

# Council of Europe Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2026 – 2030)



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Building towards a strong  
community of change



Roma and Travellers

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Council of Europe  
**Strategy for Roma  
and Traveller Inclusion**  
(2026 – 2030)

Building towards a strong  
community of change

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des roms et des Gens du voyage (2026 - 2030)*

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# Introduction: The Council of Europe and Roma and Travellers

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## Council of Europe strategic orientation

As the Council of Europe engages in a collective and inclusive process towards a “New Democratic Pact for Europe”, it is essential to invest in strategies that promote inclusion of those exposed to discrimination and exclusion, ensuring their full and effective participation in public and political life and democratic processes. A renewed strategic commitment to Roma and Traveller inclusion advances effective action by the Council of Europe and its member States to implement existing binding and non-binding standards, promote and protect the rights of Roma and Travellers, and improve their inclusion into society on an equal footing with other citizens throughout Europe.

The protection of the rights of Roma and Travellers lies at the core of the Council of Europe’s mission and is part of its mandate to uphold human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Since the adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma<sup>1</sup> in 2010, the Council of Europe has significantly reinforced its political commitment to the inclusion of Roma and Travellers. This commitment has been operationalised through two multiannual action plans, encompassing standard-setting, monitoring, and targeted co-operation activities.

The Reykjavik Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe “United Around Our Values” (2023) highlights dignity and equality<sup>2</sup> among the core areas of work of the Council of Europe and commits to strengthening work towards inclusive societies without marginalisation, exclusion, racism and intolerance. The Reykjavik Principles for Democracy underline the importance of ensuring full, equal and active participation for all in democratic processes and the promotion of political and public life that is free from hate speech and hate crime.

The Council of Europe’s Programme and Budget 2024-2027<sup>3</sup> identifies “Acting for Equality, Diversity and Respect” as one of its 12 strategic priorities. Special attention is devoted to the situation of Roma and Traveller<sup>4</sup> communities, in recognition of the persistent and widespread challenges they continue to face across Europe. The Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) and its Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) were tasked with the development and implementation of the present Strategy.

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1. [The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, High Level Summit \(20 October 2010\).](#)

2. [Reykjavik Declaration, United around our values](#), paragraphs 18, 30 and 32.

3. Council of Europe’s Programme and Budget (2024-2027): <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/programme-budget>

4. 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.

As already mentioned, the present Strategy was preceded by a Strategic Action Plan (2020-2025)<sup>5</sup> and a Thematic Action Plan (2016-2019)<sup>6</sup>. The Strategic Action Plan covering 2020-2025 focused on three priority areas:<sup>7</sup> advancing and protecting human rights, combating prejudice and antigypsyism, and fostering societal inclusion. The Plan has demonstrated strong relevance, particularly in building the capacity of public authorities to address the needs of Roma and Travellers. It has also furthered inclusive education, enhanced political participation in decision-making and strengthened monitoring and resilience mechanisms for Roma and Traveller communities.

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5. [Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#).

6. [Thematic Action Plan \(2016-2019\)](#).

7. Three priority areas of the Strategic Action Plan: 1) Combat antigypsyism and discrimination and support real and effective equality; 2) Support democratic participation and promote public trust and accountability; 3) Support access to inclusive quality education and training.

# The Strategy for Roma and Traveller inclusion: its mission, priorities and objectives

## The need for the Strategy

The Council of Europe is a leading international actor in advancing the inclusion of Roma and Travellers. Through pioneering initiatives, it has shaped action to combat antigypsyism, foster political participation, promote inclusive education, safeguard fundamental rights, including the rights of Roma and Traveller women and girls, and preserve and promote the history and culture of Roma and Traveller communities. Its impact has been made possible through a combination of intergovernmental work, binding and non-binding legal instruments, monitoring, co-operation programmes, and sustained partnerships with Roma and Traveller civil society. This has contributed to making the inclusion of Roma and Travellers a priority of public authorities in member States, while the Council of Europe has consistently demonstrated institutional commitment throughout the Organisation.



