



HATE AT A GLANCE



As many other people with a minority ethnic or racial background, Roma are affected by hate speech, and **anti-Gypsyism is known as one of the most reported grounds of hate speech**, including on social media. Manifestations of anti-Gypsyism, like hate speech, can target Roma directly or implicitly through proxy categories, such as “inadaptable” citizens, “vagrants” or people needing re-education. Politicians and public authorities often fail to publicly condemn such negative trends. Instead, in many cases they are the ones uttering racist falsehoods. And it is not just the politicians: across Europe, a range of media outlets have been broadcasting toxic narratives against Roma.



Violence against minorities, Roma included, begins with words and disparaging language. Hate speech can quickly escalate into physical harm. The [EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency \(FRA\)](#) found that hate speech and hate crimes against Roma are widespread and often inadequately investigated, and in many cases easily accepted and excused.¹ As a result, it is undeniable (as the data shows) that there has been a significant increase in hate speech against Roma.



On April 7, 2020, the EU’s FRA, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the Council of Europe issued statements drawing attention **to the disproportionate risks that Roma people face in relation to contracting COVID-19**. However, despite these **requests and the clear mandates** of international and European human rights treaties guaranteeing equality, non-discrimination, and dignity for all people, there has been a frightening escalation of populist and racist voices intent on blaming the Roma community for this pandemic

¹‘Hate crime’ and ‘hate speech’ are growing problems across Europe. ‘Hate crime’ and ‘hate speech’ are ubiquitous but not (or not strictly) legal terms or concepts. Hate speech covers many forms of expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred, violence and discrimination against a person or group of persons for a variety of reasons, while hate crime, also known as hate crime or bias-motivated crime, is a criminal act motivated by bias or prejudice towards particular groups of people. Bias motivations can be broadly defined as preconceived negative opinions, stereotypical assumptions, intolerance or hatred directed to a group that shares a common characteristic, such as race, ethnicity, language, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender or any other fundamental characteristic. Hate crime can include threat, property damage, assault, murder or any other criminal offence committed with a bias motivation.

CHALLENGES



◆ The criminal justice system in Serbia does not permit the collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity, hence there are no official statistics on the number of incidents where Roma were victims of violence, racially motivated hate crimes and hate speech. It is also impossible to determine the percentage of Roma-related cases in comparison to all documented cases, the number of Roma cases in which the police started an investigation, and the number of cases in which the prosecutor pressed charges.

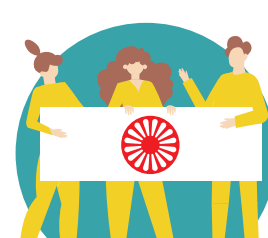
◆ Similarly, The Office of the State Prosecutor in Montenegro does not collect ethnically disaggregated data and therefore it does not possess evidence for the cases of Roma, Ashkali or Egyptians as victims of hate crime, violence attacks and hate speech including the number of respective indictments.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY



Step up the fight against all forms of discrimination against Roma, including institutional racism and xenophobia, hate speech and hate crime.

Reinforce the efforts to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crime as specific manifestations of anti-Gypsyism/anti-Roma racism – beyond the general ground already embedded in the national anti-discrimination frameworks pertaining to “race or ethnicity”.



Improve the implementation of laws to ensure they are effectively applied regarding hate crimes and hate speech directed at Roma.

Develop reporting tools and establish an obligation of the relevant institutions at national and local level to collect disaggregated data on hate speech and hate crimes committed with anti-Gypsyist motivation.



Ensure better access to justice for Roma facing discrimination, hate speech and hate crime and support the victims – in line with the [2017 Recommendation of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe](#).

Publicly condemn and stamp out instances of racist and inflammatory rhetoric, including anti-Gypsyist hate speech in the public discourse.



Promote positive and non-stereotypical counter-narratives for inclusive society and develop concrete measures to tackle hate crime and hate speech motivated by anti-Gypsyism.

Foster discussions and good practice exchange among relevant public authorities and civil society sector.



Strengthen the capacity and the crucial role of Roma civil society.