

**EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN ROMA
INSTITUTE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (ERiac)**

5TH EVALUATION REPORT

JULY 2025

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

ADI-ROM – Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues

CDADI – Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion

DGII - Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity

ERIAC – European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture / European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture

EU – European Union

LGBTI – Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

MUCEM - Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisation

OECD/DAC – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee

OSF – Open Society Foundations

REDI – Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative

RIO - Roma Initiative Office

Executive Summary

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAN), established in Berlin in June 2017, is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe, Open Society Foundations (OSF), and the Roma Leaders' initiative. Its mission is to promote Roma artistic and cultural expression, enhance Roma self-esteem, and combat prejudice and discrimination. In June 2018 the Council of Europe and ERIAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets the scope and objectives for cooperation including ERIAC's support to the outreach of Council of Europe initiatives fighting antigypsyism and discrimination; provision of good practice in the area of arts and culture to facilitate Roma inclusion in society; raising awareness of member States and NGOs; dissemination of information on Council of Europe values, standards and achievements; participation as an Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) observer¹; and cooperation with other relevant international organisations.

1.2. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The Roma and Travellers Division of the Council of Europe commissioned an independent evaluation to assess ERIAC operations and activities from March 2023 to December 2024 in line with the objectives established under the MoU signed between the two institutions. The main objectives of the evaluation are to assess the 1) alignment of operations with statutory goals, 2) adequacy of governance structures, 3) efficiency and effectiveness of internal decision-making, 4) implementation and impact of the 2023–2024 work programme, 5) cooperation with the Council of Europe and contribution to its antigypsyism and Roma inclusion objectives; 6) collaboration with Council of Europe Member States, 6) added value, complementarity, and potential duplication of activities, 7) outreach and visibility of ERIAC's work.

The evaluation will support the Committee of Ministers in determining the extent to which ERIAC has fulfilled its obligations, focusing on informing a decision regarding the disbursement of the Council of Europe's financial contribution of €200,000.

The primary audience of the evaluation is ERIAC Management, the Roma and Travellers Division of the Council of Europe Secretariat, and senior management of the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DGII), the Private Office of the Secretary General (SG), and the Deputy Secretary General (DSG), as well as the Committee of Ministers.

1.3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was designed using a mixed-method, multi-criteria approach, combining accountability and learning purposes. An overarching strategic evaluation approach, analysing the extent to which the Council of Europe's strategic action plan was successfully or unsuccessfully implemented through the signed MoU, was combined with assessing the delivery of planned activities, the use of resources, and the achievement of intended results. In this aspect, the evaluation was guided by the Theory of Change's (ToC) internal logic and coherence, which were already in place in ERIAC's Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025, serving as a guiding framework.

The proposed evaluation methodology applied the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

¹ Meanwhile CAHROM was replaced by the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM), to which ERIAC is an observer.

The comprehensive desk review was complemented by : i) 28 Key Informant Interviews representing ERIAC and Council of Europe staff and representatives, ERIAC governance structures, and partners; ii) a survey deployed to 50 Associate Members, out of which 25 responded, representing a response rate of 50%; and iii) a Berlin on-site visit on 15-16 May.

The evaluation did not encounter severe limitations. The more-than-expected response rate for the survey is encouraging, and the survey results must be interpreted considering that opinions cannot be generalised across ERIAC's member base.

1.4. MAIN FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

Between 2023 and 2024, ERIAC's initiatives demonstrated strong alignment with its 2021–2025 Strategic Objectives and its statutory goals to promote Roma pride, participation, and cultural visibility. Through various exhibitions fostering art and culture, cultural diplomacy, remembrance activities, Roma youth and women's leadership initiatives, and with a strong focus on cultural education by developing Romani textbooks and the Barvalipe Academy, ERIAC advanced its internal strategic pillars of arts and culture, building pride and identity, and institutional development. Activities were implemented in line with the Council of Europe–ERIAC MoU, particularly in areas of fighting antigypsyism and discrimination in Europe, and Roma self-esteem and identity, demonstrating that ERIAC's priorities are not only operationalised but also remain responsive to the needs of Roma communities, aligning with shared Council of Europe values, standards and commitments to promote Roma diversity, equality, and inclusion.

COHERENCE

ERIAC demonstrated strong internal and external coherence in aligning its strategic focus, governance structures, and programmatic work with the Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020–2025) and the MoU. Internally, ERIAC's governance model, including its Board, Barvalipe Academy, and membership system, reflected its values of facilitating Roma participation, preserving cultural identity, and enhancing self-determination. Externally, ERIAC's coordination with Council of Europe bodies, such as ADI-ROM and the Roma and Travellers Division, ensured that its activities complemented and reinforced Council of Europe efforts in the areas of artistic and cultural heritage, Roma history, education and language, and combating antigypsyism. Continued collaboration between ERIAC and the Council of Europe, especially in Roma history education and curriculum development, could further strengthen policy coherence across member states.

EFFECTIVENESS

Significant results were achieved under all four pillars of ERIAC's Strategic Priorities, demonstrating continuous operational growth and diversification of interventions. ERIAC made a direct contribution to the MoU objective of supporting Council of Europe outreach to combat antigypsyism and discrimination through arts and culture. This was evident in sustained support for Roma artists through exhibitions, partnerships, and talent development, as well as in linking Roma cultural production to decolonisation and museological discourses, thereby advancing the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion. ERIAC and the Council of Europe co-organised Roma Holocaust remembrance ceremonies at Auschwitz/Krakow in 2023, aligned with the Council of Europe's goal to integrate remembrance into education and public awareness, and involving the Council of Europe's Youth Department.

ERIAC Serbia contributed to the 2023 Berlin Summit Civil Society Recommendations with four policy proposals, supporting the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan. Collaboration with ADI-ROM included a joint celebration of Romani Language Day and expert engagement on cultural inclusion, as well as monitoring of the CM/Rec(2020)2 Recommendation. A significant joint achievement was the development and launch of a B1-level Romani language textbook, presented with the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division and National Minorities and Minority Languages Division in Strasbourg in 2024.

The evaluation also identified challenges that affect ERIAC's effectiveness. Cultural exhibitions, educational activities, and materials often lack continuity, accreditation, or formal links to national or academic structures, which weakens their lasting influence and follow-up, especially considering the potential synergies with universities. ERIAC's reorientation towards the performing arts is a key innovation, but the limited number of trained Roma film producers is perceived as a challenge to expanding ERIAC in this direction. The insufficiency of trained Roma educators and historians further constrains ERIAC's ability to effectively respond to growing demands in these fields. ERIAC also faces challenges in engaging Roma communities across countries and regions, as it is demanding for ERIAC to navigate between its role at the European level and the grassroots expectation for deeper national and local engagement.

EFFICIENCY

ERIAC demonstrated strong financial management and resource efficiency, as evidenced by fundraising efforts, strengthened relationships with donors, and compliance with financial standards. Despite a decline in fundraising in 2024 due to external factors such as an unfavourable political climate and a diminishing funding landscape for cultural organisations, as well as donor withdrawals, ERIAC adapted by scaling back some activities and increasing institutional development efforts. ERIAC's governance bodies function according to the MoU's principles, ensuring gender balance, and adopted new budgetary principles to strengthen financial oversight. Strategic planning and implementation advanced through the reforms initiated in ERIAC's membership base, its governance structure elections and the work on the 2026-2030 Strategy, while ERIAC's role in the new Roma Foundation for Europe represents a significant step in establishing itself as a reputable institution. However, improving operational efficiency also requires strengthening decentralised engagement and targeted capacity-building to better reach Roma organisations across regions.

SUSTAINABILITY

ERIAC has taken important steps toward sustainability through introducing selective membership reforms, creating strategic partnerships, and formally establishing ERIAC Romania and the for-profit initiative. However, limited access for non-EU members to funding opportunities, such as ERIACnet4EU, affects equitable participation of Roma organisations and communities. In this aspect, expectations of reaching out to Roma grassroots organisations and communities across member states may exceed ERIAC's current capacity. Additionally, the long-term sustainability of ERIAC's operations is affected by an increased reliance on project-based funding, minimal government contributions from member States, and limited staff capacity for expansion.

1.5. CONCLUSION

In 2023–2024, ERIAC's work demonstrated strong relevance and coherence with the Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020–2025) and the commitments outlined in the Council of Europe–ERIAC Memorandum of Understanding.

Results achieved under Strategic Priorities are significant, demonstrating a constant development and diversification of ERIAC activities. ERIAC's strategic focus on building physical and digital infrastructure, Roma history and language education and institutional development directly contributed to the Council of Europe's strategic lines of action, particularly in its pillars on combating antigypsyism and Roma discrimination and access to quality education and training.

