

EQUALITY



# Roma survey – Data in focus

## Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States



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in 11 EU Member States**



# Foreword

Roma people form Europe's largest ethnic minority and have for centuries constituted an integral part of European society. But despite efforts at national, European and international level to improve the protection of their fundamental rights and advance their social integration, many Roma still face severe poverty, profound social exclusion, barriers to exercising their fundamental rights and discrimination. These problems affect their access to quality education, which, in turn, undermines their employment and income prospects, housing conditions and health status, curbing their overall ability to fully exploit their potential.

Exclusion from education takes different forms: from refusal to enrol Roma children under pressure from non-Roma parents to placement in 'special schools' or ethnically segregated classes. Ethnic segregation is influenced by factors ranging from residential characteristics to anti-Roma prejudice. Whatever the reasons, from a human rights perspective any ethnic segregation is unacceptable. In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights concluded in a landmark judgment that placing Roma children in special schools on the basis of their ethnic origin violated the government's obligation to ensure children's access to education without discrimination. In its decision the court referred to evidence of such segregation mentioned in other European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) reports.

In this report, FRA presents the results of the 2011 FRA Roma survey on education. They show that considerable gaps between Roma and non-Roma children persist at all levels of education, from preschool to secondary education. Roma also often find themselves in segregated schools or classes. As an increasing number of young Roma enter the workforce, especially in some Member States, it is particularly worrying to see that on average only 12 % of the Roma aged 18 to 24 who have been surveyed had completed upper-secondary general or vocational education. However, the situation is better for younger age groups, which shows not only that progress has been made, but also, more importantly, that further progress is possible and feasible.

In a time of economic crisis affecting everyone in the EU, we cannot afford not to promote equal treatment and social inclusion. Persisting discrimination and marginalisation can result in the loss of the skills and talent that could help bring us out of this crisis. The problems faced by Roma are complex and therefore require an integrated approach – low educational attainment, labour market barriers, segregation in education and in housing, and poor health outcomes must all be addressed simultaneously. The EU has an important role to play in implementing such change, by improving legislation against discrimination, coordinating policy, setting common integration goals and allocating funding. National, regional and, especially, local governments are also responsible for making change happen.

Today there is evidence of progress: an EU Framework and national strategies are in place; action plans are designed and being implemented. To continue making a tangible difference to Roma people's lives requires political will, efficient coordination of efforts and effective monitoring and evaluation tools. By gathering and analysing data on the situation on the ground and testing novel approaches involving Roma communities at local level, FRA will continue its work supporting Roma inclusion efforts.

**Morten Kjaerum**

Director

# Country codes

Country code	EU Member State
<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria
<b>CZ</b>	Czech Republic
<b>EL</b>	Greece
<b>ES</b>	Spain
<b>FR</b>	France
<b>HU</b>	Hungary
<b>IT</b>	Italy
<b>PL</b>	Poland
<b>PT</b>	Portugal
<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>SK</b>	Slovakia



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# Introduction

Roma people are the largest ethnic minority in the European Union (EU) and also among the most deprived, facing social exclusion and unequal access to employment, education, housing and health. The EU is obliged under Article 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU to combat social exclusion and discrimination. It must also uphold the social rights laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Social Charter adopted by the Community and by the Council of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Improving the educational situation of Roma is a critical test of the EU's ability to achieve progress in the inclusion of all extremely marginalised and socially excluded groups. It would also be an important contribution to Europe's 2020 strategy for forging a new path of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which has set ambitious targets for education, such as pushing below 10% the rate of early school leavers.<sup>2</sup>

Education has a special role in addressing multiple deprivations that overlap and reinforce each other. A poor quality education is both an outcome of earlier spells of exclusion and a driver of future deprivations. It limits future opportunities. A better education means higher qualifications and improved chances of gainful employment, helping lift people out of poverty. And the benefits extend well beyond such an improved labour market competitiveness. Education has an intrinsic value: it prevents the waste of human talent. It is associated with better social skills, higher flexibility and adjustability to a dynamically changing world.

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies explicitly links the success of the Europe 2020 strategy to inclusion in education. The Framework, adopted in 2011, identifies a clear goal for Roma education that each EU Member State should achieve and develop in its own national integration strategies: "Ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school".<sup>3</sup> This goal reflects the fundamental right to quality education and refers to the Council of Europe Recommendation on Roma education, which calls on EU Member States to guarantee non-discriminatory access to quality education, provide quality early childhood education, reduce the number of early school leavers from secondary education and provide

support to meet the diverse needs of Roma students.<sup>4</sup> The Framework focused on primary school and did not mention compulsory education, while the major challenge Roma face in most countries is the transition from primary to secondary education.

The European Commission continues its efforts to ensure that the EU Framework is respected. In June 2013 the Commission reported that a number of EU Member States had not yet fulfilled some of its conditions, especially in the field of education, where segregation remains widespread. The Commission issued country-specific recommendations on Roma inclusion for five Member States in 2013, focusing on ensuring effective access to quality and inclusive mainstream education from preschool onwards.

On 26 June 2013, the Commission proposed a Council Recommendation to strengthen Roma inclusion efforts, also in the field of education.<sup>5</sup> The Recommendation takes note of the survey findings. It expands the EU Framework focus on primary education by recommending that EU Member States should ensure that all Roma pupils complete at least compulsory education. It also recommends specific measures to encourage Roma participation in secondary and tertiary education. This report presents a more extensive analysis of the pilot survey results in the field of education. It first examines the school attendance of compulsory school age children, assessing possible explanations of why they do not attend. Then it looks at literacy and educational attainment of all respondents aged 16 and above. Comparing the educational outcomes or the educational level attained of three different age groups provides an idea of the changes that have occurred over time. As additional background information, the report compares the 2011 data to the results of the 2004 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) survey for five of the 11 Member States covered by the FRA survey, the only data where this was possible.

The results reflect the situation of Roma living in areas where the proportion of the Roma population is higher than the national average. Results should be read in light of the outcomes for non-Roma neighbours, who share the same educational and economic

<sup>1</sup> Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, OJ 2012 C 326; European Social Charter, CETS No. 163.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2010).

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2011a).

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2009); UNICEF (2007a); Council of Europe, European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) (2006); European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) cases: *DH v. Czech Republic*, 13 November 2007; *Orsus v. Croatia*, 16 March 2010; *Sampanis v. Greece*, 5 June 2008.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2013).

infrastructure. The present analysis aims at informing policy makers in developing and implementing measures designed to ensure equality in Roma access to education. FRA would like to thank Ms. Vera Messing from the Central European University, as well as the Centre for European Policy Studies and the European Network against Racism (ENAR) for their support in reviewing this report.

## Education: a fundamental right

High quality, inclusive and mainstream education is equally crucial to the full development of the child and to overall societal development. Education equips children and young adults with the necessary skills to enter the labour market and contribute to general social cohesion. This is why the right to education is enshrined in international conventions and EU documents.

Compulsory education is crucial for the acquisition of the eight key competences that represent a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes which EU Member States consider necessary for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.<sup>6</sup>

EU Member States have committed to ensuring that all children have equal and unhindered access to mainstream, inclusive schools. The right to education is enshrined in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. All EU Member States have ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right to education for all children.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – ratified by all EU Member States – prohibits discrimination in education.<sup>8</sup>

Education is also the only social right explicitly included in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>9</sup> and protected under its Article 14 on the prohibition of discrimination, as described in the related case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).<sup>10</sup>

The 2009 Recommendations of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on the education of Roma and Travellers recall that policies should be designed at the national level “to guarantee [...] access to

quality education with dignity and respect, based on the principles of human rights and on the rights of the child”.<sup>11</sup>

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union also protects the right to education.<sup>12</sup> The realisation of the right to education includes three intertwined and equally important aspects: the rights to access education, to quality education and to respect in the learning environment.<sup>13</sup>

## Measuring progress in Roma inclusion: a mission increasingly possible

There is a growing demand for statistical evidence to measure progress – or lack thereof – towards policy targets and the fulfilment of human rights. Reliable and comparable data sets are needed together with indicators to measure evolution in Roma inclusion, including in the domain of education. Education is an area in which tracking progress is particularly important. Failure to do so may put at risk the next Roma generation’s opportunities.

Significant progress has been achieved regarding data since 2001, when the UNDP provided the first comparative household survey with data broken down by ethnicity. In 2003, the UNDP report *Avoiding the Dependency Trap*<sup>14</sup> provided the first robust statistical evidence that a significant number of Roma in the EU Member States surveyed (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) were facing severe challenges in terms of literacy, infant mortality and malnutrition. On education in particular, the survey found that Roma education levels were ‘dramatically low’ and the report underlined that “[...] because education is directly correlated with labour market skills, inadequate education is a major factor behind Roma workers’ decreasing competitiveness”. A number of data collection initiatives followed, filling in the information gaps on the magnitude of Roma deprivation. These included:

- In 2004, the UNDP conducted a comprehensive survey of the status of Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in central and South-eastern European countries. The data generated by this survey provide a baseline against which progress on Roma

<sup>6</sup> European Parliament (2006).

<sup>7</sup> United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 28.

<sup>8</sup> UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Art. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Protocol to the Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Art. 2, CETS No. 155.

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, ECtHR, *Sampanis and Others v. Greece*, 5 June 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2009).

<sup>12</sup> Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, OJ 2012 C 326, Art. 14.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF (2011).

<sup>14</sup> UNDP (2002).

inclusion – and on education in particular – can be tracked over time.<sup>15</sup>

- In 2006, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), predecessor to FRA, developed a comprehensive comparative report on Roma in public education,<sup>16</sup> based on available secondary data. The report found that in a number of Member States there was evidence of direct and systemic discrimination and exclusion in education caused by a variety of interrelated factors, including poverty, high unemployment, substandard housing conditions and poor access to health services. The report also highlighted the paucity of ethnically disaggregated data on basic educational indicators, such as enrolment and attendance, as well as performance and attainment. In 2008, FRA launched EU-MIDIS, the largest survey of its kind to date that produced comparative EU-wide data on different ethnic minority and immigrant groups' experiences of discrimination and criminal victimisation in everyday life. Using a random sampling approach, the survey interviewed 23,500 respondents across the then 27 EU Member States – including 3,500 Roma respondents in seven EU Member States. Roma respondents emerged from the survey as the group reporting the highest overall levels of perceived discrimination, compared with other groups such as North Africans and sub-Saharan Africans. The situation of Roma respondents was described in detail in a dedicated report on Roma,<sup>17</sup> raising key questions about both fundamental rights protection and rights awareness.
- In 2011, FRA, in cooperation with the European Commission, the UNDP and the World Bank, surveyed Roma and their nearest non-Roma neighbours in 11 EU Member States: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

The aim of this survey was to examine their socioeconomic situation in education, employment, health and housing, as well as issues of equal treatment and rights awareness. Concurrently to FRA, the UNDP surveyed Roma in 12 central and southeastern European countries, five of which overlap with the FRA research. Both surveys included a common core questionnaire. The UNDP followed the methodological approach tested in 2004, which made it possible to track progress in the priority areas of Roma inclusion, including education.

A number of publications and analytical studies have been published using these data. In 2012, FRA issued the report *Survey results at a glance*, analysing the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States in key socioeconomic areas.<sup>18</sup> In 2012, the World Bank published a report on the importance of preschool education.<sup>19</sup> In 2012, the UNDP also published a report on Roma education, analysing the findings of the survey on educational attainment, literacy, school attendance, Roma children in education and segregation.<sup>20</sup> The UNDP and FRA reports are mutually complementary and if read in conjunction, they provide the best-ever comparative knowledge about Roma living in geographical concentration in 18 European countries. The sampling and methodology of the two surveys were harmonised to the greatest extent possible, but some of the topics and questions were addressed differently for several reasons. Those differences include divergent countries' coverage and different relative weight of individual modules reflecting the primary research focus of the two organisations (for example, the UNDP put a stronger focus on the respondents' socioeconomic status, while FRA had an elaborated module of discrimination perceptions and experience). These differences cause some data discrepancies, which will be indicated and explained individually in the relevant sections.

<sup>15</sup> The data set is available at: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/roma/show/D69F01FE-F203-1EE9-B45121B12A557E1B#ROMAexplore>.

<sup>16</sup> European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) (2006).

<sup>17</sup> FRA (2009a).

<sup>18</sup> FRA (2012).

<sup>19</sup> World Bank (2012).

<sup>20</sup> Brüggemann, C. (2012).





# Key findings and FRA opinions

## KEY SURVEY FINDINGS ON ROMA EDUCATION

*The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States – Survey results at a glance*, a joint FRA, UNDP, World Bank and European Commission publication, presents the main findings of the combined data of the UNDP and FRA Roma surveys, including on education:

- **Low preschool attendance:** On average, only half the Roma children surveyed aged 4 up to compulsory school age attended preschool or kindergarten in 2010/2011.
- **High compulsory school attendance in most Member States:** With the exception of Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, nine out of 10 Roma children aged 7–15 are reported to attend school.
- **Low completion rates of secondary education:** Only 15 % of those Roma adults aged 20–24 who were surveyed had completed upper-secondary general or vocational education.

The survey results show that Roma face three major inter-related education problems: low preschool attendance, a high risk of segregated schooling compounded by prejudice and discrimination, high drop-out rates before completing secondary education and low literacy rates. EU Member State action is urgently needed in these areas.

## Preschool

**There is a significant gap in preschool attendance between Roma and non-Roma living close by.** The results confirm the critical role of preschool education for success at later educational stages. Low preschool attendance makes it difficult for pupils to catch up at primary school and is a principal determinant of premature drop-out rates. In contrast to 70 %–97 % of non-Roma, only 20 % of Roma aged 6–15 in Greece, and less than 50 % in the Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain had ever attended preschool. The exceptions are Hungary and Poland, where Roma preschool participation is high but still lower than for the non-Roma populations living close by.

**The results confirm that investing in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) pays off.** Children with preschool experience have a greater chance of staying in school and successfully completing compulsory education. Therefore, Roma children's access to ECEC institutions and Roma families' willingness to have their children participate in ECEC would have a beneficial effect on subsequent school attendance and attainment.

## FRA opinion

*Member States should ensure that socially disadvantaged children, including Roma, have equal access to **early childhood education and care**, irrespective of where they live or their ethnicity. To achieve this, targeted measures for children at risk of marginalisation are needed to offset the structural disadvantages they face regarding preschool enrolment and attainment.*

*Access to preschool institutions should be improved and children in marginalised communities should be favoured in preschool enrolment. Involving the family and communities is an essential precondition for the success of **early childhood education and care**. Roma families should be motivated to enrol and support their children in preschool, improving their awareness of the long-term benefits of subsequent school attendance and attainment.*

## Compulsory school attendance and educational attainment

**Fewer Roma children than non-Roma attend compulsory school.** On average, 14 % of the Roma children of compulsory school age in the households surveyed are not in education, compared to 3 % of the non-Roma children living close by. There are pronounced differences between EU Member States: in Greece, 43 %, and in Romania, 22 %, of school-age children do not attend school, while the share is minor in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Spain (5 %–7 %). In Bulgaria, France, Italy and Portugal the share of Roma school-age children not attending school is 11 %–14 %.

**The main reason for not attending school is a late start and irregular attendance resulting in early drop-out.**

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia high rates of non-attendance are primarily due to the delayed start of schooling while in Portugal and Spain these stem from pupils leaving education early. In Hungary and Italy, both late starts and early drop-outs are behind non-attendance. In Greece and Romania in particular, as well as in Bulgaria, France and Italy, Roma children of all ages fail to attend compulsory school.

**A large majority of Roma respondents had not completed upper secondary education.**

On average, 89 % of the Roma surveyed aged 18 to 24 had not acquired any upper secondary qualification compared to 38 % of non-Roma living close by. The share of Roma not having completed upper secondary education was highest in Greece, France, Portugal, Romania and Spain, at more than 90 %.

**On the other hand, data hint at a positive change over time in some Member States.**

In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy, for instance, Roma aged 18 to 24 have higher **upper secondary completion rates** than Roma of older age groups. In France, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Spain, however, completing upper secondary school remains rare also for the young age group (below 10 %).

**FRA opinion**

*Member States should consider systematic monitoring of the drop-out risk for primary schools to allow for timely interventions. Schools should deliver tailored support to children at risk both in terms of pedagogical help and individual counselling, including after-school activities providing children with opportunities to expand their knowledge. Engaging Roma parents in a meaningful way in school and education activities would also help address the risk of early drop-outs.*

*Member States should pay particular attention to the transition from primary to secondary education and from lower to upper secondary school levels, as graduation from secondary school is a prerequisite for stable employment.*

*Member States could consider positive incentives, such as scholarships, accommodation allowance (residential subsidy) and transport support to Roma students in order to encourage them to enrol and complete secondary school. Career counselling, tailored support for successful graduation from lower secondary school and preparation for upper secondary school would have a positive effect on the willingness of Roma students to consider continuing their education. Tailored, individualised mentoring in upper secondary school would help reduce drop-out rates. Positive role models can illustrate, effectively and tangibly, how education can improve life prospects.*

## Educational participation and literacy of youngsters

**Roma report low literacy rates.** About 20 % of Roma respondents aged 16- and above said that they cannot read and write compared to less than 1 % of the non-Roma living close by. The situation is critical in Greece where half of the Roma surveyed said they are illiterate, and notable levels of illiteracy are evident in Portugal (35 %), Romania (31 %) and France (25 %).

**Similar to upper secondary education, some improvement in literacy can be detected.**

The share of illiterate Roma is lower among the youngest age group (16 to 24 years) in most of the EU Member States covered by the survey. The exceptions are Greece and Romania where the share of illiterates among young Roma is still high, at 35 % and 22 %, respectively, as well as in Slovakia, where the share remained unchanged at 5 %. The difference between age groups suggests a reduction in illiteracy in recent years.

**Educational participation is also improving.**

Compared to older generations, a much higher share of young Roma adults attend school. Only 0 %–4 % of Roma in the 16–24-year-old age group have not attended school in Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria, and Italy (For more information, see Figure 11 on p. 34). The share of young Roma without experience in formal education is notable in France (12 %), Romania (15 %) and Greece (28 %). Data also suggest improvement in educational participation among Roma women – a trend that is particularly important for girls’ future life opportunities.

**Still, important cross-country differences exist concerning participation in formal education.**

Some 17 % of 16-year-old and older Roma respondents have never attended school compared to less than 2 % of non-Roma respondents. Of those surveyed, 44 % in Greece, 32 % in Portugal and 24 % in Romania and France have never attended formal education. This share is 3 % in Hungary and 1 % in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (For more information, see Figure 10 on p. 33). The trends in women’s drop-out rates by age group vary by country, however, suggesting that the progress achieved can still be reversed.



## FRA opinion

*Member States should pay special attention to the institutional or structural barriers within their educational systems that disproportionately affect marginalised areas, where many Roma live, gender-specific implications, as well as the effects of geographical internal mobility and the exercise of free movement to other EU Member States.*

*Member States could consider diversifying vocational education by on-the-job training schemes to facilitate labour market entry and provide income opportunities for students. This can reduce drop-out rates, as students learn that knowledge gained in school is converted into marketable skills. Member States could also consider making use of EU funds to facilitate access to quality vocational and upper secondary school education in disadvantaged regions and areas where many Roma live.*

## Equal treatment in education

In a number of EU Member States, **Roma children constitute a majority placed in special education schools and programmes, outside the mainstream educational system**, although they have no apparent learning challenges or disabilities. On average, the survey results show that one out of 10 Roma children were reported to have attended a special school or class that was mainly for Roma, even if only for a short period. Segregation in mainstream education is prevalent in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Greece, where 33 % to 58 % of Roma children in school attended a class where all or many of children were Roma. Ethnically segregated school environments were atypical in Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

**Despite these facts, the perception of discrimination in the field of education is low among Roma.** Education proved to be among the least affected institutional domains with respect to discrimination. About 10 % of the respondents who have been in contact with personnel in education felt discriminated against in the last 12 months, compared to 10 % in the area of health, 7 % at work, 23 % while looking for an apartment and 24 % while looking for employment. The propensity to report cases of discrimination is even lower suggesting that Roma may see unequal treatment as 'normal'.

Attending segregated or mixed schools or classes correlates in some cases with poverty. Children from households at risk of poverty – those with an equivalised income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income – are more likely to study in ethnically segregated classes or schools in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Greece than non-Roma children from households at risk of poverty.

## FRA opinion

*Segregation in education is an issue of special concern in regard to equal treatment. EU Member States should consider aspects of de facto segregation resulting from residential segregation or 'white flight' phenomena. Member States should therefore ensure through the strict application of relevant legislation and policies that schools provide an inclusive environment for all children regardless of their ethnic origin or disability. Member States should ensure that Equality Bodies are adequately resourced to monitor the desegregation of schools and the integration of children into mainstream schools. The European Commission should ensure that EU funds are not used to maintain such forms of segregation in schools.*

*Member States could consider monitoring and evaluating progress in education based on a systematic collection of anonymous statistical data broken down by ethnic origin, gender and disability enrolment, attendance and attainment.*

*Member States could also consider implementing or intensifying special training of teachers and educational staff, in particular concerning equal treatment of Roma children.*

*Improving the educational opportunities of Roma is part of a broader inclusion agenda and can be sustainable only if it involves Roma communities and majority populations. Bringing communities closer together is important to overcoming prejudice and discrimination. Member States could consider encouraging and funding local authorities and other actors to develop community cohesion initiatives, in particular in relation to education.*





# 1

## School attendance of school-age Roma children



In all EU Member States at least eight years of formal education are compulsory for all children.<sup>21</sup> These years spent at school are seen as the minimum needed to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes considered necessary for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.<sup>22</sup> A child who has never or only for a short period attended school will not be able to acquire “[...] literacy and the other essential skills, knowledge and values needed for full participation in society”.<sup>23</sup>

Extensive research underlines the benefits of compulsory education both at the individual and the societal level. A wide range of analyses<sup>24</sup> emphasise that extending education beyond the compulsory level even by one additional year increases earnings and occupational prestige as well as mobility while decreasing the likelihood of being unemployed or living on welfare. Indicators of life quality, such as satisfaction with life, happiness or subjective health, also increase with the number of years in education.<sup>25</sup> At societal level, a Hungarian study on the long-term budgetary benefits of Roma education estimates that the return on investing in the education of Roma children ranges from €30,000 to €70,000 per student.<sup>26</sup> Investing in Roma education would obviously benefit not only the individual but also society as a whole.

Survey respondents reported on the level of education attained by each child under 16 in their household

during the school year 2010/2011. Respondents could also state that a child was ‘not yet in education’, ‘temporarily not in school or skipped the year’, ‘working’ or ‘stopped school completely’. These situations are summarised as ‘not attending school’ in the following analysis.

The next sections will present the results regarding school attendance of compulsory school-aged children, the reasons behind not attending school and the possible link between participation in early childhood education and school attendance in compulsory school age and beyond.

### 1.1. Early childhood education and its implications

Early childhood education is the first contact with the education system. The European Commission in its 2011 Communication noted on this issue that “ECEC is the essential foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability”.<sup>27</sup> Early childhood education takes different forms across the EU, but all EU Member States offer some form of early programmes for children before the start of compulsory schooling, which are at least partly publicly financed.<sup>28</sup> A more recent Roma-specific Council policy document pointed to a striking paradox: although Roma children may gain most from ECEC, they lag behind in enrolment in preschool institutions compared to non-Roma. “Participation rates of Roma children in ECEC are generally significantly lower than for the native population, and expanding these opportunities is a key policy challenge across the EU.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission, Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) (2011).

