

PORTRAYAL OF ROMA IN THE WRITTEN PRESS

in Bulgaria, Greece,
Italy and Romania



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

■ This report delves into the portrayal of the Roma community¹ within the printed press in four European countries: Romania, Greece, Bulgaria and Italy, covering the period from October 2022 to October 2023. By analysing a variety of written media sources (print and online), the study aims to unravel the narratives constructed around the Roma community, offering insights into how these narratives influence public perception and societal attitudes towards this historically marginalised group. The report is not just a commentary on the current state of media portrayals but also reflects deeper societal and cultural undercurrents that shape these narratives.

■ The study reveals a consistent trend across all four countries, where the depiction of the Roma community remains negative, often characterised by stereotypes and biases focusing on crime, poverty and social exclusion. This prevalent negative stereotyping not only reinforces but also perpetuates existing prejudices against Roma, affecting their social integration and treatment within these societies.

■ Bulgaria's media landscape, however, is different, with a predominance of negative reporting. The narratives are not only unfavourable but often employ derogatory language and sensationalism, contributing to a deeply entrenched bias against the Roma community. This portrayal is indicative of the larger cultural and societal challenges to understanding and integrating the Roma within the Bulgarian social fabric.

■ The situation in Greece is mixed. The coverage often leans towards the negative, yet it includes opinion pieces and reports that endeavour to provide a more nuanced and positive perspective. These pieces serve as crucial counterweights to the otherwise skewed narratives, suggesting an undercurrent of progressive thought and a possible pathway towards greater inclusivity in media representation.

■ In Italy, the portrayal of the Roma community is varied, encompassing a spectrum that includes negative, neutral and even positive narratives. This diversity in reporting styles and narratives possibly reflects the complex socio-political dynamics in Italy and the varying degrees of awareness and sensitivity towards minority issues among journalists and media houses.

■ In Romania, the media portrayal shows a relatively more balanced approach. There are instances where the press has managed to transcend typical stereotypes, offering narratives that are positive and highlight the contributions of the Roma community. This suggests a potential shift towards more responsible journalism, albeit within the bounds of prevailing societal attitudes.

■ The portrayal of Roma in the media significantly affects how they are perceived and treated in society. The persistent negative stereotypes contribute to their continued marginalisation and discrimination. However, the presence of balanced and positive narratives, especially in countries like Romania and Italy, indicates a potential for transformation to more responsible and empathetic journalism. The media has a critical role to play and a responsibility for shaping societal perceptions and, by extension, the policies and attitudes towards minority communities.

■ To encourage a shift towards more equitable and inclusive media portrayals, there is a need for enhanced training for journalists, focusing on cultural sensitivity and unbiased reporting. Including diverse voices and narratives, especially from within the Roma community, can provide a more comprehensive and authentic portrayal. Furthermore, a systemic understanding of the challenges faced by the Roma, shifting the narrative

1. The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

from mere portrayal of problems to highlighting solutions and successes, can contribute to better integration and understanding of the Roma community in these societies. To that end, the relevant authorities and civil society should:

- ▶ encourage media outlets to adopt inclusive editorial policies that promote fair and balanced representation of all communities, including Roma;
- ▶ establish mechanisms for monitoring media practices and reporting on the representation of Roma in the press;
- ▶ identify media outlets that consistently promote negative stereotypes and work with them to improve their reporting practices;
- ▶ include more voices from the Roma community in media reports to provide a fuller, more authentic perspective;
- ▶ encourage a more diverse portrayal of Roma in various social roles, moving beyond traditional or negative stereotypes;
- ▶ include in media training and guidelines an emphasis on avoiding stereotypes and discriminatory language, focusing on individual actions rather than ethnicity; encourage media outlets and journalists to undergo training on cultural sensitivity and unbiased reporting; and provide training and resources to media professionals on culturally sensitive reporting and avoiding stereotypes;
- ▶ encourage media outlets to feature more stories highlighting Roma achievements, culture and contributions to society;
- ▶ implement media literacy campaigns to help the public critically evaluate news content and understand how stereotypes and biases can affect reporting;
- ▶ collaborate with international organisations and other countries to share best practices in combating discrimination and improving the representation of Roma in the media;
- ▶ encourage diversity within media organisations, both in terms of hiring and content production; promote the inclusion of Roma journalists, editors and other staff in media outlets.

■ The findings of this report underscore the need for a committed effort to change the narrative around the Roma community in the media. Such a change is not only crucial for the accurate representation of Roma but is also integral to the broader goal of promoting social cohesion and protecting the rights of minorities in a diverse and inclusive Europe.

INTRODUCTION

■ The Council of Europe is currently implementing a European Union–Council of Europe Joint Programme entitled Equality and Freedom from Discrimination for Roma (EQUIROM). The aim of this programme is to fight and prevent antigypsyism and discrimination and promote equality for Roma people. The programme is being implemented in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania from December 2022 to December 2024.

■ Some of the objectives of EQUIROM are to combat stereotypes in the media, raise awareness of the history and culture of Roma and other ethnic minorities, including awareness of the Roma Holocaust, and contribute to building positive narratives about Roma by journalists and other media representatives.

■ Hate speech and ultimately hate crimes build on discriminatory or negative narratives targeting specific individuals or groups of persons because of their real or attributed personal characteristics or status. Such narratives persist in public and political discourse, including that presented by TV broadcasters and media platforms. Many Roma continue to face inequality, prejudice and discrimination, and serious obstacles to fully enjoying their human rights. Their access to essential services such as healthcare, housing, education and employment is often hampered by an underlying and deeply rooted antigypsyism. These problems are aggravated by their often very negative portrayal in the media and their under-representation in public and political life and decision-making processes. Roma women face particularly high barriers to equality and participation, due to multiple forms of discrimination, gender bias and stereotypes.

Overview of relevant standards and definitions

■ The range of material in this study was examined in light of the relevant international, European Union (EU) and domestic standards on anti-discrimination.² These include the standards laid out in the European Convention on Human Rights (“the Convention”), the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (“the Court”), relevant United Nations (UN) standards (the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination), EU Race Equality Directive 2000/43/EC, Directive 2010/13/EU, Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-30, the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-25, applicable national legislation and other sources.

■ Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania, as signatories to the European Convention, are bound by its protections against hate speech. While Article 10 safeguards freedom of expression, it is not absolute; Article 17 clarifies that rights under the Convention cannot be used to undermine other fundamental freedoms. Hate speech that incites violence, discrimination, or hostility based on race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or similar characteristics, does not receive protection under freedom of expression. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that such speech can violate Articles 8 (right to private life) and 14 (non-discrimination). In *Budinova and Chaprazov v. Bulgaria*,³ the Court emphasised that even opinions on public matters that promote hatred and intolerance receive minimal or no protection under Article 10, especially when viewed through the lens of Article 17. Similarly, in *Aksu*, the Court highlighted that stereotyping, when it reaches a certain threshold, can negatively affect the identity and self-worth of individuals, impacting their right to private life.⁴

2. This chapter is a revised version compared to the same chapter in the earlier report entitled “Portrayal of Roma in TV broadcasting in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania”, published on 18 June 2024 and available at <https://rm.coe.int/report-portrayal-of-roma-web-pdf/1680af6186>.

3. *Budinova and Chaprazov v. Bulgaria*, Application No. 12567/13, judgment of 16 February 2021, available at <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-207928>, accessed 26 July 2023.

4. *Aksu v Turkey*, Application Nos. 4149/04 and 41029/04, judgment of 15 March 2012, available at <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-109577>, accessed 26 July 2023.

■ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has addressed antigypsyism, identifying it as a persistent, violent and institutional form of racism. ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 13 (2011, amended in 2020) stresses the historical and systemic nature of antigypsyism, characterised by hate speech, exploitation and stigmatisation.⁵ ECRI Recommendation No. 15 (2015) specifically targets hate speech, calling for immediate responses, media self-regulation and proactive measures to counteract hate.⁶

■ Additionally, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech, drawing from the Court's case law and ECRI's recommendations.⁷ The document urges member states and relevant stakeholders to establish comprehensive legal and non-legal mechanisms for combating hate speech both online and offline. It defines hate speech as any form of expression that incites or justifies violence, hatred or discrimination against individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, colour, religion, nationality, age, disability, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. The recommendation encourages the adoption of a robust legal framework that includes civil, administrative and criminal provisions to effectively prevent and combat hate speech.

■ In this context, media and journalists play a critical role by providing accurate information and promoting a culture of tolerance. Public-service media is encouraged to foster intergroup dialogue and represent diverse voices, while independent media regulators should act to curb hate speech, ensuring accountability and transparency.

■ The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union consolidates the rights of EU citizens, including those of minority groups. Article 70 of the EU Copyright Directive underscores that measures taken by online platforms should not undermine users' freedom of expression. Simultaneously, the 2008 EU Council Framework Decision obliges member states to penalise incitement to violence or hatred based on race, ethnicity, religion and similar grounds, along with condoning or trivialising genocide or war crimes when such acts provoke hostility.⁸

■ Beyond international frameworks, domestic standards on hate speech and non-discrimination have been considered, particularly those stemming from the implementation of EU directives. The European Commission's 2023 report on national Roma strategies highlights efforts and gaps in combating hate speech and antigypsyism in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania.⁹ While some member states have taken promising steps, such as France's legal measures against discrimination and Romania's Antigypsyism Law, further efforts are necessary to address these issues comprehensively.¹⁰ Member states with significant Roma populations are encouraged to enhance their strategies, especially in cross-cutting areas such as hate speech, antigypsyism, poverty reduction and Roma participation in society.

Methodology

■ The objective of this study is to establish the current characteristics and specificities of the portrayal of Roma in the print press – in physical and digital formats – in four member states of the Council of Europe: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania. The study is part of the EQUIROM project of the Council of Europe and covers the period from 1 October 2022 to 30 October 2023.

■ For this study, researchers in the four countries randomly selected about 25 of the most recent print press items related to or on the subject of Roma, published by a variety of media in each country. The selection includes printed press in the form of magazines and newspapers and covers a variety of interests, including news, general interest, health, sport, business, music and fashion. A list of all the analysed material and the relevant links are listed in the appendix to this report. The analysis of each item aims to answer the following key questions.

- To what extent are Roma represented in the printed press?

5. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-13-on-combating-anti-gypsyism-an/16808b5aee>, accessed 26 July 2023.

6. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-15-on-combating-hate-speech/16808b5b0>, accessed 26 July 2023.

7. Available at https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680a67955, accessed 26 July 2023.

8. Available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32008F0913>, accessed 30 October 2023.

9. Available at https://commission.europa.eu/publications/assessment-report-member-states-national-roma-strategic-frameworks-full-package_en, accessed 5 February 2024.

10. The country facts and issues are available at https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ae267c29-718a-4062-be3f-76226b124979_en?filename=1_3_50157_swd_fiches_roma_strat_pt1_en.pdf and https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/1379bd26-0808-4572-b16c-2a8ea5241a47_en?filename=1_4_50158_swd_fiches_roma_strat_pt2_en.pdf.

- ▶ How are Roma portrayed in the printed press: in a positive, neutral or negative way?
- ▶ Are there any good initiatives, practices and ways to combat antigypsyism promoted through the printed press?

■ To ensure randomness, the researchers used Google's advanced search tools and similar other search engines, using advanced tools and filters such as designating a set period of time and using keywords like "Roma", "Romani", "Roma ethnics", etc., and the translation of "gypsy" in the national languages. Furthermore, searches were made on the websites of various print press media outlets using relevant keywords. The report is structured on a country-by-country basis, followed by an overall analysis and recommendations. Each country chapter contains a section outlining the national legal and regulatory framework followed by an analysis of all the reviewed material from the country. In this report, the team of researchers, having completed an earlier report on the portrayal of Roma in broadcasting, draw a comparison with certain findings from that previous report. The report entitled "Portrayal of Roma in TV broadcasting in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania" was published on 18 June 2024 and is available at <https://rm.coe.int/report-portrayal-of-roma-web-pdf/1680af6186>.

Limitations

■ The researchers selected only material that has been published and is available in the public domain (open-source information), in physical and digital formats, and reviewed each item of material. Items that had not been published on officially recognised print press outlets and that have not been published and/or are not available anymore on various publicly accessible internet platforms and internet sites, or in physical printed format, are beyond the scope of the study. In addition, only those printed press media outlets that have been licensed/registered with the competent national bodies have been included in the study, therefore personal, organisational or institutional blogs, websites, news sections and other forms of non-licensed publishing are not within the scope of this study. The original material, whether in physical or digital form, has been preserved and archived for reference. The materials have been selected randomly, using widely available search engines and specific key words and a specified time span. The researchers have no control or insight over the way search algorithms rendered the selected articles.

REPORTS BY COUNTRY

Bulgaria

Summary of the national legal and regulatory framework

■ In Bulgaria, the regulation of printed media is more lenient compared with broadcast media, which is subject to stricter regulations and oversight. Unlike broadcasting media outlets, which need licences or registration to operate, printed media in Bulgaria does not require licensing. The regulation of printed media and their online versions, including with regard to the prevention of hate speech, is primarily governed by the Law on the Compulsory Deposit of Printed and Other Works and on the Announcement of Distributors and Media Service Providers,¹¹ the Protection against Discrimination Act (PADA)¹² and the Penal Code.¹³

■ The Law on the Compulsory Deposit of Printed and Other Works and on the Announcement of Distributors and Media Service Providers determines the grounds and procedure for the deposit of printed and other works created and circulated in the country or related thereto for the purpose of their preservation as part of the national cultural heritage, as well as the procedure for announcing information on the distributors of printed periodical works and the providers of media services. The obligation for disclosure of beneficial owners of media service providers and distributors is a major aspect of the Law on the Compulsory Deposit of Printed and Other Works and on the Announcement of Distributors and Media Service Providers in Bulgaria. This provision is in line with international standards and efforts to ensure transparency and to counter potential misuse of media for hidden agendas, financial irregularities or the spread of misleading information. The primary objective of this obligation is to ensure transparency in media ownership and prevent potential conflicts of interest. Media service providers and distributors are required to declare their beneficial owners to designated regulatory authorities.

■ The PADA prohibits hate speech, although implicitly. Article 5 of the law states that harassment and incitement to discrimination constitute discrimination. According to paragraph 1, point 1, of the additional provisions to the PADA, “harassment” means any unwanted conduct based on protected grounds, expressed physically, verbally or otherwise, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating, offensive or threatening environment. According to paragraph 1, point 5, of the of the additional provisions to the PADA, “incitement to discriminate” means directly and intentionally encouraging, instructing, pressuring or inducing a person to discriminate.

■ The Bulgarian Penal Code also prohibits hate speech and hate crimes, including hate speech that is disseminated through electronic media. Specifically, Article 162, paragraph 1, of the PC prohibits advocating or inciting discrimination, violence or hatred based on race, nationality or ethnicity through speech, print or other means of mass information, electronic information systems or otherwise. Individuals who are found guilty of this crime can be fined and imprisoned for a term of between one and four years.

It is also worth noting that Bulgaria is a signatory to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which requires the government to take measures to prevent and combat racism and racial discrimination.

■ There is an ethical code of conduct for the Bulgarian media, the Code of Ethics for Bulgarian Media¹⁴ – a non-binding document developed and adopted by the non-governmental organisation National Council for Journalistic Ethics,¹⁵ which was founded by several major media and professional journalistic associations. The code sets out the principles and standards of professional conduct that journalists and media organisations in Bulgaria are expected to follow. The code is open for all media outlets to join voluntarily. Presently, over 100 Bulgarian media are signatories to the code, among them the major state-owned and private broadcasting and press media.

11. Adopted December 2000, entered into force January 2001, last amended October 2023.

12. Adopted September 2003, entered into force January 2004, last amended October 2023.

13. Adopted April 1968, entered into force May 1968, last amended October 2023.

14. [Code of Ethics for Bulgarian Media](#).

15. Media Ethics Bulgaria. <https://mediaethics-bg.org/>, accessed 31 October 2023.

■ The Code of Ethics covers a wide range of topics, including accuracy, fairness, impartiality, privacy, the right to a response, the protection of sources, conflicts of interest and the avoidance of hate speech, discrimination and incitement to violence. The code also sets out guidelines for handling issues related to children and vulnerable people, as well as guidelines for the use of images and other visual material.

