

COVID-19

Information for Roma communities



Roma and Travellers

The following information is based on a previous communication from the Roma Standing Conference in Bulgaria and is not an official recommendation of the Council of Europe.

The Roma and Travellers Team of the Council of Europe joins efforts with its CoE/EU joint programmes and projects (ROMACT, INSCHOOL, ROMACTED and JUSTROM) in raising awareness on the spread of COVID-19 in Roma communities.

The outbreak of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused significant challenges in Roma communities throughout Europe. Roma are particularly vulnerable in an epidemic crisis due to insufficient access to clean water and proper sewage; poor infrastructure and limited access to healthcare systems; malnutrition; low awareness about preventive measures; high population density within settlements; frequent domestic and international travel and lower vaccination coverage in some settlements.

Preventive actions in the communities



Online and Offline information campaigns about COVID-19

Preventive measures to be taken

- Share the latest verified information from reliable sources
- Wash your hands
- Cover your mouth with your elbow when coughing or sneezing
- Stay at home for at least 14 days in case of any of the symptoms listed below

Risk groups

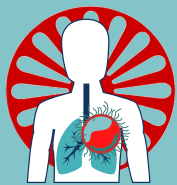
- People over 60 years old
- Those with chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer

Symptoms

- Most common symptoms: fever and dry cough
- Relatively common symptoms: fatigue and sputum production
- Not-so-common symptoms: shortness of breath, sore throat and nasal congestion

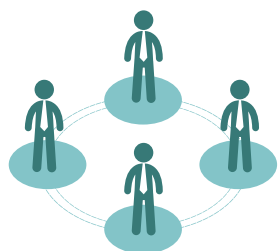
How to proceed if you think you are infected

- Please learn your local response-management protocols and identify what health facilities have been designated for the management of cases, how transport has been organised, and what telephone numbers people should use if they suspect someone is infected
- Please find out what procedures have been established by the national health authorities. What concrete steps do people need to follow? What advice should be given to the family and friends of those that have been in contact with confirmed cases



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In the regions where joint CoE/EU programmes/projects are active, get in touch with the municipal contact points, facilitators, educational advisers or support organisations of ROMACT, INSCHOOL, ROMACTED or JUSTROM programmes/projects.



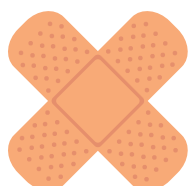
Stop all non-essential travel outside your neighborhoods.



Share the collective needs of the Roma settlements with ROMACT, INSCHOOL, ROMACTED or JUSTROM facilitators and partner organisations.



Take protective measures and assist the most vulnerable families who lack access to running water, those with chronic and underlying health conditions, and households with elderly family members.



Maintain confidence and avoid panic and internal conflicts.

- Most people infected have mild to moderate symptoms and recover, but some will show severe symptoms
- Disease in children appears to be relatively rare and mild

When a virus case occurs in a Roma neighbourhood

What to do?

- Focus on stopping the spread by confinement
- Inform the public - online and offline - about any irregularities in providing support in the Roma communities
- Inform international health organisations on the needs in the communities and request medical assistance where possible