<sup>22</sup> European Parliament (2006).

<sup>23</sup> UNESCO (2000).

<sup>24</sup> Miskovic, M. (Ed.) (2013); Friedman, E., Kriglerová, E. G., Kubánová, M. and Slosiarik, M. (2009); Kertesi, G. and Kézdi, G. (2011); Liégeois, J.-P. (1998); O’Higgins, N. and Ivanov, A. (2006).

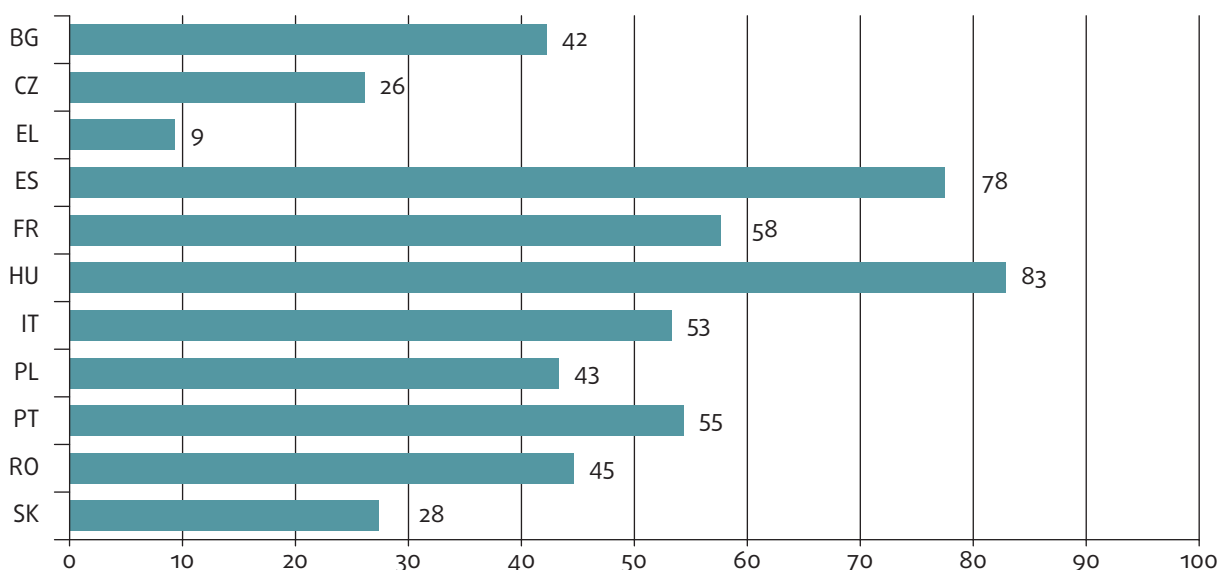
<sup>25</sup> Oreopoulos, P. and Salvanes, K.G. (2011).

<sup>26</sup> Kertesi, G. and Kézdi, G. (2006).

<sup>27</sup> European Commission (2011b).

<sup>28</sup> EACEA (2009).

**Figure 1: Roma children aged 4 and up to starting compulsory primary school age attending preschool or kindergarten in 2010/2011, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year?

Notes: Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma and non-Roma households from the age of four to the age of six or seven, depending on the starting age of compulsory education in the Member State, and not having started primary school yet. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania compulsory education starts at age 7, in the other EU Member States at 6.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

ECEC can play a key role in overcoming the educational disadvantage faced by Roma children.<sup>29</sup>

The EU and the World Bank issued a report on Roma in ECEC,<sup>30</sup> which highlights the importance of early childhood education and its benefits to children from socially disadvantaged and marginalised families, who frequently lack the capacity to provide their young children with physical and cognitive inputs that are essential to later successful participation in education.

The positive impact of early childhood education on subsequent school attendance is confirmed by the survey results. Respondents were asked if children aged 15 or under in their household were currently attending preschool or had attended in the past.

Preschool attendance is highest in Hungary and Spain where about 80 % of Roma children aged 4 to compulsory primary education age attended either preschool or kindergarten in the school year 2010/11 (Figure 1). In contrast, only 9 % of the Roma children in this age group attend preschool in Greece and less than 30 % in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

At the time of the survey, Roma also lagged behind in pre-school experience for children aged 6 to 15, but with important country variations (Figure 2). Roma children

have the lowest rate of preschool experience in Greece (20 %). The gap between Roma and non-Roma is also largest in Greece (70 percentage points), and ranges in the other countries from 17 to 50 percentage points.

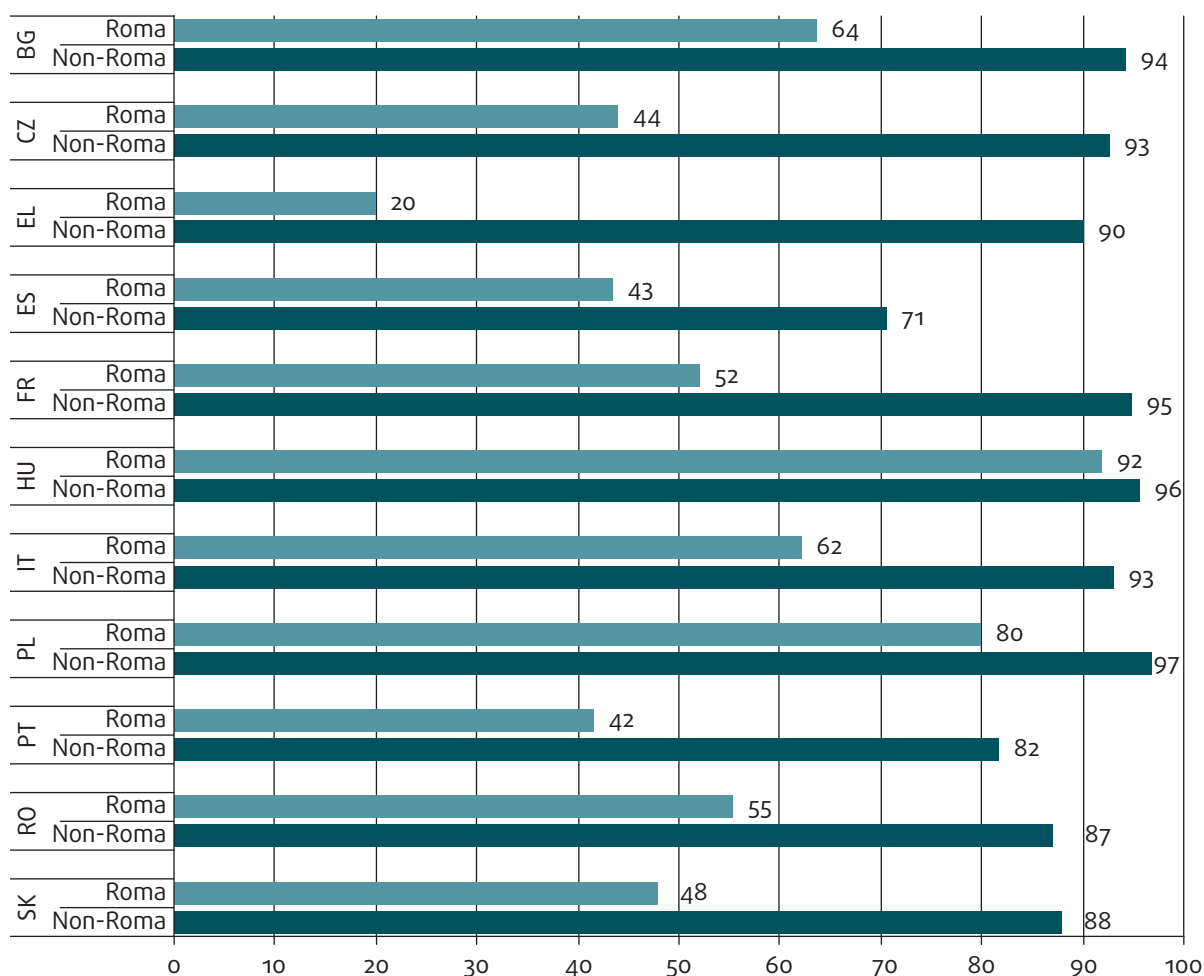
Hungary has the highest rates of Roma children with preschool experience (92 %). In Hungary, the last year of kindergarten is compulsory for all children and socially disadvantaged children are given priority in enrolment, while recently kindergarten attendance became compulsory for socially disadvantaged children from the age of three.

Almost in all EU Member States attending preschool positively influences participation of children in school. In seven countries the majority of compulsory school age Roma children who currently attend school have had previous experience of preschool. On the opposite, only a small portion of compulsory school age Roma children who do not currently attend school (due to various reasons) have had the preschool experience (Figure 3). The differences are 'statistically significant',<sup>31</sup> in all countries except for Spain. In Spain the survey results do not allow for clear differentiation between those who currently attend school and those who do not in terms of possible influence of them participating in preschool before – 44 % of

<sup>29</sup> European Commission (2011b).

<sup>30</sup> World Bank (2012).

<sup>31</sup> 'Statistically significant' results are identified based on the results of a statistical test; in this analysis the statistical significance has been tested by observing intervals with a 95 % confidence level or chi-square tests with a significance level of 0.05.

**Figure 2: Roma and non-Roma children, aged 6–15, with preschool experience, by EU Member State (%)**

Question: B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year?  
B14. Has he/she ever attended kindergarten or preschool?

Note: Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma and non-Roma households aged 6–15.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

those currently attending school went to preschool *vis-à-vis* 36 % of those who do currently not attend school, but went to preschool before. The survey data present Hungary as a clear example with visible effect of early childhood education on school attendance. As many as 94 % of compulsory school-age Roma children currently attending school have past through the preschool earlier in their life (they have had preschool experience). At the same time, only 15 % of the same-age Roma children in Hungary who do not currently attend school have had preschool experience before.

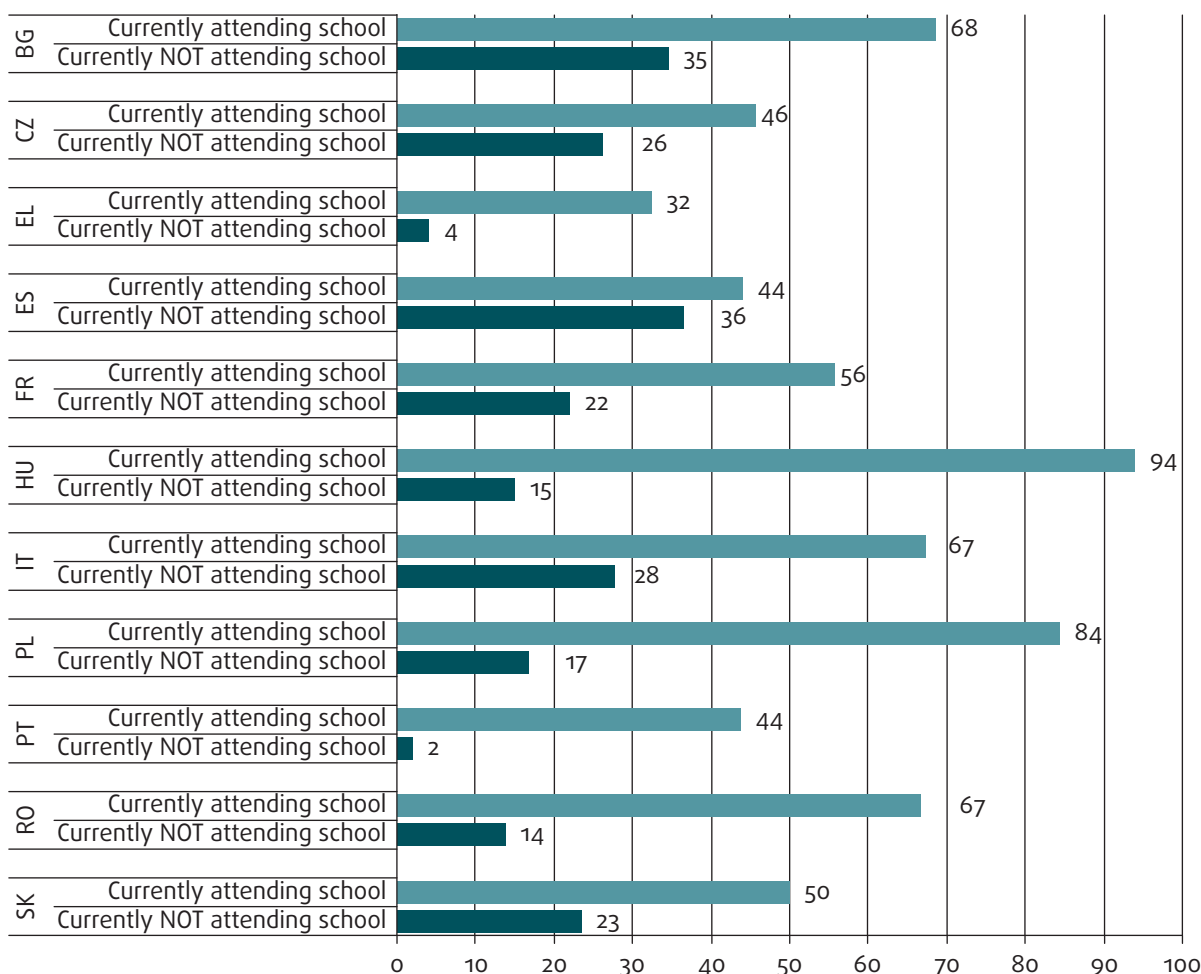
## 1.2. School attendance rates

The survey found that compared to their non-Roma peers, Roma children are at a greater risk of leaving education before the end of compulsory school age without acquiring the basic skills necessary for achieving full participation in their societies. An

average of 14 % of Roma children surveyed did not attend compulsory education, in contrast to some 3 % of non-Roma children. Greece stands out with an exceptionally high rate of non-attendance: 43 % of Roma children of compulsory school age are not attending school.

Academic literature points to a number of multi-layered factors resulting in high rates of Roma children not attending school. Those factors are both drivers and outcomes of other socioeconomic deprivations Roma face. They are mutually reinforcing and constitute two groups: one related to the situation of the Roma families and the socioeconomic environment they live in, and another related to the specific schools the children attend or do not have access to. The first group includes factors that are broadly related to poverty status (financial difficulties of the families and related child labour), poor health, early marriage and childbirth, lack of basic space at home where children can prepare

**Figure 3: Roma children of compulsory school-age and preschool experience attending compulsory school or not, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: *Preschool experience:*  
 B14. Has he/she ever attended kindergarten or preschool?  
 B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year?  
 Not attending school:  
 B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year? 01 Not yet in education 06 temporarily not in school/skipped the year) 07 Stopped working completely 08 Working.

Note: Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma households of compulsory school-age up to age 15

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

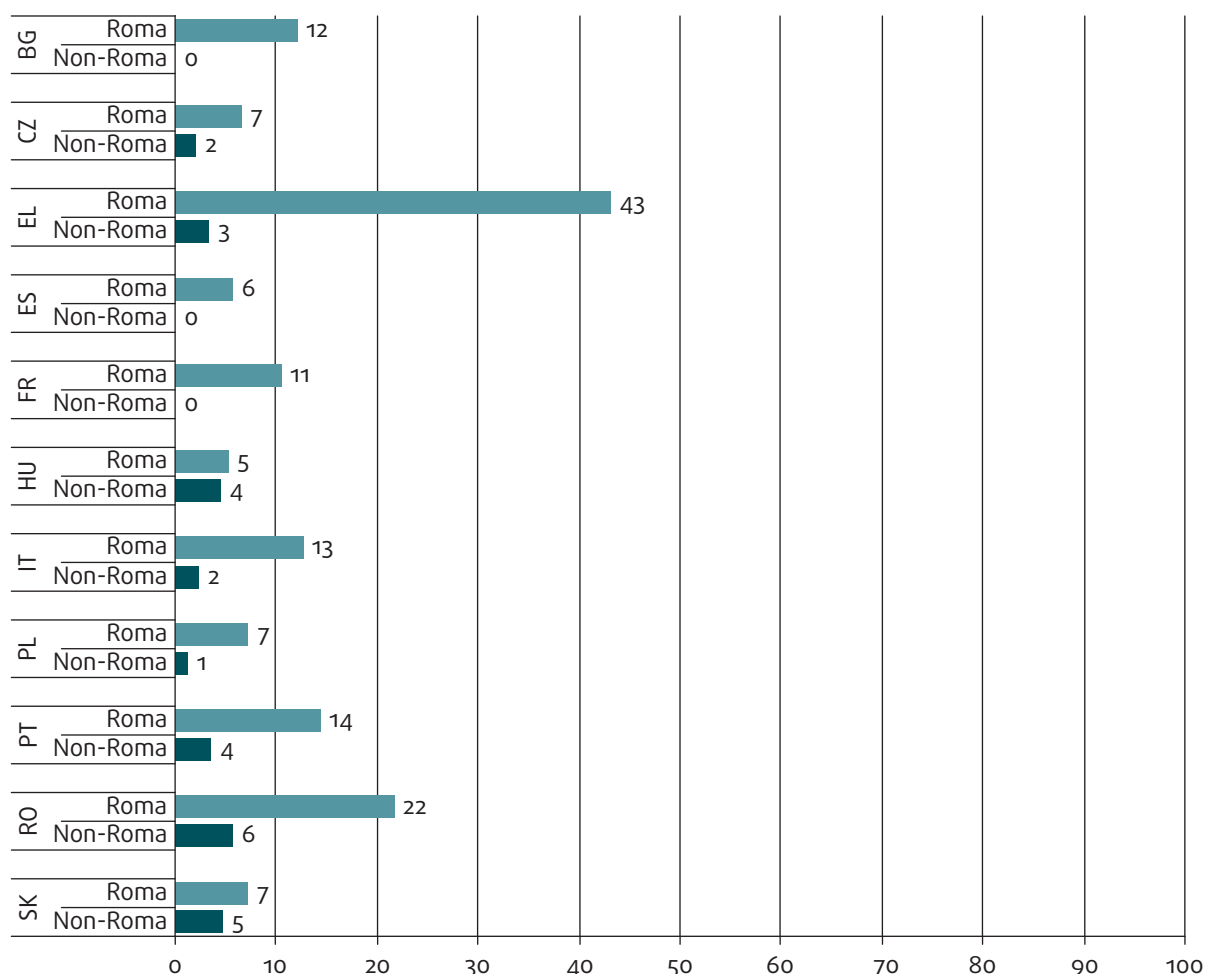
for school. The second group includes remoteness from basic education infrastructure, limited access to schools, especially beyond primary school and a high rate of unfounded channelling of Roma children into special education. All these result in starting school late, irregular attendance and inadequate performance in primary school, making the transition from primary to secondary education more difficult. Furthermore,

the high geographical mobility of the Roma population in some countries worsens the situation.<sup>32</sup>

The survey findings suggest that some EU Member States are far from reaching the education target of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), which aims to ensure that Roma children complete at least primary school. As indicated in the latest European Commission NRIS

<sup>32</sup> Brüggemann, C. (2012); Hoelscher, P., UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS (2007); Roma Education Fund (2012a); European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) (2008); European Roma Rights Centre (1999); European Roma Rights Centre (2004); UNDP (2002); Kertesi, G. and Kézdi, G., Roma Education Fund (2013); Ivasiuc, A. (2010); Roma Education Fund (2012b); Szalai, J. and Schiff, C. (forthcoming in 2014).

**Figure 4: Roma and non-Roma children of compulsory school-age not attending school in 2010/2011, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: For those aged less than 16: B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year? 01 Not yet in education 06 temporarily not in school/skipped the year) 07 Stopped working completely 08 Working.  
For aged 16 years and more, where compulsory education lasts beyond 16: A10. How would you describe his/her current job situation?  
All answer categories except: 11 in school/student 12 vocational training/apprenticeship.

Note: Reference group: All children of compulsory school-age in the Roma and non-Roma households surveyed.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

Communication, pre-conditions to achieving this goal have not been established. While primary school attendance is compulsory in all Member States, the survey results show that important differences exist between Member States with regard to the share of Roma children not attending compulsory school (Figure 4). Greece and Romania have the highest rates of Roma children not attending compulsory school at 43 % and 22 %, respectively. In the remaining EU Member States there is a clear pattern: with the exception of Spain, in south-western European countries (France, Italy, Portugal) and in Bulgaria, the share of Roma children not in compulsory school is between 10 % and 15 %, while in the central eastern European countries (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland) and in Spain the rate is between 5 % and 7 %. The differences in compulsory school attendance between Roma and non-Roma

children are statistically significant in all Member States with the exception of Hungary and Slovakia. The UNDP data set confirms these findings: the smallest ethnic gaps in school attendance were recorded in Hungary and Slovakia.<sup>33</sup> The largest difference between Roma and non-Roma in compulsory school attendance is found in Greece (40 percentage points) and Romania (16 percentage points), but it is also over 10 percentage points in Bulgaria, France, Italy and Portugal.

FRA found no indication of a significant gender gap in compulsory education attendance of Roma children. The biggest differences were observed in Greece (five percentage points) and

<sup>33</sup> Brüggemann, C. (2012).

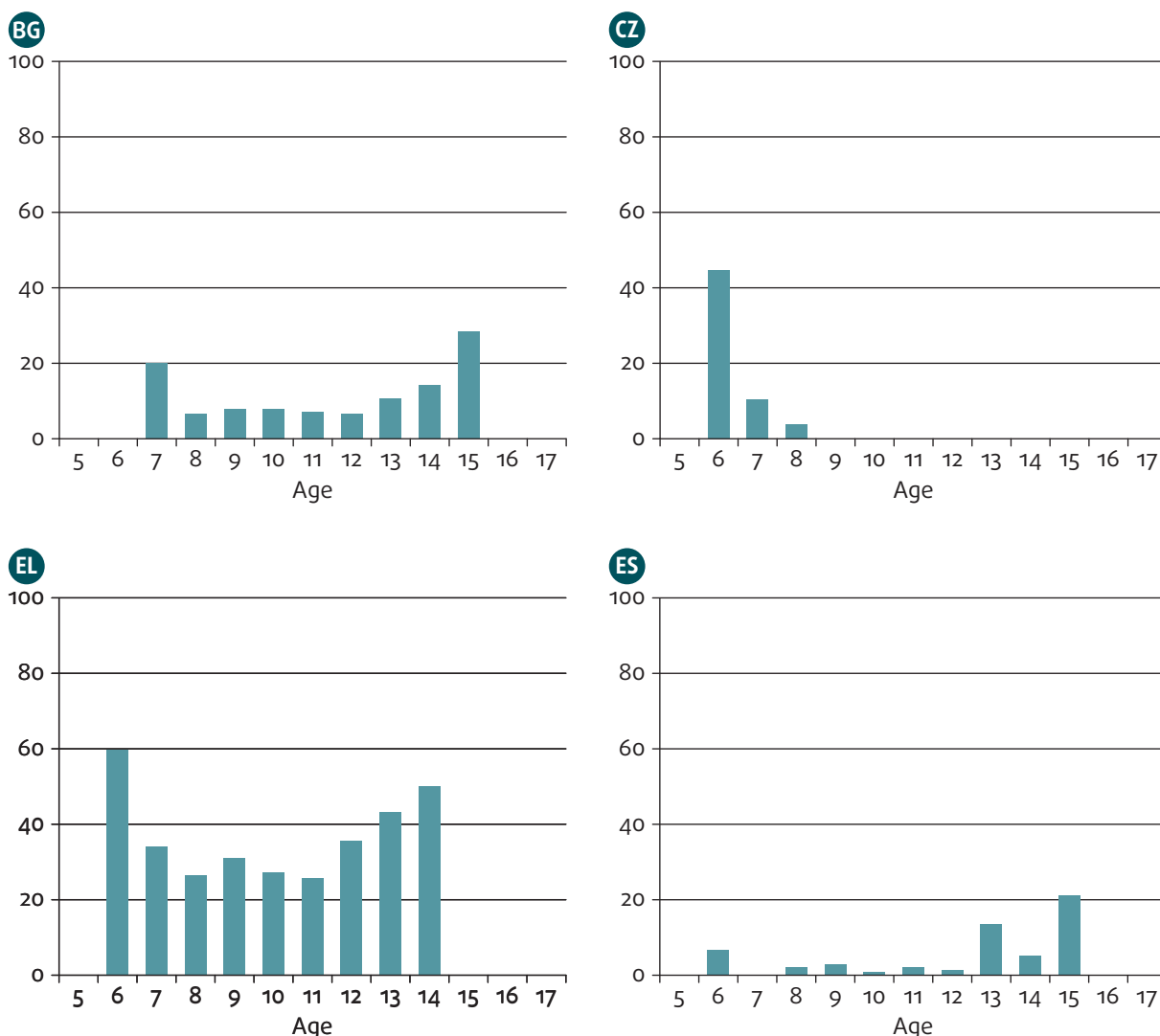
Portugal (seven percentage points) where slightly more girls than boys are not attending compulsory school. In contrast, in Slovakia (five percentage points), slightly more boys than girls are not attending school.

