



Housing discrimination against Roma in selected EU Member States

An analysis of EU-MIDIS data

October 2009

Conference edition

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FRA

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Executive summary

The European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS) was undertaken in 2008 to explore experiences and perceptions of discrimination and victimisation among immigrant and minority ethnic communities in the EU. A total of 23,500 immigrants and members of minority ethnic groups across all 27 EU Member States were surveyed including 3,510 members of the Roma community in seven EU Member States, where they constitute a sizable minority, namely Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

When asked about their *experiences* of discrimination in the past five years in relation to housing, Roma respondents across the Member States varied in their responses ranging from practically none in Bulgaria to 34% in Greece. 11% of respondents (N=304) indicated that they had been the victim of this type of discrimination in the last twelve months.

22% of respondents who had experienced discrimination had suffered multiple incidents i.e. on five or more separate occasions. One third of the total number of reported incidents in the past five years took place in Greece.

Some caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the relatively lower levels of discrimination experiences in housing in relation to other areas, because as other members of the population, Roma may not frequently look for a house or an apartment to rent or buy.

When asked about their *perception* of how widespread in general discrimination based on ethnic origin is in their respective country, between 75 to 90 % of Roma respondents in five out of the seven Member States, where they were surveyed, e.g. the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Greece said that it is very or fairly widespread. In Bulgaria and Romania, *perceived* levels of discrimination were lower, 36 – 42 %, but still considerable.

Only 27 % of respondents were aware of laws prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of ethnic or immigrant status in their country when looking for a house or an apartment to rent or to buy. Knowledge of such laws was not a predictor for reporting incidents to authorities. Respondents were unlikely to report such incidents with 71 % of those who decided against reporting citing belief that nothing would be done as their reason. A quarter of respondents (26%) believed that reporting would have negative consequences. 16% gave fear of intimidation as the main reason for not seeking official assistance.

Immigrant status was not an important factor in this study as the vast majority of Roma were born in their country of residence and had citizenship of that country.

Religious affiliation did not appear to impact on discrimination in relation to housing. However, wearing traditional or religious apparel did appear to predict incidence of discrimination. Although small in number, the experience of discrimination appeared to be slightly higher among those who wore traditional garb.

Gender does not appear to predict experience of discrimination in relation to housing among Roma.

Wide variation was observed in relation to the educational attainment of Roma. 50% of respondents in Greece indicated 'no school' or 'illiterate' in response to the question regarding educational attainment compared to 1% in Slovakia. The modal response to educational attainment across the Member States was 6-9 years meaning most respondents did not attend school beyond the junior cycle. Educational attainment predicted respondents' awareness of laws prohibiting discrimination.

Respondents with lower household earnings were almost twice as likely to experience discrimination regarding housing compared to those in the upper quartiles. More than half of respondents who were unemployed or listed as homemakers indicated experiences of discrimination. Self employed people and people with a disability were also more likely to suffer discrimination. Greece and Slovakia indicated particularly high levels of unemployment while the highest employment levels were observed in the Czech Republic.

54% of respondents lived in areas which could be described as predominantly minority / immigrant neighbourhoods. Only 21% lived in majority population neighbourhoods. 72% of respondents in Bulgaria were living in minority neighbourhoods while a similar number (66%) was seen in Romania. Poland recorded the highest number of respondents living in majority neighbourhoods (53%). Respondents living in predominantly minority neighbourhoods were more likely to be victims of discrimination. These results have to be interpreted with caution as the sampling mainly concentrated on areas with high numbers of Roma residents.

Interviewers observed 68% of respondents in Greece living in areas of poor wealth distribution. Similar figures were observed for Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

1. Introduction

This report explores experiences and perceptions of racism and discrimination when accessing housing in the light of data provided by the FRA EU-MIDIS survey. The paper examines why many incidents of racism and discrimination concerning Roma are not reported, and highlights the perceived level of understanding among the Roma community of their rights under the law and their understanding of mechanisms for redress. The dataset used in the paper is taken from the recent European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS). Analysis is confined to the dataset.¹

EU-MIDIS was undertaken in 2008 to explore the experience of discrimination and victimisation among immigrant and minority ethnic communities in the EU. A total of 23,500 immigrants and members of minority ethnic groups across 27 EU Member States were surveyed including 3,510 members of the Roma community from seven Member States: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Using face-to-face interviews EU-MIDIS collected detailed information from each respondent including respondents' gender, religion, country of birth, language, number of years in education and housing status.

When interpreting the findings in this report it is important to consider some factors that may have impacted on respondents' general perceptions at the time of the survey. For example, prior to the conduct of the survey (summer 2008) an increase in the frequency and prominence of incidents of anti-Roma speech, racism and violence against Roma in a number of EU Member States including but not exclusively the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Finland and Italy was widely reported by the media across the EU.

While it is difficult to measure the impact of such circumstances, it is likely that Roma in some Member States may have been adversely influenced by imagery, environment or general anti-Roma sentiment. Some respondents may not have asserted any personal perceptions or experiences of discrimination in relation to the areas covered in the research but may have experienced a heightened sense of general concern permeating all aspects of their lives. This may be particularly true in Member States where recent violence or anti-Roma rhetoric has peaked such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia and it may be reflected in the findings below. In contrast, respondents from Romania and Bulgaria may have indicated disproportionately lower levels of discrimination as the overall climate towards Roma has dissipated from a peak of severity several years ago.