Scaling up and sustaining cultural and artistic initiatives, as well as grassroots engagement, requires further steps to be taken according to the new strategic orientation developed for the period 2026-2030. Furthermore, the current funding landscape makes it difficult to ERIAC to sustain its operations with existing human resources and to respond to existing expectations for deeper national and local engagement.

1.6. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. To ERIAC.** Strengthen cooperation with intergovernmental bodies of the Council of Europe, particularly CDADI and ADI-ROM, to enhance ERIAC's policy influence and visibility within institutional frameworks.
- 2. To ERIAC.** Enhance strategic outreach and visibility by strengthening engagement with national counterparts at national, regional, local and grassroots levels.
- 3. To ERIAC.** Develop long-term institutional partnerships with universities and educational institutions by establishing formal cooperation agreements with departments of Roma studies, cultural studies, or social sciences.
- 4. To ERIAC.** Strengthen Associate members' capacity and regional engagement through training and workshops linked to Council of Europe standards and instruments. Share lessons and best practices with Associate members in regional/national meetings and involve representatives of Board members in these events.
- 5. To the Council of Europe:** Facilitate ERIAC's strategic engagement with Permanent Representations in Strasbourg, particularly to advocate for the implementation of CM/Rec(2020)2 on the inclusion of Roma history and Holocaust remembrance in national school curricula.

2. Evaluation Findings

RELEVANCE

EQ1. To what extent have ERIAC initiatives been aligned with its strategic objectives and statutory goals in responding to the needs of tackling antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe?

Between 2023 and 2024, ERIAC's operations demonstrated a high degree of alignment with its statutory goals, namely, to increase Roma pride, advance Roma arts and culture, combat antigypsyism, and promote Roma participation in public life.² The organisation's activities of enhancing visibility, investing in capacity building, institutional development, and sustainability are in line with its strategic objectives for 2021-2025.³ Additionally, based on the Board 2023 decision "to promote the visibility of more artistic genres – such as music, film and literature"- in 2024, ERIAC expanded its presence covering more artistic fields.

² The association's objective is the promotion of arts and culture and education as a means to promote human rights and intercultural understanding and thereby to tackle antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe and to increase their self-esteem. ERIAC Statute: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yB8CozgCtafpKXD4Sen3IJ2jc6WQv_gH

³ ERIAC Strategy 2021-2025; <https://eriac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Public-Documents-Strategic-Plan-ERiac-2021-25.pdf>

In 2023, ERIAC followed its detailed Plan of Activities under the 2021-2025 strategy, maintained its Serbian branch, and fulfilled statutory obligations related to organisational development through a relevant reform of its associate membership call and changes in the Barvalipe Academy and Pakiv Board.

The organisation's institutional stability pillar encompassed a well-thought-out membership reform, which involved conducting more than 300 interviews as part of the membership selection process. It helped diversify the geographical representation of the organisation with motivated individuals. All these reforms strengthened participatory governance processes. ERIAC Serbia, while still needing support from Berlin, engaged in building a community of Roma artists and promoters by researching the cultural capacities of Roma in Serbia.

In 2024, ERIAC also launched a for-profit initiative in Romania, which aligns with its institutional development goals.

ERiac's presence in high-level cultural events, such as the Cannes Film festival, the Roma pavilion at the Milan Triennale, Venice Biennale, and partnerships with the Council of Europe through the *OTHER SESSION (Council of Europe)* performance, presence in the "Artists at Risk Pavilion" (UNESCO), and various other collaborations with the Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, and national museums, are clear evidence that ERIAC promotes the increase of Roma cultural visibility. Stakeholders viewed these partnerships as spaces promoting Roma excellence in art and culture, changing mindsets and stereotypes through cultural influence.

Successes achieved through the performing arts, the RomaMoMA⁴ initiative, and the Barvalo⁵ exhibition, as well as film (including on platforms like Netflix) and literature initiatives, such as the publication of the trilingual monograph "*In Search of Eldorado*" promoting the Romani language, align with ERIAC's aim to promote Roma narratives within mainstream European culture. These initiatives are viewed by the majority of interviewees as essential to changing narratives and shifting the focus from depicting Roma as victims and marginalised to seeing them as empowered citizens with strong human agency and dignity, in line with the key strategic pillars of ERIAC.

The initiatives ERIAC concluded in the educational field, including commemorations, the development of Roma language books, and advocacy activities in Serbia for school curriculum reform, as well as the Barvalipe Academy lectures, have contributed to shaping Roma identity. Positive feedback was received about ERIAC's work with museums and museum staff, as many interviewed stakeholders considered this engagement to be of the utmost importance, because it contributes not only to challenging racist representations and discriminatory language of the Roma and Travellers, but also educates museum staff on how to label displayed artefacts in a meaningful and non-discriminatory way.

ERiac supports Roma youth leadership and participated alongside the Council of Europe in developing the "*Roma Youth Action Plan*". The Barvalipe online lectures, Holocaust education, and commemorations of the April 8 events target young people in particular. Language and history teaching—including dialect harmonisation, educational manuals, and conferences—meets the needs of educational inclusion. These initiatives aim to foster leadership, historical awareness, and cultural pride among young Roma. For example, a seminar on Roma Youth empowerment was co-organised by the Council of Europe Youth

⁴ <https://eriac.org/what-is-romamoma/>

⁵ <https://eriac.org/barvalo/>

Department, Roma and Travellers Division, and ERIAC at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in April 2024.

The support provided to 18 Ukrainian artists through the ARCADIA project, the *Villa Romana* fellowships⁶ granted for young and emerging talents, the *Berlin Tales* (exhibition of emerging talents), supported by the Berlin Senate of Culture, and other similar initiatives gave young Roma artists the opportunity to gain knowledge and visibility in renowned cultural spaces. Many interviewees agreed that these high-profile engagements strengthen Roma cultural pride and creative agency, while also countering stereotypes among non-Roma audiences. Additionally, strategic partnerships with non-Roma institutions, such as museums and cultural bodies, have promoted institutional change by challenging racist or exclusionary practices.

ERiac demonstrates a strong intersectional and gender-mainstreaming approach. Almost 50% of its members are women, and the work carried out with the feminist network WOMNET, the *Roma Women Leadership Academy* and the inclusion of non-binary and LGBTI artists signal a clear commitment to inclusivity. This approach was also recognised by many interviewed respondents, who acknowledged that ERIAC's leadership is successful in mainstreaming gender and LGBTI perspectives into Roma cultural programming. Membership selection and recruitment utilised materials in 16 languages, resulting in a diverse ethnic and gender composition, with increased representation of Roma and non-binary individuals.

Interviewees also highlighted that ERIAC successfully prioritises talent development and civil society engagement. The organisation's emblematic message of "*Nothing about Roma without Roma*" is considered a reflection of its commitment to inclusivity, participation, self-worth, and equality. Working with smaller Roma organisations that have strong visibility in the Balkans was especially strong in Serbia, where ERIAC collaborates with Roma-led NGOs and civil society partners.

The regranting initiatives provide capacity-building and financial support to grassroots Roma CSOs,⁷ with grant amounts ranging from €2,000 to €20,000. The grants aimed at developing and promoting Roma arts and culture serve as powerful tools to combat antigypsyism. By introducing Roma artists to the broader public and employing innovative artistic expressions, these initiatives raise awareness of key historical events, create educational programmes, and focus on research—most notably, the Roma genocide and other historical events with documented Roma participation.

Many interviewees emphasised the need for ERIAC to balance transnational visibility with deeper local cultural integration. ERIAC is aware of the demand to wear "two hats" and constantly balances the need to ensure transnational visibility with the practical necessity of maintaining local presence and connections with Roma communities. In this regard, ERIAC was highly successful in adopting a digitalisation strategy through increased social media presence and presenting high-quality content, which supports ERIAC's effort to embed Roma perspectives from the grassroots and member States level. Additionally, the ERIACnet4EU funding mechanisms and the regional programmes started in Serbia, Romania, and the Balkans already demonstrate that ERIAC successfully translate strategic objectives into localised impact.

