



About the Network

The Roma Health Network is a free to join, non-statutory network established by Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations following the [12th meeting](#) of the European platform for Roma¹ inclusion. It includes organisations working with Roma communities in EU Member States and Candidate countries addressing social determinants² of health, fundamental rights and access to rights and services for improving Roma health, through research, advocacy, policy development, monitoring and community organising.

Mission

The Roma Health Network strives to close the gap in health between Roma and non-Roma by tackling the uneven distribution of environmental and social determinants responsible for physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Vision

Achieving social justice for Roma through a holistic approach towards Roma health including equal treatment in strategic areas such as healthcare and prevention, interrelations of health and education, housing, environment, employment and gender equality by increasing influential Roma and pro-Roma civil society participation in policy making at European, national and local levels with focus on public health policy.

Core values and principles

Transparency, accountability, participation, collaboration, synergy and intersectionality, collective action, impact, effectiveness, knowledge, expertise, common language and identity, respect, joint ownership, non-competitive environment, social justice and equity in the decision-making process, including social investment and political commitment.

Aim

The Roma Health Network aims to combat health inequalities faced by Roma communities in European Union Member States and Candidate Countries by improving the effectiveness of Roma related policies and mainstreaming Roma issues in relevant European and national policies for reaching greater impact on Roma health and safeguarding that such policies address the needs of Roma.

Objectives

The Roma Health Network aims to:

- **Create space** for policy dialogue and civil society cross-sectorial cooperation to develop mainstream and Roma-specific policies to improve Roma health
- **Encourage cooperation** beyond the healthcare sector to close the health gap between Roma and non-Roma through European and national advocacy, policy development, joint initiatives, capacity building and political and social empowerment

¹ Roma refers to the political term used by the Council of Europe and designates Roma communities, Sinti, Kale, Manouches, Gitanos, and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies and Travellers:
<http://a.cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/documents/Glossary%20Roma%20EN%20version%2018%20May%202012.pdf>

² According to the World Health Organization the social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels.

- **Address** social and environmental determinants of health responsible for health inequalities through advocacy, policy design and implementation, research (quantitative and qualitative; field research; participatory action research etc.), monitoring and reporting that may contribute to better analyse the state of health and the level of health inequalities experienced by the Roma population
- **Promote sustainable and holistic initiatives** at European and national level for reducing health inequalities throughout synergies between key policies, including public health, social policies, environment, agriculture, human rights protection

Goals

- Increasing critical awareness and understanding of Health inequalities among European and national policy makers
- Advancing health equity narratives concerning Roma population
- Building capacity of public health systems for addressing health inequalities faced by vulnerable groups, including Roma
- Strengthening national coalitions of public health organisations working with Roma, promoting knowledge exchange and good practices
- Increasing Roma and pro-Roma civil society capacities for participating in the decision making process and shaping relevant European and national policies that can positively impact Roma health
- Safeguarding that mainstream policies effectively address the needs of Roma
- Enhancing European and national initiatives that aim to tackle health inequalities, including best practices

Main activities of the Network

- Involving Roma Health Network's members in European advocacy in regards with public health and Roma related policies
- Engaging with European and national policy makers and relevant stakeholders
- Initiating policy dialogues with respective stakeholders for achieving positive policy changes
- Conduct research on Roma health inequality issues, its relation to housing and their effect on education
- Compose and submit policy recommendations to national and EU level policy makers
- Making Roma health a priority on EU and national level political agendas
- Developing and promoting political narratives on social and environmental determinants of Roma health
- Contributing to design, implementation and monitoring of public policies affecting Roma communities with focus on health
- Raising awareness of respective communities on recent health policies and their implications on everyday life
- Extend and strengthen the Network's national level reach out by engaging and liaising with relevant national and local stakeholders in respective countries
- Exchanging information, expertise and best practices through the Network's Annual Meeting in Brussels
- Organisation of webinars for capacity building, information exchange
- Coordination of joint advocacy actions on relevant issues identified by the Roma health network members
- Organisation of working group meetings and regular calls
- Undertaking joint initiatives involving members acting in different countries
- Designing and leading national advocacy and communication campaigns following joint actions/statements

Thematic areas

- Access to quality and sensitive healthcare, prevention, vaccination and affordable medicines
- Entitlement to healthcare
- Health indicators
- Roma Children's rights
- Early Childhood Development, including public policies for parental support and positive parenthood
- Chronic and non-communicable diseases, including cancer
- Nutrition and child's obesity
- Women's health, including sexual and reproductive rights
- Gender dimension of health inequalities
- Environmental health
- Emerging issues: communicable diseases, public health crisis, pandemics
- Discrimination and human rights violation
- The impact of climate change on Roma

Working groups will be formed according to the thematic priorities. Cross-country cooperation is prioritised.

Communication

The Network's communication will reflect the objectives of the Roma Health Network and aims to enhance the activities of its members in regards with health inequalities faced by Roma. It works towards increasing visibility of the network and facilitating its further development.

Internal communication:

- by mail online meetings and news feed

External communication:

- The Roma Health Network members contribute to disseminate information about the network through newsletter, social media, press release, blog articles and other communication channels
- Roma Health Network has its own webpage hosted by the European Public Health Alliance
- EPHA, as well as the Roma Health Network members will contribute to disseminating joint statements/open letters, position papers, policy briefings, reports released or endorsed by the Roma health network targeting national and local policy makers
- EPHA may provide support for disseminating articles, studies, reports conducted by the Roma Health Network
- Network members may contribute to EPHA's communication on Health inequalities according to their expertise through newsletter articles, blog articles, news feed.

Governance and Structure

Management and reporting

- The Roma Health Network is hosted by the European Public Health Alliance. EPHA is responsible for managing and coordinating the network and liaising with its members and partners at European level
- EPHA's Policy Coordinator for Health Inequalities is also the Coordinator of the Roma Health Network. The coordinator is accountable and reports to the EPHA Secretary General.

Role and responsibilities

The Roma Health Network Coordinator is responsible for:

- Implementation of the action plan, including coordination of working groups; promoting members' active participation in the network's activities

- Formulating proposals for advocacy actions, joint initiatives, statements, open letters, campaigns
- Coordination of the thematic working groups
- Identifying synergies and promoting possible cooperation between the Roma Health Network and EPHA members
- Highlighting emerging issues (i.e. through the mailing list), formulate proposals for initiatives or actions to other members, facilitate a timely and inclusive process for discussion

Roma Health Network Members are responsible for:

- Identifying and liaising with national partners, institutions and authorities
- Communication and dissemination of joint statements, open letters, policy briefings etc. at national and local levels

Membership and selection criteria

The Network welcomes members who wish to join efforts and strengthen the civil society cooperation for reducing health inequalities faced by Roma across Europe.

Moreover, members should:

- Share the vision, mission principles and values of the Network
- Contribute to reaching the goals, objectives and targets of the Network
- Support the further development of the Network
- Be engaged in promoting health equity or willing to do so
- Actively contribute to the work/activities of the Network
- Have strong commitment on public health/Roma Health
- Have proven expertise on Roma health and/or health inequalities

New members must complete the membership form and fulfil the selection criteria. Membership applications are approved by current members through an online voting system.

All members can participate in the working groups and activities of the Network and can propose initiatives to be developed.

Members can be:

- National public health organisations
- Health associations
- Patients groups
- Disease groups
- Roma and pro-Roma NGOs working on health related issues (promoting access to quality and sensitive healthcare and prevention; health indicators; public health advocacy; fundamental rights; discrimination in access to healthcare; monitoring and reporting, early childhood development)
- National health professionals networks (Roma and non-Roma)
- Environmental health organisations
- Researchers
- Academia
- Advocates
- Roma and pro-Roma activists
- Other (if they represent an added value for the network's development)