



EESC

European Economic and Social Committee

**SNISMUN 2020**



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Committee and Agenda
2. Letter from the Executive Board
3. About the EESC
4. What does the EESC do
5. How does the EESC function
6. Who are the Roma
7. Who are the Sami People
8. Disability Inclusion
9. Gender Inclusion
10. Migrants and Unemployment
11. Islam and Europe
12. African Descent in Europe
13. QARMA
14. Bibliography

Committee: European Economic and Social Committee  
Agenda: Social Inclusion with special focus on the Roma  
Community

## **LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Dear delegates,

Welcome to this simulation of the European Economic and Social Committee. I, Vaania Kapoor, along with my co chairperson Arya are honoured and privileged to serve as your Executive Board.

Please go through this study guide and make note of the same as it shall be of utmost importance in ensuring a high level of debate during committee proceedings. It is expected that the delegates steer the discussion on these lines. The topics covered in this background guide are simply indicative of pressing issues and topics of concerns which must be addressed and will give you a bird's eye view of the gist of the issue. The delegates are at full liberty to bring up any other relevant point for discussion. We expect the members to come up with constructive and creative solutions to the problems, try to think from the perspective of a responsible politician and have a broad approach.

We understand that Model UN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first timers and a tiring one for those who are familiar with the concept. We strongly suggest the first time MUNers to participate fully in the conference and if any doubt persists in your minds (either substantive or related to parliamentary procedure), do not hesitate to clarify the same with the Executive Board.

If there are any queries regarding the content of the background guide or any issue for that matter please don't hesitate to contact one of us! We wish each and every delegate the best of luck and hope that everyone can walk out of SNISMUN 2020 with flying colors!

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## **ABOUT THE EESC [1]**

The EESC European Economic and Social Committee are advisory bodies of the EU. In practice, this means that they give their opinions to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers during the legislative process. The Committees thus involve regional and local authorities as well as societal and economic actors in the decision making process and express their views on all common policies concerning them. The EESC was set up under the Treaty of Rome (1957) as a consultative representation for civil society and 'social' interests, at the European institutions. It must be consulted by the decision-making bodies of the EU – the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament – in certain areas, as provided by the Treaties. The EESC can also assist and advise the European Commission when the proposals for laws are drafted. The institutions may also consult the EESC in other areas if they find it appropriate. Finally, the EESC may issue an opinion itself, if it considers that there is a need to express interests of the economic and societal groups that it represents. ROLE: Advisory body representing employers' and workers' organisations and other interest groups.

### **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE EESC:**

Due to a rampant surge in cases of social exclusion, the EESC has called for all heads of states from European countries to meet and deliberate over the matter. Thus please note that while on an everyday basis the EESC includes civilians who are employees, employers or members of NGO's, for the special meeting on 17th and 18th of July 2020, the EESC will include the heads of states of every european country and hence **DELEGATES WILL BE REPRESENTING A COUNTRY**, and not an individuals such as employees or employers.

## **WHAT DOES THE EESC DO? [1]**

It gives the interest groups a formal say on EU legislative proposals. Its three key tasks are to:

- ensure that EU policy and law are geared to economic and social conditions, by seeking a consensus that serves the common good
- promote a participatory EU by giving workers' and employers' organisations and other interest groups a voice and securing dialogue with them

- promote the values of European integration, and advance the cause of participatory democracy and civil society organisations

### **HOW DOES THE EESC FUNCTION?[1]**

The EESC is consulted by the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission on a variety of subjects. It also issues opinions on its own initiative.

Members work for the EU, independently of their governments. They meet 9 times a year. Opinions are adopted by a simple majority vote. Meetings are prepared by the EESC's specialised sections and the consultative commission on industrial change. The EESC's specialist think-tanks (known as 'observatories') track the progress of EU strategies. The EESC keeps in touch with regional and national economic and social councils throughout the EU - mainly to share information and discuss particular issues.

### **WHO ARE THE ROMA?[2]**

The Roma (sometimes referred to as the Romany People), are Europe's largest ethnic minority. Out of an estimated 10-12 million in total in Europe, some 6 million live in the EU, and most of them hold the citizenship of an EU country. Many Roma in the EU are victims of prejudice and social exclusion, despite the fact that EU countries have banned discrimination.

**[3]** They are an ethnic group of traditionally itinerant people who originated in northern India but have migrated worldwide, principally in Europe. Most Roma speak some form of Romany, a language closely related to the modern Indo-European languages of northern India, as well as the major language of the country in which they live.

