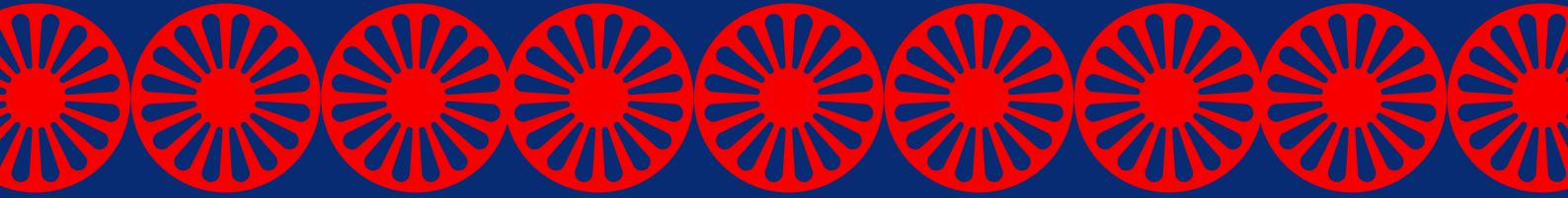


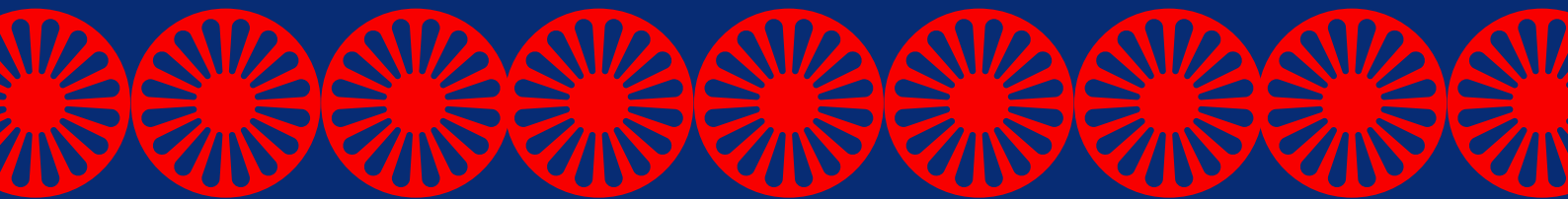


Eurodiaconia 

*Connecting faith
and social justice
through action*



GUIDELINES ON TACKLING ANTI-ROMA RACISM



December 2024



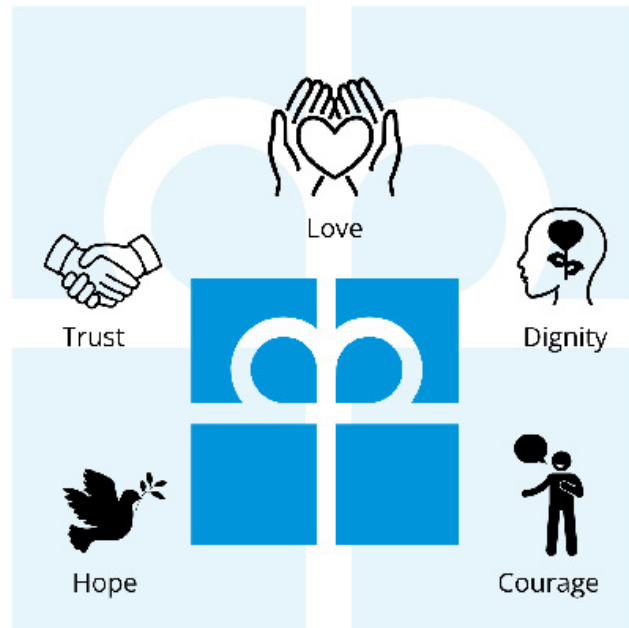
Eurodiaconia is a European network of churches and Christian NGOs providing social and healthcare services and advocating social justice.

WHO WE ARE

Eurodiaconia is a growing European network of churches and Christian NGOs with 61 national and regional organisations providing social and healthcare services, as well as advocating for social justice.

