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**The situation of Roma and Travellers<sup>1</sup> in the context of rising extremism, xenophobia and the refugee crisis in Europe**

Current Affairs Committee  
 Rapporteur: <sup>2</sup> John WARMISHAM, United-Kingdom (L, SOC)

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*Summary*

The report assesses the situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe five years after Congress Resolution 333 (2011) on “Roma inclusion as a challenge for local and regional authorities”. It underlines that, despite numerous efforts, the circumstances not only have not improved, but appear to have worsened during the refugee crisis. Although Roma and Travellers had been suffering from exclusion and discrimination long before the refugee crisis started, and the direct impact of the crisis is limited, the indirect effects, such as eroding social cohesion and rise in violent crimes and hate speech, pose new problems to this vulnerable group. Local and regional authorities are at the forefront of responding to these new challenges, as they bear a great responsibility for the social inclusion of Roma and Travellers.

The Congress reminds local and regional authorities of their responsibility to create the conditions for access to economic and social rights for Roma and Travellers, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of human rights standards and encourages them to fight anti-Gypsyism, be it social or institutional, by publicly denouncing hate speech, violence and discrimination against Roma and Travellers, and by providing legal support to victims, which will help to ensure their security and well-being as European citizens. Member States are invited to keep Roma and Traveller inclusion policy as a priority, to provide local and regional authorities with the means that will enable their work for social inclusion, to take a firm stance against anti-Gypsyism and to put in place anti-discrimination legislation.

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1 The term “Roma and Travellers” is being used to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

2 L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions  
 EPP/CCE: European People’s Party Group in the Congress  
 SOC: Socialist Group  
 ILDG: Independent and Liberal Democrat Group  
 ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group  
 NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

**RESOLUTION 403(2016)<sup>3</sup>**

1. The current refugee crisis has shaken the political landscape in Europe, especially in the European Union, the member States of which are the main receiving countries for refugees. The priorities of politicians, institutions and civil society on all levels have focussed on managing the influx of refugees, organising their transfer to their destination countries, allocating those already on European soil between countries and settling them.

2. This development has not left European societies untouched. While many civil society organisations and individuals all over Europe tried their best to manage the situation by providing humanitarian aid and support for integration measures, large parts of European societies have felt anxious, disappointed by the inappropriate response by political leaders at all levels, developing xenophobic reactions towards what they perceived as foreign and a threat.

3. Roma and Travellers have been regarded as foreigners and outsiders in Europe for the longest time. Anti-Gypsyism<sup>4</sup> is one of the main reasons why their general situation is not improving, apart from small instances of progress in some countries.<sup>5</sup> Anti-Gypsyist policies harm inclusion efforts as deeply rooted stereotypes prevent politicians from committing to Roma and Traveller inclusion policies on all levels.

4. This unfortunate tradition of excluding Roma and Travellers from the majority society and thereby constructing the image of the societal outcast seems to have been exacerbated by the outbreak of the financial and economic crisis in 2008 that led to painful cuts in welfare budgets of many European States and subsequently to a corrosion of social cohesion. Not only were Roma and Traveller inclusion efforts one of the victims of the austerity measures, the need for scapegoats led to a rise in hate speech and violent attacks against them.

5. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe had already expressed concern in 2011, in its Resolution 333<sup>6</sup> on the situation of Roma in Europe as a challenge for local and regional authorities, and stated that local and regional authorities have “a duty to take effective action at the local level and must show leadership and vision, as well as win support from all sections of the community for addressing Roma issues in order to remedy the situation of the social exclusion of Roma.”

6. The current refugee situation has impacted a continent that has not yet recovered from the crisis. Roma and Traveller inclusion policies that were already affected by the financial and economic crises are now even more at risk of being demoted and losing the priority status that these inclusion policies for Europe’s largest minority enjoyed on the European and national levels. There is a risk that political commitment for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers might be regarded as secondary, and Roma and Travellers discarded in the current context of rising racism and xenophobia that has been exacerbated by the inadequate response to the refugee situation. This risk of Roma and Travellers being deprioritised persists in spite of international commitment for their inclusion.

7. However, the arrival of one million refugees in Europe should not be seen exclusively as a threat. Many studies suggest that a good proportion of the newcomers are young, well-educated and willing to build a new life with their own hands. European states should be aware that the refugee crisis might yield economic advantages for all sides. This observation holds also partially true for Roma and Travellers. Like the majority of refugees, the average age of Roma and Traveller populations is lower than that of the majority population. In some member States Roma constitute around 10% of the population. Given that a great part of this Roma population is very young, Europe has a considerable economic asset at its disposal, which is yet to be mobilised.

8. In the Strasbourg Declaration of 2010, the Council of Europe reinforced its long-standing commitment and urged member States to strengthen their efforts to make this inclusion a reality in Europe. In March 2016, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Thematic Action Plan on the

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3 Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 20 October 2016 and adopted by the Congress on 21st October 2016, 3rd sitting (see Document [CPL31\(2016\)03final](#), rapporteur: John WARMISHAM, United-Kingdom (L, SOC)).

4 Anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination. – European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), GPR 13, 2011.

5 See, for example, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/107406?download=true>

6 <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1855297&direct=true>

Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019),<sup>7</sup> which lists the fight against anti-Gypsyism, the support of vulnerable groups and solutions at the local level as priorities.

9. The local and regional authorities have a responsibility to implement policies that will ensure access for Roma and Travellers to social rights in the fields of housing, education, employment and healthcare, as well as empowerment and political participation through numerous activities that can be implemented on the local and regional level.

10. In light of the above, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities calls on local and regional authorities to:

a. implement measures suggested by Congress Resolution 333 (2011);

b. address the social, economic and security needs of Roma and Traveller citizens by specific measures that include the following:

i. with regard to social and economic rights, to implement measures that will ensure access for Roma and Travellers to social rights in areas that fall within the competence of local authorities including education, employment, housing and health services, and to encourage local authorities to make use of the available social funding instruments to provide special education and vocational training opportunities for Roma and Traveller youth;

ii. with regard to the safety and well-being of Roma and Traveller citizens to:

- publicly condemn, identify and implement measures to combat public manifestations of anti-Gypsyism that can take the form of hate speech, discrimination, threats, intimidation and racially motivated violence, whether by individuals, organised groups or by local elected representatives themselves;

- design specific measures to guarantee the safety and well-being of Roma and Traveller women, children and youth as especially vulnerable groups.

iii. with regard to the fight against anti-Gypsyism and the access to justice to:

- take action to combat ignorance, myths and stereotypes concerning Roma and Travellers among the non-Roma population;

- discontinue all discriminatory practices which can be regarded as manifestations of institutional anti-Gypsyism, such as school segregation, forced evictions and expulsions;

- set up specialised institutions, such as local legal clinics to, effectively and at little or no cost support victims of anti-Gypsyism in the pursuit of justice;

- provide training for local government personnel such as administrative staff, social workers, municipal police forces or other security forces, that are likely to deal with cases related to anti-Gypsyism to acknowledge it, report it, and effectively and sensitively help the victims;

- develop local educational and intercultural initiatives bringing together Roma and Traveller and non-Roma youth, to facilitate cultural exchange, to spread knowledge and awareness of Roma and Traveller culture, language and history;

c. make efforts to turn the prevailing political and social crisis situation exacerbated by phenomena such as violent extremism and the refugee influx into an opportunity for local communities to review their integration strategies and policies in order to systematically address the Roma and Traveller inclusion dimension;

d. exchange information on and implement or adapt the successful examples of Roma and Traveller integration across the continent with particular emphasis on participation, engaging with the leaders of the Roma community to work in partnership with local and regional authorities, as well as establish structures to ensure the voice of Roma and Travellers is heard (including the voice of women and young people), either in the form of specific consultative bodies, or by involving Roma and Travellers in representative bodies for minorities and community groups generally;

e. in the same spirit, promote and support the development or strengthening of local Roma and Travellers associations that can mobilise and articulate this voice in appropriate forums as well as act as partners for the local authority;

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<sup>7</sup> [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c5a1d](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805c5a1d)

*f.* seek collaboration with local and regional authorities in other member States to promote mutual learning through networks such as the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers, set up as an initiative of the Congress.

**RECOMMENDATION 388(2016)<sup>8</sup>**

1. In its declaration of 1 February 2012,<sup>9</sup> the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe expressed its concern over the rise of anti-Gypsyism, anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against Roma in Europe. It called on governments and public authorities to swiftly and publicly condemn incidents of hate speech or hate crime, as well as to ensure national strategies for social inclusion in the field of housing, education, health care and employment have a strong component on anti-discrimination, for which it called on member States to implement anti-discrimination legislation.

2. In its Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)5 the Committee of Ministers recommended to member States to adopt coherent, comprehensive and adequately resourced national and regional strategies with short- and long-term action plans, targets and indicators for implementing policies that address legal and social discrimination against Roma and Travellers and enforce the principle of equality; to monitor the implementation of these strategies and to include relevant stakeholders such as regional and local authorities, self-governing bodies, Roma and Traveller organisations and the broader public in the implementation.

3. Resolution 1740(2010) of the Parliamentary Assembly on the situation of Roma in Europe called on member States to adopt national action plans and strengthen their efforts for their implementation, not least by ensuring implementation at the local level.

4. The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe has underlined that he has “encountered one serious human rights problem in practically every member state - the prolonged exclusion and discrimination of the Roma population”, which he said could be reversed with a little political will.<sup>10</sup> In a recent statement, he called on member States to fight racism and discrimination against Travellers, whose way of life is still not respected in many member States of the Council of Europe.<sup>11</sup>

5. In light of the above, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, keeping in mind all recommendations issued by the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and building up on its own recommendations to the member States, recommends that the Committee of Ministers invite member States to:

a. rise to the challenge set by the prevailing political and social situation exacerbated by phenomena such as violent extremism and the refugee influx by turning it into an opportunity to review their integration strategies in order to systematically address the Roma and Traveller inclusion dimension;

b. adopt anti-discrimination legislation and policies which are in line with international and European human rights standards to ensure that Roma and Travellers as European citizens enjoy legal and social equality;

c. develop the legislative framework to overcome institutional anti-Gypsyism<sup>12</sup> and manifestations thereof such as segregation (spatial or in schools) and forced evictions, in order to facilitate local government policy making and action in support of Roma and Traveller inclusion;

d. provide legal remedies for victims of anti-Gypsyism, whether institutional or social, that grant victims compensation and satisfaction, and deter potential perpetrators from discriminating against Roma and Travellers;

e. provide local and regional authorities with own sufficient financial resources or transfers to enable them to address the Roma and Traveller communities' needs;

f. actively and publicly condemn and counter public manifestations of anti-Gypsyism in the form of hate speech, discrimination, threats, intimidation and racially motivated violence, whether by individuals or organised groups, and take steps to ensure that the law is enforced effectively and in a non-discriminatory manner by the police and other responsible agencies.

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 2

<sup>9</sup> <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=Decl%2801.02.2012%29&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383&direct=true>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/roma-inclusion-is-mission-possible>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/travellers-time-to-counter-deep-rooted-hostility>

<sup>12</sup> Anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination. – European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), GPR 13, 2011.

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM<sup>13</sup>****Table of contents**

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**1. Introduction****a. Background**

1. Resolution 1740 (2010) of the Parliamentary Assembly on the situation of Roma in Europe and relevant activities of the Council of Europe noted that Roma are still regularly victims of intolerance, discrimination and rejection based on deep-seated prejudices, and that many activities of member States were too isolated and too limited in their nature to bring about improvement of the situation. The Assembly called on member States to adopt national action plans and strengthen their efforts for their implementation, not least by ensuring implementation at the local level. Member states were urged to strengthen their efforts in the fields of housing, education, employment and health care, as well as ensuring implementation of non-discrimination legislation and discrimination.

2. In its declaration of 1 February 2012,<sup>14</sup> the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe expressed its concern over the rise of anti-Gypsyism, anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against

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13 This explanatory memorandum is based on the document prepared by the Council of Europe consultant Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, anthropologist, PhD candidate at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, which is available from the Secretariat upon request.

14 <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=Decl%2801.02.2012%29&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3>



Roma in Europe. It called on governments and public authorities to swiftly and publicly condemn incidents of hate speech or hate crime, as well as to ensure national strategies for social inclusion in the field of housing, education, health care and employment have a strong component on anti-discrimination, for which it called on member States to implement anti-discrimination legislation.

3. In Resolution 333 (2011)<sup>15</sup> on the situation of Roma in Europe as a challenge for local and regional authorities, the Congress expressed its concern about the situation of Roma in Europe and stated that local and regional authorities have “a duty to take effective action at the local level and must show leadership and vision, as well as win support from all sections of the community for addressing Roma issues in order to remedy the situation of the social exclusion of Roma.” It invited local and regional authorities to implement policies that ensure access to social rights in the fields of housing, education, employment and healthcare, as well as empowerment and political participation through numerous activities that can be implemented on the local and regional level.

4. The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe has underlined that he has “encountered one serious human rights problem in practically every member state - the prolonged exclusion and discrimination of the Roma population”, which he said could be reversed with a little political will.<sup>16</sup> In a recent statement, he called on member States to fight racism and discrimination against Travellers, whose way of life is still not respected in many member States of the Council of Europe.<sup>17</sup>

5. Against the backdrop of the existing deplorable human rights situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe, the refugee crisis now seems to threaten the efforts that have been taken in Europe for Roma and Traveller inclusion. The fate of one already vulnerable group seems to be at stake now that another vulnerable group requires major political attention.

6. In light of these developments, the Congress’ Current Affairs Committee decided to examine the situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe today, one year after the large influx of refugees into Europe started to shake the political landscape.

#### **b. Roma and Travellers: a European minority**

7. Roma are the largest minority group in Europe, with between 10 and 12 million persons living in the Council of Europe member States. The term “Roma and Travellers” is used to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

8. Roma and Travellers still face widespread exclusion, discrimination and poverty in today’s Europe. “No European government can claim a fully successful record in protecting the human rights of the members of these minorities”,<sup>18</sup> and inclusion efforts achieve only minor successes.

9. Roma and Travellers do not only face poverty. If social inclusion was merely a question of economic empowerment by eradicating poverty, then the multitude of funds that is being made available by several international organisations and civil society initiatives would be received much more enthusiastically to finance inclusion projects for Roma and Travellers, especially on the local level. However, even though the political commitments exist, the human rights standards established by the Council of Europe and other international organisations exist, the good practices and the knowledge exist, and little change seems to come along. In the end, it seems to be the lack of political will to implement strategies for Roma and Traveller inclusion that constitutes the major stumbling block. This lack of political is often connected to one phenomenon: anti-Gypsyism.

#### **c. Anti-Gypsyism: A brief introduction**

10. According to the General Policy Recommendation No. 13 by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), “anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on

<sup>15</sup><https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=RES333%282011%29&Language=lanFrench&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679&direct=true3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383&direct=true>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/roma-inclusion-is-mission-possible>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/travellers-time-to-counter-deep-rooted-hostility>

<sup>18</sup> Council of Europe, Human rights of Roma and Travellers in Europe, 2012, [https://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/source/prems/prems79611\\_GBR\\_CouvHumanRightsOfRoma\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/source/prems/prems79611_GBR_CouvHumanRightsOfRoma_WEB.pdf)

racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination.”<sup>19</sup>

11. The term has also appeared in the language of European Parliament resolutions on Roma,<sup>20</sup> and most notably in its Resolution from 2015 in which EP acknowledged that “anti-Gypsyism is one of the main causes of the discrimination and marginalisation that the Roma people have suffered historically in many European countries”.<sup>21</sup> In the same year, the European Commission for the first time made notable use of the term in its report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.<sup>22</sup> A deeper discussion of anti-Gypsyism can be found in chapter “1. Anti-Gypsyism – A Brief Introduction” of the Appendix to this document.

## **2. Manifestations of Anti-Gypsyism: General trends and local examples**

### **a. General trends**

12. Five years after the adoption of the Resolution 333(2011) on “The situation of Roma in Europe: a challenge for local and regional authorities”, not much can be reported as visible progress in this regard. Roma communities continue to face discrimination and, according to numerous reports, they continue to be victims of hate crimes and hate speech. More disquietly and as a consequence of present social climate and rhetoric of fear and insecurity caused by the refugee crisis and jihadist attacks in several cities in Europe, the manifestations of anti-Gypsyism have intensified, making this population especially vulnerable to racists attacks and hate speech in many parts of Europe.

13. These general processes, to which Roma were subjected as parts of their societies, warranted Europe’s getting more populist and radical, both in its rhetoric and political choices and, especially, the current refugees crisis opened the door for more nationalist, xenophobic, anti-migrant and refugee as well as anti-EU turn in Europe. This unfavourable context helped anti-Gypsyism to flourish and intensify.