■ The Code of Ethics is not legally binding, but it is widely recognised and respected by the Bulgarian media industry and is used as a reference point for ethical behaviour. Media outlets that subscribe to the code are expected to follow its principles and standards, and the Bulgarian Media Ethics Council can investigate and mediate disputes related to breaches of the code.

■ The Code of Ethics for Bulgarian Media specifically addresses hate speech. The code requires that media outlets respect the human dignity of all individuals and refrain from any form of discrimination, including on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic. The code explicitly states that the media must respect everyone's right to live in safety and security and not publish material that incites or promotes hatred, violence or any form of discrimination. It stipulates that the media must not indicate race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical condition if these facts are not material to the meaning of the information. Media outlets are expected to exercise responsible journalism and to avoid any form of sensationalism, prejudice or propaganda that could lead to the spread of hate speech or other harmful content. The code also requires that media outlets provide accurate and impartial information and avoid any conflicts of interest or bias that could compromise their journalistic integrity.

■ At the Council of Europe level, monitoring and assessment of the Bulgarian legal framework and its application highlight the following elements:

while the legal framework on hate speech and hate crime is largely satisfactory, cases of sanctions for hate crimes remain isolated and interlocutors complain about a climate of impunity, in particular with regard to hate speech and hate crimes against Roma (Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities Fourth Opinion on Bulgaria, adopted on 26 May 2020).¹⁶

■ From the 2021 Committee of Ministers Resolution on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Bulgaria:

the authorities should combat and firmly condemn all instances of anti-Gypsy discourse by politicians and other public figures and actively support awareness-raising measures against antigypsyism in society.¹⁷

■ From the ECRI Report 2022:¹⁸

21. ECRI received information from various NGOs indicating that hate speech is widespread in Bulgaria, confirming the concerns of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, targeting now in particular Roma and LGBTI people.

■ ECRI:

notes that ... comprehensive action does not seem to have been taken to counter expressions of hatred against other groups that are frequently targeted, such as Roma and LGBTI persons. It therefore appears to be both useful and necessary to replicate and expand ... similar measures also to other vulnerable groups.

Analysis

■ In this analysis, we examined a selection of 25 printed media publications from Bulgaria and, most importantly, their online counterparts, focusing on the portrayal of the Roma community. By dissecting key thematic areas, such as predominant narratives, the portrayal of behaviour and the roles the community plays in these narratives, we strive to gain a more in-depth understanding of how Roma are depicted. Unveiling these insights sheds light on potential biases and patterns present in the Bulgarian media landscape, providing a crucial perspective on how media representation can be enhanced to better reflect the Roma community's diverse experiences and identities.

■ From the articles (see appendix), it is apparent that a majority focus on the negative portrayal of Roma in various contexts, especially regarding their behaviour in society. Articles cover topics including alleged criminal activities, confrontations and negative social behaviour. Only a few articles discuss positive attributes or contributions from the Roma community.

16. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/4th-op-bulgaria-en/16809eb483>, accessed 5 February 2024.

17. Available at [https://hudoc.fcnm.coe.int/?i=Bulgaria_CM_ResCMN\(2021\)1E-0](https://hudoc.fcnm.coe.int/?i=Bulgaria_CM_ResCMN(2021)1E-0), accessed 5 February 2024.

18. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-sixth-report-on-bulgaria/1680a83581>, accessed 5 February 2024.

■ A significant number of articles depict Roma in a negative light, associating them with crime, violence and irresponsible behaviour. This is evident in titles such as “Dead driver’s companion: get down and run fast! There is a bunch of gypsies running this way!”¹⁹, “Horror in Razlog! Roma invaded a school with scythes and sticks, beat up a student”²⁰ and, most notably, “You will want to beat them up: it is unbelievable what brazen Roma did in Sofia”²¹. Such articles contribute to the stereotype that Roma are inherently criminal or violent. Many of the articles directly or indirectly link the Roma community to crime, violence or unruly behaviour. Examples include incidents at a school, the beating of emergency care staff²² and the mafia boss association.

■ Articles like “43 per cent of Roma in Bulgaria work, survey shows”²³ and “Study: no improvement in Roma integration in Europe”²⁴ portray the Roma community as marginalised within the wider society, focusing on their social and economic status. They reflect a narrative of Roma struggling with unemployment, poverty and lack of integration, suggesting systemic societal issues.

■ Several publications play on deep-rooted cultural stereotypes about the Roma. For instance, the article entitled “A gypsy camp in Malinova dolina neighbourhood in Sofia was removed”²⁵. In the vast majority of cases the term “gypsy” carries pejorative connotations, which underscores cultural bias.

■ There is a notable presence of articles where experts, authorities or individuals with a significant societal role comment on the Roma community. For instance, in “Georgi Berdarov: in 2050 Bulgaria will stop functioning if there are no measures for demography”²⁶, an expert makes concerning claims about the future demographic of the country in relation to the Roma population.

■ While there is a dominant negative narrative, there are also articles that show Roma in a positive light. For instance, an article entitled “Dr Miroslav Angelov, cardiologist [of Roma origin]: most Roma work and are concerned about children’s education”²⁷ provides commentary from Roma and showcases their social responsibility and their concerns for the broader society.

■ Many articles use language that can be seen as derogatory or biased. Terms like “gypsies” in certain contexts and other pejorative descriptors, appear to be commonplace. This not only indicates a bias in the reporting but also perpetuates existing prejudices.

■ Some articles, while mentioning Roma ethnicity, actually discuss issues that are not inherently related to their ethnic background. For instance, “Gypsies settled in the house of Slavi Trifonov – the leader of the political party ITN took €40 000 from the deal”²⁸ discusses a property deal, making the ethnicity of the buyers irrelevant to the core of the story. Such is also the case with a number of articles reporting on alleged criminal or otherwise illegal activity.

■ Most of the publications come under the news category and are presented by reporters, journalists and editors in online tabloids and newspapers (see appendix). This shows that the narrative is not just shared by a few opinionated voices but is widespread in mainstream news reporting.

■ Some articles offer neutral commentary, but the framing can still perpetuate stereotypes. The voice of the Roma community is largely missing, and frequent labelling, even when not directly relevant, can lead to overgeneralisation and reinforce biases. Additionally, the placement of such articles in publications can magnify the perception of issues related to the Roma community.

■ Creating a profile involves examining how the Roma community is portrayed, their roles, characteristics and actions. Roma protagonists in the analysed publications are often described with the insinuation of them

19. Available at <https://fakti.bg/bulgaria/811738-spatnikat-na-ubitia-shofyor-slizai-i-bagai-barzo-tumba-romi-tichat-nasam>, accessed 31 October 2023.

20. Available at https://blitz.bg/kriminalni/uzhas-v-razlog-romi-nakhlitakha-ss-sopi-i-prtove-v-uchilishche-prebikha-uchenik_news976074.html, accessed 31 October 2023.

21. Available at https://blitz.bg/stolitsa/shche-iskate-da-gi-nabiete-ne-e-za-vyarvane-kakvo-storikha-nagli-romi-v-sofiya_news978870.html, accessed 31 October 2023.

22. Available at www.dnes.bg/obshtestvo/2023/04/19/predimno-piiani-romi-atakuvat-speshnite-medici.566947, accessed 31 October 2023.

23. Available at <https://dariknews.bg/novini/bylgariia/43-na-sto-ot-romite-u-nas-rabotiat-sochi-prouhvane-2358222>, accessed 31 October 2023.

24. Available at <https://e-vestnik.bg/36398/prouhvane-nyama-podobrenie-v-integratsiata-na-romite-v-evropa/>, accessed 31 October 2023.

25. Available at <https://news.bg/regions/premahnaha-tsiganski-katun-v-kv-malinova-dolina-v-sofiya.html>, accessed 31 October 2023.

26. Available at www.24chasa.bg/bulgaria/article/15752954, accessed 31 October 2023.

27. Available at <https://tretavazrast.com/2023/04/05/>, accessed 31 October 2023.

28. Available at <https://pik.bg/>, accessed 31 October 2023.

being irresponsible or cruel. There are a few mentions of them being experts or professionals, but these are outnumbered by negative portrayals. The analysis based on the articles shows the following.

■ There is an indication of the socio-economic challenges the Roma community faces. References to unemployment and property suggest economic disparity or issues related to housing and livelihood. When the media continually emphasise these economic challenges without a comprehensive look at the systemic issues at play, it creates a skewed narrative of the community being solely responsible for their circumstances. There is a noticeable scarcity of positive or uplifting stories related to the Roma community.

■ The articles show some traditional roles and characteristics associated with the Roma community, such as the mention of a “gypsy wedding”. This could perpetuate a narrative that the Roma community is primarily traditional rather than acknowledging the community’s diversity and their integration into modern society.

■ Most of the news stories about the Roma community are reactive, addressing specific incidents or statistics. There is a lack of proactive representation, such as stories that delve into the community’s culture, history, contributions or aspirations.

■ The profile of Roma drawn from these media articles tends to focus more on challenges, negative incidents and traditional roles. There is a marked absence of diverse voices and positive stories.

■ While Roma are frequently central to media narratives, they are commonly framed as reactive or passive, rather than proactive or aspirational. This leads to a dichotomy in which they are seen either as aggressors or victims, further polarising public perception. Positive or constructive behaviours, such as community building, are rarely highlighted. Traditional aspects like “gypsy weddings” sometimes feature, potentially reinforcing stereotypes of exoticism. Overall, the limited scope of behavioural portrayals contributes to a skewed, one-sided view of the Roma community, lacking nuance and everyday context.

■ The role of Roma portrayed in the media articles is multifaceted but lacks sufficient depth and breadth. The Roma community is often either at the heart of controversies or on the receiving end of external decisions. Their representation largely oscillates between being active agents in conflicts or passive subjects of policies and prejudices.

■ The analysis of 25 media publications from Bulgarian print and online media reveals a predominantly negative portrayal of the Roma community, with a substantial emphasis on stereotypes, particularly in the context of criminality, social marginalisation and cultural biases. While there are occasional positive or neutral narratives, these are overshadowed by sensationalist headlines, confrontational contexts and the consistent use of derogatory language. The Roma are frequently presented in reactive roles, often linked to crime and aggression, and their proactive, constructive behaviours are largely under-represented. Moreover, media content tends to unnecessarily emphasise their ethnicity even in non-relevant contexts and lacks the depth and breadth needed for a holistic portrayal of the Roma community, leaning heavily towards portrayals of them as either central figures in controversies or passive subjects of societal biases and prejudices. This lopsided representation perpetuates misconceptions and biases against the Roma community in Bulgaria.

Greece

Summary of the national legal and regulatory framework

■ Article 14 of the Greek Constitution governs the freedom of expression and press. Despite its length, this article primarily delineates these freedoms in its initial 36 words, while the remainder details limitations, preconditions and potential seizure of printed materials. Intriguingly, Article 15 specifies that these protections do not extend to film, photography, radio, television or other similar transmission methods. These constitutional clauses establish a dual standard for freedom of expression in Greece. The press operates without state supervision, contrasting with the constitutionally mandated state oversight of radio and television.

■ In practice, the press traditionally enjoys broader freedom, encompassing expressions that “offend, shock, or disturb”, as defined by the European Court of Human Rights in *Handyside v. the United Kingdom*.

■ While discussions on limiting freedom for hate speech are nascent in Greece, the Greek press generally adheres to the established framework. The Greek legal system, aligned with the EU, prohibits discrimination and hate speech based on race, ethnicity, religion and other characteristics. Pertinently, the Greek Penal Code, including Articles 386A (criminalising hate speech) and 386B (addressing hate crimes), applies these principles to the press.

■ Beyond legal regulations, the Greek Journalists' Union adopted the Code of Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility in 1998. However, no journalist has faced the union's disciplinary body for anti-Roma sentiment to date.²⁹

■ Law 4443/2016 on equal treatment, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, is a vital instrument against hate speech. It penalises public incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence based on various characteristics, with penalties ranging from three months to three years in prison and fines of between €5 000 and €20 000.

■ In 1979, the Greek government under Konstantinos Karamanlis initiated a policy to grant citizenship to Roma residing in Greece. This process, based on birth within the nation's territory (*jus soli*), was facilitated by Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Greek Citizenship Code, which bestows citizenship on anyone born in Greece whose nationality is undefined. Consequently, most Roma in Greece attained citizenship, though exceptions remain, such as Roma immigrants from Albania and Bulgaria. However, some Roma still face statelessness, challenging their access to rights guaranteed by the Greek Constitution and impacting public perceptions.

■ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance highlighted in its 6th report on Greece³⁰ that:

36. ECRI recommends that the authorities establish a comprehensive monitoring system for hate speech incidents, including online, building on the experiences and expertise of the police and prosecuting services, equality bodies and national human rights institutions, self-regulatory bodies and relevant civil society organisations.

45. In spite of all the measures described above, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, Roma and LGBTI communities are frequent targets of hate speech, involving at times politicians and even state officials ...

46. ECRI therefore recommends that the Greek authorities launch public awareness campaigns against hate speech, in which the dangers posed by hate speech are underlined and the falsity and unacceptability of its foundations stressed, involving responsible political and religious leaders engaging in counter-speech.

Analysis

■ This study examines 41 articles from Greek printed press from 1 October 2022 to 30 October 2023, selected randomly via search engines. Our analysis reveals significant media attention on the Roma, especially after a police officer fatally shot a 16-year-old Roma boy (Costas Fragoulis) in December 2022. Comparatively, TV coverage tended to be neutral, but printed media showed a mix of negative and positive portrayals, especially online.

■ Focusing on negative portrayals, one tabloid (*Makeleio*) featured a provocative headline: "Gypsies Attack Cancer Patient Over Free Fuel; Attempted Hit-and-Run Caught on Camera". The article exemplifies sensationalist and biased reporting, highlighting a trend in media narratives. Such stories often portray Roma as culturally backward, intruders and disruptors, emphasising their ethnicity in crime reports and echoing stereotypes of criminal tendencies. This article could possibly be deemed to amount to hate speech, flagrantly violating journalistic deontology principles. Additionally, the user comments openly calling for the extermination of "Gypsies". The outlet not only allowed these hate-filled remarks but the article itself seemed to fuel them.³¹ Similar to the preceding article, a second *Makeleio* piece concerning the shooting of the 16-year-old Roma boy by a policeman contains incitement to violence in the comments, even as the boy's condition remained critical: "Now: chaos in Thessaloniki with the protesters. They set fire outside the Hippocratic Hospital for the 16-year-old Roma shot by a policeman – New serious clashes" (video).³²

■ A misleading headline from the regional *Agrinio* newspaper stated that "Roma groups scavenge under collapsed Patras Bridge" ("Roma groups remove scrap metal from underneath a bridge that collapsed in Patras"),

29. Available at www.esiea.gr/kodikas-deontologias/arxes-deontologias-dimosiografikoy/, accessed on 5 February 2024. This code aims to, among other things, "a. Treat citizens equally, without discrimination of national origin, gender, race, religion, political opinions, economic status, and social status ... c. Respect the presumption of innocence and not anticipate judicial decisions" (Article 2). The code further acknowledges that "The expansion of mass media and the globalization of communication have significantly increased the educational and cultural role of electronic and print media. With the additional responsibilities in these new conditions, the journalist is obligated to: a. Contribute to the enhancement of journalistic discourse by avoiding grammatical, syntactical, and lexical abuses; b. Avoid obscenity, vulgarity, and linguistic barbarity, adhering to the rules of professional ethics and social responsibility even in satire and caricature" (Article 7). The next article mentions that "Violations of these obligations are controlled by the two Disciplinary Councils, meeting in a joint meeting, until the Statute is amended, which will institutionally resolve the issue of the Supervisory Body of the Code".

30. Available at <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-first-report-on-greece-adopted-on-28-june-2022-published-on-22-se/1680a818bf>, accessed 5 February 2024.

31. See Information Note on the European Court of Human Rights case law 16 June 2015, *Delfi AS v. Estonia* [GC], Application No. 64569/09, Judgment 16 June 2015 [GC], Article 10, Freedom to impart information.

