemplified in the non-renewal of the National Action Plan Against Racism (2005-2008).<sup>15</sup>

In relation to Roma the State has not taken comprehensive, concrete, deliberate or targeted measures to ensure discrimination in the exercise of children's rights is eliminated. Roma experience indirect discrimination through existing policies and there is a policy vacuum and a lack of targeted policies at national level to address substantive discrimination.

### Recommendation

**Introduce an ethnic identifier across all administrative systems in order to develop responsive and adequate inclusion policies, and to monitor and assess their impact on Traveller and Roma children. The application of an ethnic identifier needs to take place within a human rights framework.**

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<sup>14</sup> Harvey, B.(2013) *Travelling with Austerity: Impacts of cuts on Travellers, Traveller Projects and Services*. Dublin: Pavee Point Publications.

<sup>15</sup> The failure to renew the National Action Plan has been noted as a concern by the European Commission on Racism Intolerance (ECRI) in its most recent report on Ireland, 2013. The Irish Government has noted that it does not intend to develop a new National Action Plan and will instead incorporate anti-racism measures into a new Migrant Integration Strategy. However, an explicit National Action Plan Against Racism is needed, in recognition that there is a wider group in Irish society that experience racism, including Irish Travellers and other non-migrants.

## 2. General Principles

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### Non-Discrimination

Pavee Point is concerned that the protection available to Traveller and Roma children through anti-racism, equality and human rights infrastructure has been severely compromised by drastic cuts to the sector since 2008. This includes the abolishment of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), and the discontinuation of the National Action Plan against Racism. The Irish Government has noted that it does not intend to develop a new National Action Plan.

Despite this, the National Action Plan was referenced as part of Ireland's commitment to human rights as a member of the Human Rights Council in 2012.<sup>16</sup> The failure to renew the National Action Plan has been noted as a concern by the European Commission on Racism Intolerance (ECRI) in its most recent report on Ireland.

The abolition of NCCRI and the National Action Plan against Racism is of particular concern as these were both explicitly inclusive of Travellers, both in terms of their remit and in including Traveller representatives in their strategic management groups. There is no explanation for the complete closure of the NCCRI, other than financial constraints. In fact, the operating budget for NCCRI was comparatively low compared to other equality and human rights organisations.

The functions of the NCCRI were supposed to be partly taken up by the Office of the Minister for Integration; however since then the Office of the Minister for Integration has become the Office for the Promotion of the *Migrant* Integration. As Travellers are an indigenous minority group, the change to the remit of this Office has meant that Travellers are omitted from integration strategies and Traveller representatives and organisations have to continually make the argument for inclusion in any new integration strategies or policies.

A case in point is the process behind the development of the new national integration strategy. In its call for submissions the Department of Justice and Equality asked for 'submissions from all interested parties on any aspects of Ireland's migrant integration policy and these will be considered during the course of the review.'<sup>17</sup>

### Recommendation

**The Irish Government should develop a National Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination as a matter of urgency, including Traveller and Roma representative organisations, at all stages in the development and implementation of the plan.**

<sup>16</sup> Letter dated 13 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly. <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebstimedia/ourrolesandpolicies/pledges-and-commitments-during-election-to-hrc.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Department of Justice and Equality, *Integration Policy – Have Your Say*, <http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/9A962BA9B24C628880257CE6004B734D> [accessed 25 February 2015].

## **The Best Interests of the Child**

Roma families in Ireland face extreme poverty due to the habitual residence condition. Many Roma children are living in poverty are not living in adequate living conditions with access to food and basic medical services. This is resulting in a situation where social workers have to consider taking a child into care in order to access basic supports. There is no public statistical information on Roma in care or the number of Roma in Ireland; therefore it is not possible to ascertain if they are overrepresented in care at present.

Recent cases involving Roma families have pointed to racial profiling in child protection. This was demonstrated through two incidents in 2013 where Roma children were removed from their families into State care as they had fair skin and blonde hair, unlike their parents. In both cases it was later discovered that these children were living with their biological families and the children were returned. This followed the high profile case of the young Roma girl, Maria in Greece, who had been taken into care. It is clear that wider stereotypes about Roma and negative media reporting provided a context in which these children were removed.<sup>18</sup>

In response to these cases, the then Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan, carried out a special enquiry which found that the two children were wrongfully removed from their families under the Child Care Act 1991.

The Logan report recommended an independent audit of Gardaí special powers and the development of a protocol and training in cultural competence for all Gardaí. The report also stated the need to ensure that *this* principle (best interests of the child) is applied in all political, judicial and administrative decisions.<sup>19</sup>

### **Recommendation**

**Ensure no child is taken into State care solely on grounds relating to the poor housing conditions or the financial situation of his or her family. Take appropriate measures to ensure Roma and Traveller children are not taken into care on the basis of racial profiling.**

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<sup>18</sup> Ombudsman for Children (2014) Garda Síochána Act 2005 (Section 42) (Special Inquiries relating to Garda Síochána) Order 2013. <http://specialinquiry.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Special-Inquiry-July-2014.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., paragraph, 4.3 – 4.6.

