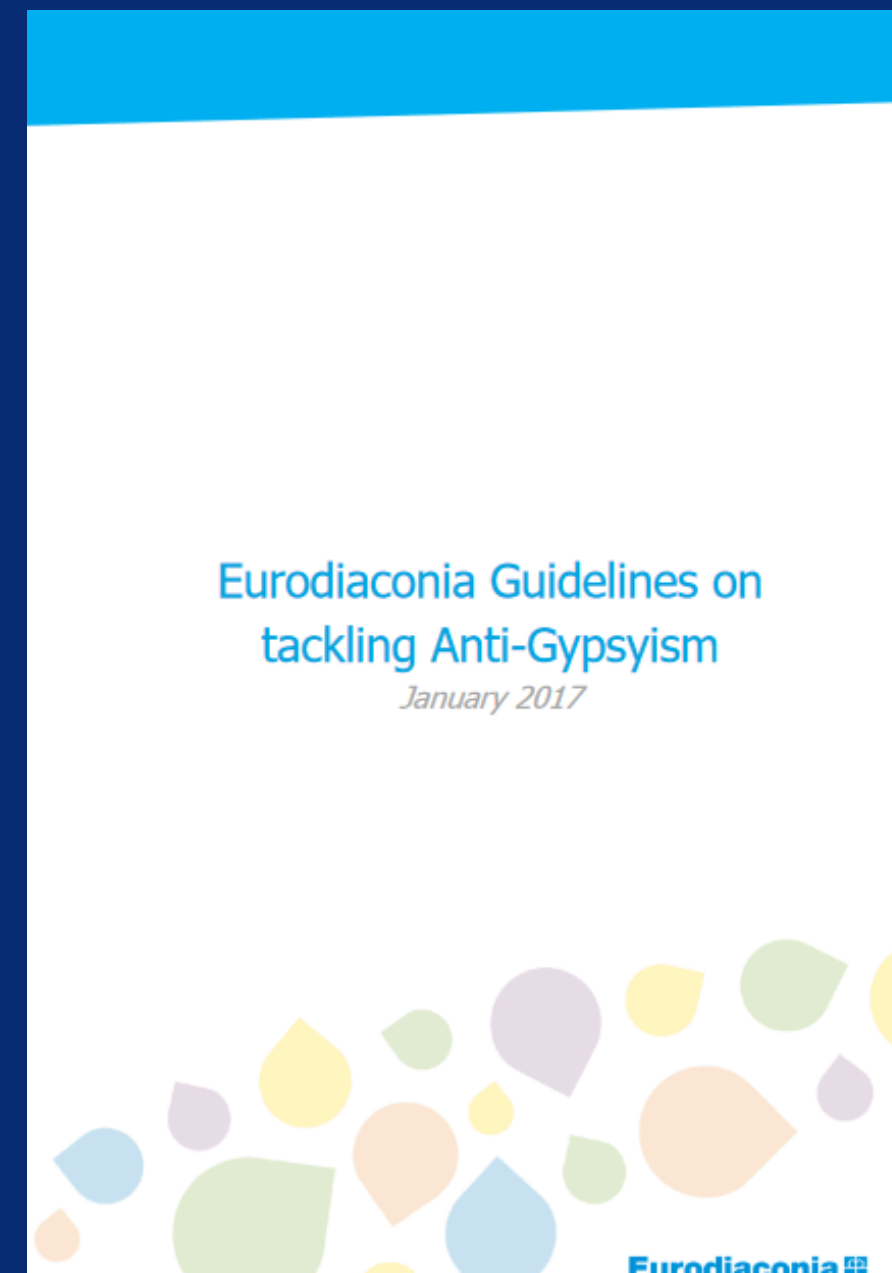


## **Co-creating recommmendations and future policy priorities**

## Eurodiaconia Guidelines on Tackling Anti-Gypsyism

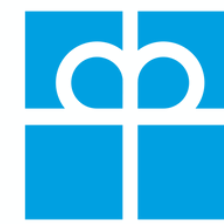
- Since 2009, Eurodiaconia members have been working together to share experiences, project methods, and contribute to EU advocacy on Roma inclusion.
- Shifting Focus in 2016 Roma Inclusion Network Meeting in Uppsala, hosted by the Church of Sweden. Marked a turning point by emphasizing the role of diaconal actors in addressing Anti-Gypsyism.
- Based on member discussions, we created the Guidelines on Tackling Anti-Gypsyism for our members.
- The guidelines:
  - Do not intend to set out a one-size-fits-all approach
  - Flexible resource for various context
  - Broad range of general actions, including members' best practice examples



**Discussion in 6 thematic groups**



- 1. Changing the Narrative*
- 2. Promoting Solidarity in Diversity*
- 3. Fostering Inclusive Church Communities*
- 4. Increasing the Space for Roma Self-determination*
- 5. Raising awareness of Roma culture and Roma history*
- 6. Coordinating advocacy actions*



## I Changing the narrative

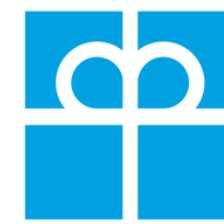
The predominant manifestation of Anti-Gypsyism consists of pervasive prejudices and negative stereotypes ("Roma are criminals", "Roma don't want to work", etc.), which are repeated and reinforced through media channels. There is a strong need to transform the portrayal of Roma in public discourse.