⁶ <https://eriac.org/announcement-of-the-2025-villa-romana-artist-residency-winners/>

⁷ <https://eriac.org/eriac-grant-awards-list-of-fstp-beneficiaries-2024/>

Regarding stakeholders' perceptions of how ERIAC responds to various needs, the opinions are quite diverse. Several stakeholders mentioned that the focus on contemporary forms of art may risk marginalising more grassroots and traditional Roma cultural expressions. Perceived as high-level and unreachable, Roma individuals and communities may not see their cultural forms reflected. On the other hand, a few stakeholders consider that contemporary art is a unique environment where stereotypes vanish and the traditional and discriminatory depiction of Roma does not have its space anymore. Survey responses are in line with these views. For example, 64 % of surveyed respondents feel represented in ERIAC activities and programmes. Still, answers to the question *"To what extent do ERIAC's initiatives represent the diversity within Roma communities, including gender, age, and different sub-groups?"* were more nuanced, with 44 % answering "very well represented" and 48% indicating "somewhat represented."

COHERENCE

EQ2: To what extent are ERIAC's strategic objectives, governance structures, and operational implementation coherent with the Council of Europe's strategic goals in combating antigypsyism and promoting Roma inclusion, as well as broader human rights and cultural inclusion for Roma/Travellers?

Between 2023 and 2024, ERIAC's activities within the Council of Europe framework demonstrated a strengthened collaboration, while consistently promoting Council of Europe values of Roma participation, dignity, diversity, and anti-discrimination. In this aspect, ERIAC strategically aligned its activities—particularly in education, language policy, and cultural programming—with both its internal pillars and the broader objectives of the Council of Europe. This alignment is evident in the way ERIAC's Pillar II strategy was adjusted to correspond with the Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020–2025) and, at the same time, considering the upcoming Council of Europe Roma Strategy for 2026–2030.⁸

In 2024, closer collaboration occurred with Council of Europe institutions, including the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM), and the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division, among others. For example, an important ADI-ROM study visit preceded the *"Safeguarding Our Romani Language"* conference in Strasbourg. Other initiatives, such as partnerships in establishing itineraries of Roma cultural heritage in Spain, Italy and Slovenia under the Roma Cultural Heritage Route (ROMHERITAGE)⁹, contributions to the *"Roma Journalist Awards"*, the Council of Europe-EU Roma Integration Project¹⁰ and various other initiatives are in line with the Council of Europe human rights principles of participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination.

ERIAC actively engaged in Council of Europe Roma civil society forums and organised Roma women conferences, supporting the implementation and follow-up of the Council of Europe–ERIAC MoU objectives by engaging Roma civil society and increasing Roma women's visibility and leadership in both policy and cultural scenes. For example, in 2023, ERIAC participated in the Strasbourg civil society consultation, coordinated the Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day, and co-led antigypsyism dialogue

⁸ https://www.Council_of_Europe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/-/integrating-insights-shaping-the-draft-council-of-europe-strategy-on-roma-and-traveller-inclusion-2026-2030-through-findings-from-monitoring-bodies-

⁹ https://romheritage.eu/?page_id=137

¹⁰ https://www.Council_of_Europe.int/en/web/ankara/roma-integration-phase-iii

sessions. In 2024, ERIAC led sessions at the meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller Civil Society, contributed to the preparations for the High-Level Roma Meeting, and participated in ongoing virtual coordination calls.

ERiac contributed to two editions of the International Roma Women's Conference with the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division. The 2021 Strasbourg conference emphasised intergenerational leadership, whilst the 2023 Skopje edition focused on political participation. ERIAC contributed to Council of Europe gender equality workshops, amplifying Roma women's voices within broader human rights frameworks. Its commitment further materialised through the creation of WOMNET, advancing Roma women's leadership and aligning with the MoU and Council of Europe priorities on inclusive democratic participation.

While many interviewed stakeholders broadly agreed about the cultural and educational value of these initiatives, several pointed out that youth outreach remains relatively limited, particularly among those from low socioeconomic backgrounds and countries with less visible Roma populations. Interview respondents called for more tailored strategies to reach marginalised youth, especially outside of capital cities and established Roma networks. The Board's 2024 decision to expand community-level efforts in Bulgaria and deepen regional work in Serbia was seen as a positive measure by many interlocutors. A relevant example is Serbia, where youth mentorship in media and collaboration with the Roma Education Fund demonstrate a direct impact on the education and visibility of young Roma.

Furthermore, these grassroots efforts to integrate Roma history and culture into educational curricula and advocating for creating a Roma Genocide and Resistance Museum in Milan align closely with the shared European values of diversity, tolerance and fundamental rights, included in the Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan and the objectives outlined in the Council of Europe–ERiac MoU.

ERiac was a member of the drafting group for Roma History Teaching in ADI-ROM at the Council of Europe and, in this capacity, led the work on language education, including the presentation in 2024 of A1–B1 Romani textbooks at the Safeguarding Romani Language Conference in Strasbourg co-organised with the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division and National Minorities and Minority Languages Division, which directly supports the Council of Europe's Curriculum Framework for Romani language education.

High-level engagements with European ministries, Council of Europe bodies, and diplomatic missions have strengthened ERIAC's institutional credibility and its ability to influence Roma inclusion policy agendas at both national and European levels. The fight against antigypsyism has been advanced through multiple ERIAC initiatives. In various instances, ERIAC acted as the expert consultant for governments and institutions, directly aligning with the Council of Europe's priorities. Cultural diplomacy events, such as the *"Woman to Woman"* exhibition at the Council of Europe Palais de l'Europe, the EU Roma Week, and the *"Roma: The Force of Nature"* concert, reflect coherence with the broader Council of Europe objectives of combating antigypsyism and promoting inclusion. The majority of survey respondents were also positive in considering that ERIAC is coherent in promoting the Council of Europe's values, as 56 % answered "very relevant" and 32 % replied "to some extent relevant" as answers to the question *"How relevant are ERIAC initiatives in promoting and defending the mission of Council of Europe in human rights, democracy, rule of law - especially in the context of current multiple threats to these?"*.

While stakeholders recognise ERIAC's valuable advisory and consultative role—particularly through forums like ADI-ROM, where ERIAC provides insights and contributes to policy work, or the training provided to European Union (EU) staff on Roma issues—several interview respondents expressed the

need to extend collaboration with various Council of Europe departments. There is also a shared perception that implementation of Council of Europe recommendations, such as Roma history education, remains inconsistent across member states. Only a few countries have taken meaningful action on these commitments. In this regard, ERIAC's work is acknowledged, but seen as constrained by external limitations, such as the political will of member states to prioritise Roma history teaching and inclusion in school curricula, and the lack of enforcement mechanisms within the Council of Europe framework.

The majority of respondents view the governance model as functional and coherent with its programmatic mission, which has facilitated the long-lasting Board and Barvalipe Academy elections in 2024. The available evidence—such as the successful establishment of ERIAC Romania and the growing capacity and effective national-level engagement of ERIAC Serbia—indicates a strong case for advocating the creation of additional ERIAC branches in other member states, contingent upon the availability of funding.

EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness is assessed by comparing the results obtained during 2023–2024 with those planned, in alignment with ERIAC's Strategic Objectives (2021–2025), the objectives of the MoU signed with the Council of Europe, and ERIAC's role as a Council of Europe subprogramme contributing to Roma inclusion and the fight against antigypsyism. The analysis also considers the factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of these goals.

EQ3: To what extent has ERIAC achieved its intended results?

Under **Strategic Priority I: Build physical and digital infrastructure to upscale the talent, visibility and quality among the Roma artists and cultural producers**, the focus priority was i) the promotion of new generations of artists, musicians, curators, and cultural producers who will be able to fulfil future opportunities created by the long-term agreements and funding situation, and ii) establishing new branches. Through this priority, ERIAC has directly contributed to the MoU objective "to support the outreach of Council of Europe initiatives concerning the fight against antigypsyism and discrimination by means of arts and culture."¹¹

In this aspect, 2023 was marked by the consistent support provided to emerging and established Roma artists through opportunities for their participation in exhibitions, partnerships, and talent development initiatives. Programmes like the *Emerging Talents Spring Salon* and the *Villa Romana Residency* provided high-level exposure and growth opportunities for a new generation of Roma artists, particularly by supporting young Roma talent and connecting them with major cultural institutions. Exhibitions hosted in ERIAC Berlin¹² provided curated platforms for Roma artists to pay tribute to Roma historical resilience through contemporary artistic innovation.

On the international stage, the *Barvalo exhibition* at MUCEM (Museum of Civilisations of Europe and the Mediterranean) in Marseille attracted a broad and diverse audience, with more than 100,000 visitors and received the *Prix Historia prize*. While fame and visibility exceeded expectations, many interview respondents mentioned that these types of impactful exhibitions should have a different follow-up and dissemination, in the form of a "travelling exhibition," to ensure sustainability and have a greater impact on non-Roma audiences.

