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Labour Market Integration of Roma in Bulgaria and the Danube Region: Evidence and Policy Perspectives

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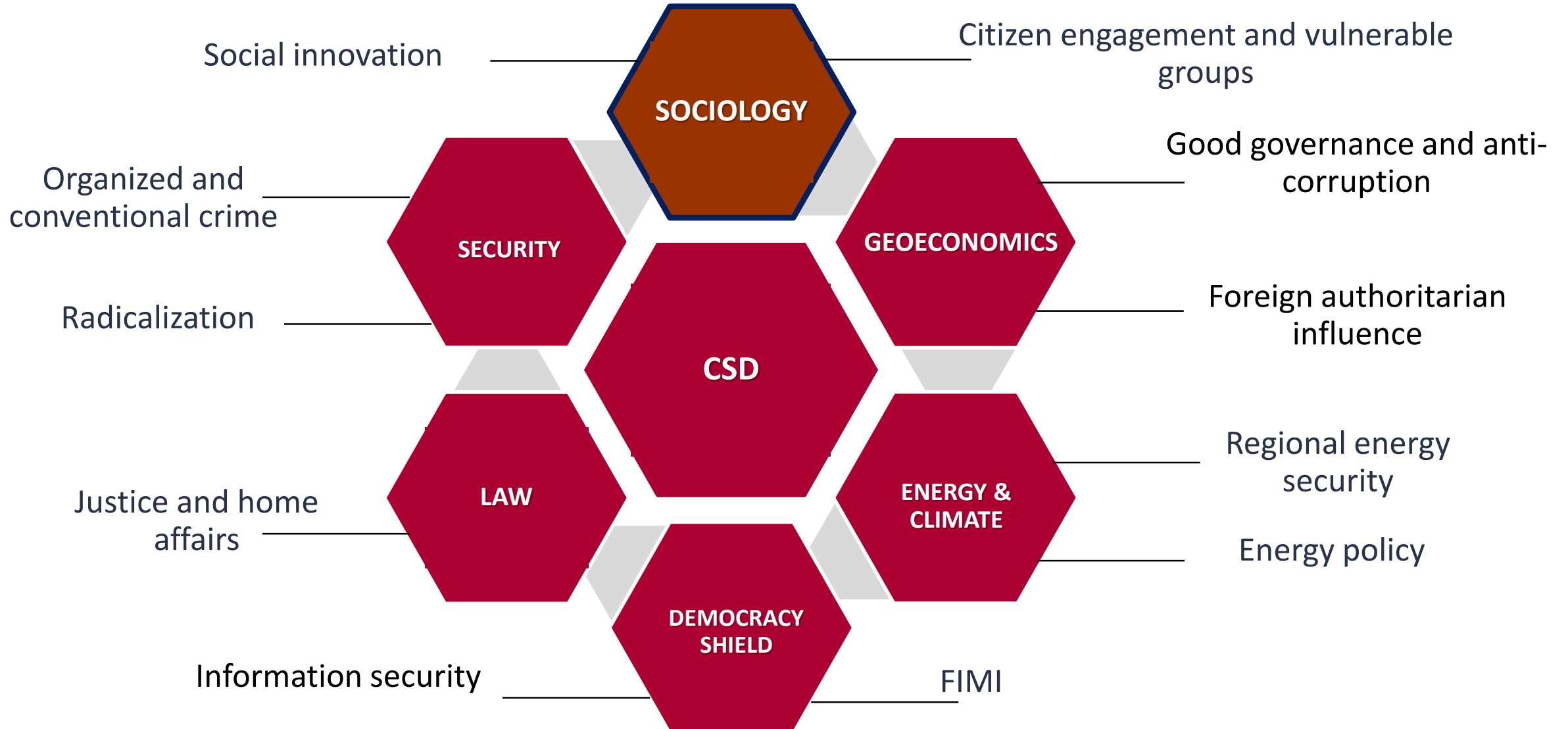
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Market Policy Platform for Roma Inclusion