## 4. Civil Rights and Freedoms

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### Protection of privacy and protection of the image

The PULSE<sup>20</sup> system is a computer system used by An Garda Síochána in their work. If a person comes into contact with the Gardaí for any reason, their details are entered into the PULSE system. There are serious concerns about the recording of Traveller children in the PULSE system.

In October 2014, a Traveller mother discovered that her two children aged four and five were recorded and given criminal tag numbers in the PULSE system. The children's details were logged in PULSE in July 2011 after she and her husband visited a Garda station to have passport applications stamped. The woman was not aware that her children were in the PULSE system until she was informed by a freelance journalist in 2014.

The Garda statement on the incident said: *'The details were put on the Pulse system initially for legitimate policing reasons. Following a recent review the records have been deleted.'* However, it is unclear what the 'legitimate policing reasons' for logging children aged four and five on the PULSE system could be.

In 2014, a Garda whistleblower alleged that up to 40 Traveller families were entered on the Garda PULSE system, including a baby of 16 days old, and that these registrations on PULSE were made as a matter of course and without any proper foundation, criminal or otherwise.

The PULSE system must follow the rules of the Gardaí's code of practice on data protection. This means that information can only be put on the system for a clearly stated purpose and there must be controls over who can see the information. These incidents raise serious concerns about the possible practice of racial profiling within An Garda Síochána.

In its report on Ireland, the European Commission against Racism and Discrimination noted that Irish 'legislation does not proscribe racial profiling by the Garda Síochána (Police) and other law enforcement agencies', and urged authorities to ensure that any new legislation in this area does not lead to discrimination based upon an individual's colour or ethnic origin.<sup>21</sup>

### Recommendation

**The State should conduct a comprehensive enquiry into racial profiling in An Garda Síochána and introduce legislation to prohibit racial profiling by An Garda Síochána and other statutory agencies.**

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<sup>20</sup> PULSE stands for Police Using Leading Systems Effectively

<sup>21</sup> European Commission against Racism and Discrimination (2013), *ECRI Report on Ireland (fourth monitoring cycle)*, Strasbourg. Council of Europe, para. 14.

## 6. Disability, basic, health and welfare

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### Traveller Health

The 'Our Geels: All Ireland Traveller Health Study' (AITHS) was commissioned by the Department of Health and Children and carried out by researchers at University College Dublin in partnership with Pavee Point and Traveller organisations throughout Ireland. The partnership approach taken resulted in an almost 80% response rate of all Travellers in Ireland.

The study found that compared to the general population, Travellers experience considerably higher mortality at all ages in both males and females. The problem stretches across the entire age spectrum and the disadvantage is seen from the very start of life.

#### Key findings from the study are as follows:

- Traveller infant mortality is estimated at 14.1 per 1,000 live births. This compares to an infant mortality rate in the general population of 3.9 per 1,000 live births giving an infant mortality ratio for Traveller children which is 3.6 times higher than in the general population.
- The suicide rate in male Travellers is 6.6 times higher than in the general population.
- Life expectancy at birth for male Travellers is 61.7 which is 15.1 years less than men in the general population.
- Life expectancy at birth for female Travellers is 70.1 which is 11.5 years less than women in the general population.
- Traveller children have higher reported prevalence of hearing, eyesight and speech problems.
- Breastfeeding rates are very low at just 2.2%, in comparison with 50% of the general population.
- Travellers of the same causes as the settled population (cancer; lung disease; heart disease and; stroke) but in far higher numbers.
- The Health Service Provider Study conducted as part of the AITHS asked Service Providers how often they thought Travellers experience discrimination in their use of health services in general to which 66.7% agreed that it sometimes occurred.<sup>22</sup>

In the intervening years since the study was published the Government has failed to develop a new National Traveller Health Strategy or update the existing strategy in light of the findings from the AITHS. Whilst it has stated that subsequent health strategies i.e. the National Intercultural Health Strategy, 2007 – 2012 were inclusive of Traveller and Roma, the failure of the State to include an ethnic identifier across the health system has made it impossible to monitor or assess the impact of these strategies on Traveller and Roma children.

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<sup>22</sup> Kelleher et al (2010) *Our Geels, All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, University College Dublin & Department of Health & Children.

The Government has failed to take concerted action to address the health inequalities that Travellers face and adopts a 'mainstreaming approach' which ignores disparities in health outcomes.

There is an urgent need to address cause-specific issues for infant mortality and mental health problems.

The suicide rate in the Traveller community is cause for serious alarm. Mental health issues need to be addressed with an emphasis on empowerment and promotion of self-esteem for young Travellers of both sexes.