14. A testimony to this is the European Parliament Resolution from 2015 in which EP “expresses its deep concern at the rise of anti-Gypsyism, as manifested inter alia through anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against Roma in Europe, including murders.”<sup>23</sup> Another document from this year observes that “anti-Gypsyism, far right demonstrations [against the Roma], hate speech and hate crime have been on the rise.”<sup>24</sup>

### **b. Anti-Gypsyism: Deterioration of social acceptance of Roma and Travellers**

15. When it comes to social acceptance of Roma and the opinion of the majority society, the picture all over Europe appears to be rather bleak, as the majority population (for example 85% in Italy, 72% in Denmark, 42% in Germany) seems to hold unfavourable views of Roma according to EU surveys.<sup>25</sup>

16. There is plenty of evidence and reports on discrimination against Roma and Travellers, hate crime and hate speech in all parts of Europe and especially during the recent years. They are proof of the general deterioration of the human rights situation of Roma and Travellers and increased racism and intolerance this minority faces in those countries.

17. While most studies deal primarily with Roma (the great majority of whom does not travel anymore), Travellers (who embrace a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life) should not be left out of consideration as they find themselves in a situation comparable to Roma. One example that tragically highlights the low level of acceptance of Travellers is the events that unfolded after a fire at a poorly maintained traveller site in Carrickmines, near Dublin, killed 10 people. As a first response to the incident, the local authorities planned to set up a temporary site for the Travellers until a new permanent site could be created. Residents blocked the entrance to the land plot stating “we don’t want them here”.<sup>26</sup>

19 [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/GPR/EN/Recommendation\\_N13/e-RPG%2013%20-%20A4.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/GPR/EN/Recommendation_N13/e-RPG%2013%20-%20A4.pdf)

20 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2005-0151+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

21 “European Parliament resolution of 15 April 2015 on the occasion of International Roma Day – anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War

II” <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-20150095+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

22 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_communication2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf)

23 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2015-0095>

24 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_communication2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf)

25 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_communication2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf)

26 <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/carrickmines-tragedy-temporary-site-for-survivors-blocked-by-residents-31608722.html>



18. Chapter 2.a. of the Appendix of this document holds more, similar examples.

### **c. Anti-Gypsyism and hate speech**

#### *i. Public officials and anti-Gypsy rhetoric*

19. Not only have Roma and Travellers been stigmatised as a “security issue”,<sup>27</sup> which led on the one hand to their de-humanisation, but on the other hand also suggests that measures taken against them are necessary for public security. Also, it seems that more and more public officials come up and employ openly racist anti-Gypsy rhetoric. Statements by public officials that would not have been acceptable several years ago seemingly are allowed nowadays.

20. One example of anti-Gypsyist rhetoric deployed by public officials is the joint declaration of 5 towns in Vorarlberg in Austria to no longer accept camps of Roma families that were trying to make a living by begging in several towns.<sup>28</sup> The declaration displays a number of anti-Gypsyist stereotypes: reference to alleged nomadism, to the alleged lack of willingness to make a living by “decent” work, the equation of “beggars” with “Roma families”, the alleged inability to respect laws and the reference to littering and hygienic problems in the camps.<sup>29</sup>

21. An example of hatred against Travellers and their stigmatisation as a “security issue” unfolded in Belgium: In a Flemish town, a group of French Travellers had an agreement with the owner of a private camping site for a stay of two weeks. Although the Travellers had paid their stay and although no complaints whatsoever were recorded, the mayor demanded the Travellers to leave the municipality immediately. The mayor issued an eviction order, based on an article of the communal law, stipulating that any placement of caravans for another cause than recreation has to be authorised by the mayor – even on private ground. The mayor argued that it would be the duty of his office to protect his citizens from crime – he stated that in the past a rise of crime was recorded whenever travellers were around. The travellers were evicted with force from the camping site.<sup>30</sup>

22. The European Network against Racism (ENAR) observed that “political discourse which demonises migrants, asylum seekers and minorities creates a climate in which attacks on minorities are legitimate.”<sup>31</sup> In such a context, racist and xenophobic rhetoric obviously contributes to escalation of negative attitudes and, in the case of Roma, often legitimises stronger manifestation of anti-Gypsyism. Numerous examples of anti-Gypsy rhetoric employed by public officials can be reported across Europe.

23. According to a Harvard report on the violence against Roma in Hungary, “discrimination against Roma has escalated into violence and physical assaults due to political leaders who incite hatred against the Roma through racist attitudes and discourse.”<sup>32</sup> The report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights on Hungary notices with concern the “increasing influence of extremist rhetoric on the discourse of mainstream politicians and on society at large”.<sup>33</sup> The same source notes that hate speech against Roma occurs also in political discourse, particularly at the local level.

24. Hungary has been particularly notorious in using explicit anti-Roma rhetoric in the political discourses.<sup>34</sup> In 2015 for example, Elod Novak, MP and Deputy Leader of the far-right Jobbik party posted racist comments about Roma on Facebook, saying that: “The number of Hungarians is not just falling disastrously, but soon we will become a minority in our own homes.”<sup>35</sup>

25. Furthermore, as the European Commission noticed in 2015, these expressions and rhetoric are not publicly condemned or ostracised.<sup>36</sup> There are only rare instances when politicians are brought to the courts and held responsible for their racist statements. Most recently, French courts ordered Jean-

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27 See Chapter 2.b. of the Appendix to this document.

28 <https://www.bregenz.gv.at/bregenz-aktuell/presse/beitrag/keine-zeltlager-in-den-staedten.html>

29 [http://www.romano-centro.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=103&Itemid=18&lang=de](http://www.romano-centro.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=103&Itemid=18&lang=de)

30 Reply to the questionnaire by CAHROM members.

31 [http://enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport\\_2013-14\\_en\\_final\\_lowres-2.pdf](http://enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport_2013-14_en_final_lowres-2.pdf)

32 [https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/02/FXB-Hungary-Report\\_Released-February-3-2014.pdf](https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/02/FXB-Hungary-Report_Released-February-3-2014.pdf)

33 Report by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Hungary, Strasbourg, 16 December 2014, <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CommDH%282014%2921&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInter=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383&direct=true>

34 <http://www.errc.org/blog/10-things-they-said-about-roma-in-hungary/83>

35 <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31168246>

36 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_communication2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf) “politicians and public authorities often failed to publicly condemn such negative trends.”

Marie Le Pen to pay €45,000 for racism against Roma people and for denying the true scale of the Holocaust.<sup>37</sup>

26. More examples can be found in chapter 2.c.1 of the Appendix to this document.

#### *ii. Anti-Gypsyism in the media*

27. Manifestations of anti-Gypsyism are commonplace in present-day media. Stereotypical, biased, racist and sensational reporting on Roma continues to uphold the centuries-old stereotypes about communities and oftentimes fuels anti-Roma sentiments. International organizations such as the Council of Europe and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (OSCE-ODIHR), but also numerous civil society organisations have been documenting this practice and provided numerous recommendations on how to deal with this phenomenon through education and schooling. Nonetheless, it seems that the present climate revives and intensifies presence of anti-Gypsyism in the media.

28. Sensational and discriminatory media reports not only reinforce stereotypes and negative attitudes towards the Roma, but can also easily provoke violence. For example in 2013 in Serbia, an article published by the local newspaper *Vecernje Novosti* which described Roma as “dirty” and claimed that “their children have scabies” led to an anti-Roma protest, threats and verbal abuses against a Roma community near Belgrade.<sup>38</sup> More examples can be found in chapter 2.c.2 of the appendix to this document.

#### *iii. Anti-Gypsyism online*

29. Anti-Gypsyism is especially present online – on forums, social media and blogs. Numerous hate groups and communities have been created online, most notably on Facebook, leading its creator to restrict and monitor hate speech in an effort to curb extremism online.<sup>39</sup> Due to its nature, anti-Gypsyism online is particularly difficult to measure and tackle; nonetheless, the international community as well as national governments are increasingly aware of the growth of the problem. According to ECRI’s 2014 annual report, “hate speech through the social media is rapidly increasing and has the potential to reach a much larger audience than extremist print media were able to reach previously.”<sup>40</sup> In 2015, the danger of online hate speech was also acknowledged by UNESCO.<sup>41</sup>

30. There are limited reports which analyse the level of the online proliferation of anti-Gypsyism, nonetheless the scope of this problem is visible at first sight. Platforms, such as the Council of Europe’s “No hate speech movement”, provide a plethora of examples of anti-Gypsy sites, groups and posts.<sup>42</sup>

31. It should be noted that not only hatred instigated by media, as mentioned above, but also anti-Gypsyist online hate speech can quickly escalate into violence. In 2014 in Ireland, a group of 200 people in Waterford set out to target Roma families living in the area chanting “Roma out, out, out”, breaking windows and damaging property. According to reports, in the weeks prior to the march, there were a number of Facebook pages which demanded the eviction of Roma from Waterford which led up to this violence. It is argued that “the actions of the mob in Waterford show an undeniable correlation between hate speech and incitement to violence on social media and actual physical damage. Without the hate speech that was allowed to foster online, which became progressively more violent in its intentions, individual grievances would not have morphed into a hate crime.”<sup>43</sup>

32. More examples can be found in chapter 2.c.3 of the appendix to this document.

#### **d. Hate crime and violence**

33. Incidents of hate speech and hate crime, and acts of violence committed by state and non-state actors remain frequent across European countries. According to the 2013-2014 “Shadow Report on racist crime in Europe” by the European Network against Racism (ENAR), cases of violence, abuse and incitement to violence against Roma has been recorded in 26 European states. Furthermore, the

37 <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/jean-marie-le-pen-must-pay-for-saying-roma-are-smelly-5hzjch77z>

38 [http://media-diversity.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2661:serbian-newspaper-initiated-anti-roma-protest&catid=35:media-news-a-content&Itemid=34](http://media-diversity.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2661:serbian-newspaper-initiated-anti-roma-protest&catid=35:media-news-a-content&Itemid=34)

39 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/federicoguerrini/2016/01/19/facebook-launches-new-initiative-against-online-hate-speech-in-europe-and-beyond/#49aaca85646c>

40 [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual\\_Reports/Rapport%20annuel%202014.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Rapport%20annuel%202014.pdf)

41 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002332/233231e.pdf>

42 <http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/>

43 <http://www.nascireland.org/latest-news/anti-roma-violence-highlights-need-better-online-hate-speech-laws/>

report argued that "racist crimes that target this group are more prevalent in EU Member States with a large Roma population."<sup>44</sup>

34. In April 2016, a grenade was thrown into the courtyard of a house in Zagreb, Croatia, which houses a Roma association and a kindergarten.<sup>45</sup> Some claim that the incident is of clear racist nature and can be associated with the growth of radical groups in the country.<sup>46</sup> A few days later, in the same neighbourhood, a Romani house was set on fire, although police is still investigating the causes and whether both incidents are related.<sup>47</sup> According to some press releases, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the houses and caused the fire.<sup>48</sup>

35. Roma are also victims of hate crime in Turkey. Following the İznik pogrom in 2013, in which a mob of over 2000 people attacked a Roma neighbourhood, experts are warning that the incident is a sign of rising intolerance against Roma.<sup>49</sup>

36. Chapter 2.c.4 of the Appendix can be consulted for further examples.

#### **e. Extremist and far-right groups**

37. Since 2011, extremists and far-right groups have been proliferating and growing in number across Europe.<sup>50</sup> This trend, visible for some years, has intensified in the context of the current refugee crisis.

38. In the Czech Republic, far-right and neo-Nazi groups have been targeting Roma for a long time. For example, in 2013 right-wing extremists organised a series of 26 anti-Roma demonstrations and protests,<sup>51</sup> and such marches and demonstrations have been organized throughout 2014 and 2015. Recently in 2015, the Regional Court in Plzeň held a hearing in a case concerning arson attacks in Czech cities of Aš, Hodonín, Praha, Sokolov and Trutnov.<sup>52</sup>

39. In 2016, the anti-Roma rallies continued. Most recently, a meeting organized by a newly formed coalition of several far-right groups took place in Vitkov on 16 April in support of convicted perpetrators of arson attacks against Roma families.<sup>53</sup>

40. Far-right vigilante groups and right-wing private militias have been set up in numerous countries across Europe, most notably in Hungary, Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Romania. A worrisome trend is that of expansion and gradual consolidation of such groups across the borders.

41. See the Appendix chapter 2.c.5 for more examples.

#### **f. General radicalisation of European societies**

42. The unfavourable social climate for Roma and Travellers has intensified during the refugee crisis and jihadist attacks in several cities in Europe. Anti-Gypsyism is deeply rooted in Europe's culture and the current social climate revives it. With radicalisation of European majority societies, these negative trends are getting stronger and persistent, despite efforts to improve the situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe.

43. In Bulgaria, in May and July of 2015, outbreaks of anti-Roma protests and mob attacks on Roma settlements were witnessed in Garmen and Orlandovci near Sofia.<sup>54</sup> According to some analysts, right-wing ultras, non-Roma residents and the nationalist Patriotic Front (PF) rioted on the streets, demanding an end to 'Roma theft' and that 'illegal' Roma houses be demolished.<sup>55</sup> In May 2016, over a period of two days, more than 2000 people joined anti-Roma protests in the city of Radnevo. The

44 [http://enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport\\_2013-14\\_en\\_final\\_lowres-2.pdf](http://enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport_2013-14_en_final_lowres-2.pdf)

45 <http://www.independent.mk/articles/30665/Zagreb+Bomb+Detonates+in+Kindergarten+for+Roma+Children#sthash.DL6fWV KQ.dpuf>

46 <https://communismeouvrier.wordpress.com/2016/04/18/attaque-raciste-a-zagreb-la-bombe-contre-une-creche-accueillant-les-enfants-rroms/>

47 <http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/crna-kronika/nova-eksplozija-u-romskom-naselju---434368.html>

48 <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/internacional/segundo-ataque-en-cuatro-dias-contra-un-barrio-gitano-en-zagreb/20160421/nota/3113170.aspx>

49 <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67696>

50 [http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OldThreatNewApproach\\_2014.pdf](http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OldThreatNewApproach_2014.pdf)

51 [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech\\_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf)

52 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/security-lax-at-czech-trial-of-alleged-ultra-right-arsonists-and-others>

53 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-handful-of-neo-nazis-demonstrate-in-vitkov-to-raise-money-for-racist-arsonists-who-attacked-romani-family>

54 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/bulgaria-must-stop-its-anti-roma-attacks>

55 <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/news/world/article/2798/standing-with-mitko-against-racist-violence>

protest, which turned violent with several people getting hurt, was sparked by an alleged assault against 3 Bulgarian men by a group of Roma.<sup>56</sup>

44. The growing radicalisation of European societies can also be measured by the increasing popularity of far-right, radical, ultra-nationalistic, fascist and openly xenophobic political parties, whose activities have been described above. This trend has been observed in most European countries, from East to West. Fascist and/or far-right parties have made significant electoral gains in recent elections in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and Ukraine.<sup>57</sup>

45. See Appendix chapter 2.d. for further examples.

#### **g. Institutional anti-Gypsyism: Perspectives from the ground**

46. Anti-Gypsyism manifests itself on a more systemic level through structural and institutional discrimination against Roma and Travellers, unfair (discriminatory) laws or policies, unfair application of laws, unequal access to economic and social rights, unequal access to protective mechanisms, lack of accountability for violations of Roma and Traveller rights or lack of recognition of Roma and Traveller culture are all diverse expressions of anti-Gypsyism by the State.<sup>58</sup>

47. In this report, special consideration will be given to three areas in which anti-Gypsyism leads to grave human rights violations: access to economic and social rights; evictions, expulsions and deportations; and segregation from majority society, all of which fall within local authority competence.