Several essential new standards, policies and tools were developed during the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025): on history teaching<sup>8</sup> and Holocaust<sup>9</sup> remembrance, multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration,<sup>10</sup> combating hate speech<sup>11</sup> and hate crime,<sup>12</sup> youth participation,<sup>13</sup> political<sup>14</sup> participation, and equality of women and girls.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Roma and Traveller topics were mainstreamed throughout new strategic documents of several entities within the Organisation, including in the fields of children's rights<sup>16</sup>, gender equality,<sup>17</sup> youth,<sup>18</sup> and education.<sup>19</sup>

8. Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials and Capacity-building programme and tools supporting the implementation of CM Rec(2020)2.
9. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on passing on remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity.
10. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)10 of the Committee of Ministers to multilevel policies and governance for intercultural integration.
11. Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech.
12. Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate crime.
13. Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Roma youth participation.
14. Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)9 of the Committee of Ministers on political participation of national minority youth.
15. Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls.
16. Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027).
17. Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 p.37.
18. Youth Sector Strategy 2030.
19. Council of Europe Education strategy "Learners First" (2024-2030).



The provision of peer-to-peer exchanges through the thematic work and reports<sup>20</sup> of the ADI-ROM raised awareness of several essential areas that a new strategic document should consider after 2025.

The joint programmes implemented with the European Union (JUSTROM, INSCHOOL, ROMACT, ROMACTED, EQUIROM, Roma Integration III and Roma Holocaust Remembrance and Education - RomaMemory), brought advancements in the rights of the communities in the member States. Co-operation activities were carried out jointly with the authorities and civil society to support the structural implementation of Roma and Traveller-related judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court). Finally, in co-operation with the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC), the Council of Europe continued to promote Roma arts and culture as a tool to boost pride among Roma and fight antigypsyism.

Despite these important achievements, Europe has faced many challenges in recent years that have negatively impacted the protection of rights and the effective implementation of policies concerning Roma and Travellers. Austerity policies in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the covid-19 pandemic and geo-political conflicts, socio-political reactions to migration and economic fears due to inflation, the energy crisis, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) with little regulation, as well as democratic backsliding, all affect policy advancements made to enhance equality of Roma and Travellers. New judgments from the European Court for Human Rights, findings from monitoring bodies (i.e. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance – ECRI, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities – ACFC, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – GREVIO) and reports from Roma and Traveller civil society organisations highlight ongoing violations of the rights of Roma and Travellers and areas needing further improvement.



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20. [ADI-ROM Thematic reports.](#)



## The new Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2026-2030)

The Council of Europe Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion contributes to implement the Organisation's core mandate of protecting human rights, promoting democracy, and upholding the rule of law for all Europeans. Its priorities and objectives directly stem from the evaluation of the Council of Europe's previous strategic documents on Roma and Traveller inclusion and the recommendations addressed to the member States by the Council of Europe monitoring bodies and Roma and Traveller civil society organisations.

The Strategy demonstrates the Council of Europe's sustained commitment to addressing historical injustices while harnessing existing mechanisms for change. By strengthening a co-ordinated approach across member States, the Strategy aims to transform fragmented national efforts into a coherent European response that can effectively combat antigypsyism, ensure equal enjoyment of rights, promote gender equality as well as active participation of all Roma and Travellers in democratic processes. Through this Strategy, the Council of Europe affirms that the protection of Europe's largest minority is not just a national responsibility but a shared European obligation essential to upholding the continent's fundamental values and social cohesion.

The long-term vision for Roma and Travellers in Europe is to achieve substantive and comprehensive equality and dignity for Roma and Travellers across member States, to foster inclusive societies valuing Roma and Travellers' cultural heritage and, finally, to establish sustainable mechanisms which would support Roma and Travellers' agency and gender-sensitive active participation. The Strategy will be implemented through a comprehensive approach that includes intergovernmental work and co-operation projects, considering the findings from the monitoring bodies.

The overall strategic objective is to **further advance towards equality and ensure the protection of human rights of Roma and Travellers in the Council of Europe's member States.**

### The focus of the period 2026-2030 will be on three priorities:

- ▶ Increasing and promoting knowledge and awareness about Roma and Traveller communities to combat antigypsyism and prejudice while fostering a sense of pride in Roma and Traveller identities;
- ▶ Ensuring equal rights, dignity, and gender equality for Roma and Travellers by effectively implementing legislation and policies across all areas of life;<sup>21</sup>
- ▶ Promoting democratic governance and increasing active participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life.