32. Video available at [Makeleio.gr](https://www.makeleio.gr), 5 December 2022.

whereas the article actually described Roma labourers working on the bridge at the time of its collapse.³³ Another report, ethically questionable, entitled “Roma loot flood victims’ homes”, was based solely on an unconfirmed TV interview, casting the Roma as unprincipled thieves without any factual backing (“Roma ragpickers looting the homes of flood victims”).³⁴ Additionally, two articles covering a Roma wedding portrayed the community as unusual and disrespectful of the law, emphasising eccentric customs and a perceived disregard for legal norms: “Gypsy wedding with 3 000 guests in Volos. Why the prosecutor intervened?” and “Roma wedding with 1 500 people in Volos – Why did the Hellenic police intervene?”.³⁵

■ Numerous articles negatively depict Roma in the context of unauthorised encampments, leading to local conflicts and portraying them as uncultured, rude and invasive occupants of Greek land.³⁶ Crime reporting often exacerbates this view, frequently highlighting the ethnicity of Roma suspects in headlines and throughout the articles, reinforcing stereotypes. Additionally, many crimes reports merely echo police statements without independent verification, perpetuating biases that link Roma to criminal activities like theft, fraud, physical assault and public disturbances.³⁷

■ Our research uncovered trending pieces on Roma, influenced by popular TV shows and a widely viewed TikTok video about Roma divorce customs.³⁸ Regrettably, these articles often perpetuate negative stereotypes and fail to adequately capture the community’s distinctiveness.³⁹ Additionally, we observed articles exploring Roma history, particularly following the unfortunate incident where a police officer fatally shot Fragoulis. These pieces typically portray the Roma as historically perceived as irresponsible dwellers in Greek regions, plagued by internal strife and perceived as demanding rights without fulfilling corresponding duties.⁴⁰

■ Our analysis included three negative narratives from opinion pieces: one from a liberal-leaning newspaper,⁴¹ another from a nationalistic right-wing publication⁴² and a third from a local Karditsa outlet.⁴³ Each article reinforced negative stereotypes about Roma, describing them as uneducated, unemployed, involved in drugs, aggressive, neglectful of children’s education and susceptible to electoral manipulation. These narratives suggest that Roma’s vulnerable position and lack of regulation might necessitate a less forceful yet coercive approach to their societal integration.

■ Regarding positive narratives, most are found in opinion pieces. An influential article on lifo.gr, entitled “Romaphobia: the last acceptable racism”, acts as an eye-opener, challenging social perceptions about Roma and other minorities.⁴⁴ RednBlack, a progressive site, offers a historical perspective on the Roma community’s enduring vulnerability within society.⁴⁵ Moreover, on the (rather conservative) Chronos site, the author sends a message that Roma, from the depths of history to the present day, deserve better treatment.⁴⁶ Chronos, leaning towards conservatism, features an article entitled “The Roma I met were neither happy nor criminals”, which refutes stereotypes, particularly in the context of Fragoulis’s murder, and criticises the mismanagement

33. Agriniopress.gr, 23 July 2023, available at www.agriniopress.gr/omades-roma-evgazan-paliosidera-kato-apo-ti-gefyra-poy-katerreyse-stin-patra-stin-patra/, accessed 9 October 2023.

34. koolnews.gr, 11 September 2023, available at www.koolnews.gr/mathane-pou-plimmyrisame-plakosane-ki-oi-gyftoi-pliatsiko-roma-se-spitia-plimmyropathon/, accessed 9 October 2023.

35. In.gr, 8 August 2023, available at www.in.gr/2023/08/08/greece/tsigganikos-gamos-3-000-kalesmenous-ston-volo-giati-epenevi-eisaggeleas/, accessed 14 August 2023, available at <https://thesstoday.gr/%CE%B3%CE%AC%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82-%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%AC-%CE%BC%CE%B5-1-500->, accessed 9 October 2023.

36. tribune.gr, 8 March 2023, available at www.tribune.gr/crime/news/article/848813/patra-gymnes-roma-se-koini-thea-oi-tsigganoi-kanoyin-o-ti-theloyin.html, accessed 10 October 2023 and piraepress.gr, 17 August 2023, available at <https://piraeuspress.gr/piraeus/fotoreportaz/578643/gyfti-ston-pirea-ekanan-megali-pediki-chara-tsantri-aplomena-roucha-slipingk-bagk-ich-choris-pinakides-foto/>, accessed 10 October 2023.

37. aftodioikisi.gr, 17 April 2023, available at www.aftodioikisi.gr/koinonia/pos-droysan-oi-tsigganoi-hackers-exapatoyan-akoma-kai-logistes/, accessed 10 October 2023.

38. “The unwritten laws in Roma societies”, featured in the show “Autopsy” on the Alpha channel in November 2021.

39. “Weddings in the world of the Roma: the ‘purifiers’, the ‘matchmakers’ and divorces via ... TikTok”, iefimerida.gr, 11 November 2022, available at www.iefimerida.gr/ellada/gamoi-kosmos-tsigganoi-katharistes-proxenites-diazgygia-tiktok, accessed 10 October 2023.

40. “The Roma/Gypsies of Thessaloniki”, prototheme.gr, 11 December 2022, available at www.protothema.gr/greece/article/1317154/oi-roma-tsigganoi-tis-thessalonikis/, accessed 10 October 2023.

41. “Gypsies/Roma must be integrated into society by any means”, liberal.gr, 8 December 2022, available at www.liberal.gr/politiki/oi-tsigganoi-prepei-na-entahthoyin-stin-koinonia-me-kathe-tropo, accessed 10 October 2023.

42. “The Roma Gypsies obtained citizenship”, e-synews.gr, 15 December 2022, available at www.e-synews.gr/2022/12/15/piran-ithageneia-oi-gyftoi-roma/, accessed 10 October 2023.

43. “The social integration of the Roma”, alithianews.gr, 11 December 2022, available at www.alithianews.gr/more/bitter-truth/10789-i-koinoniki-ensomatosi-ton-tsigganon, accessed 10 October 2023.

44. “Romanophobia is the last accepted racism”, lifo.gr, 6 December 2022, available at www.lifo.gr/stiles/daily/i-romafobia-einai-o-teleytaios-apodektos-ratsismos, accessed 10 October 2023.

45. “History of the Roma, Myths, Legends, and the Causes of Migration”, rednblack.gr, 2 April 2023, available at www.rednblack.gr/stiles/istoria-ton-roma/mythoi-thryloi-kai-ta-aitia-tis-metanastefsis/, accessed 10 October 2023.

46. “Roma population in Greece and abroad”, xronos.gr, 15 June 2023, available at <https://xronos.gr/arthra/oi-plithysmoi-roma-se-ellada-kai-exoteriko>, accessed 10 October 2023.

of European funds for Roma welfare.⁴⁷ Similarly, ARTInews presents an article asserting “The Roma, the Gypsy, the tzigane, are people like us”, highlighting the link between poverty and crime.⁴⁸ A left-leaning website’s historical report delves into the lesser-known Romani Holocaust, uncovering this hidden tragedy.⁴⁹

■ In Kathimerini, an article entitled “The ‘fragile lives’ of the Roma: ‘this is our opportunity to expose racism against us’” allows Roma voices to narrate their experiences post-Fragoulis’s death.⁵⁰ A report from the Ilia region, headlined “Roma in the region of Ilia struggle for their social inclusion”,⁵¹ provides a platform for responsible Roma individuals to discuss the problems they face and their challenges in achieving integration.⁵² Finally, an Epochi investigation reveals racist practices by public institutions and cites positive instances of Roma social integration in certain municipalities.⁵³

■ A distinguished journalist and ex-party leader, in an opinion piece, shares his insights and experiences related to the tragic police shooting of a young Roma boy. Similarly, an article in the Communist Party’s newspaper examines the integration policies for Roma in the USSR.⁵⁴ Notably, two upbeat reports feature the Roma community’s accomplishments: one highlighting Roma women’s success in launching the first Roma cuisine restaurant with governmental backing⁵⁵ and the other discussing challenges faced by youths attempting to start a Social Community Enterprise.⁵⁶

■ Further, two interviews detail the aspirations of and hurdles facing young Roma people striving for education and employment.⁵⁷ In a striking contrast, an interview in the entertainment section with a Roma model addresses experienced racism and underscores the bias evident in Fragoulis’s shooting.⁵⁸ Additionally, an interview with the director of a popular Greek TV series, depicting a Roma–non-Roma romance, illustrates how the show has been instrumental in dispelling stereotypes and reshaping public views.⁵⁹

■ In our study, a number of articles (see appendix) were deemed neutral. Coverage of a murder case included perspectives from the victim’s family and Roma community leaders. Entertainment-related articles showcased prominent Greek Roma personalities and TikTok influencers. Additionally, pieces covering demonstrations in areas unofficially inhabited by Roma, alongside social reports on community events, were noted. Several research articles in this category utilised data from the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Anti-Poverty to support their analyses.⁶⁰

47. “The Roma I met were neither happy nor criminals”, haniotika-nea.gr, 20 December 2022, available at www.haniotika-nea.gr/oi-tsigganoi-poy-gnorisa-oyte-eytychismenoi-alla-oyte-ki-egklimaties-itan/, accessed 10 October 2023.

48. Available at “The Roma, the Gypsy, the tzigane, are people like us”, artinews.gr, 8 April 2023, accessed 10 October 2023.

49. “The unknown Holocaust of the Roma by the Nazis”, tvxs.gr, 2 August 2023, available at <https://tvxs.gr/istoria/agnosto-olokaytoma-ton-roma-apo-toys-nazi/>, accessed 10 October 2023.

50. “The vulnerable life of the Roma is our opportunity to show racism against us”, kathimerini.gr, 10 December 2022, available at www.kathimerini.gr/society/562178839/i-eythraysti-zoi-ton-roma-einai-i-eykairia-mas-na-deixoyme-ton-ratsismo-enantion-mas/, accessed 10 October 2023.

51. “We are not Roma, we are Gypsies”, tovima.gr, 3 March 2023, available at www.tovima.gr/print/society/den-eimaste-crroma-eimastecr-tsigganoi/, accessed 10 October 2023.

52. “The Roma of Ilia struggle for social inclusion”, patrisnews.com, 24 December 2022, available at www.patrisnews.com/oi-roma-tis-ileias-agonizontai-gia-koinoniki-entaxi/, accessed 10 October 2023.

53. “Ghettoisation and state violence against the Roma”, epohi.gr, 9 July 2023, available at www.epohi.gr/article/46723/gketopoihshekai-kratikh-via-kata-ton-tsigganon, accessed 10 October 2023.

54. “Scapegoat for heavy-handed state suppression”, rizospastis.gr, 10 December 2022, available at www.rizospastis.gr/page.do?publD ate=10/12/2022&id=18866&pageNo=24, accessed 10 October 2023.

55. “Visitors taste Roma cuisine at a women’s Roma restaurant”, voria.gr, 4 February 2023, available at www.voria.gr/article/thessaloniki-geyseis-apo-tsigganiki-koyzina-piran-oi-episkeptes-se-estiatorio-roma-gynaikon, accessed 10 October 2023.

56. “Fighting youth Roma gangs in Kordelio”, parallaximag.gr, 30 March 2023, available at <https://parallaximag.gr/thessaloniki-news/polemontas-tin-koinsep-ton-nearon-tsigganon-sto-kordelio>, accessed 10 October 2023.

57. “The 18-year-old Taxiarchis looks for work but he’s Roma”, stonisi.gr, 21 February 2023, available at www.stonisi.gr/post/51530/o-18xronos-taksiarxhs-psaxnei-gia-doyleia-alla-einai-roma-video; and “Irene, the Roma woman who went to university”, rodiaki.gr, 12 July 2023, available at www.rodiaki.gr/article/497353/h-eirnhh-h-tsiggana-apo-ton-kataylismo-toy-korakoneroy-poy-phge-sto-panepisthmio-kai-teleiwse-thn-panteio, accessed 10 October 2023.

58. “Thanos Dimitriou from GNTM on the shooting of the 16-year-old”, tlife.gr, 11 December 2022, available at www.tlife.gr/eidhseis-nea/media/thanos-dimitriou-GNTM-gia-ton-pyrovolisimo-tou-16xronou-roma-an-den-itan-tsigganos-mporei-na-min-pyrovoulouse/1360467/, accessed 10 October 2023.

59. “Who is interested in the Roma people?”, cretalive.gr, 13 March 2023, available at www.cretalive.gr/lifestyle/manosyos-manosyakis-poiros-endiaferetai-gia-toys-tsigganoys, accessed 10 October 2023.

60. “Greek Roma are making fuzz on TikTok”, in2life.gr, 3 March 2023, available at www.in2life.gr/article/2001365/oi-ellhnes-romakanoy-namo-sto-tiktok; “14 famous Greeks with Gypsy heritage”, stereaeconomy.gr, 7 June 2023; “Roma have set up camps along the coastline”, cretalive.gr, 11 August 2023, available at www.cretalive.gr/kriti/roma-ehoy-n-kataskinosai-kata-mikos-tis-paraliakis-giati-erhontai-stin-kriti; “Protests against Roma settlement in common spaces”, ermisnews.gr, 21 June 2023, available at <https://ermisnews.gr/diamartyries-gia-tin-egkatastasi-roma-se-koinochristous-chorous-tis-polis/>; “The revival of the Ederlezi tradition by the Roma in Amaliada”, proini.gr, 25 April 2023, available at <https://proini.news/anaviose-to-enterlezi-apo-tous-roma-stin-amaliada/>; “How many Roma are there in Greece today, settlements, ages, and living conditions?”, protothema.gr, 1 May 2023, available at www.protothema.gr/stories/article/1365958/roma-posoi-einai-stin-ellada-simera-oi-oikismoi-tous-oi-ilikiies-kai-oi-sunthikes-diaviosis/, accessed 10 October 2023.

■ The media depiction of Roma in Greece presents a multifaceted picture, ranging from outright hate speech to subtler forms of negative stereotyping, alongside narratives celebrating Roma individuals' achievements and insightful analyses of their societal exclusion. Greek legal and ethical frameworks aim to combat hate speech and discrimination in the press, with specific regulations promoting responsible journalism. Yet, the impact of these regulations hinges on their rigorous application by both authorities and media practitioners. A common theme in Greek media is the portrayal of Roma integration as a seemingly insurmountable challenge, subtly suggesting a perpetual state of societal stagnation, rather than explicit insults.

■ The more profound issue here is not overt hate speech, which indeed occurs, especially in unchecked online comments, but rather the insidious persistence of such biased narratives. Despite these challenges, the Greek press does feature stories that empower Roma voices, address their struggles and highlight the need for greater social integration. Neutral reporting, offering a more balanced perspective, also exists.

■ The debate over balancing free expression with journalistic responsibility continues in Greek media circles. To this end, training and awareness campaigns for journalists are vital. These efforts are particularly crucial given that many problematic reports stem not from malintent but from a misplaced sense of empathy, ultimately proving counterproductive.

Italy

Summary of the national legal and regulatory framework

■ The Italian legal system provides a robust framework of guarantees to protect individual fundamental rights comprehensively, including in the written press.

■ Although the Italian Constitution of 1948 establishes the fundamental elements and principles governing the legal system in Italy, there is no legal definition of hate crime. The definition generally used as reference⁶¹ is the one provided by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, according to which⁶² hate crime is a criminal act committed against an individual and/or property associated with him/her motivated by a prejudice the perpetrator has towards the victim based on a "protected characteristic" of the latter.

■ To be considered a hate crime, the offence must meet two criteria: first, the act must constitute an offence under criminal law (a "base crime"); second, the act must have been motivated by bias against the person chosen as a "target".⁶³

■ Nonetheless, Italy has several rules on the protection of human rights and on the principles of dignity and equality of all human beings, as enshrined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic, as well as within the explicit reference made by Article 117, paragraph 1, to the requirements of EU legislation and international obligations.⁶⁴

■ The first law within the Italian legal system dealing with racial discrimination, although incidentally, is Law 645/1952, which implemented the constitution, forbidding the reorganisation of the dissolved Fascist Party and any sort of racist propaganda.

■ The first Italian criminal law provision specifically countering racism was introduced into the Italian criminal system later on, by Article 3 of the above-mentioned Law 654/1975 ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

■ The relevant offences, which have been amended several times over the years, are currently defined in Article 604 *bis* of the Criminal Code (in compliance with Legislative Decree 21/2018).

61. Source: OSCAD Observatory/State Police.

62. See ODIHR's [efforts to counter hate crime](#).

63. That is the reason why hate crimes are also defined as target crimes or message crimes, because they are crimes with a specific target and the perpetrator intends to send through them a message of non-acceptance of that person and of the community, he/she belongs to.

