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UN & CoE

January

12 January – UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) publishes concluding observations on combined 11th and 12th periodic reports of Slovakia

February

27/28 February – European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) publishes fifth monitoring reports on Spain and Sweden

March

April

May

15 May – ECRI publishes fifth monitoring report on Croatia and conclusions on the implementation of recommendations in respect of Czechia and Hungary

15-16 May – 5th meeting of the Operational Platform on Roma Equality (OPRE), Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

22-25 May – 15th meeting of the CoE's Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM), Athens, Greece

June

6 June – CERD publishes concluding observations on combined 22nd and 23rd periodic reports of Sweden

7 June – CAHROM releases final abridged report for its 15th Plenary Meeting

20-21 June – 5th meeting of the CoE Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society: "Participation in political life", Strasbourg

July

4 July – CoE Committee of Ministers launches 2nd Report on the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)

August

September

25 September – CERD publishes concluding observations on combined sixth to 12th periodic reports of Latvia

25-26 September – International Seminar on the "Transition from education to employment for Roma Youth", Brijuni Islands, Croatia, organised under the aegis of the Croatian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the CoE

October

2 October – ECRI issues its fifth monitoring report on Portugal

15-16 October – 6th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society, Strasbourg, on "Civil Society Assessment of the Implementation of the CoE Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)"

16-19 October – 16th meeting of CAHROM, Strasbourg

November

6 November – CoE Commissioner for Human Rights issues her report following a visit to Greece in June 2018

6 November – CAHROM releases its final abridged report for 16th Plenary Meeting

December

EU

January

February

7 February – European Parliament (EP) adopts a resolution on protection and non-discrimination with regard to minorities in the EU Member States (2017/2937 (RSP))

March

April

May

June

July

13 July – Council of the EU endorses country-specific recommendations for Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia in the context of the European Semester

August

September

October

8–9 October – 2018 Meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion takes place in Brussels

November

13 November – EP adopts a resolution on minimum standards for minorities in the EU (2018/2036 (INI))

December

4 December – European Commission issues a communication on the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (COM2018/785 final)

5

Roma integration



Roma continue to face discrimination because of their ethnicity in access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. Reports of discrimination and hate crime continued in 2018, confirming that anti-Gypsyism remains an important barrier to Roma inclusion. There has been little change in the social and economic situation of Roma across the EU, FRA data show. This undermines EU and national efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 10 in regard to reducing inequality within countries, and more specifically its Target 10.3 to ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome. The 2018 edition of Eurostat's monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in the EU contains no reference to Roma inclusion outcomes or to the relevant data that FRA produced, despite the high relevance of monitoring a number of goals specifically for Roma (in particular Goals 1, 4, 6 and 8). Such monitoring would have explicit policy relevance, given the existence, since 2011, of an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the related Council Recommendation of 2013.

5.1. EU action against anti-Gypsyism

In 2018, the European Commission evaluated the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.¹ The evaluation assesses the policy, legal and funding instruments that have been aligned and mobilised since 2011 and explores ways to develop the EU framework and feed into the targeted and mainstream EU policy, legal and funding instruments after 2020 in the light of the Council Recommendation of December 2013,² focusing on the fundamental right to equal treatment and non-discrimination, in particular in relation to access to employment, education, housing and health.

Fighting anti-Gypsyism should be a separate priority area for Roma integration strategies at both EU and national levels, in addition to the four key Roma integration goals for education, employment, health and housing, according to the Commission's 2018 mid-term report. A subsection of the evaluation highlights the need for an increased focus on fighting discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. It suggests measures, such as updating educational curricula, inter-ethnic community building, and training to sensitise employers, educational, health and housing authorities, police, prosecutors and judges.

On terminology

Who are the Roma?

The Council of Europe uses 'Roma and Travellers' as umbrella terms to refer to Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari, Balkan Egyptians, Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal) and groups such as Travellers, Yenish and the populations designated under the administrative term *Gens du voyage*, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

See the Council of Europe's web page dedicated to Roma and Travellers.

