

EN

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Answer given by Ms Lahbib

on behalf of the European Commission

(28.7.2025)

While early marriage and early pregnancy are not confined to any single ethnic group, these are serious concerns for Roma children and girls, who often face discrimination and socioeconomic exclusion and are often deprived from basic rights: 83% of Roma children (0-17) live at risk of poverty¹. To address this, the EU Roma Strategic Framework promotes gender equality, child protection, and equal access to education and health, among other policies.

The Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection² also urges a zero-tolerance for any form of violence against children, including gender-based violence such as child marriage, in line with the EU Strategy on the rights of the child³. It is up to each Member State to legislate on the right to marry, as established in Article 9 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, including the minimum age for marriage. Furthermore, forced marriage is a crime under Union law (specifically, Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence⁴, which is to be transposed by member States by 14 June 2027) and is punishable by a maximum term of at least three years' imprisonment. Victims shall receive protection and support regardless of nationality or residence.

Concerning funding, the European Social Fund+ and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme support projects for Roma inclusion, combating antigypsyism, strengthening civil society, Roma Holocaust awareness, and culture. National Roma Contact Points, crucial for community outreach, are also supported.

¹ https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results_en.pdf.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32024H1238>.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0142>.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj/eng>.