**Brexit, the EU Settlement Scheme and the Roma communities in the UK**

**What is happening?**

1. Following the Brexit Referendum, the Government has launched the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in March 2019 requesting all EU citizens living in the UK, including children, to register in order to retain their rights in the UK after Brexit;
2. 15% to 25% of Roma children are not making EUSS applications;
3. Many Roma parents are not aware that their children need to make EUSS applications, especially parents whose children are born in the UK
4. The UK Government has completely missed engaging with children within the EUSS process
5. All EU parents and their children have until 30 June 2021 to make EUSS applications, otherwise they risk becoming undocumented and lose their rights in the UK

**What can be done?**

1. It is vital that professionals in the education environment get informed regarding the EUSS implications for EU families they are working with;

* Here is a helpful video: <https://imix.org.uk/how-to-apply-for-eu-settled-status/>

1. Schools and their staff should check if the EU parents and children they are working with are aware of the EUSS;

* EUSS child friendly materials are available here: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/law/2-research/ecru/EU,Settlement,Scheme,-,Information,for,Children.pdf>
* Translated information EU citizens in 26 languages is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-translated-information-materials>
* EUSS videos in different languages are available here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/european-londoners-hub/brexit-and-eu-settlement-scheme-information-your-language>

1. Schools and their staff should assist parents who need support with making EUSS applications

* Available free support can be identified using this tool: <https://www.gov.uk/help-eu-settlement-scheme>
* Guidance for EU children is available here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/european-londoners-hub/brexit-impact-children-eu-citizens-living-uk>
* School letter template to support EUSS applicants proving residence: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/how-to-show-residency-when-the-eu-settled-status-automated-checks-dont-work/>

**More information about the Roma communities and their experience with the EUSS is available below.**

**The EU Settlement Scheme** (EUSS) was developed as a new immigration system, a part of the Brexit process, to request all EU Citizens living in the UK to register their presence in the UK and to secure their rights post Brexit through domestic regulations.

**Who needs to register?**  
All EU Citizens and their non-EU family settled in the UK by 31st December 2020 will have to register under the EU Settlement Scheme regardless of how long they have been living here. This includes EU Citizens who are living here for long periods, like 30, 40 years or more and also children recently born here.

**Who is exempt?**

The only EU citizens exempt from making applications are those with British citizenship and those with Indefinite Leave to Remain.

**Deadline?**

All EU citizens and their non-EU family members, settled in the UK by 31st December 2020, can make EUSS applications by 30 June 2021.

**What status is available?**

Those who live in the UK for longer than 5 years can apply for Settled Status which will grant them right to live and work in the UK for the rest of their life.

Those who live here for less than 5 years can apply for Pre-Settled Status which will grant their rights to live and work in the UK for the following 5 years.

**How to make application?**

Applications can be made online or via paper forms for those with more complex situations.

**More information:**

* Home Office guidance on the EUSS process: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>
* Making an online EUSS application video guide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syMa0E3cGHk>
* Home Office tips when making an EUSS online application: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGXwvq-fKyE>

**Who are the Roma communities?**

Vast majority of Roma communities living in the UK are EU citizens. The most significant groups of Roma in the UK are from Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania. The most accurate, official, data regarding Roma population indicates presence of 200.000 Roma living in the UK[[1]](#footnote-1) as of 2013. As very few of them have British citizenship or Indefinite Leave to Remain, vast majority are requested to make EUSS applications.

The historical background and the current situation in countries of origin is what makes those from the Roma communities vulnerable in the EUSS context.

Relevant facts:

* Roma people have migrated from Northern India 1000 years ago and over 12 million are settled in various countries all around the globe today
* Roma people went through 500 years of slavery in East Europe, most notable in Romania.
* Roma people have been targeted by the Nazis during the Holocaust with numbers of victims ranging from 200.000 (by official records) to 1.5 million (by estimates)
* Roma have been forced to settled and lost nomadic lifestyle during the communist regimes.
* Roma communities across the Europe face highest rates of poverty and still experience wide spread discrimination in all areas of life and segregation in education environment.

**Why Roma need EUSS support?**

It is impossible to indicate how many Roma have made EUSS applications so far as the Home Office is not collecting data on ethnicity and is more likely that Roma would hide their ethnic background.

The current influence of the historical background that Roma have is reflected in the following:

* As of 2014, 20% of European Roma self declare as illiterate, comparing to 1% of the wider EU population[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Only 20% of the Roma families that RSG works with have access to smartphone/ tablet/ laptop and email address
* 44% of the Roma people that benefitted from RSG’s EUSS support needed to access information on EUSS in another language than English (according to the UK 2011 Census, 89% of foreign born nationals spoke well or very well English[[3]](#footnote-3))
* Only 3% of Roma are able to complete an online application completely independent[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Roma communities experience on the EUSS**

* By September 2020 over 59% of Roma that RSG supports have been granted the lesser Pre-Settled Status[[5]](#footnote-5) compared to 42% national average[[6]](#footnote-6);
* 15% - 25% of Roma children are not making applications;
* 10% - 15% of Roma, including children, do not have valid ID documents and therefore not making EUSS applications;

**Roma children and EUSS:**

Many Roma children are not making applications. From our experience this is happening because parents are not aware that their children have to make EUSS applications as well. Additionally many parents believe that children born in the UK are not expected to make EUSS applications. Also, children themselves are not aware of the EUSS either. This is because the EUSS process has not engaged with children from any communities and therefore no communication strategy was developed by the Government for this reason. Lastly, but equally important, many children do not have ID documents which makes it impossible for them to make online EUSS applications.

**Other resources available:**

* EU Londoners HUB: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/european-londoners-hub>
* Videos in relevant languages for the Roma communities on RSG YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RomaSupportGroup>
* RSG guide for Romanian Roma communities (in Romanes, Romanian Roma dialect): <https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/roma-and-brexit.html>
* EUSS Q&A session by Roma immigration solicitor, in Romanes, with Romanian interpretation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUsalGKiXdI&feature=youtu.be>
* EU settled status walk-through - applying for children video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CMEhJ4Ox5s>

1. <http://hub.salford.ac.uk/care-shusu/wp-content/uploads/sites/125/2020/06/Migrant_Roma_in_the_UK_final_report_October_2013.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1\_en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/english-language-use-and-proficiency-of-migrants-in-the-uk/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c_Yvx_S10Zc2UgE8z8QI4chvscWBHRRS/view> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/uploads/9/3/6/8/93687016/rsg_annual_report_19-20_web.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)