Anti-Gypsyism

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe defines anti-Gypsyism as a "specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination".

See Council of Europe, ECRI (2011), ECRI General Policy Recommendation no.13 on Combating Anti-Gypsyism and Discrimination Against Roma, Strasbourg, September 2011, p.3.

In 2018, the EU paid growing attention to persisting anti-Gypsyism. Focusing attention on this phenomenon is a positive policy trend that FRA already noted in 2017.³ It was evident in high-level events, such as the European Platform for Roma Inclusion on 8–9 October, which the European Commission organised. It acknowledged anti-Gypsyism as an obstacle preventing the fair and equitable access of Roma to health and housing services, and highlighted that anti-Gypsyism requires further attention from Member States.⁴ Under the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, an expert conference on anti-Gypsyism held on 27 November discussed how anti-Gypsyism can be addressed in a post-2020 EU Roma Framework.⁵ Roma civil society also organised a range of events on anti-Gypsyism.⁶

The European Semester provides a policy framework for monitoring and guiding economic and social reforms by EU Member States to reach the Europe 2020 strategy targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU.⁷ Country-specific recommendations, which the Council of the EU adopts on a yearly basis, reflect challenges and propose solutions specific to each EU Member State. Regarding Roma inclusion, since 2012 the European Commission has issued country-specific recommendations for **Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Romania** and **Slovakia**, which the Council of the EU has endorsed. In 2018, these recommendations focused on the need to promote Roma participation in inclusive, mainstream education in all five countries. The recommendation for **Slovakia** also suggests reinforcing activation and upskilling measures, including quality, targeted training and individualised services for disadvantaged groups, such as Roma, in particular by delivering on the action plan for the long-term unemployed.⁸ Such measures would contribute to the social inclusion of Roma, but would benefit from reference to anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to their implementation, and to measures tackling it that target the majority population.

The European Structural and Investment Funds are the financial instrument supporting the Europe 2020 strategy. They are of critical importance for Roma inclusion and for tackling anti-Gypsyism. In May 2018, the European Commission published its proposals for the EU budget period 2021–2027. Roma integration remains a priority; see Article 4 of the proposal for a Regulation on the European Social Fund Plus and point 4 of Annex IV of the Proposal on the new Common Provisions Regulation. When the EU and Member States make future partnership agreements for the new generation of EU funds, it will be important for them to refer explicitly to the participation of Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant investments in Roma inclusion at local level.⁹

FRA ACTIVITY

Analysing data on Roma

In 2018, FRA published its report on anti-Gypsyism. It analysed trends between 2011 and 2016 in access to education, employment, healthcare and housing, and in manifestations of anti-Gypsyism such as discrimination, harassment and hate crime. On average, one out of three Roma surveyed had experienced some form of harassment in 2016, such as offensive or threatening personal comments, personal threats of violence, offensive gestures or inappropriate staring, the results show. There has also been little improvement in the overall social and economic situation of Roma across many Member States, it finds.

See FRA (2018), A persisting concern: Anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

5.2. Structural and institutional discrimination, and anti-Gypsyism

Anti-Gypsyism shows itself in structural and institutional discrimination, as discriminatory treatment becomes embedded in structures, organisations and institutions. This may manifest as educational and residential segregation, mass evictions, racial profiling or discriminatory treatment by police, and difficulties for Roma to register their residence or obtain administrative documents that can affect their opportunity to be connected to electricity, clean water and sanitation. Institutional discrimination can have an impact on everyday activities in many areas of life, FRA data show. For example, the highest prevalence of discrimination reported by Roma respondents in the past 12 months is when they use public or private services, such as administrative offices, public transport, shops, restaurants or bars (19 %), and when they look for work (16 %), analysis of FRA's data from EU-MIDIS II reveals.¹⁰