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About CSD: Structure



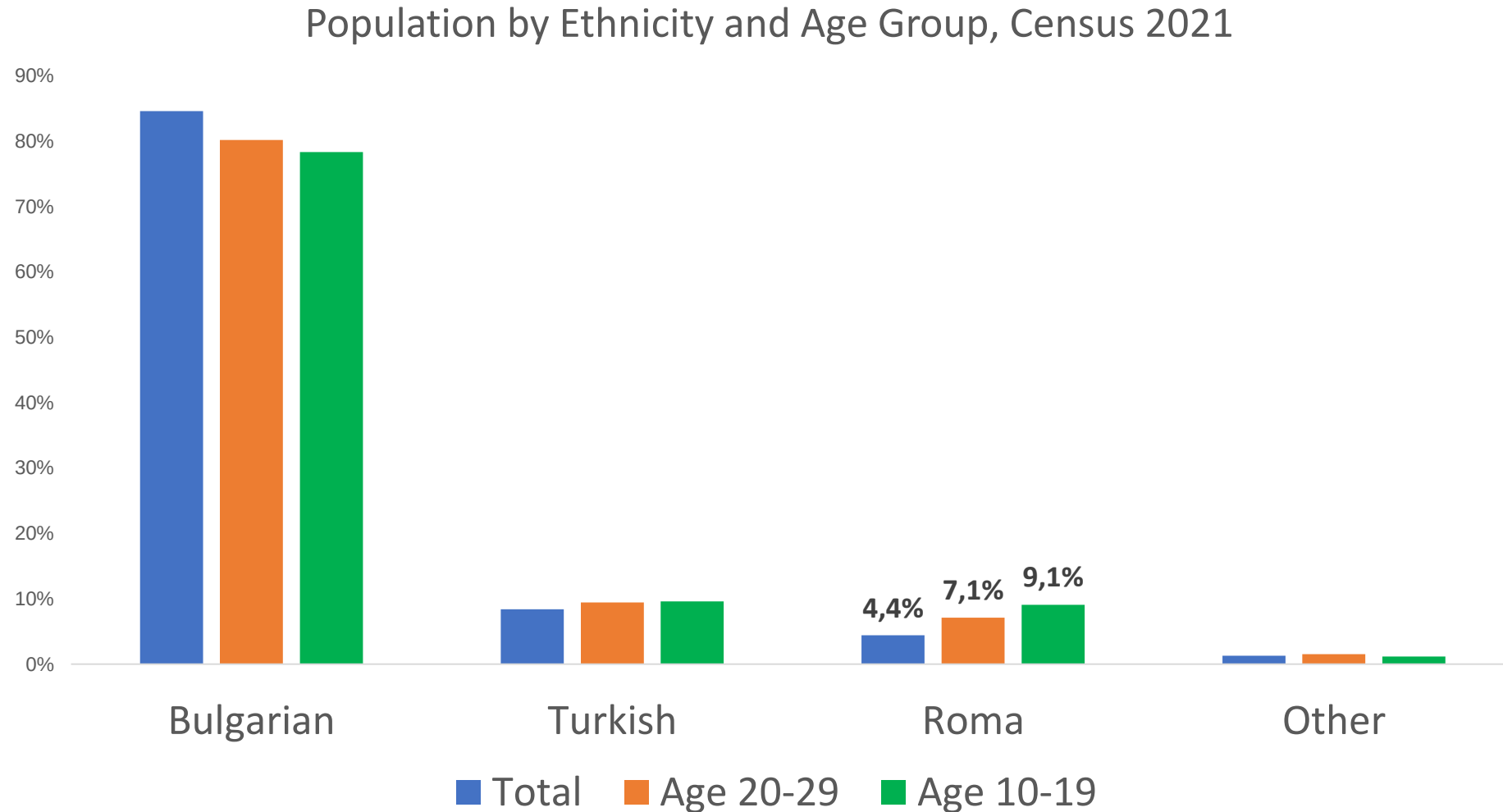
- Focus: vulnerable groups, social inclusion, labour market integration, citizen engagement.
- Combines research, policy innovation, and advocacy.
- Active in EU and Interreg Danube initiatives.