64. Within the framework of these international obligations certainly there is the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (albeit without binding legal effects); the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the Convention, *inter alia* Article 14); the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Within the EU legal system, as primary law, there is Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union; Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. As EU secondary law, there is the EU Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA (on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law) and Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime). The latter led to the introduction into the Italian legal system of the crime of denial (current Article 604 *bis*, paragraph 3 of the Criminal Code) and of the "condition of particular vulnerability" of the victim (Article 90 *quarter* of the Code of Criminal Procedure).

Article 604 *bis* of Criminal Code (“Propaganda and incitement to commit crimes of discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin and religion”) criminalises all conduct envisaged in Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: disseminating ideas based on racial superiority or hatred; inciting to commit or committing racially motivated acts of discrimination or of violence; promoting, directing, participating, supporting racist organisations or groups). Furthermore, paragraph 3 of Article 604 *bis* of the Criminal Code punishes denialist conduct, as provided for by Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA.

Furthermore, Law 205/1993 introduced, among other things, punishing external manifestations and the display of fascist emblems and symbols (Article 2); requiring the precautionary suspension and the dissolution of racist associations/groups (Article 7); and, in particular, introducing a special aggravating circumstance – to be prosecuted also *ex officio* (Article 6) – for all crimes committed for racist motives or to facilitate the activities of racist associations/groups (which in reality means that if a crime is aggravated by these additional circumstances, the sentence can be increased by up to half). Such an aggravating circumstance cannot be reduced with any concurring mitigating circumstances (except for when the offender is a minor).

Legislative Decree 21/2018, known as the “Mancino aggravating circumstance” (formerly Article 3 of the law) has become Article 604 *ter* of the Criminal Code).

The criminal provisions highlighted so far punish discrimination offences based on race, ethnicity, national origin and religion, but, as outlined above, there are further “protected characteristics” of the victim that may constitute grounds for discrimination (for instance disability). The current criminal legal framework does not cover crimes committed on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. The homophobic/transphobic motivation of a crime has sometimes attracted the application of the aggravating circumstance of the “base motives” (Article 61, paragraph 1.1, of the Criminal Code).

With this in mind, some Italian NGOs⁶⁵ have observed that despite the strong protection of the right to freedom of expression and equality within Italian law, the legal framework on “hate speech” may not fully comply with international human rights standards. In particular since the protected characteristics (strictly listed by criminal law) with respect to the most serious forms of “hate speech” are limited to race, ethnic origin, nationality or religion.⁶⁶

From an institutional point of view it should be noted that two equality institutions play an important role in countering “hate speech” in Italy through monitoring and positive measures. These are the National Office against Racial Discrimination (UNAR) and the Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination (OSCAD). UNAR’s tasks include assisting victims of discrimination, receiving and monitoring complaints, promoting research in the area, running training courses, campaigning and reporting annually to the parliament and the government. OSCAD also receives discrimination complaints.⁶⁷ UNAR and OSCAD exchange information and data on hate crimes and have previously organised joint training activities and awareness-raising campaigns.

With regard to the press, the overall regulation is constituted by the fundamental law (Article 21 of the constitution on freedom of expression) and by specific laws. The first specific law concerning the press is Law No. 47/1948⁶⁸ in which Article 1 defines what the press is and within the subsequent articles establishes the rules on liability,⁶⁹ duties and obligations. Subsequently, Law No. 416/1981⁷⁰ introduced the “regulation of

65. See, *inter alia*, www.article19.org/issue/equality-and-hate-speech.

66. Proposals to expand these protected categories have stalled in parliament. There is a similar stalemate regarding the provision within the Criminal Code of the “prohibition of incitement” applied to incitement to hatred (in compliance with international standards). Furthermore, criticism is linked to the fact that the Italian authorities still apply “defamation” provisions in cases of “hate speech”, as the purpose of defamation laws was to protect individuals from false statements that cause harm to reputation, in a manner detached from the element of “hate”. It is also argued that cases of “incitement to hatred” should be distinguished. Some NGOs in Italy recall the need for journalists’ organisations to regularly organise training courses and updates for professional journalists and trainees on internationally binding human rights standards on hate speech and freedom of expression and related ethical codes of conduct; and to ensure that ethical codes of conduct on hate speech are effectively implemented, widely publicised and internalised in order to guarantee full compliance, providing sanctions for violations of the codes.

67. Since 2014, OSCAD has been drawing up a report for the Public Security Department on the annual collection of data on hate crimes by the OSCE, forwarding the official data of the Investigation System of the Interagency Data Processing Centre on discriminatory offences provided for by the law, namely crimes on the grounds of race/ethnicity, nationality and religious belief as well as those committed against members of national linguistic minorities and disabled people (application of the aggravating circumstances provided for by Article 36 of Law No. 104/92).

68. “Provisions on the press” (OJ General Series No. 43 of 20 February 1948), available at www.gazzettaufficiale.it/atto/serie_generale/caricaDettaglioAtto/originario?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=1948-02-20&atto.codiceRedazionale=048U0047&elenco30giorni=false, accessed 5 February 2024.

69. Article 11 on civil liability (now ruled by Article 694 of the Criminal Procedural Code) and Article 13 of Law No. 47/1948 on penalties for defamation.

70. Published in the Official Journal No. 215 on 6 August 1981, available at www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:1948-02-08;47;vig=www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1981/08/06/081U0416/sg, accessed 5 February 2024.

publishing companies and contributions for publishing”.⁷¹ Law No. 67/1987 established the Renewal of Law No. 416/1981, which regulates publishing companies and contributions for publishing, amending some articles of Law No. 416/1981, while the subsequent regulations mainly concern financial issues and editorial support.

■ With regard to the regulation of the press the updated 2016 Ethical Code of Conduct of Journalists, approved by the National Press Council, includes among the fundamental duties of the journalistic profession the duty to respect “the rights and dignity of sick people or people with mental, physical, intellectual or sensorial disabilities”. The code also incorporates the Charter of Rome,⁷² a specific code of conduct for journalists who write on immigration and asylum-related themes. However, the disciplinary sanctions for violations of the code are rarely applied by the competent supervising bodies, causing widespread criticism of their effectiveness as a deterrent.

■ The code of conduct of the Institute of Advertising Self-Regulation (IAP) does not include any explicit reference to “hate speech”. However, it establishes that all commercial communications must not offend “moral, civil and religious convictions” and “must avoid all sorts of discrimination, including gender-related”.

■ The association Carta di Roma⁷³ seeks to be a stable reference point for those who work on a daily basis with the media on issues concerning minorities: journalists, media operators and various institutions, associations and activists involved in promoting and supporting the rights of asylum seekers, refugees, minorities and migrants in the field of media reporting. It has established a network of journalists “Carta di Roma advocates” within the editorial staff who serve as points of contact when violations occur, and who encourage proactive engagement among their colleagues.

■ The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs mentioned the Carta di Roma as an example of best practice at the EU level during the round table event “Migrants in the Media” on 14 October 2013.

■ Selected findings from the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, in its Fifth Opinion on Italy, published in 2023,⁷⁴ show that:

21. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to condemn promptly and publicly instances of hate crimes, as well as hate speech relating to minorities, migrants or refugees in political discourse, the media and on social media.

97. The image and portrayal of Roma and Sinti remains highly negative in the general perception in Italy as confirmed by various studies and surveys.

98. Despite a change in language promoted at national level, Roma and Sinti representatives reported that the outdated and stereotyping terms “nomads” (“nomadi”) or “nomad camps” (“campi nomadi”) are still often used in public discourse and in the media, including social media, despite the fact it is considered by members of these communities as stigmatising.

100. Roma and Sinti representatives reported a persisting level of antigypsyism in society and expressed concerns about statements made by public officials strengthening negative stereotypes affecting their communities in society which have a harmful effect on public opinion.

106. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to adopt legislative and more targeted measures, including awareness-raising campaigns, to prevent, counteract and effectively sanction the persisting antigypsyism in society, with a particular focus on social media. Furthermore, the authorities should carefully monitor terminology used to refer to Roma and Sinti or their place of residence and ensure that derogatory, stigmatising and inappropriate language is no longer used in practice.

■ The Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, in Resolution CM/ResCMN(2023) on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Italy:⁷⁵

7. condemn promptly and publicly instances of hate crimes, as well as hate speech relating to minorities, migrants or refugees in political discourse, the media and on social media;

8. adopt legislative and more targeted measures, including awareness-raising campaigns, to prevent, counteract and effectively sanction the persisting antigypsyism in society, with a particular focus on social media; furthermore, carefully monitor terminology used to refer to Roma and Sinti or their place of residence and ensure that derogatory, stigmatising and inappropriate language is no longer used in practice.

71. *Inter alia*, by Article 42. It modified Article 8 of Law No. 47 of 8 December 1948 on the right of rectification.

72. See [Charter of Rome](#) and [Guidelines for the application of the Rome Charter: a working tool for accurate media coverage on migration and asylum](#).

73. The association Carta di Roma was founded in December 2011 with the goal of implementing the Journalist’s Code of Conduct on immigration, signed by the National Council of Journalists (CNOG) and the National Federation of the Italian Press (FNSI) in June 2008.

74. See www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/italy.

75. See [CM/ResCMN\(2023\)](#).

Analysis

After analysing more than 34 randomly selected press articles published between 1 October 2022 and 30 October 2023, several themes and patterns emerged regarding the representation of Roma in the Italian press. The majority of material analysed within the selected randomised group of articles concerns news within cultural, political and social contexts.

First, it is important to recognise that in contrast to broadcast media, print journalism does not predominantly feature negative stereotypes of Roma. Print journalists generally seem better trained or more committed to avoiding cultural biases and ethnic labels. However, it is noteworthy that our analysis of the articles reveals a lack of representation from Roma artists or highly educated Roma individuals as commentators. Interviews, when conducted, are predominantly with individuals connected to criminal activities. Moreover, the diversity in social roles among Roma citizens remains under-represented. The media focus tends to be narrow and is often on the treatment of minors and women within some Roma families, or on showcasing either the affluence or the extreme poverty and dilapidated living conditions of Roma settlements.

It is significant to note the presence of numerous active Roma associations across the nation, whose efforts to promote women's empowerment, educational advancement, community inclusion and especially job placement seldom receive media attention. Representatives of these associations are also rarely consulted for their viewpoints on socially relevant issues. While sensationalism in headlines is not uncommon,⁷⁶ overtly discriminatory content within the articles appears to be less frequent compared with the broadcast media sector.

Readers will encounter articles where Roma individuals are distinctly portrayed either as perpetrators⁷⁷ or victims⁷⁸ of crimes and discrimination. While these articles often discuss ethnicity, culture, habits and customs, they generally avoid overtly discriminatory overtones. Nonetheless, there remains a noticeable number of articles emphasising criminal⁷⁹ and health⁸⁰ concerns associated with informal Roma settlements,⁸¹ evident in both print and online journalism.⁸²

What particularly emerges from our analysis is the clustering of articles around International Roma Day. Contrasting with those pieces commemorating the day by spotlighting Roma history,⁸³ culture and their current⁸⁴ and historical suffering,⁸⁵ there has been a noticeable increase in articles focusing on negative aspects

76. "Ndrangheta: ... New blow to the 'gypsy clan' in the Sibaritide ... The investigation has decimated the Abbruzzese gang", 30 June 2023, available at www.corriere.it/cronache/23_giugno_30/ndrangheta-blitz-sibaritide-decapitato-clan-abbruzzese-c7ea602a-1720-11ee-9d3b-d6c83e3af955.shtml, accessed 16 October 2023.

77. "The nightmare of a 13-year-old Roma girl: 'forced into prostitution by her grandmother, 400 euros for an hour with her'", 17 December 2022, available at "L'incubo di una bambina rom di 13 anni: 'Costretta a prostituirsi dalla nonna, 400 euro per un'ora con lei'" (leggo.it), accessed 16 October 2023; also see: "Pickpockets in Milan, who they are and where they come from: 'Italy is a paradise!'. In the city one arrest per day (The residence often refers to Rome, but they are permanent in Milan. The system: the women steal, the men organise 'batteries' of thieves, manage and divide the earnings)", 16 March 2023, available at https://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/23_marzo_16/borseggiatrici-chi-sono-e-da-dove-vengono-l-italia-e-un-paradiso-a-milano-un-arresto-al-giorno-319506e4-c34b-11ed-af09-a18a8fb0afbe.shtml, accessed 16 October 2023.

78. "Omerovic case, the shocking interceptions of the agents: 'Let's stop, or the wave of s*** will submerge us all' (After the arrest of agent Andrea Pellegrini for torture, four other policemen ended up in the register of suspects)", 17 February 2023, available at "Caso Omerovic, le intercettazioni choc degli agenti: 'Pariamoci, o l'onda di m*** ci sommergerà tutti'" (leggo.it), accessed 15 October 2023.

79. "Rome, policemen attacked in Roma camps. The Municipality's move: 'Now stop the checks'. On Sunday a group of agents attacked in front of the Roma barracks in Via Salviati. Councilor Funari sent a letter to Angeloni to suspend the censuses", 17 January 2023, available at www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/tiburtino/roma_aggressione_rom_vigili_cosa_e_successo-7172028.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

80. "Roma settlements 'unusable' among broken sewers and landfills. Five million for making them safe", 12 October 2023, available at www.virgilio.it/italia/roma/notizielocali/campi_rom_inagibili_tra_fogne_rotte_e_discariche_cinque_milioni_per_la_messa_in_sicurezza-72115851.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

81. "Roma stones thrown against buses in via Candoni. And councillor Patané blurts out: 'That camp needs to be moved'. Three new cars were damaged in the area of the nomads' camp", 8 January 2023, available at www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/portuense/polemiche_e_sempre_piu_urgente_arrivare_alla_delocalizzazione-7154728.html, accessed 16 October 2023.

82. "Girl abused by her father in the Roma settlement since she was 8 years old, but no one believes her. (In the courtroom the girl's mother, grandmother and a friend denied the accusations", 26-28 September 2023, available at www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/metropoli/ragazza_violentata_padre_campo_rom_nessuno_le_crede-7655748.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

83. "World Roma Day: 'Hatred and prejudices of the xenophobic right, an evil to be eradicated'", 8 April 2023, available at www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/04/08/news/giornata_rom_contro_pregiudizi-395397219/, accessed 15 October 2023.

84. "The defamatory campaign against the Roma people. Roma pickpockets and do-it-yourself justice: nothing but inclusion, in Italy the hate campaign against 'gypsies", 8 April 2023, available at www.ilriformista.it/borseggiatrici-rom-e-giustizia-fai-da-te-altro-che-inclusione-in-italia-la-campagna-dodio-conto-gli-zingari-351697/, accessed 15 October 2023.

85. "Racism even more cruel than the prejudice that leads to discrimination against blacks. Roma pickpockets, the hunt for 'gypsies' with the excuse of humanitarian reason: Italian investigative journalism", 7 April 2023, available at www.ilriformista.it/borseggiatrici-rom-la-caccia-alle-zingaracce-con-la-scusa-della-ragione-umanitaria-il-giornalismo-dinchiesta-italiano-351560/, accessed 15 October 2023.

of the Roma image⁸⁶ or the fiscal implications of welfare and inclusion programmes for Roma.⁸⁷ Critically, this might imply that even brief periods dedicated to improving the Roma minority's image are rarely unmarred by negative reporting. Alternatively, this could simply reflect heightened media interest in Roma issues around this significant date.

It is, however, crucial to recognise the existence of balanced, non-discriminatory and culturally or socially focused articles depicting Roma in positive or neutral tones throughout the year, irrespective of specific occasions or seasons.

Among the favourable articles, some underscore the significance of inclusive⁸⁸ plans⁸⁹ and policies,⁹⁰ shining a light on various initiatives⁹¹ in this regard.⁹² Others highlight the cultural or religious dimensions and activities related to the Roma community, offering a counter-narrative⁹³ to prevailing negative stereotypes. Additionally, there are pieces that effectively expose the populist⁹⁴ and demagogic⁹⁵ tactics⁹⁶ prevalent in television talk shows. These articles present accurate statistics of the Roma population both nationally and locally, emphasising that certain criminal activities, often wrongly seen as exclusive to the Roma, are in fact similarly perpetrated by both Italian nationals and non-EU citizens. Furthermore, some articles critically examine politicians and television journalists, holding them accountable for racist or discriminatory rhetoric and actions for political gain.