In 2018, a pilot project initiated by the European Parliament on 'Capacity building for Roma civil society and strengthening its involvement in the monitoring of national Roma integration strategies' published its first reports. This project is often referred to as the 'Roma Civil Monitor'. The European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers manages it, and around 90 NGOs from 27 Member States actively participate in implementing it. The EU's Racial Equality Directive has not yet translated into effective action against discrimination against Roma, and has not addressed structural and institutional racism, the

synthesis report argues.¹¹ It finds low levels of rights awareness among marginalised Roma communities and lack of trust in institutions, arguing that the lack of free legal aid prevents many Roma from bringing claims forward. The report refers to underreporting, confirming related FRA findings that only 27 % of Roma who experienced hate-motivated violence reported this to any organisation, including the police.¹²

Anti-Gypsyism affects structural discrimination in education. This results in the persistent segregation of Roma children in separate schools or classes, despite rulings from national courts and the ECtHR. At EU level, infringement procedures concerning discrimination against Roma children in education have been ongoing in **Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia**. The proportion of Roma children (aged 6–15 years) attending classes where ‘all classmates are Roma’ actually increased, on average, from 10 % in 2011 to 15 % in 2016, according to FRA data, underlining the need for more decisive action in this area.¹³

Anti-Gypsyism also manifested itself in housing in 2018, as demolitions and evictions decided by the authorities continued to affect Roma disproportionately. Local administrations in 61 % of all municipalities in **Bulgaria** issued 444 orders for the demolition of residential buildings, of which 399 (89 %) concerned Roma homes, according to the Roma Civil Monitor synthesis report.¹⁴ It also pointed to some alleged practices in **Czechia**,¹⁵ where property speculators buy up fully occupied buildings in segregated areas and evict the residents. This disproportionately affects Roma families, who end up living in crowded, poorly maintained residential hotels. In **Romania**,¹⁶ there were reports of forced evictions of Roma, and civil society organisations accused the authorities of not giving reasonable notice, not offering access to legal aid and not providing adequate alternative accommodation. In **Hungary**, according to the Roma Civil Monitor, the local government in Miskolc continued the forced eviction of Roma¹⁷. In 2018, the EU pilot case on the forced eviction of Roma in Miskolc was closed by a decision of the European Commission on 10 December 2018, based on the Commission’s finding that the information given by the Hungarian authorities showed that the situation had been resolved satisfactorily.¹⁸

There is a shocking lack of action on anti-Gypsyism, FRA data reveal. There was little improvement between 2011 and 2016 in the severely deprived housing conditions affecting many Roma households. A third of the Roma surveyed continue to live in housing that has no tap water inside the house, and 38 % do not have a toilet, shower or bathroom inside their home, in stark contrast to the average in the general population.¹⁹

FRA ACTIVITY

Transitioning from education to employment

In July 2018, following the publication in the same year of its report on anti-Gypsyism, FRA published a report that examined how young Roma manage in their transition from school to work, based on data from its EU-MIDIS II survey. The report reveals the dire consequences of the poor educational outcomes influenced by anti-Gypsyism. They particularly affect young women, who are more often than men not in work, education or training.

For more information, see FRA (2018), [Transition from education to employment of young Roma in nine EU Member States](#), Luxembourg, Publications Office.

In 2018, there were some positive developments in data disaggregated by ethnicity. The Financial Mechanism Committee established by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway had a new Programme Agreement with the government of **Bulgaria**. It envisaged a predefined project, ‘Novel approaches to generating data on hard-to-reach populations at risk of violation of their rights’, with the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria as a project promoter. The project aims to develop innovative methods for generating data that policymakers and donors need to formulate practical ways to address vulnerability challenges at regional and local levels. The experience from the project will be relevant to other EU Member States and candidate countries facing similar challenges of Roma integration. FRA will support the project, bringing in its experience in monitoring poverty and inequality among hard-to-reach groups.²⁰ In **Croatia**, the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, with the technical support of FRA and full involvement of Romani communities, finalised research collecting baseline data on the socio-economic position of the Roma communities. It included a mapping of the Roma population, combining external and self-identification methods, and qualitative and quantitative research, enabling proper monitoring of impact of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy.²¹