### **Recommendations**

- **The Government should, as a matter of urgency, work with Pavee Point and other Traveller representative organisations to develop a new National Traveller Health Strategy, using the social determinants of health approach with clear targets, objectives, dedicated budget, clear timeframes and responsibilities; building on the findings of the All Ireland Traveller Health Study.**
- **Development of targeted interventions to address mental health and promote self-esteem for young Travellers of both sexes.**
- **An ethnic identifier should be included on all health data sets to facilitate the monitoring of access, participation and outcome to services for Travellers and Roma.**

### **Roma Health**

Many Roma children in Ireland do not have access to medical cards. This is related to a lack of access to social protection and an inability to prove their means when applying for a medical card. The result is lack of access to basic general practice (GP) care, as without a medical card this is very costly. Roma women report inability to access GPs and being afraid to use accident and emergency or maternal health services in case they receive bills for treatment. Women report receiving conflicting reports in relation to payment for maternal services and a lack of knowledge of the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme.<sup>23</sup>

Lack of financial resources or state support, combined with a lack of clear accessible information, and a lack of trust in maternal and broader health services all impact on engagement with pre and post-natal services. Many women delay accessing care to a late stage of pregnancy. The first point of contact for Roma women with a health service can be in the A&E ward of a maternity hospital when already in labour.

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<sup>23</sup> Pavee Point (2014) *Challenging Barriers and Misconceptions: Roma Maternal Health in Ireland*, <http://www.paveepoint.ie/temp/site3/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Roma-Maternal-Health-in-Ireland.pdf>

Women also report fears of children being taken away from them if they engage with health practitioners, particularly if they are living in poverty and overcrowded accommodation. The removal of two blonde Roma children from their families in October 2013 has further exacerbated fears within the community. As a result, public health nurses often experience difficulties tracking mothers of new born babies when mothers make themselves inaccessible upon visits. This can mean children do not get vaccinations. This affects women's health, children's health and public health more widely. Also, accessing nutritious food and buying clothes and nappies for a new baby can be extremely challenging.<sup>24</sup>

Another key issue is the need to build up trust and engagement between Roma and health service providers. Following on from the successful Primary Healthcare for Travellers Projects in Ireland, a similar pilot project could be developed with Roma. This would build up a network of engagement between Roma communities and service providers.

### **Recommendations**

- **Ensure that basic healthcare is accessible for Roma in Ireland.**
- **Develop a primary healthcare project with Roma so as to increase access to healthcare.**

### **Social security and childcare services**

The Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) is a condition which applicants must satisfy in order to qualify for certain social welfare assistance payments, including child benefit. Habitual residence essentially means an applicant must be able to prove a close link to Ireland.<sup>25</sup> Application of the habitual residence condition has placed migrants, Travellers (who move across jurisdictions, generally from the UK to Ireland) and Roma in Ireland in very vulnerable positions, whereby they cannot access any support services. It has had a particularly negative impact on Roma in Ireland, whereby many Roma have been unable to access any social supports. This prevents people from accessing medical cards which are necessary to access GP care and housing assistance. In this context many Roma do not have access to basic primary care and are living in unsuitable and overcrowded housing conditions.

It has a particularly negative impact upon women experiencing violence and children. For women trying to leave a situation of violence, if they do not meet the habitual residence condition, they are unable to access a refuge beyond an emergency period. This has resulted in women being forced to stay in violent situations due to economic circumstances.

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<sup>24</sup> Pavee Point (2014) *Challenging Barriers and Misconceptions: Roma Maternal Health in Ireland*, p 4-7.

<http://www.paveepoint.ie/tempsite3/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Roma-Maternal-Health-in-Ireland.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Five factors are considered to determine habitual residence:

- a. the length and continuity of residence in the state or in any other particular country;
- b. the length and purpose of any absence from the state;
- c. the nature and pattern of the person's employment;
- d. the person's main centre of interest;
- e. the future intentions of the person concerned as they appear from all the circumstances.



Despite the fact that Child Benefit is described as a ‘universal’ payment, as it is subject to the Habitual Residence Condition, certain groups of children are denied social protection because of their parents’ status. This is pushing children into poverty. Pavee Point’s engagement with social workers would suggest that this is causing child protection issues where parents/guardians are unable to provide adequate shelter and food for their children.<sup>26</sup>

Concerns about HRC have been raised by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, she has stated in her 2012 report that she ‘*encourages the Government to review the impact of the condition as a matter of priority.*’ ECRI also recommended that Irish authorities review the impact of HRC.<sup>27</sup> This has still not taken place and the Department of Social Protection has stated that it does not intend to undertake a review of the impact of the HRC.<sup>28</sup>

### **Recommendation**

**Invest in and conduct a review and impact assessment of the habitual residence condition, particularly in relation to ethnicity and gender.**

### **Traveller Accommodation**

According to the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS), Travellers most frequently lived in a house (73.3%), followed by trailer/mobile home or caravan (18.2%). 55.3% of those on a trailer/mobile home were parked on a halting site, 23.8% on an “unofficial site” and 6.8% on a transient site.