Eurodiaconia members provide diverse services to persons in need, working to see everyone live in dignity and their human rights are respected and protected. Services offered range from health care, childcare, elderly care, hospice and palliative care, youth inclusion programmes, employment and inclusion services to vulnerable groups such as migrants and Roma, housing services for persons experiencing homelessness and services to persons with disabilities. Eurodiaconia represents over 33 000 service centres, with approximately 1 000 000 staff and over a million volunteers are involved in providing diaconal services. For example one of our members Diakonie Deutschland is one of the largest providers of facilities for the care, support and persons in need in Germany. It offers 33 374 services and has a capacity of 1 018 000 beds/spaces, it employs approximately 627 349 qualified staff and has over 700 000 volunteers. Similarly, one of our members in Czechia, Slezska Diakonie, is one of the largest non-profit organisations providing quality social services in Český Těšín region. It offers more than 100 social services in more than 60 centres and has over 1200 employees. In France, our member Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP) represents approximately 370 member associations and foundations and provides more than 1000 services, with 24 000 employees and over 15 000 volunteers. These three organisations are just examples of the breadth of the delivery of the mission and vision of Eurodiaconia.

ORGANISATION VALUES



OUR MISSION AND VISION

Inspired by our Christian faith, our vision is of a Europe where social injustice is eradicated and each person is valued, included, and empowered to realize their fullest potential, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized. Together we work for just and transformative social change across Europe.

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INTRODUCTION

Anti-Gypsyism or Anti-Roma Racism is increasingly recognised as a key obstacle to the sustainable inclusion of Roma in society.¹ The historical roots of this particular form of racism run deep and continue to divide the largest ethnic minority in Europe from non-Roma citizens. Whilst important initiatives have been taken at EU level to address the issue, Roma continue to experience discrimination, segregation and violence.

Defining the term 'Anti-Gypsyism' or 'Anti-Roma Racism' and selecting appropriate terminology is challenging. Academics, activists, and international institutions have proposed varying definitions, however, there is no internationally agreed legal definition. A common thread across these definitions is that 'Anti-Gypsyism' is recognized as a specific form of racism against Roma. Eurodiaconia's Roma Inclusion Network recommends the use of the term 'Anti-Roma Racism' rather than 'Anti-Gypsyism', and therefore, we will use the first in the present Guidelines. The preference stems from the need to highlight the systemic and ethnic nature of discrimination against Roma, as well as to avoid terms historically rooted in derogatory or pejorative connotations. The term 'gypsy' is often associated with stereotypes and dehumanising language. However, to ensure clarity and alignment with existing EU policy language², we will use the term 'Anti-Gypsyism' in our policy focused publications.

Anti-Roma Racism refers to "a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigma 'gypsy' or other related terms, and incorporates:

- 1) a homogenising and essentializing perception and description of these groups;
- 2) the attribution of specific characteristics to them;
- 3) discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background, which have a degrading and ostracising effect and which reproduce structural disadvantages."³

Unlike other forms of racism, it carries a relatively high degree of social acceptance: prejudices and discriminatory attitudes are common especially in EU Member States with larger Roma populations and meet with little resistance as they are often perceived as justified and legitimate. Despite relevant initiatives at EU level, the FRA's 2021 Roma Survey reveals that the levels of discrimination against Roma have barely changed since 2016. While some countries or specific areas of life show a reduction in reported experiences of discrimination, a significant proportion of Roma across the EU still face widespread discrimination in various aspects of

¹ Following the European Commission's terminology and without denying heterogeneity, 'Roma' is used in this document as an umbrella term, encompassing a wide range of different people of Romani origin (e.g. Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels and Boyash/Rudari). It also encompasses groups such as Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as traveller populations. See 'EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030'

² See: European Commission (2020) [A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, COM \(2020\) 620 final](#)

³ Alliance Against Antigypsyism (2017) 'Antigypsyism. A reference paper', p. 5

life due to their ethnic background. One in four Roma face discrimination due to their ethnicity (25%), with underreporting on the rise.⁴ Moreover, nearly half of the population across EU member states (45%) expressed discomfort at the idea of having Roma as neighbours.⁵

Anti-Roma Racism has an adverse effect on the image of Roma in public discourse, preventing equal opportunities in education and on the labour market. It also obstructs Roma communities' hope for change, and it undermines the political willingness of decision-makers to take positive action publicly.

