

Maynooth University Pavée Point

Dear Madame Chair, states and colleagues. My name is Meagan Berry, and I am an Irish Traveller woman. When we speak about building a fair, peaceful, and accountable society, it is critical that Irish Travellers are not only included, but actively heard. My community has faced generations of systemic racism, which has resulted in poor outcomes across health, education, and employment. We welcome the recent development of a number of state strategies, such as the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy, the National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy, and the National Traveller Health Action Plan, aimed at Traveller inclusion. These commitments are important steps forward, but implementation remains slow, accountability is weak, and outcomes on the ground have not significantly improved. For these efforts to truly work, Traveller participation must be meaningful, continuous, and central. Peacebuilding and accountability processes only work when our communities can be a part of designing and developing them. To strengthen this work, I offer three recommendations. Several targeted policies have emerged, which seek to address Traveller inclusion. The state needs to ensure the full implementation of these targeted policies in collaboration with Traveller organizations, as well as meaningful inclusion of Travellers within all mainstream policy responses. Create accountability mechanisms with measurable indicators, transparent reporting and consequences for inaction, ensuring that state strategies lead to real improvement. To effectively address racism and discrimination, the state must collect and use disaggregated data by ethnicity. We urge the state to publish its National Equity Data Strategy, including immediate action for introducing ethnic identifiers underpinned by a human rights framework. Recognizing the full contributions of Travellers means more than celebrating diversity, it requires structural change, respect, and meaningful investment. Thank you