### **Discrimination against Roma Students in Schools :**

The Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority. They can be considered among Europe's disadvantaged population as a whole. They are highly socially excluded and are treated separately than others in health spaces, education centres, housing and workplaces.

They are often forced to attend poor schools that are not up to the mark or face discrimination in schools where they are the minority.

In several instances Roma children have been denied access to education on account of lack of proper documentation as required by the institutions or simply because they live far away from their nearest schools. As a result they suffer from low levels of education.

Educationists consider this as one of the major reasons for them to suffer from intergenerational poverty. These factors result in them having lower school registration and attendance and higher dropout rates as compared to the rest of the Population. Nora Shabani is an education specialist for UNICEF -- the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. She told VOA that many Roma children have a number of needs, and school access alone is only one."They lack food. They lack clothing. They lack documents. They have problems with the language of instruction, and these needs really require engagement from many partners and service providers."

## **EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 [2]**

The EU has long stressed the need for better Roma integration (see the 2010 communication on the economic and social integration of the Roma in Europe).

The European institutions and every EU country have a joint responsibility to improve the living conditions and integration of the Roma. In 2011, the European Commission called for national strategies for Roma integration.

The EU Framework for National Roma integration strategies centres around four key areas: education, employment, healthcare and housing.

Each country produced a Roma strategy that was assessed by the European Commission in 2012: National Roma integration strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework. In 2013, the European Council agreed on a recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in EU countries.

## **What is the Roma Inclusion Index?**

The Roma Inclusion Index has provided in depth analysis in the situation of the Roma Community in Europe. The study although is conclusive and comprehensive it suffers from several drawbacks primary of which is lack of data. The Roma Inclusion Index has shown that although improvements have been made in certain areas yet the situation is not favourable yet . The Report has even provided country by country analysis pertaining to individual fields .Some things that have been found are 18% fewer Roma are literate than others, 16% fewer Roma are employed than others, the gap for Romani females is 30% , 30% more Roma are homeless than others, 39 % earn lower income than others etc. **Refer to Bibliography [4] and [5]** for the analysis report.

## **WHO ARE THE SAMI PEOPLE?**

Like the Roma, Sami people are another group of indigenous minorities who reside predominantly in the far north of Europe, particularly in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

The sami people are severely subject to discrimination, to name a few in the recent past- the Norwegian Government shutting down Sami schools with the stroke of a pen [6], The governments of Finland and Norway trying to make salmon fishing illegal for the Sami yet give new fishing rights to rich people who have built cabins on the homeland of Sami people [7] etc. As a result, various Government's have attempted to further the rights of Sami people by setting up a Truth Commission for the Sami People [8] and a commission on discrimination. [9]

Nevertheless these attempts have been mediocre and have largely failed which intensifies the discrimination towards the Sami people, even by members of opposing Government parties.

Members of this committee are urged to take strict action against such forms of ethnic discrimination towards the Roma and Sami and hold countries accountable for their discriminatory practices. Delegates are urged to go through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [10]

## **DISABILITY INCLUSION [11]**

The EU and its Member States are committed to improving social and economic situation of persons with disabilities, committing to its goals as well as building on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and on the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. The basis of this initiative lies on the spirit of Social Inclusion Goals of the European Union with its member states. The European Union and all its Member States are party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This important treaty entered into force creating the basis and the content of the **European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.**

Some useful policy instruments are :

- the **European Pillar of Social Rights**, with principle 17 dedicated to persons with disabilities and disability concerns address in relevant principles
- the **European Semester**, which provides a framework for the coordination of economic policies across the EU and provides information on the situation of persons with and without disabilities in the Member States

The EU commission has also taken several initiatives to raise awareness regarding the same at several levels. For this it has taken direct as well indirect actions through several organisations as well. Many of them have yielded favourable results. Some of them are the European day of Persons with Disability Conference, the Access City Award, which rewards cities which have made outstanding efforts to become more accessible, the annual work forum on the implementation of the UNCRPD among others. However there are still some issues which have to be dealt with in order to promote the EU goal of social inclusion.

### **GENDER INCLUSION**

Gender inclusion is a concept that transcends mere equality. It's the notion that all services, opportunities, and establishments are open to all people and that male and female stereotypes do not define societal roles and expectations. [12]

Gender based violence, gender pay gap, workplace discrimination and a lack of political representation of women are few of the many problems that women in Europe face. Furthermore, a lack of importance given to the gender non binaries as well as the transgender community has led to marginalisation of these groups. A 2019 report by the ILGA found that Italy, Latvia and Poland were some of the worst ranking countries in terms of human rights and equality whereas Finland, Malta and Belgium were ranked amongst the best. [13]

According to the Gender Equality Index [14] The European Union has been moving towards gender equality at a snail's pace. With a Gender Equality Index score of 67.4 out of 100, the EU's score has increased by only 5.4 points since 2005 (+ 1.2 points since 2015). Considering that a majority of the members of this committee are members of the EU, these statistics are truly worrying.

