



# Fighting racism, intolerance and discrimination against Roma

## ECRI General Policy Recommendation Nos. 3 & 13: Key Topics

Many Roma<sup>1</sup> suffer from widespread prejudice and stereotyping and are the victims of endemic discrimination in Europe. This perpetuates the marginalisation of Roma communities and poses serious obstacles for any policy initiatives to improve their situation. Antigypsyism, discrimination and social exclusion must be tackled by a combination of legal responses, capacity-building, as well as educational and awareness-raising activities.

” **Antigypsyism** is an especially persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace 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.

### KEY MESSAGE

Governments must develop, implement and fund national strategies and policies which promote the empowerment and participation of Roma and engage them as equal partners in working to eliminate racism, intolerance and discrimination. These strategies must ensure:

- ▶ The adoption of policies underpinned by clear political will and long-term investment designed to improve the situation of Roma;
- ▶ Targeted activities to combat racist violence and antigypsyism and implement effective legal protection against all forms of discrimination in employment, housing, education, health, access to goods and services, and in the exercise of all public authorities’ duties;
- ▶ Collection and analyses of statistical data to monitor progress.

1. The term “Roma” includes not only Roma but also Sinti, Kali, Ashkali, “Egyptians”, Manouche and kindred population groups in Europe, together with Travellers.

▶▶▶ <http://www.coe.int/ecri>

### SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments must ensure that national legislation genuinely protects Roma rights and take urgent action to combat antigypsyism in the following areas:

#### Education

- ▶ End segregation in schools, and eliminate harassment of Roma pupils;
- ▶ End negative stereotyping in school texts;
- ▶ Eliminate obstacles to equal participation in education and make nursery education genuinely accessible;
- ▶ Use school mediators to liaise between parents and schools and to encourage parents to get their children to attend school;
- ▶ Ensure Roma pupils are fluent in official languages;
- ▶ Foster knowledge of Roma language, culture and history and train teaching staff to facilitate intercultural dialogue and improve society’s awareness of antigypsyism.



## Employment

- ▶ Stamp out discrimination against Roma in recruitment and career development;
- ▶ Take positive measures for Roma in respect of employment, particularly in recruitment and vocational training.

## Housing

- ▶ Afford Roma access to decent housing and end segregation;
- ▶ Provide permanent and transit sites for travellers in sufficient numbers and duly serviced and ensure their traditional way of life is not impeded;
- ▶ Ensure Roma are not forcibly evicted without notice or opportunity for rehousing;
- ▶ Promote coexistence and mutual understanding among Roma and non-Roma living in mixed neighbourhoods.

## Health care

- ▶ Recruit Roma health mediators to help secure equal access to quality health care.

## Racist violence and crimes against Roma

- ▶ Encourage Roma victims of racist violence and crime to lodge complaints;
- ▶ Publicly condemn all hate speech and violence against Roma, and investigate and prosecute hate speech, in particular on the internet.

## Policing

- ▶ Train the police in human rights and raise their awareness of the problems Roma face;
- ▶ Promote Roma recruitment to the police.

## Media

- ▶ Offer training to media professionals on their responsibility not to transmit prejudice or incite discrimination, hatred or violence against Roma;
- ▶ Promote participation in the media by recruiting and training Roma journalists.

## Access to public places, goods and services

- ▶ Ensure Roma neighbourhoods are not disadvantaged in respect of public services;
- ▶ Train service providers and civil servants in recognising and preventing racism and discrimination against Roma.

## Women and children

- ▶ Improve the situation of Roma women, ensure their rights and combat multiple forms of discrimination against them;
- ▶ Register all Roma children at birth and ensure all Roma are issued with identity documents.

## Awareness of equality and human rights

- ▶ Encourage training of Roma to ensure they are fully aware of and can enjoy their rights;
- ▶ Support training on national anti-discrimination legislation for all those concerned with the administration of justice.

### ECRI – USEFUL LINKS

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No.3 Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-03-1998-029-ENG>

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No.13 Combating antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-13-2011-037-ENG>

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No.10 Combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-10-2007-006-ENG>

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No.11 Combating racism and racial discrimination in policing

<http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng?i=REC-11-2007-039-ENG>

Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers

<https://rm.coe.int/1680684b5e>

### FACTS AND FINDINGS

“Although most Council of Europe member states have adopted [measures at different levels], mostly in the form of national strategies and action plans [for the integration of Roma], these are often not successfully implemented. Bridging the gap between strategy and proper implementation is a challenging task for many countries. A number of member states have not allocated a specific budget for this purpose and a considerable part of funding spent on Roma integration across Europe is provided through EU funds. This reflects the low level of political priority accorded to Roma at national level.”  
ECRI Annual Report 2016, paragraph 22.