¹ This report, financed and edited by the FRA, was developed by Mr Stephen O'Hare on behalf of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Budapest, and Pavee Point Travellers Centre, Dublin.

In order to give a comprehensive picture of the experience of Roma in relation to housing within selected Member States this paper is divided into two sections:

- Roma experience of discrimination regarding housing, and
- The housing situation of Roma: Key factors relating to discrimination.

The interviews were conducted in the period May - July 2008. The survey was conducted using both nationwide random route sampling and, where necessary, random route sampling in urban areas (Greece, Hungary). Five hundred Roma respondents were surveyed in each of the seven Member States. Respondents were asked about their experience of discrimination relating to employment, healthcare, education, financial services, retail services, social services, housing and access to cafes, restaurants, etc. A detailed description of survey methodology and fieldwork in each Member States can be found in the EU-MIDIS Technical Report.²

² Report available at <http://fra.europa.eu/eu-midis>

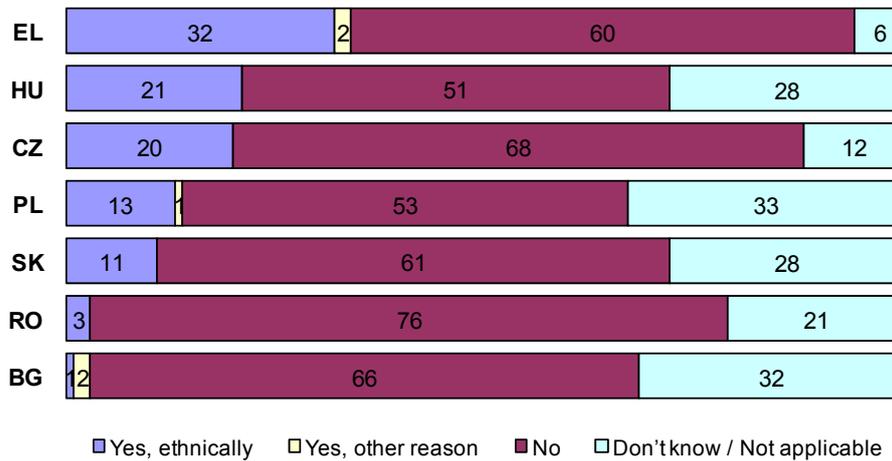
2. Experiences of housing discrimination

Respondents were asked whether they could cite personal experiences of discrimination within both the previous five years and the previous 12 months when looking for a house or apartment to rent or buy because of their immigrant or ethnic minority background. Given the infrequent nature with which respondents are likely to look for housing compared to, for example, accessing services or interacting with school personnel, it is reasonable to examine less recent experiences of discrimination in relation to this ground. For this reason, both five-year and 12-month experiences of discrimination will be examined here.

Overall, experiences of discrimination in relation to housing were lower compared to other areas³ and in each Member State the majority of respondents indicated that they had not experienced discrimination in this regard. Some caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the lower levels of discrimination in housing in relation to other areas. As with other members of the population, Roma may not frequently look for a house or an apartment to rent or buy. While the interviewees were asked not only whether they had experienced discrimination in the last twelve months but also in the past five years, even five years is a relatively short period of time in which to change house. However, some considerable variation was observed across Member States. Almost no respondents in Bulgaria and only 3% of respondents in Romania indicated that they had experienced discrimination when looking for housing in the past five years. Experiences were more pronounced in the Czech Republic and Hungary where a fifth of respondents indicated such experiences. Greece demonstrated the highest experience of discrimination with a third indicating 'Yes' when asked directly (Fig. 2.1).

³ EU-MIDIS asked the respondents about discrimination they had experienced, in the past 12 months or in the past 5 years, in nine areas: 1) When looking for work, 2) at work, 3) when looking for a house or an apartment to rent or buy, 4) by healthcare personnel, 5) by social service personnel, 6) by school personnel, 7) at a café, restaurant or bar, 8) when entering a shop, 9) when trying to open a bank account or get a loan.

Fig. 2.1 Experiences of discrimination in housing⁴ in the last five years (%)



EU-MIDIS, Q. CC1

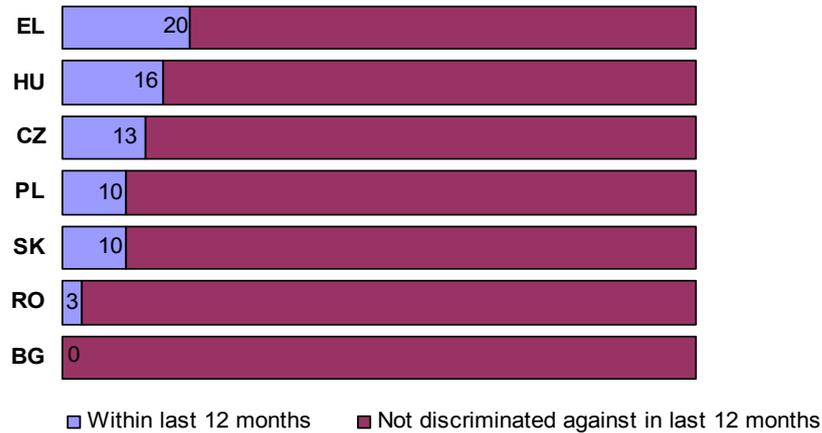
Given the high levels of discrimination experienced across the nine areas outlined as illustrated in Figure 2 of the recent FRA *Data in Focus Report: The Roma*⁵ it is reasonable to assume that discrimination in relation to housing occurs on the whole more infrequently than other forms. This may relate to a number of factors. Member States with large, dispersed or centralised Roma populations may have varying housing strategies in place. Member States may have higher levels of segregated provision, as in the case of Romania and Bulgaria. Most probable of all, respondents may be living longer than five years at their current residence or may not have sought a recent change of residence.

