Best Practice in addressing issues of migration (of Roma) from Eastern Europe

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Gypsy and Traveller issue?

- Similarities e.g.
  - Roma identifying with Gypsies and Travellers, some shared history and culture, hard-to-engage, mobile
- Differences e.g.
  - Language, background/ culture as migrant
  - Not site provision issues etc

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Why are we interested?

- Operational and strategic roles
  - Roma has emerged across nearly all of these – it is a practical issue, a political issue and a strategic issue
- Large strategic impact
  - probably the biggest migration issue our region's LAs currently face
- Do LAs have tools to deal with the issue?

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What are LAs saying

- Localised issue
- Specific issues:
  - e.g school attendance, overcrowded housing, environmental issues and cohesion
- Data is very difficult to ‘read’
  - reliant on LA estimates
- Each LA deals with it differently?
- Elected members and senior officers don’t understand context

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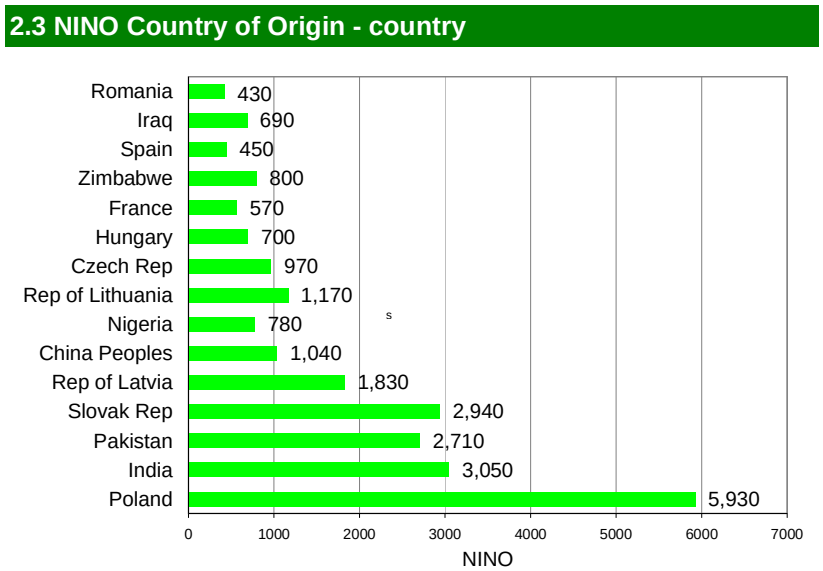
Where Roma are coming from

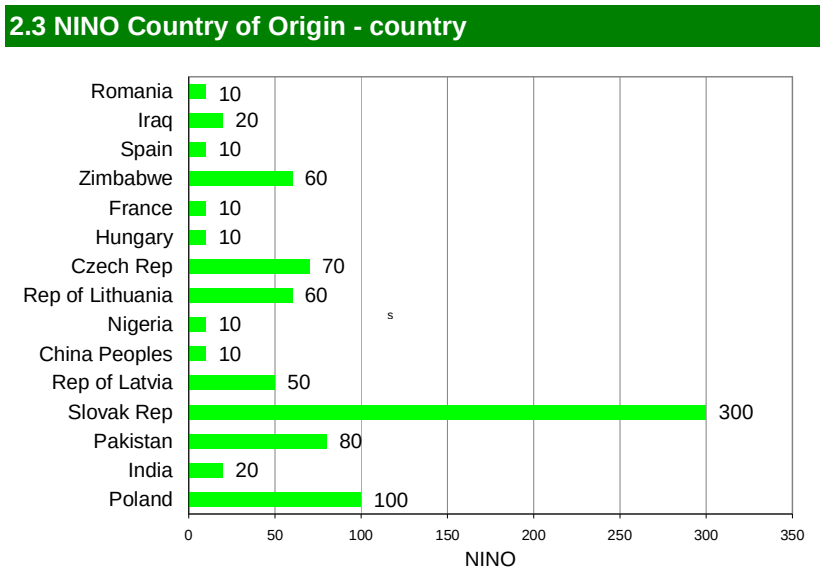
- Eastern and Central Europe
- Different migration picture in each area

NINO – Regional



Sources: NIRS

NINO – Rotherham



Sources: NIRS

Understanding Roma

- Specific experiences
- Often lived in poor conditions and have faced discrimination
- Chain migration from specific areas

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Košice, Slovakia

Current responses

- Existing services responding to need
  - e.g. gypsy traveller services, health, education
- Specific funding – (e.g. MIF)
  - e.g. supporting children in schools, community support and courses, family advocacy officers
- Cuts, retraction of specific services

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Roma SOURCE

- EU funded – 8 partners, 6 countries
  - Aims - combat and reduce discrimination, developing mutual understanding, promoting equal rights
  - Key areas – research, protecting children, health, worklessness, participation

- Regional programme includes:
  - Raising profile, health champion pilots, community development, workshops, guides

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Specific Challenges

- Safeguarding, exploitative employment and impact on communities
- End of transitional controls on 1 April
- The mobility of the population
- The ‘solutions’ are often structural
- Hard to plan for changing population
- Engaging the community

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Broader challenges

- LA expertise to deal with and respond to migration – how is learning being captured and used.
- Which migrants are we ‘concerned about’? Can policy respond to that?
- How can local political leadership support this debate?
- Migration and changing populations is a new reality
- In current financial climate the ability of LAs to look outwards and learn from one another and from EU
- Where does this fit? Who is responsible?

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