### 1.3. Age patterns of Roma children’s non-attendance

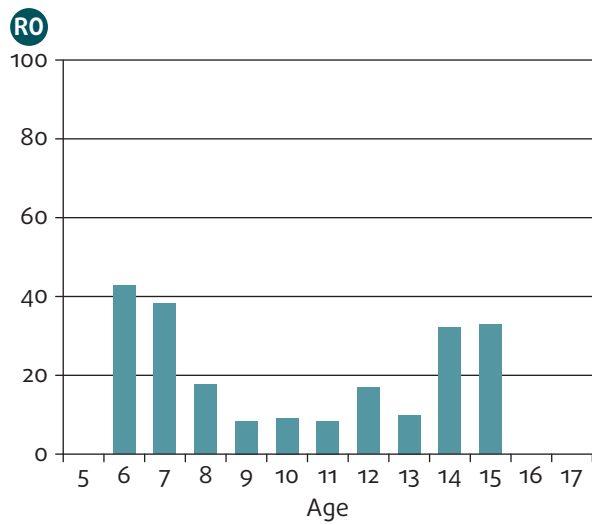
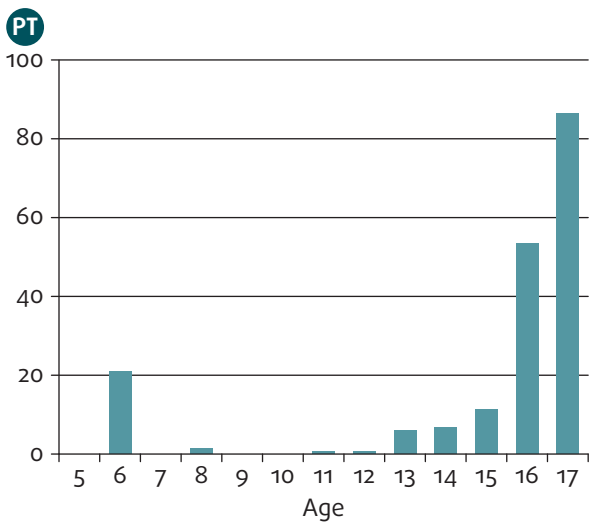
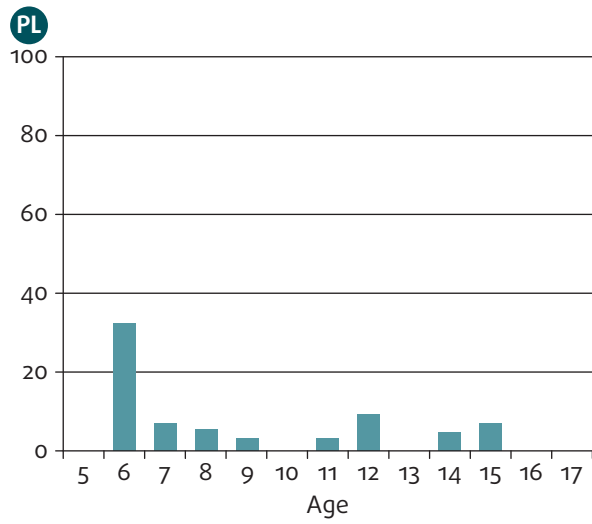
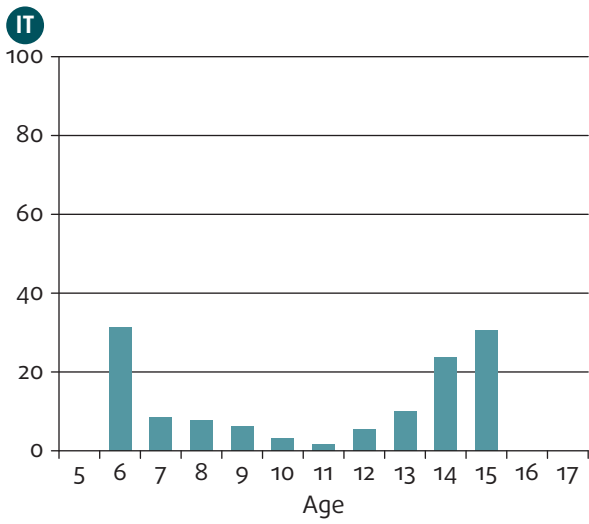
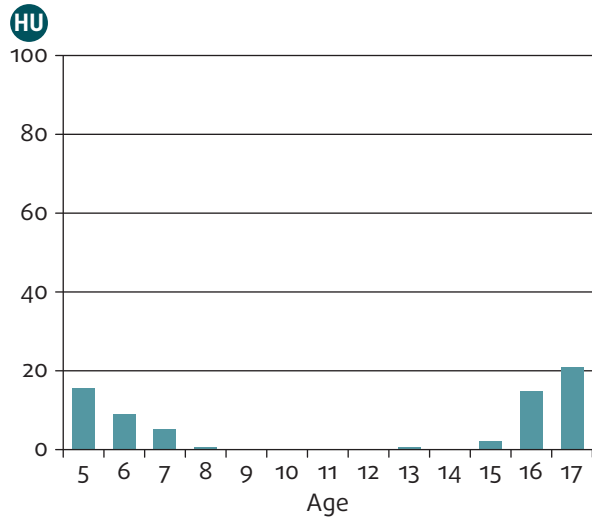
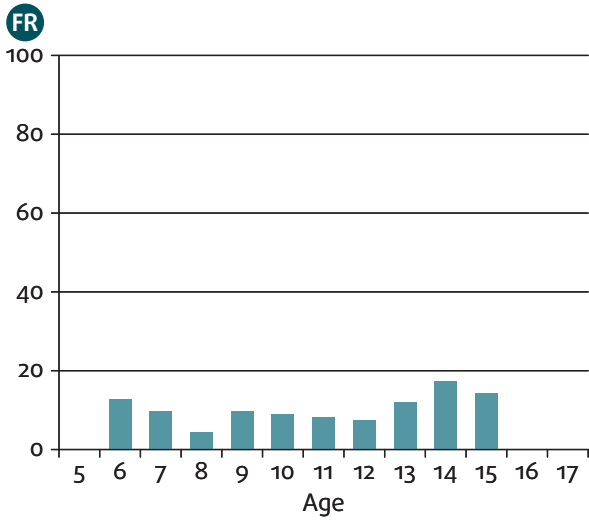
The age distribution of children whose age is within the legally defined compulsory school age but who are not attending school is indicative of the patterns and gravity of the ‘non-attendance’ problem among Roma. Figure 5 shows that, apart from higher proportions at the beginning and the end of the school career, a relatively high share of Roma do not attend school at all ages, particularly in Greece, where although compulsory education starts at the age of six, 60 % of 6-year-olds in Roma households covered by the

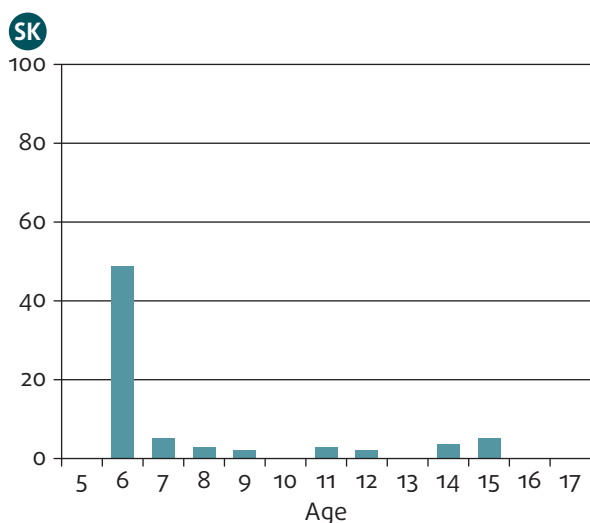
survey were reported not to attend school. The share of Greek Roma children of compulsory school age not attending school is very high in all age groups, although it is highest at the two ends of the age distribution: one third of 7-year-olds; 26 %–31 % of 8–11 year-olds; 36 % of 12-year-olds; and 43 % of 13-year-olds are not attending school. The survey does not yield sufficient information about the possible reasons for the high non-attendance rate of Roma children in Greece but the few,<sup>34</sup> mostly anthropological, research projects on Roma suggest multiple causes behind the deprived educational situation. Some of them might be related to geographic isolation, some to living in segregated slums on the outskirts of larger cities. Many of those who attend school study in substandard segregated schools or classes and are rarely encouraged to continue education. The Greek state seems to neglect the importance of the Roma’s social integration and the role of education in this process.<sup>35</sup>

Figure 5: Roma children of compulsory school age not attending school, by EU Member State and age (%)



<sup>34</sup> Lydaki, A. (1997); Rinne, C. (2002).  
<sup>35</sup> National Commission for Human Rights of the Hellenic Republic (2011).





Questions: For those aged less than 16: B9. Which education level was he/she attending this (IN SUMMER ASK: the previous) school year? 01 Not yet in education 06 temporarily not in school/skipped the year 07 Stopped working completely 08 Working.  
 For those aged 16 years and more, where compulsory education lasts beyond 16: A10. How would you describe his/her current job situation? All answer categories except: 11 in school/student 12 vocational training/apprenticeship.  
 Note: Reference group: All children of compulsory school age in the Roma households surveyed.  
 Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

### 1.4. Reasons for not attending compulsory school

Earlier in-depth research in Romania found that a combination of institutional and structural factors embedded in the educational system lead to high Roma drop-out rates and non-attendance.<sup>36</sup> These factors might also be relevant for other countries. They include poor infrastructure and shortages of equipment, geographical distance to schools and the lack of available public transport, general problems which disproportionately affect marginalised rural areas where many Roma reside. In addition to the institutional causes, individual characteristics, such as language and communication problems, low confidence in schools, early marriage and childbirth or the necessity of contributing to household income, hinder Roma children’s school attendance. These reasons are often aggravated by teaching styles or curricula that do not resonate with the real-life experiences of Roma children; teacher prejudices or low motivation; or segregation.

When asked why the household’s school-aged children were not attending compulsory school, respondents could select from the following options: ‘not yet in education’, ‘stopped school completely’, ‘children are working’ or they were ‘temporarily not in school or skipped the year’.The option ‘not yet in education’ means that they had reached school age but their parents had not yet enrolled them.

Children declared as ‘working’ were considered to have stopped education. In all EU Member States, less than 2 % of all Roma children of compulsory school age were not currently attending school because they were reported to be working. The category ‘temporarily not in school or skipped the year’ includes children who missed a school year because of sickness, moving house, financial problems or other reasons. Any of these responses was understood as non-attendance.

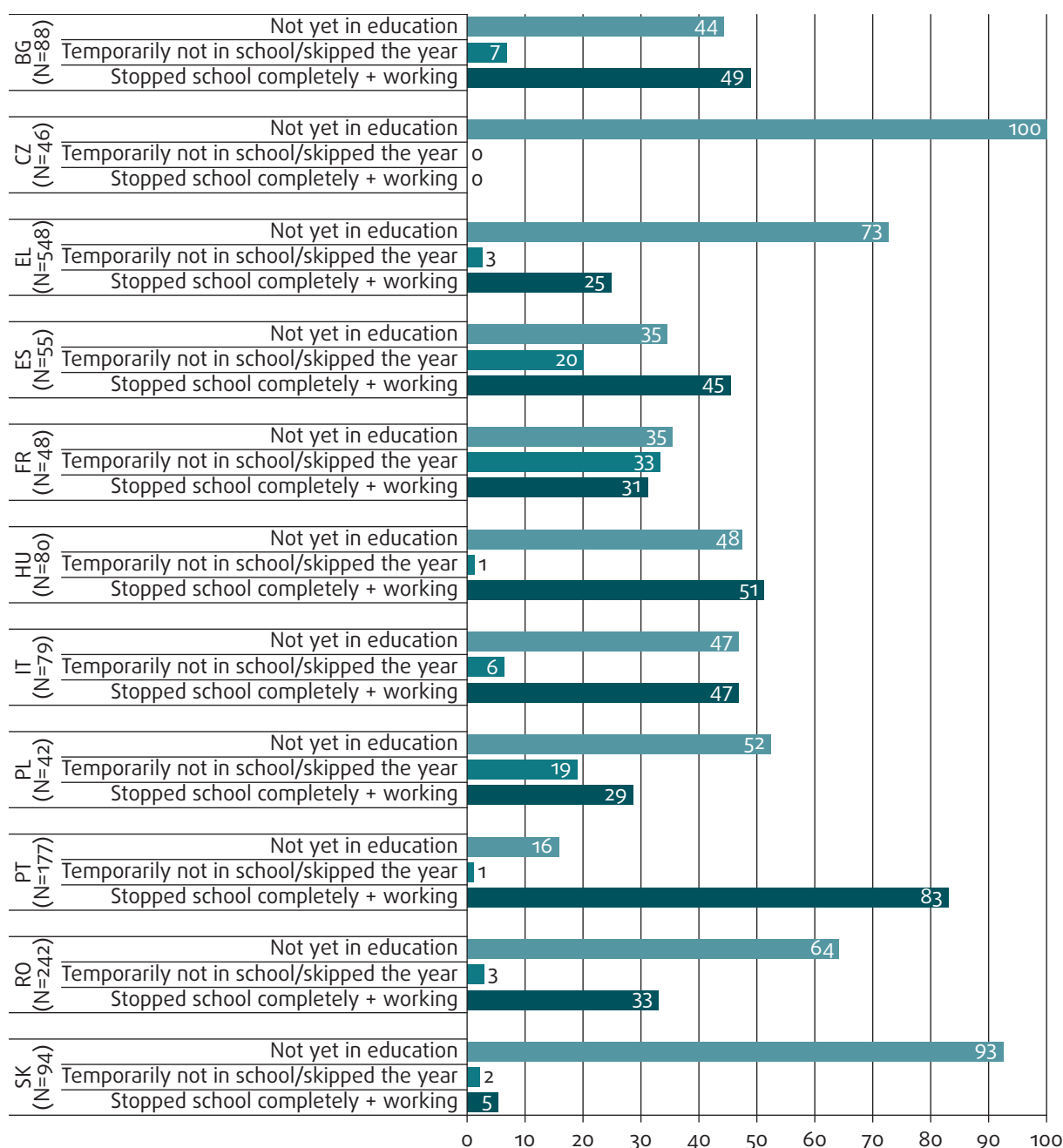
Selecting one of the three possible options for non-attendance is just the first step towards explaining its underlying factors. Three main reasons may be distinguished for children of compulsory school age not attending school: late school start (59%), irregular school attendance (5%), and early drop-out (36%). These categories overlap to a certain extent, however, and it is difficult to rigidly differentiate ‘reasons’ from ‘non-attendance outcomes’. Drop-out may be an ultimate outcome of the late school start or irregular school attendance, but it can also be used as a ‘reason’ for not attending school. These types of reasons form country-specific patterns.

In most EU Member States, late start seems to be the major reason for not attending compulsory school. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, this appears to be the only reason. Further research is necessary to examine the reasons for a delayed start of compulsory education, in particular concerning lack of preschool experiences and the existence of admission criteria, such as ‘maturity tests’ that might disproportionately affect Roma.

<sup>36</sup> Fleck, G. and Rughinis, C. (2008).



**Figure 6: Reasons for non-attendance among compulsory school-age Roma children not in school, by EU Member State (%)**



Questions: For those aged less than 16: B9. Which education level was he/she attending this school year? 01 Not yet in education 06 temporarily not in school/skipped the year) 07 Stopped working completely 08 Working.

For those aged 16 years and more for countries where the age of compulsory education is over 16: A10. How would you describe his/her current job situation? All answer categories except: 11 in school/student 12 vocational training/apprenticeship.

Notes: In some cases, rounding may result in a small difference of +/- one percentage point in the percentage quoted in the text (e.g. percentage of children not in education) as opposed to the result one would get from adding up the results from the individual response categories as presented in the tables and graphs (that is, summing up the percentage of children who are not yet in education and the percentage of children who are temporarily not attending and the percentage of children who have dropped out). Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma households of compulsory school-age and currently not in school.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

## 1.5. Irregular school attendance

On average 5 % of Roma children not attending compulsory school were reported as having skipped a year or as temporarily not in school. There are

important country variations, with about 20 % of Roma children not attending compulsory school in Poland and Spain. In France, that figure is about 33 %, which might be explained in terms of the mobile lifestyle of *gens du voyage* among other factors, such as parents' negative

perception of the educational institutions and the low value placed on skills beyond reading and writing.<sup>37</sup>

Late school start and irregular school attendance contribute to early drop-out rates, which are high in the case of Roma children in most EU Member States surveyed. Portugal (83 %) and Hungary (51 %) recorded the highest share of Roma who dropped out while still in compulsory school. Other factors that are not related to the educational system per se can play a role, such as early marriages or fluctuations in the demand for unskilled labour in certain sectors, like construction. In Portugal and Hungary, compulsory schooling is two-to-three years longer than in the other countries and ends only at 18, which may be another factor influencing drop-out rates.<sup>38</sup> Early drop-out is also reported as an important reason for non-attendance in Bulgaria, Italy and Spain, where between 45 %–50 % of children stop education before the end of compulsory school.

The analysis of data by age groups and reasons for not attending reveals important country-specific differences. In Bulgaria, Greece and Romania children of all ages do not attend compulsory school, with peaks at the beginning and end of compulsory school age. In these countries 'not yet in education' does not only concern the first two years of compulsory school, and drop out does not only occur during the last two years. In Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Spain only the first and last two years of compulsory education are affected by late start and early drop out. Early drop out occurs mostly at the point of transition between school types: in Portugal, 83 % of children drop out, mainly when they are 16 and 17 years old. France is a particular case, as Roma children were reported not to attend compulsory school at all ages; and the reasons are more or less equally distributed between the three possible answers.

<sup>37</sup> See also Cour des comptes (2012).

<sup>38</sup> EACEA (2011).



# 2

## Educational attainment and literacy of adult Roma



The next sections will examine literacy and educational attainment of Roma aged 16 and above in comparison to non-Roma living close by and in regard to changes over time as reflected in the responses of different age groups. The different responses demonstrate a rising number of Roma in many EU Member States accessing education, a phenomenon known as educational expansion. Policy interventions might have had a convincing impact on the educational attainment of Roma. The academic literature differentiates between the expansion of secondary education and of higher education.

### 2.1. Literacy

Literacy is an essential prerequisite to social integration and participation in modern societies. An illiterate person faces problems coping with daily activities and has fewer opportunities to develop a professional career.<sup>39</sup> According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the ability to read and write provides “[...] a solid foundation for poverty reduction and sustainable development in pursuit of a democratic and stable society”.<sup>40</sup> UNESCO data (2011) show that self-perceived youth literacy is close to 100 % in EU Member States. The European Council declared literacy as a key competence to participation in European societies and a key instrument to enhance societal welfare: “Low literacy levels hold back economic growth and reduce its sustainability. The economic benefits to Member States of reaching the EU’s target of reducing the low performance in reading of 15-year-olds to below 15 % can be considerable.”<sup>41</sup>

The national averages, however, tend to hide differences between specific population groups, such as the Roma who are not adequately captured by existing official statistical instruments. The survey measured self-perceived literacy, which produces higher rates than standardised assessment studies. On average 20 % of Roma respondents reported that they could neither read nor write in stark contrast to 1 % of non-Roma respondents (Figure 7). The situation is particularly critical in Greece, where more than half of the Roma respondents aged 16 and above cannot read or write. It is also problematic in Portugal (35 %), Romania (31 %) and France (25 %). In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, however, at most 6 % of the Roma respondents perceived themselves as illiterate. The differences between Roma and non-Roma are statistically significant in all Member States. For non-Roma respondents living nearby Roma, Portugal has the highest proportion of those who cannot read and write (8 %) corresponding to national-level statistical data, indicating that Portugal has the second-highest illiteracy rate among all EU Member States.<sup>42</sup>

The results reveal a relationship between school attendance and literacy rates in all countries. Completing primary school appears to be an essential prerequisite to acquiring literacy. Attending primary school without graduating from it does not result automatically in acquiring basic literacy skills: 16 % to 24 % of the Roma respondents who attended but did not finish primary school remained illiterate with the exception of Greece (28 %), Hungary (13 %) and Spain (3 %).

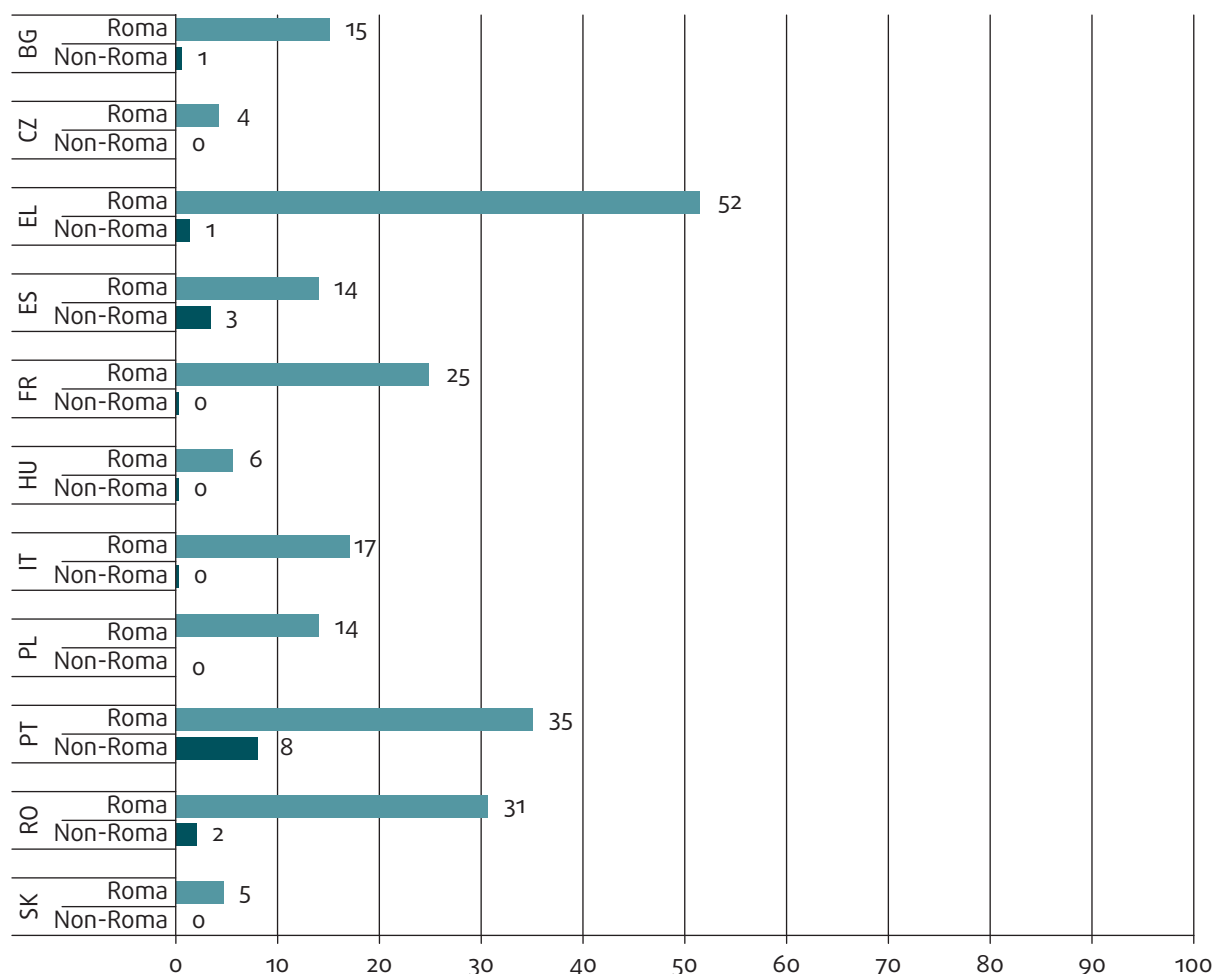
<sup>39</sup> European Commission, Education and Training. Literacy, Online resource.