Other commendable articles feature voices from individuals, associations and organisations⁹⁷ that call out⁹⁸ discrimination against Roma by persons or institutions,⁹⁹ addressing issues like housing and educational

86. "Roma settlements 'unusable' among broken sewers and landfills. Five million for making them safe", 12 October 2023, available at www.virgilio.it/italia/roma/notizielocali/campi_rom_inagibili_tra_fogne_rotte_e_discariche_cinque_milioni_per_la_messa_in_sicurezza-72115851.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

87. "Social services: Sicily spends one hundred euros less per person than the north. Welfare is a particularly burdensome expense item for the municipalities, which covered over 68% of the costs in 2020. But the differences between north and south are enormous, underlines an Istat study. And in Sicily more than average expenditure under the heading 'Immigrants, Roma, Sinti and Caminanti'", 12 April 2023, available at <https://focusicilia.it/servizi-sociali-la-sicilia-spende-cento-euro-a-persona-in-meno-rispetto-al-nord/>, accessed 16 October 2023.

88. "Plastic free returns to Reggio with the integration project for Roma children (Two events of the association in blue which returns to raise awareness among citizens about plastic pollution and waste)", 29 August 2023, available at www.citynow.it/reggio-calabria-2-6-settembre-plastic-free-torna-azione-pellaro-arghilla/, accessed 15 October 2023.

89. "COMO – The star Luciana Savignano and the Bausch dance high school pay homage to the 'saint' of the French Roma", 10 July 2023, available at www.malpensaews.it/2023/07/letoile-luciana-savignano-e-il-liceo-coreutico-bausch-omaggiano-la-santa-dei-rom-francesi/889439/, accessed 15 October 2023.

90. "Inclusion Strategy 2020-30' EU Commission: antigypsyism and anti-Roma racism persist in Europe. Recommendations to Member States", 9 January 2023, available at [Commissione Ue: in Europa persistono antiziganismo e razzismo antirom. Le raccomandazioni agli Stati membri, AgenSI](https://www.commissioneue.it/en/In Europa persistono antiziganismo e razzismo antirom. Le raccomandazioni agli Stati membri, AgenSI), accessed 16 October 2023.

91. "Beauty and humanity erased: power does this with gypsies and with every community on the margins", 18-21 October 2022, available at www.corriere.it/sette/opinioni/22_novembre_18/bellezza-umanita-cancellate-potere-fa-cosi-gli-zingari-ogni-comunita-margini-15f939d8-6585-11ed-9758-a021e00ba84b.shtml, accessed 16 October 2023.

92. "Roma culture will be taught at school: it happens in Sala's Milan – as part of the mega-project for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti communities financed with almost 3 million, the training of teachers who will have to teach children to be 'against stereotypes'", 9 September 2022, available at www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/nella-milano-sala-scuola-si-insegner-cultura-rom-2065226.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

93. "Tano D'Amico, the autumn of the Roma people – interview. The author tells 'Orphans of the Wind. The autumn of the gypsies'", from Mimesis Edizioni, 10 December 2022, available at <https://ilmanifesto.it/tano-damico-lautunno-del-popolo-rom>, accessed 15 October 2023.

94. "The statements of the Northern League leader. The 'fight against the gypsy plague' is the same as what Hitler did", 25 March 2023, available at www.ilriformista.it/la-lotta-alla-piaga-zingara-e-la-stessa-che-fece-hitler-349699/, accessed 16 October 2023.

95. "The proposal on children in prison – pickpockets on the Milan subway, because the right is calling for a law against Roma that violates the law", 25 March 2023, available at www.ilriformista.it/borseggiatrici-della-metropolitana-di-milano-perche-la-destra-chiede-una-legge-contro-i-rom-che-viola-il-diritto-349691/, accessed 15 October 2023.

96. "Beauty and humanity erased: power does this with gypsies and with every community on the margins", 18-21 November 2022, available at www.corriere.it/sette/opinioni/22_novembre_18/bellezza-umanita-cancellate-potere-fa-cosi-gli-zingari-ogni-comunita-margini-15f939d8-6585-11ed-9758-a021e00ba84b.shtml, accessed 16 October 2023.

97. "The UN condemns the Italian police forces: 'Too many episodes of racism, Parliament should intervene' (The UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination said it was 'concerned by the numerous reports on the widespread use of profiling racial discrimination by Italian law enforcement'. For this reason, the committee recommended that Italy pass a law to ban these practices", 12 September 2023, available at www.fanpage.it/politica/lonu-condanna-le-forze-dellordine-italiane-troppi-episodi-di-razzismo-intervenga-il-parlamento/, accessed 16 October 2023.

98. "Beware of the gypsies!": shock announcement on the 'A' metro reported on Twitter. Measures for the operator. Journalist Francesca Mannocchi denounces the story on social media and Atac tracks down the person responsible: 'Unacceptable offence', 10 March 2023, available at https://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/23_marzo_10/attenti-agli-zingari-attenti-agli-zingari-annuncio-choc-sulla-metro-a-denunciato-su-twitter-provvedimenti-per-l-operatore-71c5093f-aa49-4652-a014-383572cc8xlk.shtml, accessed 15 October 2023.

99. "Watch out for the gypsies! The incredible announcement in the Rome metro. (After the complaint on Twitter, Atac takes action against the author of the warning made over the loudspeaker)", 10 March 2023, available at www.ildubbio.news/cronache/attenti-agli-zingari-lincredibile-annuncio-nella-metro-di-roma-hdg7dnai, accessed 15 October 2023.

marginalisation.¹⁰⁰ These pieces also report on legal judgments against hate crime offenders, including politicians,¹⁰¹ thereby delineating for readers the fine line between free speech and hate speech. While these represent commendable journalistic practices, there remains a notable deficiency in the media's promotion of existing initiatives and strategies aimed at countering antigypsyism.

It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of articles that can be characterised as neutral – those that report on incidents where stereotyping or immediate ethnic identification of criminals¹⁰² as Roma¹⁰³ might be tempting, yet the journalist, adhering to ethical codes, refrains from mentioning the social group's affiliation. This restraint is evident in instances where, although the reporting might involve a Roma settlement (a fugitive passing through it, for example), the journalist avoids presuming the fugitive's association¹⁰⁴ with the settlement's residents. Similarly, in cases where a criminal is identified as residing in a Roma camp, the journalist carefully avoids labelling the individual's ethnicity or group membership, focusing instead on the factual elements of the crime, such as repeated escapes to the settlement post-robberies.

This final observation is pivotal, highlighting that the narrative style chosen by journalists significantly influences readers' perceptions and the portrayal of individuals featured in their stories.

From this viewpoint, it is noteworthy that the portrayal of similar themes, such as wealth accumulation among the Roma, varies in its narrative approach. For instance, an article neutrally reported a crime against Roma individuals involving the desecration of a grave to steal jewellery, merely referencing the Roma funeral custom.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, similar situations involving non-Roma subjects were narrated with a discriminatory bias. This suggests an underlying prejudice wherein Roma wealth is newsworthy primarily because it contradicts the stereotypical image of Roma either living in poverty and poor sanitary conditions or, paradoxically, possessing lavish wealth through criminal activities.

Among the examples analysed, one of the most egregious is an article that exhibits severe implicit discrimination despite using technically correct language.¹⁰⁶ This piece, focusing on a Roma individual owning luxury property in an affluent area of northern Italy, subtly implies wrongdoing. The article draws a parallel to similar estates in the region historically owned by notorious criminals, insinuating a dubious connection. Remarkably, the report fails to clarify whether the affluent Roma property owner is an artist, footballer, entrepreneur or indeed involved in criminal activities. This omission subtly reinforces a deep-seated discriminatory bias, even without explicitly derogatory terminology.

100. "Being Roma at the Radice institute is a pathology", Marino's complaint. (The president of the Un mondo di mondo association highlights the critical issues that emerged from the school's self-evaluation report", 29 March 2023, available at www.reggiotoday.it/cronaca/scuola-rom-istituto-radice-alighieri-marino.html, accessed 16 October 2023.

101. "Turin defined the Roma as 'ticks, piranha bait'. For the Court of Cassation, the Northern League member Povo's invectives are 'discriminatory' (Asgi dragged the former Ivrea councillor to court: 'We are satisfied'. At first instance and on appeal the judges had recognised Povo's 'freedom of expression", 27 May 2023, available at https://torino.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/23_maggio_27/torino-defini-i-rom-zecche-esche-per-piranha-per-la-cassazione-le-invettive-della-leghista-povo-sono-discriminatorie-0fb4ad73-7aaf-4db2-bc6d-97ef5021cxlk.shtml, accessed 15 October 2023.

102. "Milan, the pickpocket with nine children: 'I earn up to 1 000 euros a day from thefts, but I feel guilty'. Milan, the confessions of a 29-year-old who mugs metro passengers. 'I learned the trade at 13, one of my sisters preferred to study and today she has a job. For me it's too late. Prison? I don't risk anything", 17 March 2023, available at https://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/23_marzo_17/borseggiatrice-milano-1-000-euro-giorno-37e31f66-343d-4423-acd8-6ac485135xlk.shtml, accessed 16 October 2023. The article does not report the facts in a politically correct way but, although it mentions the criminal's origin from Bosnia, it does not identify him ethnically as a Roma or Gypsy.

103. "Rome, they rob the Romanina pharmacy and flee to the Roma camp. The police car was hit. Two local officers injured. The bandits tracked down and reported by the men of the Flying Squad", 9 November 2022, available at www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/tuscolana/rapina_farmacia_romanina_campo_rom_auto_vigili-7040281.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

104. "Rome, hunt for a gang of thieves: the film-like escape in the Roma camp. The gang intercepted by a police car was aboard a recently stolen car", 15 October 2022, available at www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/news/ladri_fuga_campo_rom_roma-6989747.html, accessed 15 October 2023.

105. "Thieves dig up a coffin in the cemetery to steal 5 kg of jewels buried with the body. The theft in Rome. The custom of burying bodies with precious objects is very widespread in the Roma community", 7 January 2023, available at www.ilmessaggero.it/roma/cassia/bara_gioielli_cimitero_riesumata_roma_prima_porta_furto_ladri-7154298.html, accessed 15 October 2023; see also "The Roma tomb desecrated by thieves: 'There were five kilos of gold in the coffin'. Family jewels stolen", 9 January 2023, available at "La tomba rom profanata dai ladri: 'Nella bara c'erano cinque chili d'oro'. Rubati i gioielli di famiglia" (leggo.it), accessed 15 October 2023.

106. "The Roma's luxury villa overlooking Lake Garda ends up for sale. The villa, owned by some citizens of the Roma ethnic group, appeared on several real estate advertisements, for sale for just over a million euros. It is a valuable property", 8 November 2022, available at https://brescia.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/23_febbraio_05/villa-rom-vista-lago-garda-finisce-vendita-0848d1a0-a49f-11ed-a9a2-20247d5f06f9.shtml, accessed 15 October 2023.

Summary of the national legal and regulatory framework

■ In Romania, the relevant national legal and regulatory framework regulating the written press includes the Constitution of Romania (Articles 30 and 31),¹⁰⁷ Law No. 19/2003 on the organisation and functioning of the National Press Agency AGERPRES,¹⁰⁸ the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, international treaties to which Romania is a party, the Copyright Law, the Law on Access to Public Interest Information, the Emergency Ordinance on the Prohibition of Organisations and Symbols with Fascist, Racist or Xenophobic Character and on Promoting the Cult of Personalities Guilty of Committing Crimes Against Peace and Humanity,¹⁰⁹ the Unified Deontological Code¹¹⁰ and the Code of the Romanian Press Club.

■ Furthermore, the Romanian Anti-discrimination Law prohibits and sanctions all forms of discrimination and provides for the protection of human dignity¹¹¹ and specifically sanctions the infringement of the right not to be discriminated against and the violation of personal dignity.¹¹² Equally, the law prohibits harassment and defines this form of discrimination as:

any behaviour based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social category, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, belonging to a disadvantaged category, age, disability, refugee or asylum seeker status or any other criterion that leads to the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive framework.¹¹³

■ The Romanian Criminal Code prohibits incitement to hatred or discrimination in the context of the previous Article 317 that has been amended by Law No. 286/2009 and incorporated in Article 369.¹¹⁴ In 2022, the provision of Article 369 was further amended by law¹¹⁵ to be better aligned with the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA.¹¹⁶ Currently, the legal provision states that:

inciting the public, by any means, to violence, hatred or discrimination against a category of people or against a person on the grounds that they are part of a certain category of people defined on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, opinion or political affiliation, wealth, social origin, age, disability, chronic non-contagious disease or HIV/Aids infection, considered by the perpetrator as causes of a person's inferiority in relation to others, is punishable by imprisonment from 6 months to 3 years or with a fine.

■ Last, Law No. 2/2021¹¹⁷ concerns measures for preventing and combating antigypsyism, regulating penal liability for promoting, in public and in any way, antigypsyism ideas, conceptions or doctrines¹¹⁸ and for distributing or making available to the public, by any means, antigypsyism material.¹¹⁹

107. "Articolul 30 – Libertatea de exprimare", Constituția României, available at www.constitutiaromaniei.ro/art-30-libertatea-de-exprimare, accessed 31 October 2023.

108. "Legislație", AGERPRES, available at www.agerpres.ro/corporate/legislatie, accessed 31 October 2023.

109. Legislative act ID 35293, Camera Deputaților, Romania, available at www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htm_act?id=35293, accessed 31 October 2023.

110. "Codul Deontologic Unificat adoptat de COM în octombrie 2009", Centrul pentru Jurnalism Independent, available at <https://cji.ro/codul-deontologic-unificat-adoptat-de-com-in-octombrie-2009/>, accessed 31 October 2023.

111. Governmental Ordinance No. 137/2000, republished, Article 1, paragraph 1, comprising an implicit reference to the values protected in the Romanian Constitution such as human rights, rights and liberties of citizens and free development of human personality.

112. Article 15 of the Antidiscrimination Law provides for the protection of human dignity stipulating that "It constitutes misdemeanour ... if the act does not fall under the criminal law, any behaviour manifested in public, having the character of nationalist-chauvinist propaganda, of inciting racial or national hatred, or that behaviour that has as its purpose or aims at the achievement of dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere, directed against a person, a group of persons or a community and related to their belonging to a certain race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social category or a disadvantaged category or of his beliefs, gender or sexual orientation".

113. See Antidiscrimination Law, Governmental Ordinance No. 137/2000 republished, with amendments, available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/24129>, accessed 27 July 2023.

114. Criminal Code, Law No. 286/2009, available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/267695>, accessed 27 July 2023.

115. Law No. 170 from 3 June 2022 for amending Article 369 from Law No. 286/2009 regarding the Criminal Code, available at: <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/255941>, accessed 27 July 2023.

116. Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008F0913>, accessed 27 July 2023.

117. Law No. 2 from 4 January 2021 regarding measures for preventing and combating antigypsyism, published in the Official Gazette No. 9 from 5 January 2021, available at <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/235923>, accessed 27 July 2023.

118. According to Article 3 of the law, imprisonment of between three months to three years and the prohibition of certain rights.

119. According to Article 4 of the law, imprisonment of between one and five years.

■ Several observations from the Advisory Committee's Fifth Opinion on Romania focus on hate speech and antigypsyism:¹²⁰

118. The new law defining and criminalising antigypsyism, which was adopted in 2021, is intended to address the perceived impunity for hate speech with an anti-Roma bias. Some Roma representatives believe that the law has a rather symbolic value. So far, the Advisory Committee has not been informed of any cases of application of the new law by the judiciary or law enforcement authorities.

120. The Advisory Committee broadly welcomes the legislative steps taken to increase the protection from hate speech in law, to strengthen the capacity for investigating hate crime, as well as steps undertaken to come to a more systematic collection of relevant data. It is, however, concerned that significant flaws remain in the practical application of the existing laws and in particular the procedural response to victims' allegations on hate crime and hate speech, undermining effective investigation and prosecution as well as the trust of potential victims in institutions and redress mechanisms.

121. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to ensure the effective investigation, prosecution and sanctioning of hate crime and hate speech and ensure the systematic collection of relevant data.