5.3. Legal developments

5.3.1. EU anti-discrimination law as tool against anti-Gypsyism

FRA has repeatedly highlighted the need to implement the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia more effectively. It made this point in the EU-MIDIS II report on *Roma-Selected findings*,²² the fundamental rights reports 2017 and 2018,²³ and the report on anti-Gypsyism published in 2018.²⁴ However, in 2018,

there were few national measures to enforce EU anti-discrimination legislation with respect to Roma.

At the EU level, the Commission's 2018 mid-term report on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies noted that "antigypsyism is monitored under the Racial Equality Directive and the Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia". At the same time, the EU's High Level Group on combating racism and xenophobia prioritised the fight against discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. The European Commission continues to monitor the outcome of infringement proceedings against certain Member States for their failure to correctly implement the Racial Equality Directive, particularly in the area of education and where Roma children are overrepresented in special schools for children with disabilities. FRA supported the Commission's monitoring through fact-finding missions and data.

In April 2018, the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) published a decision of 5 December 2017 on the case *European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) v. France* (complaint No. 119/2015) concerning eviction orders against Roma families. The ECSR found that in this specific case, French authorities had violated Part V, Article E, of the European Social Charter (ESC) on the enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the ESC without discrimination, in relation to the right of Roma children to education (Article 17 (2)), the right of Roma children and their families to protection against poverty (Article 30) and their right to housing (Article 31).²⁵ In July, a resolution by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe took note of the French government's commitment to conform with the ESC.

5.3.2. National courts on Roma discrimination

In 2018, there were a few relevant court decisions, mostly on discriminatory treatment of Roma in employment, education and housing. For example, in **Slovakia**, the Košice Regional Court ruled that the case of a Roma woman who was not hired as a social worker despite her experience and qualifications amounted to discriminatory treatment on grounds of ethnic origin.²⁶ In **France**, the Court of Cassation found one mayor responsible for discriminatory practices for having refused to enrol in primary school five Roma children who lived in a camp that was under an evacuation order.²⁷

Most court rulings on Roma discrimination concerned housing. In **Czechia**, a real estate agency was found guilty of discrimination for asking potential tenants about their ethnic background.²⁸ In the **United Kingdom**, a municipality's housing policy was ruled unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 for establishing criteria such as continued residence over a period

of 10 years in the area, which could have a negative impact on access to housing for Irish Travellers.²⁹ A court in **Slovakia** found that a decision to move Roma to different municipal housing, with lower standards and located in a segregated area, amounted to discriminatory treatment.³⁰

Lack of data remains one of the major challenges in improving and enforcing antidiscrimination law prohibiting discrimination against Roma. In 2018, a few examples of incident reporting and collection of data on anti-Gypsyism could be identified. For example, Amaro Foro e.V. in **Germany** continues to record incidents of anti-Gypsyism in Berlin, and the Roma organisation Romano Centro does similar work in **Austria**, although no relevant reports were published in 2018.³¹ Therefore, FRA's regular survey data collection on the Roma remains a key source of data at the Member State and EU levels, which the European Commission uses to assess progress in key priority areas of Roma integration.

5.4. National developments

5.4.1. National action plans

Few national strategies address anti-Gypsyism explicitly. Some national Roma integration strategies do mention discrimination, sometimes even as distinct priority areas of the strategy, but they do not uniformly address anti-Gypsyism explicitly as a separate concept. Many Member States' national Roma integration strategies do not explicitly refer to anti-Gypsyism at all; they deal with racism in general, through cross-cutting, mainstream measures. However, a number of developments at national level in 2018 show an encouraging trend in acknowledging anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism.