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO (2007).

<sup>41</sup> Council of the European Union (2012).

<sup>42</sup> According to the United Nations Statistics Division, the share of literate adults (age 15+) is 95 % in Portugal and 92 % in Malta (last update in December 2012). See United Nations Statistics Division (2012).

**Figure 7: Self-perceived illiterates among Roma and non-Roma respondents aged 16 and above, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: A11. Can she/he read and write?

Note: Reference group: All Roma and non-Roma respondents aged 16 and above.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

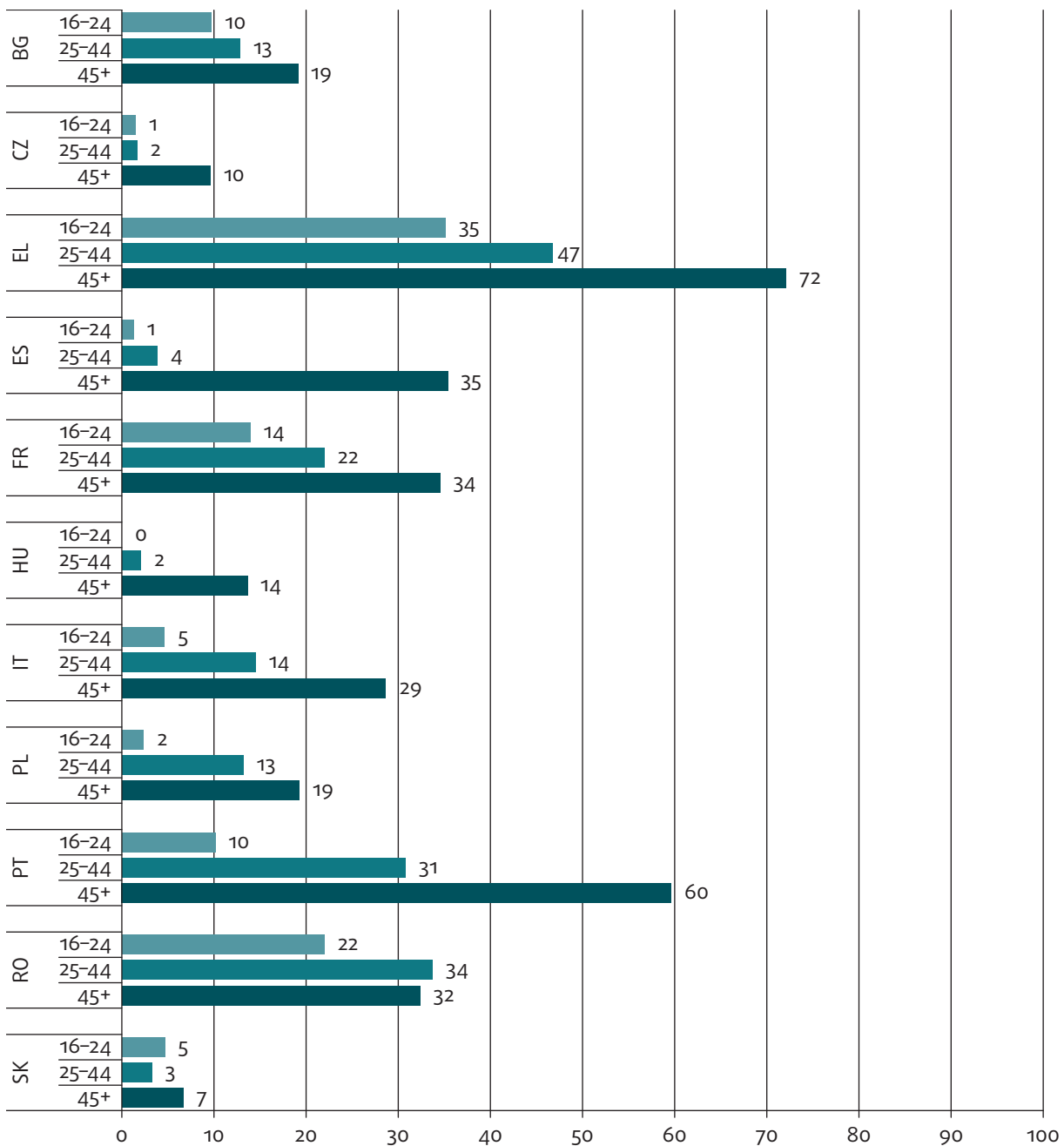
The educational expansion in European societies and its consequences for Roma become apparent when looking at the change of illiteracy rates of Roma across age groups. Figure 8 shows that the share of respondents who cannot read and write is declining for each successive age group in most EU Member States. This trend is particularly impressive in Portugal where the share of illiterate Roma has dropped from 60 % among those 45 and older to 10 % for those aged 16 to 24, and in Spain, where the rates decreased from 35 % to 1 %.

The Spanish case illustrates how inclusive educational policies can improve access to education and thereby reduce illiteracy. In Spain, the 1978 Constitution raised the age of compulsory education. The second half of the 1970s was marked by an institutional expansion of education, with a wave of school constructions, university openings and a modernisation of educational methods and content. Spain also launched 'bridge

schools' during this period. Although these were nominally ethnically segregated institutions, they provided many Roma with the first chance of attending school and educated the first generation of literate Roma. FRA data indirectly reflect this process. They show an impressive decline in illiteracy rates to 4 % for younger Roma aged 25–45 against a rate of 35 % for Roma aged 45 and older.<sup>43</sup> The Spanish case suggests that schools attended mostly or entirely by a particular ethnic group may improve the educational outcomes in the long run, but only if they are specifically designed as transitional ('bridging') solutions for marginalised children.

The decrease in illiteracy rates of Roma is less impressive in central and southeastern European (post-communist)

<sup>43</sup> Santiago, C. and Maya, O. (2012); Cudworth, D. (2010); Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and Other Travellers (ACERT) (1993).

**Figure 8: Self-perceived illiterates among Roma respondents, by EU Member State and age group (%)**

Question: A11. Can she/he read and write?

Note: Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

countries, due to the lower initial level of illiteracy among the older generations compared to that in the old EU Member States. In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia the share of illiterate persons in the oldest age group is less than 20%. The decline in illiteracy in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland is associated with the expansion of education during communism after the Second World War. In these central European countries, primary education became compulsory during the early years of state socialist regimes in the late 1940s

and the early 1950s, during which time they expanded education. Extensive research literature discusses the process of educational expansion and its consequences for the Roma population in Hungary, reaching back to the first Roma surveys in 1971.<sup>44</sup> In southeastern European countries, namely in Romania and Bulgaria the decrease in illiteracy was less pronounced.

<sup>44</sup> Kemény, I. (2005); Kertesi, G. (2005); Havas, G., Liskó, I., Kemény, I. (2001).

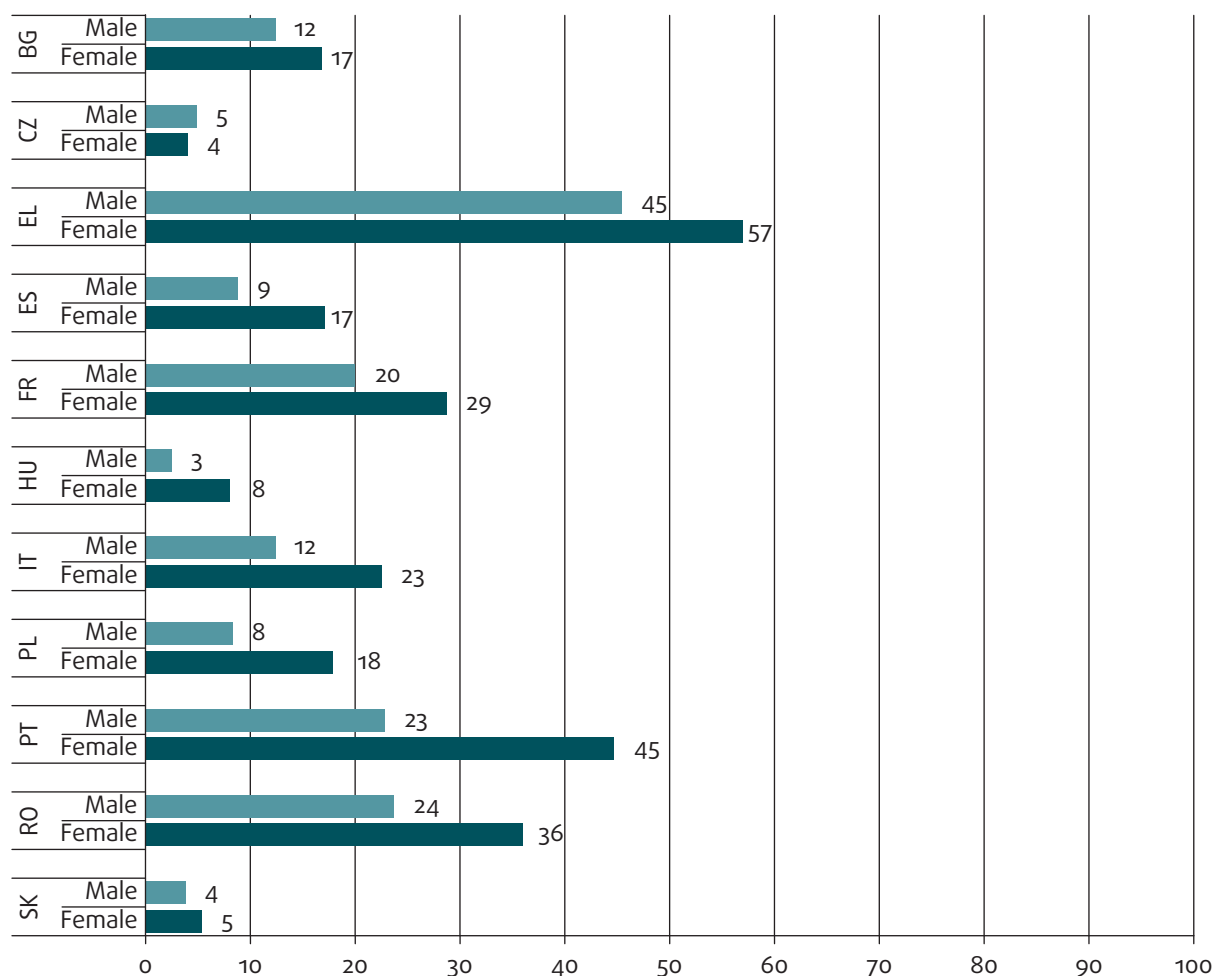
An important survey finding is that there is still a considerable number of illiterate young Roma in several Member States. The share of Roma aged 16–24 who say that they cannot read or write is 10 % in Bulgaria and Portugal, 14 % in France, 22 % in Romania and a very high 35 % in Greece. This result, which is in line with the UNDP survey findings on central and eastern European countries,<sup>45</sup> indicates that even today a considerable share of Roma youth leave school without obtaining the most basic skills for social and labour market integration and equal participation in society.

In addition, the share of Roma aged 25–44 who say they cannot read or write is very high in Greece (47 %), Romania (34 %) and Portugal (31 %). Illiteracy in an age group expected to be the ‘breadwinners’ has far-reaching consequences in terms of labour market exclusion, poverty and social marginalisation.

Overall, more women than men said they are unable to read or write (Figure 9). The differences are smallest in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Hungary – at most five percentage points. They are most pronounced in Portugal at 22 percentage points.

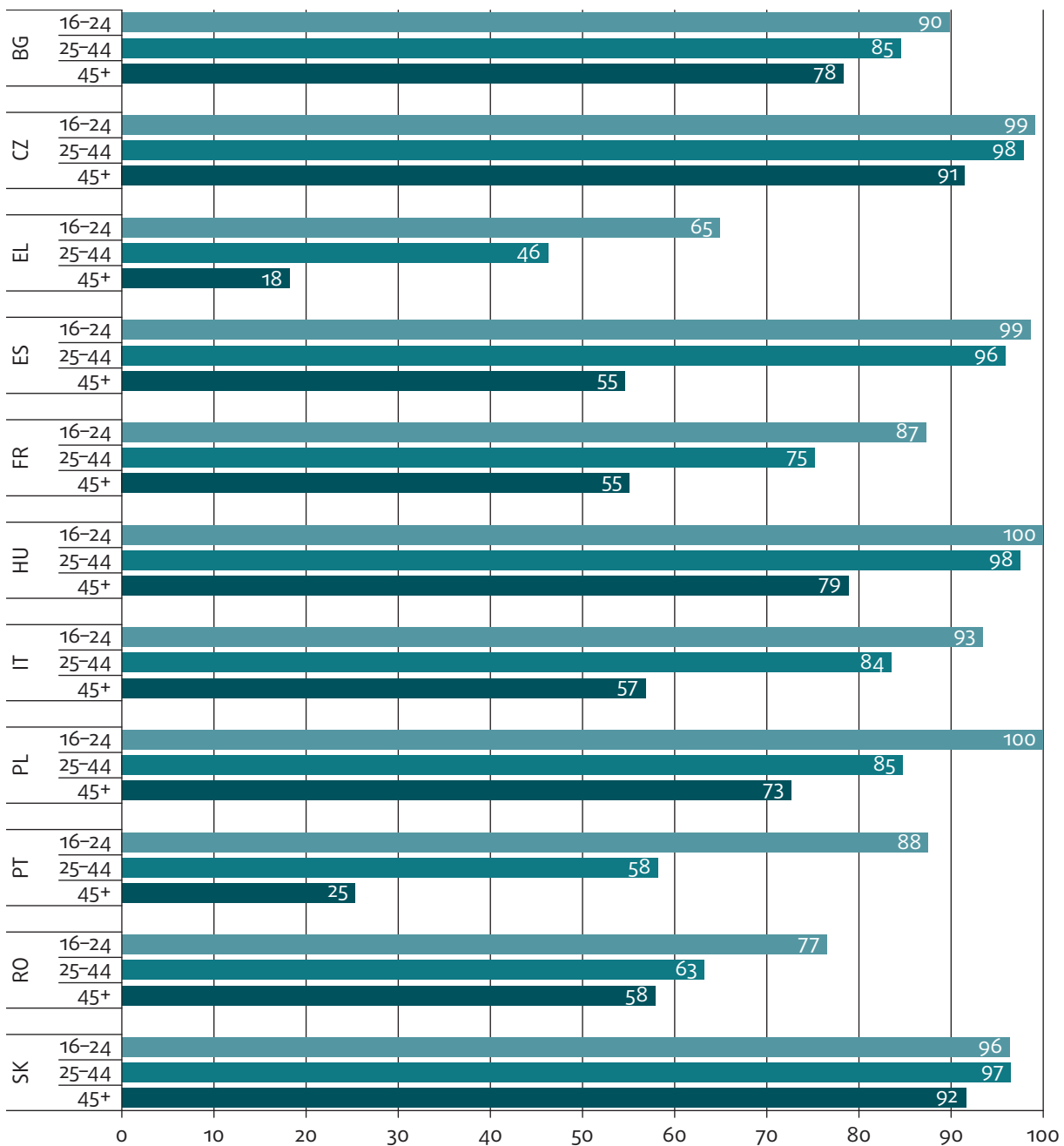
The age group analysis suggests again, however, that women’s literacy is improving. Women’s literacy rates in all countries are higher among the younger age groups. Greece and Portugal, where the self-reported literacy rates among women aged 45 and older is particularly low (Figure 10), have also registered the highest progress in that regard, although in Greece literacy rates even for the younger age-group remain the lowest among the countries surveyed.

**Figure 9: Self-perceived illiterates among Roma respondents aged 16 and above, by EU Member State and gender (%)**



Question: A11. Can she/he read and write?  
 Note: Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above.  
 Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

<sup>45</sup> Brüggemann, C. (2012).

**Figure 10: Roma women self-reported literacy rates – change over generations, by EU Member State and age (%)**

Question: A11. Can she/he read and write?

Note: Reference group: All female Roma respondents aged 16 and above.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

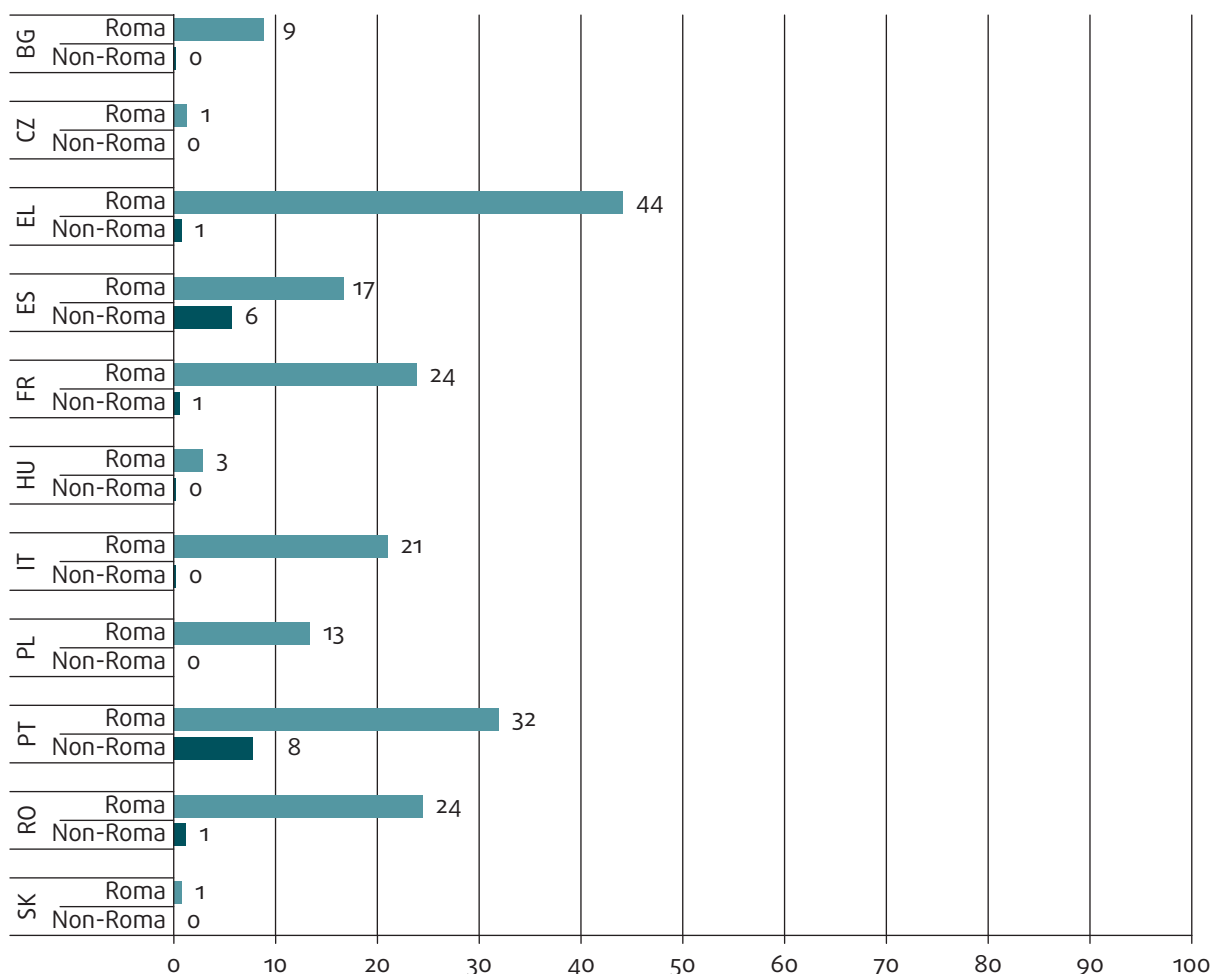
## 2.2. Participation in formal education

Data on the attainment of formal education suggest strong differences between Roma and non-Roma (Figure 11). In some countries, many Roma have not had any formal education. In Greece, 44 % of Roma respondents aged 16 and above said that they had never been to school. For Portugal, that figure was 32 % and in France, Italy and Romania it stood

between 20 % and 25 %. In contrast, in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, the share of Roma who reported never having been to school is very low.

The expansion of education for Roma is apparent in all Member States: the percentage of Roma respondents who have never attended school is lowest among the youngest age group. The share of respondents in the oldest age group who report that they have never been in school is highest in Greece (66 %), Portugal (57 %) and Spain (43 %). Portugal and Spain have made

**Figure 11: Roma and non-Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have never been to school, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: H1. At what age did you finish or leave school? 94 never been in education.

Notes: Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

particular headway: younger Roma in those two countries are far more likely to have attended school than older Roma. Specifically, the percentage of Roma aged 16–24 who have never attended school dropped to 9 % in Portugal and under 1 % in Spain compared to 57 % and 43 % for those aged 45 and over (Figure 12).

The share of 16–24-year-old Roma who have never been to school is, however, still considerable. The share is highest in Greece (28 %), but it is also considerable in Romania (15 %), France (12 %) and Portugal (9 %). This elevated share of young Roma who have never been in formal education stems from a combination of social, geographical and infrastructural factors, such as social exclusion, sub-standard living conditions, the lack of accessible schools. The outcomes of these overlapping deprivations are documented, for example, in Romania, where many Roma still live on waste dumps separating communal waste to sift out recyclable materials. They remain neglected by state institutions and providers of

social services.<sup>46</sup> In France, the considerable share of Roma youth without formal education may be linked, among other factors, to a mobile lifestyle, but may also reflect low aspirations and mistrust in educational institutions.<sup>47</sup>

Gender differences in the proportion of Roma respondents aged 16–24 who have never attended school are most important in Romania, where women more often than men have not attended school (eight percentage points difference) and France, where men more often have no formal education (seven percentage points difference).