Roma in Bulgaria

	<u>Census 2011</u>	<u>Census 2021</u>	Census 2011	Census 2021	Decrease since 2011
Total	7,364,570	6,519,789			
Bulgarian	5,604,300	5,118,494	84.8%	84.6%	8.7%
Turkish	585,024	508,378	8.8%	8.4%	13.1%
Roma	320,761¹	266,720	4.9%	4.4%	16.8%
Other	48,321	79,006	0.7%	1.3%	
No answer / Refusal	53,107	79,513	0.8%	1.3%	
No information	753,057	467,678			

¹700,000-800,000 Roma as of 2010
[according to unofficial estimates](#)

Roma in Bulgaria



- [Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European Countries — Perspectives from the Roma Survey 2024](#) (FRA).
- The data suggest that most of the EU-level goals set by the [EU Roma framework](#) for increasing effective equal access to high-quality and sustainable employment are likely to be achieved by 2030.
- Nevertheless, several of the EU-level goals set are not likely to be achieved by 2030.

TABLE 2: LIKELIHOOD OF ACHIEVING THE EU-LEVEL GOALS BY COUNTRY

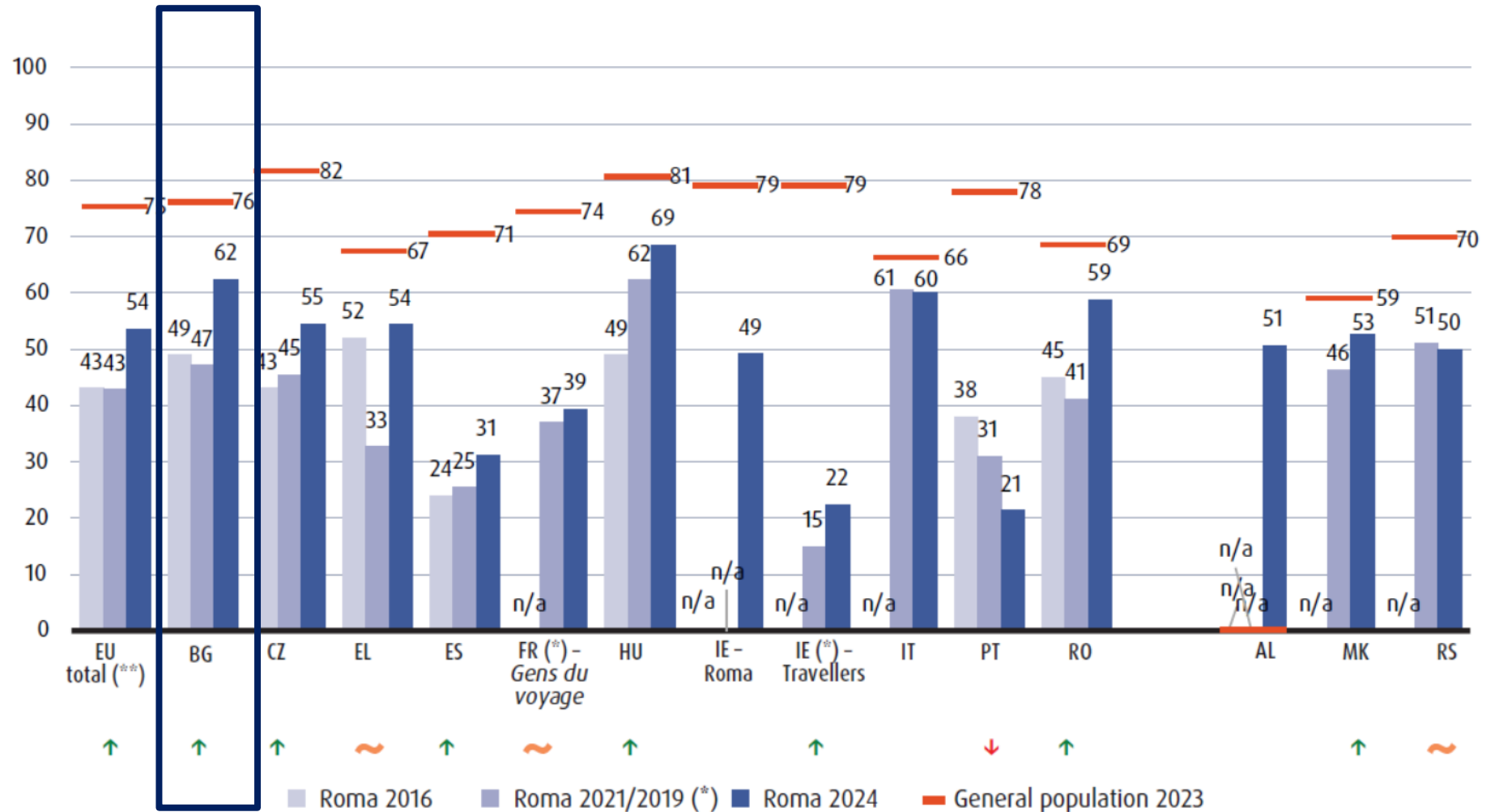
Objective	EU total	BG	CZ	EL	ES	FR ^(a)	HU	IE ^(b)	IT	PT	RO
Antigypsyism and discrimination											
Poverty and social exclusion											
Participation											
Education											
Employment											
Health											
Housing											