48. Before examining examples, one additional element should be highlighted: There is a strong correlation between state racism and racist attacks: “Where Roma people experience high levels of state racism, they are often the target of public incitement to violence and hatred”, and “if Roma are particularly discriminated against in schools and employment within a particular Member State, then they are often also the target of racist crimes.”<sup>59</sup>

##### *i. Economic and social rights*

49. It is beyond the scope of this report to analyse and contrast the data regarding the access of Roma to economic and social rights. There are numerous reports by such institutions as the Council of Europe,<sup>60</sup> UNDP, FRA, OSCE, the World Bank, among many others, which document in detail the human rights situation of Roma in Europe, with specific focus on socio-economic situation. In general terms, however, most recent data indicates that the situation of Roma continues to be alarming in many areas of life.<sup>61</sup>

50. One area that is especially worrying is the problematic situation in housing, since the right to housing is an “enabling right” without which other human rights cannot be fully enjoyed. Even after ten years of political attendance to this issue during the Decade for Roma inclusion, no visible progress seems to have been achieved.<sup>62</sup> Also Travellers suffer from this situation, as many member States with a considerable Traveller population fail to provide sufficient halting sites or to maintain the sites in acceptable conditions.<sup>63</sup>

51. For more examples, see chapter 2.e.1.

##### *ii. Forced evictions*

52. Forced evictions are defined as “permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of,

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56 <http://www.balkaneu.com/police-protesters-hurt-clash-bulgarias-radnevo-ethnic-tension/> ; <http://m.btvnovinite.bg/gallery/bulgaria/protestirashti-probiha-zagrazhdenijata-v-radnevo.html>

57 <http://www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2016/04/fascism-and-the-far-right-in-europe-country-by-country-guide-part-one/>

58 “Mirrors – Manual on combatting Antigypsyism through human rights education”, Council of Europe, 2015

59 [http://enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport\\_2013-14\\_en\\_final\\_lowres-2.pdf](http://enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport_2013-14_en_final_lowres-2.pdf)

60 Notably the report “Human rights of Roma and Travellers in Europe”, Council of Europe, 2012

61 <http://www.egam.eu/racial-discrimination-in-the-job-market-in-europe-situation-testing-campaign-201516/> For example, a recent study conducted in 2016 in nine countries by EGAM found an alarming level of racial discrimination on the job market; people of Roma and Sub-Saharan African origin are the two most discriminated against groups. In some cases, like in Kosovo and Serbia, between 67%-69% of Roma applicants were rejected.

62 [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9809\\_file1\\_final-lostdecade.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9809_file1_final-lostdecade.pdf)

63 <https://cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/10%20CAHROM%20Plenary%20meeting/Item%2008%20-%20The%20European%20Social%20Charter%20and%20Roma%20and%20Travellers-related%20case%20law.pdf>

and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.”<sup>64</sup> Even though they are potentially a threat to anybody living under insecure tenure, they disproportionately affect Roma and Travellers.

53. Despite criticism, forced evictions remain a prevalent, systemic and continuous practice across Europe and represent a major human rights violation, especially when no alternative housing is provided. According to a recent assessment by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) of the National Roma Integration Strategies, “the situation appears to have worsened in 2015: forced evictions and demolitions continue apace, with many Roma ‘relocated’ to remote, sometimes toxic sites with no access to basic services.”<sup>65</sup>

54. With many countries allocating competences over housing issues and local land-use planning to local and regional authorities, mayors and local administrations bear a huge responsibility in upholding human rights standards and refraining from forced evictions that violate the right to housing. Forced evictions of Roma communities seem to have become a popular policy choice by populist mayors in some European states.<sup>66</sup>

55. In France, controversies around forced evictions of Roma, many of them EU-citizens, have been continuing for many years. In 2013, France has evicted a record 19,380 Roma from camps.<sup>67</sup> According to the ERRC, in 2015, over 11,000 Roma were forcibly evicted from their homes,<sup>68</sup> including the biggest and oldest Romani camp “Le Samaritain”.<sup>69</sup> Thus, in 2015 a Roma camp was destroyed every three days.<sup>70</sup> In a recent report, during the first quarter of 2016, 3,683 people were forcibly evicted by local authorities from 25 living areas and a “significant increase of evictions based on a notice on grounds of safety risks or health hazards adopted by municipalities has been observed.”<sup>71</sup> In most cases, the Roma were not provided with alternative housing. Despite repeated criticism<sup>72</sup> by international organizations condemning forced evictions in France, the situation has not improved.

56. In Italy, according to an Amnesty International report, over 40,000 Roma live in camps; many of those communities have experienced forced evictions. For example, between 2013 and 2015, there were 168 forced evictions of Roma in Rome alone.<sup>73</sup> Most recently, a Romani camp in Torre el Greco, near Naples was given a sudden eviction notice, resulting in a protest by teachers and school principals of a local school attended by Romani students from the camp.<sup>74</sup>

57. In early 2016, Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Nils Muižnieks sent letters to the governments of Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia, France, Hungary, Italy and Sweden calling on them to stop the practice of forced evictions of Roma, especially where no alternative housing is provided. Despite such urging, forced evictions of Roma and Travellers remain common practices. Recently, in April 2016, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that 25 French Travellers, evicted from their homes, should receive compensation to the amount of €350,000.<sup>75</sup>

58. For more examples, see chapter 2.e.2 of the Appendix.

### *iii. Segregation in public spaces and schools*

59. Separation through spatial segregation seems to be a widespread policy and continues unabated. Despite many social inclusion policies and programs, there is a rise in the number of excluded communities which are separated from the non-Roma societies.

64 General Comment No. 7, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

65 <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/2015-eu-roma-framework-written-comments-19-february-2016.pdf>

66 [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9809\\_file1\\_final-lostdecade.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9809_file1_final-lostdecade.pdf)

67 <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/6/17/roma-attack-franceviolence.html>

68 <http://www.errc.org/article/more-than-11000-roma-migrants-forcefully-evicted-in-france-in-2015/4442>

69 [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/05/opinion/frances-war-on-the-roma.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/05/opinion/frances-war-on-the-roma.html?_r=2)

70 <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2016/04/21/roma-france-politics-exclusion>

71 <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/france-census-of-forced-evictions-1st-quarter-11-april-2016.pdf>

72 Most recently: Letter of the Commissioner for Human Rights to the French minister of Interior, 26th of January 2016:

<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2890537&SecMode=1&DocId=2359340&Usage=2>; <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/secretary-general-responds-to-reports-that-french-police-have-cleared-hundreds-of-roma-in-paris?inheritRedirect=true>

73 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/04/roma-on-the-margins-housing-rights-denied/>

74 [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2016/04/06/teachers-protest-roma-people-eviction\\_00677e83-cfd-49a6-b75e-4ea7efb88041.html](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2016/04/06/teachers-protest-roma-people-eviction_00677e83-cfd-49a6-b75e-4ea7efb88041.html)

75 <http://www.errc.org/article/winterstein-and-others-v-france/4246>



60. Spatial segregation includes building walls to separate Romani camps and settlements from the non-Roma population. Such a practice exists in Slovakia, where 14 walls exist, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy and France.<sup>76</sup>

61. The Slovak municipality of Hrčel' has introduced special rules for using its multi-functional playground that was created with EU funds in 2012: Romani children can use it on even-numbered days and "the rest" of the citizenry can use it on odd-numbered days.<sup>77</sup>

62. Regarding school segregation, the situation remains worrisome as well. According to a 2015 European Commission report, "segregation of Roma children in education continues to persist: many marginalised Roma children attend segregated schools or classes (...). In CZ and SK, more than 20% of Roma children up to the age of 15 attend special schools and classes for children with mental disabilities."<sup>78</sup>

63. In December 2013 the European Council adopted a Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member States, including in relation to access to education. It stresses the need to "implement, where relevant, desegregation measures concerning Roma both regionally and locally". The European Commission went further and started infringement proceeding because of Roma children discrimination in education against Czech Republic (2014), Slovakia (2015)<sup>79</sup> and Hungary (May 2016).<sup>80</sup>

64. More examples can be found in chapter 2.e.3. of the appendix to this document.

#### **h. Impact on Roma and Traveller women**

65. Roma and Traveller women are exposed to multiple and intersecting discrimination, based on their gender and ethnicity, but also on other intersecting variables such as social class, nationality, level of education etc. For this reason, Roma and Traveller women are particularly vulnerable and encounter limited access to healthcare, education, employment, social services and political participation. According to a survey of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union, "on average, the situation of Roma women in core areas of social life, namely education, employment, housing and health is worse in comparison to that of men."<sup>81</sup>

66. In the context of growing racism and xenophobia, and specifically of anti-Gypsyism, Roma and Traveller women are particularly exposed to experiencing racism. The 2013 FRA survey indicated that they continue to experience discrimination, social exclusion, and deprivation across the EU, and are disproportionately affected.<sup>82</sup>

67. Furthermore, Roma and Traveller women are especially vulnerable to racist practices regarding their reproductive health, including forced sterilisation. Despite the fact that such practices of the past have been strongly condemned by international community, many victims of forced sterilisation are still waiting for compensation.<sup>83</sup> There are even those who still advocate for such measures: In 2013, a Romanian politician was fined for advocating for forced sterilization of Roma women. In 2016, on the occasion of the International Roma Day, he reiterated his stand.<sup>84</sup>

68. In numerous Western countries, Roma women make a visible presence due to the practice of begging on the streets of major European cities, and as such, are significantly exposed to attacks. Recently, two incidents involving Roma women beggars were reported: In March 2016, football fans humiliated Roma beggars on the street of Madrid;<sup>85</sup> in another incident in March 2016, a football fan was recorded urinating on a Roma woman beggar on the streets of Rome.<sup>86</sup> In some places, Roma women beggars are rejected homeless shelters. For example, in Finland a feminist group has denounced the homeless shelter policies of official shelters which deny housing to them.<sup>87</sup>

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76 <http://www.ergonetwork.org/ergo-network/campaigns/wall-free-europe/>

77 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovak-municipality-opened-playground-with-segregated-use-rules-romani-children-on-even-numbered-days-only>

78 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_communication2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf)

79 <http://www.errc.org/article/slovakia-racist-stereotyping-should-not-determine-education-policy--international-ngos-criticize-slovak-government/4368>

80 [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-1823\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1823_en.htm)

81 <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ep-request-roma-women.pdf>

82 <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/discrimination-against-and-living-conditions-roma-women-11-eu-member-states>

83 <http://www.aedh.eu/Forced-sterilization-of-Roma-women.html>

84 <http://ziarulunirea.ro/cinci-ong-uri-cer-excluderea-lui-rares-buglea-din-pnl-pentru-declaratii-rasiste-369960/>

85 [http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Piden-Fiscalia-Delitos-Odio-PSV\\_0\\_495200637.html](http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Piden-Fiscalia-Delitos-Odio-PSV_0_495200637.html)

86 <http://www.thelocal.it/20160318/prague-football-fans-filmed-urinating-on-rome-beggar>

87 [http://yle.fi/uutiset/feminist\\_group\\_lashes\\_helsinki\\_over\\_treatment\\_of\\_roma/8759513](http://yle.fi/uutiset/feminist_group_lashes_helsinki_over_treatment_of_roma/8759513)



69. See chapter 2.f. of the Appendix for more examples.

### i. Impact on Roma and Traveller youth and children

70. It is estimated that about 4 million young Roma live in the 47 Council of Europe member States. The Roma and Traveller population is younger than the EU average: 26.7% are aged between 15 and 29 compared to 19.3% in the EU. The average age of Roma is 25 compared to 40 in the EU.<sup>88</sup>

71. Roma and Traveller youth face obstacles in accessing their basic human rights and are commonly in a situation of disadvantage when compared to their non-Roma peers: they have lower levels of education, higher unemployment rates and reduced access to social security and social services.<sup>89</sup>

72. Roma and Traveller children and youth are especially vulnerable, being significantly affected by diverse manifestations of anti-Gypsyism. One of the areas where their life-trajectories are especially touched is education, where they often are victims of segregation. Harassment and bullying in schools by other pupils and teachers is not uncommon.<sup>90</sup>

73. According to studies, at least one third of Roma and Traveller youth have experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity. Furthermore, it should be noted that they also experience discrimination based on their age and gender. In this context, young Roma and Traveller women are the most vulnerable to be exposed to instances of discrimination.

74. Regarding political participation, young people find it difficult to have their voices heard, and young Roma and Travellers even more so. Their political participation remains an area of concern with Roma and Traveller youth facing multiple challenges that hinder participation in decision-making on all levels.<sup>91</sup> As was clarified by the Congress Resolution 366 (2014) on empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels”, participation of Roma and Traveller youth remains a responsibility for local and regional authorities as well.<sup>92</sup>

75. Roma and Traveller youth are also exposed to racially motivated violence. In 2013, a number of cases of violence and threats against Romani children and youth were reported, including: in Hungary, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported a case of threats against Roma children in Konyár; physical assault by a group of people of a 10-year-old boy in Italy; and a murder of a Romani teenager in Serbia.<sup>93</sup> In 2014, cases of physical assaults on Romani children and teenagers have been reported in France, Ireland and Ukraine.<sup>94</sup> The proliferation of nationalistic and neo-Nazi groups along with increasing radicalization of European societies pose a threat that such attacks may indeed increase in the future. Recently in Bulgaria, a 17-year-old boy was humiliated and beaten by a Bulgarian man; the incident was recorded on a mobile phone and posted online.<sup>95</sup>

76. Chapter 2.g of the Appendix to this document lists additional examples.

### 3. The refugee crisis and Roma communities<sup>96</sup>

77. According to a coalition of NGOs, “Roma are *neglected casualties* of the refugee crisis” and “the focus on refugees and economic migrants has brushed aside concerns linked to internal forms of discrimination and xenophobia, which must not be ignored.”<sup>97</sup>

78. At this point, and especially due to lack of comprehensive data, it is difficult to find direct causality between anti-Gypsyist incidents and the current refugee crisis. After all, anti-Gypsyism is a historical and continuous phenomenon and its manifestations through violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization and structural racism, have been present in Europe for centuries.

88 [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CG%2826%298FINAL&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true#P165\\_20636](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CG%2826%298FINAL&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true#P165_20636)

89 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/187861>

90 See, for example, Council of Europe, Barabaripen – Young Roma speak about multiple discrimination, 2014, available at: [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/BARABARIPEN\\_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/BARABARIPEN_en.pdf); or also: <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/i-am-a-traveller-not-a-knacker-1.2577202>

91 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/187861>

92 <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CG%2826%298FINAL&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true>

93 <http://hatecrime.osce.org/taxonomy/term/229?year=2013>

94 <http://hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/bias-against-roma-and-sinti>

95 <http://www.romatimes.news/index.php/en-us/holokaust/862-a-young-roma-boy-was-brutally-humiliated-and-attacked-by-a-bulgarian-man-just-because-he-said-that-they-were-equal>

96 Research for this part was supported by members of the CoE's Ad Hoc Committee of Roma Experts (CAHROM) and the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

97 [https://gallery.mailchimp.com/5c7d31432b4ec275fab6b84a1/files/PR\\_EPHA\\_InternationalRomaniDay.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/5c7d31432b4ec275fab6b84a1/files/PR_EPHA_InternationalRomaniDay.pdf)

79. The danger or demoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers over the challenges of the refugee crisis seems imminent. At the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Roma Issues (CAHROM), the concern was voiced that refugees could be played off over Roma and Travellers.<sup>98</sup> Some local authorities already observe waning readiness to provide funding for Roma inclusion efforts, as the focus seems to switch to de-radicalisation and safety.<sup>99</sup>

80. The Commission officials seem also to notice this link. On the occasion of celebrating the International Romani Day, EU Justice Commissioner Věra Jourová stated during the session of the European Parliament on 11th of April 2016: "The Romani minority is the first to be afflicted by the deteriorating situation in Europe." She further argued that discrimination against Romani people "is currently on the rise in the context of the overall growth in extremism and radicalism there"<sup>100</sup> and that "now, with the worsening of the whole atmosphere in Europe and with increasing intolerance, the Roma people are among the first to be attacked, mocked and abused."<sup>101</sup>

81. The following paragraphs aim to give an overview over the effects that the refugee crisis had on Roma and Travellers in Europe. The distinction is made between direct and indirect effects, as well as different groups of European countries (main entry countries, transit countries, receiving countries, countries indirectly affected).

#### **a. Direct impact**

82. Between 2008 and 2015, about 370, 000 persons from five Balkan states asked for asylum in Germany, many of them Roma fleeing discrimination, persecution, ethnic tensions or poverty. As the refugee crisis has reinvigorated the debate about the so-called "false asylum seekers", and more broadly, about the phenomenon of Roma migration, Germany is seeking to reduce asylum applications from the Balkans to zero.

83. Germany has therefore recognised Balkan countries as "safe countries of origin", making it impossible for Balkan Roma to seek asylum in Germany; Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia have been declared as such in 2014 and Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo in 2015.<sup>102</sup> It should be noted that Albanian and Kosovo citizens are among the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> most numerous migrants seeking asylum in the EU in 2015.<sup>103</sup>

84. Critics claim that the measure of declaring Balkan state as "safe countries" is inexplicitly targeting the Roma,<sup>104</sup> and fails to acknowledge the persecution suffered by Roma communities in the region. The move to expand the list of "safe countries" comes amidst the ongoing process of returning Roma from Balkan states, mainly from Kosovo, who sought asylum in Germany fleeing the Balkan Wars and who have not been granted the asylum status.<sup>105</sup>

85. Other steps to curb the inflow of refugees have been taken as well, e.g. through altering the asylum regulations.<sup>106</sup> Countries such as France and The Netherlands have adapted diverse measures to limit the intra-European migration of Roma.<sup>107</sup>

86. It should be noted that these developments do not only stigmatize Roma asylum seekers and migrants as those who "cheat the system", an allegation which ties on the old image as the Roma as thieves. It also denies the existence of discrimination, persecution and violence, which numerous Roma suffer from and which becomes the main "push" factor for Roma to migrate and/or seek asylum.

