

## CONTRIBUTION

# How Could the Future EU Anti-Racism Strategy Contribute to Combatting Antigypsyism and Discrimination against Roma?

June 2025

The European Network on Roma Equality under EU Funds (EURoma Network) has been working since 2007 to foster an increased and effective use of European Cohesion Policy Funds (notably ESF/ESF+ and ERDF) to advance the social inclusion, equal opportunities and fight against discrimination of Roma people across the EU, through mutual learning, generation of knowledge and awareness-raising activities. To this end, the Network brings together public authorities responsible for Roma policies (i.e. National Roma Contact Points) and those in charge of European Cohesion Policy Funds from 15 EU Member States, as well as the European Commission. The Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), which is responsible for the Network's Technical Secretariat, leads and coordinates the Network.

This document outlines the EURoma Network's contribution to the European Commission's call for evidence and public consultation to seek stakeholders' views on the upcoming EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030. It aims to contribute to increasing the effectiveness of this Strategy in combatting the discrimination and the specific form of racism, known as antigypsyism, experienced by Roma across the EU.

### 1. Introduction

As set out in President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines for 2024-2029, the European Commission (EC) intends to develop a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms and manifestations of racism across the EU beyond 2025, giving continuation to the five years of implementation of the first-ever [EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025](#). The Strategy will outline a series of non-legislative measures and actions aimed at addressing interpersonal and structural racism, the latter of which is embedded in institutional rules, norms, routines and behaviours at EU, national, regional and local levels.

EURoma Network welcomes the elaboration of a new EU Anti-Racism Strategy for 2026-2030. This Strategy should be crucial for building a more inclusive and equitable society that upholds the fundamental rights of all individuals, including Roma. It should reinforce the protection of rights holders (in cases of institutional and interpersonal racism) and develop targeted policies and measures to tackle structural racism and discrimination in key sectors such as employment, education and housing.

Against this background and in light of the European Commission's current call for evidence and public consultation processes, the EURoma partners have discussed and agreed on a set of key proposals for the future EU Anti-Racism Strategy to maintain and reinforce the fight against the racism and discrimination faced by Roma across the European Union (EU). These proposals are based on the discussions within the Network and the experience of partner countries.

They build upon the outcomes and proposals already set out in the European Commission's Report on the implementation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025<sup>1</sup>, as well as on the proposals included in the public consultation questionnaire.

## 2. EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025

The introduction of the EU's first Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020–2025), which includes the development of National Action Plans Against Racism (NAPARs), is considered an **important step forward in putting racial discrimination in the political agenda**. It is also worth noting the specific consideration of the Roma as one of the target groups suffering discrimination, hate speech (including online), hate crime and antigypsyism (the specific form of racism against the Roma). **However**, according to most EURoma partners, **the Action Plan has so far delivered limited added value in addressing racism and discrimination against Roma. They remain persistently high and have even worsened in some cases**, as illustrated in the next section.

Further efforts are needed to tackle antigypsyism, as well as other forms of racism, and to increase the focus on victims, ensuring they receive adequate support. Furthermore, enhancing the effectiveness of efforts to combat racism and discrimination will contribute to greater progress in addressing unequal opportunities. This interconnection is particularly important for the Roma and must be further strengthened in the upcoming strategy to ensure that equal rights are effectively protected. In general, there is a need to improve monitoring of the implementation of the NAPARs.

There is also **room for improvement as regards the cooperation between the coordinators of the NAPARs and the National Roma Contact Points (NRCs) as well as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)/European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Managing Authorities**. While cooperation does exist in some cases, particularly with the NRCs, it remains limited, being considered regular and meaningful in only a few Member States. This **impacts the alignment between the NAPARs and the National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs), and between the NAPARs and EU funds**. Stronger alignment and coordination are needed in order to join forces and address the shared objectives of the NAPARs and NRSFs with regard to combating discrimination and promoting equality.

In this context, **action at the EU level is considered essential, as are close, coordinated efforts with Member States and relevant stakeholders** to address these challenges. **Mutual learning and exchange between countries** is also seen as an essential tool and driver of progress.

