

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000914/25
to the Commission
Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová (Renew)
(4 March 2025)

Subject: Concerns over Roma minority school in Rakúsy, Slovakia — risks of reinforced segregation

In 2024, Slovakia's Ministry of Education announced plans to turn the primary school in Rakúsy into the first Roma minority school, aiming to support mother-tongue education and combat segregation. A memorandum was signed with local and academic partners. However, the school is already de facto segregated, with seemingly no state action being taken to desegregate it despite legal obligations. Critics argue the initiative was not Roma-led, lacks proper support for Roma language instruction at an appropriate level and offers no real alternative for mixed education. While framed as progress, the project risks reinforcing segregation rather than addressing systemic inequalities in education.

1. What is the Commission's view on this plan in terms of compliance with Directive 2000/43/EC on racial equality?
2. Does the Commission plan to take steps to ensure that educational measures do not lead to further segregation of Roma children but rather to their genuine inclusion?
3. What additional tools does the Commission have at its disposal to support the desegregation of education in Member States and to protect the right of Roma children in Slovakia to access high-quality and equitable education?

Submitted: 4.3.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(6 June 2025)

Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union stipulates that the Union shall fully respect the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.

In exercising its competences in those matters, Slovakia is bound to respect applicable international and European law, which provides a number of safeguards to ensure that education in national minority languages does not lead to discrimination and ensures equivalent standards, quality and conditions of education.

Segregation in education on the basis of ethnic origin is prohibited under EU law by the Racial Equality Directive ⁽¹⁾ and minority schools cannot be used as a means to circumvent EU law and discriminate against Roma children.

Infringement proceedings against Slovakia for segregation of Roma children in education are pending at the Court of Justice ⁽²⁾. The Commission will continue to closely monitor the situation.

The EU Roma Strategic Framework for equality, inclusion and participation ⁽³⁾ and EU funds, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility and cohesion policy funds, can serve as additional tools to support the desegregation in education in Member States.

The 'Mapping Study on School segregation of Roma Communities: Pathways and trends towards educational inclusion' ⁽⁴⁾ compiles promising practices and relevant literature for policy-makers to support effective policy making on desegregation in education.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22-26.

⁽²⁾ Case C-799/23.

⁽³⁾ COM(2020) 620 final.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/inclusive-education-for-roma-children/texts-2>.