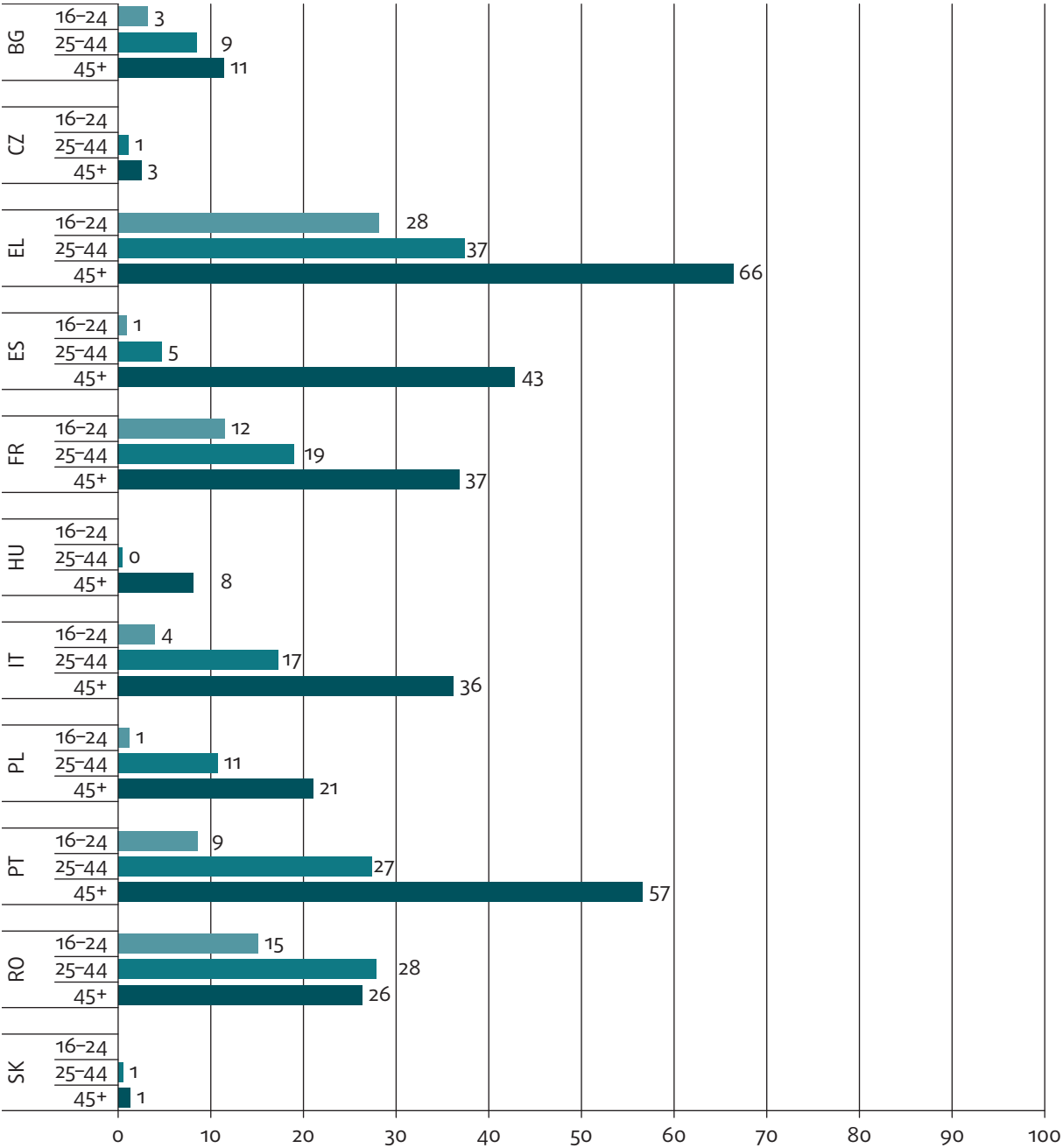
As in the case of literacy, women’s school attendance has improved over the generations. In all the EU

<sup>46</sup> Fleck, G. and Rughinis, C. (2008); Magyari-Vincze, C. and Hajnalka, H. (2009).

<sup>47</sup> Cour des comptes (2012).



Figure 12: Roma respondents who have never been to school, by Member State and age (%)

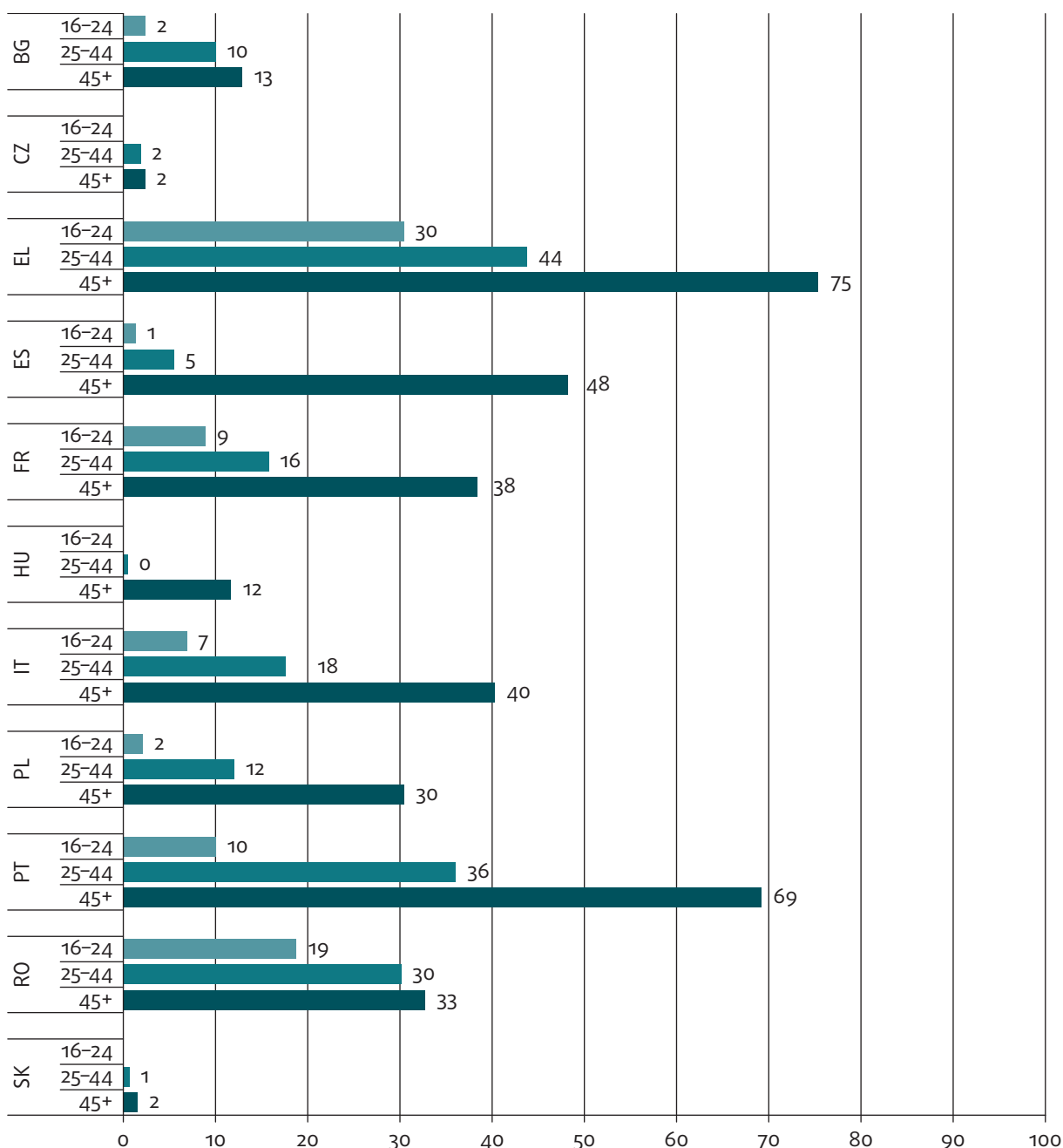


Question: H1. At what age did you finish or leave school? 94 never been in education.  
 Notes: In Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia only very few individuals have never been in education. Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above.  
 Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

Member States surveyed, the share of women who never attended school is lower for women aged 16-24 than for the older generations. Spain has witnessed the most impressive progress in that regard – the share of

the female respondents who never attended school dropped from 48 % for those aged 45 and older to just 1 % for those 16-24 (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Roma women who never attended school – change across generations, by EU Member State and age (%)



Question: H1. At what age did you finish or leave school? 94 never been in education.

Notes: In Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia only very few individuals have never been in education. Reference group: All female Roma respondents aged 16 and above.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

### 2.3. Leaving school prior to completing secondary education

According to the Eurostat definition early school leavers are: “[...]the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or

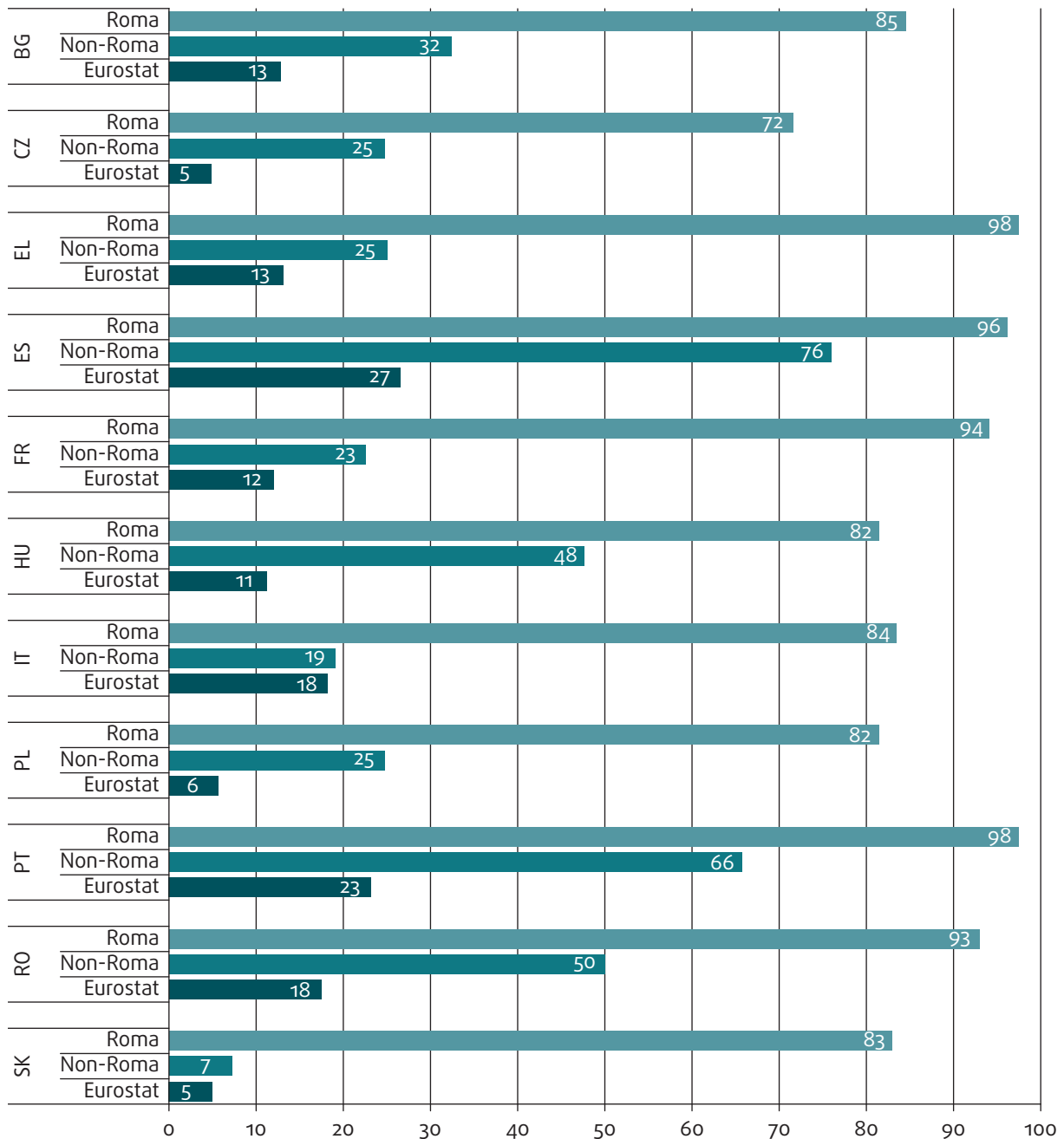
training”.<sup>48</sup> The headline target of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce early school leaving rates to less than 10% by 2020, because educational skills acquired during the higher stages of education (vocational and upper secondary), improve employability and reduce poverty. Eurostat data for Member States covered by the FRA Roma survey show that for the general

<sup>48</sup> EUROSTAT (2010).

population aged 18–24, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland have succeeded in pushing their rates under the Europe 2020 benchmark of 10 %, while Bulgaria, Greece and France are just above it. Spain (27 %) and Portugal (23 %) have the highest share of early school leavers.<sup>49</sup>

The survey results, summarised in Figure 14, outline the magnitude of the challenge with regard to school leaving rates in the case of vulnerable groups such as Roma. The data refer to all household members who never completed upper secondary education, including therefore all individuals who have at most

**Figure 14: Early school leavers among Roma and non-Roma (FRA survey) and the general population (Eurostat/ Labour Force Survey 2011), by EU Member State and among the population aged 18–24 (%)**



Question: A12. What is the highest educational level she/he has attained?

Notes: The results from the FRA and Eurostat surveys are only of limited comparability. They used different methods and questions and can, therefore, provide only a rough indication of the different situations. Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 18–24.

Sources: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011; Eurostat, available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-577\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-577_en.htm)

<sup>49</sup> European Commission (2012).

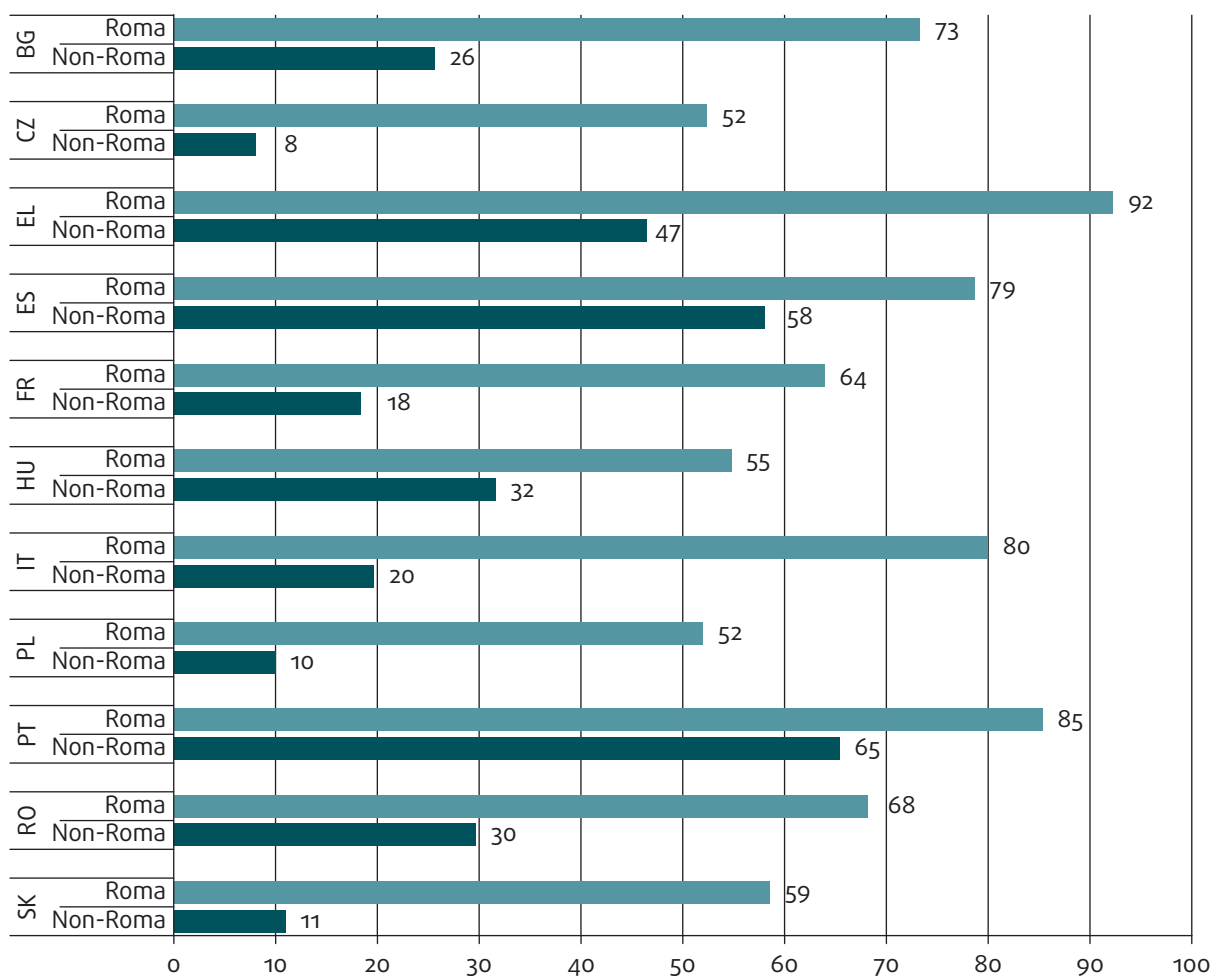
completed lower secondary education. The FRA Roma survey results are not directly comparable to Eurostat data based on the Labour Force Survey, because of differences in the formulation of the questions and the possible response categories. Nonetheless, the differences they reveal outline the magnitude of the educational gap between Roma, non-Roma living nearby and the general population.

A crucial finding of the survey is that the vast majority of Roma aged 18–24 leave education without obtaining a vocational or general upper secondary qualification and therefore lack an essential condition to stable participation in the labour market. The percentage of early school leavers among Roma aged 18–24 ranges from 72 % in the Czech Republic to 82 %–85 % in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Italy and Bulgaria. In Romania, France, Spain, Portugal and Greece, more than 93 % of Roma aged 18–24 did not complete upper secondary education.

The situation of non-Roma surveyed by FRA is also worse than that of the general population across all Member States with the exception of Slovakia and Italy where the difference is minor (Figure 14). The relatively low educational attainment of non-Roma population living in close proximity to Roma might be linked to a number of factors – the lack of upper secondary educational infrastructure in areas where Roma and their non-Roma neighbours live, low educational aspirations and the limited appeal of secondary education for finding work, particularly in rural areas. The data from the survey, do not allow, however, for testing these potentially contributing factors.

Research literature for central eastern European countries emphasises that Roma drop out already at the admission stage or during vocational or upper secondary school education. This may be because of difficulties in accessing such schools, which may be far enough away from their homes to require frequent

**Figure 15: Roma and non-Roma respondents who have attended school but left education before the age of 16, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: H1. At what age did you finish or leave school?  
 Note: Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have attended school.  
 Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

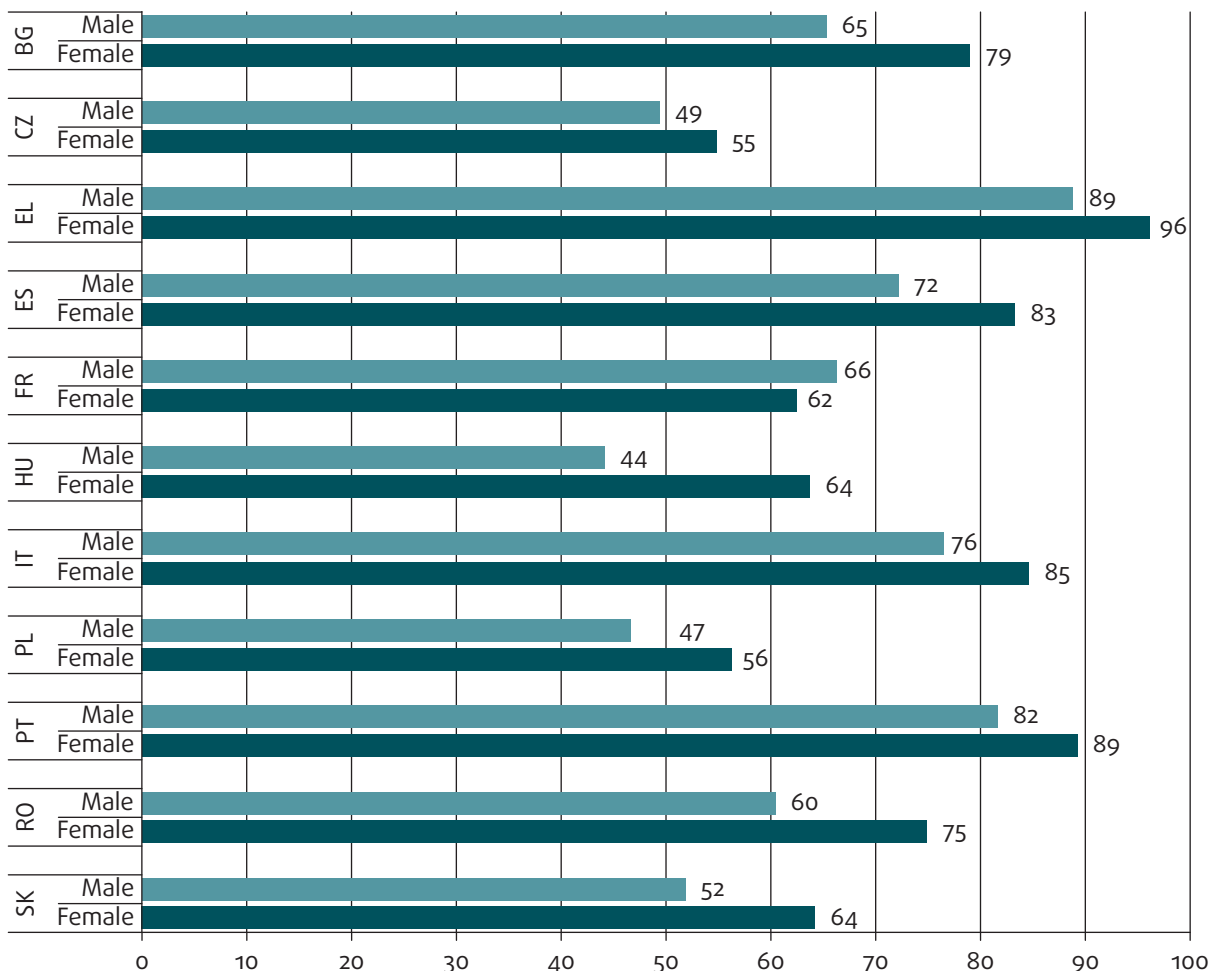
commuting, for example in Hungary where such research is well advanced.<sup>50</sup> Poor Roma families may also not have adequate financial means to support their children’s further education. The existing literature on the subject suggests that other important impediments to participation in higher secondary education include the low quality of primary education in schools attended by Roma, low attainment in primary school, early marriage and childbirth, the need to contribute to household income, and Roma parents’ worries about the safety of their children, especially their daughters.<sup>51</sup>

The analysis also looked at the age at which the respondent said he or she stopped school, including a category for respondents who said that they had never been in school. Survey results show that two thirds of the

Roma respondents who attended school stopped their education before the age of 16 (Figure 15), the age that marks the end of compulsory schooling in most Member States. Regulations on the compulsory schooling age have changed several times in the past 30–40 years in all of the EU Member States studied. Therefore, depending on the respondent’s age, 16 may not always fall, or have fallen, within the legally defined age of compulsory schooling. The share of Roma respondents who have attended school but stopped education before the age of 16 is over 79 % in Spain, Italy and Portugal reaching 92 % in Greece. It is lowest, between 52 % and 59 %, in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

The difference between Roma and non-Roma is smallest in Portugal, Greece, Spain and Hungary. In the Czech

**Figure 16: Roma respondents who were in education but stopped before the age of 16, by EU Member State and gender**



Question: H1. At what age did you finish or leave school?