The authors of the study note that the most destitute of Travellers are living in very poor conditions indeed. ‘*What we can say is that the better accommodated the Traveller family, the better the health status.*’<sup>29</sup> As well as physical health, the study found that living conditions impacted on mental health.

AITHS also found that significant numbers of families in group housing or sites reported lack of footpaths, public lighting, fire hydrants and safe play areas (**play areas were unavailable for 77.5% of respondents**). Further undermining the health and safety of Traveller families were issues such as rats (a problem for 33.1% of families) and being too close to a main road (a problem for 47.5% of families).

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<sup>26</sup> Health Service Executive and Pavee Point (2012) *Roma Communities in Ireland: Child Protection Considerations*

<sup>27</sup> See UNGA (2012) Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, A/HRC/20/25 Para 102 & ECRI (2013) Fourth Report on Ireland, CRI(2013)1 Para 130.

<sup>28</sup> A Departmental working group was set up in June 2010 to review the **operation** of the habitual residence guidelines. However, this review did not examine the impact of the habitual residence condition.

<sup>29</sup> Kelleher et al (2010) *Our Geels, All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, University College Dublin & Department of Health & Children.

At the end of 2011, 3,377 Traveller families (families living on unauthorised sites, sharing housing and living in private rented) still needed to have their permanent accommodation needs met.

Almost 1 in 3 Irish Traveller households living in mobile or temporary accommodation had no sewerage facilities in 2011. These dwellings housed 886 people. One in five Irish Traveller households living in mobile or temporary dwellings (containing 566 people) had no piped water source in 2011.<sup>30</sup>

Travellers continue to experience severe difficulties in relation to accommodation and it is one of the main areas where Pavee Point feels there has been insufficient progress since the publication of the Task Force Report on the Traveller Community in 1995. Poor accommodation has a direct and significant impact on both education and health outcomes of Traveller children.

The 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act placed an obligation on local authorities to produce accommodation plans covering a fixed period. Under the Act, the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (NTACC) was established to advise the Minister of Environment and Local Government on Traveller accommodation policy and was mirrored at local level by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees (LTACC) which provides:

- advice on the preparation and implementation of Traveller accommodation programmes;
- advice on the management and maintenance of Traveller accommodation and;
- liaison between Travellers and the local authorities.

However, the lack of political will and incentives or sanctions in the legislation have resulted in local authorities failing to provide adequate accommodation for Travellers. The NTACC and LTACC are purely advisory bodies with no mandate to compel local authorities to comply with their obligations.

Following the economic crash in 2008, the overall social housing budget for the State fell from €1.6 billion in 2008 to €299 million in 2013. The Housing (Capital Assistance) Scheme was reduced from €130 million in 2008 to €70.7 million in 2012.

The dedicated budget line for Traveller accommodation includes a combination of capital spending and a small amount for accommodation-related supports and funds for purchases of homes. Funding for Traveller accommodation fell from €40 million in 2008 to €4 million in 2015, down by 85%.<sup>31</sup>

Most alarmingly is that during a time of extreme pressure on Traveller accommodation, significant amounts of the money allocated to Traveller accommodation were unspent.

- 2010: 46% of the budget was spent, 54% was unspent;
- 2011: 62% of the budget was spent, 38% was unspent;
- 2012: 66% was spent, 34% was unspent.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Central Statistics Office, *Census 2011 Profile 7- Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers* at 32

<sup>31</sup> Harvey, B.(2013) *Travelling with Austerity: Impacts of cuts on Travellers, Traveller Projects and Services*. Dublin: Pavee Point Publications.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

Traveller families often face discrimination, harassment and racist attacks by people who do not want them to live in their area. The MacGréil study undertaken in 2010 found that 79.6% of those surveyed 'would be reluctant to buy a house next door to a Traveller.'<sup>33</sup> In 2013, a house which had been allocated to a Traveller family by the Donegal County Council was burned down days before the family were due to move in. It was the third time that an arson attack had happened following public knowledge of the allocation of houses to Traveller families in recent years.<sup>34</sup>

Of serious concern is that discriminatory attitudes and behaviour towards Travellers is often supported by elected public representatives rather than challenged. Following the arson attack in Donegal, Seán McEniff, a Fianna Fáil county councillor in Donegal commented: *'I think that there should be an isolated community of them some place. Give them houses and keep them all together'*<sup>35</sup>

Mr. McEniff's comments were supported by another local councillor Eugene Dolan, the former Mayor of Ballyshannon in Donegal, who stated: *'As far as I'm concerned they can be sent to Spike Island for all I care.'* Given the role of local councils in providing and allocating accommodation this level of endemic racism is particularly appalling.