- » Refrain from victimising Roma, which can disempower communities and undermine their role as agents of change.
- » Monitor and engage with the portrayal of Roma in the media in order to identify and address prejudices and stereotypes.
- » Raise public awareness about concrete instances of discrimination against Roma.
- » Promote direct Roma participation in public discourse and encourage dialogue between Roma and non-Roma through specific actions such as exhibitions, festivals, conferences and workshops.

## II Promoting solidarity in diversity

In times of rising nationalism and xenophobia, diaconal organisations have an important role to play in upholding equality, solidarity and diversity as central biblical principles.

- » Promote universal human dignity and mutual respect as a precondition for the development of inclusive societies.
- » Emphasise the value of diversity as an enrichment of society. Challenge implicit claims to cultural superiority of societal majorities.
- » Raise awareness about the heterogeneity of Roma culture and emphasise the individuality of its representatives. Avoid painting a monolithic picture of Roma to combat stereotypes.



## III Fostering inclusive church communities

Historically, churches have played an ambivalent role in the Roma inclusion process; across the continent, churches have offered different forms of support to those facing destitution, including Roma. However, there are also many instances of churches playing a negative role in spreading Anti-Gypsyism, either by actively supporting its institutional proponents or by failing to raise their voices. In recent years, some churches have issued public apologies for their (lack of) actions, particularly in the Scandinavian countries. When it comes to Anti-Gypsyism, church communities constitute an important context for sending a new signal.

- » Challenge the discrimination of Roma within and beyond the church environment through the Gospel message, emphasising the principle that all human beings were created in God's image and are therefore equal.
- » Encourage church communities to bridge the divide between Roma and non-Roma and to develop partnerships with (pro-)Roma civil society organisations.
- » Explore ways to move beyond treating Roma purely as a target group of service provision and provide opportunities for them to become an integral part of the church and the proclamation of the Gospel.

## IV Increasing the space for Roma self-determination

The Roma inclusion process, including the fight against Anti-Gypsyism, should not be shaped and realised without meaningful Roma involvement. To become effective agents of change, Roma are in need of equal educational and employment opportunities.

- » Promote equality in education to bridge the gap between Roma and non-Roma and to safeguard equal opportunities for children.
- » Promote employment opportunities for Roma to tackle stereotypes and better enable full societal participation.
- » Encourage organisations promoting Roma inclusion to hire Roma social workers, which can serve as mediators and improve the relation between Roma communities and public authorities.
- » Encourage organisations promoting Roma inclusion to hire Roma with higher education degrees for managerial and project coordination positions, allowing them to take an active role in strategic decision-making.

## V Raising awareness of Roma culture and Roma history

An important foundation for prejudice is a lack of reliable knowledge. Raising awareness of the history, diversity, traditions and values attached to Roma culture is important for transcending a narrative confounded by stereotypes.

- » Promote knowledge about Roma culture through conferences, exhibitions, campaigns and in schools. Share stories and promote storytelling in both directions.
- » Increase public awareness of the systematic segregation, discrimination and persecution which Roma have experienced in the past, and continue to experience in the present. Emphasise the importance of learning from the past in order to avoid repeating it.

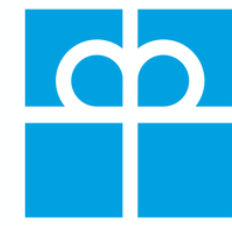




## VI Coordinating advocacy actions

The fight against Anti-Gypsyism must incorporate a dialogue with institutions and political decision-makers. Diaconal organisations should engage in partnerships and take advocacy action at local, national and European level.

- » Incorporate a law enforcement angle into advocacy by systematically reporting abuses against Roma (including by law enforcement officials).
- » Monitor relevant policies and provide critical input, for example through shadow reporting on the situation of Roma in local and/or national contexts.
- » Identify and engage relevant stakeholders in NGOs and public authorities. Establish alliances with other actors involved in Roma inclusion and human rights promotion to achieve greater advocacy impact.
- » Invest into capacity-building for government bodies, service providers and churches working with Roma to ensure they're addressing existing needs sensibly and effectively.



## Guiding questions

11:40-12:20

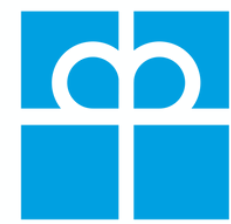


*1. What challenges do you see in your context related to these actions?*

*2. What practical actions/strategy have worked well for your organisation? Best practice examples*

*3. Is this recommendation up to date? If not, what can we modify to update it according to our knowledge and reality in 2024?*

*4. Would you add any new recommendation to the list?*



## ***Presentation in plenary***





## Looking ahead:

Are there any specific issues concerning Roma inclusion that we should focus on?



# Thank you!

If you have any questions or remarks,  
please reach out to

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[karina.smrekova@eurodiaconia.org](mailto:karina.smrekova@eurodiaconia.org)





# Satisfaction survey

Let's us know your experience!