Note: Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have attended school.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

<sup>50</sup> Fleck, G. and Rughinis, C. (2008); Havas, G., Liskó I. and Kemény, I. (2001).

<sup>51</sup> Moldenhawer, B., Frauke, M., Kallstenius, J., Messing, V. and Schiff, C. (2009).

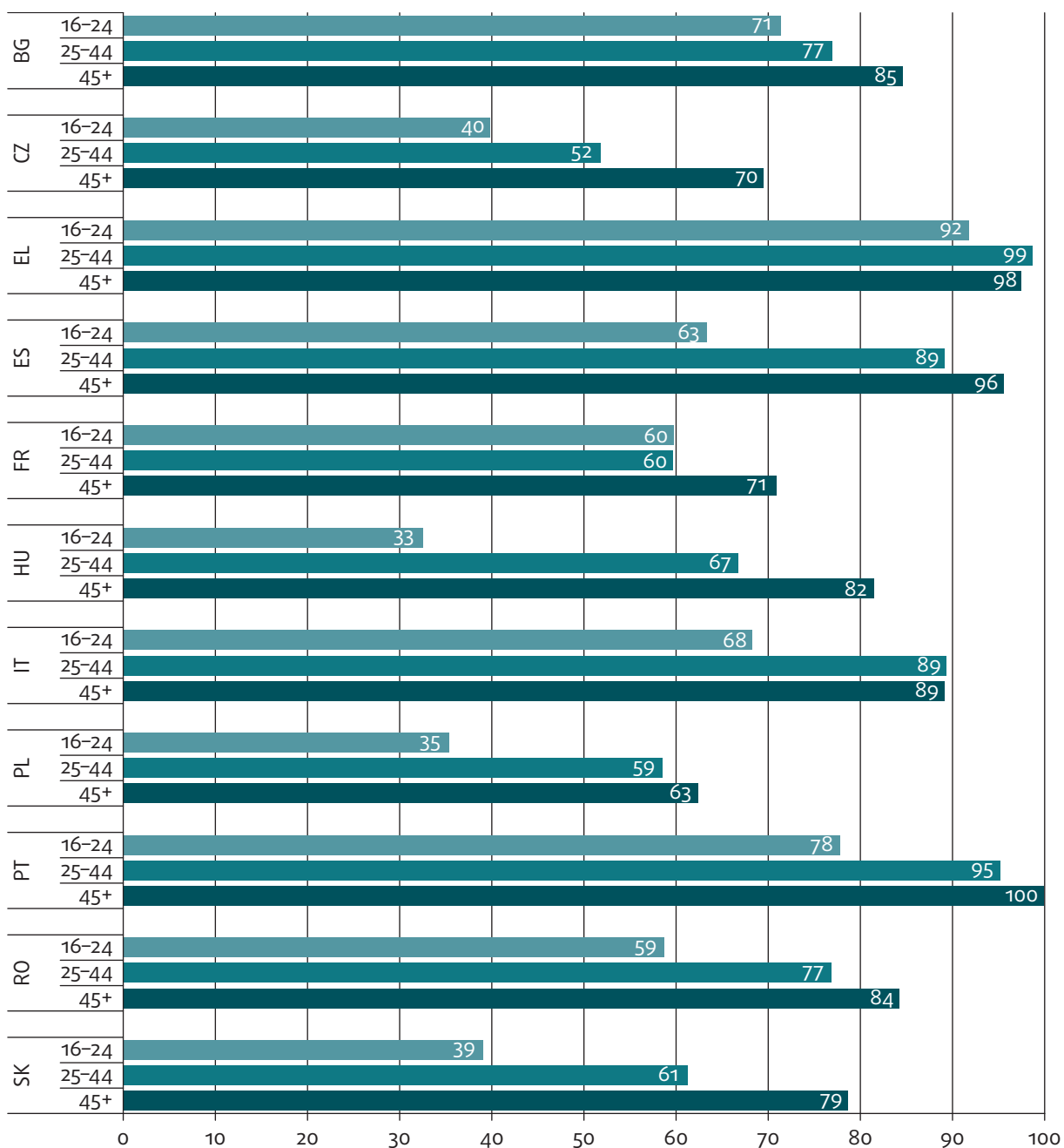
Republic, Slovakia and Poland, Roma stopped school before the age of 16 five to seven times more often than non-Roma, whereas in Bulgaria, Italy and France the difference is somewhat smaller, though still important.

The percentage of respondents in the youngest age group, 16–24, who stopped school before the age of 16 remains high in all Member States, at 86 % in Greece, 73 % in Portugal, 70 % in Italy and 65 % in Bulgaria.

This share is lowest in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland, ranging between 25 % to 35 %.

When looking at gender differences, the results show that Roma women are more likely to leave school at an early age than Roma men except in France (Figure 16), where men leave school before the age of 16 slightly more often.

**Figure 17: Roma women who have attended school but left before the age of 16, by EU Member State and age (%)**



Question: H1. At what age did you finish or leave school?  
 Note: Reference group: All female Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have attended school.  
 Source: FRA Roma pilot survey 2011

On average, 62 % of Roma men and 72 % of Roma women who attended school stopped education before the age of 16. Hungary had the largest gender gap, with women stopping education before the age of 16 by 20 percentage points more than men. The gender gap was the smallest, at six percentage points or less, in the Czech Republic and France. The results suggest that younger Roma's longer school attendance than older age groups was also accompanied by a decline in the gender gap in most Member States.

Most countries have also registered progress in girls' early drop out rates. As Figure 17 shows, the share of Roma women who attended school but stopped before the age of 16 has declined most impressively in Hungary, falling from 82 % for those aged 45 and older to 33 % for those aged 16–24.

This progress is particularly worth noting. The implications of school non-attendance are important for both girls and boys but affect girls disproportionately. If girls drop out of school, their life chances narrow dramatically and therefore it is important to maintain the momentum of improvement.

## 2.4. Completing upper secondary education

Completing upper secondary education can make an essential difference in the job market and is a minimum requirement for accessing tertiary education. According to a few country specific surveys, the chances of employment increase decidedly for those who complete secondary school. A Hungarian study in 2010 found that a Roma person with a vocational qualification has 27 times, and one with a general upper secondary qualification seven times, more chances of getting a regular job than one with lower than primary school education.<sup>52</sup> Although there may be variation by country, the basic relationship between sustainable employment and completed secondary education stands true for all countries. The number of years required to completing upper secondary education differs by EU Member State. In most countries, upper secondary education starts at the age when compulsory schooling ends. Thus, in order to graduate from upper secondary school, young people in most of the countries will need to study beyond the age limit established for compulsory education.<sup>53</sup> This may be one of the reasons behind the stark difference in the shares of the general population and of Roma who completed upper secondary education.

The survey results indicate that very few of the 25–64-year-old Roma had completed upper secondary education compared to the non-Roma living close by, and the difference is even more pronounced when compared to the general population data provided by Eurostat.<sup>54</sup> The survey results are only partially comparable to Eurostat results, mainly based on the Labour Force Survey, due to differences in sampling methodologies and the questions asked. Nevertheless, the gap in the 11 Member States covered by the FRA survey between the Eurostat general population is very large: 73 % of those aged 25–64 in the general population completed at least secondary education against only 10 % of the Roma surveyed by FRA. As shown in Figure 18, the share of Roma completing upper secondary school is highest in Poland (23 %) and the Czech Republic (21 %) and is lowest in Portugal (1 %), Greece (2 %), Spain (3 %) and France (4 %). The pattern that emerges shows that, with the exception of Romania, the share of Roma completing upper secondary education is relatively high in central eastern European countries – though still low by overall EU standards – ranging from 12 % in Bulgaria to 23 % in Poland. This share remains below 10 % in southwestern EU Member States. But even in the first group the relative 'success' is misleading: the gap between Roma and non-Roma is similarly wide in most countries. The difference between Roma and non-Roma is 74 percentage points in Slovakia, 73 in Italy, 65 in France and 63 in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. It is 62 percentage points in Poland and 61 in Greece. Only in Hungary, Romania, Spain and Portugal is this gap less than 50 %, mostly due to lower upper secondary completion rates for non-Roma and not to higher educational outcomes for Roma.

The increase in the duration of schooling in most countries, whether from an earlier start, such as preschool or from more time in school after age 16, can have adverse consequences in the case of Roma unless their participation in education improves by removing structural barriers. Roma parents have an important role to play in this by ensuring their children's timely enrolment and attendance, but they will need to be actively supported and empowered by the relevant public authorities.

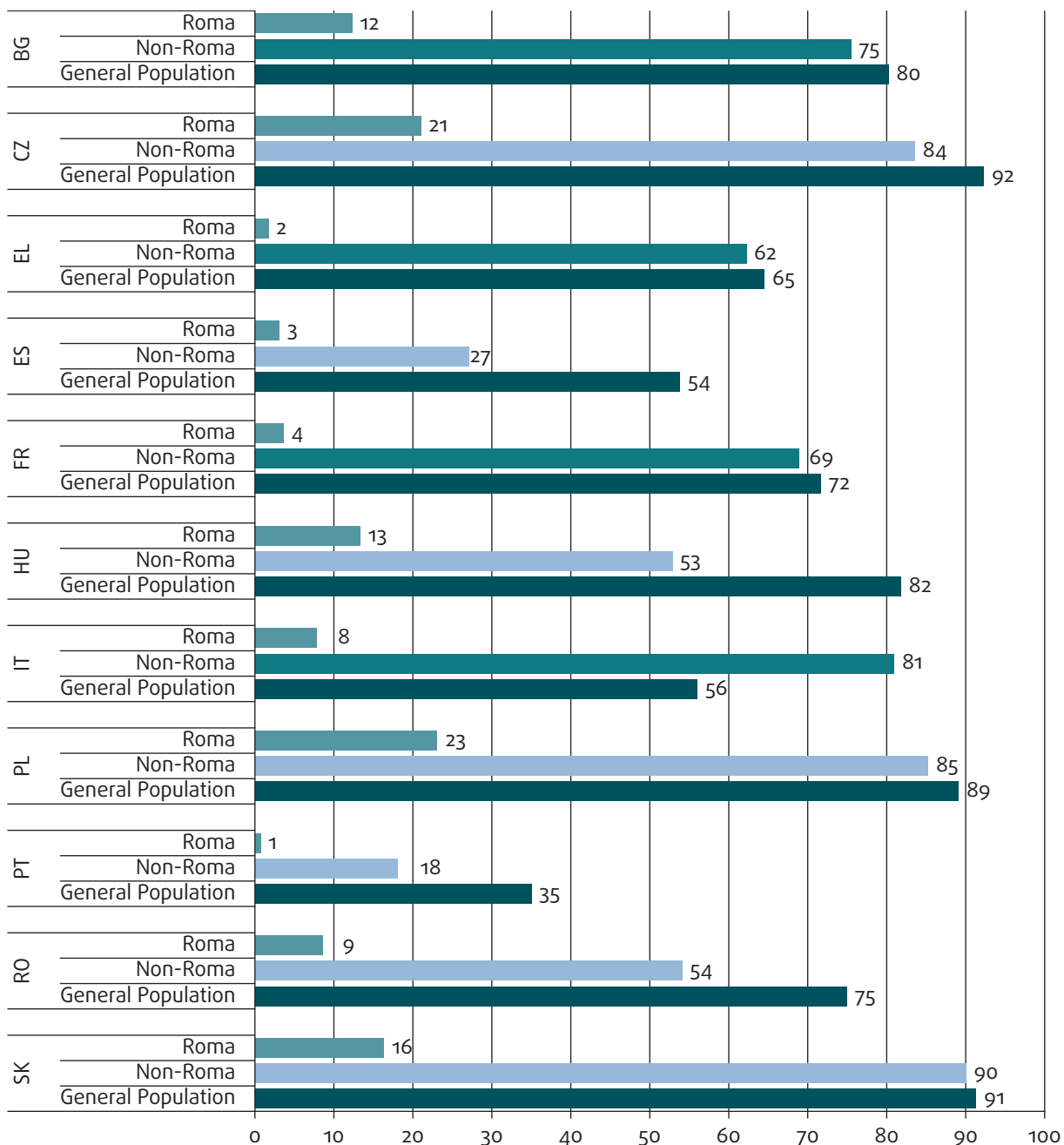
In most EU Member States the results show some improvement for younger Roma over older generations concerning upper secondary school completion rates (Figure 19). The most important improvement is observed in Italy, where completion rate for the 18–24 age group is 13 percentage points higher than for the 45–64 group. The Czech Republic and Hungary also registered improvements, with the difference in completion rates between the two age groups at 10

<sup>52</sup> Mód, P. (2011); Messing, V., Brozovicova, K., Fabo, B. and Kahanec, M. (2012).

<sup>53</sup> EACEA (2011).

<sup>54</sup> Eurostat (2013).

**Figure 18: Roma and non-Roma (FRA Survey – household members) and general population (Eurostat/Labour Force Survey 2011) who have completed at least upper secondary education (vocational or general), by EU Member State among those aged 25–64 (%)**



Question: A12. What is the highest education level she/he has attained?

Notes: Total population aged 25–64 who have completed at least upper secondary education, data available at: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00065>. Reference group FRA Roma pilot survey: All persons in the surveyed Roma and non-Roma households aged 25–64.

Sources: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011; and Eurostat 2011

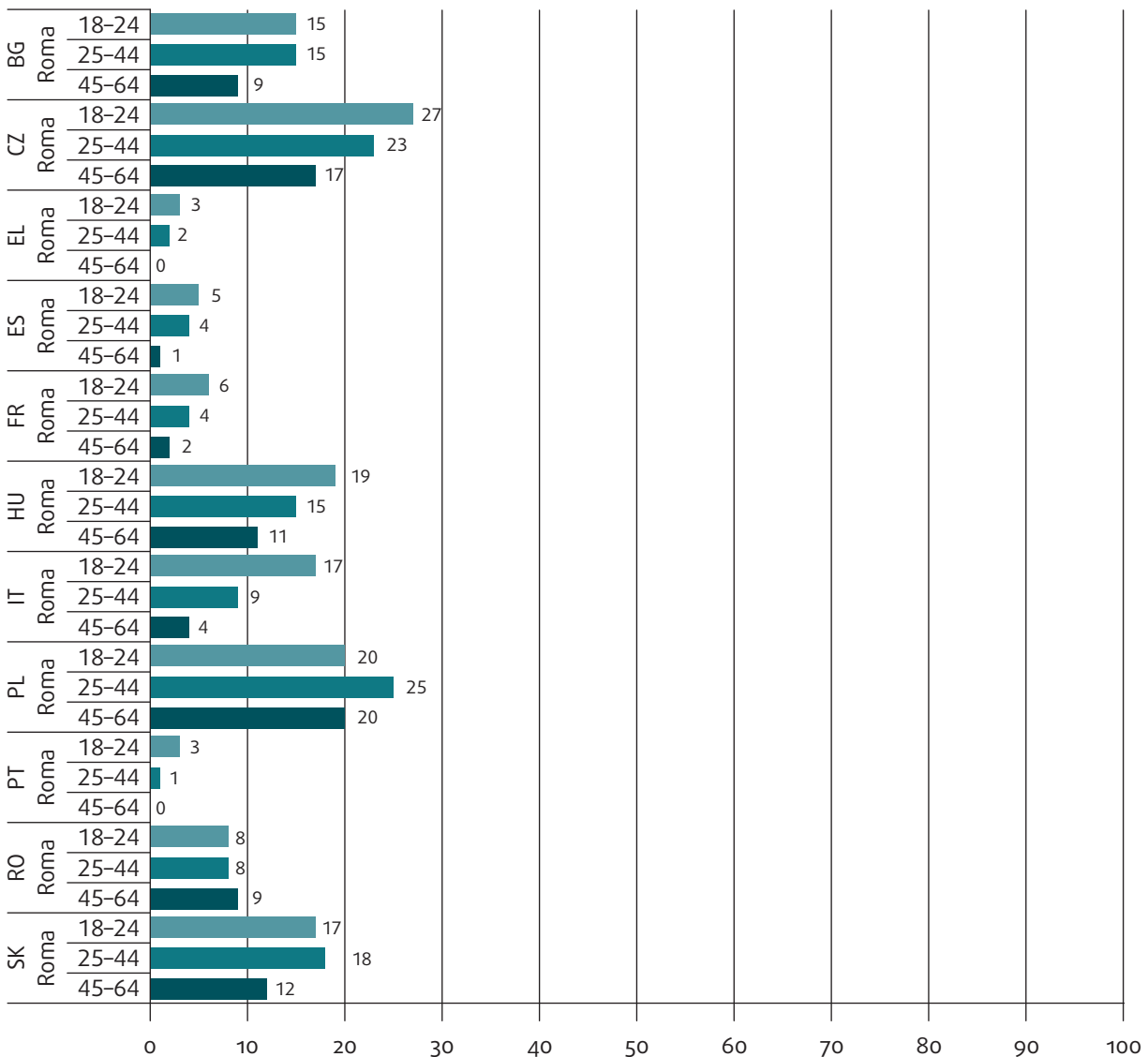
and eight percentage points, respectively. Research on the educational attainment, labour market participation and living conditions of young Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, conducted by UNECE in 2011, reached a similar conclusion: younger generations have higher education levels.<sup>55</sup>

In the Member States with the lowest shares of Roma completing upper secondary education, namely Greece, Spain, France and Portugal, no differences between men and women have been observed. Gender gaps are more substantial, between four and six percentage points, in those countries with the highest upper secondary completion rates.

<sup>55</sup> Cekota, J., Trentini, C., Cekota, J. and Trentini, C. (2011).



**Figure 19: Roma (household members) who have completed at least upper secondary education (vocational or general), by EU Member State and age (%)**



Question: A12. What is the highest education level she/he has attained?

Note: Reference group: All persons in the surveyed Roma and non-Roma households aged 18-64.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

## 2.5. Reasons for never attending school or stopping education early

To identify possible reasons for non-attendance the survey asked respondents why they stopped going to school or why they never attended school. Respondents could choose up to three different answers from a list of twelve. Possible responses included financial reasons, such as the need to work and the cost of education, given that households have associated costs. Other responses reflect circumstantial reasons, such as illness, long distance from school, marriage and childbirth or a lack of documents, as well

as aspirational reasons, such as did poorly at school or judged to be sufficiently educated. Finally there are reasons related to the school environment, which may, for example, be hostile. Migration and the necessity to assist in the household or family business were not among the defined response categories and fall under 'other', the response chosen most frequently in Portugal, Italy, Spain and France.

Table 1 presents the three reasons the Roma respondents most frequently chose. These reasons related to low aspirations, such as the respondent's belief that he or she was sufficiently educated, or employment, he or she needed to work for income or had found a job. The second group is actually poverty related because

it hints that education is simply unaffordable for an important share of the respondents. Given that the employment-related reasons for quitting education are just another dimension of poverty, poverty emerges as a primary reason for stopping education.

Two options – ‘judged to be sufficiently educated’ and ‘need to work for income/found job’ were more frequently selected in all countries, indicating that the respondents seem to view the level of education they have attained as sufficient for the jobs they can get. The results cannot tell us about the nature of

these jobs, but it is reasonable to assume that they would be low-skilled. This could reflect the need to find work in order to address immediate needs at a lower education level thus limiting opportunities for improving their labour market situation through longer stay in education.

Some clear regional patterns emerge from the results. Romania registered the highest scores for poverty-related reasons (costs of education), which also emerged among the top three categories in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary and Slovakia. The choice between

**Table 1: Roma respondents’ three most frequently mentioned reasons for stopping school aged 16 and above, by EU Member State (% , based on all answers)**

<b>Bulgaria (n=1,274)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Czech Republic (n=1,565)</b>	<b>%</b>
Judged to be sufficiently educated	30	Judged to be sufficiently educated	25
Need to work for income/found job	24	Did poorly, failed at entrance exam	19
Cost of education too high	19	Need to work for income/found job	19
<b>Hungary (n=1,540)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Romania (n=1,191)</b>	<b>%</b>
Need to work for income/found job	30	Cost of education too high	36
Judged to be sufficiently educated	24	Need to work for income/found job	18
Cost of education too high	11	Judged to be sufficiently educated	17
<b>Slovakia (n=1,662)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Greece (n=1,588)</b>	<b>%</b>
Judged to be sufficiently educated	30	Need to work for income/found job	34
Need to work for income/found job	20	Cost of education too high	14
Cost of education too high	14	Judged to be sufficiently educated	13
<b>Poland (n=833)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Spain (n=1,101)</b>	<b>%</b>
Need to work for income/found job	22	Need to work for income/found job	40
Judged to be sufficiently educated	21	Judged to be sufficiently educated	21
Marriage, pregnancy or childbirth	15	Other reason	18
<b>Portugal (n=1,214)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Italy (n=656)</b>	<b>%</b>
Other reason	40	Other reason	29
Judged to be sufficiently educated	19	Need to work for income/found job	25
Need to work for income/found job	12	Judged to be sufficiently educated	13
<b>France (n=795)</b>	<b>%</b>		
Other reason	29		
Judged to be sufficiently educated	24		
Need to work for income/found job	15		

Question: H2. Why did you stop going to school? Why did you never go to school?

Notes: n= Number of responses. Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above. Respondents were asked to provide up to three answers.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011



education and income is also reflected in 'the need to find a job' option, with poverty again acting as a major factor pushing Roma out of education. Dropping education in favour of income generation backfires, however, in the long run, because it reduces future income generation opportunities and effectively locks Roma in a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty. There is a real risk that people simply extrapolate their experience onto their expectations, perceiving this vicious cycle as the only realistic approach, which may also at least in part explain their low educational aspirations.

In western European countries, however, financial reasons score somewhat less high. 'Other reasons' emerge prominently. Again, the data do not allow for further elaboration on these reasons, which could relate to geographical mobility or migration, both of which make education beyond the age of compulsory schooling challenging; or a social obligation for young women and girls to stay home and help with the household.<sup>56</sup> The analysis of gender differences would support this hypothesis, as a higher share (between 10 and 20 percentage points difference) of Roma women indicated 'other reasons' than men in Portugal, Italy, France and Spain.

The results also indicate a certain influence of early marriages on Roma drop-out rates. Respondents, with the exception of those in Poland, did not include early marriage and childbirth among the three most relevant reasons for abandoning school. In Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland, 10 %–15 % of the answers listed marriage or childbirth, while in the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Greece and Spain that range was 7 % to 8 %. In the remaining countries, less than 5 % of the answers referred to marriage and childbirth.

The influence of early marriages on early dropout rates is complex and linked to the increased responsibilities of household and family obligations. This factor needs to be examined through a gender perspective, because the consequences of early marriages on education and other issues are not the same for men as for women. Examining the survey results in regard to the gender distribution of reasons for drop-out rates supports the hypothesis that early marriages are an important factor. More women than men mentioned marriage and childbirth as the cause for stopping education, especially in the EU's central and eastern countries. Still, even here, marriage and childbirth are low on the list of women's reasons for stopping school, following 'judged to be sufficiently educated', 'need to work', 'cost of education was high'. The exceptions are Hungary and Poland. In Hungary, women selected marriage and childbirth third most often, with 16 % mentioning it. In Poland, it is the most important reason, with 21 % of women choosing this option.