There is very little information on Roma accommodation. Most Roma in Ireland live in private rented accommodation. A report of 2012, based on engagement with service providers working with Roma, highlighted issues of inadequate living conditions and families living in severely overcrowded accommodation. This is linked to lack of access to financial resources and difficulties in applying for local authority housing due to lack of documentation.<sup>36</sup> Social workers have reported cases of families living in unsafe accommodation with no electricity or heating. In 2015, the Gardai reported a case, in which over 20 Roma adults were living in a derelict warehouse with no electricity or water. There has been no coordinated State response to address housing issues faced by Roma in Ireland.

## **Recommendation**

**The Department of the Environment and Local Government should ensure that Local Authorities fulfil their obligations in relation to Traveller accommodation and sanctions are applied when obligations are not met.**

<sup>33</sup> MacGreil, M. (2010) *Emancipation of the Travelling People*. National University of Ireland.,Maynooth.

<sup>34</sup> O'Connell, J. (2013) *Our casual racism against Travellers is one of Ireland's last great shames*. <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/our-casual-racism-against-travellers-is-one-of-ireland-s-last-great-shames-1.1315730> [accessed 24 February 2015]

<sup>35</sup> Extended Interview with Sean McEniff. <https://soundcloud.com/oceanfm/extended-sean-mceniff> [accessed 20/02/2015]

<sup>36</sup> Pavee Point (2014) *Challenging Barriers and Misconceptions: Roma Maternal Health in Ireland*, <http://www.paveepoint.ie/tempsite3/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Roma-Maternal-Health-in-Ireland.pdf>

## 7. Education, leisure and cultural activities

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### School enrolment

Historically, school enrolment policies have had a disproportionately negative impact on Traveller students due to their selection criteria.

A large number of schools give priority in school admissions to children or relatives of past pupils this is known as the 'past-pupil criterion'. This can pose a significant barrier for Traveller students as was illustrated in the case of *Stokes v CBS High School Clonmel*.<sup>37</sup>

The 'Our Geels: All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS)' found that 38.5% of 30-44 year olds and 25.8% of 45-64 year olds had primary education only which means that for a large number of Traveller children the chances of their parents having attended a post-primary school are remote.

This policy also proves a significant challenge for Travellers who are nomadic and are therefore unlikely to have had a family member previously attend the school in question.

It has been established that this criterion is by its very nature discriminatory and has a disproportionate impact on communities with high levels of educational disadvantage.

### Recommendation

**Ensure that schools are no longer permitted to use discriminatory criteria as part of their school admissions policy.**

### Addressing Educational Disadvantage

Financial barriers and lack of access to social protection is a serious barrier for many Roma and Traveller parents in ensuring their children's access and engagement in education. Many Roma and Travellers living in Ireland are left outside of the social welfare protection system due to restrictions posed by the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) - a social welfare restriction which determines access to social welfare payments in Ireland, including child benefit and back to school allowance.<sup>38</sup>

Failure to qualify for the HRC has a significant impact on the ability of parents to ensure their children's engagement in education, particularly for parents who are unable to establish or maintain a permanent source of income.

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<sup>37</sup> *Stokes -v- Christian Brothers High School Clonmel & anor* [2015] IESC 13, 184/2012

<http://courts.ie/Judgments.nsf/597645521f07ac9a80256ef30048ca52/A09897A48211897980257DF6005A3C31?opendocument>  
[accessed 25/02/2015]

<sup>38</sup> Pavee Point, *Impact of the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) on Travellers and Roma*, Dublin: Pavee Point, 2011, <http://paveepoint.ie/2011/08/position-paper-on-the-habitual-residence-condition/> [Accessed 28/1/2013].

Additional costs associated with schooling put an extra financial pressure on families. Many are unable to afford to purchase school uniforms, books or lunches. Barnardo's 'School Costs Survey' 2014 found that on average parents were paying €350 for a child in senior infants. This increased up to €785 for children going into first year in secondary school.<sup>39</sup>

Some schools are reported to help Roma and Traveller families who cannot afford to purchase necessary items. This can often be the only source of financial support for Roma families, but not all schools are in a position to do so.

## Recommendations

- **Ensure that all children have access to the 'Back to School Clothing and Footwear Scheme'.**
- **The government should tackle school costs as a matter of urgency to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent children from participating in school.**

## Traveller and Roma Education

Poor educational outcomes have long been an issue for the Traveller community. There remain stark inequalities between Traveller children and the general population in relation to education.

- Only 13% of Traveller children complete secondary education in comparison with 92% of the general population<sup>40</sup>.
- 55% of Traveller children have completed their formal education by the age of 15.<sup>41</sup>
- 90% of Travellers have completed formal education by the age of 17.<sup>42</sup>
- Currently, less than 1% of Travellers go on to third level education.<sup>43</sup>
- 62% of Travellers experienced discrimination at school.<sup>44</sup>The Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS (2011)<sup>45</sup> found that the educational attainment of Travellers remains

<sup>39</sup> Barnardos, *School Costs Survey 2014*, <http://www.barnardos.ie/assets/files/Advocacy/2014SchoolCosts/School-Costs-Survey-Briefing2014.pdf> [accessed 25/02/2014]

<sup>40</sup> Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), *Growing Up in Ireland Study 2012*, Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

<sup>41</sup> Central Statistics Office, *Census 2011 Profile 7- Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers* at 32

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Kelleher et al (2010) *Our Geels, All Ireland Traveller Health Study*, University College Dublin & Department of Health & Children.