Analysis

■ The analysis of 30 materials published in the written press in Romania during the period between 1 October 2022 and 20 October 2023 reveals a varied and complex picture of Roma representation. In contrast to our previous study on broadcast audiovisual media, the written press demonstrates a comparatively more balanced and accurate representation of this community.

■ The negative portrayals and narratives are overwhelmingly contextualised by alleged criminal activities, clan organisation and intra-ethnic conflict, or negative events involving Roma. For example, the online newspaper *Adevărul* published several items covering a legal battle won by the Romanian state against the alleged "real estate Mafia of Timișoara", the article, published in September 2023, first identifies the "Mafia" as Roma clans: "The Romanian state managed to win the lawsuit for the palace on Loga boulevard no. 42, owned for 30 years by the Roma clans from Timișoara. A kindergarten would operate in that location".¹²¹ The same newspaper covers in October 2023, in a rather neutral and objective tone, the case of a young Roma woman's kidnapping¹²² however neither the alleged perpetrators nor victims have any agency in providing context to the story, the only source of information cited being a court decision on the case.

■ The publication *Adevărul* reported instances of blatant discrimination against Roma, exemplified by the coverage of a Roma family denied access to a beach in Alba, leading to legal action against the administrator. The journalist described the incident, where the family's mother was assaulted and derisively called a "dirty crow", as potentially constituting a hate crime. This incident was also extensively covered by local media, including the news portal Sebes Info.¹²³ The thorough and impartial reporting by both national and local press on discrimination cases, along with their legal outcomes, represents a significant positive shift. This development not only helps rectify discriminatory practices by state and non-state entities but also indicates a substantial improvement in editorial policies towards more balanced and objective reporting of Roma.

■ Nevertheless, articles that focus on disturbances, internal conflicts, criminal acts and misdemeanours continue to be published in the written press as well, with the ethnicity of alleged perpetrators being explicitly highlighted in such articles. Local press outlets¹²⁴ and national newspapers¹²⁵ rarely provide an objective portrayal in such articles, largely using police reports and testimonies by the general public as sole sources of information. Roma are subjects of such articles and lack agency or perspective. They are rather portrayed as

120. See www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/romania.

121. "Victorie împotriva mafiei imobiliare din Timișoara", *Adevărul*, available at <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/timisoara/victorie-impotriva-mafiei-imobiliare-din-2302864.html>, accessed 31 October 2023.

122. "Tanara de 14 ani de etnie Roma, rapita de acasa in miezul noptii pentru casatorie", *Adevărul*, <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/alba-iulia/tanara-de-14-ani-de-etnie-roma-rapita-de-acasa-in-2305168.html>, accessed 31 October 2023.

123. "Familie de romi refuzata la un strand din Petresti, administratorul trimis in judecata", *Sebesinfo.ro*, available at www.sebesinfo.ro/familie-de-romi-refuzata-la-un-strand-din-petresti-administratorul-trimis-in-judecata-35085.html, accessed 31 October 2023.

124. "Scandal pe strada Morilor din Ramnicu Valcea, doua familii de romi s-au incaierat", *Gazeta Vâlceană*, available at www.gazetavalceana.ro/fapt-divers/foto-scandal-pe-strada-morilor-din-ramnicu-valcea-doua-familii-de-romi-s-au-incaierat/, accessed 31 October 2023.

125. "Scandal si masini distruse intr-o comunitate de romi din Galati, trupele speciale au intervenit pentru aplanarea conflictului", *Mediafax*, available at www.mediafax.ro/social/scandal-si-masini-distruse-intr-o-comunitate-de-romi-din-galati-trupele-speciale-au-intervenit-pentru-aplanarea-conflictului-19091630, accessed 31 October 2023.

unruly and needing to be “cooled down” by law enforcement.¹²⁶ Local press outlets appear to cover significantly more such articles, often using inflammatory and biased language. The portrayal of Roma is overwhelmingly negative, common stereotypes of Roma as backward, prone to violence, unruly and criminal being represented.

■ Roma are often the subject of cultural and artistic controversies in Romania, often focused on cultural cleavages among some Romanian and Roma populations. In 2023 a performance by a Roma musical artist Gheboasa at the widely advertised international music festivals Untold and Electric Castle was the subject of controversy and given fines and legal proceedings levelled against the artist for explicit lyrics considered offensive. Such controversies are a common occurrence in Romanian cultural circles, as the cultural space is becoming more diversified and successful artists of Roma origin penetrate the mainstream cultural scene. Coverage of these events appeared to be more objective in the written press, with the voices and opinions of Roma representatives and leaders being added to the public conversation. Nevertheless, they highlight deep cleavages and the still widespread racial bias against Roma. In *Aktual 24*, a Roma leader talks about a cultural event that accompanies the international music festival Untold. The material gives voice to a local Roma leader who describes the event as an attempt to address controversial events where a Roma artist was fined by law enforcement following his rap performance at the festival. The material is rather neutral and it provides a space for local Roma leaders to express their opinions and views.¹²⁷

■ Another important development is that certain historical events that are marked by Roma internationally and in Romania are covered extensively in major publications. One such example is the commemoration of the Roma Genocide on 2 August of each year. The event and recounting of the crimes that Roma suffered is covered by *Observator Cultural*, *Adevarul*, *Juridice.ro*, *Mediafax* and by local outlets such as *BizBrasov*, *Constanteanul* and others. The manner in which the written press covers this subject ranges from short informative excerpts, noting declarations by the Romanian president or the European Commission President, to in-depth interviews with Roma representatives of non-governmental organisations focused on historical facts about the genocide of Roma. Other outlets cover news about the introduction of the subject of Roma history, including the history of slavery and deportation during the Second World War, into high school curriculums.¹²⁸ These plans are to be accompanied by efforts to train educational staff in schools to teach the new subjects.¹²⁹ These examples underscore how important the official recognition of certain events marking the history of Roma are. The fact that European Union institutions and member states acknowledge such days leads to more information, education and general knowledge about the presence, suffering and contributions of Roma in European history.

■ Roma also feature as subjects in general information news, in various national and local outlets. These news items cover statements by Roma representatives about participation in elections,¹³⁰ information about the results in the most recent census conducted in Romania¹³¹ and coverage of local cultural events. The format of these types of articles is informative and generally neutral without a loaded representation of Roma.

■ The representation of Roma in the Romanian written press appears to be varied and complex. It is not limited to a single perspective and encompasses a range of issues and stories. Compared with our previous study focused on audiovisual media, the written press provides a more balanced and often more accurate portrayal of Roma. It offers a mix of both positive and negative stories. Negative narratives in the written press are often contextualised by alleged criminal activities, clan organisation, intra-ethnic conflicts or negative events involving Roma. This contextualisation provides a more comprehensive view of the stories.

126. “Scandal intre doua familii de romi pentru o casa la Timisoara, au intervenit politistii si jandarmii”, Tion.ro, available at www.tion.ro/eveniment/video-scandal-intre-doua-familii-de-romi-pentru-o-casa-la-timisoara-au-intervenit-politistii-si-jandarmii-1767011/, accessed 31 October 2023.

127. “Romii din Romania pregatesc Festivalul Untold Romano la Cluj-Napoca”, Aktual24, available at www.aktual24.ro/romii-din-romania-pregatesc-festivalul-untold-romano-la-cluj-napoca/, accessed 31 October 2023.

128. “Noi discipline anuntate de Ligia Deca: Istoria robia si deportarea romilor, optionala pentru elevii de gimnaziu si liceu, iar istoria comunismului din Romania se va”, G4Media, available at www.g4media.ro/noi-discipline-anuntate-de-ligia-deca-istoria-robia-si-deportarea-romilor-optionala-pentru-elevii-de-gimnaziu-si-liceu-iar-istoria-comunismului-din-romania-se-v.html, accessed 31 October 2023.

129. “Deca anunta trei noi materii in scoli: Istoria comunismului, a Holocaustului si a robiei romilor”, SpotMedia.ro, available at <https://spotmedia.ro/stiri/educatie/deca-anunta-trei-noi-materii-in-scoli-istoria-comunismului-a-holocaustului-si-a-robiei-romilor>, accessed 31 October 2023.

130. “Romii clujeni se pregatesc de alegerile de anul viitor: Vor viceprimari si chiar primari in comune cu populatie roma”, Cluj24.ro, available at <https://cluj24.ro/foto-romii-clujeni-se-pregatesc-de-alegerile-de-anul-viitor-vor-viceprimari-si-chiar-primari-in-comune-cu-populatie-roma-194165.html>, accessed 31 October 2023.

131. “Recensamant 2021: Procentul de 3% populatie roma este considerat prea mic fata de realitate, sustin liderii comunitatii rome. Recenzorii nu s-au dus in comunitatile de romi”, G4Media, available at www.g4media.ro/recensamant-2021-procentul-de-3-populatie-roma-este-considerat-prea-mic-fata-de-realitate-sustin-liderii-comunitatii-rome-recenzorii-nu-s-au-dus-in-comunitatile-de-romi.html, accessed 31 October 2023.

■ There is an important positive development in the extensive and objective coverage of cases of discrimination against Roma and their legal repercussions. This has a corrective effect on discriminatory practices by both state and non-state bodies. While there are positive developments, articles focusing on disturbances, conflicts, criminal acts and misdemeanours involving Roma continue to be published. These often highlight the ethnicity of the alleged perpetrators and tend to perpetuate negative stereotypes.

■ Roma continue to be the subject of cultural and artistic controversies, often related to cultural differences and diversity in Romania. The coverage of these events in the written press is generally more objective and includes the voices and opinions of Roma representatives. The written press extensively covers historical events related to Roma, such as the commemoration of the Roma Genocide on 2 August each year. This reflects the growing recognition of the importance of acknowledging these events. The overall conclusion is that the representation of Roma in the Romanian written press, whether at the local or national level, appears to be balanced. It includes a range of perspectives and stories, both positive and negative, and reflects efforts to provide a more objective and comprehensive view of the Roma community.

CONCLUSIONS

■ The examined material reveals that the portrayal of the Roma community in the printed press across Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania presents a multifaceted picture with significant variances and particularities among the countries. In Bulgaria the narrative is predominantly negative, focusing on crime, violence and socio-economic challenges. There is a lack of positive stories and proactive representation of Roma culture and achievements. In Greece, written media portrayals vary from hate speech and negative stereotyping to positive and balanced narratives. Influential articles and investigative reports challenge stereotypes and promote a nuanced understanding of Roma experiences. In Italy, there is a focus on negative aspects like criminal activities and under-representation of Roma diversity. The media rarely highlight active Roma associations and their contributions. Sensationalism is common, although outright discrimination is less frequent. In Romania, the representation is more varied and complex, with a mix of positive and negative stories. The media provides a balanced view, often including the Roma perspective, and addresses discrimination and cultural controversies.

■ Across all countries, negative portrayals linking Roma to crime, violence and socio-economic issues are common, often overshadowing positive narratives. Most media focus on reactive stories, with fewer instances of proactive coverage exploring Roma culture, history and positive contributions. While negative stereotypes persist, efforts to present balanced and nuanced portrayals are evident, especially in Greece and Romania. Each country faces unique challenges in portraying the Roma community, indicating the need for continued efforts to combat stereotypes and promote a more inclusive and diverse narrative.

■ There is significant variability in the quality and tone of reporting among different media outlets and countries. Some media demonstrate more balanced reporting, including positive stories and avoiding stereotypes. The portrayal of Roma is influenced by the specific cultural, historical and political contexts of each country, shaping the narrative in unique ways. Positive portrayals, when present, tend to focus on individual success stories or cultural contributions but are less frequent than negative portrayals.

■ This comprehensive analysis shows that while there are significant challenges in the portrayal of Roma in the printed press, there are also notable efforts and opportunities to improve representation, combat stereotypes and highlight the diverse experiences and contributions of Roma in Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage media outlets to adopt inclusive editorial policies that promote fair and balanced representation of all communities, including Roma.
- Establish mechanisms for monitoring media practices and reporting on the representation of Roma in the press.
- Identify media outlets that consistently promote negative stereotypes and work with them to improve their reporting practices.
- Include more voices from the Roma community in media reports to provide a fuller, more authentic perspective.
- Encourage a more diverse portrayal of Roma in various social roles, moving beyond traditional or negative stereotypes.
- Media training and guidelines should emphasise avoiding stereotypes and discriminatory language, focusing on individual actions rather than ethnicity. Media outlets and journalists should be encouraged to undergo training on cultural sensitivity and unbiased reporting and training and resources should be provided to media professionals on culturally sensitive reporting and avoiding stereotypes.
- Encourage media outlets to feature more stories highlighting Roma achievements, culture and contributions to society.
- Implement media literacy campaigns to help the public critically evaluate news content and understand how stereotypes and biases can affect reporting.
- Collaborate with international organisations and other countries to share best practices in combating discrimination and improving the representation of Roma in the media.
- Encourage diversity within media organisations, both in terms of hiring and content production. Promote the inclusion of Roma journalists, editors and other staff in media outlets.

APPENDIX

Bulgaria

Date	Brief description	Type of message	Link to the material
26/01/2023	The article is entitled «Debauchery again: young drunken Roma go around a metropolitan neighbourhood, beat people up». What stands out is this article is sensationalism and tendentiousness, mentioning the ethnicity of the alleged perpetrators without it being relevant to what happened, as well as a violation of the presumption of innocence.	NEGATIVE	Blitz
04/02/2023	The article is entitled «Macedonian Roma also intervened in the tensions between Sofia and Skopje» and concerns a video with wrong subtitles (the particular incorrect part is «and you gypsies here are making it difficult for me to enter»), broadcast on Channel 5 television, which shows an argument between Bulgarian citizens and North Macedonian border guards at the Deve Bair checkpoint.	POSITIVE	Darik News
08/02/2023	The article is titled «Gypsies from the village of Mikrevo beat a forest officer» and is yet another example of the use of tendentious expressions, violation of the presumption of innocence and disclosure of the ethnicity of the alleged perpetrators without it being relevant to the substance of what happened.	NEGATIVE	Pik
04/04/2023	The article is entitled «Four charged after Roma attack police in Stamboliyski» and reports on a case in which police tried to stop a moped driver for a check, but he escaped. Officers followed him into the neighbourhood, where the man ditched the vehicle and hid. Meanwhile, his relatives pounced on the officers.	NEGATIVE	dir.bg
05/04/2023	The article is entitled «Dr Miroslav Angelov, cardiologist: most Roma work and are concerned about children's education».	POSITIVE	Treta Vazrast
19/04/2023	The article is titled «Emergency medics are attacked mostly by drunk Roma». It republishes an interview with the emergency care trade union representative. In it, the latter makes the following statement: «It is mainly the Roma brothers who show this aggression. Drunk, drugged, they attack the teams they call for help, and then these crimes are committed against them. If they know that they face imprisonment or a hefty fine, they will not attack. This must be eradicated once and for all.» It should be noted that the interviewee does not support his statement with any evidence, which suggests bias and prejudice.	NEGATIVE	Dnes.bg
26/04/2023	The article is titled «Among the poor of Bulgarian and Turkish ethnicity, pensioners predominate, whereas among the Roma – the working» and states that these are the results shown by a study conducted by the National Statistics Agency. This suggests that many Roma live under the poverty even though they are employed.	NEUTRAL	Dnevnik
04/05/2023	The article is titled «Romani families from the BRUTAL BRAWL in Kazanlak are not displaced, they are still AT WAR». It follows up on the occurrences in Kazanlak which were also reflected in the previous analysis on Roma portrayal in broadcasting media.	NEGATIVE	BG Dnes