87. An aspect which is not present in the discourse about the refugee crisis, which however represents a direct impact of the refugee crisis, is the fact that amongst the refugees from Turkey, Syria and Iraq, there are many members of the Dom, an Indo-Aryan people that share a common Indian origin and a similar socio-economic status with the Roma and are therefore covered by the

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98 Council of Europe, 11th CAHROM meeting, abridged report.

99 Reply to questionnaire by Current Affairs Committee members.

100 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/eu-justice-commissioner-says-situation-of-romani-people-is-not-improving>

101 [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Roma\\_Daily\\_News/conversations/messages/24891](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Roma_Daily_News/conversations/messages/24891)

102 <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/Germany/asylum-procedure/safe-country-concepts>

103 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

104 <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-shuts-out-refugees-with-safe-states-list/a-18615010>

105 <http://www.alle-bleiben.info/category/material/>

106 <http://www.errc.org/article/roma-rights-1-2014-going-nowhere-western-balkan-roma-and-eu-visa-liberalisation/4325/9>

107 <http://www.errc.org/article/roma-rights-1-2014-going-nowhere-western-balkan-roma-and-eu-visa-liberalisation/4325/11>

Council of Europe's definition of "Roma and Travellers" under the aspect "Eastern groups".<sup>108</sup> In this regard, the refugee crisis has a small yet direct impact on a group of Roma.

88. Chapter 3.a. of the Appendix to this document can be consulted for additional examples.

### **b. Indirect impact**

89. The challenges posed by the current refugee crisis, together with the radicalisation of European politics and societies, pose a threat to the process of Roma integration, especially at the local level. The growing anti-Gypsyism across Europe makes the topic of "Roma inclusion" unpopular, especially in times of elections or in those countries where far-right parties have made significant electoral gains. After all, the relative success of numerous radical far-right parties is due to their anti-Roma agenda. On the other hand, current challenges are treated as an emergency: urgency of receiving and accommodating refugees effectively demotes the Roma inclusion agenda.

90. Furthermore, there may be a feeling of competition between sectors of the population living below the poverty line, as for example, in Greece.<sup>109</sup> The current context makes it even more difficult to prioritise the agenda of Roma inclusion, leading to a downgrading of Roma and Traveller inclusion and abandonment of prior political commitments.

91. Finally, the growing popularity of radical movements, the increasing presence of anti-immigrant and often racist rhetoric, both in public and political discourses and in the media, leads to increased anti-Gypsyism and its diverse manifestations. Lack of timely and dissuasive response in combatting or condemning anti-Gypsyism by respective authorities and politicians is read by various groups as "silent approval" of such attitudes that can lead to their increasing occurrence.

### **c. Categories of countries**

#### *i. Main entry countries (Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain)*

92. Countries particularly affected by the current refugee crisis have also witnessed an increase in racism and xenophobia and a growing popularity of extremist and xenophobic parties. According to a Europol 2015 report: "Acts of violence by Islamic State have the potential to increase the number and intensity of extreme-right wing activities, both legal (e.g. demonstrations) and illegal (e.g. violent acts), in EU Member States."<sup>110</sup> Numerous radical groups, private militia and vigilante groups have been proliferating across Europe, many of which also explicitly target Roma.

93. In Italy, the far-right "systematically portrays Roma and refugees as criminals who receive preferential treatment from the government", fuelling hatred against both groups. Anti-Roma rhetoric has also swept the internet – in the connection to a tragic hit-and-run accident allegedly caused by a Roma man in 2015, online discussions included statements such as "We must burn all Roma people" and "Roma people are the dregs of humanity."<sup>111</sup> Similar developments can be seen in Greece, as outlined in chapter 3.b. of the Appendix.

#### *ii. Transit countries (Balkan states & Hungary)*

94. A noticeable and worrying trend in some transit countries is the linking of impoverished Roma communities as targets of radicalisation of jihadist's activities in Europe, both in media reports and by politicians.

95. In Hungary in October 2015, the centre-right Fidesz Minister of Justice Laszlo Trocsanyi said that Roma in Europe "could be a target for radicalisation" and that there is a risk that Roma could end up as foreign fighters alongside jihadists or other radical groups.<sup>112</sup> Although there are no known jihadist's foreign fighters from Hungary, the Minister, when asked why a Roman Catholic Roma could potentially become a radical jihadist, clarified that "it is because they are deprived people and they are usually more exposed to radical views."

96. Associating impoverished Roma Muslim communities with potential jihadist threats can also lead to specific responses by local administration. For example, the town of Pazardzhik in Bulgaria recently imposed a ban on full-face veils in public in order to "prevent tension among communities and boost security". The ban aims to target mainly part of the local Roma community, some of whom practice an

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108 <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/nowhere-to-turn-september-2015.pdf>

109 Interview with Manolis Rantis of RomNetwork association in Greece.

110 <https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2015>

111 <https://euroalter.com/2015/italy-sows-seeds-of-hatred-against-roma-and-migrants-to-win-votes-and-consensus>

112 <https://euobserver.com/justice/130740>

ultra-conservative form of Islam, as was argued by media reports. The law is a consequence of growing concerns that the migrant inflow “may pose a threat to their predominantly Orthodox Christian culture and help radicalize part of the country’s long-established Muslim minority.”<sup>113</sup>

97. These reports may lead to stigmatisation of Balkan migrants in the West, among them numerous Roma, and have concrete ramifications, such as increased profiling, policing or legislative changes. Obviously, such reporting also fuels populism, radicalisation and far-right discourses of Western politicians and societies, further contributing to the rise of xenophobia and racism.

98. Chapter 3.c. of the Appendix provides numerous additional examples.

*iii. Main receiving/destination countries*

99. As was outlined in the section on the direct impact of the refugee crisis on Roma, many countries in Western Europe either take efforts to deport Roma asylum seekers or restrict their freedom of movement. In contrast to these measures by states, indirect impacts concern the social climate. In Sweden, the far right has been gaining public support as a result of anti-immigrant rhetoric. In this context, it is reported that since 2014 there have been an increased number of attacks on beggars, most of whom are Roma. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention reported around 300 attacks on Roma in 2014, up by 23% from 2013. The police argue that the scale of the problem is much bigger.<sup>114</sup> Countries like Sweden could see a collapse of Roma inclusion efforts should the municipalities have to accept the transfer of responsibility from the national level for the rather large number of refugees one year after their arrival.<sup>115</sup>

100. The growing anti-immigrant and xenophobic political discourses as well as the growing populism among European societies are also bound to influence the political arena. For example, in Austria, the far-right Freedom Party candidate Norbert Hofer came first in the first round of the presidential elections in April 2016.<sup>116</sup> The Freedom Party, known for its anti-immigrant and xenophobic agenda,<sup>117</sup> when in government in 2000, raised concerns of human rights advocates, especially Roma, for the well-being of Roma communities in Austria. With the growing popularity of far-right parties in Austria, racially motivated violence is also escalating, and in some cases targeting Roma. For example, in Linz, in March 2016, there were three arson attacks on Romanian Roma migrants. Commentators are speculating that “the recent attacks show (...) that the atmosphere in society may lead to inexcusable crimes.”<sup>118</sup>

101. See chapter 3.d. of the Appendix for more examples.

*iv. Central and Eastern European countries that have been indirectly affected*

102. The region is characterised by virtually no presence of refugees<sup>119</sup> but real anti-refugee attitudes has been stirred up by right, centre-right and extreme forces and politicians since the refugee crisis began. This region also includes countries with significant Roma populations. It represents, therefore, a particular region where imaginary refugee status is often being projected on the Roma population living there.

103. In Poland, a number of incidents have also been noted, associated with the rise of activity of far-right groups and increasing proliferation of xenophobic and explicitly anti-immigrant rhetoric. According to reports, since September 2015, there were at least 22 racially motivated physical assaults and attacks; 13 of the assaulted people were attacked because they were assumed to be Muslim. Many more cases of hate crime and hate speech have been recorded. According to police, the number of hate crimes in Poland between 2014 and 2015 has risen by over 30%.<sup>120</sup> Many of those attacks have also targeted Roma.

104. In November 2015, in Limanowa (Poland), Roma have been experiencing intimidation by radical groups, including damaging property and racist graffiti written on Romani homes saying “prepare for the genocide” and “Roma out of the country”. According to the police numerous graffiti included names of specific Roma families and individuals living there.<sup>121</sup> Some argue that the attack are a

113 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-bulgaria-islam-veils-idUSKCN0XO20M>

114 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-sweden-idUSKCN0QT0BB20150824>

115 Reply to the questionnaire sent to members of the Congress Current Affairs Committee.

116 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36124256>

117 <http://www.errc.org/article/letter-concerning-situation-of-roma-in-austria/221>

118 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/austria-arson-attacks-against-romani-families-from-romania>

119 However, apparently Latvia seems to experience a slight demotion of Roma inclusion policies (CAHROM questionnaire).

120 <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,19951693,polska-mapa-nienawisci-miasta-gdzie-bija-i-zniewazaja-za-kolor.html>

121 <http://www.tokfm.pl/Tokfm/1,103454,19190020,szykujcie-sie-na-zaglade-i-falanga-rasistowskie-hasla-na.html>

result of the growing anti-Muslim attitudes in the country – during the incident in Limanowa, someone has also placed numerous posters saying “No to the Islamic Neighbourhood in our city”. According to one Roma living in Limanowa, “there are no Arabs in our city, so for sure that’s why the nationalists decided to take our Roma community as a target.”<sup>122</sup> In April 2016, the monument commemorating the Roma Genocide at Borzęcin was completely destroyed, including the head of the monument representing a Romani woman which was cut down with an axe.<sup>123</sup>

105. Although apparently Roma were no longer the principal target of hatred in the Czech Republic (2016 data suggest that “the main topics taken up by Czech extremist groups during the first quarter of 2016 were a critique and rejection of the European Union and migration”<sup>124</sup> and another study suggests that following the Paris terrorist attacks, Muslim communities became the principle target of online hatred), according to some research, “hatred on the Czech-language Internet has returned to its traditional target, the Romani people.”<sup>125</sup> The alleged decline in hate crimes against Roma might be a temporary fluctuation but doesn’t represent a substantial change for Czech Roma. Numerous other reports show that Roma continue to be the main victims of hate crimes. The rise of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes and discourses often result in fuelling anti-Roma sentiments as well.

106. Chapter 3.e. of the Appendix provides more examples.

#### **4. Assessment of the activities of local and regional authorities and of the Congress initiative “Alliance of cities and regions for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers”**

##### **a. Responses of local and regional authorities in member States**

107. As was clarified by Congress Resolution 333 (2011) on Roma inclusion as a challenge for local and regional authorities, cities and regions bear a heavy responsibility when it comes to social inclusion. It seems thus reasonable to look at examples of initiatives that have been taken on the local and regional level and try to establish their usefulness.

##### *i. Responses of local and regional authorities: useful and successful measures*

108. A hopeful example was described of a French town in the department of Indre where the mayor engaged in diverse efforts to receive 50 families which arrived in his town following an eviction from Nantes in 2013: solidarity actions initiated by the administration provided housing, schooling and employment for the families. A large part of the population engaged in the inclusion efforts.<sup>126</sup>

109. In Slovakia, the Mayor of Spišský Hrhov has been setting an example for others to follow. By creating jobs through a municipal firm, the local Roma community has one of the lowest unemployment rates throughout the country and consequently sees a gradual improvement in their socio-economic conditions.<sup>127</sup>

110. A simple yet powerful message against anti-Gypsyism has been issued by the Swedish City of Göteborg (Gothenburg); Celebrating International Roma Day on 8 April 2012 together with the local Roma community, the Roma flag was raised next to the Swedish flag in the heart of the city.<sup>128</sup>

111. Regarding education, many good practices are being developed all over Europe. As one of many examples, the City of Ghent (Belgium) should be mentioned, which employs school mediators as “bridging figures” who help the school administration and Roma families to better work together.<sup>129</sup> Similar projects can be found in the Database of Policies and Good Practices.<sup>130</sup>

112. The direct involvement of Roma communities and Roma civil society are also relevant for establishing effective measures for Roma inclusion. Numerous municipalities establish local Roma councils which create spaces for direct involvement and dialogue between Roma and local level

122 <http://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/1,44425,19192423,romow-maja-za-islamistow-nienawistne-hasla-na-murach-zniszczone.html>

123 <http://www.gazetakrakowska.pl/wiadomosci/tarnow/a/borzecin-z-siekierami-na-pomnik-ku-czci-romow-zdjecia-wideo.9915319/>

124 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-s-quarterly-report-on-extremism-ultra-right-trend-is-anti-immigration-ultra-left-is-unable-to-unify>

125 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/analysis-roma-replace-muslims-as-main-target-for-czech-hate-online>

126 [http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Seminar%20report\\_241013.pdf](http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Seminar%20report_241013.pdf)

127 <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2016/0509/In-Central-Europe-one-town-offers-new-lessons-in-fighting-age-old-racism>

128 <http://www.goteborgdaily.se/news/gothenburg-celebrates-romani-day>

129 <http://www.roma-alliance.org/en/page/187-1st-place-of-the-5th-dosta-congress-prize---city-of-ghent--belgium-.html>

130 <http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en/node/380>



administration. For example, in Barcelona, the Municipal Council for the Roma (Consell Municipal del Poble Gitano a Barcelona) was established in 1998 and through joint efforts led to the creation in 2015 of Local Strategy for the Roma People in Barcelona.<sup>131</sup> Barcelona City has also engaged in efforts to promote Romani culture and identity, as a way of dealing with existing stereotypes and prejudice towards the Roma. For example, in 2016 in the framework of the International Roma Day, Barcelona city hosted a week of events promoting Romani culture, many of which took place in public and touristic spaces.<sup>132</sup>

113. Acknowledging the existence of anti-Gypsyism and establishing pro-active and preventive measures to curb its manifestations, is necessary to effectively address this problem. In 2014 in Sweden, a governmental commission against anti-Gypsyism was established, being first such body in Europe. Prior to creating the commission, the Swedish government also published a White Paper in 2014 on abuses and rights violations of Roma during the 1900s, which acknowledged that prejudices towards Roma in those years laid the foundation for current attitudes towards Roma.<sup>133</sup>

114. More examples can be found in chapter 4 of the Appendix.

*ii. Responses of local and regional authorities: measures falling short of expected results*

115. Many initiatives fail because their design is based on stereotypes, a paternalistic approach and the lack of consultation and participation of Roma, lack of incentives for participation, or because of a design that reinforces exclusion and segregation through exclusive targeting.

116. For example, in the Slovakian municipality Vel'ká, a project was implemented that focused on literacy courses for Romani women combined with cleaning and gardening work, while Roma men were trained in the use of different tools. While several hundred men were expected to participate, only 135 did so, of who only 49 landed a (seasonal) job. With regard to the participation of women, only about 20 women attended the courses, and many dropped out after they either found the courses did not help them or when they were not paid for the work they did in addition to the courses. Besides the problems in the administration of the project, such as the lack of communication and coordination between the stakeholders, the main problem was the "top-down" design of the project that failed to include the Roma women and men as beneficiaries from the beginning.<sup>134</sup>

**b. A short assessment of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers**

117. After its Resolution 333 (2011), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities initiated the Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers to serve as a framework and platform for collaboration and exchange for local and regional authorities. Since its formal launch in March 2013, it has attracted 130 cities and regions from 29 member States of the CoE.

118. The main activities of the Alliance are the organisation of national and international seminars, workshops and roundtables that provide a forum for exchange for participants and stakeholders of Roma and Travellers inclusion of all levels of government and NGOs. Such seminars took place in Málaga (Spain), Belgrade (Serbia) and Trakai (Lithuania) in 2015.<sup>135</sup> As one of the means of communication and exchange, the Alliance also offers an intranet platform, which has already been used to find partners and apply for EU funding together.