¹¹ MoU between ERIAC and Council of Europe

¹² OMARA: *You Let Me Play* and *Cejka Stojka: We Were Ashamed, Berlin Tales. The Margins Strike Back*

Interviewees also highlighted *RomaMoMA* as an initiative that achieved an important narrative shift regarding Roma. The *RomaMoMA Nomadic Library* and blog series, curated by leading art professionals, connected Roma cultural production to broader decolonisation and museological discourses, advancing the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan's line of action in combating antigypsyism through the arts and public education.

In 2024, ERIAC expanded its artistic programming across genres. As a result of the Board's decision in 2023, the organisation broadened its reach beyond the visual arts to encompass film, theatre, music, and literature. In this regard, ERIAC established a partnership with the European Film Academy (EFA) and launched initiatives in collaboration with the Marché du Film at the Cannes Film Festival, including a panel discussion and a scholarship for Roma filmmakers. While interest in Roma storytelling in film is increasing, ERIAC faces challenges such as limited funding and a small pool of trained Roma film producers. The partnership with Deutsche Welle led to showcasing both ERIAC as an organisation and also Roma actors,¹³ demonstrating the impact this form of visual art can produce. Many interview respondents also confirmed the need for targeted capacity-building and investment in the filmmaking industry.

ERiac also supported international theatre productions and emphasised music as a powerful medium of cultural expression. The *Tajsa Prize* ceremony, as well as the participation and events organised within the *Timisoara European Capital of Culture* in Romania, are clear evidence that ERIAC is effectively using culture and art to influence international perceptions of Roma identity.

In line with the Council of Europe's aim to recognise the Roma Holocaust and ensure remembrance is integrated into education and public awareness, ERIAC and Council of Europe co-organised remembrance ceremonies at Auschwitz/Krakow in 2023, reaffirming the Council of Europe's commitment to remembrance and Roma dignity. The event included a youth education seminar supported by the Council of Europe's Youth Department, addressing the existent trend of denial and distortion of the Roma genocide.

The establishment of new branches remains an essential element for ERIAC. In 2023, the Board discussed the urgency of accelerating actions to open a new branch in Romania, which, in turn, led to the formal establishment of ERIAC Romania in 2024, representing a significant milestone.

ERiac Serbia played a significant role in contributing to the Berlin Summit Civil Society Recommendations by actively participating in strategic dialogues focused on Roma inclusion, cultural rights, and the fight against antigypsyism in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. As part of the broader "*Addressing Antigypsyism and Mainstreaming Roma Issues*" initiative—within the Roma Integration Phase III Joint Programme of the European Union and Council of Europe—ERiac Serbia developed and submitted four policy recommendations, contributing to the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-25).

Under **Strategic Priority II Build on the recent breakthrough Council of Europe recommendation on the inclusion of the history of Roma and /or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials**, the focus was defined as i) produce and film Barvalipe University lectures in high quality and prepare for their online

¹³ <https://www.dw.com/de/roma-und-sinti-in-europa/t-67889378>
<https://www.dw.com/de/roma-kulturinstitut-eriac-gesandschaft-unseres-volkes/a-71036290>
<https://www.dw.com/de/roma-schauspieler-stars-wir-zelebrieren-die-vielfalt/video-60895721>
<https://www.dw.com/de/glaso-stimme-eine-portraitreihe/a-56437310>

marketing; ii) design and prepare manuals for marketable certificate training; and iii) create potential synergies with universities.

In 2023–2024, significant progress was made in advancing the inclusion of Roma history and culture in education and public discourse, building on the momentum of the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2 by organising language workshops, literary readings and the launch of a digital platform in 2024. The Council of Europe's ADI-ROM members celebrated Romani Language Day together with ERIAC during events organised in Berlin on November 5, 2023, and provided expertise on cultural inclusion, while supporting the monitoring of the recommendation's implementation.

This priority focused on positioning ERIAC as a leading expert and consultant for governments, public institutions, and universities in curriculum development, while also establishing ERIAC as a central hub for language and education within the transnational Romani movement. Interview respondents viewed ERIAC's work on curriculum development and language education as central to institutional credibility. The Barvalipe Roma Online University, for example, has become a platform for disseminating Roma knowledge, attracting 3,000–4,000 monthly website visits. At present, it serves as a key reference point for researchers, educators, and policymakers, and its educational offerings expanded in 2024 with three new masterclasses.

A significant milestone in language education was reached with the production of marketable training manuals, following the development and formal launch of a B1-level Romani language textbook, based on the Curriculum Framework for Romani created by the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division in 2008, and in line with the principles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This textbook was created in collaboration with 14 language experts and academic institutions. Presented during the "*Safeguarding Our Romani Language*" conference in Strasbourg in 2024, co-hosted by the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division and the National Minorities and Minority Languages Division, these language books represent a significant milestone in language revitalisation, also widely recognised by interviewees.

Under the ERIACNET4EU initiative, ERIAC delivered practical training and courses in areas such as Romani language, historical trauma and healing, media production, and grant writing, thereby strengthening the capacities of Roma professionals, youth, and civil society. Further trainings were provided for EU staff and officials on Roma identity, history, and culture.

ERIAC also actively contributed to institutional frameworks and policy development through its participation in the Council of Europe's working groups, supporting the creation of teaching guidelines on Roma history, including the genocide during the Nazi era. These actions of raising historical awareness and countering structural discrimination are fulfilling the MoU objective of documenting and disseminating Council of Europe values and standards.

Interview respondents also highly appreciated these activities as a strong contribution to developing institutional frameworks. The Barvalipe initiative aligns with the MoU in that it strengthens ERIAC's observer role and contribution to ADI-ROM's work. For example, a shared result between the two institutions was the development and promotion of a digital platform on the Romani language and culture, relying on Barvalipe's intellectual leadership and supported by ADI-ROM as part of broader monitoring and dissemination of the recommendation. However, the evaluation evidenced that the goal of building deeper institutional partnerships with universities (beyond project-based collaboration) has only partially

materialised. The long-term integration of knowledge products, tools, and resources into academic systems, as well as creating partnerships with universities, is still a work in progress.

ERIAC Serbia emerged as a respected local organisation, advocating for the inclusion of Roma history in school curricula and engaging in high-level policy dialogues. The collaboration with the Ministry of Education secured commitments to support Roma students and to highlight the roles of Roma women. Still, sustained advocacy is needed to ensure the full integration of Roma history into the national curriculum.

Under Strategic Priority III, Advance the sense of pride and belonging among the Roma, efforts were made to i) create a database of followers, members of the communities and allies; ii) observe and document the situation of Roma in Ukraine and connect these stories to mainstream media.

Measuring pride and identity across ERIAC's target groups is challenging, a fact acknowledged by ERIAC and many stakeholders. However, the overall perception is that this component is also on track, with various achievements and signals of development. For example, ERIAC successfully grew and activated a diverse network of followers, members, and online supporters through the Proudroma platform.¹⁴ Enhanced digital strategies resulted in over 29,000 Facebook followers and 4,700 Instagram followers, reaching individuals and communities across borders, particularly Roma youths.

ERIAC continued to serve as a storyteller and platform for Roma identity, curating visual narratives that celebrate Roma culture and promote pride in Roma heritage. An example of this result is the Roma Holocaust Voices Fellowship, launched in 2024, supported by the Fortunoff Video Archive's membership contribution to ERIAC. This initiative awarded nine fellowships of €1,000 each, marking the start of a long-term partnership and a sustained programme.

ERIAC's work on growing its digital community, amplifying Roma identity narratives, and creating a visual archive on Ukrainian Roma heritage aligns with MoU Objectives on self-esteem building and information dissemination. For example, in response to the war in Ukraine, ERIAC provided targeted support to 18 Roma artists from Ukraine who received financial aid, mentorship, and promotional opportunities. In 2024, however, the grant from the ARCADIA foundation was terminated, and in these circumstances, internal resources were allocated to continue preserving the Ukrainian Roma heritage. A visual archive containing relevant research pieces was developed about the situation of Roma in Ukraine, preserving essential materials and preparing for future advocacy and funding efforts. In 2024, these efforts continued under the OSF project, which documented the stories of five prominent Roma who resisted Russian aggression through a photo collection.

ERIAC Serbia contributed to this strategic objective by promoting Roma identity and remembrance through campaigns like *"Roma Remember"* and regional events. Media mentoring and partnerships—such as those with Deutsche Welle—empowered young Roma artists and showcased their art in regional media. These actions align well with the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025, with an emphasis on youth and cultural empowerment as a response to crises such as the war in Ukraine. The Roma flag displayed at Belgrade Tower in 2024, on the occasion of International Roma Day, was a strong signal of strengthening pride and visibility for the Romani community, also reported in national and international media.