<sup>45</sup> Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action plan for Educational Inclusion was launched in May 2005 and is the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. 849 schools are included in the programme, 657 primary schools and 192 secondary schools. DEIS schools receive a number of supports and provisions including a pupil teacher ratio (PTR) of 20:1 in junior schools, 22:1 in vertical schools and 24:1 in senior schools. DEIS schools can also access a number of supports including :

- DEIS grant paid based on level of disadvantage and enrolment
- Access to Home School Community Liaison services
- Access to Schools Meals Programme
- Access to range of supports under School Completion Programme
- Access to literacy/numeracy support such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps, Ready Set Go Maths
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports
- Additional funding under School Books Grant Scheme

significantly lower than that of their settled peers in both reading and mathematics. The magnitude of the difference between the scores of the two groups is large in every case.

Given that students in DEIS schools have access to a number of extra supports it is of particular concern that even in this context Traveller students are not reaching the same level of educational attainment as their settled peers. 47% of Traveller students at primary level are in non-DEIS schools and 51% of Travellers at post primary level are in non-DEIS schools,<sup>46</sup> in these schools they do not have access to the same education supports as are available in DEIS schools. Information is not available on the educational attainment of Traveller pupils in non-DEIS schools.

Despite the significant difference in educational outcomes between Traveller children and their settled peers, in budget 2011 Traveller specific education supports were cut by 86.6%. This resulted in the dismantling of the Visiting Teachers for Travellers Service and the Resource Teacher for Travellers Service.

Several of these measures were undertaken in the name of mainstreaming Travellers into the main education system. The evidence, though, is that the programme of mainstreaming was carried out aggressively after the breaking of the economic and social crisis, but the supports necessary to assist the process were not provided.

Whilst it had long been accepted that segregated Traveller education should be brought to an end, it was clear that Travellers required specific targeted additional support for them to participate in mainstream education on equal terms with the rest of the settled community. No system was put in place to measure the possible impact of this disinvestment on Traveller children's educational outcomes.<sup>47</sup>

The need for additional support was recognised at departmental level. Indeed, the brief to the then incoming Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn, described the key challenge as being to refocus services to provide greater support for Travellers. The department admitted that<sup>48</sup>:

*It has not been possible to update the General Allocation Model (GAM) under which resource teachers are provided to schools to deal with the more common learning difficulties to include Traveller pupils (they were not counted in numbers of pupils when GAM allocations were made because of separate RTT scheme). Schools with significant numbers of Traveller students are concerned about insufficient resources to support such students given the loss of RTTs (pp9-10).<sup>49</sup>*

Since 2011, there has been a 20% cut to the school completion programme (SCP). The SCP works in 470 primary and 223 post-primary schools to implement educational interventions for

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<sup>46</sup>Information received by the Traveller Education Strategy Advisory Consultative Forum from the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Education and Skills, October 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Harvey, B.(2013) *Travelling with Austerity: Impacts of cuts on Travellers, Traveller Projects and Services*. Dublin: Pavee Point Publications.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Details are provided in Department of Education & Skills: *Organization and current issues - a brief for the information of the Minister for Education and Skills*. Dublin, author, 2011.

approximately 36,000 students. Given the rates of early school leaving among the Traveller population, these cuts will have a significant impact on school completion.

The Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy was published in 2006. The report was never developed into a strategy and does not have an implementation plan with associated deliverables and deadlines; as a result progress on its implementation has been remarkably slow. The report is now seven years old and there are a number of chapters where none of the recommendations have been implemented, and many of the recommendations that were implemented have since been dismantled (e.g. Visiting Teachers for Travellers).

The Traveller Education Advisory Consultative Forum (TESACF) was established in 2009 following extensive lobbying with a brief to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategy. However the TESACF only meets four times a year and no subgroups have been established to progress areas of work. The TESACF was not consulted ahead of the cuts to Traveller specific education supports in budget 2011.

There is currently no framework or provision within the education system to address underlying issues impacting on Roma children's participation as highlighted by educational practitioners and Roma parents including: poverty; lack of access to social welfare payments and; the history of educational disadvantage experienced by many Roma.<sup>50</sup>

Roma are not included in the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy or in the terms of reference for the Traveller Education Strategy Advisory Consultative Forum.

We welcome the introduction of an ethnic identifier at primary level by the Department of Education in September 2014. The collection of disaggregated data is essential to tracking outcomes for Traveller and Roma children. Best practice in this area stresses the importance of a universal question within a human rights framework, where everyone is asked to identify the group to which they belong, not just minorities. The current situation at second level where only Travellers are asked to identify is wholly unacceptable and only serves to make young Travellers feel further singled out. This should be rectified as a matter of urgency.