Few respondents selected language problems or failure at school as reasons for stopping school. Only in Greece did a small share (4 %) of Roma respondents give 'language problems' as a reason. Some respondents in the Czech Republic (19 %), Slovakia (13 %) and Hungary (10 %) mentioned failure at school as a reason for stopping education, but in the other countries the share of such answers was below 10 %. 'Hostile school environment' and 'safety concerns' were mentioned in Greece, the Czech Republic, Poland and France where, respectively, 8 % and 5 %, 4 % and again 4 % of the respondents gave it as a reason for stopping education.

<sup>56</sup> See for example: European Commission (2003).



# 3

## Equal treatment in education: ethnic segregation and perceptions of discrimination



The treatment of children and youth in school is an important factor that can influence educational outcomes. The differences in treatment of Roma and non-Roma help determine school attendance, attainment and the gender gap observed and range from racist bullying or hostility from non-Roma parents and school staff to practices resulting in de facto segregation in different schools or classes.

Extensive academic and policy literature reveals that separating children belonging to ethnic minority groups into distinctive and/or separate schools or classes is a discriminatory practice and may have far-reaching negative consequences for their mental and psychological development, educational performance and career chances. In the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal”. In Europe, various data sources<sup>57</sup> on ethnic minority students’ school careers have pointed out that segregated conditions deprive students of quality education and opportunities to obtain a valuable qualification, compared to their peers studying in integrated settings. Research literature on Roma education has examined the extent of ethno-social segregation and its negative consequences. In Hungary, for example, the “standard index of segregation shows that ethnic segregation more than doubled [since the 1980s] in areas with more than one school”.<sup>58</sup> In other post-communist countries, the introduction of the right of parents to choose between schools has intensified the concentration of Roma in certain educational institutions, and the ‘white

flight’ phenomenon from schools where the share of Roma reaches a certain threshold.<sup>59</sup>

Lower quality segregated educational institutions should not be confused with temporary ‘bridging’ schools, for example in Spain, which are designed as catch-up institutions with the clear objective of bringing children from disadvantaged families up to the level of mainstream education. Schools with consistently high shares of children from minority ethnic groups, however, are usually characterised by poor infrastructure, uninspired teachers and low educational quality. Research shows that such institutions can contribute to Roma students’ limited career aspirations and reduce their chances of continuing education.<sup>60</sup> There are few studies on the difference in Roma performance, continued education, and career aspirations between those studying in segregated and integrated school settings demonstrate the disadvantages of segregated education.<sup>61</sup> Several successful litigation cases in which Chance for Children Foundation (CFCF) in Hungary<sup>62</sup> represented Roma parents prove that municipalities maintaining schools have not taken effective measures against segregation, which is prohibited by law.

In some cases, such discrimination is compounded by directing Roma children into special schools for those with mental disabilities. A number of studies demonstrate that the unfounded streaming of Roma children into such educational institutions has resulted in an overrepresentation of Roma in special education, primarily in post-communist countries. In

<sup>57</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); the Integration of the European Second Generation (TIES); Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe (EDUMIGROM); On the Margins of the European Community (EUMargins) (2011).

<sup>58</sup> Kertesi, G. Kézdi, G. (2013).

<sup>59</sup> Messing, V. (2013).

<sup>60</sup> Szalai, J. and Schiff, C. (forthcoming in 2014); Roma Education Fund (2012b).

<sup>61</sup> Kézdi, G. Surányi, É. (2009); Roma Education Fund (2011).

<sup>62</sup> For individual litigation cases represented by Chance for Children Foundation (CFCF), see: <http://cfcf.hu/en/projects/litigation-cases.html>.

addition to academic studies, litigation also highlights the problem's existence and severity: in the Ostrava school segregation case, for example, the ECtHR ruled against the Czech Republic in favour of 18 Roma. The ECtHR found that the separation of Roma children into separate, sub-standard schooling arrangements was discriminatory. In the *D.H and others v. the Czech Republic* case, the court used statistical data showing the disproportionate placement of Roma children in schools for the mentally disabled to prove that such measures violated Article 14 of the ECHR.<sup>63</sup> In *Orsus and Others v. Croatia*, the court ruled that the placement of Roma children in special classes – even for a purportedly limited time period – amounts to discrimination in education. And in *Sampanis and Others v. Greece*, the ECtHR held that the placement of Roma children in special classes located in an annex of the main school building amounted to discrimination.<sup>64</sup>

Various inter-related mechanisms may lead to the segregation of Roma students. At the primary school level segregation is most frequently the result of unintended processes of 'white flight', which gradually turns a mixed school into a segregated one. This is the most frequent cause of segregated Roma schools in central European countries. While prejudice may be influencing parental choices, the poor quality, low aspirations and behavioural patterns associated with Roma-dominated classes also play a role in parents' decisions to move their children to different schools, even if these are further away. A sustainable response to the challenge of 'white flight' requires that all the factors involved in this complex decision-making process be addressed.

Streaming of school pupils into separate educational establishments or separate classes of students according to their level of 'maturity' can also contribute to segregation of non-Roma and Roma at a very early age, often during the first years of primary school. At secondary school level, segregation can be a consequence of several interrelated factors, including inferior performance; preference for vocational training; and teachers' low expectations.<sup>65</sup>

Another mechanism that can contribute to segregation are testing procedures. Roma Education Fund research in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovakia, showed that testing procedures applied to establish school maturity and learning disabilities prior to entering primary school are culturally biased and may contribute to the segregation of Roma children into

special schools or classes.<sup>66</sup> 'Special' education implies a more limited curriculum and few, if any, opportunities for further study after primary school. The Roma Education Fund stressed that "throughout the region, Roma are disproportionately present in special education in the case study countries, accounting for a majority of pupils in practical schools in the Czech Republic; between 20 and 90 percent of children in special education in Hungary; [...]; and approximately 60 percent of children in special primary and secondary education in Slovakia".<sup>67</sup>

This chapter will analyse school segregation, participation in segregated special education and experiences of discrimination. The FRA survey respondents were asked a number of questions related to segregation and discrimination in the context of education: was the class attended by children of the household composed of a majority of Roma children or not; did the household's children ever attend a special school or class that was mainly for Roma; had they experienced discrimination from those working in a school or in training in the last 12 months; and if they had reported the last incident of discrimination experienced.

### 3.1. Segregation in mainstream schools

Roma children may attend either a school, or a class in a nominally integrated school, comprised primarily of Roma children. In the survey, respondents were asked about the ethnic background of their children's classmates, information that can provide a rough indicator for the ethnic mix in class. Given that the survey covered areas where Roma lived in higher density than the country average, the answers are likely to reveal a higher share of Roma children at school.

The results delineate three country groups: Roma children attending schools or classes where all or many of their classmates are also Roma; Roma children attending ethnically mixed but balanced classes; and classes where there are some or no Roma classmates. The first group includes Slovakia and Hungary, where 58 % and 45 %, respectively, of the children attend classes with all or many Roma pupils (Figure 20). Bulgaria and Spain form the second group with around 60 % of Roma children attending ethnically mixed classes, while in the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Portugal and Poland more than 50 % of Roma children attend classes with some or no Roma classmates. Less than 10 % of Roma children attend segregated classes

<sup>63</sup> ECtHR, *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*.

<sup>64</sup> ECtHR, *Sampanis and Others v. Greece*, 5 June 2008.

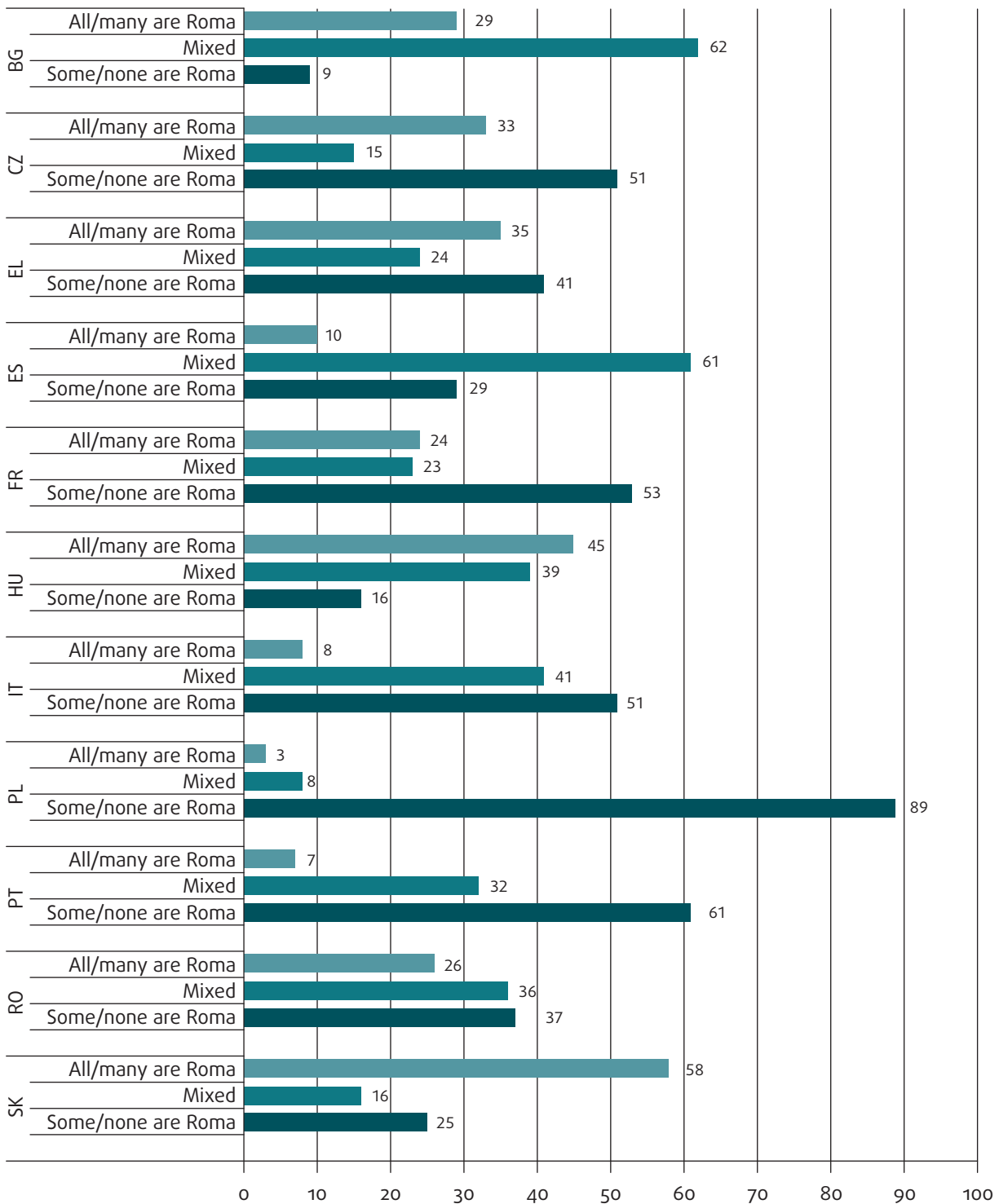
<sup>65</sup> On educational aspirations of Roma children, teachers' expectations, and mechanisms and consequences of segregation, Szalai, J. and Schiff, C. (forthcoming, 2014); on the phenomenon of twofold segregation, see also: Brüggemann, C. (2012).

<sup>66</sup> Roma Education Fund (2012a).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.



**Figure 20: Ethnic composition of school classes attended by Roma children, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: B12. What is/was the background of his/her classmates in school or kindergarten?

Notes: Information about the ethnic background of the classmates of children (Roma and non-Roma) is used as a rough indicator of the ethnic mix in classrooms. Given that the sampling methodology covers areas where Roma live in higher density than the country average, answers would be expected to reflect a higher proportion of Roma children in a school/kindergarten. It is also worth mentioning that the share of Roma children attending segregated classes is lower in new EU Member States, according to the UNDP results. The methodologies used might in part explain the differences between the two surveys: in the FRA survey a randomly selected respondent in the household provided the information on all children in the household, while the UNDP survey asked the child's main caretaker. Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma and non-Roma households up to the age of 15 who are or have been in school.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Poland. About 90 % of the Roma children in Poland attend classes with mainly non-Roma, 60 % in Portugal and about 50 % in the

Czech Republic, Italy and France. In Greece, about a third of the Roma children were reported by the household respondents to attend schools or classes,



where all or many of their school or classmates were Roma; a quarter attended mixed classes.

The data on the schools or classes attended by non-Roma children living nearby show an ethnically homogeneous school environment in most countries: In Poland (96 %), Greece (91 %) and Italy (85 %), non-Roma children attended classes without or with only some Roma children. In the Czech Republic (78 %), in Slovakia (76 %) and in Portugal (77 %), over 75 % of non-Roma children attend classes without or with only some Roma. In these countries, non-Roma children living nearby the Roma surveyed apparently do not attend the same schools or classes. In Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, 32 % to 49 % of non-Roma children living nearby Roma said that they studied in ethnically mixed classes. France was not included in this analysis because comparing children from mobile populations with those from nearby non-Roma sedentary populations, might yield misleading results.

In certain countries, attending segregated or mixed schools or classes may strongly correlate with the household's socioeconomic status. In households 'at risk of poverty', namely those with an equivalised income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income, Roma children in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Greece are more likely to attend segregated classes or schools than non-Roma children in such households.

### 3.2. Residential and educational segregation

The concentration of Roma in certain residential areas may also be a driver of school segregation. Children usually attend school near their homes; therefore the ethnic composition of school classes is likely to reflect the neighbourhood's ethnic composition. The results of the survey show that Roma children living in neighbourhoods with a high share of Roma households are more likely to attend schools and/or classes with a high share of Roma children in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. In Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, 65 %, 59 % and 40 %, respectively, of the Roma children who live in Roma neighbourhoods attend a school where all, or many of their classmates are also Roma (Figure 21).

While it is expected that residential segregation may translate into educational segregation, it is surprising that the survey findings show that the reverse is not always true: living in a non-segregated environment does not necessarily lead to integrated education. The share of Roma living in mixed areas and attending segregated institutions is lower than for those living in residentially segregated areas, but it still remains high.

In Slovakia, for example, the share of Roma who attend schools where all or many are Roma falls from 65 % for those living in segregated areas to 45 % for those living in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods and to 27 % for those living in majority neighbourhoods; in Hungary these percentages are 59 %, 34 % and 6 %, while in the Czech Republic they are 40 %, 27 % and 15 %. This suggests that Roma children living in mixed or predominantly non-Roma neighbourhoods still risk ending up in classes where all or many of the pupils are Roma. Thus residential desegregation improves the chances of educational desegregation, but it is not by itself sufficient to address de facto segregation.

Poland seems to constitute a separate case, as there are only very few Roma children in segregated schools or classes regardless of their household's neighbourhood. This could be explained in terms of the decrease in size of the Roma community in recent years.

### 3.3. Segregation in special schools and classes for Roma

The survey also asked whether Roma respondents had attended special schools or classes that were mainly for Roma, even if only for a short period. While the survey cannot assess the quality of the curriculum taught in these separate facilities, abundant research has shown that these special classes or schools often have substandard infrastructure and teaching quality.<sup>68</sup> In the Czech Republic, for instance, Roma children in 'practical' schools follow a different, reportedly substandard, curriculum.<sup>69</sup>

The term 'special school or class' used in the survey covers a highly diverse range of settings across Member States: it includes special schools for children with disabilities, special or remedial schools or classes, and, in France, it also includes mobile schools for *gens du voyage* children. The survey made an effort to translate the term 'special school or class' respecting, as much as possible, the terms used nationally in order to capture the different contexts while retaining comparability. The UNDP survey conducted in parallel with the FRA survey adopted a somewhat different interpretation of special school and therefore the findings of the two surveys may to some extent diverge.

This chapter argues that in several countries, primarily those in central eastern Europe, the disproportionately high share of Roma students in special schools may result from discriminatory practices. Research and

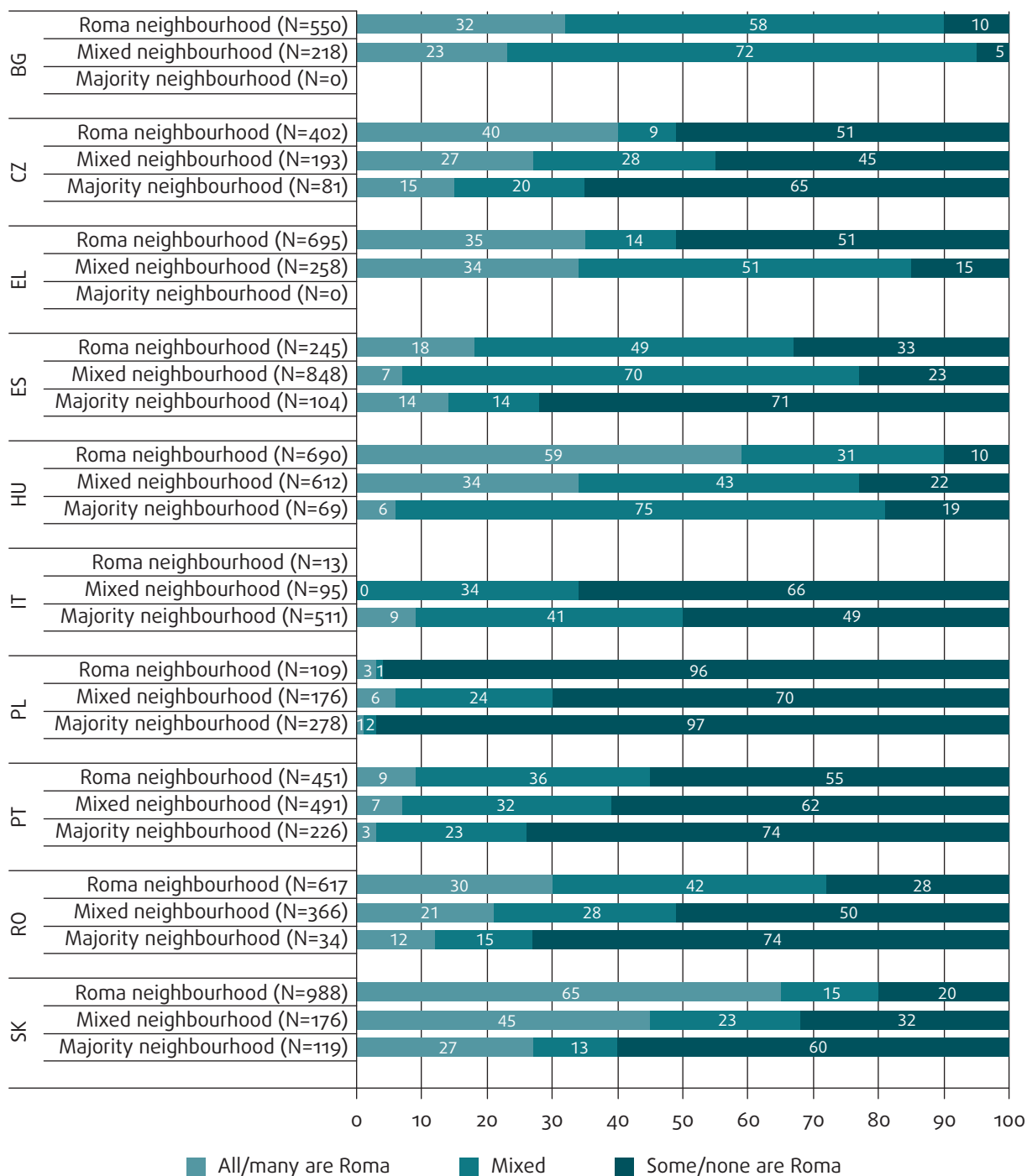
<sup>68</sup> Brüggemann, C. (2012).

<sup>69</sup> See ERRC and Amnesty International (2012).





**Figure 21: Ethnic composition of school classes according to the neighbourhood in which Roma children live, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: B12. What is/was the background of his/her classmates in school or kindergarten?  
M4. Was the neighbourhood predominantly a...?

Notes: The French gens du voyage are excluded because of their mobile lifestyle. N indicates the number of children in each category. Results are not presented if 'n' is less than 30 children. Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma households up to the age of 15 who are or have been in school.

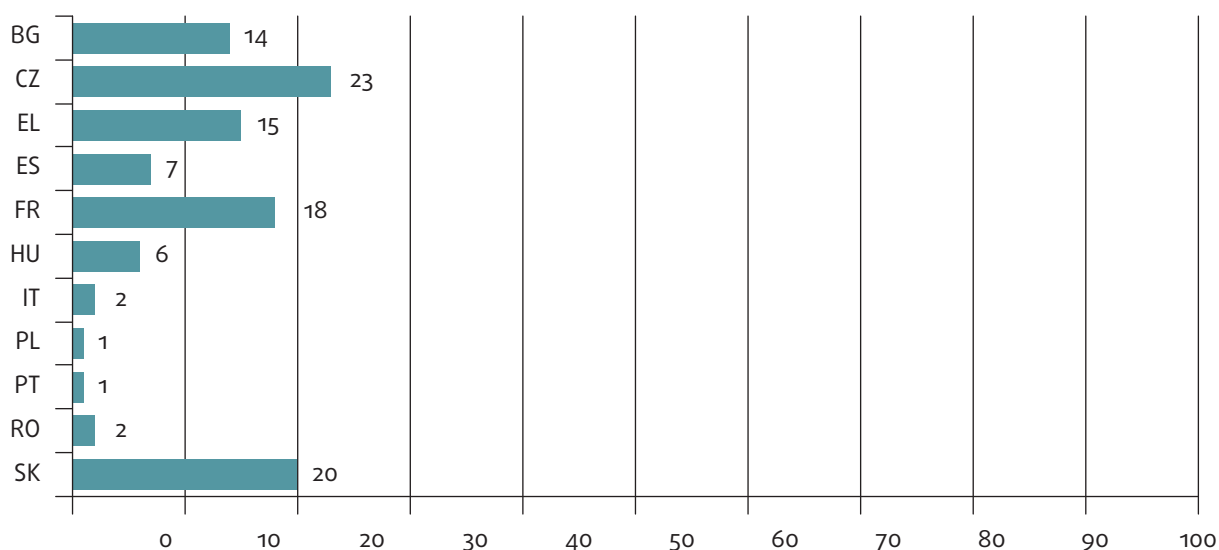
Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

court cases in these countries found culturally biased testing procedures applied at the start of schooling, the unfounded streaming of Roma children into special schools for mentally retarded children as well as informal routines advocating the advantages of special

schools for Roma children.<sup>70</sup> This section will look at the current and former experiences of Roma in ethnically segregated special schools.

<sup>70</sup> Roma Education Fund (2012a).

**Figure 22: Roma children up to age 15 who attended special schools and classes that were mainly for Roma, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: B13. Has he/she ever been to a special school or class that was mainly for the Roma, even if only for a short period?

Notes: The very low figures for Romania could be a result of the inadvertent omission of 'special class' in the translated questionnaire, thereby limiting the question's scope. Reference group: All children in the surveyed Roma households up to the age of 15 who are or have been in school and with valid information on the type of school or class they attended.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

Placement in some of these institutions can be explicitly designed to allow children to catch up and prepare for transferring to mainstream education. This requires that placement decisions are well founded and systematically reviewed. In such institutions teachers' qualifications, infrastructure and teacher/student ratios should be better than in regular schools and the institutions' staff should have clear incentives to prepare children to enter into regular schools as soon as possible. There is evidence, however, that in practice Roma and other children assigned to 'special schools' remain there.