For example, **Portugal** included in its revised Roma integration strategy specific goals on anti-Gypsyism and concrete actions, such as fighting negative Roma stereotypes, persuading municipalities to sign a declaration against anti-Gypsyism, and strengthening training on Roma history and culture, as well as rights awareness.³² In **Austria**, the updated national Roma integration strategy now includes specific measures, such as publishing a report on anti-Gypsyism, organising a conference and awareness-raising workshops on anti-Gypsyism, and working with Roma youth on a national No Hate Speech committee.

A small number of Member States included references to Roma or anti-Gypsyism in their national action plans against racism, xenophobia and ethnic discrimination in 2018 – for example, **Croatia**, **Germany** and **Sweden**. For more information on national action plans against racism, see [Chapter 4](#).

Some of these national action plans against racism and ethnic discrimination mention Roma in specific areas of action. For example, in **Italy**, the national plan of action against racism, xenophobia and intolerance refers to Roma in relation to accommodation, education, integration, awareness-raising activities and good practices. In **Slovakia**, the national action plan focuses specifically on combating prejudice and intolerance towards marginalised Roma communities. The **French** national plan against racism and antisemitism includes Roma in reference to measures tackling prejudice-related crime against minorities and to actions to fight negative stereotypes. In **Greece**, the Special Secretariat on Roma Inclusion reported to the national Council against Racism and Intolerance, and it is expected that Roma will be included in the forthcoming action plan. In the **United Kingdom**, the Government has made specific commitments to tackle discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the national Hate Crime Action Plan.³³

The European Commission suggested in 2018 that national authorities responsible for Roma inclusion “should involve equality bodies when drawing up action plans on fighting antigypsyism, racism and discrimination under NRIS”.³⁴ In this light, there is scope for more reference to equality bodies in national action plans in order to engage them more effectively in combating anti-Gypsyism. More information on equality bodies is available in [Chapter 3](#).

5.4.2. Positive initiatives

In 2018, a wide range of positive initiatives were implemented throughout the EU promoting Roma inclusion and empowering Roma, in particular young people and women. A number of these initiatives promoted Roma culture and history, helping to tackle anti-Gypsy stereotypes. For example, arts exhibitions about the Sinti and Roma culture and their persecution throughout history took place in **Austria**,³⁵ the **Netherlands**³⁶ and **Slovakia**.³⁷ In **Croatia**, NGO Kali Sara continued to mark the World Day of Romani Language,³⁸ Days of Romani culture,³⁹ as well as other important days. In **Romania**, the National Roma Culture Centre – Romano Kher organised several events, such as film screenings, music concerts and literature evenings featuring Romani-language poetry and prose.⁴⁰

In **Germany**, the federal programme “Live Democracy!”⁴¹ funds different projects that explicitly address anti-Gypsyism. These projects focus on counselling, historical-political education, prevention of anti-Gypsyism, participation and empowerment. Twelve model projects by different institutions throughout Germany are being funded to develop and test innovative approaches to the prevention of anti-Gypsyism.

In **Italy**, within the framework of the Council of Europe’s Roma Youth Action Plan and the Roma, Sinti and Travellers’ National Platform, UNAR has promoted in collaboration with the Council of Europe’s Department for Youth Policies two workshops on anti-Gypsyism involving 40 young activists, educators, and representatives of Roma, Sinti and Travellers Communities, to develop their knowledge and to provide proposals for countering discrimination, anti-Gypsyism and online hate speech. The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC)⁴² continued to hold exhibitions, conferences, seminars and other innovative public events relating to arts and culture of Roma communities. It promotes arts and culture and education as a means to promote human rights and intercultural understanding and thereby tackle anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe, as well as to increase their self-esteem.

Promising practice

Raising awareness on anti-Gypsyism through film

The **Swedish** civil society organisation Re:orient organised a Roma film festival in Stockholm, which showed films about Roma life and about the Roma genocide. The festival included music events and discussions about vulnerable EU Roma in Sweden, the structural discrimination facing Roma, and the strategies of Swedish political parties to secure the rights of Roma and to close the socio-economic gap between the national minorities and the majority population. The festival also took place later in Gothenburg.