It is crucial that this ethnic identifier is used to track attendance, attainment and retention. Systems should be put in place to ensure that the new Child and Family Agency, Túsla, has access to and engages with the data which is collected by the Department of Education.

There are two Traveller only schools remaining; St. Thomas's in Clonshaugh and St. Kieran's in Bray. The Department of Education has said that whilst it would like to see the schools phased out, the decision rests with the patron – in this case, the Catholic Church. However, the Department of Education continues to fund both schools through the allocation of the capitation grant and the payment of teaching staff's wages. The provision of segregated education is wholly unacceptable

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<sup>50</sup> Pavee Point (2014) *Roma and Education in Ireland*, p 30-31. <http://www.paveepoint.ie/tempsite3/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Roma-and-Education.pdf>

and steps should be taken in collaboration with Traveller parents, Traveller representative groups, local schools and the patron to ensure the phasing out of these schools.

### **Recommendations**

- **An evaluation should be undertaken on the impact of the withdrawal of Traveller specific education supports.**
- **An implementation plan should be developed with associated timelines, key deliverables and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy in partnership with Traveller and Roma representative organisations.**
- **Urgently introduce an ethnic identifier at second level within a human rights framework, where everyone is asked to identify the group to which they belong, not just Travellers.**
- **Facilitate and support the closure of the two Traveller only schools.**

### **Bullying**

In 2012, the State of the Nations Report found that when compared to other children, Traveller children, immigrant children and children with a disability and/or chronic illness were more likely to report that they were bullied at school. Identity based bullying remains a significant issue for Roma and Traveller Children.

In 2013 the State published *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* which included a template for schools to record incidents of identity based bullying. However the completion of this template is not compulsory and there does not appear to be any intention to inspect these reports as part of the whole school evaluation process. This makes it all but impossible for the State to monitor in any real way the incident of identity based bullying in schools.

### **Recommendation**

**State should ensure that incidents of identity based bullying are recorded in schools and these records are inspected as part of the whole school evaluation process.**

### **Inclusive Education**

All initial teacher education at primary and post primary level includes modules on intercultural education. However it is not compulsory for teacher training colleges to include training on Traveller or Roma communities as part of their intercultural programmes.

More alarmingly, training on the Traveller and Roma community and/or intercultural education is not compulsory for qualified teachers at primary or post primary level.



Comprehensive training modules on equality and diversity which effectively challenge bias and prejudice and equip teachers to address discriminatory attitudes and behaviour must be included in initial teacher training courses and as a compulsory part of continuous professional development.

If teachers are not aware of the unconscious prejudice and stereotypes that they carry and are not empowered with tools to allow them to reflect on these, it can result in negative outcomes for the young people in their classroom.

### **Recommendation**

**Training on the Traveller and Roma community, and intercultural approaches should be a compulsory component of initial teacher education and continuous professional development for primary and post primary teachers and early year practitioners.**

### **Inclusion of Traveller and Roma culture and history in the curriculum**

Given that the Roma and Traveller populations in Ireland are relatively small, in many schools there may only be one or two Traveller/Roma children. This leaves children particularly vulnerable and isolated when identity based bullying occurs, particularly if the response from the school is inadequate. The issue of isolation is compounded by the absence of Traveller/Roma culture within the formal curriculum at primary and post primary levels.

The long term implications of failing to incorporate Traveller/Roma culture across the curriculum are twofold. Firstly, it prevents students from the majority population from understanding and appreciating the contributions made by the Traveller and Roma communities to wider Irish society and European culture, allowing individual prejudices and stereotypes to breed. Secondly, it results in Traveller/Roma students feeling that their culture is neither valued nor welcomed in the education system, contributing to a lower sense of self-worth and isolation with the school community.

### **Recommendation**

**Ensure that Traveller and Roma culture and history is included in the primary and post primary curriculum.**

### **Cultural rights of children belonging to indigenous and minority groups**

The practice of implementing laws intended to negatively impact on one group of society is discriminatory and is contrary to EU and International human rights treaties.

In 2002, the Irish government introduced the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2002, with the specific purpose of “clamping down” on Travellers who were camping around the country as a nomadic people. The legislation criminalised nomadism which previously been a civil offence.

This legislation combined with a lack of provision of transient halting sites has resulted in the suppression of nomadism, a key element of Traveller culture and history. For Traveller children, this has meant that they have had no opportunity to engage in nomadism – key to their cultural identity and rights.

It has also meant that evictions of Traveller families, who have nowhere else to go still occur. The Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2002 has been widely criticised for its negative impact on Travellers. For example, both ECRI<sup>51</sup> and the UN Human Rights Committee<sup>52</sup> have recommended that the legislation be reviewed and amended.