WHAT ROLE FOR DIACONAL ACTORS?

Eurodiaconia members, as diaconal actors and non-profit social service providers, are uniquely positioned to contribute to the efforts to tackle Anti-Roma Racism through their extensive work with communities in situations of vulnerability. Their focus on social inclusion, healthcare, empowerment, and advocacy enables them to address both immediate needs –such as the provision of shelter, accommodation or food aid–and systemic challenges–through counselling services, inclusive educational and vocational training, or training of public authorities, among others.

Since 2009, they have been regularly exchanging experiences and project methodology, contributing to EU advocacy on Roma inclusion in the context of Eurodiaconia's Roma Inclusion Network. In 2024, the Roma Inclusion Network gathered 14 Eurodiaconia members representing 10 diverse national realities in Budapest.⁶ The Network explored the role of non-profit social service providers and diaconal organisations in combating Anti-Roma Racism, as well as fostering trust within communities through inclusive educational environments, while identifying key opportunities for concrete action. The discussions also emphasised the importance of actively engaging Roma voices in shaping strategies and initiatives, ensuring that their perspectives are central to building trust and addressing systemic barriers.

Based on workshops, group discussions, and individual input, Eurodiaconia members revised and updated the "Guidelines on tackling Anti-Gypsyism" originally published in 2017 to reflect current realities.

HOW TO USE THESE GUIDELINES

These Guidelines outline key aspects of a diaconal strategy against Anti-Roma Racism offering diverse national insights and practical examples from Eurodiaconia membership. As such, the Guidelines are not intended to set out a one-size-fits-

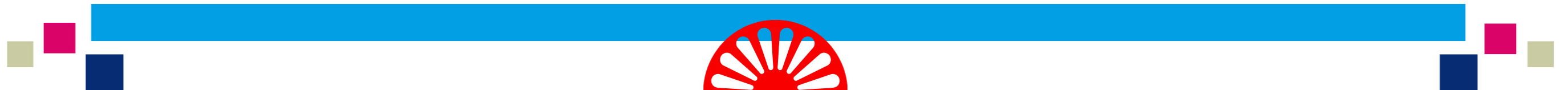
4 See: FRA (2022) '[Roma in 10 European countries. Main results](#)' p. 21-29

5 See: FRA (2019) '[Fundamental Rights Report](#)'

6 Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, and Spain.

all approach. Rather, they aim to illustrate the broad range of potential actions which can be undertaken in general; in practice, individual organisations and churches can select actions which best align with their own profile and expertise. Each thematic section of the Guidelines describes concrete initiatives suggested by members and is accompanied by a concrete project or service example.

The Guidelines are intended to be a flexible resource, which can be updated in accordance with new project ideas. We encourage our members to translate these Guidelines into their respective national languages for further dissemination.



I CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

The predominant manifestation of Anti-Roma Racism consists of pervasive prejudices and negative stereotypes. These stereotypes are simplifying the complex socio-economic and structural barriers that many Roma face (e.g. intergenerational cycles of poverty, social exclusion, lack of equal opportunities to access desegregated education and employment, or structural discrimination). Shifting the narrative from blaming and stereotyping towards understanding and addressing systemic challenges is crucial for transforming public discourse about Roma and promoting social inclusion.

- **Avoid victimisation:** Refrain from victimising Roma, which can disempower communities and undermine their role as agents of change
- **Stand against discrimination:** actively challenge Anti-Roma Racism manifestations whether in public spaces or within service provision.
- **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.
- **Educate on language:** Inform both the public and decision-makers about the impact of discriminatory language and the importance of respectful communication.
- **Organise capacity-building trainings on Anti-Roma Racism:** Provide training for staff and volunteers to deepen their understanding on Anti-Roma Racism, equipping teams with tools to actively challenge implicit biases and foster inclusivity within service provision and communication activities.
- **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

GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALISTS: HOW TO WRITE ABOUT ROMA MIGRANTS? DEACONESS FOUNDATION (FINLAND)⁷

Shifting the narrative and engaging on the media representation of Roma communities is key in combatting Anti-Roma Racism. The guidelines for journalists developed by the Helsinki Deaconess Institute in collaboration with the Sopiva Association of Mediation Journalist, is a valuable resource for promoting fair and accurate reporting.