119. All these activities have been met by participants with satisfaction and have reportedly helped to enhance the performance of local and regional authorities. However, it is difficult to establish the long-term outcome of the activities of the Alliance. What can be stated is that authorities find it hard to keep their commitments for Roma and Traveller inclusion since the rather frequent change of locally elected politicians leads to a gap between intentions at the joining of the Alliance on the one hand, and actual fulfilment of the commitments on the other. Also, the financial and human resources contributions that were expected to lead to an increased number of activities of the Alliance did not materialise, and neither did the political support by other international organisations. As a first remedy to this situation, the management of the Alliance was transferred from the Congress to the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Roma Issues in January

131 [http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu-documents/EstrategiaGITANO\\_DINA4\\_web.pdf](http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/sites/default/files/arxiu-documents/EstrategiaGITANO_DINA4_web.pdf)

132 <http://www.museuvirtualgitano.cat/2016/03/31/programacio-per-celebrar-el-dia-internacional-del-poble-gitano/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/8abrilbarcelona/>

133 <http://motantiziganism.se/english/about-us/>

134 <http://www.univie.ac.at/alumni.ksa/images/text-documents/ASSA/ASSA-Journal-2011-01.pdf>

135 See [www.roma-alliance.org](http://www.roma-alliance.org)



2016 in pursuance of synergies with other Council of Europe programmes on Roma and Traveller inclusion.

## 5. Conclusions

120. It seems that the greater number of Roma and Travellers have not directly suffered from the refugee situation and the insufficient response by European states to it, the victims of which are chiefly refugees. However, it should not be forgotten that there are Roma from either the Balkan states or the Eastern groups such as the Dom, who are as refugees directly affected by the crisis.

121. As the examples in this report have shown, Roma and Travellers have been exposed to an unacceptable amount of racism, discrimination and exclusion long before the situation deteriorated for all vulnerable groups in Europe. Even though the current situation may impact the greater number of Roma and Travellers only indirectly, they still suffer from its repercussions. In the context of rising racism and xenophobia, anti-Gypsyism is far from being the last phenomenon to worry about.

122. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that local and regional authorities, as well as national governments, undertake firm actions to prevent the spread and proliferation of diverse manifestations of anti-Gypsyism. It is important to condemn anti-Gypsyism incidents and discourses. But it is even more important to engage in preventive measures, by educating societies and shaping an alternative and balanced counter-narrative.

123. The fulfilment of human rights standards for Roma and Travellers, be it classical civil and political rights, or economic and social rights, must be a priority. Even though all levels of government in many European countries now face the challenge to effectively integrate newly arrived refugees, commitments and obligations with regard to the inclusion of Roma and Travellers must be upheld and not forgotten. The work for inclusion in the fields of education, employment, healthcare and housing must remain a priority.

124. A special focus must be put on the education and vocational training of Roma and Traveller youth. Europe cannot afford to lose another generation that cannot participate in a society that is increasingly based on knowledge and technology. Local and regional authorities must ensure they make use of the numerous financing instruments that are available to support the educational and vocational training for Roma and Traveller youth. At the same time, discrimination in these fields must be fought with determination.

125. Political leadership in shaping the public and political discourse on Roma and Travellers is vital. Nothing influences the public discourse and consequently public opinion more than what politicians on a local, regional, national and European level say in their daily work. The political discourse of a society plays a major role in preventing or stimulating the rise of racism and xenophobia and their manifestations, thus it either encourages or discourages anti-Gypsyism.

126. The same holds true for media that carry a tremendous responsibility when it comes to the creation of a certain image of Roma and Travellers. Journalists are not immune against prejudices anti-Gypsyist stereotypes and need training to detect and prevent anti-Gypsyist elements in their reporting. Initiatives such as the Council of Europe's *Dosta!* campaign, which provides a toolkit to fight prejudices through education, have been developed and are ready to use. In cases where media exploit stereotypes not out of negligence but intentionally, they need to be reminded of their duty not to instigate hatred.

127. Education is key for culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse societies. Initiatives that foster intercultural understanding, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion need to be implemented consequently. In order to build bridges between the majority society and Roma and Travellers, the teaching of Roma and Traveller history and remembrance of the Roma genocide is crucial. Appreciation of cultural differences should replace mere acceptance or tolerance of cultural diversity. The Council of Europe Intercultural Cities programme<sup>136</sup> and the project "Alliance of European cities against violent extremism",<sup>137</sup> co-launched by the Congress in cooperation with the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) and the Mayors of Aarhus and Rotterdam, offer a useful framework in this regard.

128. The strengthening of anti-racist civil society initiatives and organisations and specifically Roma and Traveller civil society seems important. Local authorities can achieve much by building alliances

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136 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/home>

137 <http://citiesagainstextremism.eu/>

with NGOs, involving civil society in dialogue mechanisms and by monitoring of implementation of strategies against anti-Gypsyism. Local and regional authorities have plenty of opportunities to shape the prevalent discourse, by supporting the No Hate Speech Movement,<sup>138</sup> supporting or organising activities around the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March or the European Action Week against Racism.<sup>139</sup>

129. The fight against anti-Gypsyism also needs legal remedies that are available to victims, and law enforcement that is sensitive to anti-Gypsyism. Legal remedies with teeth must be put in place against all manifestations of Anti-Gypsyism that will grant victims compensation and satisfaction, while deterring potential perpetrators from discriminating against Roma and Travellers. Local and regional authorities can support Roma and Travellers with setting up local legal clinics that support victims in their pursuit of justice.

130. Participation of Roma and Traveller youth in all levels of decision-making also constitutes a vital aspect of empowerment on the path to inclusion. Local and regional authorities have many opportunities to facilitate this progress, as lined out in Congress Resolution 366 (2014).

131. Last but not least, the fulfilment of human rights standards is of utmost importance. Especially the fulfilment of economic and social rights in the field of education, employment, healthcare and housing to secure a decent standard of living is crucial.

132. This short evaluation of the situation of Roma and Travellers, to which local and regional authorities can greatly contribute via policies suggested in Congress Resolution 333(2011),<sup>140</sup> indicates that the subject remains a challenge for local and regional authorities.

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138 <http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/join-the-movement>

139 <http://weekagainstracism.eu/>

140 <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=RES333%282011%29&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679&direct=true>

## APPENDIX

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#### 1. Anti-Gypsyism: A brief introduction

1. In a recently published “Comprehensive study of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues on the human rights situation of Roma worldwide, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism”,<sup>141</sup> Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsak argues that “anti-Gypsyism therefore includes strong anti-Roma prejudices and stereotypes, including those that lead to labelling Roma communities as criminal, aggressive, or as ‘parasites’ on welfare systems.” She further notes that “although anti-Gypsyism is originally a European term, the discrimination it embodies manifests itself in a variety of ways across regions” and thus, is a worldwide phenomenon.

2. Markus End differently defines it as “historically emerging and self-stabilizing social phenomenon consisting of 1. a homogenising and essentialising perception and description of certain groups under the stigma of “Gypsy” or other related terms; 2. an attribution of specific deviant characteristics to the stigmatized, and 3. along with discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background.”<sup>142</sup>

3. Although the term and definition of anti-Gypsyism remain under discussion, as well as, its use or reference in jurisprudence remains limited and flawed, anti-Gypsyism is gaining acceptance and finding its way into official documents. A broad consensus seems also to emerge recognising that anti-Gypsyism is one of the root causes of Roma exclusion. With this recognition a shift in focus from Roma social inclusion to robust action tackling this phenomenon is noticeable.

#### 2. Anti-Gypsyism: General trends and local examples

##### a. Anti-Gypsyism: deterioration of social acceptance of Roma and Travellers

6. In **Western countries**, in 2015 the Commission reports that in the old EU countries “heated debates on free movement and social rights contributed to negative stereotyping of Roma. As a result, in several Member States majorities hold unfavourable views of Roma (Italy: 85%, France: 66%, Greece: 53%, United Kingdom: 50%)”.<sup>143</sup>

7. Other research suggest that the Roma are the least tolerated minority group in **Western and Northern Europe** (France: 55%, Germany: 42%, Sweden: 45%, Finland: 53%, Norway: 40%, Britain:

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141 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/SRMinorities/Pages/GlobalStudyonRomaworldwide.aspx>

142 <http://docplayer.net/12396503-Antigyysism-in-the-german-public-sphere.html>

143 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_communication2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf)

58%, Denmark: 72%) and in all surveyed countries are viewed more negatively than Muslims, second in most countries.<sup>144</sup>

8. Furthermore, as indicated by a Pew Research Centre survey, “there is a strong relationship between ideology and attitudes toward Roma. People who place themselves on the right side of the political spectrum tend to offer more negative opinions, although these views are not uncommon among those on the left.”<sup>145</sup> As European politics increasingly shift towards the right, the negative anti-Roma sentiments might proliferate further.

9. In 2014 Human Right Watch report on the EU, it was argued that “Roma, migrants, and asylum seekers are particularly marginalized” and are the main victims of hate crime, violence and discrimination across the EU.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, it is argued that there “are two major groups that have been in a controversial public discourse already for a long time and seem to be the ‘number one enemy’ of most populist and right wing extremists throughout Europe: ‘Muslim’ and ‘Roma’.”<sup>147</sup> In 2016, these trends have intensified for all above mentioned groups.

10. Similar trends can be observed in post-communist countries. For example, in **Poland**, where Roma are one of the smallest minority in the country and smallest comparing with population in countries such as Romania, Hungary, Slovakia or Bulgaria, the Roma population have been the least favourably perceived minority for years. What is startling, however, is how the level of tolerance has deteriorated over the last two years – in 2014, 55% of the persons asked viewed the Roma negatively<sup>148</sup> and in 2016 this number rose to 67%, same number as the perception of Arabs.<sup>149</sup> In **Hungary**, there is a concern of the “deterioration of the situation as regards racism and intolerance in Hungary, with anti-Gypsyism being the most blatant form of intolerance, as illustrated by distinctively harsh manifestations, including violence targeting Roma people and paramilitary marches and patrolling in Roma-populated villages.

11. A 2014 FRA report provides data that confirms this for many countries where Roma live, including in former communist countries: The majority of Roma (54%) feel discriminated against when looking for paid work, for example, in Czech Republic this percentage reaches 74%, for Italy, France or Poland is between 64 and 68%.<sup>150</sup>

#### **b. Anti-Gypsyism: securitisation of the discourse on Roma**

12. Over the past few years, there is a growing and noticeable trend of treating Roma as a “security issue”. In political, public, media and in some cases even scholarly discourse, Roma are treated as “abnormal citizens”, unable to fit into the mainstream society, prone to crime and misconduct and with a tendency to disobey social and legal norms. This is often illustrated by problematising and racialising such social phenomenon as migration, begging, vagrancy, early or forced marriages or unemployment, which are commonly treated as traditional and inherent to Romani culture.

13. Such framing of discourse on Roma disregards historical, institutional and socio-economic factors, including deep-rooted prejudice as manifested by prevalent anti-Gypsyism. Such discourses which frame the Roma as a threat to public order lead to and justify the “securitization of the Roma issue” in state policies, evidence of which can be traced in different European countries (for example in Italy, France, Hungary, Slovakia).<sup>151</sup>

14. Presenting Roma as a potential social threat to public order, which seemingly becomes an increasing trend especially in the media and political discourses, results in the emergence of what Huub van Baar calls “reasonable anti-Gypsyism”. According to him: “The argument goes that you are rightfully entitled to act against them and treat them differently, because they cause inconvenience,

144 [https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus\\_uploads/document/q96awulgzv/Eurotrack\\_Minorities\\_W.pdf](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/q96awulgzv/Eurotrack_Minorities_W.pdf)

145 2014 Global Attitude Survey, Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/05/12/chapter-4-views-of-roma-muslims-jews/>

146 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/european-union>

147 [http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/archive/pages/thema07.htm#\\_5](http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/archive/pages/thema07.htm#_5)

148 [http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2014/K\\_020\\_14.PDF](http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2014/K_020_14.PDF)

149 <http://polska.newsweek.pl/ktore-narody-polacy-lubia-najbardziej-badanie-cbos.artykuly.383448.1.html>

150 Roma survey — Data in focus: Poverty and Employment: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States, FRA, 2014.

151 See for example: Huub van Baar, “The Securitization of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in Europe: Context, Critique, Challenges”, Keynote speech delivered at New Scotland Yard, London, UK. Held 3 December 2014. In the context of the international seminar Crime and Punishment: Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in the Criminal Justice System. Organized by IDRICS, Bucks New University and The University of Warwick. Available at:

[https://www.academia.edu/10862181/The\\_Securitization\\_of\\_Gypsies\\_Travellers\\_and\\_Roma\\_in\\_Europe\\_Context\\_Critique\\_Challenges\\_2014](https://www.academia.edu/10862181/The_Securitization_of_Gypsies_Travellers_and_Roma_in_Europe_Context_Critique_Challenges_2014).

Bărbulescu, Horia. “Constructing the Roma people as a societal threat: the Roma expulsions from France.” *European Journal of Science and Theology* 8.1 (2012): 279-289; Carrera, Sergio. “The Framing of the Roma as Abnormal EU Citizens.” *The Reconceptualization of European Union Citizenship* (2013): 33.

indulge in criminal activity and can generally be expected to cause trouble.”<sup>152</sup> As a consequence, anti-Gypsyism becomes a legitimised, justifiable and socially accepted attitude, instead of recognising that anti-Gypsyism is, in fact, a form of racism.

15. There are numerous examples of how the securitisation discourse translates into concrete actions undertaken by local authorities. A good example of this kind of logic is provided by town of Bouscron in Belgium, which plans to build a wall to separate a Roma settlement, a local member claimed: "Those people will not be able to cross into Belgium from there, they will have to make their way around the barrier, which means they will not cross the border so frequently. The aim is not to hide them from view, but to create a safer environment."<sup>153</sup> There are of course numerous other examples of 'securitisation of Roma issue' both in former communist countries and in the old EU countries.

### c. Anti-Gypsyism and hate speech

#### i. Public officials and anti-Gypsyist rhetoric

16. In **Italy**, from January 2013 to March 2015, the European Roma \_Rights Centre (ERRC) documented 35 cases of hate speech by public figures, including two demonstrations. Most of the hate speech (15 cases) came from the Lega Nord (Northern League), a political party.<sup>154</sup> For example, the head of the party, has numerous times engaged in anti-Roma rhetoric. In 2015, for example, he was accused of inciting racial hatred by saying that he would "give six months' notice then raze the Roma camps to the ground".<sup>155</sup> In 2015, an Italian member of the European Parliament from the right-wing Northern League party, Gianluca Buonanno, called Roma the "dregs" of society in a TV debate.<sup>156</sup> In Italy, there is also a noticeable increase in verbal violence, by far the most common expression of discrimination. According to Lunaria, in 2011 there were 89 reported cases of verbal violence; in 2014 the number peaked to 916.<sup>157</sup>

17. In 2013, a **French** politician and mayor of a town called Cholet, Gilles Bourdouleix, sparked international outrage when he said that "Maybe Hitler didn't kill enough Gypsies."<sup>158</sup> Roma Genocide denial by politicians was also recorded in 2014 in Hungary and Czech Republic.<sup>159</sup>

18. In **Romania**, in 2014 it was argued that "Anti-Roma rhetoric emerges from politicians across all three major political parties – the left, the right and the Liberals",<sup>160</sup> including through statements made during TV interviews and online. Most notably, in 2013, a Rares Buglea, the leader of National Liberal Party (PNL) Youth Organization in Alba County has been fined for his post on Facebook arguing for forced sterilisation of Romani women.