¹⁴ www.proudroma.org

Under Strategic priority IV, ensuring institutional stability and development, ERIAC intended to i) enhance EriacNet4EU Grant's efficiency in engaging membership; ii) stabilise and develop the ERIAC Serbia team; and iii) launch a for-profit for sustainability.

In 2023, ERIAC strengthened its institutional stability and development through targeted actions aimed at expanding its reach, reinforcing governance, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

A central pillar of this effort was the ERIACNET4EU project¹⁵, which enhanced member engagement, supported capacity building, advocacy, and awareness-raising. It enabled ERIAC to distribute grants to 9 projects across ERIAC member organisations from eight EU member states. In addition to regranting to its members, ERIAC successfully financed over 25 projects in the period 2023-2024 through the EU-CERV civil society financing component. Through grassroots regranting, ERIAC also empowers local Roma civil society, advancing the Council of Europe's aim of strengthening democratic participation and building trust.

The successful completion of the ERIACNET4EU project marks a significant milestone, as it represents ERIAC's transition to becoming a grantmaker. At the same time, this step brings ERIAC closer to its members and to smaller Roma organisations at the grassroots level, which is highly beneficial for the organisation as a whole. To further consolidate its membership base, ERIAC launched a renewed membership process in 2023, providing opportunities for more than 100 members to become active ERIAC supporters through financial and in-kind contributions.

Collaboration with the EU DG JUST in providing training, the Roma Foundation for Europe, the European Roma Grassroots Organisation (ERGO) network, and the JEKHIPE project—formally titled *"Reclaiming Our Past, Rebuilding Our Future: New Approaches to Fighting Antigypsyism"*¹⁶ — focused on changing narratives around antigypsyism and promoting transitional justice. It also reflects the MoU Objective in supporting the Council of Europe's co-operation with other organisations.

Integration into the Roma Foundation for Europe's network further anchored ERIAC's institutional legitimacy and presence. In terms of network development, many respondents indicated that collaboration with national-level movements is a possible area which could be strengthened.

In 2023, the ERIAC Serbia team continued to benefit from Berlin's support. Organisational capacity grew with the addition of new staff members and a Programme Manager, funded by a Council of Europe project. Leadership development continued under the Acting Executive Director. ERIAC Serbia successfully strengthened its network by connecting 30 media professionals from the Western Balkans and Türkiye. Externally, between March and June 2024, a series of high-level diplomatic engagements took place involving the Presidency of Serbia, the German Bundestag and Foreign Office, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, as well as the German and U.S. Embassies in Serbia.

ERIAC also supported the launch of a for-profit initiative, materialised in 2024 in Romania. The company was established independently of ERIAC by REDI (Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative) to maintain ERIAC's tax-exempt status, as per its statute.

¹⁵ ERIAC Network to Advance Roma Inclusion by Combating and Preventing Antigypsyism in the EU.

¹⁶ <https://eriac.org/kick-off-meeting-and-public-launch-of-jekhipe-project/>

EQ4: How successful is ERIAC in raising the visibility of Roma/Travellers' art and culture?

ERIAC's cultural programming and diplomatic efforts support the MoU Objective and the Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025 by combating antigypsyism and reinforcing Roma self-esteem through visibility and cultural celebration. For example, the ERIAC Film Pitch Deck, showcased at the Cannes Film Festival, supported emerging Roma filmmakers, extending their visibility even into Latin America. The cooperation with Deutsche Welle has not only increased the visibility of Roma and Traveller art and culture but also presents ERIAC as an institution through the celebration of the Tajsja Prize, and provides opportunities for Roma artists to gain visibility and recognition from the Council of Europe itself.¹⁷

The joint cultural programming of ERIAC and the Council of Europe made ERIAC extremely visible at the European level. In 2023, ERIAC contributed to the Council of Europe's *"Democracy and Diversity Through Culture"* exhibition at the Palais de l'Europe, which showcased the works of Romani visual artists and filmmakers, curated in collaboration with ERIAC's Board, and highlighted Roma cultural resistance.

Interviewed stakeholders also widely recognise ERIAC's impact in the sphere of cultural diplomacy. They acknowledge that ERIAC has found impactful ways to centre Roma community stories, which is one of the added values of ERIAC. As one stakeholder expressed, *"we bring human stories to the public"*, which has an indirect impact on trust-building and strategic cultural diplomacy. Surveyed respondents also confirmed this positive perception of ERIAC's visibility, as 24% think ERIAC is "extremely visible", and 60% answered that ERIAC is "somewhat visible" as answers to the question, *"In your opinion, how visible or accessible is ERIAC to non-Roma cultural actors and organisations?"*.

ERIAC's communication strategy, along with its online and physical presence in Germany and Serbia, has reached several million people over the years. Its presence on Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Netflix and in-person programming ensured cultural access across the globe and different target groups. Stakeholders emphasised that ERIAC's investment in social media has been especially effective in reaching younger and urban audiences. ERIAC's communication strategy and online outreach further contribute to disseminating Council of Europe values and the MoU Objective by extending Roma visibility to youth and international audiences.

ERIAC's partnerships with museums and cultural institutions influenced museum professionals and staff, changing their practices and contributing to the reform of ethnographic and terminology approaches.

ERIAC's gallery in Belgrade, regional initiatives in Serbia, Romania, and the Balkans, and commemorative events often incorporated international and local media, which helped ERIAC bridge the gap between high visibility at the transnational level and increased visibility at the regional and local levels.

Many interviewed stakeholders agreed that measuring the visibility of how ERIAC's work contributes to increased Roma pride is a challenging task. Although ERIAC enjoys strong visibility in artistic, academic, cultural, and institutional circles, many grassroots Roma communities remain unaware of its work, especially those living in remote and underdeveloped areas.

¹⁷ <https://www.dw.com/de/glase-stimme-eine-portraitreihe/a-56437310>

Challenges regarding artist representation, regional imbalances, and grassroots reach underscore the need for improved implementation of the Council of Europe's inclusive participation strategic pillar and highlight a future opportunity to reinforce the MoU's objective of expanding co-operation with national Roma movements.

Some concerns were raised regarding the trend of using the same artists in events, and not diversifying the representation of artists by geographical location and age. The same concern was also raised by the Board, which suggested diversifying the authors of the Romani language book B1 and not relying solely on one author. Opinions were expressed that Roma artists from various countries and regions often face limited opportunities, thereby restricting the geographical outreach of ERIAC to those member states and their Roma populations. These views can be interpreted together with the survey answers to the question *"Please indicate those areas in which you think ERIAC could determine a positive change/development", and for which 48 % indicated the "support for new generations of artists, musicians, curators and cultural producers"*. On the same line of argumentation, partnerships with national Roma movements remain imbalanced, which is seen as an opportunity to be strengthened in the future.

Stakeholders widely recognised the following factors enabling ERIAC's progress:

- Human resources and governance are seen as essential, with the Barvalipe Academy and Pakiv Board ensuring strategic alignment, oversight and accountability. Staff professionalism and dedication enabled the timely and high-quality delivery of the programme, despite resource constraints.
- Networks and partnerships represent a significant asset for ERIAC. ERIAC's partnership with the Council of Europe and its transnational mandate built credibility, which was backed up by very strong financial management and positive audit results. Collaborations with the European Commission, various funders, donors, and civil society organisations contributed to expanding ERIAC's reach and its results in the priority areas outlined in the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).
- ERIAC's social media presence is highly visible, and with the creative campaigns and digital platforms, the organisation reached millions.
- ERIAC's initiatives targeted diverse Roma communities, including youth, women, LGBTI people, and Ukrainian Roma, reflecting a strong commitment to intersectionality.

Despite these strengths, several internal and external challenges shape ERIAC's existence.

- Externally, rising nationalism, economic difficulties, and limited support from the cultural sector create a limited funding space for ERIAC. ERIAC faces funding challenges due to limited MS support, the overall political climate and the nature of available financing. For example, while EU institutional funding supports capacity development, it is limited to EU-based organisations, limiting access to these funds from ERIAC Serbia and its non-EU partners. Moreover, a major concern remains the lack of donor interest and the limited availability of financing for providing core institutional support.
- Reliance on project-based funding, however, risks diverting focus from ERIAC's strategic goals, as different donor expectations and the required in-kind contributions (sometimes as high as 20%) strain both human and institutional resources. Short-term project dependency makes planning and sustainability more fragile and unpredictable.
- The lack of local ERIAC branches limits grassroots engagement, which in turn creates accessibility issues for many smaller Roma organisations. ERIAC is aware of this situation, and its management took steps at Board meetings in 2024 to develop strategies for opening local branches, thereby

ensuring the strengthening of Pillar III, Pride, and Identity. These concerns about regional imbalances and member engagement point to areas where ERIAC's contribution to Council of Europe's strategic goal of fostering inclusive participation across Europe could be strengthened further through deeper outreach.

