

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

MEMO / 22 April 2009

European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS)

Background to the report: While the composition of Member States' populations is becoming increasingly diverse, FRA reports have consistently shown that there is a severe lack of data on minorities in many countries. Data is needed to measure social inclusion of ethnic minority and immigrant groups, as well as the extent of discriminatory treatment and criminal victimisation, including racially motivated crime, experienced by minorities.

Therefore, the FRA conducted a major representative survey (executed by GALLUP), interviewing selected ethnic minority and immigrant groups in all of the 27 Member States of the EU. The survey examined experiences of discriminatory treatment, racist crime, victimisation, awareness of rights, and reporting of complaints. This is the first ever EU-wide survey of ethnic minority and immigrant groups' experiences of discrimination and victimisation in everyday life.

EU-MIDIS aims to provide evidence-based information that can support policy-makers and other key stakeholders to address discriminatory, racist practices, and improve support structures for victims of discrimination and racially motivated crime.

Today (22 April 2009), the FRA presents the first two reports stemming from this survey:

- 1) **“EU MIDIS at a glance”** - an overview of the whole EU MIDIS survey ('European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey'), and;
- 2) **“Data in Focus Report 1: The Roma”** - the first in a series of EU-MIDIS 'Data in Focus' reports. As the Roma reported the highest overall levels of discrimination in EU-MIDIS, they were selected as the first group for a focused report.

KEY RESULTS

Racist crime, harassment and discrimination grossly under-reported

High levels of discrimination, racist crime and victimisation

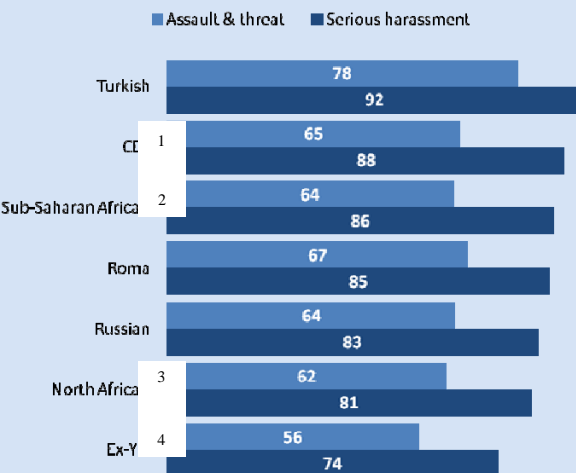
The ethnic minority and immigrant groups interviewed described high levels of discrimination, racist crime and victimisation in their Member States on the basis of ethnic origin.¹

Overwhelming majority do not report their experiences

The survey showed that the overwhelming majority did not report their experiences of discrimination to an organisation or at the place where it occurred. The same is true for assaults, threats and serious harassment: the majority of respondents did not report their experience of victimisation to the police. This means that thousands of cases of discrimination and racist crime remain invisible, and are therefore not recorded by official complaints and criminal justice data collection mechanisms.

Percentage of unreported racist crime by type (assault and threat, or serious harassment)

In the past 12 months, out of all victims of racist in-person crime



1 Any of the 12 new Member States of the EU, apart from Cyprus and Malta, abbreviated as CEE

2 All other African countries not listed as North African – including Surinamese respondents of Sub-Saharan African origin

3 Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara

4 Those from any of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia

What can policy-makers do about this?

- The data from this survey offers the possibility to develop targeted and evidence-based policy responses.
- The data also calls for the introduction of adequate mechanisms for reporting and recording discrimination and racist crime to enhance evidence-based policy development.

¹ For more details see *EU MIDIS at a glance*, p.9

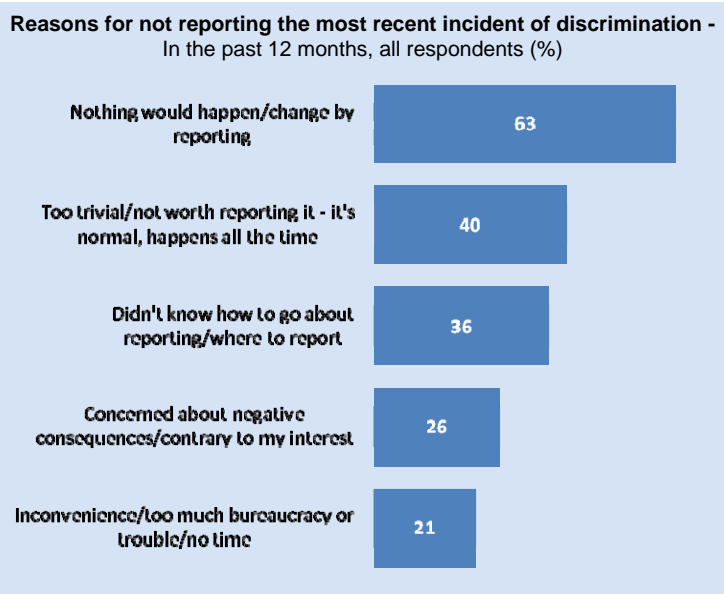
Poor rights awareness and sense of resignation among minorities and migrants