The survey results<sup>71</sup> show that the percentage of children up to the age of 15 reported as having attended a special school or class, which was organised 'mainly for Roma', varied by Member State (Figure 22). The highest values are observed in the Czech Republic, where 23 % of children were reported as having attended special schools or classes. Slovakia (20 %), Greece (15 %) and Bulgaria (14 %) followed. In France, the relatively high share (18 %) could correspond to the mobile school units or other specific structures attending to the needs of *gens du voyage*. While this finding highlights that Roma children in these countries often attend special schools or classes, it does not say anything about the objective or the quality of these particular institutions.

### 3.4. Perceived experiences of discrimination

The survey asked whether respondents had felt discriminated against by school staff because of their ethnic origin at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. Both students aged 16 and above and their parents could express their experiences of perceived unequal treatment in the survey. The FRA EU-MIDIS survey in 2008 on European minorities' discriminatory experiences found that: "Roma were discriminated against because of their ethnic background more than other groups that were surveyed in EU-MIDIS [...]. Every second Roma respondent said that they were discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity at least once in the previous 12 months".<sup>72</sup> Education, however, proved to be one of the least affected areas in this respect, particularly in comparison to employment, housing, healthcare or going to a café, restaurant or a bar.<sup>73</sup>

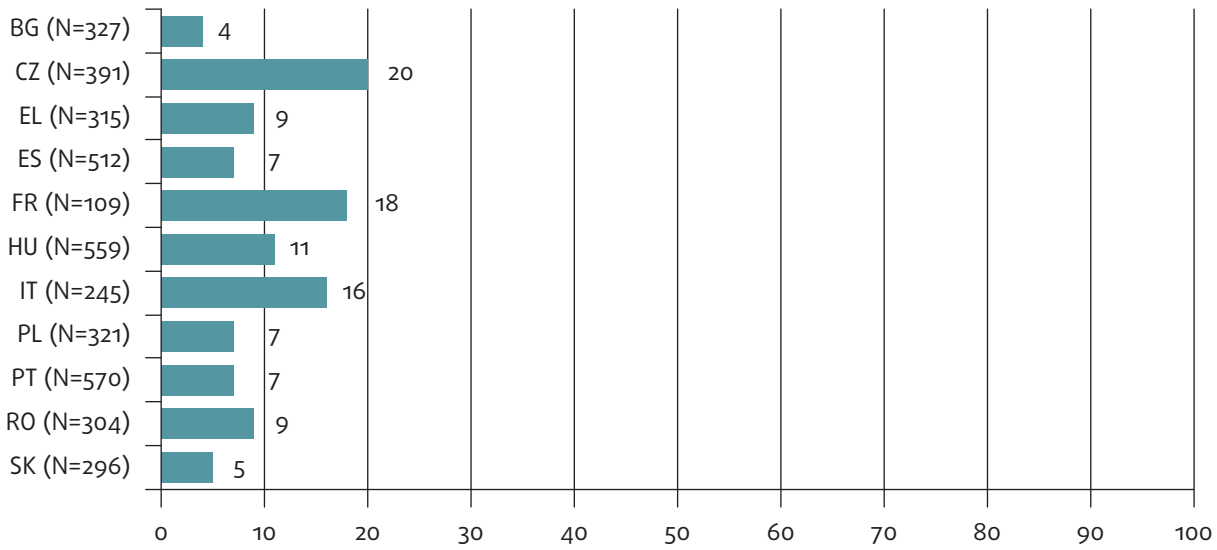
The survey results confirm this trend and the number of Roma respondents who said that they had experienced at least one incident of discrimination by school personnel in the last 12 months was very small, ranging between 1 % and 7 % of Roma respondents aged 16 and above. If these numbers are, however, compared to those who had any contact with educational institutions and their staff, the share of Roma who felt discriminated against in education in the

<sup>71</sup> Brüggemann, C. (2012).

<sup>72</sup> FRA (2009b), p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 23: Roma respondents aged 16 and above who experienced discrimination in education in the last 12 months, by EU Member State (as a % of those Roma who had contact with educational institutions)**



Questions: J2E. Over the past 5 years (or since you have been in the country, if less than 5 years) have you ever in [COUNTRY] come into contact with an education or training institution either as a student or a parent? 01 yes.

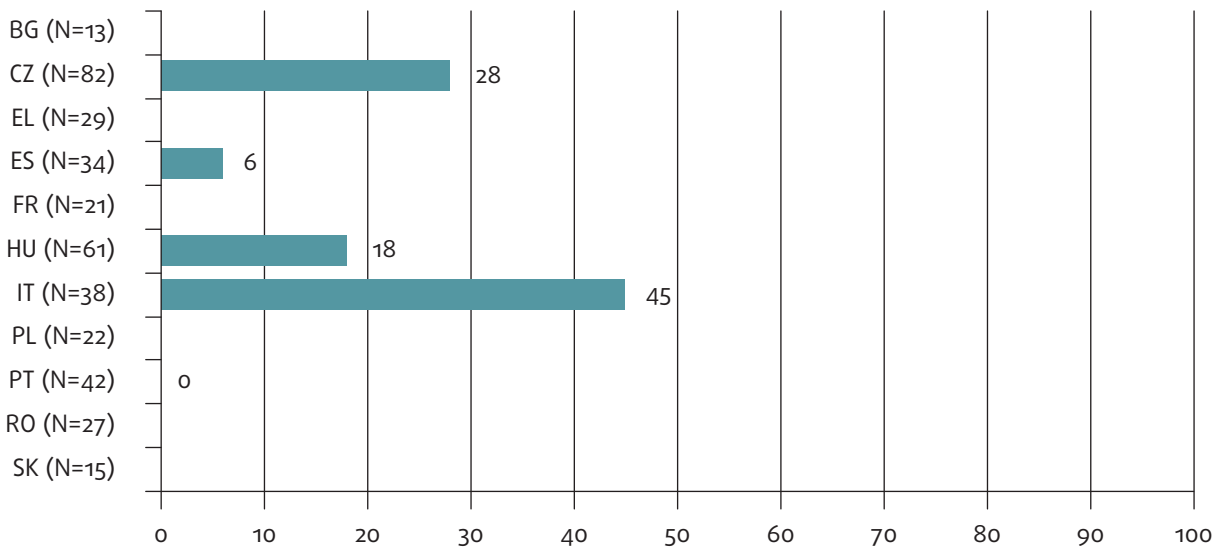
J3E. Over the last 5 years in [COUNTRY], [or since you have been in the country if less than 5 years], have you ever been discriminated against by people working in a school or in training? This includes schools, colleges and other further education. This could have happened to you as a student or as a parent. 01 yes.

J5E. Thinking about the last time this happened, when was this: in the last twelve months or before then?

Notes: Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have been in contact with educational institutions in the last 5 years.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

**Figure 24: Roma respondents reporting the most recent incident of perceived discrimination in education in the past 12 months, by EU Member State (%)**



Question: J2E. Over the past 5 years (or since you have been in the country, if less than 5 years) have you ever in [COUNTRY] come into contact with an education or training institution either as a student or a parent? 01 yes.

J3E. Over the last 5 years in [COUNTRY], [or since you have been in the country if less than 5 years], have you ever been discriminated against by people working in a school or in training? This includes schools, colleges and other further education. This could have happened to you as a student or as a parent. 01 yes.

J5E. Thinking about the last time this happened, when was this: in the last twelve months or before then? 01 yes.

J6. Please try to remember THE LAST TIME you were discriminated against. Did you or anyone ELSE report this incident anywhere?

Notes: Results are not presented for Member States where less than 30 respondents declared to have experienced discrimination when in contact with an educational institution during the last 12 months. Reference group: All Roma respondents aged 16 and above who have been in contact with educational institutions in the last 5 years and who have experienced discrimination in education in the last 12 months.

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011

last 12 months ranges from a high 20 % in the Czech Republic to 4 % in Bulgaria (Figure 23). There are very important differences among countries in this respect, with the Czech Republic, France and Italy standing out as those where most Roma respondents said that they had experienced discrimination by school personnel.

Discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin is prohibited in all EU Member States and the Racial Equality Directive has been transposed into national legislation across the EU. Member States also established special Equality Bodies to collect discrimination complaints. Roma respondents who experienced at least one incident perceived as discrimination in the educational setting in the last 12 months were also asked if they had reported it anywhere. The data reveal noteworthy differences across countries in this respect: in six out of 11 Member States covered by the survey (Bulgaria, Greece, France, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) the number of respondents who perceived that they had been discriminated against in the context of education in the past year was too low (under 30 respondents)

for an in-depth analysis of reporting behaviour. In the five remaining countries, the number of reported incidents varied widely: in Italy, 45 % of respondents said that they had reported the incident while in the Czech Republic, 28 % did so. In Hungary, only 18 % of the respondents reported the incident, as did 6 % in Spain. In Portugal incidents were not reported at all (Figure 24).

Given the overall poor educational situation of Roma compared to that of non-Roma, the low rates of perceived discrimination in this area and the even lower reporting rates may come as a surprise, but might be explained either in terms of the overall importance attached to education or the way in which 'discrimination in education' was interpreted by the respondents. The fact that Roma in Italy, the Czech Republic and Hungary more often reported experiences of discrimination in the survey and were also more willing to report such incidents to the authorities could be related to more rights awareness and the greater impact of equality bodies.



# Conclusions

The survey data show the extent and the implication of Roma exclusion from education, which begins as early as preschool. Failure to attend preschool dramatically cuts the chances of students' completing compulsory education later on.

The survey results show that the Roma surveyed are less likely to be in formal schooling over the entire period of compulsory education than the non-Roma surveyed and that the Roma's educational outcomes are considerably lower. Data also show that literacy (even self-reported that is substantively different from functional one) and completion of secondary education remain a challenge for many Roma.

The survey provides a range of important information on Roma and non-Roma of different age groups, making it possible to analyse progress in educational achievement over time. The analysis demonstrates that both educational attainment and literacy have improved. Young Roma perform better on both counts than older age groups. The gap in educational

attainment between Roma and non-Roma living nearby, however, remains high.

In some countries, attending segregated or mixed schools or classes correlates with poverty. Children from households at risk of poverty are more likely to study in ethnically segregated classes or schools suggesting that progress in education cannot be achieved in isolation, through solely sector-focused interventions. Instead, any interventions need to be part of a broader development and inclusion agenda.

Finally, the report presents the results on issues of equal treatment in education including segregation, the ethnic mix of school classes and perceived discrimination. Roma often attend ethnically segregated classes to the detriment of their future life opportunities. Apparently many Roma do not perceive this as a manifestation of discrimination. Roma tend to see educational deprivation and discriminatory practices as 'normal'.



# Annex 1: The survey in a nutshell

In 2011, FRA, in cooperation with the European Commission, the UNDP and the World Bank conducted a pilot survey of Roma and non-Roma populations living nearby. The study collected data on their socioeconomic condition, experiences of discrimination and rights awareness in 11 Member States in order to examine the socioeconomic situation in employment, education, housing and health, as well as issues of equal treatment and rights awareness.<sup>74</sup>

In total, 16,319 households were included in the survey in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. For each household one respondent was selected for the interview. The information given refers in part to the household as a whole, so that in total the data describe the living conditions of 61,271 persons in these households.<sup>75</sup> For each country about 1,000 Roma households and 500 non-Roma households living in close proximity were sampled randomly. The sample included only regions known to have a sizeable Roma population.

The sample reflects the situation of Roma living in areas with an above-average proportion of Roma in the 11 Member States. Consequently, the survey is neither representative for the total Roma population of a country nor for the general population. Instead, the survey throws a spotlight on living conditions in those areas where Roma identity has been visible to a larger extent than elsewhere. The population of non-Roma has been sampled in the same areas. Although the non-Roma population surveyed is clearly distinct from the Roma population in respect to income, employment and housing, there is also an observable and shared economic gap to the general population as they often share the marginalisation and lack of infrastructure of segregated living areas. The term 'majority' population is used here to describe the general population in a country, reflecting the average living standard.

It is essential to underline that Roma ethnicity was determined solely through self-identification.<sup>76</sup> This implies explicit awareness and a certain feeling of belonging to the Roma minority.

## Which EU Member States were surveyed?

The survey was conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.

## Who was interviewed and how?

- In each Member State, about 1,000 Roma households and 500 non-Roma households were sampled randomly in areas that were known to have a proportion of Roma residents above the national average. The survey therefore reflects the situation in those areas of the 11 EU Member States that overall have an above-average proportion of Roma.
- A household was categorised as 'Roma' if at least one person in the household identified himself/herself as belonging to a Roma or related group and was willing to participate in the survey. In France, these were people living in caravans at halting sites, who self-identified as *gens du voyage*.
- Across all countries, the survey interviewed 10,811 Roma and 5,508 non-Roma households providing information on 61,271 household members.
- Non-Roma refers to the general population living in the same area as or in the closest neighbourhood to the Roma interviewed.
- Information on the household and its members was collected through face-to-face interviews in their homes with one randomly selected respondent from the household aged at least 16; non-Roma respondents were sampled from the same residential area or from the closest neighbourhood to the Roma interviewed.
- The majority of Roma interviewed in the survey held the citizenship of the country of residence, with the exception of Italy where about 40 % of respondents were non-citizens.

## What did the survey ask?

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: a 'household grid'; and an 'individual part' or 'core questionnaire'. The 'household grid' yielded information on the basic

<sup>74</sup> FRA (2012).

<sup>75</sup> An additional sample of Roma migrants in France was interviewed but not included in this analysis. The results of this sample group were used in Cherkezova, S. and Tomova, I. (2013).

<sup>76</sup> The technical report gives detailed information on the survey and its design: FRA (2013).

characteristics of all members of the household as reported by the randomly selected respondent. It included questions about the basic socio-demographic characteristics of all household members, their country of origin, ethnic background, marital status, their situation in employment and education. In the first part, on household status, the 'core questionnaire' yielded information on the housing conditions and household income shared by all members of the household, the neighbourhood and its infrastructure. In the second part, the 'core questionnaire' went into depth with questions about the respondent's employment, education, health status, integration, experience and perception of discrimination, rights awareness and citizenship issues, mobility and migration experiences and intentions.

- The results for non-Roma are not representative of the general population in each Member State, but serve as a benchmark for Roma since the non-Roma interviewed often share the same environment, labour market and social infrastructure.

The survey 'total' mentioned in many graphs and tables is an 'unweighted average' of all Roma included in the survey and should only be used as a reference point for individual country values. The 'unweighted average' does not correct for different population sizes in different countries, in other words, it does not reflect the situation of the total Roma population in the 11 EU Member States surveyed.

## How representative are the results?

- The results are representative for those Roma women and men living in areas where they reside in a higher than national average density.





## Annex 2: Survey methodology<sup>77</sup>

### Defining the universe of study

The first step in any quantitative research is precisely defining the universe of study. This is extremely difficult in the case of Roma for a variety of reasons.

Historically, Roma identity was constructed largely *vis-à-vis* non-Roma society, the *Gadje*. The consolidation of the modern states with their secular and religious structures, made participation or non-participation in these structures increasingly an important identification marker – and later a driver of social exclusion.<sup>78</sup> There is a long academic, legal and policy debate on the strategy of identifying Roma by survey research. The problem is multi-layered: firstly, Roma are a heterogeneous group with respect to their ethnic identity, language use, cultural traditions and level of social inclusion, therefore many scholars argue that ‘Roma’ serves rather as an umbrella term denominating population with highly varying ethnic identities. Secondly, most European Roma have multiple and complex identities and revealing their ethnic identity depends on how they perceive the possible consequences. Thirdly, due to their frequent experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination, many Roma prefer to conceal their ethnicity in an interview situation.<sup>79</sup>

There are two main approaches to conceptualising ‘Roma’ in surveys, which result in findings that are comparable only in part. In the narrower interpretation, the Roma minority is composed of those who identify themselves as Gypsies/Roma (‘self-identification’), while the broader concept embraces all those who are regarded as such by outsiders (‘external identification’).<sup>80</sup>

The use of the term ‘Roma’ in official EU documents generally follows the Council of Europe approach<sup>81</sup> which uses the term ‘Roma’ to refer to 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’. The Council of Europe also notes that the term *gens du voyage* used in France is an administrative term, which has been used since the 1970s to refer to both the ‘Roma’, Sinti/Manush and Gypsies/Gitans, and other non-Roma groups with a nomadic way of life. This term actually refers to French citizens, as opposed to the term ‘Roma’ which at official level is improperly used to refer exclusively to Roma immigrants from Eastern Europe. In the context of the survey, the term ‘Roma’ is therefore used as an umbrella term within a policy context dealing primarily with issues of social exclusion and discrimination, and not with specific issues of cultural identity. This must not, however, lead to the erroneous perception that all Roma live in conditions of social and territorial exclusion and marginalisation.

The FRA survey took a multi-stage approach to identifying ‘Roma’ respondents: firstly, it identified Roma-dense areas based on census data (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania) or other available population data sources (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Spain). In France, Greece, Italy and Portugal, no data sources were available. Here, academic and NGO sources helped identify Roma-dense residential areas. For France, FRA used a nationwide list of *gens du voyage* halting sites. Secondly, respondents were screened by an introductory question – ‘Are there any Roma living in the household?’ Thirdly, during the interview, the randomly selected respondent was asked to answer a question about the ethnic background of all household members. That question was designed to reconfirm the preceding identification process and not to capture multiple identities – the respondent could select only one identity option.

### Sampling

The challenges in defining ‘Roma’ affect the identification and sampling of respondents in surveys targeting this particular population group. The FRA survey created a sample of Roma – and non-Roma living nearby – representing, as much as possible, the diversity of these groups so that the results would adequately reflect their situation. In each Member State, the sample was selected in areas where Roma live in sufficient concentration – above the national average – to allow random sampling at reasonable cost. Non-Roma respondents were selected on the basis of the proximity of their residence to Roma, which means that they share certain characteristics of the local environment. The results are therefore

<sup>77</sup> For a more detailed presentation refer to FRA (2012); and FRA (2013).

<sup>78</sup> Ivanov, A. (2012).

<sup>79</sup> Rughiniş, C. (2010). See also: Milcher, S. and Ivanov, A. (2004); McGarry, A. and Tremlett, A. (2013); Krizsán, A. (2011); Csepeli, G. and Simon, D. (2004); Szelényi, I. and Ladányi, J. (2006); Simon, P. (2007).

<sup>80</sup> Ivanov, A., Kling, J. and Kagin J. (2012).

<sup>81</sup> Council of Europe (2012).

representative for the areas where the research was undertaken, while also serving as a proxy for Roma at risk of exclusion. In other words, the data do not claim to be representative of all Roma throughout the EU Member States surveyed. Given the construction of the survey sample, Roma in social and territorial exclusion possessing low social status (including low level of education and labour market participation) are likely to be overrepresented, while Roma integrated in society, living in a majority environment and possessing higher social status are likely to be underrepresented. This is even more the case for children due to the household level of the survey: Roma living in Roma-dense areas are more likely to be marginalised and also, more likely to have many children. The survey, however, does provide data that correspond to the priorities of the EU and its Member States concerning the Roma.

The same sampling frame included all known areas where Roma lived in higher concentration than the national average and reflected the rural/urban distribution of the Roma population in their selection. Households in these areas were selected randomly. In addition, the survey used focused enumeration to reach Roma in more mixed areas. Up to 20 % of the respondents in each country were identified through this method. The survey used a combination of external and self-identification for sampling Roma. The FRA randomly selected households from which one individual aged 16 or more was chosen, also randomly, to reply to the questionnaire providing information

on all members of the household, on the household as a whole, and on his/her individual situation and experiences. The survey fieldwork was carried out by Gallup Europe under the supervision of expert staff who participated in interviewer training sessions and observed the fieldwork.

The data set is completely anonymous and no respondent can be identified.

## Demographic profile of the sample

The age distribution of the sample shows marked differences between Roma and non-Roma: in all Member States the Roma households surveyed are generally younger and with fewer older persons – reflecting the generally higher number of children and also earlier deaths (lower life expectancy). The country of birth, compared with the current country of residence of a person is generally used as a migration background indicator. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, almost all Roma and non-Roma included in the survey were born in their country of residence. In the Czech Republic, a higher number of Roma and non-Roma were not born in their country of residence, possibly due to the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993. In France, Greece, Portugal and Spain, almost all Roma surveyed were also born in the respective EU Member State, while the percentage of non-Roma born elsewhere was higher.

**Table A.1: Sample sizes, by EU Member State**

EU Member State	Roma households	Roma household members	Non-Roma households	Non-Roma household members
BG	1,100	4,690	500	1,245
CZ	1,100	4,112	500	1,281
EL	1,102	5,449	500	1,369
ES	1,115	4,807	502	1,441
FR	714	2,377	500	1,210
HU	1,100	4,864	500	1,234
IT	608	2,670	500	1,210
PL	670	2,558	505	1,397
PT	1,102	4,502	501	1,453
RO	1,100	4,995	500	1,457
SK	1,100	5,359	500	1,591
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,811</b>	<b>46,383</b>	<b>5,508</b>	<b>14,888</b>

Source: FRA Roma pilot survey, 2011



A possible explanation is that in these Member States the areas where Roma live also attract persons with a migration background, because of the low cost of housing and/or because accommodation is more difficult to get in other areas. In Italy, about one third of Roma living in a household covered by the survey was born in a different country, and two out of five did not have Italian citizenship.

At least two-thirds of Roma households in the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Portugal and Spain were in urban areas. Between half and three-quarters of the Roma households in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia were in rural areas. In Italy, half of the Roma households were in urban areas, the other half in encampments. In Greece, one-third of Roma households were in encampments, while in France *gens du voyage* were only interviewed at halting sites.

## Pilot countries

In France, Italy, Portugal and Spain<sup>82</sup> no large-scale comparative quantitative survey on the socioeconomic situation of the Roma has ever been conducted. The FRA survey thus serves as a pilot for developing viable survey methods and instruments. In Portugal and Spain sufficient data were available to construct the appropriate sampling frames, but this proved to be a challenge in France and Italy. In France, a sampling frame based on halting sites was used for the *gens du voyage*. In Italy, given the paucity of relevant population data, a well-documented convenience sample was created showing that migrant and national Roma lived in the same locations. In Greece, Roma who were interviewed in Thrace and identified themselves as 'Muslims', were included in the Roma sample based on information from the local authorities and NGOs.

<sup>82</sup> A survey on 'Health and the Roma Community' was carried out in 2007 under the coordination of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano covering Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. See Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2009).



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## HELPING TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS A REALITY FOR EVERYONE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Education has a special role to play in addressing multiple deprivations, such as those facing many of the European Union's (EU) largest ethnic minority, Roma. Education is so important because it largely determines future life chances. Unequal access to education can therefore lead to unequal access to employment, housing and health and ultimately reduce Roma's chances to enjoy their fundamental rights. Just as a poor quality education limits future opportunities, a good one can lead to better employment prospects and help to lift people out of poverty. This report examines the results of the European Union Agency's for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2011 Roma survey on education, which show that considerable gaps between Roma and non-Roma children persist at all educational levels. They reflect the widespread segregation of Roma children in education, which the European Court of Human Rights has judged discriminatory. Such segregation also represents a failure to adhere to the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, which focuses in part on inclusion in education.

Nonetheless, the results also point to improvement for younger age groups. The data illustrate not only that some progress has been made but, more importantly, that further improvement is possible and feasible.

Improving the educational situation of Roma is not just about Roma. It is a litmus test of the EU's ability to achieve progress in the inclusion of all extremely marginalised groups. To support its efforts, FRA will continue to test novel community-level approaches and deliver evidence of the changes taking place on the ground.



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