EFFICIENCY

EQ5: To what extent has ERIAC used its financial, institutional and human resources efficiently and in achieving strategic outcomes?

2023 marked a successful financial year for ERIAC, with strong financial indicators and successful fundraising efforts. The organisation managed a total of €3.57 million in funds, with revenue of €2.8 million, representing an 88% increase compared to 2022. Donor and institutional contributions from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and the Council of Europe significantly supported programming and institutional stability, while also demonstrating credibility in ERIAC's financial governance.

Expenditure in 2023 was well-balanced, with 60% directed towards programming and 40% allocated to institutional operations. Audits conducted by independent bodies—including the Federal Foreign Office, the Council of Europe, and a private firm (Schomerus and Partners) demonstrated the organisations' adherence and compliance with standards of financial management. In terms of fundraising, ERIAC raised €994,551.75 in 2023 for programmatic activities.

However, a comparison with 2024 highlights existing constraints and external pressures on ERIAC's fundraising capacity. As of October 2024, total funds managed were approximately €2.95 million, with total fundraising reaching €848,633.50. While this figure includes €496,885.50 in direct fundraising and €351,748 in approved future funding (ERIACNET4EU 2025), this decrease illustrates the external factors' influence over ERIAC's operations.

In light of these constraints, ERIAC adapted its programmatic priorities. History and language education were scaled back, while institutional development saw an increase in activity and funding, due to the ERIACNET4EU project, which disbursed €100,000 in grants to ERIAC network members.

Despite submitting applications for €8.2 million, the actual confirmed fundraising income was 15% less by the end of October 2024 compared to 2023 levels.

Despite this unfavourable funding landscape, stakeholders affirmed that the organisation's strategies for designing and utilising online learning, including synchronous and asynchronous learning, mobile-friendly platforms, and online exhibitions, have been a cost-effective and strategic response to both funding limitations and shifting political landscapes.

ERIAC's functioning of its governing organs complies with Articles 7, 8, and 9 of its MoU, including ensuring a gender balance with 44% female, 54% male, and 2% non-binary members. This institutional and governance structure has also contributed to strategic oversight and efficient resource management. The Board, General Assembly, and Barvalipe Academy responded well to existing challenges, and interviewees emphasised the existing collaborative relationship with ERIAC management. ERIAC's local offices in Serbia and Berlin are showing resilience at the national level. Both operate independently, engaging at local levels and strengthening ERIAC's credibility and reputation.

In 2024, ERIAC's Board reviewed the financial performance to guide future budgeting practices. As such, and in line with Article 6 of the MoU¹⁸, the ERIAC Board confirmed a balanced allocation of resources between institutional and programmatic activities, highlighting that expenditures aligned well with strategic outcomes across ERIAC's pillars. However, to strengthen financial governance, the Board adopted new budgetary principles, establishing that personnel costs should be between 30% and 40% of the total annual budget, and direct operational costs should not exceed 20% of the total annual budget. Concerns were raised about the extensive and increased activity plan compared to the previous year, related to the available human resources capacity to implement the plan.

In parallel, ERIAC continued strengthening its strategic orientation and institutional development. In 2023, ERIAC strengthened its strategic orientation, particularly in Pillar III (Pride and Identity) and Pillar IV (Branch Policy), as well as in broader institutional development. By 2024, the Board decided to focus more strongly on branch offices and funding (Pillars I and IV), University partnerships (Pillar II), and pride and identity (Pillar III). The 2026–2030 Strategy and Venues Plan, presented in late 2024, reflected this evolution, incorporating the Barvalipe Academy's proposal to reorient programming towards investing in Roma public spaces and memorials, enhance the focus on Roma pride and identity, and shift from visual to performing arts.

Governance reforms progressed, including modifications to the Rules of Procedure and the application of the Code of Conduct. By the end of 2024, the planned transfer of the Open Society Foundation (OSF)-Roma Initiative Office (RIO)'s founding membership to the Roma Foundation for Europe was confirmed by the General Assembly on December 6, 2024, in Berlin. Through this step, ERIAC became a foundational pillar of the new foundation, alongside the Roma Education Fund, Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative, and Roma for Democracy.

Challenges remain in terms of strategic monitoring and impact evaluation, despite the fact that in 2023, the Board requested the development of a formal impact measurement strategy with clear baselines and indicators. This process is still in its development stage. In this aspect, both ERIAC and interview respondents highlighted the difficulties in measuring results under "Pride and Identity (pillar III).

ERIAC's capacity to manage large projects, such as ERIACnet4EU, with limited staff is a clear indication of human resource efficiency. However, staff shortages and reliance on unpaid decision-making roles have their limitations. This was particularly evident in the case of the Serbian office, where staffing and oversight gaps led to responsibilities being transferred to the Berlin office.

In this regard, both the desk review and interviews with stakeholders highlighted concerns about staff being overworked due to a heavy workload, especially in managing EU projects, which are highly resource-intensive.

While the use of short-term consultants represents a temporary solution, this approach is viewed as unsustainable in the long term. The need to strengthen Board–Barvalipe Academy collaboration was also emphasised, especially when Board decisions require urgent responses and rapid decision-making.

Interviewed stakeholders also expressed concern that high-profile events, such as exhibitions and film productions, are resource-intensive and consume a large portion of existing finances. Furthermore, the

¹⁸ The Institute is responsible for its own financial viability and sustainability over time. It is the understanding of both Parties that the Institute must conduct effective fund-raising activities in order to secure the long-term viability of its operations.

reliance on project-based funding leads to responding to various donors with various needs and principles, which are not necessarily aligned with ERIAC's core strategic goals.

In terms of membership development, many interviewees think that since 2023, ERIAC has implemented a more grassroots-oriented membership model. Various respondents indicated that some associate members are increasingly active, contributing to projects and co-designing programmes. Section coordinators, in particular, were commended for responding effectively to member needs and facilitating engagement through projects such as ERIACnet4EU.

Many interviewees agreed that some smaller Roma organisations, and especially those outside the EU, continue to feel excluded or disconnected from ERIAC's core network. While recent associate membership reforms have increased active membership and participation, as well as the greater inclusion of grassroots organisations, more inclusive approaches to involve smaller Roma organisations across Europe remain a priority. In this context, several stakeholders highlighted the importance of bringing ERIAC's activities closer to local communities by organising regional events outside of Berlin. Such decentralised engagement, combined with targeted training programmes, was seen as essential to enhance members' skills, foster stronger local collaboration, and ensure that capacity-building efforts are accessible and responsive to diverse regional contexts.

ERIAC Serbia has demonstrated a generally efficient use of its resources, despite facing notable structural and contextual challenges. In 2023, ERIAC Serbia's programming revenue fell considerably (achieving only 20% of the target by October), and the organisation continued operations using institutional reserves. By 2024, ERIAC Serbia had recorded a 43% increase in revenue compared to 2023, indicating a more effective use of project-based funding, particularly from the Council of Europe and the German Government. The renewal and expansion of institutional support from Dunav Insurance (2024–2027) to €80,000 annually significantly strengthened ERIAC Serbia's financial stability. The small team that operated in 2023 was due to limited financial and institutional capacity. However, in 2024, a new Programme Manager was hired with the support of the Council of Europe, and a new Acting Executive Director was appointed.

SUSTAINABILITY

EQ6. How resilient is ERIAC's operational model in adapting to political, institutional, and funding changes across member States?

In 2023, ERIAC introduced a more selective membership process aimed at enhancing the quality of its membership base and improving the efficiency of the selection process. According to many interview respondents, this strategy proved useful, and its visible result can be seen in the members' contribution to programmatic support. Challenges with membership, however, remain pertinent in the yearly financial contributions that members are required to pay. The €500 annual fee, while intended to ensure commitment, may exclude grassroots actors, small organisations or individuals. To ensure sustainability and fairness, ERIAC is currently reassessing membership contribution fees.

Financially, ERIACnet4EU financed more than 25 projects, which involved capacity building, media training, and youth internships. Challenges exist with this funding opportunity, as it provides limited access to non-EU members. In this regard, although many interviewed stakeholders think that youths and under-represented countries should be more visible in ERIAC's programming, they also agree that expectations may exceed ERIAC's current capacity to support member involvement. This finding is also

confirmed by surveyed respondents, whose answers to the question *"Do you feel ERIAC makes efficient use of its resources to support membership development?"* are divided, as 44% considered "yes", 40 % thought "partially", and 12 % answered "I don't know". Answers to the question *"To what extent is ERIAC successful/or not in sharing lessons learnt and good practices in the field of art and culture?"*, 56 % of surveyed associate members thought that ERIAC is "extremely successful", or "successful", while 44 % considered the organisations as "partially successful", with "little success" or "no knowledge" about sharing lessons learned and good practices.