The **European Commission's Report on Implementation of EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025**<sup>2</sup>, published in 2024, also offers relevant information on the progress made and well as on the remaining challenges as regards policies, practices and initiatives, including those related to Roma. The report stresses several areas of progress as regards the fight against racism at both EU and Member State levels, particularly through the adoption of dedicated NAPARs (or the integration of anti-racism measures in broader national policy frameworks) and the implementation of supporting legislative and policy measures. It also refers to stronger enforcement of the Racial Equality Directive, including legal action against some Member States over discriminatory practices such as the segregation of Roma children in schools. Furthermore, it reports how national equality bodies have been empowered with broader mandates to support victims and uphold anti-discrimination laws more effectively. Efforts to address institutional discrimination and hate are also acknowledged, rebuilding trust in law enforcement, undermined by cases of racial profiling and excessive force.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/4968fa88-5350-48d9-bf36-abd3c0142aa8\\_en?filename=Report%20Antiracism.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/4968fa88-5350-48d9-bf36-abd3c0142aa8_en?filename=Report%20Antiracism.pdf) (English version)  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52024DC0419> (all language versions)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.euromanet.eu/news/report-on-implementation-of-eu-action-plan-2020-2025-and-national-plans-against-racism-and-discrimination/>

While acknowledging the progress made, it also points out to persisting challenges or areas where further progress would be needed, including inadequate funding and limited involvement of the communities most affected by racism, as well as the fight against the surge in racism, xenophobia and hate crimes across the EU, which is stressed as a source of concern. To more effectively address structural racism, the EC advocates for the harmonised collection of data disaggregated by ethnic background, despite remaining reluctance from some Member States. It also stresses the importance of training for police and urges Member States to expand such initiatives.

**Insights gained from the implementation of the current EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020–2025) can help sustain and strengthen effective approaches, while also tackling ongoing challenges and closing existing gaps.**

### **3. Why strengthening the fight against racism and discrimination faced by Roma in future EU Anti-Racism Strategy?**

Despite some overall progress, vulnerable groups still face widespread and persistent racism and discrimination, in particular when it comes to accessing employment, education, healthcare and housing. This remains especially true for Roma, as evidenced in numerous reports.

The **2023 Eurobarometer survey on discrimination in the EU**<sup>3</sup> shows that **Roma people experience the most widespread discrimination of all the groups considered**: 65% of respondents believe that widespread discrimination on the basis of being Roma exists in their country (an increase of 4 percentage points since the 2019 Eurobarometer survey<sup>4</sup>). Of all the vulnerable groups surveyed, Roma people are the most likely to experience discrimination and harassment in relation to health services (23% of them have experienced discrimination) and in the use of social services (also 23%). Roma also often experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace, in public spaces and when looking for housing (around 15% of Roma report having experienced discrimination in all of these areas). The Eurobarometer survey also found that 67% of the Europeans would not feel comfortable having daily contact with a Roma person in the workplace. Within the education system, 73% of Europeans believe that the educational curriculum should include information on Roma culture and history.

On the other hand, reports published by the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** reveal alarming data on discrimination against the Roma population. The 2021 Roma Survey<sup>5</sup>, which covers 10 countries, shows that the overall 12-month prevalence of discrimination on the grounds of being Roma remains high at 25 % (a figure that is almost identical to the 26% recorded in the 2016 FRA EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU MIDIS II) <sup>6</sup>, which covered all 28 EU Member States). The 2021 Survey also reveals significant under-reporting of this discrimination, with only 5% of victims reporting or filing a complaint about their most recent discriminatory incident because of being Roma. This represents an ongoing, and even worsening, trend compared to the 2016 EU-MIDIS II, where only 16% of victims reported such incidents.

In the context of **education**, it is important to acknowledge that Roma parents, guardians and pupils frequently encounter discrimination based on their Roma identity when interacting with school authorities (11% in the 10 countries surveyed in 2021 and 7% in the 28 countries surveyed in 2016). Furthermore, according to their parents or guardians, a worrying proportion of Roma children (one in five) experienced hate-motivated bullying because of their Roma background in the countries surveyed in the 2021 Survey. This percentage is slightly

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<sup>3</sup> <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972>

<sup>4</sup> <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2251>

<sup>5</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results2\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-roma-survey-2021-main-results2_en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf)

lower than in the 2016 Survey, which showed that 27% of Roma children had experienced this type of bullying because of their Roma origin.