19. In **Slovakia**, anti-Roma rhetoric has been proliferating on behalf of politicians, especially those associated with radical parties such as People's Party-Our Slovakia. Mr. Martin Kotleba, the party's leader has been building electoral power through anti-Roma rhetoric; in his electoral manifest during 2013 regional elections, Kotleba argues for "the need to ensure safety in the surroundings of Roma settlements" and to fight "unfair favouritism of Gypsy parasites." More recently, in 2016, Mr. Kotleba argued that "Every month they fail to stop Gypsy extremists somewhere raping or killing someone. Police, led by the interior minister, protect thieves and parasites."<sup>161</sup>

20. In **Bulgaria**, there were numerous cases of anti-Roma rhetoric by public officials and politicians. Among the most scandalous examples of the anti-Gypsyism in Bulgaria is the case of Patriotic Front co-leader Valeri Simeonov who in December 2014 made derogatory statements concerning Roma in the National Assembly, calling them "brash, overconfident, and ferocious apes" who "want sickness benefits without being ill, child care for children who wallow with the pigs on the streets, and maternity benefits for women who have the instincts of street bitches."<sup>162</sup> A few days earlier, the Minister of Health Petar Moskov called "animals" and argued that "those who choose to behave like animals deserve to be treated like them", in a response to attack on ambulance crews which took place in a Roma neighbourhood.<sup>163</sup> The 2014 ECRI report on Bulgaria notes that racist and intolerant hate

152 [https://www.academia.edu/8170981/The\\_Emergence\\_of\\_a\\_Reasonable\\_Anti-Gypsyism\\_in\\_Europe\\_2014](https://www.academia.edu/8170981/The_Emergence_of_a_Reasonable_Anti-Gypsyism_in_Europe_2014)

153 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/france-building-a-wall-around-romani-camping-site>

154 [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT\\_CESCR\\_CSS\\_ITA\\_21312\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT_CESCR_CSS_ITA_21312_E.pdf)

155 <http://www.italianinsider.it/?q=node/2953>

156 <http://roma.idebate.org/news-articles/mep-indulges-anti-roma-rhetoric-during-italian-tv-show-0>

157 [http://www.lunaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Last\\_english\\_version\\_Libro\\_Bianco.pdf](http://www.lunaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Last_english_version_Libro_Bianco.pdf)

158 <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/gilles-bourdouleix-france-gypsy-hitler-kill-cholet-493310>

159 <http://www.romareact.org/news/view/1981>

160 <https://euobserver.com/eu-elections/123907>

161 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/106fdaf2-e46e-11e5-ac45-5c039e797d1c.html#axzz45bpFLH1O>

162 <http://www.state.gov/j/dri/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252891#wrapper>

163 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/bulgaria-attacks-on-ambulance-crews-launch-new-discussion-about-romani-integration>



speech in political discourse is escalating, with a growing number of ultra-nationalist, fascist groups and political parties operating in Bulgaria.<sup>164</sup> The anti-Roma rhetoric, common in Bulgarian political discourse, leads to incitement to hate and violence and creates an environment in which anti-Gypsyism is legitimized and tolerated. According to the Chair of Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, “in 2015, nationalist parties of neo-totalitarian type (both in government and in opposition) became the main sources of incitement of hate, discrimination and violence against Roma people, Muslims and refugees.”<sup>165</sup>

21. The presence of anti-Gypsy rhetoric in political discourse is not only influenced by extremist discourse outside of formal politics, but increasingly becomes part of formal politics. For example, in **Greece** and **Hungary**, parties with extremist rhetoric have been elected to national parliaments, namely Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή) in Greece targeting irregular migrants and the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom) in Hungary mainly targeting Roma and Jews.<sup>166</sup> In the 2013 parliamentary elections campaign in the **Czech Republic**, the right-wing populist party “Dawn of Direct Democracy” appealed to anti-Roma sentiments with its leader calling for the Roma to leave the Czech Republic and found their own state or, ideally, return to India; the party won 14 seats.<sup>167</sup> Recently in 2016, also in **Slovakia** ultra-nationalist People’s Party-Our Slovakia won 14 seats in national parliament.<sup>168</sup>

22. Anti-Roma rhetoric is not uncommon even among the highest-level public officials. In the **Czech Republic**, analysts argue “Czech President Miloš Zeman added a significant amount of fuel to the fire of this hatred by saying in a January interview for the Deník newspaper that people living in ghettos have no one to blame but themselves.”<sup>169</sup> President Zeman has also made controversial remarks about Roma in 2014. With regards to the Czech Republic, ECRI noted with concern the use of the term “inadaptable” to refer to vulnerable groups, in particular Roma, which has become a commonly used expression in public discourse and in the media. ECRI and others<sup>170</sup> have repeatedly called for not using this term in any official capacity.<sup>171</sup>

23. Anti-Roma statements and sentiments may become a trade-mark of entire political parties. For example in **Sweden** in 2015, the nationalist “Sweden Democrats” engaged in an anti-Roma campaign through posters introduced in the metro of Stockholm. As reported by Michael Guet of the SRSG Roma Support Team, the posters targeting tourists and written in English were clearly, inciting “racial hatred against one particular ethnic group, the Roma who are pictured in a very negative and stereotyped way. Not only these posters are extremely controversial and provocative but they misinform the public.”<sup>172</sup> In view of some scholars this kind of expression of anti-Gypsyism can be considered an example of genocidal discourse.<sup>173</sup>

## *ii. Anti-Gypsyism in the media*

24. According to an ECRI report on the **Czech Republic**, the Roma remain the main target of racism in the media – a 2013 study on stereotypes in the media image of Roma found “that a large part of reporting about Roma is comprised of news of anti-Roma marches, increasing Roma criminality and the growing anti-Roma sentiment of the majority population.”<sup>174</sup>

25. According to the ERIO report “Human Rights Abuses and Discrimination against Roma 2015” anti-Roma rhetoric is increasingly present in **Czech** online media as well as online blogs.<sup>175</sup> It is argued that the Czech tabloid Blesk launched a campaign against inclusive education of Roma in 2016.<sup>176</sup>

164 <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Bulgaria/BGR-CbC-V-2014-036-ENG.pdf>

165 <http://www.bghelsinki.org/en/news/press/single/bulgarian-helsinki-committees-annual-report-bulgaria-faced-serious-challenges-sphere-human-rights-2015/>

166 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary, 2013

167 [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech\\_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf)

168 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/106fdaf2-e46e-11e5-ac45-5c039e797d1c.html#axzz45bpFLH1O>

169 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/analysis-roma-replace-muslims-as-main-target-for-czech-hate-online>

170 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/together-to-school-coalition-protests-use-of-the-term-inadaptables-in-czech-media>

171 [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech\\_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf)

172 [http://a.cs.coe.int/team81/opre\\_platform/SitePages/Home.aspx](http://a.cs.coe.int/team81/opre_platform/SitePages/Home.aspx)

173 Emma Townsend, “Hate Speech or Genocidal Discourse? An Examination of Anti-Roma Sentiment in Contemporary Europe”, Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies, vol. 11, no. 1, January 2014.

174 [https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech\\_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf)

175 [http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Human%20Rights%20Abuses%20and%20Discrimination%20against%20Roma\\_2015.pdf](http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Human%20Rights%20Abuses%20and%20Discrimination%20against%20Roma_2015.pdf)

176 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/analysis-czech-tabloid-launches-campaign-against-inclusive-education>



26. In **Bulgaria**, a 2016 study “Hate Speech in Bulgaria: Risk Zones and Vulnerable Objects” found that hate speech has increased in Bulgarian media. Reportedly, the most common victims of hate speech are Bulgarian Roma, mentioned in 93 % of cases cited in the study.<sup>177</sup>

27. In the **UK**, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain provided numerous examples of bias, racism and stereotyping in the media in relation to the reporting of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues.<sup>178</sup>

28. In **Austria**, a recent report by Romano Centro provides numerous examples of stereotypical depiction of Roma in the media, arguing that this practice is common not only in the right-wing extremist media but also in the mainstream. Although “openly racist articles are rare”, the term Roma and beggars are being used as synonyms, Roma are depicted in association to begging or criminal activity, often invoking the image of the “begging mafia”. Such portrayal of Roma “contributes to the solidification of the criminal minority” and increase resentment.<sup>179</sup>

29. In **Italy**, according to reports every two days there is a serious incident of hate speech that indiscriminately penalises and stigmatises Sinti communities.<sup>180</sup> The same source also underlines that 79% of recorded incidents of hate speech in the media (print and online) came from politicians and local elected representatives.

### *iii. Anti-Gypsyism online*

30. In the **UK**, a 2014 report suggests that Roma, Gypsy and Travellers are the number one target of hate speech on Twitter.<sup>181</sup>

31. Already in 2010, one master thesis depicted the proliferation of anti-Roma hate speech in online forums arguing that “in **Romania** it is the Roma people that are considered, at least on the Internet forums in question, the biggest threat to the realisation of the “one country, one “nation” fantasy” of far-right movements and countries.<sup>182</sup>

32. According to the PROXI Project report for 2015, Roma are one of the main target groups of hate speech in **Spain, France, Italy and Romania**.<sup>183</sup> For example, in **Spain**, PROXI analysed comments posted on online forums of three major Spanish newspapers and found that around 60% of all comments posted on Roma can be classified as intolerant (hate speech, stereotypes and prejudice, rumours, low intensity anti-Gypsyism); the same percentage as in the case of anti-immigration discourse.<sup>184</sup>

33. In **Slovakia**, experts have raised concern over increasing extremisms online.<sup>185</sup>

34. In **Czech Republic**, it is argued that the online environment cultivates hatred against Roma and that numerous blogs allow anti-Gypsyist content on regular basis.<sup>186</sup> Furthermore, it is argued that the approval of the Romani Integration Strategy until 2020 sparked the main hateful reaction online against Romani people, alleging “positive discrimination of Roma.”<sup>187</sup>

35. In **Poland**, a 2015 study found that 74% adults and 85% teens have encountered hate speech towards Roma, mostly online. It has also found that the hate speech against Roma is common especially among teens, and that it is much more widely acceptable than hate speech direct towards other minorities.<sup>188</sup>

177 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/experts-warn-against-epidemic-of-hate-speech-in-bulgaria-03-28-2016#sthash.YUfit8I5.dpuf>

178 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140122145147/http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Submission-from-The-Irish-Traveller-Movement-April-20121.pdf>

179 “Anti-Gypsyism in Austria”, Romano Centro, 2015, [http://www.romano-centro.org/downloads/Antigypsyism\\_in\\_Austria\\_2015.pdf](http://www.romano-centro.org/downloads/Antigypsyism_in_Austria_2015.pdf)

180 “Anti-Gypsyism 2.0 Report 2013-2014”, Osservatorio 21 Luglio, 2014, [http://www.21luglio.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Antiziganismo-2-0\\_13-14\\_web.pdf](http://www.21luglio.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Antiziganismo-2-0_13-14_web.pdf)

181 <http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2014-06/18/hatebrain-stats-uk>

182 <https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/18163/hatespee.pdf?sequence=1>

183 “Backgrounds, experiences and responses to online hate speech”, PRISM PROJECT, 2015 [http://www.unicri.it/special\\_topics/hate\\_crimes/Backgrounds\\_Experiences\\_and\\_Responses\\_to\\_Online\\_Hate\\_Speech\\_A\\_Comparative\\_Cross-Country\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.unicri.it/special_topics/hate_crimes/Backgrounds_Experiences_and_Responses_to_Online_Hate_Speech_A_Comparative_Cross-Country_Analysis.pdf)

184 “Informe del observatorio PROXI”, Vol. 1, Septiembre 2015, <http://www.observatorioproxi.org/images/pdfs/INFORME-proxi-2015.pdf>

185 <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20056743/government-taking-note-of-online-extremism.html>

186 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-online-environment-cultivating-hatred-of-roma>

187 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/analysis-roma-replace-muslims-as-main-target-for-czech-hate-online>

188 <http://siectolerancji.pl/sites/default/files/Romowie2015.pdf>

*iv. Hate crimes and violence*

36. In **France**, according to the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), “there has been an increase in acts of violence, hate speech and cases of rejection of Roma or people designed as such. This clearly illustrates an alarming rise of anti-Gypsyism which was already shown to be at a high level in France.”<sup>189</sup> In 2014, a Roma teenager was left in a coma after being kidnapped and brutally beaten by a group of vigilantes in Paris.<sup>190</sup>

37. In **Italy**, between 2013 and 2015, the ERRC has documented numerous cases of attacks and violence against Roma in Italy, including cases of throwing Molotov cocktails at Romani camps.<sup>191</sup> Nonetheless, ERRC argues that many cases of violence against Roma remain unreported. A project developed by ERRC and financed by Open Society Initiatives for Europe (OSIFE) created an online tool for reporting incidents of hate crime and hate speech in Italy and France.<sup>192</sup>

38. In the **Czech Republic**, Roma are the main targets of hate crime. According to research by the European Commission, 32 % of Romani people living in the Czech Republic have been physically assaulted or threatened with such an attack because of their nationality.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, according to police statistics, the number of hate violence “motivated by nationality, religion, sexual orientation or skin colour rose year-on-year from 38 to 211 cases” in 2013.<sup>194</sup> According to a report by IUSTITIA, Roma and Muslims are the most frequent victims of hate crime.<sup>195</sup>

39. In **Bulgaria**, violence against Roma has also been reported. For example, in 2013 a Bulgarian man shot dead three members of Romani family before committing suicide.<sup>196</sup>

40. The 2014 report of the FXB Centre for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University, warned of accelerating patterns of Anti-Roma violence in **Hungary**, listing a comprehensive list of human rights violations, including hate crimes and violence, racially-motivated killings, anti-Roma marches and attacks.<sup>197</sup>

41. In **Poland**, according to the Attorney General the number of reported racially motivated hate crimes has increased significantly – in 2013 there were 835 cases; in 2015 that number reached 1548 reported cases. Roma are the main target of hate crimes, followed by Jews and Muslims.<sup>198</sup>

42. Roma also fall victims and are particularly vulnerable in times of social unrest and internal conflicts. Most recently during the **Ukraine** crisis, Roma communities have been numerous times victims of racially motivated attacks, including shootings, setting property on fire and physical attacks, as reported by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)<sup>199</sup> and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE-ODIHR).<sup>200</sup> Furthermore, according to the WHO, since the crises started, 10,000 Roma people are estimated to have fled from their residences in the Eastern part of the country.<sup>201</sup>

43. Roma are also victims of **police violence**. For example, in Eastern **Slovakia**, the Slovak police allegedly injured 15 Roma during their intervention in the settlement near Michalovce in 2015.<sup>202</sup> According to ROMEA, this is one of many problematic interventions of police forces with Roma communities in Slovakia.<sup>203</sup>

44. In **Romania**, it is stated in the recent US State Department report, that “major human rights problems included police and gendarme mistreatment and harassment of detainees and Roma.” This also includes cases such as the 2014 case of police officer George Stefan, who allegedly beat to

189 <http://www.errc.org/article/more-than-11000-roma-migrants-forcefully-evicted-in-france-in-2015/4442>

190 <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/6/17/roma-attack-franceviolence.html>

191 [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT\\_CESCR\\_CSS\\_ITA\\_21312\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT_CESCR_CSS_ITA_21312_E.pdf)

192 <http://www.errc.org/about-us/projects/combating-hate-crime-and-hate-speech-in-france-and-italy/4446>

193 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/hate-violence-and-romani-people-in-the-czech-republic>

194 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-number-of-victims-of-hate-violence-rose-in-2013>

195 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-ngo-report-finds-muslims-and-roma-most-frequent-victims-of-hate-violence>

196 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/bulgarian-man-shoots-dead-three-romani-people-before-committing-suicide>

197 [https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/02/FXB-Hungary-Report\\_Released-February-3-2014.pdf](https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/02/FXB-Hungary-Report_Released-February-3-2014.pdf)

198 <http://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/1,35241,19979096,zniewazanie-grozby-pobicia-lawinowo-rosnie-liczba-przestepstw.html>

199 <http://www.errc.org/article/joint-statement-on-violence-against-roma-in-ukraine/4278>

200 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/124494?download=true>

201 <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/roma-health/news/news/2015/04/who-and-partners-increase-focus-on-roma-population-in-ukraine>

202 <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20056808/roma-allege-police-brutality-in-eastern-slovak-village.html>

203 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovakia-mayor-and-romani-residents-say-police-brutalized-them-police-deny-it>

death a 26-year-old Romani man or policy brutality in Romani community of Racos, Brasov County.<sup>204</sup> Police violence against Roma is also an issue in Western Europe.