In 2024, a major milestone was the formal establishment of ERIAC Romania. However, in this aspect, ERIAC followed its internal policy on branch development to ensure sustainability, meaning that operations would only begin once long-term funding—covering space and staffing for at least 2 to 4 years—was secured.

Expanding the ERIAC Serbia team with motivated young Roma professionals proved challenging due to limited interest and funding. However, the team successfully secured longer-term sustainability through a renewed multi-year partnership with Dunav Insurance. Future team expansion will depend on the success of fundraising efforts.

The 2024 launch of a for-profit initiative is still in its early stages, with limited visibility and budgetary contributions to ERIAC funding.

Despite these difficulties, many interviewees also confirmed that ERIAC managed to build trust and confidence in donors. This is the reason for having multi-annual prepayments from funders like the EU, the Roma Foundation for Europe, and various embassies.

IV.LESSONS LEARNED

1. ERIAC's strong alignment with the Council of Europe's Strategic Priorities 2020-2025 and the MoU facilitated meaningful policy influence and participation in high-level forums, such as ADI-ROM.
2. The establishment and strengthening of ERIAC branches in Romania and Serbia highlighted the importance of local presence for increasing relevance, visibility, and Roma ownership.
3. By securing alternative funding sources and improving the quality of its membership despite an unstable funding climate and contextual uncertainties, ERIAC successfully built trustworthy relationships with donors and its membership base.
4. The establishment of a for-profit initiative demonstrated that new financing schemes require time, resources, and their results and usefulness for ERIAC can be assessed at a later stage.

V.CONCLUSIONS

ERIAC's initiatives were strongly aligned with its Strategic Objectives and its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Council of Europe (Council of Europe). In close coordination with Council of Europe bodies, such as ADI-ROM, CDADI, the Roma and Travellers Division, and the Youth Department, ERIAC advanced key priorities of the Council of Europe Roma and Traveller Inclusion Strategy (2020–2025), particularly in the areas of combating antigypsyism and Roma discrimination and access to quality education and training. Measures promoted by ERIAC encompassed i) peer reviews, thematic visits

and thematic reports; ii) training of the public authorities in Council of Europe standards such as capacity building provided for the EU Commission, national, and local level authorities and civil society; iii) conferences and high visibility events serving empowerment of Roma women and youth; iv) awareness-raising actions for the general public. All these actions contributed to increased participation among Roma and non-Roma, promoting public trust and accountability.

However, cultural exhibitions, educational activities and materials often lack continuity, accreditation, or formal links to national or academic structures, which weakens their lasting influence and follow-up, especially considering synergies with universities. ERIAC's reorientation towards the performing arts is a key innovation, but the limited number of trained Roma film producers is perceived as a challenge to expanding ERIAC in this direction. The insufficiency of trained Roma educators and historians further constrains ERIAC's ability to effectively respond to growing demands in these fields. Furthermore, the current funding landscape makes it difficult to ERIAC to sustain its operations with existing human resources and to respond to existing expectations for deeper national and local engagement.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ERIAC. Strengthen co-operation with intergovernmental bodies of the Council of Europe, particularly CDADI and ADI-ROM to enhance ERIAC's policy influence and visibility within institutional frameworks.

2. To ERIAC. Enhance strategic outreach and visibility by strengthening engagement with national counterparts at national, regional, local and grassroots levels. ERIAC should deepen its engagement with national and local actors — including Ministries of Culture, regional cultural centres, Roma NGOs, and municipalities — to support the institutionalisation and public recognition of Roma cultural practices. This includes co-organising events with local partners, involving national media, and creating content in national languages to increase visibility and public participation.

Suggestions for implementation:

- Develop and implement a national outreach strategy to enhance ERIAC's profile among Roma communities, cultural institutions, and the broader public, by establishing a network of national contact points to represent ERIAC locally and support year-round engagement.
- Develop strategic partnerships with cinemas, film production companies, museums, and contemporary art institutes to co-produce events and build artists' capacities.
- Explore the possibility of participating in the EACEA CERV Networks of Towns (EU) to support city-level partnership projects with local Roma organisations. This work could be linked with the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities,¹⁹ aligned with the Council of Europe's Strategy "²⁰
- Increase the visibility of cultural diplomacy and strengthen engagement with the Dialogue meeting consultation mechanism by leading thematic advocacy workshops in partnership with Roma civil society organisations.

¹⁹ <https://www.CouncilofEurope.int/en/web/congress>; Home - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

²⁰ "While member States have the overall responsibility for the elaboration of national Roma inclusion strategies, local authorities play a crucial and often decisive role in their implementation on the ground" (Council of Europe Strategy 2020-2025)

- Transform major cultural exhibitions (e.g. *Barvalo*) into modular, travelling formats adapted for museums, universities, and cultural festivals, with active co-curation by local Roma artists and experts.

3. To ERIAC: Develop long-term institutional partnerships with universities and educational institutions by establishing formal co-operation agreements with departments of Roma studies, cultural studies, or social sciences. The existing resources developed through the Barvalipe Academy could be integrated into academic modules on Roma arts and culture. Furthermore, educational activities with schools could be explored.

Suggestions for implementation:

- Co-develop fellowships, internships, or research programmes with universities and think tanks.
- Invest in Educational Outreach through School-Based Cultural Programmes. To increase visibility of Roma art and culture, ERIAC could develop targeted educational programmes in schools and learning centres in Berlin and Belgrade with a Roma/Traveller history component. These programmes could include bringing school students to ERIAC events, facilitating workshops, and developing classroom materials co-created with educators and Roma artists.

4. To ERIAC. Strengthen Associate Members' Capacity and Regional Engagement through Training and Workshops linked to Council of Europe standards and instruments. Share lessons and best practices with Associate members and involve representatives of the board members in these events.

5. To the Council of Europe: Facilitate ERIAC's strategic engagement with Permanent Representations in Strasbourg, particularly to advocate for the implementation of CM/Rec(2020)2 on the inclusion of Roma history and Holocaust remembrance in national school curricula. The Council of Europe could support ERIAC in establishing structured dialogue with the Permanent Representations of member states and education ministries, including bilateral meetings with countries that have significant Roma populations.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Terms of reference
- Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix
- Annex 3: Stakeholders interviewed
- Annex 4: List of documents consulted
- Annex 5: Survey results

Annex 1: Terms of reference

Independent Evaluation of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERiac)



TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

These Terms of Reference (ToR) provide for the independent evaluation of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERiac). They have been elaborated in compliance with the decisions taken by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as follows:

- on 13 April 2018 at its 1313th meeting (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1313/6.2)
- on 24 October 2018 at its 1328th meeting (CM/Dem/Dec(2018)1328/6.1)
- on 23 November 2021 at its 1418th meeting (CM/Del/Dec(2021)1418/6.1)
- on 4 October 2023 at its 1477th meeting (CM/Del/Dec(2023)1477/4.3).

This evaluation is an evaluation of ERiac with the main purpose of carrying out an assessment of its operations and activities from March 2023 to December 2024, in order to assist the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in evaluating to the extent possible the implementation of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Council of Europe and the Institute (CM(2017)154-final), including for deciding on the disbursement of the Council's financial contribution of €200,000 earmarked in its 2025 Ordinary Budget²¹ towards ERiac's total budget of approximately €2 900 000.

The ToR provide background information on ERiac, describe the evaluation purpose, objectives and scope, evaluation criteria and questions, evaluation methodology and the evaluator selection.

2. European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERiac)

ERiac's objective is the promotion of arts and culture and education as a means to promote human rights and intercultural understanding and thereby to tackle antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe and to increase their self-esteem.

The association's objective is achieved, in particular, but not limited to, through:

- holding of exhibitions, conferences, seminars and other innovative public events relating to arts and culture of Roma communities, respecting and showing the diversity of cultures and heritage in Europe;
- provision of online information on Romani history, Romani language and other contributions of Roma to European culture;
- partnerships between Roma and non-Roma institutions and initiatives working in the areas of arts and culture;
- realisation of arts and culture-related projects of cultural activists and artists of Roma origin;
- publication of studies and reports, and provision of advice to European and national institutions on artistic and cultural issues.

The association shall exclusively and directly pursue objectives of public benefit within the meaning of the Chapter "Tax Exempt Objectives" of the Second Part of the German Tax Code.