Gender pay gap is also a pertinent issue for members of this committee- some of the countries with the worst gender pay gaps in this committee include Russia (30.6%), United Kingdom (35.2%), Switzerland (37.5%) and Netherlands (40.3%). [15]

### **MIGRANTS AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

The migrant crisis is one of the biggest crisis that the EU has to deal with. The migrant crisis brings with it immense unemployment issues.

In 2019 in the European Union, foreign-born persons aged 20-64 had higher unemployment rates than native-born. Finding work was especially difficult for persons born outside the EU. Their unemployment rate was more than twice that of the native-born population (12.3% vs. 6.0%). The rate for persons born elsewhere in the EU (other than born in the reporting Member State) stood at 7.3%. [16] The lowest unemployment rates for persons born outside the EU were recorded in Czechia (2.5%), Malta (4.2%), Lithuania (5.2%), Poland (5.5%), Estonia and Slovenia (both 6.1%). At the

other end of the scale, the highest unemployment rates for non-EU-born persons were observed in Greece (29.0%), followed by Spain (19.9%), Sweden (17.3%), France (14.7%) and Belgium (13.8%).

Several measures can be undertaken in order to ensure a better integrated European labour market.

- States can undertake to create several jobs for low-skilled and immigrant workers.
- States can provide proper working condition to immigrant low-skilled labourers
- Provide vocational and technical training to low skilled immigrant workers
- Improving mobility of European citizens
- Implementing common measures to admit economic immigrants in order to make the EU an attractive area of immigration
- Inclusion: Gender- and cultural-sensitive integration programmes with special attention to the social situation and inclusion of migrant women
- Specific efforts to promote the educational performance of second and third generation immigrants; Development of skills in the countries of origin

## **ISLAM AND EUROPE**

Today, Islamophobia in Europe manifests itself through individual attitudes and behaviors, and the policies and practices of organizations and institutions.

Examples—which vary across countries and time—include the following:

- physical or verbal attacks on property, places of worship, and people—especially those who display a visible manifestation of their religious identity such as women wearing the *hijab* or *niqab*
- verbal or online threats of violence, vilification, and abuse.
- policies or legislation that indirectly target or disproportionately affect Muslims, and unduly restrict their freedom of religion, such as bans on wearing visible religious and cultural symbols, laws against facial concealment, and bans on building mosques with minarets
- discrimination in education, employment, housing, or access to goods and services
- ethnic and religious profiling and police abuse, including some provisions of counterterrorism policing

- public pronouncements by some journalists and politicians—across the whole political spectrum—that stigmatize Muslims as a group and disregard their positive contributions to the communities and countries in which they live. **[17]**

### **People belonging to AFRICAN DESCENT IN EUROPE .**

Across Europe, people of African descent face widespread and entrenched prejudice and exclusion. Racial discrimination and harassment are commonplace. Experiences with racist violence vary from nation to nation. Discriminatory profiling by the police is a common reality. Hurdles to inclusion are multi-faceted, particularly when it comes to looking for jobs and housing.**[18]** They have taken several active actions and undertaken plans, which we urge the committee to discuss extensively.**[19]**

### **QARMA (Questions A Resolution Must Answer)**

- 1. Why does discrimination against minorities exist in the European Nation and what can the states can do to prevent it at all levels?**
- 2. How can the member states increase the literacy rate of minorities?**
- 3. How can we eradicate economic weakness of minority groups by increasing their presence in the labour forces as well as creating more job opportunities for them?**
- 4. What grass root level programs can be used to empower the weaker sections of the society?**
- 5. How efficient are the existing programs created to empower socially excluded groups proven to be?**
- 6. Can the states take measures to prevent discrimination against minority community children in both public and private schools and to reduce their drop out rates and increase their attendance rates?**
- 7. How can countries provide financial assistance to empower these communities?**
- 8. How can we increase representation of the socially excluded in several policy making bodies as well as in politics?**
- 9. Can the EU and the non EU member states work together in ensuring their development and empowerment? Or is the idea of synergy and combine effort simply a facade of our imagination?**

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