45. In **Hungary**, Roma are oftentimes mistreated by police, frequently being victims of absurd misdemeanour charges by the police; in response Roma Press Centre (RSK) has launched a campaign documenting stories of must absurd police charges against Roma.<sup>205</sup>

46. In **Italy** in 2015, policy brutality was denounced by a local Roma organisation, following a raid on a Roma camp outlying the Tor Cervera neighbourhood in Rome.<sup>206</sup>

47. In 2012, in **Portugal**, a policeman dressed in civilian clothes shot a Romani man in the face. The policeman was heard saying that "I feel hate towards the Roma and if I could, I would kill all of your race."<sup>207</sup> Since 2011, the ERRC has engaged in numerous court proceedings regarding police brutality in Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Slovakia, among others.<sup>208</sup> Some cases also include police brutality towards Romani minors and youth.<sup>209</sup>

48. Furthermore, it should be noted that prosecuting police misconduct and police brutality remains challenging and rarely ends up in court. For example, a 2015 report on **Slovakia** of the United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT) found that "systematic repressive action by the police goes hand in hand with ineffective investigations of police misconduct".<sup>210</sup> Despite calling on the Slovak government to adequately investigate cases of police brutality, the practice of denying any wrongdoing remains the same – on 1 April 2016 "Slovak Interior Ministry investigators stopped prosecutions in all cases against police officers".<sup>211</sup>

#### v. *Extremist/far-right groups*

49. In **Hungary**, "one of the most worrying trends in the field of racism and intolerance in Hungary is the growing visible presence of extremist organisations over the last years. A distinctive feature of this phenomenon is the combination of the strong presence in the Hungarian national parliament of a party which uses extremist rhetoric and the close links between the latter and paramilitary groups carrying out acts of intimidation against Roma. (...) Some of them have taken the form of intimidating marches in paramilitary uniforms and patrolling by vigilante groups, in Roma-populated villages. The widely documented march attended by up to 2,000 people in the village of Gyöngyöspata on 6 March 2011 succeeded by several weeks of patrolling by vigilante groups threatening, intimidating and harassing Roma residents, was followed by other such incidents in 2012 and 2013 in several places (Cegléd, Devecser, Hajdúhadház and Miskolc)."<sup>212</sup>

50. In the Eastern **Hungarian** town of Tiszavasvári, the far-right mayor Erik Fülöp, affiliated with the Jobbik party, decided to task an extremist group called the Association of the Legion of Honour (*Becsület Légiója Egyesület*) to serve as a municipal security force, and giving them a role in child care and social services cases. In February 2016, a panic broke out among Romani parents after news that the municipality was planning to take Roma children into state care.<sup>213</sup>

51. In **Bulgaria**, fascist groups particularly target the Roma population.<sup>214</sup>

52. The far-right **Finnish** vigilante group "Soldiers of Odin" has expanded over the period of last months also to **Norway**, **Sweden** and **Estonia**.<sup>215</sup> In **Sweden**, reportedly neo-Nazi propaganda

204 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252891#wrapper>

205 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/hungary-roma-press-center-launches-ironic-campaign-against-police-abuse-featuring-leading-actors>

206 <http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/135332/Roma-people-denounce--savage--police-attack-on-women--kids.html>

207 <https://www.publico.pt/sociedade/noticia/policia-movido-por-odio-racial-condenado-por-baleiar-cigano-que-so-queria-conversar-1729238>

208 <http://www.errc.org/article/domestic-cases-state-response-to-violence-and-hate-speech/4405>

209 For example: <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-romani-youth-beaten-by-police-says-officers-told-him-he-would-die>

210 <http://www.errc.org/article/un-slovak-politicians-must-not-tolerate-police-violence-against-roma/4417>

211 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/bernard-rorke/slovakia-roma-exclusion-and-dark-side-of-democracy>

212 Report by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Hungary, Strasbourg, 16 December

2014 [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CommDH\(2014\)21&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CommDH(2014)21&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383)

213 <http://hungarianfreepress.com/2016/02/16/panic-breaks-out-in-a-hungarian-roma-community/>

214 <http://www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2016/04/fascism-and-the-far-right-in-europe-country-by-country-guide-part-one/>

215 <https://www.rt.com/news/337075-soldiers-of-odin-sweden/>

actions have reached record highs, increasing by 23% between 2014 and 2015.<sup>216</sup> Reportedly, there are also far-right vigilante groups patrolling Danish-Swedish borders against immigrants.<sup>217</sup>

53. Although the groups are defined as anti-immigrant, the right-wing media show that they group also targets Roma.<sup>218</sup> According to some analysts, vigilante groups once “claimed to be aiding police in fighting against ‘Roma criminality’. Now they have found a new area of activity and seek social appraisal because they want to protect their countries from Muslims”.<sup>219</sup> But there are also vigilante groups which target Roma explicitly. Recently, the members of the ultra-nationalist **Slovak** National Party announced to plan a national private militia, in order to protect the country from “Roma criminals”, which would, for example, patrol night trains.<sup>220</sup> Reportedly a similar anti-Roma vigilante patrol was created in **Romania** by the ultra-national politician Bogdan Diaconu.<sup>221</sup>

#### d. General radicalisation of European societies

54. In the **Czech Republic**, according to a STEM opinion poll conducted in 2015, 73% of Czechs oppose the idea that everyone living in the country should be granted citizenship, up from 67% in 2014 and a record high. Also, 67% consider foreigners a security risk (60% in 2014). This trend also affects ethnic minorities living in the Czech Republic – 69% of Czechs are against ethnic minorities being allowed to live according to their own traditions, up from 54 % in 2014.<sup>222</sup>

55. In **Hungary**, “refugees and asylum seekers have also become the target of hate crime and hate speech.”<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, there has been a rise in negative attitudes towards foreigners, asylum seekers and refugees, particularly in rural areas: according to 2013 public opinion poll by the Tarki Institute, 36% of the adults responded that they were xenophobic, in the sense that asylum seekers should not be allowed in the country and only 11% declared that they were favourable to foreigners, in the sense that in their opinion all asylum seekers should be accepted in the country.<sup>224</sup>

56. Apart from Bulgaria, anti-Roma protests have been reported also in other countries during the past few years, most notably in the **Czech Republic**, **Ireland** (in Waterford in 2014),<sup>225</sup> **Serbia** (in 2013).<sup>226</sup>

57. In **Western Europe**, a rise in xenophobia, racism and racially motivated violence and crime has also been observed. For example, in **Spain**, hate crimes against Muslims have risen more than tenfold since 2014.<sup>227</sup> In **Italy**, between January 2013 and March 2015, the ERRC has documented 20 cases of hate speech by citizens, including demonstrations, flyers, protests and a ban for Roma.<sup>228</sup> For example, in February 2015, a poster appeared on the wall of a building in Vicenza saying “We have seen Gypsies in the streets and looking through the windows to steal from people’s homes. Shoot on sight and then we will come!”<sup>229</sup>

58. During the 2014 European Parliament elections, far-right parties have also won a significant number of seats, leading in 2015 to the formation of a political group called the Europe of Nations and Freedoms Group in the European Parliament.<sup>230</sup>

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216 <http://www.thelocal.se/20150324/neo-nazi-activity-on-the-rise-in-sweden>

217 <https://www.rt.com/news/339927-sweden-nationalist-vigilantes-refugees/>

218 <http://www.dailystormer.com/successful-nationalist-street-patrols-against-anti-white-violence-in-finland/>

219 <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114871,19933337,lowcy-migrantow-grasuja-w-europie-wschodniej-wsrod-nich-dinko.html>

220 <http://www.lalibre.be/actu/international/slovaquie-les-roms-s-inquietent-du-retour-de-la-peste-brune-5713a2c935702a22d679a174#87aa6>

221 <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/fluechtlinge-in-osteuropa-regierungen-dulden-selbstjustiz-der-buergerwehren-a-1087388.html>

222 <http://praguemonitor.com/2015/04/23/poll-czech-become-less-tolerant-foreigners>

223 Report by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Hungary, Strasbourg, 16 December 2014,

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CommDH\(2014\)21&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CommDH(2014)21&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383) ;

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary, 2013

224 [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2013/kitekint/20130205\\_idegenellenesseg.html](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2013/kitekint/20130205_idegenellenesseg.html).

225 <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/behind-the-news-anti-roma-protests-in-waterford-1.1983698>

226 [http://media-diversity.org/en/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2661:serbian-newspaper-initiated-anti-roma-protest&catid=35:media-news-a-content&Itemid=34](http://media-diversity.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2661:serbian-newspaper-initiated-anti-roma-protest&catid=35:media-news-a-content&Itemid=34)

227 <http://www.thelocal.es/20160413/hate-crime-against-muslims-rises-tenfold-in-spain>

228 [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT\\_CESCR\\_CSS\\_ITA\\_21312\\_E.pdf](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/ITA/INT_CESCR_CSS_ITA_21312_E.pdf)

229 [http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/02/18/sparate-a-vista-agli-zingari\\_n\\_6703408.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/02/18/sparate-a-vista-agli-zingari_n_6703408.html)

230 <https://euobserver.com/political/129129>



59. Countries particularly affected by the current refugee crisis have also witnessed an increase in racism and xenophobia and a growing popularity of extremist and xenophobic parties. For example, in **Greece**, the economic crisis as well as the increasing influx of asylum-seekers has resulted in a “growing influence of the extremist party Golden Dawn and its electoral gains in 2012, as well as for the threats and assaults perpetuated on migrants by extremist groups.”<sup>231</sup>

#### e. Institutional anti-Gypsyism: Perspectives from the ground

##### i. Access to economic and social rights

60. Failing to take advantage of funding opportunities and position Roma inclusion as a priority, hinders the possibility to effectively implement Roma inclusion policies locally. For example, according to a briefing paper by Roma Support Group, in the **UK** the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have failed to include the Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities into their strategies. According to the research into the priorities of the 39 LEPs in England, only in four areas there is a mention of Roma as potential beneficiaries. LEPs failed to ensure that the Roma will be able to benefit from the estimated £6bn to be spent in the UK through European Structural and Investment programmes during the funding period 2014-2020.<sup>232</sup>

##### ii. Forced evictions

61. In **Sweden**, according to “Inconvenient Human Rights: Access to Water and Sanitation in Sweden’s Informal Roma Settlements” report, since 2013 Swedish municipalities have been initiating more than 80 evictions of vulnerable EU citizens, mostly Roma.<sup>233</sup>

62. In **Bulgaria**, numerous forced evictions and demolitions of Roma settlements were also reported in 2015, causing tensions and protest, most notably in Varna and Garmen. The Roma from demolished settlements were not provided adequate housing.<sup>234</sup>

63. How forced evictions are being used as an instrument of local policy is shown by a case in Bulgaria. Anti-Roma protests, gathering thousands of people, erupted in the village of Radnevo, following a road-rage incident in which three Bulgarians were injured by Romani men. The Romani men have been charged with attempted murder. However, as reported by the ERRC, the Mayor of Radnevo, Tenjo Tenev, decided to apply collective punishment to the entire Roma neighbourhood, commencing procedures to identify and demolish the informal houses in which more than 1200 Roma have lived for over 20 years.<sup>235</sup>

64. In **Romania**, evictions or attempted evictions of Roma continued in Bucharest, Caracal, Baia Mare, Eforie and other localities during recent years.<sup>236</sup>

65. In **Hungary**, forced evictions have also been reported. Most recently, in 2015, a city of Miskolc in Northern Hungary begun to forcibly evict its Roma community, despite a Court’s ruling not to carry out the eviction.<sup>237</sup>

66. Forced evictions of Roma have also been reported in **Poland**<sup>238</sup> and in **Finland**, where according to Helsinki Police, Roma camps are dismantled almost on daily basis.<sup>239</sup>

67. According to the ERRC, “even less attention is paid to the forced evictions of Roma happening in countries outside the EU, such as Serbia (where Roma were evicted from their homes with almost no notice and placed in yet another container settlement), Macedonia, Albania, Turkey, and Ukraine.”<sup>240</sup> For example, in **Serbia**, around 1,000 Roma were forcibly evicted by the City of Belgrade; Amnesty

231 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary, 2013

232 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1\\_Krg5gnUWJHLUQ0S0REeU/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krg5gnUWJHLUQ0S0REeU/view)

233 “Inconvenient Human Rights: Access to Water and Sanitation in Sweden’s Informal Roma Settlements”

<http://rwi.lu.se/app/uploads/2016/04/Inconvenient-Human-Rights.pdf>

234 <http://www.novinite.com/articles/169536/Five+Illegal+Residential+Buildings+Demolished+in+Bulgaria%E2%80%99s+Garmen>

235 <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanRomaRightsCentre/photos/a.367490363319026.81028.152127778188620/1009827549085301/?type=3&theater>

236 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252891#wrapper>

237 <http://www.errc.org/blog/miskolc-mayor-remains-defiant-on-roma-evictions-despite-latest-court-ruling/96> ;

<http://www.errc.org/article/hungarian-city-set-to-expel-its-roma/4293>

238 <http://www.roma.nomada.info.pl/en/37-en/first/70-romanian-roma-settlement-forced-eviction-in-gdansk-poland>

239 [http://yle.fi/uutiset/helsinki\\_police\\_roma\\_camps\\_dismantled\\_almost\\_every\\_day/8068280](http://yle.fi/uutiset/helsinki_police_roma_camps_dismantled_almost_every_day/8068280)

240 <http://www.errc.org/article/international-roma-day-and-every-other-day-sees-roma-fighting-back-against-forced-evictions-and-theyll-win/4471>

International reported that three years later the Roma were still not provided adequate housing.<sup>241</sup> There were also reported evictions in **Albania**<sup>242</sup> and **Turkey**.<sup>243</sup>

### iii. Segregation in public spaces and schools

68. In the **Czech Republic**, various towns (most recently Duchcov in 2015) have passed ordinances banning people from sitting on concrete barriers or walls, placing armchairs in the streets and from grilling food in public areas. According to some critics, the ordinance targets Romani residents.<sup>244</sup>

69. In **Italy**, evicted Roma are placed in segregated temporary shelters and camps, are denied access to education and employment opportunities and face constant evictions, enduring harsh living conditions injurious to their health and safety; a situation which according to the ERRC amounts to a breach of the Racial Equality Directive.<sup>245</sup>

70. In **Romania**, according to the recent US State Department report, “there were reports that the government effectively segregated Romani children from non-Romani students and subjected Romani children to discriminatory treatment.”<sup>246</sup>

71. The 2016 OSF Justice Initiative report on “Strategic Litigations Impacts: Roma School Desegregation”, assessing and measuring the impact of strategic litigation for Roma school desegregation, concludes that outcomes “remains elusive”.<sup>247</sup>

72. The European Commission Report on discrimination of Roma children in education from 2014 by Lilla Farkas makes similar observation: “While international and supranational organizations fully embrace the integration/social inclusion of the Roma and regularly condemn anti-Romani sentiments and exclusionary practices, Member States’ policies and practices have in many cases, reportedly and starkly deviated from this approach.” And further: “Practice has shown that it is not so much the finding of (indirect) discrimination that poses challenges, but the tailoring and enforcement of effective, proportionate and dissuasive remedies.”<sup>248</sup>

73. According to a recent ERRC assessment, despite launching infringement proceedings and existing European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rulings, school segregation persists. In some countries such as **Hungary**, school segregation of Romani children has increased.<sup>249</sup> In other cases, for example **Greece** and the **Czech Republic**, implementing existing court judgements on desegregation has encountered significant backlash, mostly of the attitudes of non-Roma majorities who objected inclusive schooling.<sup>250</sup> In **Slovakia**, the so-called container school worsen the situation of school segregation. According to Amnesty International, following the 2012 landmark judgment condemning unlawful segregation, “not only has the separation continued, but it is actually taking on even more severe forms”.<sup>251</sup>

### f. Impact on Romani women

74. A recent US State Department report on **Romania** argued that “some women, especially Roma, had difficulty accessing reproductive health services for reasons that included lack of information, ethnic discrimination, lack of health insurance, and poverty.”<sup>252</sup>

75. It was also reported that Romani women face both gender and ethnic discrimination and often due to the lack of skills and training are especially vulnerable on the labour market. The situation of Romani women, especially young women and girls, is particularly difficult with regards to education;

241 “Serbia: Roma still waiting for adequate housing”, Amnesty International 2015,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur70/1308/2015/en/>

242 <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/misc/Housing%20Policies%20and%20Practice%20for%20Roma%20in%20Albania.pdf> ; <https://www.amnesty.org/download/.../EUR1126442015ENGLISH.pdf>

243 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/constructor-destroys-shacks-in-istanbul-leaves-roma-people-homeless-in-winter-cold.aspx?pageID=238&nid=76543&NewsCatID=341>

244 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/yet-another-czech-town-bans-sitting-outdoors>

245 <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/2015-eu-roma-framework-written-comments-19-february-2016.pdf>

246 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252891#wrapper>

247 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/strategic-litigation-impacts-roma-school-desegregation-20160407.pdf>

248 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_childdiscrimination\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_childdiscrimination_en.pdf)

249 <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/2015-eu-roma-framework-written-comments-19-february-2016.pdf>

250 <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/strategic-litigation-impacts-roma-school-desegregation-20160407.pdf>

251 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/03/slovakia-segregation-of-roma-schoolchildren-worsens/>

252 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/187861>



reportedly fewer Romani girls than boys remain in schools after the age of 16.<sup>253</sup> The group with highest rates of no formal education are Romani women (27% according to some sources).<sup>254</sup>

76. Romani women are also vulnerable to racially motivated violence and physical attacks. In **Italy** in 2013 acid was thrown at a Roma woman and her child, resulting in serious injuries. Other report of physical assaults against Romani women were also reported in 2013 in **Poland, Serbia** and in 2014, physical attacks on Romani women were reported in **Poland, the Czech Republic** and the **UK**.<sup>255</sup>

### g. Impact on Roma youth and children

77. In the **UK**, a recently published study confirms that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are among those most likely to be excluded from school rating four to five times higher than the national average. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are particularly vulnerable in a school setting and subjected to bullying.<sup>256</sup>

78. In **Sweden**, according to reports, the majority of Roma informants have been exposed in schools to bullying and discriminatory remarks and treatment.<sup>257</sup> In **Romania**, there were reports of discrimination by teachers and students against Romani students, which represents a disincentive for Romani children to complete their studies. There were also cases of schools rejecting enrolling Romani students to schools and of uninterrupted bullying.<sup>258</sup>

79. It was also recalled that a recent study on Roma education in **Turkey** showed that “most teachers working in predominantly Roma neighbourhoods asked to be reassigned after only one year.”<sup>259</sup>

## 3. The refugee crisis and Roma communities

### a. Direct impact

80. Steps were undertaken to obstruct or restrict the right of Roma to leave their countries, as for example in Macedonia.<sup>260</sup> Some of these restrictions applied not only to non-EU citizens, but also to Roma migrants coming from new EU countries, such as from Romania and Bulgaria, for example, through forced evictions and deportations back to their home countries. With the current refugee crisis in Europe, these tendencies are bound to further affect the situation of Roma, as for example, indicate some moves by Germany.