There is a serious shortage of permanent, culturally appropriate housing for Travellers. As a result many Traveller families are forced to move into private rented accommodation. This is problematic for a number of reasons.

Discriminatory attitudes on the part of the general population mean that Travellers are often forced to live in areas where the local community is hostile towards them. This has a significant impact on the mental health of children and families and leaves Traveller children facing isolation and discrimination. In this situation Travellers are not only isolated within the community but also from the support network of their extended family and opportunities intergenerational learning.

Private rented accommodation can be very expensive and often forces families into poverty as they are forced to pay exorbitant rents for accommodation. In many cases Travellers may have to pay extra to secure accommodation due to discriminatory attitudes on the part of landlords.

It is for these reasons that it is essential that the State provide suitable permanent culturally appropriate housing. Group housing schemes should be developed and planned in partnership with Traveller families and Traveller representative groups.

### **Recommendation**

**The Government should repeal the Housing (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 2002 and provide more permanent culturally appropriate housing and transient accommodation for Travellers in order to respect their housing and cultural rights.**

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<sup>51</sup> ECRI (2007) *Third Report on Ireland*, p.6.

<sup>52</sup> UN Human Rights Committee (2008) *Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee*. CCPR/C/IRL/CO/3 (para. 23)

## 9. Special Protection Measures

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### Recognition of the Traveller community as a minority ethnic group

Despite the recommendation of many UN treaty monitoring bodies (CERD; CEDAW; CRC, HRC), and a range of European institutions (ECRI, FCPNM; Council of Europe) as well as equality and human rights bodies within Ireland including the Irish Human Rights Commission and Equality Authority, the Government continues to refuse to acknowledge Traveller ethnicity. This impacts Travellers in many ways. In particular, the Government division responsible for development of anti-racism initiatives does not include Travellers as part of its brief and so Travellers are not included in such initiatives by design. In short, racism against Travellers is not acknowledged by the State.

In April 2014, the Government Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality produced a report on the recognition of Traveller ethnicity.<sup>53</sup> This report was based on a number of written submissions and three public hearings with a number of stakeholders, to consider the issues in more detail.

The report is endorsed by the Committee, which has representatives from all political parties and recommends that ***'the Taoiseach or the Minister for Justice and Equality should make a statement to Dáil Éireann confirming that this State recognises the ethnicity of the Travelling community.'*** The Committee report has also recommended that following this, the Government should write to the relevant international bodies, confirming that this State recognises the ethnicity of the Travelling community.

### Recommendation

**The state should recognise Travellers as a minority ethnic group as a matter of urgency.**

### Measures to prevent the marginalisation and social exclusion of Roma children

In relation to Roma, the State has not taken comprehensive concrete deliberate and targeted measures to ensure discrimination in the exercise of children's rights is eliminated. Roma experience indirect discrimination through existing policies and there is a policy vacuum and a lack of targeted policies at the national level to address substantive discrimination.

There is no official Government data in relation to the population of Roma in Ireland. Many Roma in Ireland are living in poverty due to a lack of access to work and restrictive social welfare measures. Some Roma have to beg to survive. In 2012, the body of a young Roma girl, Marioara Rostas, was found by police. She had been abducted in Dublin in 2008 while begging. This tragic situation highlights concerns about risks faced by members of Roma communities and in particular Roma women in Ireland.

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<sup>53</sup> Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality (2014) *Report on the Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity* <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/committees/justice/Report-onTraveller-Ethnicity.pdf>

For those who are unable to find employment or access supports, options include reliance on charities and family or ‘voluntary repatriation’ to country of origin. The Irish Government was required by the European Commission to develop a Roma and Traveller integration strategy.<sup>54</sup> However, Ireland’s strategy is inadequate and was developed with no involvement of Roma or Travellers. It contains no goals, targets, indicators, timeframes or funding mechanisms and has no reference to human rights.<sup>55</sup> The need for a strategy was reiterated by the human rights committee in 2014.<sup>56</sup>

## **Recommendation**

**Develop and implement a progressive National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy in collaboration with civil society organisations, in line with human rights commitments. Ensure Traveller and Roma participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategy.**

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<sup>54</sup> European Commission, *An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*, Brussels, 05 April 2011 COM (2011) 173 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com\\_2011\\_173\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Pavee Point (2014) *Briefing Note on Ireland’s National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy*

[http://www.paveepoint.ie/temp/site3/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Pavee-Point-Briefing-Note\\_Irelands-National-Traveller-Roma-Integration-Strategy\\_Feb-2014.pdf](http://www.paveepoint.ie/temp/site3/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Pavee-Point-Briefing-Note_Irelands-National-Traveller-Roma-Integration-Strategy_Feb-2014.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> The Committee notes that “the State party should adopt an effective policy and action plan, developed in consultation with Traveller and Roma communities, to redress situations of inequality.” UN Human Rights Committee (2014) *Concluding Observations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Ireland*, Geneva: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, para. 23.