21. The priority refers to essential spheres of life essential for effective inclusion: education, employment, health, housing and social protection.

These three priorities will be achieved by mobilising the institutional capacity and using the instruments of the Council of Europe to the fullest possible degree. The governments of member States will drive the implementation of the Strategy at national, regional and local levels, with the active participation of civil society organisations and in line with the relevant national legislative framework.

At the Council of Europe, the implementation of the strategy will be co-ordinated by the Committee of Experts for Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) under the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). These will use their expertise for the implementation of the Strategy in partnership with member States, civil society, the European Union and other international organisations, and strengthen inter-sectoral coherence on the topic of Roma and Traveller equality within the Organisation and beyond.

The proposed priority areas incorporate intersectional aspects – gender equality, the perspectives of youth, children and inclusivity and environmental considerations – to further advance the equality of Roma and Travellers and ensure that no one is left behind. These will be operationalised through inclusive policy design, disaggregated data collection, participatory approaches and legal and institutional initiatives.





Matgorzata Mirgas-Tas, *March*, 462x387cm, textile acrylic, wooden stretcher, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Foksai Gallery Foundation. Collection Bonnefanten. Photo: Jacopo Salvi

### **Priority 1: Increasing and promoting knowledge and awareness about Roma and Traveller communities to combat antigypsyism and prejudice, while fostering a sense of pride in Roma and Traveller identities**

Antigypsyism<sup>22</sup>, as well as anti-nomadism, remain major obstacles to the meaningful inclusion of Roma and Travellers. This specific type of racism is contrary to the values of the Council of Europe, such as respect and tolerance, and it is a root cause of discrimination and the repeated violation of human rights of Roma and Travellers. Society's knowledge about Roma and Travellers rarely goes beyond the notion that they are "in a situation of vulnerability" or "exposed to discrimination", which essentially reinforces negative attitudes, stereotyping and stigmatisation of Roma and Travellers in all segments of life, including in the media and in the field of education. Stereotypes about Roma and Traveller women and girls in particular give rise to enhanced forms of discrimination and prejudice.

Despite ongoing efforts, research<sup>23</sup> has shown a lack of comprehensive and accurate representation of the history and culture of Roma and Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials. This further perpetuates prejudice attached to Roma and Travellers and leads to ignorance of their valuable contribution to European cultural and historical heritage. The lack of knowledge and memory sites about the Roma Holocaust and its denial and distortion exacerbate these issues. Formal education is crucial for increasing knowledge and awareness about Roma and Traveller culture and history, including the Holocaust and other historical persecutions. At the same time, raising awareness of the public on these topics remains an important issue. This also includes the need to support cultural institutions that promote and preserve Roma and Traveller culture, serving as centres of education and cultural dialogue for both the communities and the general public.

22. In Ireland, the term 'antigypsyism' is not widely used. While the concept is clearly understood and relevant, it is described in national inclusion strategies as 'racism and discrimination against Roma and Travellers'.

23. Council of Europe, 2020, *The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks, Analytical Report*.

Teaching about the identities<sup>24</sup> of Roma and Travellers and the consequences of antigypsyism is essential to re-contextualise academic knowledge and offer a better understanding of the communities' historical background. The final evaluation of the Strategic Action Plan (2020–2025) has shown that collaboration with academic institutions on the recognition and consequences of antigypsyism offer a valuable space for shaping future policymakers and other decision-makers. When implementing inclusive education<sup>25</sup> practices and shaping new generations, it is important to understand the way cultural patterns influence one's relationship with others, while also considering social differences.