81. In mass media diverse terms such as “migrant”, “refugee”, “asylum seeker” are used almost simultaneously, without acknowledging the diverse meaning each of those words entail. Furthermore, the increase of migrants and their diverse national/ ethnic background conflates the public, antagonizing “true refugees” against “false refugees”, oftentimes associated with “economic migrants”. Roma are perceived as “economic migrants” and have been perceived as undesirable migrants even before the refugee crisis begun.<sup>261</sup> The current challenges posed by the migration wave of refugees, further antagonise Roma migration.

### b. Main entry countries (Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain)

82. The report of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue indicates that between 2012-2014 far-right vigilante groups were “maintaining a visible presence (often donning uniforms) in areas with a large presence of the conceived ‘enemy’” (i.e. Roma, migrants, asylum seekers).<sup>262</sup>

83. In **Greece**, there is a significant deterioration of social acceptance of Roma, noticeable especially through the increase of hate speech directed at Roma online. Though radical, neo-Nazi groups target mainly immigrants, there were cases in which Roma were also affected by violence. Local Roma fear that the increase in xenophobia and racism, along with growing activity of radical groups, may eventually lead to violence against Roma as well. On the other hand, the context of political,

253 <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ep-request-roma-women.pdf>

254 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/187861>

255 <http://hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/bias-against-roma-and-sinti>

256 <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/uploads/IEF%20Gypsies%20Travellers%20and%20Roma.pdf>

257 [http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com/Wigerfelt\\_And\\_Wigerfelt\\_Anti-Gypsyism\\_in\\_Sweden\\_IJC\\_Feb\\_2015.pdf](http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com/Wigerfelt_And_Wigerfelt_Anti-Gypsyism_in_Sweden_IJC_Feb_2015.pdf)

258 <http://www.state.gov/j/dri/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252891#wrapper>

259 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-first-roma-deputy-calls-for-solid-action-against-discrimination-on-roma-day-.aspx?pageID=238&nid=97516>

260 <http://www.errc.org/article/roma-rights-1-2014-going-nowhere-western-balkan-roma-and-eu-visa-liberalisation/4325/3>

261 Will Guy (ed.), *Between Past and Future: The Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*, 2001

262 [http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OldThreatNewApproach\\_2014.pdf](http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OldThreatNewApproach_2014.pdf)

economic and refugee crises in Greece lead to evident down-grading and abandonment of Roma inclusion efforts, both by the State as well as by local governments.<sup>263</sup>

*i. Transit countries*

84. According to such views more exposed to such influence are Muslim Roma communities, especially in the Balkans, and in those countries which are currently a transit route of the refugees. Some claim that in the Balkans, Islamic fundamentalists are recruiting Roma and forcing them to commit to radical Islam, as was argued by Darko Trifunović, Serbian delegate of the International Strategic Studies Association.

85. Jovan Damjanović of the World Roma Organization also claims that “Roma settlements are targets for terrorists - they consider us uninformed, uneducated and not in good economic and social positions.”<sup>264</sup> Likewise, according Serbian Intelligence, “anti-Muslim sentiment and the rift between Serbia’s Islamic affairs institutions have allowed violent jihadi extremists to exploit disadvantaged Roma and Bosnian communities.”<sup>265</sup> Reportedly, there have been several cases of Romani radical Islamists, and their alleged connection to ISIS, in **Bulgaria**<sup>266</sup> and **Serbia**.<sup>267</sup>

86. While there is no reliable data about the growth of Islamic fundamentalism among Muslim Roma communities, sensational media coverage regarding the alleged connection of Muslim Roma to terrorist and radical movements have dire consequences for the Roma themselves. According to some Roma leaders “extremist pressure is being created by new obstacles to the inclusion of Romani people into Balkan society, because the “majority” is now associating them with the danger of Islamic fundamentalism.”<sup>268</sup>

87. The situation can also potentially impact negatively on migrant Roma communities from Balkans in Western countries. Some analysts maintain that the scale of Balkan jihadist extremism is “underestimated”<sup>269</sup> and report on infiltration and presence of jihadist propaganda in most of the Balkan states, including Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In some Western countries jihadist cells have been identified among Balkan migrants. For example, in Italy radical cells are “located in Milan, Rome, Liguria, Lucca and Siena, infiltrated into communities of Muslim emigrants from Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia.”<sup>270</sup> Recently, a Bosnia citizen living in Austria was arrested and sentenced to prison for spreading jihadist propaganda and recruiting fighters.<sup>271</sup>

88. These reports may lead to stigmatisation of Balkan migrants in the West, among them numerous Roma, and have concrete ramification, such as increased profiling, policing or legislative changes. Obviously, such reporting also fuels populism, radicalisation and far-right discourses of Western politicians and societies, further contributing to the raise of xenophobia and racism.

*ii. Main receiving/ destination countries*

89. According to the Human Rights Watch World report 2016, “forced returns of Kosovo nationals from Western Europe, most of them ethnic Albanian, but also Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, significantly increased. This was due in part to the high number of asylum claims filed mostly by Albanian Kosovars in Germany in the first months of the year, the vast majority of which were rejected.”

90. In **France**, in 2014 a government proposed a new asylum bill in order to increase accommodation for asylum-seekers and speed-up the process. At the same time it proposed a new immigration bill allowing France to ban citizens from other EU countries if “they are deemed a threat to a “fundamental interest of society” or “abuse the law”—a move that appears to target Roma.<sup>272</sup> A similar clause has been included in the new anti-terrorist law, approved by the Senate in October 2014, raising concerns among human rights activists that the bill in reality aims at restricting the

263 Interview with Manolis Rantis, of the Rom Network association in Greece.

264 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/self-proclaimed-islamic-state-trying-to-recruit-roma-in-the-balkans>

265 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/jihadists-target-young-marginalised-serbian-muslims--03-27-2016>

266 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/the-roma-and-the-radicals-bulgaria-s-alleged-isis-support-base-01-10-2016-1>

267 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/jihadists-target-young-marginalised-serbian-muslims--03-27-2016>

268 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/self-proclaimed-islamic-state-trying-to-recruit-roma-in-the-balkans>

269 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/scale-of-balkan-jihadist-extremism-underestimated--03-29-2016>

270 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/italy-on-alert-over-jihadist-threat-from-balkans>

271 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/austria-jails-bosnian-citizen-for-recruiting-fighters-03-04-2016>

272 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/croatia-european-union-france-germany-greece-hungary-italy>

freedom of movement of EU nationals, specifically Roma.<sup>273</sup> In this context, the 2015 ERRC report observed an increase in acts of violence and hate speech against Roma.<sup>274</sup> Surprisingly however, a recent report of the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights stated that French are becoming a more tolerant society. The report also claims that the level of anti-Gypsyism has slightly declined in 2015. The Commission attributes this decline to the awareness-raising campaigns launched in France during the past year. While attitudes reportedly have improved, there has been an increase in the number of racist incidents in the country, reaching an all-time high of 2034 reported racist acts. The report, however, does not specify how many of those have targeted Roma.<sup>275</sup>

### *iii. Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE) indirectly impacted*

91. In 2014, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights raised concerns over the increased frequency of violent acts targeting Roma communities most notably in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.<sup>276</sup> In 2016, this trend in Visegrad countries continues or is on rise.

92. Already in 2014, in Andrychów, Poland, the Roma community has been facing harassment by far-right groups, including anti-Roma rallies chanting “Gypsies out”<sup>277</sup> and physical assaults (reportedly on a pregnant Romani woman).<sup>278</sup>

93. The incident is also associated with the rise of activity of radical groups such as Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (ONR). A worrisome trend lies in the fact that activities of such groups are increasingly legitimized by the current government, with the Ministry of Self-Defence planning to finance and train members of such groups as part of its plans of setting up National Defence forces.<sup>279</sup> Recently in May 2016, a group of football fans demolished a whole Roma camp in Gdańsk.<sup>280</sup>

94. In the **Czech Republic**, according to some reports, displays of hate and/or aggression towards Roma was redirected towards migrants and refugees instead, even virtual. For example according to Czech intelligence, in 2014 the anti-Roma events fell as the extremists were concentrating on anti-Islamic campaigns that took a form of anti-EU campaign.<sup>281</sup> Radical anti-Roma attitudes, however, do not only lead to specific action by radical groups but also by institutions. In 2015, the chamber of commerce of Usti nad Labem has called for the army to be deployed on the town's streets to help it deal with alleged problems caused by Roma migrants.<sup>282</sup>

95. In **Slovakia**, the rise to power of Our Slovakia ultra-nationalist party led by Marian Kotleba, along with the increasingly radical anti-Muslim, anti-refugee and ultra-nationalistic discourses, also poses a challenge to Roma inclusion. Kotleba, but also a ruling coalition partner, the right-wing Slovak National Party, has a long history of anti-Roma rhetoric. According to Jarmila Lajcakova from the Bratislava-based Centre for Research of Ethnicity (CVEK), “the threat of physical assault and intimidation against Roma has also increased.”<sup>283</sup>

96. A worrisome trend is the **transnational collaboration** of ultra-national, radical vigilante/militia groups, especially among Visegrad countries. These groups intensify exchange and networking but also undertake joint actions, sometimes targeting Roma. For example, in 2015, Polish, Slovak and Czech neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists have gathered to protests against immigrants in Ostrava; following the demonstration they headed towards the Romani neighbourhood in the city. The police had to intervene, detaining 63 extremists.<sup>284</sup>

273 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11174598/France-proposes-to-bar-undesirable-EU-migrants-on-terror-grounds.html>

274 <http://www.errc.org/article/more-than-11000-roma-migrants-forcefully-evicted-in-france-in-2015/4442>

275 [http://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/les\\_essentiels\\_-\\_rapport\\_racisme\\_2015\\_page\\_a\\_page.pdf](http://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/les_essentiels_-_rapport_racisme_2015_page_a_page.pdf)

276 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/czech-republic-urgent-action-needed-to-protect-roma-from-racist-extremism>

277 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/polish-far-right-groups-stir-up-anti-roma-hatred-in-the-shadow-of-auschwitz-9595882.html>

278 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-farright-roma-idUSKBN0FE0AS20140709>

279 [http://polska.newsweek.pl/onr-zostanie-uznany-za-formacje-dzialajaca-na-rzecz-bezpieczenstwa-kraju-\\_artykuly\\_384473\\_1.html](http://polska.newsweek.pl/onr-zostanie-uznany-za-formacje-dzialajaca-na-rzecz-bezpieczenstwa-kraju-_artykuly_384473_1.html)

280 <http://www.trojmiasto.info-migrator.pl/aktualnosci-trojmiasto/3107-grupa-kilkunastu-kibicow-zdemolowala-romskie-koczowisko-w-gdansk-policja-wiedziala-o-zagrozeniu-i-nie-zabezpieczyla-terenu?hitcount=0>

281 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-counter-intelligence-says-number-of-anti-romani-events-fell-in-2014-extremists-agitating-against-islam-instead>

282 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/czechrepublic/11697126/Czech-town-calls-for-army-deployment-to-deal-with-Roma-migrants.html>

283 <https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/31295121/roma-face-uncertain-future-amid-slovakias-nationalist-surge/>

284 <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-polish-and-slovak-neo-nazis-protest-migrants-in-ostrava-target-roma-area-63-right-wing-extremists-detained>

97. In **Romania**, incidents of hatred have also been reported. Most recently in 2016, on the occasion of celebrating the 8 April, International Roma Day, the tent of the National Centre for Roma Culture at the University Square in Bucharest has been vandalised, including a graffiti saying “Death to Gypsies”.<sup>285</sup>

#### 4. Responses by local and regional authorities

98. Personal commitment and political will of local-level authorities and politicians are often decisive factors for establishing useful measures to facilitate the process of Roma inclusion. A hopeful example was described of a Quote of the mayor of the French town of Indre, Jean-Luc Le Drenn:

*“The winter was approaching and he refused to allow further evictions, and instead with the help of his team he implemented solidarity actions: they collected clothes and they installed facilities to provide newly arrived families with electricity and showers, with each family paying 50€ a month for this service. He insisted that there had been no issues with receiving these payments from the families. A third of the population of Indre were favourable, a third unsure, and a third against Roma being present in the town, but they decided to allow the families to remain and tried to integrate them into the community. The first step was to provide schooling for children; they have caught up with the other children and now speak French without an accent. He then explained that they had to concentrate on 6 families out of the 50, especially as a result of lack of means/resources. The town bought mobile homes for the 6 families, with the rest of the families relocated to municipalities that positively responded to Mr Le Drenn’s relocation project. The mayor provided an example of the exchanges between the population and the newcomers: cooking workshops were held where the Roma learnt how to cook French food and the French women learnt Romani dishes.”<sup>286</sup>*

99. Envisioning comprehensive and sustainable measures in order to improve the situation of Romani communities, especially those most vulnerable, is essential. A positive decision was recently adopted by the regional government of Emilia-Romagna in Italy, to commit 1 million Euros to overcome nomad camps by providing Roma with durable and respectable housing. The measure also includes social and educational support to families, social mediation and intervention against conflicts.<sup>287</sup>

100. Political participating of Roma at the local level is also important to secure political will and commitment to Romani inclusion processes. For example in **Greece**, in Agia Varvara, there have been Roma municipal councillors elected continuously since 1975; at the moment 3 Roma fulfil this position. Agia Varvara also hosts the oldest Roma organization in Greece, which was established in 1939. The presence of Roma councillors as well as strong Roma organizations contribute to a better representation of Romani claims, and overall, improve the situation of the local Roma community, considered to be among the most successful in the country.<sup>288</sup>

101. It is also important to provide a counter-narrative to challenge the prevailing stereotypes about Roma people. One way to do this is to educate societies through school curricula. Recently in Spain the regional government of Castilla y Leon agreed to include Romani culture in school curricula, starting from next year.<sup>289</sup>

102. It should be noted that the Council of Europe itself engages in identifying good local practices. For example, the Dosta! Congress Prize awards municipalities for their commitment and positive results of efforts aiming at improving the situation of their local Roma communities. In 2015 (5<sup>th</sup> edition of the awards celebrated since 2007), 4 cities were honoured: Ghent (Belgium), Kragujevac (Serbia), Reggio nell’ Emilia (Italy) and Madrid (Spain).<sup>290</sup>

285 <http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/reactii-extrem-de-dure-dupa-ce-pe-un-cort-din-capitala-au-aparut-pestes-noapte-mesaje-rasiste-iohannis-este-oripilat.html>

286 [http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Seminar%20report\\_241013.pdf](http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Seminar%20report_241013.pdf)

287 <http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/notizie/2016/febbraio/rom-e-sinti-un-milione-per-soluzioni-abitative-alternative-ai-grandi-campi>

288 Interview with Manolis Rantis, Rom Network organization in Greece.

[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/leri\\_community\\_summary\\_-\\_aghia\\_varvara\\_-\\_greece\\_-\\_en\\_0.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/leri_community_summary_-_aghia_varvara_-_greece_-_en_0.pdf)

289 [http://www.abc.es/espana/castilla-leon/abci-educacion-introducir-cultura-gitana-curriculo-escolar-201602121919\\_noticia.html](http://www.abc.es/espana/castilla-leon/abci-educacion-introducir-cultura-gitana-curriculo-escolar-201602121919_noticia.html)

290 <http://www.roma-alliance.org/en/page/181-5th-dosta-congress-prize-for-roma-inclusion-awarded.html>