Respondents who indicated that they had experienced discrimination regarding housing were asked how recently their experience had occurred, i.e. within the last 12 months or before. More than half of those who responded 'yes' indicated that discrimination had occurred within the past 12 months. Again, very low levels of reported discrimination were seen in either Bulgaria or Romania with the highest rate in Greece. The fact that approximately half of those experiencing discrimination did so in the last 12 months might be explained in part by respondents' likelihood of remembering more recent experiences, rather than any upturn in actual experiences over that time.

⁴ Explained as, “when looking for a house or apartment to rent or buy by people working in a public housing agency, or by a private landlord or agency”.

⁵ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2009), *Data in Focus Report: The Roma*, <http://fra.europa.eu/eu-midis>.

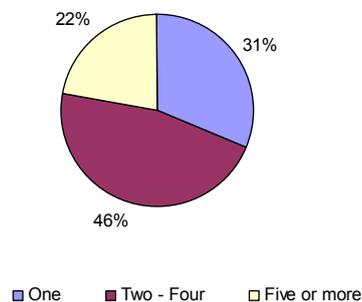
Fig. 2.2 Experiences of discrimination in housing in the last 12 months (%)



EU-MIDIS, Q. CC2

Approximately one in ten (11%)⁶ Roma respondents indicated that they had experienced this type of discrimination across the seven Member States in the previous 12 months. 70% of those indicated that such discrimination had occurred more than once. Approximately one in five of these respondents (22%) indicated that they had suffered high repetition of discrimination (i.e. five incidents or more). This finding suggests that there may be a particularly vulnerable group within Roma who is prone to repeated discrimination requiring a targeted response at local and regional level. This highlights the need to pay particular attention to 'groups within groups' who are most at risk from repeated occurrence.

Fig. 2.3 Number of incidents of discrimination



EU MIDIS, Q. CC3

⁶ The total number of respondents in the seven Member States reporting incidents was 304 (unweighted).

Although figures varied from country to country, approximately 2-3% of respondents in the seven Member States who indicated such incidents were victims of repeated discrimination. This adds further weight to the assertion that certain vulnerable groups may exist within Roma communities (Table 2.1). When looking across the seven Member States, a quarter of the total number of reported incidents took place in Greece over the past 12 months.

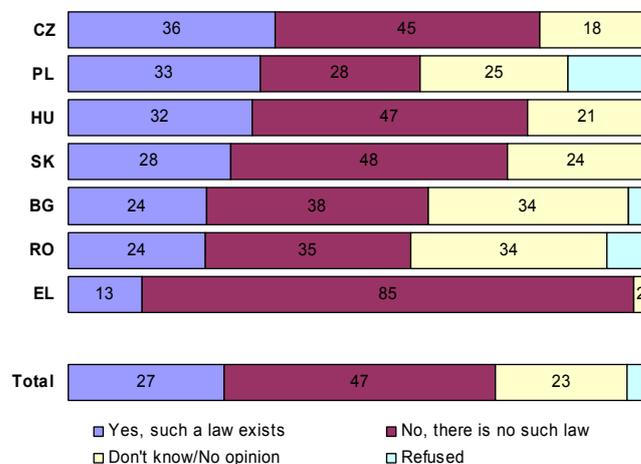
Table 2.1 Repeated experiences of discrimination (as percentage of total)

	EL	CZ	HU	PL	SK	RO	BG
Once	9	4	3	1	3	1	0
Two to four	7	8	9	4	4	1	0
Five or more	3	2	3	4	3	1	0
Don't know / No reply	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	20	13	16	10	10	3	0
N/A	80	87	84	90	90	97	100

EU MIDIS, Q. CC3

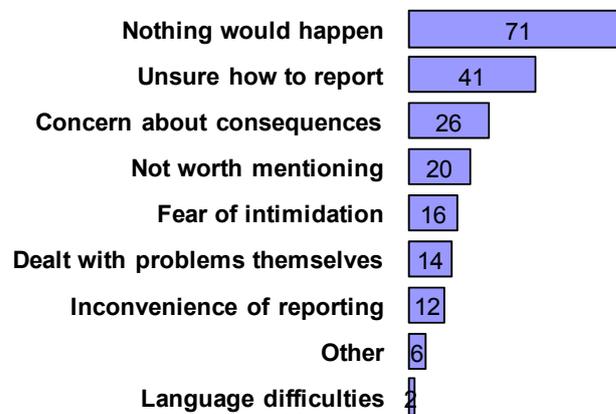
Only a quarter (27 %) of all respondents stated awareness of laws that prohibit discrimination in relation to ethnicity when securing housing. In contrast, half of respondents surveyed (47%) did not know of any laws and further 23% of respondents were unsure or had no opinion. This trend was evident across all Member States with the exception of Greece, where only 13% of respondents from Greece were aware of such a law, while 85% stated that no law existed.