Source: [Rights of Roma and Travellers in 13 European Countries — Perspectives from the Roma Survey 2024](#) (FRA)

- Roma employment rate: still significantly below national average.
- Persistent gender and regional disparities.
- Structural barriers: low education, informal work, discrimination.
- National programmes lack Roma-specific targeting and evaluation.
- Intersectional approach needed – addressing multiple vulnerabilities and risks (e.g. undeclared employment, precarious work, gender-based violence, trafficking in human beings).

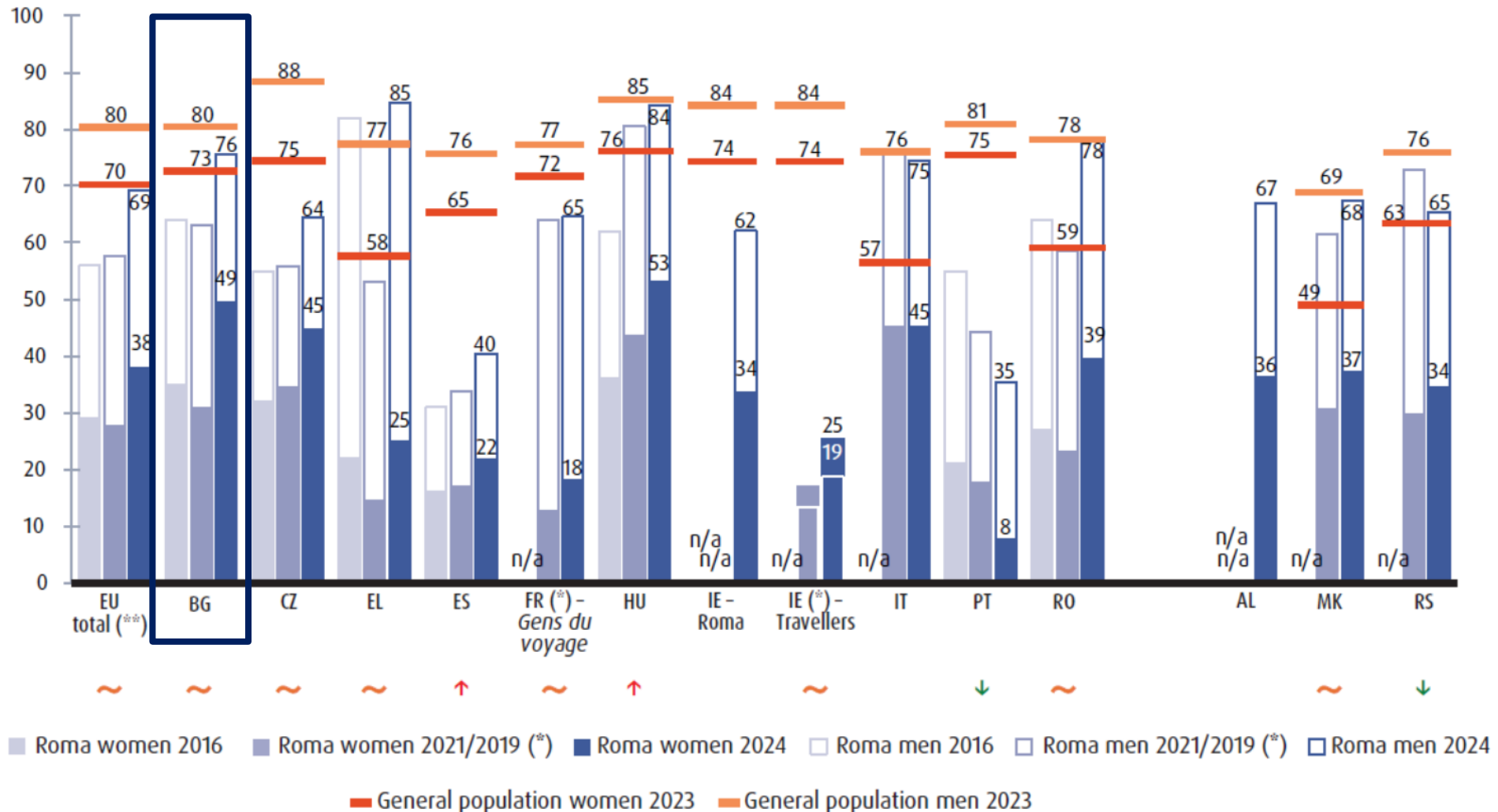
Roma in the Bulgarian Labour Market

FIGURE 17: PEOPLE AGED 20–64 WHO DECLARED THEIR MAIN ACTIVITY STATUS AS ‘PAID WORK’ (INCLUDING FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, AD HOC JOBS, SELF-EMPLOYMENT, OCCASIONAL WORK OR ANY WORK IN THE PAST FOUR WEEKS), BY COUNTRY AND SURVEY YEAR (%)



Roma in the Bulgarian Labour Market

FIGURE 18: DIFFERENCES IN PAID WORK RATES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN AGED 20-64, BY COUNTRY AND SURVEY YEAR (%)



- [Limited participation of Roma youth in Bulgaria in the EU's Youth Guarantee](#), which aims to provide young people with employment, education, or training opportunities (2019).
- Roma youth face significant barriers to accessing youth guarantee measures, including systemic discrimination, lack of awareness, and inadequate outreach.
- Policy Recommendations: culturally sensitive outreach, stronger collaboration with Roma organizations, better data collection, and tailoring program measures to Roma youth's needs ([CSD PB, 2019](#)).

- False narratives about unemployment and welfare dependency undermines Roma labour participation ([Care for Truth, 2021](#)).
- Differentiated, data-driven interventions and stronger evaluation mechanisms to support the effective integration of vulnerable youth (like Roma NEETs) into the labour market ([Lost Millennials, 2023](#)).
- Common findings: fragmented policies, low trust, lack of data-driven design.

- Data-driven and differentiated employment programmes.
- Roma-led outreach and mediation.
- Anti-discrimination and media literacy in employment services.
- Stronger evaluation and monitoring frameworks.
- Accounting for GenAI-driven changes in the labour market.
- Regional learning through Danube partnerships.

**Interreg
Danube Region**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**



- COOPOWER (Interreg Danube) promotes social economy & youth empowerment.
- Builds on CSD evidence to support sustainable local job creation.
- Roma youth form a major segment of vulnerable young people in the Bulgarian case study.
- <https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/coopower>



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