In terms of **employment**, it is worth noting that one in three Roma over the age of 16 experienced discrimination due to their ethnicity when looking for work in the last 12 months in the countries surveyed in the 2021 Survey. This figure is more than double the percentage reported in the 2016 EU-MIDIS II Survey, where 16% of Roma respondents said they had experienced discrimination due to their ethnic background when looking for work.

In terms of **accessing healthcare services**, 14% of Roma experienced discrimination due to their ethnic background in the 2021 Survey, compared to 8% in the 2016 Survey.

A significant proportion of the Roma also face discrimination when seeking **accommodation**. Almost one quarter (24%) of those surveyed in 2021 reported experiencing discrimination due to their Roma ethnicity when looking for housing in the previous five years. This figure was even higher in the 2016 Survey, with 41% reporting that they had suffered discrimination when seeking accommodation.

#### 4. Proposals on how the future EU Anti-Racism Strategy could further contribute to combating antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma

Against this background, EURoma Network puts forward five specific proposals to strengthen the efforts to tackle the antigypsyism and discrimination encountered by Roma:

1. **Inclusion of a dedicated chapter on discrimination against Roma and antigypsyism**
2. **Enhancement of governance mechanisms to improve coordination and cooperation**
3. **Advancement of legislative developments specifically addressing antigypsyism**
4. **Strengthening of victim support services as a key measure to combat racism**
5. **Strengthened EU-level support and monitoring to ensure antigypsyism is effectively addressed within NAPARs**

##### 4.1. Inclusion of a dedicated chapter on discrimination against Roma and antigypsyism

Including a dedicated chapter on the specific situation of Roma would **ensure a more targeted focus and action**. By explicitly addressing the racism and discrimination suffered by Roma people, as well as the measures needed to combat it, the positive impact over the next five years will be strengthened.

As mentioned in the public consultation, the consequences of racism and racial discrimination for racialised individuals and groups are numerous and affect all areas of life. Consequently, this dedicated chapter, as well as the EU Anti-Racism Strategy as a whole, must address the various forms of racism, including incidents of racial discrimination and racist stereotypes (whether committed by individuals or at an institutional level), which manifest in key areas such as work, the economy, inclusive education, housing, access to justice and policing, and hate speech and hate crime.

In particular, **the chapter on the Roma should include information and data illustrating the racism and discrimination they face in different areas.** These include:

- Discrimination incidents and hate crimes in the different fields (e.g. employment, education, housing, social media, policing....), whether committed by individuals (interpersonal anti-gypsyism) or at an institutional level (institutional anti-gypsyism).
- The most widespread forms of structural anti-gypsyism requiring further attention, such as school segregation, segregated settlements and substandard housing. Persistent stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies that negatively portray Roma people in these areas should also be considered.

Based on this analysis, the dedicated chapter on Roma should **set out specific measures to address the situation in the different areas and specifically the challenges identified.** These measures should cover policy, legislative and institutional frameworks, as well as contribute to transforming predominant narratives, combatting stereotypes and promoting a realistic, diverse and current image of the Roma population, as well as to encourage mutual understanding and coexistence. These measures should help address incidents of discrimination and hate crimes, as well as forms of structural anti-gypsyism.

Possible actions may include supporting the creation and sharing of innovative approaches and methodological tools (including pilot projects), promoting awareness-raising initiatives, and advancing research and innovation in anti-racism tools aimed at developing evidence-based methods to understand, assess and combat various forms of racism.

**Member States should also include a specific chapter on Roma in their respective NAPARs/anti-racism measures.**

The **specific situation of Roma women**, who suffer intersectional discrimination because of their Roma identity and their gender, should be taken into account. More broadly, it is important to recognise that racial discrimination interacts with discrimination on other grounds, particularly with regard to the sex/gender dimension of racism.

## **4.2. Enhancement of governance mechanisms to improve coordination and cooperation**

The objectives of the future Anti-Racism Strategy must be **aligned with existing frameworks, such as the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation and initiatives like the EU Child Guarantee.**

Looking ahead, it will also be essential to establish **coordination and cooperation mechanisms with upcoming EU strategies and plans**, such as the Affordable Housing Initiative and the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy. In order to achieve the EU's targets in sectoral policies, cross-cutting interventions that dismantle discriminatory and racist barriers must be implemented to ensure equitable access to services and rights. In short, the anti-racism perspective needs to be better integrated into certain EU policy areas, both from a preventive and proactive perspective. Mainstreaming anti-racism into EU policy frameworks -and ensuring its effective translation into sectoral national policies-is essential for combating the racism (including structural racism, as well as incidents of discrimination and hate crimes) experienced by Roma and other marginalised groups. This continues to prevent them from fully enjoying their fundamental rights, including access to education, employment, adequate housing and healthcare.

In order to improve the effectiveness of public policy implementation and achieve the intended impact, **stronger and more effective governance mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between the bodies coordinating the NAPARs and those in charge of these sectoral policies are essential.**



Cooperation with **equality bodies**, as key actors in promoting equal treatment and combatting discrimination, should also be acknowledged. The contribution of other relevant stakeholders to combatting racism and discrimination should also be recognised.

As regards the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, **the NRCPs and the bodies responsible for implementing the future Anti-Racism Strategy must establish regular, meaningful and formal dialogue and coordination processes for programming, implementing and monitoring actions. Coordination with the ESF+ and ERDF authorities** is also important to ensure alignment with EU Funds.

#### 4.3. Advancement of legislative developments specifically addressing antigypsyism

We fully agree with the Commission's proposal to **prioritise support for the implementation of the EU legal framework** combatting discrimination, racism, xenophobia, hate speech and hate crime in the coming years.

Furthermore, **anti-racist legislation needs to be developed further to include antigypsyism and introduce the latest human rights standards in the fight against different forms of discrimination**, including intersectional discrimination, online hate speech and algorithmic bias. The most recent legislation in this regard is Directive 2000/43, so updating the legislation seems necessary.

#### 4.4. Strengthening of victims support services as a key measure to combat racism

Providing robust support for victims of discrimination and racism is fundamental to combatting racism effectively. While this element is included in the current EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, greater prominence must be given to it and it must be implemented more effectively. Support services for victims play a vital role in this effort.

Consequently, **robust legal provisions that guarantee sufficient competencies** - including an increased capacity for strategic litigation- **and adequate funding allocations** are essential for their effective functioning. **Combining EU funding with national resources** could help to achieve these goals.

Furthermore, the **Roma must be explicitly recognised, and targeted programming of specific measures, actions and indicators** must be implemented to ensure these services effectively meet the needs of Roma victims of racism and discrimination.

This approach aligns with the provisions set out in recent EU Directives aimed at strengthening the role of national equality bodies across all Member States ([EU 2024/1499](#) & [EU 2024/1500](#)).

#### 4.5. Strengthened EU-level support and monitoring to ensure antigypsyism is effectively addressed within NAPARs

The **European Commission should increase its support for, and cooperation with, Member States in their efforts to implement future NAPARs**. It should play a stronger role in enhancing capacity and overseeing the incorporation and implementation of Roma-related measures into national strategies, ensuring that discrimination faced by Roma and antigypsyism are effectively addressed into future national anti-racism strategies.

To this end, it is crucial to **move towards a harmonised approach to equality data collection across the EU**. This could be achieved by drafting a recommendation on equality data collection and providing clear guidelines at local, regional and national levels to establish a data collection system with all the necessary

safeguards, including disaggregated data. Additionally, it would also be relevant to collect, promote, share and support the analysis of data on the prevalence of different stereotypes among Roma people in the EU. Furthermore, the role and powers of the EU Anti-Racism Coordinator should be enhanced in order to fulfil the assigned duty of ensuring the correct implementation of anti-racist policies by both EU institutions and Member States.

The European Commission could **facilitate mutual learning and the exchange of practices between Member States in the fight against racism**. The **EURoma Network will continue playing its role as platform for engaging partners in mutual learning and the exchange of positive experiences** in countering the discrimination of Roma people and antigypsyism, as well as on how the use of EU funds can play a critical role in this endeavour.

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