Vulnerable groups not informed about support

This survey provides evidence that those groups most vulnerable to discrimination in the EU remain uninformed as to where they can seek assistance if they have been discriminated against. Between 59 and 94% of respondents (depending on the group and country surveyed) did not know of any organisation offering support and advice to people who have been discriminated against. This demonstrates an urgent need for better information, but could also reflect a real absence of support services in many Member States.

Resignation among minorities

The results also show a sense of resignation among ethnic minorities and immigrants who lack confidence in mechanisms designed to protect victims of discrimination or racist crime. The main reason given for not reporting incidents was that respondents lacked confidence that anything would happen following their complaint. At the same time, a high number of respondents indicated that they avoid certain places for fear of becoming victims of discrimination or racist crime. This avoidance behaviour may contribute to the sense of



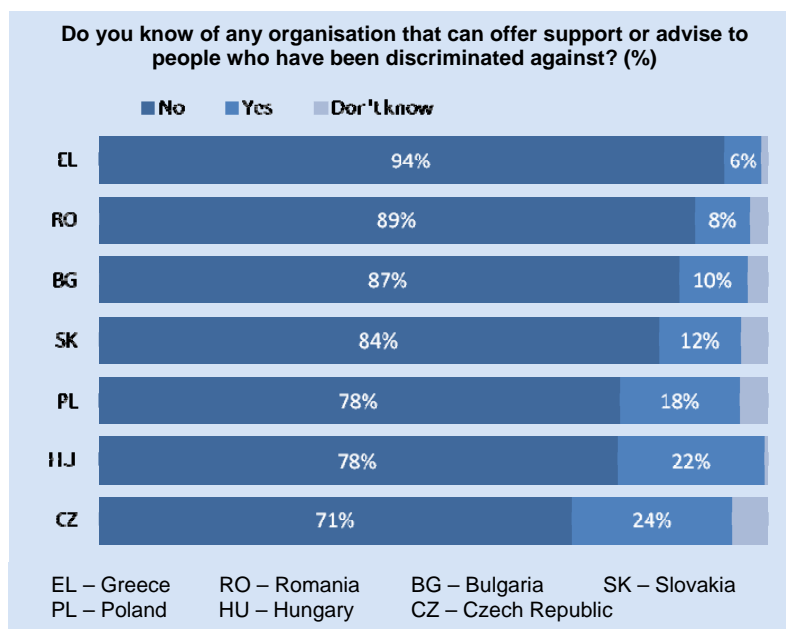
exclusion and social marginalisation experienced by various minority groups in the EU.

What can policy-makers do about this?

- Invest resources to make those who are vulnerable to discrimination aware of where they can turn to for support and advice.
- Allocate resources to organisations that are tasked with offering assistance to people who have been discriminated against.
- Encourage those who have been discriminated against or harassed to report their experiences to a competent authority in the knowledge that their complaints will be taken seriously.

The Roma – survey reveals extent of discrimination, under-reporting and sense of resignation²

- On average, every second Roma respondent³ claimed to have been discriminated against at least once in the previous 12 months, and those discriminated against reported an average of 11 incidents of discrimination for that period.
- 1 in 4 Roma reported an average of 4 incidents of assault, threats and serious harassment over a 12 month period, suggesting that racially motivated crime is an everyday experience.
- Between 66 and 92% of Roma (depending on the country surveyed) did not officially report their most recent experience of discrimination (within the last 12 months)
- Lack of confidence in law enforcement and justice structures was reported by 65-100% Roma.
- Only 14% of Roma could name an organisation that could assist them if they were discriminated against.
- The Roma stand out from the other groups surveyed, in that 30% of Roma respondents in the sample went to school for five years or less. At the time of the interview, the rate of Roma employed in paid jobs (self-employed or in full or part time jobs) is highest in the Czech Republic with 44%, while employment rates are lowest in Romania (17%) and Poland (18%).



What can policy-makers do?