The guide aims to support journalists in avoiding harmful stereotypes, using respectful and inclusive language, and ensuring that Roma voices are central in stories about their lives. They emphasise the importance of highlighting the systemic issues that Roma face, rather than perpetuating reductive narratives. Key recommendations include avoiding generalizations and stigmatising terms, contextualising stories to reflect structural inequalities and challenging implicit biases in reporting. This tool is a practical step towards reshaping public perceptions and responsible journalism.

The 9-step guide is accompanied by a list of links to source materials as well as a story from an expert by experience Roma about collaboration with journalists in Finland. In addition to the guide, Deaconess Foundation produced trainings for journalists regarding how to report on Roma migrants; they included analysing journalistic representations on migrant Roma as well as the social and historical discourses regarding Roma in the Finnish society.

⁷ See: [Guidelines for Journalist: How to write about Roma migrants?](#)



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** and challenge implicit assumptions of cultural superiority of societal majorities.
- **Raise awareness about the heterogeneity of Roma cultures and communities** by emphasising the individuality of its representatives and avoiding monolithic portrayals that reinforce harmful stereotypes. Recognise the diversity within Roma communities to ensure that those in most vulnerable situations (e.g. children, mobile Roma or Roma girls and women) are also represented.
- **Work with Roma, not just for Roma:** Ensure Roma are actively involved in all activities promoting solidarity and inclusion, following the principle of “no actions for Roma without Roma.” For instance, by recruiting Roma as employees and volunteers.
- **Collaborate with media outlets** to shape positive narratives and promote accurate, respectful representations of Roma culture and contributions.
- **Use storytelling to influence societal attitudes**, sharing real-life examples—both positive and challenging—to build empathy and reshape public perceptions.
- **Strengthen connections between Roma and non-Roma** to build up social networks, foster mutual understanding and promote inclusivity.

“THE ACCEPTED RACISM”⁸, KIRKENS BYMISJON (NORWAY)

“It feels like everyone sees us but pretends we don’t exist.”

Through the magazine - “The Accepted Racism”, Kirkens Bymisjon brings the hidden stories of migrant Roma to light, exposing how prejudice and systemic racism shape their access to housing, healthcare, and employment in Norway. Central to this initiative is the empowerment of Roma women, who were given disposable cameras to document their everyday lives on the streets of Oslo. The former shifts the focus from speaking about Roma to amplifying their own voices.

Combining storytelling and advocacy, the project seeks to challenge the normalized discrimination and social stigma that are pushing migrant Roma to the margins of society. By giving Roma migrants a platform to share their experiences, Kirkens Bymisjon is not only raising awareness but also creating opportunities for dialogue and change.

The project also calls for collective responsibility, encouraging public institutions, policymakers, and individuals to confront their biases and take concrete action toward inclusion. The voices shared are a reminder that fighting discrimination starts with listening to and elevating the stories of those who are marginalized.

“LET’S MEET ROMA”, ECUMENICAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION (EHO, SERBIA)

To foster positive changes in attitudes towards Roma communities, EHO engaged non-Roma individuals through an annual multicultural event to learn more about Roma. By sharing cultural, historical and traditional values, this initiative aims to promote empathy and challenge narratives towards marginalised communities. “Let’s meet Roma” is part of the project “Social inclusion for life in dignity of Roma and other socially vulnerable groups in Serbia 2023-2026”, supported by HEKS/EPER Switzerland.