Against this background, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2<sup>26</sup>, which contains comprehensive guidance on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials. Since 2020, the Council of Europe's Observatory on History Teaching (OHTe) has been developing tools and materials to support the implementation of these standards, in close collaboration with the Roma and Travellers Division. Moreover, extensive work has been carried out with ERIAC on promoting the contribution of Roma and Travellers to the common European cultural and historical heritage, including the harmonisation of the Romani language<sup>27</sup>. The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (COMEX) makes recom-

mendations regarding the protection and promotion of the Romani language to the member States where it is spoken.<sup>28</sup>

In the current landscape, both traditional and digital media (including social media) often contribute to the reinforcement of negative stigma about Roma and Travellers. The country monitoring reports<sup>29</sup> of ECRI and opinions of the ACFC highlight the explicit publication in certain media of racist content, the use of offensive language and stereotypes in relation to minorities and derogatory comments directed at Roma and Travellers. Both ECRI and ACFC have also drawn attention to instances of violence against these communities and have further noted that some media convey stereotypical or even degrading images of



24. In the context of Roma identity, language, history and culture are considered as essential pillars.

25. Through the joint EU-CoE INSCHOOL Project (2017-2024), efforts were made to assist several member States in designing and implementing inclusive education practices in schools.

26. Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.

27. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) recognises Romani as a non-territorial minority language traditionally spoken by Roma communities across Europe. Romani includes a variety of dialects reflecting the diverse cultural and historical backgrounds of Roma groups. In addition, some Roma communities, notably the Boyash/Beyash, speak Boyash/Beyash, a distinct language derived from archaic Romanian dialects, with sub-dialects including Árgyelán, Muncsán, and Ticsán. Both Romani and Boyash/Beyash are supported under the ECRML, which promotes their protection and use in education, media, and public life.

28. Country monitoring – Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (COMEX). See also the Factsheet on Romani and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (to be published in 2025).

29. Country Monitoring - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

Roma and Travellers, especially women. ECRI has also reported campaigns against the use of Romani, the minority language spoken by many Roma.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems can reinforce harmful narratives and contribute to the misrepresentation and marginalisation of Roma and Travellers by replicating and amplifying existing societal biases, including gender stereotypes. There is a critical need for traditional and digital media outlets and regulatory bodies to adopt more ethical, responsible, inclusive and gender-sensitive practices, promoting positive narratives and highlighting the contributions of Roma and Travellers to European culture. Accurate resonance and amplifying Roma and Traveller voices in the media and education remain crucial for preventing and combating antigypsyism and its negative consequences and for allowing for the democratic participation of all Roma and Travellers.

### **The priority pursues the following specific operational objectives:**

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- ▶ Building alliances with traditional and digital media professionals, and regulatory bodies to counter disinformation and promote objective, inclusive and gender-sensitive reporting about Roma and Traveller communities;
- ▶ Evaluating the impact of generative AI on the rights of Roma and Travellers, with the aim of identifying and mitigating ethical risks, while harnessing its potential to enhance their visibility and strengthen their participation – particularly among women and youth – in digital spaces;
- ▶ Enhancing inclusive education practices and policies for Roma and Travellers by incorporating the history (including Holocaust remembrance) and culture of Roma and Travellers into curricula, national programmes and teaching materials in close collaboration with the Council of Europe's OHTE and ERIAC;
- ▶ Supporting promotion of Roma and Traveller cultural heritage and the harmonisation, protection and teaching of the Romani language in co-operation with ERIAC and other relevant stakeholders;
- ▶ Raising awareness of all parts of society of the Roma Holocaust and supporting its remembrance, research and memorialisation, in co-operation with civil society and historians;
- ▶ Promoting the integration of antigypsyism and intersectional discrimination into academic curricula as essential areas of study, while supporting the development of relevant tools and resources in this regard and advancing community-based participatory research in collaboration with Roma and Traveller communities and scholars.

### **Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:**

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- ▶ Work with Roma and Traveller media and mainstream media and regulatory bodies, journalists and civil society on promoting inclusive and gender-sensitive reporting and combating stigma and prejudice about Roma and Traveller communities, while addressing intersectional discrimination of Roma and Traveller individuals experiencing particular forms of vulnerability;<sup>30</sup>
- ▶ Foster collaboration within the Organisation and with other relevant stakeholders to understand and address the role and ethics in generative AI in perpetuating misrepresentation of Roma and Travellers in digital spaces, while also harnessing the positive potential of AI systems to amplify the voices of Roma and Travellers, in particular women and youth;

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30. Specific type of vulnerabilities faced by women, youth, children LGBTI, the elderly, persons with disabilities and victims of climate and natural hazards.