Fig. 2.4 Awareness of laws prohibiting discrimination when renting or buying a flat



Knowledge of laws relating to discrimination did not appear to predict whether respondents would report such incidents to the relevant organisations. Of the 304 respondents (unweighted) that had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months, only one in nine (11.5%) chose to report such incidents to the relevant organisations indicating very high levels of underreporting of discrimination in relation to housing among Roma. The vast majority did not choose to report any incidents with most of those believing nothing could be achieved from doing so. Fig. 2.5 reveals the reasons most frequently cited by respondents.

Fig. 2.5 Reasons for under-reporting discrimination (%)



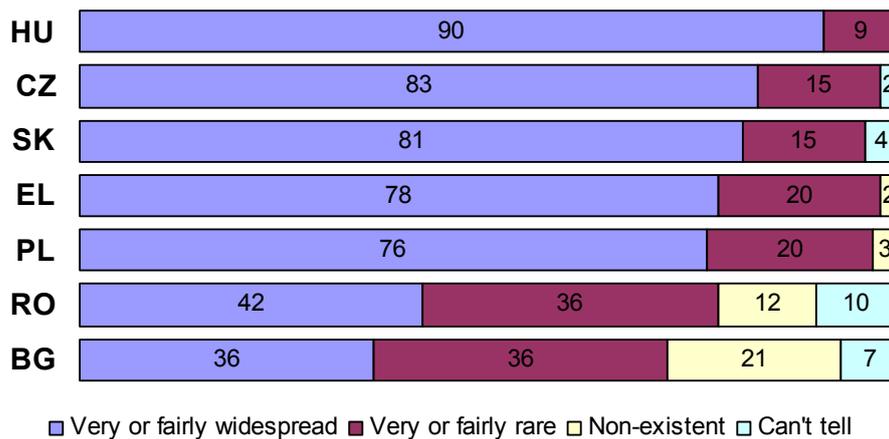
EU-MIDIS, Q. CC5_1 - CC5_10

Many respondents cited multiple reasons for non-reporting. Almost three quarters said that nothing would happen, while 41% indicated that they were unsure how to report such incidents. A quarter of respondents were also concerned about the consequences of reporting discrimination with some 16% concerned that they would suffer intimidation from perpetrators as a backlash. This demonstrates the vulnerability of many Roma who are confronted with discrimination. A particularly high number of respondents in the Czech Republic and Poland cited concern regarding negative consequences (44% and 42% respectively) as a reason for not reporting discrimination. In Poland, fear of intimidation was also highly pronounced (40%).

3. Perceptions of discrimination

Perceptions among respondents in each Member State regarding the level of discrimination based on ethnicity or immigrant origin across all areas reveal the extent of the problem. In general, Roma respondents reported high levels of perceived discrimination. From the survey, the highest reported level of perceived discrimination was observed in Hungary with 90% of respondents indicating that discrimination is very or fairly widespread. Similarly high numbers were reported across the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Greece and Poland (Fig. 3.1).

Fig. 3.1 Perception of how widespread is discrimination based on ethnic or immigrant origin (%)



EU-MIDIS Q. A1

In Bulgaria and Romania, respondents were more evenly divided but, at 36% and 42% respectively, perceptions of discrimination were nonetheless acute. In addition, Roma in Bulgaria and Romania experience relatively high levels of segregation from the majority population (i.e. housing in predominantly Roma areas) at 72% and 66% respectively in the sample. This potentially minimises experiences of discrimination in relation to housing, because contact with the majority population is limited.

4. Analysis of other variables

4.1. Personal status

4.1.1. Immigrant status

The overwhelming majority of Roma respondents interviewed for the survey were born in their present country of residence⁷ (96%) and enjoy citizenship of that country (99%). As such, immigrant status was not a contributing factor for either experiences of discrimination or housing status. These findings suggest that the Member States surveyed by EU MIDIS are not recipients of significant numbers of migrant Roma compared to other EU Member States.

4.1.2. Religious affiliation

Two thirds (67%) of respondents indicated that religion was either very important or fairly important in their lives. Three quarters of the Roma surveyed professed either a Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christian religious affiliation. Fig. 3.1 outlines religious affiliation by Member State. Using a Pearson Chi Square test (where variables are both nominal) it was noted that a significant relationship could be observed between religious affiliation and experiences of discrimination regarding housing in the last five years ($p < .001$).⁸ However, it is unlikely that religion is a reliable predictor of discrimination in these circumstances. A significantly lower percentage of Muslim Roma indicated encountering discrimination, but of the 117 (unweighted) Muslim Roma identified in the survey, 91 (unweighted) were from Bulgaria where almost no respondent indicated encountering discrimination in relation to housing.

4.1.3. Traditional / religious apparel

Although only a small number of respondents indicated that they usually wore traditional or religious apparel in public there was a significant difference regarding those who indicated they had and those who had not suffered discrimination in the past five years ($p < .05$).⁹ Table 4.1 indicates that those

⁷ In the case of Roma in the Czech Republic it should be noted that some were born in the former "Czechoslovakia".

⁸ [$\chi^2(8)=85.647, p < .001$] Recoded 10, 13, 14 as "Christian Other" Recoded 20-27 "Islam" as one variable, Recoded 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 95 as "Other".