In 2024, the “Let’s meet Roma” event featured a theatrical monodrama performed by a renowned Roma actress. The performance showed the complex challenges that Roma women face in different areas of life—highlighting the multiple forms of discrimination that Roma women endure, and the perspectives of non-Roma communities. The audience of 118 attendees at the Novi Sad premiere responded with tears and visible connection to the issues presented. Following the premiere, the monodrama was staged in two more municipalities in 2024, reaching an audience of 245 people. In 2025, the event will be expanded to four municipalities, with an expected audience of 400 people, further advancing efforts to reshape the societal perception of Roma communities.

⁸ See: [The Accepted Racism Publication](#) and [the website article](#)

III FOSTERING INCLUSIVE CHURCH COMMUNITIES

Historically, churches have played an ambivalent role in the Roma inclusion process. Across Europe, 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-Roma Racism, either by actively supporting its institutional proponents or by failing to raise their voices. In recent years, some churches, particularly in Scandinavian countries, have issued public apologies for their past actions or inaction. Today, churches have a unique opportunity to challenge discrimination and foster inclusion, sending a powerful message through their communities.

- **Challenge the discrimination of Roma within and beyond the church environments**, guided by the principle that all human beings were created in God's image and are therefore equal.
- **Empower, don't impose**: Shift the focus from working for Roma to working with Roma, emphasising empowerment and supporting them in making their own choices. Recognize their individual agency and avoid imposing preconceived notions of the "right path" or uniform solutions.
- **Inclusive and open communities**: Foster an approach that welcomes people of different religious affiliations into church communities and ensure services are open to everyone in need. Inclusivity strengthens trust and creates shared spaces for dialogue and collaboration.
- Encourage church communities to bridge the divide between Roma and non-Roma and to **develop partnerships with (pro-)Roma civil society organisations**.
- **Incorporate Roma into church life**: Explore ways to move beyond treating Roma purely as a target group of service provision. Create opportunities for Roma to become an integral part of the church, actively participating in leadership, worship and the proclamation of the Gospel.

THE ROMA MISSION, THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY (HUNGARY)

An initiative by the Reformed Church in Hungary, the Roma Mission supports Reformed congregations to become open and inclusive communities. The aim is to increase social solidarity and to lessen tensions between the majority society and minority groups.

The Mission provides training to pastors, teachers and co-workers on how to include Roma into church and society, disseminates information about Roma culture and challenges stereotypes. These trainings promote community development methods and holistic approaches. They aim to help congregations to shift from the "help to the Roma" to "live, plan and serve together with the Roma". Its website and publications share stories, good practices, and up-to-date information about the situation of Roma in Hungary. Besides organising national gatherings, the Mission also encourages congregations to reach out to Roma families and to organise meetings and joint actions, which help overcome grievances between different societal groups. A broad range of congregational projects provide educational support for Roma children from nursery to university level and promote inclusion and community life.

The national office of the Roma Mission has 6 staff members responsible for fund-raising, planning and project implementation across the whole country. Additionally, the work is supported by approximately 200 Roma and non-Roma volunteers. Individual congregations cooperate with municipalities, social institutions, schools and Roma communities. National cooperation takes place with church institutions and services, other NGOs and state bodies.



IV INCREASING THE SPACE FOR ROMA SELF-DETERMINATION

The Roma inclusion process, including the fight against Anti-Roma Racism, should not be shaped and implemented without meaningful Roma involvement. To become effective agents of change, Roma require equal opportunities in education, employment and representation in decision-making processes.

- **Promote equality in education.** Work with families, teachers, social workers, and community mediators to build inclusive communities and bridge educational gaps between Roma and non-Roma, and to safeguard equal opportunities for Roma children to access quality, inclusive and desegregated education to achieve their potential.
- **Promote employment opportunities for Roma** supporting initiatives that mainstream Roma inclusion within broader employment programs to tackle stereotypes and foster full societal participation. Encourage Roma to pursue their goals and aspirations by creating environments that encourage self-determination and self-belief.
- **Strengthen Roma representation:** Encourage organisations promoting Roma inclusion to hire Roma professionals for diverse roles, not limited to Roma-targeted activities. While Roma can act as mediators and improve the relation between Roma communities and public authorities, they should also be included in broader activities. Additionally, Roma with higher education degrees should be recruited for managerial and project coordination positions to take an active role in strategic decision-making. Junior level Roma employees should be supported in their educational and career paths.
- **Work alongside Roma communities,** acknowledging their agency and supporting their individual paths to empowerment, rather than prescribing a uniform solution.
- **Increase Roma representation at events:** Actively involve Roma in member events and Eurodiaconia activities. Ensure that Roma speakers, facilitators, and participants are included to represent their communities and perspectives.