For more information, see Sweden, Re:orient, The films of the Roma Festival, Sweden, Stockholm House of Culture & City Theatre (Kulturhuset Stadsteatern), Roma Festival 2018.

Promoting Romani history and culture in schools was also a common theme among Member States in 2018. In **Bulgaria**, schools offered an elective class on Romani folklore.⁴³ In the **Netherlands**, through projects funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, teaching materials about the history of Roma were provided for primary and secondary education levels.⁴⁴ In the **United Kingdom**, schools nationwide celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) history month in June each year, “promoting GRT culture among children from different backgrounds as an alternative to biased opinions expressed in the media”.⁴⁵ Similarly, **Ireland** has started consultations on the possibility of including Traveller culture and history in schools’ curricula.⁴⁶ In **Croatia**, the Ministry of Science and Education initiated a public consultation process for the establishment of the Romani Language and Culture Curriculum.⁴⁷

Promising practice

Remembering the Roma Holocaust

Recognising and commemorating the Roma genocide can help fight anti-Gypsyism. In **Austria**, the NGO Romano Centro organised a commemoration for Roma victims of Nazism.* In **Poland**, the NGO Fundacja Dialog-Pheniben organised a project called 'Trace of Roma – history remembrance and present of European Roma', which includes school visits to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and reflections on the current situation of Roma in Europe.** In **Lithuania**, youth leaders were trained in organising Roma Holocaust educational activities using the handbook *Right to remember*, which was published in November 2018.*** In **Greece**, the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs began implementing actions to develop educational material on the Holocaust and teacher training in primary and secondary schools.

In **Croatia**, the Education and Teacher Training Agency organises and delivers annual teacher professional development courses, which, among others, include topics such as the Holocaust and crimes against humanity. The teacher manual on Roma in the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945 was published, and the NGO Kali Sara continued to commemorate the Roma victims of World War II (Samudaripen).**** **Italy**, which has been an International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) member since 1999, had the chairmanship of the Presidency of IHRA in 2018 and involved RSC members and NGOs. In 2018, a twinning between Municipalities of Laterza and Lanciano was ratified to improve cooperation in fighting anti-Gypsyism and for initiatives on Porrajmos Remembrance.*****

*See Austria, APA press release, 'Gedenkttag an den Völkermord an Roma und Sinti: Gedenkveranstaltung auf dem Wiener Ceija-Stojka-Platz'.

**Poland, Foundation Dialog Pheniben Fanpage.

***Lithuania, Youth Department of the Council of Europe, Training workshop on education with young people in Lithuania about the Roma Genocide.

**** Croatia, Education and Teacher Training Agency; Vojak, D. et al., *Priručnik za učitelje i nastavnike Romi u Drugom svjetskom ratu u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj, 1941.-1945.* (Teacher Manual: Roma in the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945), Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, Zagreb, 2018; Roma NGO Kali Sara, *Holokaust – samudaripen*.

***** Italy, *Twinning between Municipalities of Laterza and Lanciano, Istituto Comprensivo Statale Diaz Laterza, 2018.*

In 2018, some Member States organised workshops for professionals in multicultural environments. For example, in **Bulgaria**, the Ministry of the Interior trained law enforcement officers on various issues that come up when working with Roma communities.⁴⁸ The EU-funded JUSTROM programme of the Council of Europe also provided **Bulgarian** law enforcement and judicial officers with training sessions on combating discrimination and the effective application of relevant legislation.⁴⁹ Similarly, the 'United against anti-Gypsyism' campaign in **Bulgaria** aims to enhance teachers' capacity to address anti-Gypsyism in the classroom.⁵⁰ In **Portugal**, the training programme 'Know me before you hate me' targets school teachers and their knowledge about Romani culture.⁵¹