13/07/2023	The article is entitled «A bunch of young Roma bullies children in capital's neighbourhood, young woman shocks the web with revelations». Its subtitle is «Of course, her post provoked many comments on the Web, many of which we will spare for the sake of good manners». This is yet another example of tendentious presentation of media content inciting intolerance and prejudice against Roma. Again, the ethnicity of the alleged perpetrators is irrelevant to the substance of what happened.	NEGATIVE	Blitz
02/08/2023	The article is entitled «A gypsy camp in 'Malinova dolina' neighbourhood in Sofia was removed» and it is about the fact that «an excavator demolished illegal buildings resembling makeshift tents. The site was also cleared of a lot of plastic, wooden and construction waste left there by the gypsies illegally residing there». It is worth noting that the use of the term «gypsy» generally implies a pejorative connotation, which is fairly apparent in this particular material.	NEGATIVE	news.bg
04/08/2023	The article is entitled «Swiss newspaper on Bulgarians in Dortmund: misery, alcohol and drugs» and it is about the fact that 12 000 Bulgarians and Romanians have officially settled in Dortmund, the majority of whom are Roma, and the appearance of the neighbourhood in which they have settled consists of abandoned buildings with mountains of garbage in front, alcohol and drugs.	NEGATIVE	Darik news
15/08/2023	The article is titled «German Police Investigate Bulgarian and Romanian Gypsies in Duisburg for Aid Fraud».	NEGATIVE	news.bg
15/08/2023	The article is entitled «Gypsies stabbed deputy interior minister in pub». The material showcases another example of tendentious and undermining use of language to depict Roma citizens. Moreover, the occurrence is being used for political purposes and yet again the ethnicity of the alleged perpetrators is irrelevant to the substance of the event.	NEGATIVE	Pik
29/08/2023	The article is entitled «One of the arrested Roma who fatally struck the driver in Prilep charged with intentional homicide». It follows up on the fatal accident with the truck driver and a 6-year old child. What is worth noting in this and in a number of other articles is that the mentioning of the ethnicity of the victims/perpetrators is irrelevant to the substance of what is to be reported.	NEGATIVE	Novini.bg
29/08/2023	The article is titled «A tsunami of outrage floods the web after lynching of TIR driver executed by Roma». Yet again the editorial staff employs tendentious, belittling and pejorative vocabulary when reporting on the occurrence. A noteworthy example is the following: «Street justice ensued, served according to medieval custom by a mob of Roma. Drunken from the afternoon Roma, who lynched the truck driver and sent him to the other world with fists.»	NEGATIVE	Novinite.bg
29/08/2023	The article is entitled «The horror in the village of Prilep: the mob trampled the driver of the truck, finally stabbed him with a pig knife». The publication makes use of strong and tendentious language.	NEGATIVE	iNews
31/08/2023	The article is entitled «43 per cent of Roma in Bulgaria work, survey shows» and, according to the organisation conducting the survey, these data unequivocally prove the steady trend of employment among the Roma community in Bulgaria.	POSITIVE	Darik news
31/08/2023	The article is entitled «Dead driver's companion: get down and run fast! There's a bunch of gypsies running this way!» and is about a tragic occurrence in which a truck driver accidentally ran over a young girl and was consequently murdered by relatives of the girl (who were allegedly Roma).	NEGATIVE	Fakti
18/09/2023	The title of the article is «Because they're Roma: they're mistreated in Germany too» and the subtitle is «It sounds unbelievable, but it's a fact: most racism in Germany occurs in the civil service». The article refers to trends towards the growth of right-wing extremism and institutional discrimination against Roma in Germany.	NEUTRAL	Fakti

19/09/2023	The article is entitled «Horror in Razlog! Roma invaded a school with scythes and sticks, beat up a student». Again, it shows bias, ethnic division and irrelevance in stating the ethnic origin of the alleged perpetrators.	NEGATIVE	Blitz
24/09/2023	The article is entitled «Roma threatened pregnant woman they would kill her if she did not sell them her child». As in many other pieces, one can see here a violation of the presumption of innocence, as well as tendentious, insulting and belittling expressions.	NEGATIVE	Blitz
03/10/2023	The article is entitled «Former deputy minister of agriculture found that produce from a sunflower field was stolen from him» and in it the deputy minister mentions, among other things, that some of these violations are committed by «Roma who steal agricultural produce without hindrance in order to sell it and profit».	NEGATIVE	Sega BG
03/10/2023	The article is titled «Minority children from Varna are actors in «My world is yours too» and shows a good example of Roma inclusion and cultural acceptance by means of artistic performances.	POSITIVE	Focus News
04/10/2023	The article is entitled «You'll want to beat them up: it's unbelievable what brazen Roma did in Sofia». It reports on a case in which Roma took shelter in an uninhabited house in Sofia. The article abounds in outright hate speech, tendentious, insulting and belittling language.	NEGATIVE	Blitz
06/10/2023	The article is entitled «Georgi Berdarov: in 2050 Bulgaria will stop functioning if there are no measures for demography». The expert, whose presentation the article reflects, claims that «in 2050 the population of Bulgaria will be around 5-5.5 million people, with 1.5 million pensioners and over 1 million Roma, 90% of whom will not have completed secondary education. This means that more than 50% of the Bulgarian population will not be active in the labour market. And it means only one thing – this country will stop functioning».	NEGATIVE	24 Chasa

Greece

Date	Brief description	Type of message	Link to the material
11/11/2022	Trend article on Roma based on a TV show and TikTok video perpetuates both negative and positive stereotypes rather than offering an in-depth understanding of the community.	NEGATIVE	iefimerida.gr
05/12/2022	A news article linked to the December 2022 police shooting of a 16-year-old boy elicited hateful comments. Despite the boy's critical condition, this article used a bold headline targeting the Roma (Gypsy) ethnicity, sparking comments filled with hate speech and direct calls for violence.	NEGATIVE	Makeleio.gr
06/12/2022	The opinion article with the heading: «Romaphobia: The Last Acceptable Racism» is significant in its reach and influence as it serves as a wake-up call for even the most socially conscious individuals who may not engage with Roma issues.	POSITIVE	lifo.gr
08/12/2022	The opinion article stereotypes the Roma as uneducated, unemployed, involved in drug dealing and aggressive. It argues that they prioritise rights over responsibilities, citing tradition as a reason for neglecting education. The proposed solution, given their vulnerable status and limited regulation, is a milder form of coercion to facilitate their integration into society.	NEGATIVE	liberal.gr
10/12/2022	Crime news article focuses on the perpetrators' ethnicity, perpetuating stereotypes and often merely echoing police reports without verifying information. This reinforces bias against the Roma community.	NEGATIVE	defence-point.gr

10/12/2022	The interview-style article under the title «The 'Fragile' Lives of the Roma: 'This Is Our Opportunity to Expose Racism against Us'» allows the Roma themselves to take centre stage and speak about their own experiences in the shadow of Fragoulis's murder.	POSITIVE	kathimerini.gr
10/12/2022	The piece in the newspaper of the Communist Party, published a few days after the murder of Fragoulis, falls under the category of an exposé of ideas. The message it conveys, following a detailed analysis and a historical retrospective of what has happened in other countries, and especially what happened in the USSR, where the Roma were integrated through specific policies, is that the Roma were marginalised in Greece by all previous governments.	POSITIVE	rizospastis.gr
11/12/2022	A history article that delves into Roma history, emphasising their portrayal as irresponsible residents in Greek territories, primarily focused on rights rather than obligations. Emerged after Fragoulis's tragic shooting.	NEGATIVE	protothema.gr
11/12/2022	The opinion article highlights the absence of education as a potential factor behind criminal behaviour but does not explore the reasons for Roma not attending school. It also hints at the innocence of the police officer who shot the boy.	NEGATIVE	alithianews.gr
11/12/2022	An interview on an entertainment page features a Roma boy who participated in a modelling reality show (GNTM). He discusses the racism he has personally encountered and emphasises that if Fragoulis had not been Roma, they would not have shot him.	POSITIVE	tlife.gr
12/12/2022	The opinion article focuses on sharing writers' specific experiences and personal views on a topic and delves deeply into how we reached the point where another young Roma boy was fatally shot by a police officer.	POSITIVE	kathimerini.gr
15/12/2022	The opinion article overtly questions the Greek identity of the Roma, emphasising that they enjoy more rights than native Greeks.	NEGATIVE	e-synews.gr
20/12/2022	The opinion article challenges stereotypes in the wake of Fragoulis's murder. The author, from a local newspaper in Crete, explains to readers, based on their own experiences, how state mechanisms mismanage European funds allocated for the Roma. The author also highlights that European authorities do not adequately monitor the destination of their funds.	POSITIVE	haniotika-nea.gr
24/12/2022	The news report entitled «Roma in the Region of Ilia Struggle for Their Social Inclusion» provides a platform for responsible Roma individuals to discuss the problems they face and their challenges in achieving integration.	POSITIVE	patrisnews.com
04/02/2023	A social report on the Roma community, featuring Roma protagonists, highlights the successful efforts of Roma women who, with state support, established the first restaurant serving Roma cuisine.	POSITIVE	voria.gr
21/02/2023	An interview with a young Roma person who shared his experiences and challenges while searching for employment. This conversation sheds light on the hurdles many Roma individuals face in their quest for a job.	POSITIVE	stonisi.gr
03/03/2023	Entertaining report that discusses famous Greek Roma individuals and others aspiring to become famous through their beloved TikTok application.	POSITIVE	in2life.gr
08/03/2023	A negative news article about Roma, centered on unauthorised encampments, depicts them as vulgar, culturally deprived, intrusive, and offensive, perpetuating harmful stereotypes, without any reflection on why Roma camp wherever they find open space.	NEGATIVE	tribune.gr
13/03/2023	An interview with a director who created one of the most successful TV series of all time in Greece, centered on the love story between a Roma woman and a non-Roma man. The show achieved a 60% viewership, while the director revealed that, initially, the script had been rejected. The creator believed that the programme shattered some stereotypes and changed not only the way Greeks perceived Roma but also how Roma perceived the Greeks.	POSITIVE	cretalive.gr

30/03/2023	A social report about the endeavours of a group of young individuals trying to establish a Social Community Enterprise, who face numerous obstacles in their realisation.	POSITIVE	parallaximag.gr
02/04/2023	The opinion article attempts to explain the stereotypes surrounding the Roma and why they migrate through a historical retrospective. Arriving at the conclusion that Roma have always belonged to the most vulnerable in the social hierarchy, the author allows readers to draw parallels with the present day.	POSITIVE	rednblack.gr
03/04/2023	The interview-style article under the title «We Are Not Roma, We Are Gypsies» suggests that even their name was imposed on them from outside. Roma people are the protagonists of these reports expressing their perspective on matters that directly concern them.	POSITIVE	tovima.gr
08/04/2023	The opinion article with the title «The Roma, the Gypsy, the tzigane, they are people like us» explains the self-evident fact, emphasising that when people, regardless of their background, live in disadvantaged conditions, criminality increases.	POSITIVE	artinews.gr
14/04/2023	Crime news article focuses on perpetrators' ethnicity, perpetuating stereotypes and often merely echoing police reports without verifying information. This reinforces bias against the Roma community.	NEGATIVE	vradini.gr
17/04/2023	Crime news article focuses on perpetrators' ethnicity, perpetuating stereotypes and often merely echoing police reports without verifying information. This reinforces bias against the Roma community.	NEGATIVE	aftodioikisi.gr
25/04/2023	A report about Enderlezi festival, as a convergence of cultures and traditions, serves as a heart-warming reminder of the positive relations between Roma and non-Roma communities.	NEUTRAL	proini.news
01/05/2023	Research study with incorporating data that record the Roma and their settlements, drawing data from the General Secretariat of Social Solidarity and Anti-Poverty of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.	NEUTRAL	protothema.gr
07/06/2023	Crime report related to the Fragoulis murder, they include the opinions of the 16-year-old victim's relatives and friends, as well as other representatives of their community.	NEUTRAL	stereaeconomy.gr
15/06/2023	The opinion article sends a message that the Roma, from the depths of history to the present day, deserve better treatment.	POSITIVE	xronos.gr
21/06/2023	A news article about the protests that emerge against Roma communities occupying public spaces.	NEUTRAL	ermisnews.gr
09/07/2023	An investigative report exposes racist behaviour from public entities and presents positive examples of municipalities where the social integration of the Roma community has slowly begun.	POSITIVE	epohi.gr
12/07/2023	An interview which depicts the struggle of a young Roma girl who tried to break free from the settlements, pursue education and find employment.	POSITIVE	rodiaki.gr
16/07/2023	A negative news article about Roma, centered on unauthorised encampments, depicts them as vulgar, culturally deprived, intrusive and offensive, perpetuating harmful stereotypes, without any reflection on why Roma camp wherever they find open space.	NEGATIVE	piraeuspress.gr
23/07/2023	The news article's misleading title unfairly blames Roma for a bridge collapse, violating journalistic ethics by misrepresenting the news and using a false narrative.	NEGATIVE	agriniopress.gr
02/08/2023	The history report delves into the lesser-known aspect of the Romani Holocaust – the Nazi unknown genocide.	POSITIVE	tvxs.gr
08/08/2023	A report on a Roma wedding negatively stereotypes them, portraying them as odd and law-defying, perpetuating discrimination and harmful stereotypes.	NEGATIVE	in.gr

11/08/2023	A news article about Roma who are travelling to Crete in the summer in order to find work. The problems that are created when they choose to establish temporary camps in public areas.	NEUTRAL	cretalive.gr
14/08/2023	A report on a Roma wedding negatively stereotypes them, portraying them as odd and law-defying, perpetuating discrimination and harmful stereotypes.	NEGATIVE	thesstoday.gr
17/08/2023	A negative news article about Roma, centered on unauthorised encampments, depicts them as vulgar, culturally deprived, intrusive and offensive, perpetuating harmful stereotypes, without any reflection on why Roma camp wherever they find open space.	NEGATIVE	piraeuspress.gr
11/09/2023	Another unethical article entitled «Roma Allegedly Rob Flood Victims» lacks journalistic integrity, using unverified information to portray Roma as immoral thieves, breaching ethical codes.	NEGATIVE	koolnews.gr
27/09/2023	This news article exemplifies hate speech and violates journalistic ethics. It derogatorily refers to all Roma as «Gypsies» in an offensive manner, and it fosters a climate of violence within user comments, all stemming from a real incident widely reported by the media.	NEGATIVE	makeleio.gr

Italy

Date	Brief description	Type of message	Link to the material
09/09/2022	«Roma culture will be taught at school: it happens in Sala's Milan». (As part of the mega-project for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti communities financed with almost 3 million, the training of teachers who will have to teach children to be «against stereotypes».)	NEUTRAL	ilgiornale.it
13/10/2022	«The controversy: Salvini cannot be a minister, he said 'gypsy' to a Roma girl».	POSITIVE	ilriformista
15/10/2022	«Rome, hunt for a gang of thieves: the film-like escape in the Roma camp. The gang intercepted by a police car was in a recently stolen car».	NEUTRAL	Il Messaggero - Rome edition
21/10/2022	«Beauty and humanity erased: power does this with gypsies and with every community on the margins».	NEUTRAL	Corriere della Sera online
08/11/2022	«The Roma's luxury villa overlooking Lake Garda ends up for sale. (The villa, owned by some citizens of the Roma ethnic group, appeared on several real estate advertisements, for sale for just over a million euros. It is a valuable property)».	NEGATIVE	Corriere della Sera
09/11/2022	«Rome, they rob the Romanina pharmacy and flee to the Roma camp. The police car was hit. Two local officers injured. The bandits tracked down and reported by the Flying Squad».	NEUTRAL	Il Messaggero
10/12/2022	«Tano D'Amico, the autumn of the Roma people interview. The author speaks of 'Orphans of the Wind. The autumn of the gypsies', from Mimesis Edizioni».	POSITIVE	Il Manifesto
17/12/2022	«The nightmare of a 13-year-old Roma girl: 'Forced into prostitution by her grandmother, 400 euros for an hour with her'. (For an hour with her she asked for 400 euros. Now she is on trial: the girl was adopted by another family)».	NEGATIVE	Leggo.it
07/01/2023	«Thieves dig up a coffin in the cemetery to steal 5 kg of jewels buried with the body. The theft in Rome. The custom of burying bodies with precious objects is very widespread in the Roma community».	NEGATIVE	Il Messaggero - Rome edition («Cassia» section)