- While legal instruments to combat discrimination and exclusion do exist, there is a need for wider knowledge of measures to address discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma. This should include educational programmes to increase confidence and rights awareness amongst Roma youth.
- European Structural Funds and pre-accession funds could be specifically allocated to support Roma inclusion, thus encouraging governments to deal with the issue of Roma discrimination and social inclusion in a comprehensive manner.
- Raise awareness to prevent discrimination amongst private service providers, as well as sanctions against private services that discriminate against Roma.
- Politicians and other public figures need to speak out and lead by example on human rights protection.

² For details see "Data in Focus Report 1- The Roma".

³ Respondents with a Roma background were interviewed in seven Member States: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

FAQ – Frequently asked questions

Why did the Agency undertake this survey?

The Agency's reports have consistently shown that there is a severe lack of data on minorities in many countries. As a result, policy-makers remain ill-informed about how minorities experience everyday life in the Member States. For example, on average only 11 EU Member States collect good, comprehensive data on racist crime that allows for a trend analysis over time. This continued lack of (comparable) data makes it difficult for policy-makers at national and EU level to develop and target interventions to combat discrimination and racist crime. EU-MIDIS can complement existing efforts in some Member States and at EU level to try and rectify the current lack of hard data on minorities' experiences of discrimination and victimisation.

How was the survey conducted, and what were respondents asked?

The survey (executed by Gallup) conducted face-to-face interviews with a random sample of respondents from selected ethnic minority and immigrant groups in all 27 Member States of the European Union. 23,500 ethnic minority and immigrant people were interviewed. In addition 5,000 people from the majority population living in the same areas as minorities were interviewed in 10 Member States to allow for comparison of selected results.

EU-MIDIS surveyed between one and three immigrant, ethnic minority or national minority groups in each Member State of the EU, with a minimum of 500 people interviewed per group in each country. The survey used the same standard questionnaire in all EU countries. The results of this survey are representative for the groups surveyed in the areas where the research was undertaken.

The survey asked ethnic minority and immigrant people about their experiences of discrimination in nine different areas of life: (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, bar or club; (8) when entering or in a shop; (9) when trying to open a bank account or get a loan.

Experiences of criminal victimisation, including racially motivated crime, were asked about within five different areas: (1) theft of or from a vehicle; (2) burglary or attempted burglary; (3) theft of personal property not involving force or threat; (4) assault and threat; (5) serious harassment.

How comparable is the survey data?

As the results predominantly refer to the experiences of the largest ethnic minority groups in the EU, general comparisons can be drawn with respect to the different groups surveyed. However, when making such comparisons due consideration must be given to the different backgrounds and context of each group in each Member State.

EU-MIDIS allows for comparisons between Member States that have similar minority populations, for example between countries where Roma or North Africans were interviewed. The results can be compared in each Member State with official government data on discrimination and victimisation (in the form of reported incidents, recorded crimes, and court cases), where such data is available, or with figures from unofficial sources such

as NGOs. The scale of potentially unreported discrimination and racist victimisation can thus be gauged in each Member State.

EU-MIDIS provides the most extensive data set to date on discrimination and victimisation faced by ethnic minorities and immigrants in the EU. It is, however, only representative for the groups surveyed, and not for all ethnic minority and immigrant groups present in the EU. EU-MIDIS has tested a robust and comprehensive random sampling methodology, which any EU Member State can use to extend the survey's coverage to different groups and more respondents in a country, thus allowing for further comparison and analysis.

Who was interviewed, and how were the groups selected?

The survey sampled men and women who were at least 16 years old and identified themselves as belonging to one of the selected ethnic minority or immigrant groups. Respondents needed to have been residing in the respective Member State for at least 12 months.

Groups were selected for interviewing in each Member State on the basis of the following⁴:

- Information supplied to the FRA by its Racism and Xenophobia Network (RAXEN) of 27 National Focal Points, which provide the Agency with detailed national annual reports on different minorities' vulnerability to discrimination and victimisation in each Member State;
- Identification of the largest minority group or groups in each country, which had to reach a minimum overall size of 5% to be sufficient for random sampling in specific areas;
- Availability to be surveyed in more than one Member State, which allowed for the creation of 'aggregate' groups – such as 'North Africans' – for comparison of results between countries.

How will the Agency follow-up the survey?

The Agency will present the results from the survey to key stakeholders, including policy-makers at EU and national level. Throughout 2009, the Agency will release further 'data in focus' reports on specific minority groups and key issues examined in the survey. The full results from the survey will be publicly released and form the background to a high-level conference, to be held in Stockholm in December 2009 under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency of the EU.

“EU MIDIS at a glance” and “Data in Focus Report 1 - The Roma”, as well as further background information, can be found at: <http://fra.europa.eu/eu-midis/>

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⁴ For more detailed information on the groups surveyed see EU MIDIS at a glance, p.4