ROMA GATE PROJECT, DEACONESS FOUNDATION (FINLAND)

The Roma Gate project, implemented from August 2020 to July 2023 under the ESF+, aimed to enhance the social inclusion of Roma migrants from Bulgaria and Romania in Finland. The Roma Gate was initiated at the request of Roma migrants living in Pietarsaari, responding to their concerns about insufficient daily support and a lack of cultural sensitivity toward their needs. The project sought to advance the participation of Roma in the city by improving their employability, education level, and social conditions, while fostering collaboration with local authorities. A key component of the project involved working closely with Roma to tailor the programs to their specific circumstances and creating a multicultural team.

Key activities included individual and group support, skills and language training, CV clinics, employment counselling, and networking with local schools and employers. The project also organized cultural sensitivity workshops and launched awareness raising campaigns to promote social inclusion. By improving Roma migrants' access to education, healthcare, and employment, and strengthening their participation in the local community, the Roma Gate project has contributed to the empowerment of Roma migrants in Pietarsaari.

FROM EDUCATION TO DECENT WORK, HEKS/EPER ROMANIA (SIBIU, ROMANIA)

HEKS/EPER Romania's projects are transforming the lives of marginalized communities, including Roma populations, by bridging gaps in education and employment. HEKS/EPER Romania offers a wide range of services, including career counselling and orientation, visits to companies, job mediation, and support for both students and vulnerable adults. These initiatives also focus on building capacity among school personnel and employers through training on inclusive practices, creating a comprehensive approach to breaking cycles of exclusion and fostering access to decent employment.

The recent project "From Education to Decent Work" in Sibiu County aimed at empowering socially disadvantaged groups through targeted activities. The project provided career counselling to 1,214 7th and 8th-grade students, counselling and recreational activities (girls and boys clubs) to 684 girls and 211 boys in 5th and 6th grades for continuing education, and job mediation for 11th-grade students from professional schools. It also offered counselling for more than 1000 parents, post-employment coaching for 107 new employees, and capacity-building for 100 teachers and school counsellors. Employers were engaged through training on diversity and inclusion, to facilitate workplace integration, with 61 representatives from 24 companies participating. By combining personalized support, advocacy, and collaboration with schools and employers including company visits, group counselling, workshops, and using a Career Planner platform, the project boosted students' confidence, academic performance, and motivation.

V RAISING AWARENESS OF ROMA CULTURE AND ROMA HISTORY

An important foundation for prejudice is the lack of reliable knowledge about Roma. Addressing this knowledge gap is crucial for breaking stereotypes, fostering mutual respect and shared understanding. Raising awareness about the history, diversity, traditions and values of Roma culture is important for transcending the current narrative and advancing social inclusion.

- **Increase public awareness of the systematic segregation, discrimination and persecution experienced by Roma** in the past, and continue to experience in the present. Emphasise the importance of learning from the past to avoid repeating it. Highlight key historical events, such as the Roma Holocaust, and address contemporary challenges, including discrimination and systemic exclusion.
- **Integrate Roma culture and history into education:** Advocate for the integration of Roma culture, history and heritage in national education frameworks, with a particular emphasis on countries with significant Roma populations and a long-standing history of Roma communities. Provide educators with specialised training and resources to teach these topics effectively.
- **Create accessible resources**, such as documentaries, podcasts, or exhibitions, that document Roma experiences throughout history and in contemporary contexts. Develop these resources **in collaboration with Roma communities and organisations**, ensuring their voices are central to the narratives and content. When possible, **expand outreach through social media** campaigns and digital platforms to engage younger generations.
- **Facilitate platforms for dialogue and learning** by organising conferences, exhibitions, and public lectures that celebrate the richness of Roma culture. Celebrating Roma cultural activities or festivals is also a bridge to build connections between Roma and non-Roma communities.
- **Encourage storytelling initiatives** that allow Roma to share their narratives while inviting non-Roma audiences to engage in open dialogue and promote mutual storytelling as a way to build understanding and empathy. **These can be hosted through community events or media platforms.**