08/01/2023	«Roma stones thrown against buses in via Candoni. And councilor Patané blurts out: 'That camp needs to be moved'. Three new cars were damaged in the area of the nomads' camp».	NEGATIVE	Il Messaggero - Rome edition («Portuense» section)
09/01/2023	«The Roma tomb desecrated by thieves: 'There were five kilos of gold in the coffin'. Family jewels stolen».	NEUTRAL	Leggo.it
09/01/2023	«Inclusion Strategy 2020-30 – EU Commission: anti-Gypsyism and anti-Roma racism persist in Europe. Recommendations to Member States».	NEUTRAL	Sir Agenzia d'informazione
17/01/2023	«Rome, policemen attacked in Roma camps. The municipality's move: 'Now stop the checks'. On Sunday a group of agents were attacked in front of the Roma camp in Via Salviati. Councilor Funari sent a letter to Angeloni to suspend the censuses».	NEGATIVE	Il Messaggero - Roma edition («Tiburtino» section)
17/02/2023	«Omerovic case, the shocking interceptions of the agents: 'Let's stop, or the wave of s*** will submerge us all'. (After the arrest of agent Andrea Pellegrini for torture, four other policemen ended up on the register of suspects)».	NEUTRAL	Leggo.it
10/03/2023	«'Beware of the gypsies, beware of the gypsies!': shock announcement on the A metro reported on Twitter. Measures for the operator. Journalist Francesca Mannocchi denounces the story on social media and Atac tracks down the person responsible: 'Unacceptable offence'».	POSITIVE	Corriere della Sera - Rome edition
10/03/2023	«'Watch out for the gypsies!'. The incredible announcement on the Rome metro. (After a complaint on Twitter, Atac takes action against the author of the warning issued through a loudspeaker)».	NEUTRAL	Il Dubbio
16/03/2023	«Pickpockets in Milan, who they are and where they come from: 'Italy is a paradise!'. In the city, one arrest per day. (The residence often refers to Rome, but they are permanent in Milan. The system: the women steal, the men organise 'batteries' of thieves, manage and divide the earnings)».	NEGATIVE	Corriere della Sera - Milan edition
17/03/2023	«Milan, the pickpocket with nine children: 'I earn up to 1 000 euros a day from thefts, but I feel guilty'. Milan, the confessions of a 29-year-old who mugs metro passengers. 'I learned the trade at 13, one of my sisters preferred to study and today she has a job. For me it's too late. Prison? I don't risk anything'».	NEGATIVE	Corriere della Sera - Milan edition
25/03/2023	Subtitle: «The proposal on children in prison – Pickpockets on the Milan subway, because the right is calling for a law against Roma that violates the law».	NEGATIVE	Il Riformista
25/03/2023	«The statements of the Northern League leader. The 'fight against the gypsy plague' is the same as what Hitler did».	NEGATIVE	Il Riformista
30/03/2023	«Pillory against Roma and migrants 'but we are not racist'».	NEGATIVE	Il Riformista
07/04/2023	«Racism even more cruel than the prejudice that leads to discrimination against blacks. Roma pickpockets, the hunt for 'gypsies' with the excuse of humanitarian reason: Italian investigative journalism».	POSITIVE	Il Riformista
08/04/2023	World Roma Day: «Hatred and prejudices of the xenophobic right, an evil to be eradicated».	POSITIVE	Repubblica
08/04/2023	Subtitle: «The defamatory campaign against the Romani people. Roma pickpockets and do-it-yourself justice: nothing but inclusion, in Italy the hate campaign against 'gypsies'».	POSITIVE	Il Riformista
12/04/2023	«Social services – Sicily spends one hundred euros less per person than the north. Welfare is a particularly burdensome expense item for the municipalities, which covered over 68% of the costs in 2020. But the differences between the north and south are enormous, underlines an Istat study. And in Sicily expenditure is more than average under the heading 'Immigrants, Roma, Sinti and Caminanti'».	NEGATIVE	FocuSicilia
05/05/2023	Italy is outside the agenda of the European RSC platform on Roma, Sinti and Travellers.	NEUTRAL	contropiano.org

27/05/2023	“Turin, he defined the Roma as ‘ticks, piranha bait’. For the Court of Cassation, the invectives of the Northern League member Povoletto are ‘discriminatory’ (Asgi took the former Ivrea councilor to court: ‘We are satisfied’. At first instance and on appeal the judges recognised Povoletto’s ‘freedom of expression’).”	NEGATIVE	Corriere della Sera - Turin edition
29/05/2023	Subtitle: «Being Roma at the Radice institute is a pathology. Marino’s complaint (the president of the Un mondo di mondo association highlights the critical issues that emerged from the school’s self-evaluation report)».	NEGATIVE	Reggio Today
30/06/2023	«Ndrangheta: blitz in the Sibaritide – The Abbruzzese clan beheaded. In the ‘Athena’ investigation ... years of intimidation and drug trafficking in Calabria were reconstructed». (A new hard blow to the «gypsy clan» in Sibaritide. The investigation has decimated the Abbruzzese clan – 39 people in prison, 24 under house arrest, five under signature obligations, including a municipal councilor of Cassano allo Jonio.	NEUTRAL	Corriere della Sera
10/07/2023	«COMO – The étoile Luciana Savignano and the Bausch dance high school pay homage to the ‘saint’ of the French Roma». The artistic godmother of the Busto Arsizio school, together with professor Francesco Posa, who is also a choreographer, created a video in the splendid rooms of the palace Lambertenghi.	POSITIVE	Malpensa news
29/08/2023	Subtitle: «Plastic Free returns to Reggio with the integration project for Roma children» (Two events of the Associazione in blu, which returns to raise awareness among citizens about plastic pollution and waste).	POSITIVE	Citynow.it
12/09/2023	Subtitle: «The UN condemns the Italian police forces: ‘Too many episodes of racism, Parliament should intervene’ (The UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination said it was ‘concerned by the numerous reports on the widespread use of profiling racial discrimination by Italian law enforcement’. For this reason, the Committee recommended that Italy pass a law to ban these practices».	NEUTRAL	FanPage.it
28/09/2023	Subtitle: «Girl abused by her father in the Roma settlement since she was 8 years old, but no one believes her». (In the courtroom the girl’s mother, grandmother and a friend denied the accusations.)	NEGATIVE	Il Messaggero - Rome edition
12/10/2023	Subtitle: «Roma settlements ‘unusable’ among broken sewers and landfills. Five million to make them safe».	NEGATIVE	Virgilio.it

Romania

Date	Brief description	Type of message	Link to the material
03/02/2023	The article discusses sociologist Gelu Dumnică’s insights into the Roma population in Romania. He suggests that the actual number of Roma is higher than indicated by the recent census, which shows a decline of about 50 000 compared to 2011. Dumnică attributes this discrepancy to Roma people’s fear of self-identifying due to stigma and discrimination, and technical changes in the census regarding Roma subgroups. He estimates that the real Roma population in Romania could be between 1.2 to 1.5 million, significantly higher than official figures, but acknowledges that this is not an official statistic.	NEUTRAL	Rfi
04/02/2023	This article reports on Roma leaders questioning the results of the national census, claiming the census did not include Roma communities.	NEUTRAL	G4Media
19/02/2023	The article from «Europa Liberă» discusses the commemoration of the emancipation of the Roma in Romania, observed on 20 February. The article highlights the struggle of the Roma, who endured nearly half a millennium of slavery under monasteries, nobility and rulers until their official emancipation in 1856.	NEUTRAL	Europa Libera Romania

06/03/2023	The article reports on an important regional meeting organised by the «Pro Europa» Roma Party in Cluj-Napoca from 3 to 5 March 2023. The meeting aimed to establish a calendar of activities for the upcoming period. Representatives from 15 counties participated, discussing the organisation's priorities, which include addressing Roma community issues, providing educational support, expanding the workforce, strengthening partnerships with local authorities, cultural activities, legal matters and collaboration with NGOs and religious representatives.	POSITIVE	Ziua de Cluj
03/04/2023	This article discusses the importance of Roma representation in local decision making in Romania, highlighting the low political engagement among the Roma and efforts to improve it through EU strategies and the Council of Europe's ROMACT programme. It also addresses the role of Roma experts in local advocacy and the Regional Co-operation Council's initiative for Roma-focused budgeting in socio-economic policies.	POSITIVE	Euractiv
23/04/2023	The article reports on a violent confrontation in the Galați locality of Podoleni, involving three Roma families. This incident, stemming from longstanding disagreements, escalated into a street fight where stones and other blunt objects were used, resulting in the damage of two cars and a fence.	NEGATIVE	Mediafax
27/04/2023	The article discusses the introduction of the subjects of the Roma Holocaust and the liberation from slavery into the school curriculum.	POSITIVE	ziar de cluj
02/08/2023	This article reflects the statements of the head of state marking the Romani Holocaust and the role of Romania in the events.	POSITIVE	Mediafax
02/08/2023	The article marks the commemoration of the Romani Holocaust. Local media.	POSITIVE	BizBrasov
07/08/2023	This article describes a major disturbance in the centre of Șimleu Silvaniei, where a large group of Roma engaged in a violent confrontation on Sunday night. Armed with clubs, metal pipes and stones, they fought openly in the streets, causing alarm. The incident is believed to have started over the sale of a house in the city centre, where the local Roma community is known for frequently causing disturbances, noise and littering. The police intervened and issued a single fine of 1 000 lei. The article also mentions more video footage available on the YouTube channel of Ziarul Monitorul de Sălaj.	NEGATIVE	Monitorul de Salaj
08/08/2023	The article reports on an alleged scandal among Roma leading to death and injuries.	NEGATIVE	ZCH News
08/08/2023	Nicolae Păun, leader of the Partida Romilor Pro-Europa, commented on the controversy surrounding Gheboasă's performance at the Untold festival. He mentioned that Gheboasă's music appeals to a younger generation and compared it to other artists like BUG Mafia, La Familia and Paraziții, who use similar language.	NEGATIVE	G4Media
09/08/2023	This article is about the Roma community in Romania preparing for the «Untold Romano» festival in Cluj-Napoca, which will feature international Roma artists and traditional Roma cuisine.	NEUTRAL	Aktual24
09/08/2023	This article reports on a fight between members of two Roma families in the car park of a hotel on Calea Lugojului in Timișoara, where a wedding was taking place. The altercation occurred on Wednesday evening, and by the time police arrived, those involved in the incident had left the scene. No one involved in the fight filed a complaint with the police, nor did anyone seek hospital treatment for injuries. The police have started an investigation into public disturbance and are working to identify and locate the individuals involved.	NEGATIVE	Hotnews
10/08/2023	The article reports on a situation at the hospital in Câmpia Turzii, following a violent conflict between two groups in the town's Mihai Viteazu Square. As a result, five adults involved were injured and taken to the hospital for treatment. The police are conducting investigations to determine the full circumstances of the incident and will take necessary action.	NEGATIVE	Rfleqtmmedia

10/08/2023	This article discusses the social representations of the Holocaust concerning the Romani people. It mentions the deportations of Romani individuals during the Second World War to concentration camps and mass shootings by the Einsatzgruppen. The exact number of Romani victims remains uncertain, but estimates suggest around half a million across Europe. The article also highlights the European and Romanian commemorations of the Holocaust against Romani people, as well as the challenges in addressing this history in Romanian society.	POSITIVE	Observator Cultural
14/08/2023	This article describes a dispute at Aquapark Amazonia in Timișoara, where a group of Roma individuals were denied entry. The security guards cited the park being full and their discretion to select customers as reasons for not allowing the group in. This led to a heated argument between the group and the security agents. The person filming the incident questioned the refusal, highlighting that they had money and were well presented.	NEUTRAL	Ziare
15/08/2023	This article is about a conflict in Timișoara, Romania, where five individuals engaged in a dispute in the Ronaț area, leading to the destruction of a car. The police intervened, preventing further escalation and conducting an investigation into destruction and public disturbance offences.	NEGATIVE	Buletin de Timisoara
15/08/2023	Another article about a scandal among Roma, with goods and vehicles being destroyed.	NEGATIVE	Opinia Timisoarei
22/09/2023	This article is about the launch of the Virtual Museum of Roma Culture, founded by Dr Delia Grigore. The museum's primary goal is to preserve and promote Roma culture, providing accessible information about its history, values and contributions. Dr Grigore emphasises the museum's role in combating stereotypes, fostering intercultural dialogue and strengthening Roma identity. The museum offers content in multiple languages and plans to expand with interactive online events, educational resources and global outreach to showcase Roma culture.	POSITIVE	Observator Cultural
25/09/2023	This article describes a legal victory against alleged real estate fraud in Timișoara, Romania, where the state reclaimed a palace allegedly fraudulently held by Roma «clans» for 30 years.	NEGATIVE	Adevarul
27/09/2023	This article reports on an event entitled «Images from the Past: The Holocaust in Romania», hosted by the National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania «Elie Wiesel» and the Freedom House Romania Foundation. The event was announced to take place at the National History and Archaeology Museum in Constanta on 30 September 2023, aiming to remember and understand the Holocaust's impact on Jews and Roma in the Constanta region.	POSITIVE	Constanteanul
03/10/2023	This article reports on the Romanian Minister of Education, Ligia Deca, announcing the introduction of three new subjects in schools starting with the 2025/2026 school year: the history of communism, the Holocaust and the enslavement of Roma. While the first two subjects will be compulsory, the course on Roma history will be optional.	POSITIVE	SpotMedia
05/10/2023	This article is about a dispute between two Roma families in Timișoara, Romania, over a house on Constantin Brâncoveanu Boulevard. The conflict arose because both families had signed purchase agreements with the property owner, but only one family obtained the house. The disappointed party confronted the new owners, leading to a call to the police and gendarmes, who intervened. Upon arrival, the authorities found the situation calm and did not take any immediate action, as no formal complaints were filed.	NEGATIVE	Tion
16/10/2023	The article tells the story of a Roma woman who feels more liberated in prison than outside and explores the exotic tales of a girl stolen by a boy. It also discusses cases where the state sometimes turns a blind eye.	NEGATIVE	Hotnews

20/10/2023	This article is about a family of Roma ethnicity being refused entry to a swimming pool in Petrești, Romania, leading to the pool administrator being charged with abusive behaviour. The incident occurred in July 2021, but the case reached court in 2023. The administrator allegedly refused entry to the Roma woman and her children under the pretext of full capacity and insulted her using derogatory terms. The case highlights issues of discrimination and legal accountability in Romania.	NEUTRAL	SebesInfo
20/10/2023	This article reports on an incident at a swimming pool in Sebeș, Alba County, Romania, where the administrator was charged with abusive behaviour for denying entry to a Roma woman and her children and using derogatory language towards her. The event occurred in July 2021, but the case only reached court in 2023. Witnesses corroborated the woman's claims of discrimination and verbal abuse.	POSITIVE	Adevarul
23/10/2023	This article discussed the results of a census, noting that many Roma do not declare their ethnicity.	NEUTRAL	Euronews Romania
23/10/2023	The article reports on the arrest of Cosmos Tanase's pregnant niece, who is under 18. The incident occurred in the car park of the Arcadia Hospital in Iași, leading to a confrontation between the girl and several gendarmes. The girl, initially joking with the officers, became agitated and insulting when refused a ride home, eventually striking the gendarme.	NEGATIVE	SpyNews
24/10/2023	This article reports on a conflict between two Roma families on Morilor Street in Râmnicu Vâlcea on the morning of 24 October 2023. The Public Order Police intervened after receiving an emergency call about a large-scale fight. The altercation reportedly stemmed from a dispute between the family leaders. Upon arrival, the police had to use force to restore order. Eventually, the crowd was dispersed, and fines were issued for disturbing public peace.	NEGATIVE	Gazeta Valceana

Across Europe, the Roma community remains one of the most marginalised and misrepresented groups in the media. This report examines the portrayal of Roma in the printed and online press of Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania between October 2022 and October 2023. Through an in-depth analysis of media narratives, the study uncovers how journalistic practices shape public perception, reinforce stereotypes and influence societal attitudes. By exploring both prevailing biases and emerging shifts in reporting, the report provides a compelling overview of the role media plays in either entrenching discrimination or fostering inclusivity.

The findings reveal a trend over the covered period: across all four countries, Roma are frequently depicted through negative stereotypes linked to crime, poverty and social exclusion. While Bulgaria's press demonstrates a particularly stark bias, often employing derogatory language, Italy and Romania present more varied narratives, including instances of positive representation. In Greece, despite the dominance of negative reporting, some media voices strive to counterbalance stereotypes with more nuanced perspectives. These variations highlight both persistent challenges and opportunities for progress in media representation.

To foster fairer and more responsible journalism, the report advocates for concrete reforms, including journalist training in cultural sensitivity, increased Roma representation in the media and policy-driven efforts to promote balanced reporting. By implementing these recommendations media organisations, policy makers and civil society can work together to shift harmful narratives and support a more inclusive and accurate portrayal of Roma communities across Europe.

The member states of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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