⁹ [$\chi^2(1)=5.565, p=.018$]

wearing traditional or religious apparel were more likely to suffer discrimination regarding housing than respondents who did not.

Table 4.1 Incidents of discrimination over the past 5 years and type of clothing usually worn %

Discrimination in last five years	Wear traditional / religious apparel in public	Do not wear traditional / religious apparel in public
Yes	21 (N=43)	17 (N=411)
No	49 (N=103)	62 (N=1536)
No reply / No contact	30 (N=62)	21 (N=511)
Total	100 (N=208)	100 (N=2458)

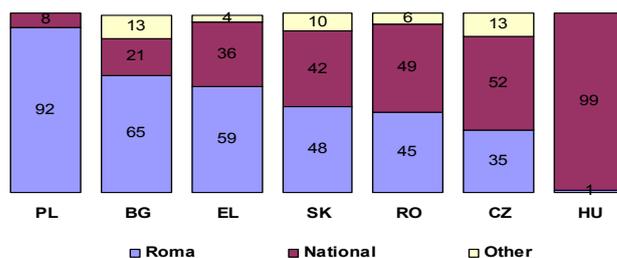
EU-MIDIS, Q. BG4*CC1

Table 4.1 illustrates findings from all seven Member States. Almost all respondents from Romania (N. 483, unweighted) did not believe that the question of whether they wore traditional clothing which differs from the majority population was applicable in their case.

4.1.4. Language

When asked to identify their mother tongue (i.e. the language used in the family home when they were a child) almost half of respondents (48%) indicated the Romani language. The other half indicated speaking the language of their native country. Respondents from Poland almost entirely indicated Romani language as their mother tongue. Only 1% of Roma said they were raised speaking Polish. This stands in stark contrast to Hungary where almost all respondents spoke Hungarian. In Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia respondents were more or less evenly divided between speaking the Romani language and the State language (Fig. 4.1).

Fig. 4.1 Language (%)



EU-MIDIS, Q.Bg8_1_NEW

In the Czech Republic, a significant relationship was observed between a respondent's primary language and their experiences of discrimination in housing in the last five years ($p < .05$).¹⁰ Respondents whose mother tongue was Roma were more likely to suffer discrimination with regard to housing than those whose primary language was Czech (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Percentage of those discriminated against in the last five years by mother tongue – the Czech Republic (%)

Discrimination in the last five years	National language	Romani	Total
Yes	17	27	21
No	70	63	67
No contact / no reply	12	10	11
Total	100	100	100

EU MIDIS, Q. BG8_1_New*CC1

There was also a significant relationship observed between mother tongue and discrimination in the last 12 months in Greece¹¹ where approximately 30% of respondents who spoke the national language experienced discrimination in the last 12 months, compared to approximately 15 % of respondents who spoke Romani.

The contrasting results regarding the Czech Republic and Greece suggest that further in depth qualitative research is required to understand fully how differences in language use affect the discrimination experiences of Roma.

4.1.5. Gender

Gender does not appear to affect experiences of discrimination in relation to housing either in the last five years or over the past 12 months whether measured across the seven Member States or on a country by country analysis.

4.1.6. Education

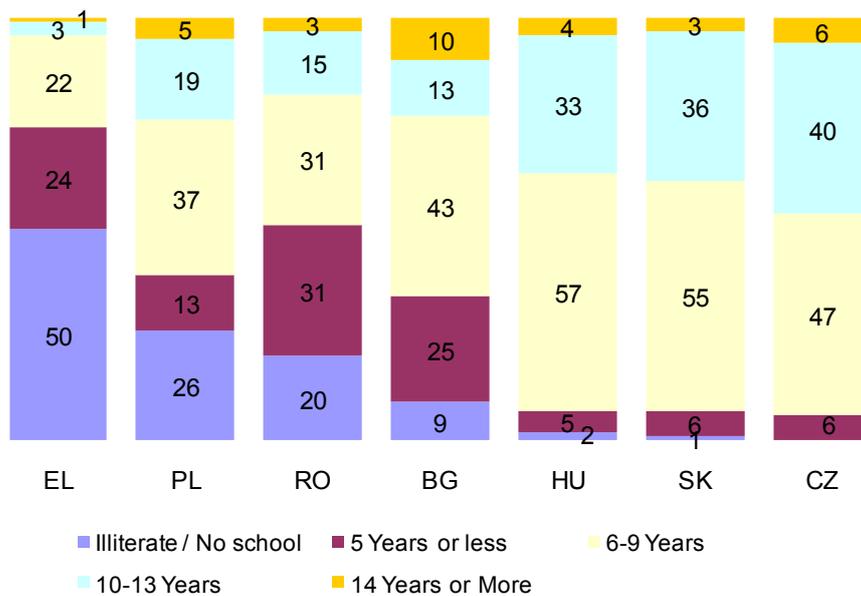
Respondents were asked to indicate their years of education. 15% of respondents indicated that they were either illiterate or had received no schooling to date. A further 16% had received less than five years while 40% of

¹⁰ [$\chi^2(1)=5.665$, $p=.017$] Cramers V = 0.122, $p=.017$ indicating a moderate association between variables. Recoded bg8_1NEW Items 1-20 as 1=National language, 30=Roma. Recoded CC1 items 6; 7; 9 as missing values.

¹¹ [$\chi^2(1)=11.162$, $p=.001$] Cramers V= 0.161, $p=.001$ indicating a strong association between variables.

respondents received between six and nine years in formal education. Only 4% of respondents indicated education beyond 14 years, (i.e. third level education and beyond). Fig. 4.2 illustrates the level of education attained by respondents across each State.

Fig 4.2 Educational attainment by country



EU-MIDIS BG7

Educational attainment rates remain consistently poor across the seven Member States for Roma. Extremely high levels of complete lack of schooling were visible in Greece with high levels evident in Poland and Romania. The modal level of education across Member States was six to nine years.

A significant relationship was observed between educational attainment and respondents' awareness of laws prohibiting discrimination in relation to housing ($p < .001$).¹² Awareness of such laws rose consistently from 24% among respondents with no education to 48% among those with third level. No significant relationship was observed between experience of discrimination in the last five years and the years in school (Table 4.3).

¹² [$\chi^2(4)=54.521, p < .001$] Cramers V= 0.146, $p < .001$ indicating a moderate association between variables. Recoded bg7 0 and 1 as 1; 5 and 6 as 5, 94 and 99 as Missing.

Table 4.3 Experience of discrimination by years in school (%)

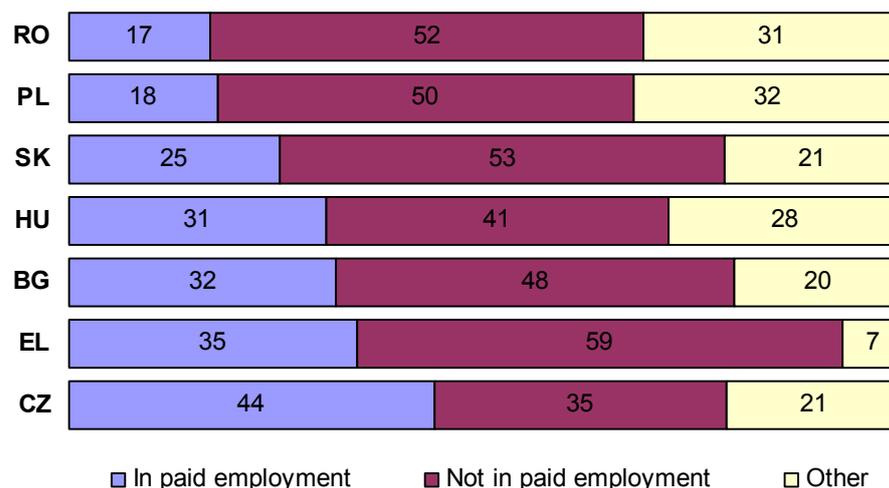
Discrimination	No school / Illiterate	0-5 years	6-9 years	10-13 years	14 + years
Last five years	22	18	18	17	18
None	78	82	82	83	82
Total	100	100	100	100	100

EU-MIDIS, Q. BG7*CC1

4.1.7. Household earnings and employment

Fig. 4.3 illustrates employment status across the Member States. A high number of respondents in each Member State indicated that they were not in paid employment, were retired, in training or not working for another reason. Very low employment levels among respondents were observed in Romania (17%) and Poland (18%). The Czech Republic reported the highest number of respondents in paid employment (44%) and also the lowest number of respondents not in paid employment (35%).

Fig. 4.3 Employment status across Member States (%)



EU-MIDIS, Q. BG5

38% of respondents reported household earnings in the lowest quartile while a further 22% occupied the second lowest quartile on the income scale. There was

a significant relationship observed between reported earnings and experience of discrimination over the past five years ($p < .05$).¹³

A significant relationship was observed between employment status and experience of discrimination ($p < .001$).¹⁴ Students/trainees, retired people and those in paid full time employment were least likely to suffer discrimination while self-employed people, home makers, the unemployed and those with a disability were most likely to experience it.

Respondents in paid employment, including self-employed respondents were less likely to experience repeat discrimination than respondents who were not in paid employment (Table 4.4); however, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 4.4 Multiple incidents of discrimination by employment status

	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Other
One incident	41	30	20
Two to four	36	49	64
Five or more	23	22	16
Total	100	100	100

EU-MIDIS, Q Bg5*CC3

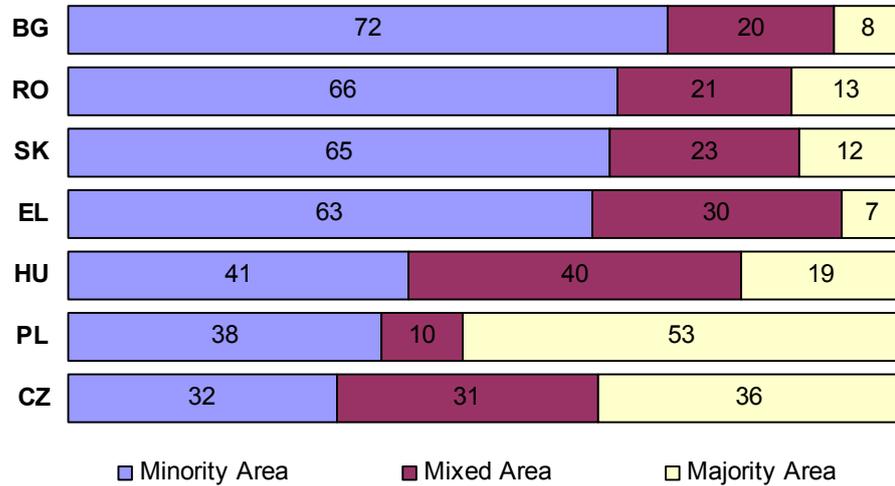
4.2. Area demographics

Interviewers conducting the EU-MIDIS survey determined that more than half of those surveyed (54%) across the seven Member States were living in predominantly immigrant/minority population neighbourhoods. A quarter of respondents (25%) lived in mixed neighbourhoods, i.e. neighbourhoods with sizeable majority and minority populations while 21% were living in predominantly majority population neighbourhoods. Fig. 4.4 illustrates the type of neighbourhood across all seven Member States and shows considerable variance between countries.

¹³ [$\chi^2(3)=7.893$, $p < .048$] Cramers V= 0.061, $p < .05$ indicating a moderate association between variables.

¹⁴ [$\chi^2(8)=47.828$, $p < .001$] Cramers V= 0.134 $p < .001$ indicating a strong association between variables. Recoded bg5 items 5; 10, as 11.

Fig. 4.4 Type of neighbourhood



EU MIDIS, Q. PI01

High levels of minority/immigrant 'segregation' were evident in eastern EU Member States with Bulgaria recording the highest observed level (72%). Two thirds of respondents in Romania (66%), Slovakia (65%) and Greece (63 %) were living in predominantly minority areas. Poland was the only Member State which saw considerable levels of Roma living in predominantly majority areas (53 %). The Czech Republic was roughly split between minority, mixed and majority neighbourhoods.

Respondents living in predominantly minority areas indicated slightly higher levels of recent experiences of discrimination than those in mixed or majority areas (Table 4.5). However, the differences in the experience of discrimination by type of area are relatively small.

Table 4.5 Type of area and recent experience of discrimination (%)

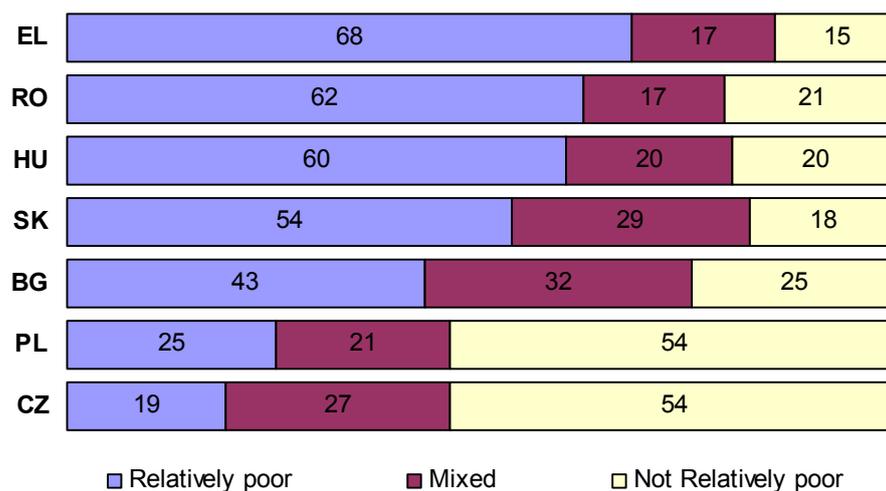
Area	Minority	Mixed	Majority
Last 12 months	12	9	10
Not discriminated against in the past 12 months	88	91	90
Total	100	100	100

EU-MIDIS, Q. PI01*CC2

4.3. Perceived distribution of wealth

Interviewers found that approximately half of all respondents were living in areas that were poor relative to other areas of the city (47 %). A strong positive correlation was observed between type of areas (i.e. minority, mixed, majority) and the relative distribution of wealth compared to other areas in city ($p < .001$).¹⁵ While this finding is not unexpected, it reinforces the evidence that many Roma continue to be marginalised in segregated and/or disadvantaged communities. Here, opportunities for discrimination are increased. Fig. 4.6 illustrates the relative wealth of areas across Member States.

Fig. 4.6 Relative distribution of wealth in an area as perceived by the interviewer



4.4. Type of dwelling

Respondents were classified as living in particular types of dwelling by the interviewer upon conclusion of the interview. Dwellings were classified as follows:

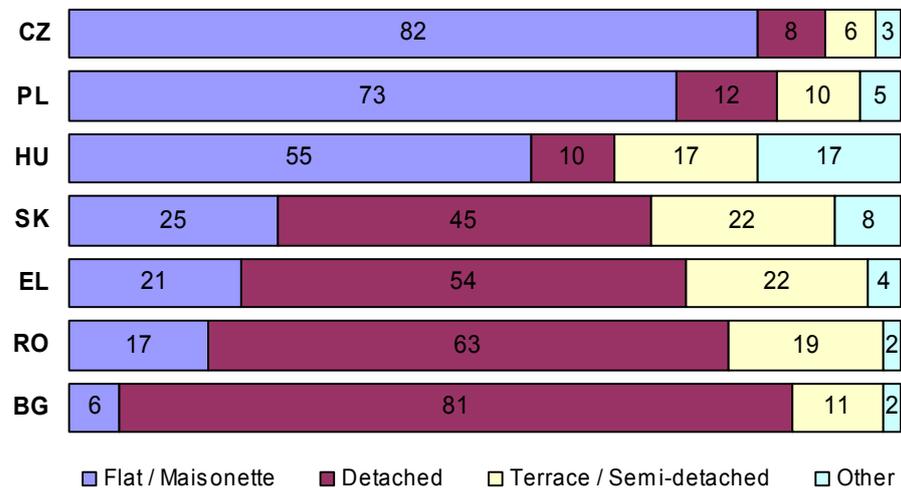
- Flat/apartment/maisonette;
- Separate detached house;
- Terrace or row house;

¹⁵ [$\chi^2(4)=1305.294, p < .001$] Cramers V = 0.431, $p < .001$ indicating a strong positive association between variables.

- Semi detached house, and
- Other.

Fig. 4.7 details the type of dwelling by Member State. It should be noted that different types of dwellings will undoubtedly relate to state-specific infrastructure as well as the geographical and socio-economic circumstances of respondents. In that regard the type of dwelling may be less useful as an indicator of discrimination across Member States. A country by country analysis may yield more relevant information.

Fig. 4.7 Type of dwelling



EU-MIDIS, Q PI11

Respondents in the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary were more likely to live in flat/apartment/maisonette style housing with the highest concentration in the Czech Republic (82 %). Respondents in these Member States tend to live in large urban areas. Conversely, respondents from Romania, Bulgaria and Greece were more likely to live in detached dwellings with 81 % of respondents residing in this type of dwelling in Bulgaria.

It was notable that in Greece a significant relationship was observed between type of dwelling and experiences of discrimination ($p < .001$).¹⁶ The majority of respondents lived in detached dwellings and were approximately twice as likely to have experienced discrimination in the past 5 years based on ethnicity. Table 4.6 shows that respondents in higher density housing (flats, apartments,

¹⁶ [$\chi^2(3)=18.805, p < .001$] Cramers V= 0.199 $p < .001$ indicating a strong association between variables.

maisonettes or terrace/semi-detached housing) were less likely to experience discrimination than those in detached or other unspecified forms of housing.

Table 4.6 Type of dwelling and experiences of discrimination in Greece

Discrimination last five years	Flat/apt/maisonette	Detached	Terrace / Semi detached	Other unspecified
Yes	21	39	20	52
No	74	59	64	43
No contact / no reply	5	2	16	5

EU-MIDIS, Q.PI11*CC1

While similar trends were observed in Slovakia and Poland the actual number of respondents with experiences of housing discrimination were too low to allow for a meaningful interpretation of the results.

Conclusions

Overall, direct discrimination in relation to housing initially appears low compared to experiences of discrimination among Roma in other areas bearing in mind that this may be influenced by the fact that housing discrimination may not occur frequently in general, as individuals do not often buy or rent property.

The experience of housing related discrimination among Roma varies considerably between the seven EU Member States surveyed. When drawing this conclusion it is important to consider a number of extraneous factors: thus, where low levels of discrimination and high levels of geographic segregation occur, as in the case of Romania and Bulgaria, respondents may not be aware or may not view their current or previous experiences as discriminatory. Segregation, particularly when a community is born into such provision, can appear normal and, as such, satisfactory. It can, in effect, be the result of institutional discrimination forming part of the social and economic framework of a State and does not necessarily manifest as particular incidents of discrimination. This is an important point, as the segregation experienced by Roma is often the result of management or avoidance practices to limit opportunities for interaction, integration, and ultimately discrimination.

While single incidents of discrimination in the seven Member States surveyed were more pronounced in central and southern EU regions such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Greece, respondents there tended to enjoy less segregation and live in perceptibly more affluent and integrated surroundings. Conversely, lower levels of discrimination in Eastern Europe (Romania and Bulgaria) were accompanied by higher levels of general deprivation, such as poorer socio-economic areas and higher unemployment.

Low levels of reporting incidents of discrimination are likely to lead to a low level of action by authorities and this in turn may confirm a perception that “nothing will happen or change”, which was indicated by many respondents as a reason for not reporting an incident of discrimination. Low levels of reporting hide the actual level of discrimination from local authority and State monitoring bodies. In most cases, perceptions and lived experience remain polarised. Experiences of inaction by State authorities will lead invariably to greater apathy among minority communities.

The high level of citizenship among respondents in each State removes the visa/immigration status concern that may be evident among Roma in other Member States, particularly where restrictions apply to particular nationalities. Instead, perceptions of negative consequences and fear of reprisals point to an existing underlying culture of repression in some States, particularly among more vulnerable groups within Roma. For many, an anti-discrimination policy framework, such as the EU Race Directive, antidiscrimination laws and State

obligations have little bearing on their daily experiences, pointing in some cases to low levels of State intervention and a general lack of action to encourage greater awareness particularly toward those at high risk of marginalisation.

Highlighting evidence of risk should play a key role in the strategy to initiate change for vulnerable communities. Time and again, the FRA has pointed to the paucity of relevant robust and comparable statistical data on minorities and immigrants at national or EU level. Through EU-MIDIS the FRA developed, for the first time in the EU, a comprehensive dataset on the experiences and perceptions of migrants and minorities, including Roma, in relation to housing provision, employment, education, health, etc. Building on this initiative, Member States could themselves further develop such surveys that will allow them to target action more effectively, through concrete strategies and measures for integration, based on robust evidence.

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An analysis of EU-MIDIS data

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