ROMANI PODCAST, THE REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY AND HEKS/EPER (HUNGARY)⁹

In May 2022, HEKS/EPER and the Roma Mission of the Reformed Church in Hungary initiated a podcast channel called “aRoma Podcast” to promote dialogue on Roma-related topics. The show features Roma and non-Roma experts to discuss about key topics, such as education, culture, stereotypes, community-building, history and traditions, among others. Podcasts like “aRoma” are accessible tools for raising awareness and sharing knowledge, fostering a better understanding of Roma issues and amplifying Roma voices.

Podcast Topics	
1.	There is also space for Roma
2.	Inclusion = Christian Attitude?
3.	Stereotypes, prejudices – what does the Bible say about these?
4.	Who are the Roma? Roma History
5.	Roma spirituality
6.	Roma gastronomy
7.	Roma Holocaust
8.	The role of sport in communities
9.	The key to motivation
10.	Not belonging here yet or anymore
11.	Speaking of mourning – Roma traditions or preserved peasant customs?
12.	Romani language
13.	Media and Roma
14.	Treat your fellow human beings well - Roma and the police

⁹ Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@orszagosreformatusciganymi1158/podcasts>
 Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/3f4wKXyRXPwdJN1kDPDi8x>

RHOMANO KHER, KIRKENS BYMISJON (NORWAY)

Romano Kher, established in 2018, is a Roma cultural and resource centre in Oslo, Norway. The name “Romano Kher” translates to “the Roma house” in the Romani language. Kirkens Bymisjon, assisted Norwegian Roma representatives in the development of this initiative, and is the current centre operator. The centre offers a variety of programs and several initiatives to raise awareness of Roma culture.

- “Culture House”: Hosts events such as cultural days, film screenings, and storytelling evenings to showcase the diverse Roma culture to both minority and majority audiences.
- “Bridge Construction Service”: Provides individual guidance and skills development for public services, staffed by both Roma and non-Roma advisers. This service also advocates for behavioural and policy changes to advance on the inclusion of Roma in Norway.
- ‘Kelasame’: After-school program offering activities for children and young people, including homework assistance and sports teams, to support their educational and social development.
- ‘Nevimos Norvego’: A media platform producing content that highlights current issues affecting Roma in Norway and Europe, as well as showing Roma culture and food.

FIGHTING ANTI-ROMA RACISM THROUGH INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE PROVISION, KIRKENS BYMISJON (NORWAY)

Kirkens Bymisjon has been implementing a project aimed at combating anti-Gypsyism racism by raising awareness and providing accessible information about the Roma community. The initial phase of the project included the creation of a publication in 2022, which served as a foundational resource. Building on this, the 2025 project plan focuses on expanding efforts to disseminate knowledge and foster engagement. To ensure diverse perspectives and expertise, the project involves a reference group comprising several organizations and a professor from the University of Social Work.

In the second round of the project, Kirkens Bymisjon refined its core objectives to increase awareness about Roma people and actively combat anti-Roma racism, both at the public and institutional levels. Central to this effort was the development of a digital platform to house all materials related to anti-Roma racism, including a storytelling section that presents personal experiences of Roma migrants in

Norway, gathered through newly conducted qualitative and unstructured long-form interviews.

Another key component of the project was a series of five seminars was organized in collaboration with Roma guests at the emergency shelter, focusing on themes selected by the target group, including Roma culture and history, traditional crafts, identity, anti-Roma racism, and reporting discrimination. The project also produced an impactful presentation on anti-Roma racism, which has been adapted for diverse audiences and presented at conferences and has been incorporated as a lecture into a university curriculum.