In **Slovenia**, the Interior Ministry trained civil servants interacting with Roma communities to raise their awareness of prejudice against Roma.⁵² In **Sweden**, healthcare workers were provided with information on national minorities.⁵³ In Wales, **United Kingdom**, the Centre for Equality and Human Rights offered e-courses for health practitioners, explaining the challenges Gypsies, Roma and Travellers face in healthcare.⁵⁴

In some Member States, there were initiatives in 2018 to empower Roma young people. For example, the **Estonian** Council of Roma Integration working at the Estonian Ministry of Culture trained young Roma to increase their knowledge on civil society as well as on project management, teamwork and communication skills.⁵⁵ In **Slovakia**, Roma young people discussed fundamental rights issues and integration policies in a Congress of Roma Youth.⁵⁶ In **Sweden**, Roma youth associations developed an app that provides information on the national strategy for Roma inclusion.⁵⁷ It connects relevant authorities and the Roma minority and provides information translated into five Roma dialects.

Other initiatives dealt with monitoring discrimination and assisting in accessing legal remedies. In **Bulgaria**, for instance, the JUSTROM programme offered legal advice and consultation on relevant legislation and discrimination cases.⁵⁸ The NGO Fundación del Secretariado Gitano provided similar services in **Spain**.⁵⁹ In **Poland**, OSCE/ODIHR developed an online platform for reporting hate crimes against Roma in cooperation with the NGO Fundacja Dialog-Pheniben.⁶⁰ In **Finland**, hate crimes targeting Roma have been added as a distinct category to the hate-crime specification in the annual monitoring of hate crime.⁶¹ For more information on hate crime and hate

► speech, see Chapter 4.

Promising practice

Facilitating the reporting of hate crimes

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the **United Kingdom**, in cooperation with the police, created an online reporting page where hate crimes against Gypsy, Roma and Travellers can be reported. This practice aims to tackle the continuing underreporting of hate crime against Roma.

Complementary to this, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government funds the civil society organisation GATE Herts, which has created the website 'Report racism, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller' to encourage the reporting of hate incidents among Roma, who are reluctant to report directly to the police for many reasons. The portal is run by and for members of the Roma community and collects data on the location, point of time and type of hate crime, but does not allow the identification of the person affected by the incident. The project aims to increase police and government awareness of the extent of hate incidents against the Roma communities, to counter this issue.

For more information, see United Kingdom, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018), Written submission, April; True vision for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers; GATE Herts, Report racism, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller.

The EU and Roma civil society continued their efforts to draw national policymakers' attention to the local level, where inclusion policies are implemented. The European Commission's 2018 evaluation of the EU framework highlighted the importance of community engagement, stating that "effective community engagement can help to identify funding priorities, empower local communities, provide critical feedback and increase accountability for Roma inclusion policies".⁶² It also notes that efforts to sustainably support the capacity of Roma grassroots organisations have not been strong enough.

FRA ACTIVITY

Working with local Roma communities

Over several years, FRA conducted a project on Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI). Its outcomes show how local communities can become empowered to participate in projects and strategy development, and in particular to improve community relations between Roma and non-Roma. The final report of this project was published in November 2018.

The development of the project's activities in a number of localities helped draw attention to the challenges Roma, Sinti and other Roma and Traveller groups face daily, thus raising awareness of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. In several Member States, there was a strong feeling that activities that focus on improving inter-community relations and relations with the wider neighbourhood would also help to overcome tensions and combat discrimination against Roma. In several localities where the project focused on community development activities as a way to improve inter-community relations, these in effect also worked to counter anti-Gypsyism and discrimination. This was the case, for example, in Aghia Varvara in **Greece**, Mátraverebély in **Hungary**, and Rakytník and Hrabušice in **Slovakia**.

The results of the project point to the critical role of community-level engagement in bringing the European Structural and Investment Funds closer to local communities' priorities, giving the people an active role in formulating the projects, implementing the activities, and monitoring the results.