The association acts altruistically. It does not primarily focus on economic objectives for its own benefit.

²¹ CM/Del/Dec(2022)1452/11.4

ERIAC was set up as a joint initiative between the Council of Europe, the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and the Alliance for ERIAC. It is located in Berlin, Germany, where it was launched on 8 June 2017.

3. Evaluation Purpose and Use

As mentioned, the evaluation aims to carry out an assessment of ERIAC operations and activities from March 2023 to December 2024 in order to assist the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to understand the results achieved by ERIAC and make decisions on the way forward including for deciding on the disbursement of the Council's financial contribution earmarked in the 2025 Ordinary Budget.

The evaluation report shall be submitted to the governing organs of the Institute and to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The Roma and Travellers Division of the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Management of ERIAC will also use this information.

4. Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation shall focus on the implementation of the MoU signed between the Council of Europe and the Institute. It aims at providing an analysis of evidence notably with regard to the performance of the Institute in achieving its major objectives, especially showcasing Roma arts and culture to a European audience as a means to promote human rights and thereby to tackle antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe and to increase their self-esteem. The evaluation will also assess how ERIAC addresses gender inequalities.

It will particularly focus on:

- 1) alignment of the Institute's operations and activities with the statutory aims and objectives;
- 2) the adequacy of the governing organs;
- 3) efficiency and effectiveness of the Institute's inner decision-making mechanisms;
- 4) the extent to which the work programme has been implemented and the level of achievement of the objectives in 2024-2025;
- 5) co-operation with the Council of Europe, and the Institute's contribution towards the aims of the Council of Europe in the field of antigypsyism and Roma inclusion;
- 6) co-operation with member States;
- 7) complementarity or duplication as well as added value of the Institute's activities to other similar ones.

The review may also, to the extent possible, provide an assessment of the outreach of the Institute's activities.

The evaluation report shall contain recommendations for the future implementation of the MoU, the future activity of the Institute, efficiency gains in its governance and management, co-operation with other international and national stakeholders and funding sources, and the development of the membership base.

It shall also make a recommendation concerning the future co-funding through the Council of Europe.

5. Scope

The scope of the evaluation will cover all ERIAC operations and activities between March 2023 to December 2024. ERIAC's programme of activities can be found here: [Eriac](#)

6. Methodology

The evaluation shall assess ERIAC against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The following cross-cutting dimensions shall be incorporated, to the extent possible, in the evaluation process: human rights based approach, gender mainstreaming, civil society participation and work with specific groups, such as Roma/Traveller women and youth.

The evaluation process will be guided by the “Council of Europe Evaluation Guidelines”²², Council of Europe Code of conduct for Evaluation²³ and the Council of Europe’s Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Travellers Inclusion (2020-2025)²⁴ and its implementation report²⁵.

The consultant is expected to define the evaluation based on consultations with the Roma and Travellers Division and to elaborate the evaluation matrix in the inception phase of this evaluation.

The evaluation shall be based on:

- 1) A document review based on existing relevant documents and other data that shall be made accessible to the evaluator, including the Institute’s annual reports for 2023 and 2024, the report of the German tax authorities on the not-for-profit status, the reports of the governing organs, press reviews and the membership database;
- 2) evidence gathered through written or oral (in person²⁶ or online) semi-structured interviews with:
 - a) the ERIAC Executive Director, all members of the ERIAC Board, and a representative selection of the members of the ERIAC Barvalipe Academy;
 - b) relevant members of staff of the Council of Europe Secretariat;
 - c) a selection of members of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM);
 - d) a representative selection of co-operation partners in the context of ERIAC projects, incl. cultural institutions, major Roma organisations, media, member States and funders.

The evaluator will interview key stakeholders from the Council of Europe Secretariat and from ERIAC. Based on these interviews and a document review, (s)he will draft an inception report for comments by the Council of Europe. In total, about 25 interviews will need to be conducted for this evaluation.

7. Deliverables

The deliverables of the evaluation shall be:

- 1) An Inception Report including the evaluation approach and Evaluation Matrix to be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat by 30 April 2025;
- 2) a Draft Evaluation Report (20 pages maximum) to be submitted to the Council of Europe Secretariat by 30 June 2025;
- 3) a Final Evaluation Report (20 pages maximum) taking into account the comments by the Council of Europe Secretariat, to be submitted to the Secretariat by 10 July 2025.

All deliverables shall be written in English.

8. Evaluation workplan

The estimated duration of the contract is from 15 April 2025 to 10 July 2025.

²² [CM\(2020\)167](#), 30 October 2020

²³ <https://rm.CouncilofEurope.int/CouncilofEurope-codeofconductforevaluation/1680a1a023>

²⁴ CM(2019)161-final

²⁵ [Mid-term review report on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#)

Main phases	Tasks and deliverables	By whom	Indicative timing
Planning	Conduct desk review, prepare the draft ToR and consult the draft ToR with DIO	Evaluation Manager (EM)	20/03/25
	Select and conclude the contract with the evaluation consultant(s)	EM	15/04/25
Inception	Conduct the kick-off meeting	Consultant(s) & EM	18/04/25
	Carry out the initial review of documentation (desk review)	Consultant(s)	25/04/25
	Conduct inception interviews	Consultant(s)	25/04/25
	Prepare and submit the draft inception report	Consultant(s)	30/04/25
	Review of the draft inception report by the project team and DIO Submit the consolidated feedback to the consultant(s)	EM	05/05/25
	Submit the revised draft inception report to the project team and DIO	Consultant(s)	10/05/25
	Submit the final inception report	Consultant(s)	10/05/25
Implementation	Carry out the review of documentation (desk review)	Consultant(s)	10/06/25
	Conduct interviews	Consultant(s)	10/06/25
	Carry out data analysis	Consultant(s)	10/06/25
	Validate the preliminary findings, present and discuss them with the project team and DIO	Consultant(s) & EM	15/06/25
Reporting and finalisation	Prepare and submit the draft evaluation report	Consultant(s)	30/06/25
	Review of the draft evaluation report by the project team and DIO Submit the consolidated feedback to the consultant(s)	EM	07/07/25
	Submit the revised draft evaluation report to the project team and DIO	Consultant(s)	10/07/25
	Submit the final evaluation report	Consultant(s)	10/07/25
	Final payment	EM	10/07/25
Follow up	Prepare the management response/action plan Carry out the final proofreading of the evaluation report	EM	15/09/25

	Publish the report and management response/action plan on DIO website Submission to CM Secretariat	EM&DIO	15/09/25
	Presentation to GR-H meeting		
	Presentation to the CM		

9. Evaluator selection

The evaluation shall be conducted by an evaluator who is external to the Institute, has not had any previous direct or indirect involvement with the Institute and does not have any conflict of interest. If the evaluation is carried out by a team, gender balance and cultural diversity should be taken into account.

The evaluator will be selected based on Council of Europe criteria, including:

- an advanced university degree in evaluation, human rights, social sciences, arts and culture, or a related field;
- more than 5 years evaluation experience at European level;
- a strong record in designing, managing and leading evaluations in the context of international co-operation;
- extensive knowledge of, and experience in, applying standard evaluation principles, as well as qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods;
- experience or knowledge in organisational assessments (governance, internal controls);
- ability to draft concise evaluation reports of high quality in English;
- independence and absence of conflicts of interests.

Knowledge in the field of arts and culture would be an advantage.

10. Evaluation management

The evaluation shall be managed and facilitated by the Roma and Travellers Division of the Council of Europe, who will provide the evaluator with all relevant Council of Europe documents, with a list of stakeholders, and a desk at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg should travel to Strasbourg be required.

The evaluator shall be responsible for logistics: interpretation/translation if needed, administrative and secretarial support, etc., and for the dissemination of all methodological tools (for example, questionnaires).

The evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report to the Council of Europe Secretariat and take their comments on possible factual errors into consideration when finalising the report.

The Quality Assurance of the evaluation will be carried out by the Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO). All deliverables will need to be quality checked prior to further internal or external dissemination.

11. Submission of a methodological brief

Service Providers are requested to submit a methodological brief outlining how they will approach this evaluation. Once contacted by Council of Europe, Service Providers have up to 5 days to respond.

For the financial proposal, the prices shall be stated in Euros, and the amount of VAT shall be indicated separately. The proposed budget will include a breakdown of the costs per deliverable, including travel costs, interpretation costs etc. The maximum budget for this evaluation is € 20 000.

The methodological brief shall contain a proposed methodology and a work plan for the evaluation.

Appendices

- Evaluation Matrix Template
- Quality Assurance Checklist for Final Report
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC)