



Prioritising Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation in Europe's recovery from Covid-19

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Health equity for Romani people in the context of Europe's recovery and resilience

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What is ERGO Network?

- European umbrella organization of **31 national members** representing grassroots Roma communities across Europe, founded in 2008.
- *Objective:* to **combat antigypsyism, poverty, and inequality** and to **strengthen Roma civil society** and participation in decision making at local, national and European level.
- Advocates for **better policies** on national and European level, organises public debates and campaigns, **builds the capacity of Roma activists**, and provides spaces for networking and mutual learning.



Snapshot: Roma in Europe

- **The umbrella-term 'Roma'** covers diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Travellers, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal.
- An estimated **10 to 12 million Roma live in Europe**, of which approximately 6 million are citizens or residents of the EU.
- *Key figures:* 80% at risk of poverty; 41% report experiencing antigypsyism; only 43% in paid employment; poor health, education, and housing indicators compared to the majority (*EU FRA*)



Impact of Covid-19 on Roma communities

- Second half of 2020 - research on **the impact of Covid-19 and associated measures on Roma communities in Europe.**
- **1352 respondents** from seven EU Member States (BE, BG, CZ, HU, IE, RO, SK), five Western Balkan countries (AL, B&H, NM, KO, RS) and Turkey.
- Main conclusion:

*Despite some positive responses regarding immediate measures taken by some governments to assist vulnerable groups, including Roma and Travellers, **the pandemic disproportionately hit these communities.***

⇒ Access the full study [here](#)

⇒ Watch a short animated video of the key findings [here](#)



Impact of Covid-19 on Roma communities

- No access to basic **sanitation** / **hygiene** facilities and products
- Unsuitable, overcrowded, damp, dark **accommodations**
- Poorer state of **health**, prevalence of underlying conditions
- Could not access **medical care** or medicines when sick
- Could not leave homes to secure **food** and necessities
- Ineligible for **replacement income** schemes; many are self-employed / work in informal sectors (crafts, artists, agriculture)
- Difficulty in accessing **online education** because of lack of infrastructure, equipment, and skills (digital divide)
- Worsening **antigypsyism**: scapegoating by general public and the media for the pandemic, police brutality



The Roma in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)

- Engagement with the **drafting of the National Plans**, stakeholder consultation processes, desk officers in the European Commission, European Semester Officers
- Parallel, similar engagement with **National Roma Frameworks**, prepared in the same time – what synergies?
- Detailed **review of 11 National Recovery and Resilience Plans (AT, BE, CZ, FR, DE, HU, IE, LT, RO, SK, ES)**.
- To what extent were the Roma included in national reforms and investments to be supported through the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility?

⇒ ***Read the full synthesis report [here](#).***



The Roma in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)

KEY MESSAGE 1

Only 5 of the 11 reviewed NRRPs (CZ, HU, RO, SK ES) explicitly refer to the Roma, despite the dire situation most of them were facing even before the pandemic, now much worsened.

Our members deem most measures welcome, but insufficient to tackle root causes of exclusion.



The Roma in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)

KEY MESSAGE 2

None of the 11 NRRPs reviewed includes any references to antigypsyism.

More than half (7/11) also do not mention discrimination or racism.

Those that do refer to discrimination only take into account gender equality, disability, sexual orientation, or migrant background.



The Roma in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)

KEY MESSAGE 3

The EU and National Roma Frameworks are absent from most (8/11) of the NRRPs reviewed (AT, BE, CZ, FR, DE, IE, LT, ES).

When they are mentioned (HU, RO, SK), these are general references or problem statements, rather than concrete measures to bring about change.



The Roma in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)

KEY MESSAGE 4

None of the 11 Plans reviewed appears to prioritise social inclusion or vulnerable groups

This is highly disappointing, but not surprising in a context where there was no earmarked minimum amount for social spending in the European Commission Guidance on the NRRPs.



The Roma in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)

KEY MESSAGE 5

All of our national respondents in 11 Member States indicated that the engagement of civil society in the drafting of the NRRPs was of poor quality.

Main criticisms include lack of information, unclear process, tight deadlines, lack of resources, and non take-up of submitted input.



The way forward

- Member States must **step up investment in public health!**
- **Vulnerable groups must be prioritized** in all recovery efforts, starting by guaranteeing access to vaccination!
- Health = one of the 4 thematic objectives of the EU Roma Strategic Frameworks – but **comprehensive, wrap-around support is needed**, including housing, education, employment + poverty-reduction, combatting antigypsyism, fostering participation!
- The **implementation of the NRRPs must be aligned with that of the National Roma Frameworks**, as well as other initiatives (European Pillar of Social Rights, Child and Youth Guarantee etc) + Cohesion Policy!
- (Pro-)Roma **civil society must be key partners** in this process, alongside Roma communities themselves!





Thank you for your attention!

- **Find** out more: www.ergonetwork.org
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