For more information, see FRA (2018), Working with Roma: Participation and empowerment of local communities, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

In some Member States, national action plans are beginning to focus more on participation and empowerment measures. For example, in **Finland**, a new national Roma policy (ROMPO 2018–2022) refers to the participation of both Roma and non-Roma, particularly at local level.⁶³ In **Portugal**, the project 'Local plans for the integration of Roma communities'⁶⁴ aims to develop local interventions to support the participation of Roma communities in the democratic process and create local partnerships.

FRA opinions

Concrete measures to address anti-Gypsyism and widespread discrimination against Roma are not yet systematically in place across the EU, nor are they a key priority in the national Roma integration strategies and related policies at European, national, regional and local levels. Few national Roma integration strategies address discrimination as a distinct priority. Many Member States' national Roma integration strategies do not explicitly refer to anti-Gypsyism at all. Enhanced efforts to address discrimination and anti-Gypsyism more concretely and systematically are necessary to strengthen the processes of social inclusion and improve integration outcomes.

FRA opinion 5.1

EU Member States should review their national Roma integration strategies and acknowledge anti-Gypsyism as a form of racism, which can lead to forms of structural discrimination. National Roma integration strategies should specify which of their general anti-discrimination measures address anti-Gypsyism explicitly and how. Specific measures should address both Roma – for example, through rights awareness campaigns or facilitating access to legal remedy – and the general public – for example, through raising awareness about historical discrimination, segregation and persecution of Roma.

Very few Roma who experience harassment and hate-motivated violence report these incidents to any organisation, including the police, FRA data show. Measures to enforce EU anti-discrimination legislation with respect to Roma remained weak in 2018. There are major challenges in improving and enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination against Roma. At the top of the list are a lack of trust in institutions on the part of Roma, and poor understanding of the challenges Roma are facing on the part of institutions. The lack of regular monitoring of discrimination and of reporting of hate crimes at national level also remains a problem, since the extent of anti-Gypsyism and discrimination is difficult to capture without data or evidence. Only a few examples of incident reporting and collection of data on anti-Gypsyism could be identified across the EU Member States.

FRA opinion 5.2

To tackle limited reporting of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism to the authorities, EU Member States should ensure that law enforcement agencies cooperate with equality bodies, as well as Ombuds and national human rights institutions. This would help to develop actions that foster an environment where Roma, like everyone else, feel confident about reporting incidents of discriminatory treatment, including discriminatory ethnic profiling, in the knowledge that the competent authorities will take their complaints seriously and follow up on them. Such actions could include, for example, third-party reporting referral procedures, which engage civil society organisations with law enforcement to facilitate reporting of hate crime and discrimination.

In 2018, EU institutions and Roma civil society continued to highlight the importance of the meaningful participation of Roma, especially at local level, for more effective implementation of inclusion policies and for achieving sustainable outcomes as required by the global Agenda 2030. The European Commission highlighted in its 'Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020' the importance of community engagement, stressing also that participation of Roma can help to identify funding priorities. Importantly, the findings of the evaluation resonate with FRA's local-level research, which highlights how interactions and community-level engagement can be an important tool to facilitate more positive community relations, ease possible tensions between Roma and non-Roma, and ultimately combat anti-Gypsyism by contributing to breaking down stereotypes and eliminating discriminatory behaviours. Such community-level engagement has the potential to boost the effectiveness of European Structural and Investment Funds by reflecting local communities' priorities and making genuinely inclusive the process of their implementation.

FRA opinion 5.3

EU Member States should review their national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of policy measures to promote a participatory approach to designing, implementing and monitoring Roma inclusion actions, especially at local level, and to support community-led efforts. European Structural and Investment Funds and other funding sources should be used to promote and facilitate the participation of Roma and community-led integration projects. Future partnership agreements for the new generation of EU funds should explicitly include the participation of Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant investment on Roma inclusion at local level.

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