VI COORDINATING ADVOCACY ACTIONS

The fight against Anti-Roma Racism requires a multifaceted approach, incorporating dialogue with institutions and decision-makers at the local, national and European level. Non-profit social service providers and diaconal organisations should engage in partnerships and coordinated action at different levels to ensure impact.

- **Monitor and evaluate relevant policies and legislation:** critically assess the development and implementation of key policies, such as National Roma Strategic Frameworks and Anti-Racism Frameworks. **Provide meaningful input** through tools like shadow reporting, highlighting the real-life impacts of these policies on Roma communities at local, regional and national levels.
- **Build strategic alliances:** Identify and engage relevant stakeholders in NGOs and public authorities to build alliances with other actors involved in Roma inclusion and human rights promotion to amplify advocacy efforts.
- **Empower Roma leaders as agents of change:** Involve Roma representatives/leaders in co-designing advocacy actions. Provide the necessary support to ensure their active participation and leadership in your advocacy initiatives.
- **Adopt a participatory advocacy approach:** engage directly with Roma communities to understand their needs and priorities, using accessible language to ensure goals and actions are clear—ensuring consistent engagement and transparent communication.
- **Invest into capacity-building:** Strengthen capabilities of government bodies, service providers and churches working with Roma to ensure they are addressing existing needs sensibly and effectively. Focus on empowering Roma individuals with the skills and knowledge to advocate for their own rights.
- **Incorporate a law enforcement angle into advocacy** by systematically reporting abuses against Roma, including those perpetrated by law enforcement officials, to ensure accountability and justice.

MOBILISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY, ECUMENICAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION (SERBIA)

The EHO has been implementing the “Mobilization and Development of the Roma Community” project in Serbia for several years, focusing on empowering Roma communities and improving their access to services. The 2021–2024 cycle targets 6 municipalities (Zabalj, Arandjelovac, Smederevska Palanka, Surdulica, Novi Sad, and Raska) and aims to build the capacity of Roma representatives, local institutions, and community stakeholders.

The project trains Roma representatives on essential topics like human rights, communication skills, and project writing, enabling them to identify and implement community-driven initiatives. Participants are selected based on their potential to improve their local environment and bridge gaps in access to services. Through collaboration with local governments, institutions, and NGOs, the project strengthens partnerships and enhances the capacity of Roma groups to advocate effectively.

In previous cycles, the project has supported Roma communities across 16 municipalities, resulting in the establishment of over 10 new civil society organisations and the implementation of more than 30 local initiatives. These include additional educational support for children, health workshops, settlement clean-ups, and the development of Local Action Plans (LAPs) for Roma inclusion. Local governments have also been mobilised to provide financial backing for these initiatives. The Project is supported by Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and is followed by a new cycle focused on Empowering Roma girls and Roma Women for 2024-2027.

SENSITIZATION TRAININGS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS, ECUMENICAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION (SERBIA)

Through the project “Social inclusion for life in dignity of Roma and other socially vulnerable groups in Serbia 2023-2026” supported by HEKS/EPER Switzerland, EHO’s team and legal experts are conducting trainings and workshops for public servants in seven municipalities. To drive meaningful behavioural change, they are educating civil servants about Roma communities—background, history, and culture—empowering them to act against the diverse manifestations of anti-gypsyism. Between 2023 to 2024, 280 public employees from state institutions participated in training sessions focused on anti-gypsyism, stereotypes and discrimination. By 2026, an additional 280 are expected to complete the trainings.

The partner municipalities have been encouraged to adopt and distribute an Anti-Discrimination Code to their staff. In this line, partnerships with National Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the Provincial Commissioner, the

local ombudsmen, and the Permanent Conference of Cities and Municipalities in Serbia have been established to implement common actions and strengthen trust in public institutions. These efforts have improved Roma communities' access to socio-economic rights.

Additionally, since discrimination is rarely reported, EHO is also empowering Roma and other vulnerable groups to identify and report discrimination by raising awareness about their rights and available protection mechanisms. To further strengthen these efforts, EHO's Group of Ambassadors Against Anti-Gypsyism organizes biannual meetings, bringing together Roma communities, partnering municipalities, legal experts, and civil society organizations to foster dialogue.