- ▶ Disseminate and promote the implementation of the capacity-building programme and tools for the inclusion of history and culture of Roma and Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials, and support Holocaust remembrance, considering different contexts and needs of the member States. The programme and tools are based on the Committee of Ministers Recommendations CM/Rec(2020)2<sup>31</sup> on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials, and CM/Rec(2022)5<sup>32</sup> on passing on remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity;
- ▶ Support member States and civil society organisations in implementing specific activities in the field of remembrance<sup>33</sup> and memorialisation of the Roma Holocaust, with the active involvement of Roma and Traveller youth;
- ▶ Organise specific co-ordination platforms with European stakeholders on promoting and teaching about Roma and Traveller culture, history, remembrance and language, including Roma and Traveller women's contribution to culture and history;
- ▶ Organise awareness-raising activities to increase knowledge on Roma and Traveller history and culture in member States;
- ▶ Provide support to cultural institutions and civil society organisations in their efforts to promote Roma and Traveller history and culture;
- ▶ Collaborate with relevant sectors of the Council of Europe, ERIAC, and other pertinent organisations on the promotion of the cultural identity of Roma and Travellers in member States, and on the harmonisation of the Romani language;
- ▶ Utilise existing and prepare new tools for preventing and combating antigypsyism with a gender and intersectional perspective and integrate this issue into academic curricula, programmes, textbooks and courses;
- ▶ Provide support to independent civil society organisations to monitor and report antigypsyist incidents and enhance equality data collection to prevent systemic antigypsyism;
- ▶ Mark annually the International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), International Roma Day (8 April), Roma Resistance Day (16 May), Roma Holocaust Memorial Day (2 August) and International Romani Language Day (5 November) and raise awareness on the meaning and importance of these dates in the member States.



31. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2020\)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.](#)

32. [CM/Rec\(2022\)5 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on passing on remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity.](#)

33. Activities include addressing the topic of Roma Resistance and presenting examples of member States that protected Roma communities from deportation to Nazi concentration and extermination camps during the Second World War.



## **Priority 2: Ensure equal rights, dignity, and gender equality for Roma and Travellers by effectively implementing legislation and policies across all areas of life**

Roma and Traveller communities continue to face significant and multifaceted challenges that undermine their dignity and human rights. The Court has found a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights in respect to Roma and Traveller applicants in 114 judgments in the period from 2002 to 2024. In over 40 cases, the supervision of their execution is pending. Several judgments are under enhanced supervision since they raise structural problems including discrimination, for example in the field of education, ill-treatment, racially motivated crimes and lack of proper investigation of such crimes.

Roma and Traveller communities are regularly subjected to mob violence and attacks by extremist groups. Discrimination perpetrated by police and other law-enforcement officials against Roma and Travellers is a persistent problem. ECRI and the ACFC consistently stress the importance of combating pervasive hate speech and hate crimes against Roma and Travellers fuelled by deep-rooted racism that operates at individual, institutional, and structural levels.

The existence of cases of denial of equal protection under the law, disregard for historical exclusion, and weak implementation of laws and policies in the field of social policy further deepen the marginalisation, especially at local level. These communities continue to face high unemployment rates, limited access to quality education, substandard living conditions, and significant health disparities — often as a result of institutional neglect, antigypsyism, and exclusionary policies. In this context, both the ECRI and the ACFC point to systemic discrimination in sectors such as education, employment, health, housing, and social services/social protection. The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) found violations of social rights of Roma and Travellers under the European Social Charter in a considerable number of cases. These decisions show a wide array of the problems that persist and hinder the full and equal





enjoyment of human rights by Roma and Travellers. In its 2023 Conclusions<sup>34</sup> on the articles of the Charter relating to children, family and migrants, the ECSR further emphasised the need for member States to protect the rights of Roma children, particularly in relation to access to housing of Roma families, health and inclusive education.

There are still structural obstacles preventing the realisation of Roma and Traveller women's full enjoyment of their human rights in society. Reports of the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies and of many other international and national bodies show that Roma and Traveller women and girls suffer from stark inequalities in fields such as education, employment, economic situation, housing, health, life expectancy and participation in public and political life, making them subject to gender-based violence. Roma and Traveller women are often not aware of redress mechanisms that are in place to tackle discrimination. Additionally, GREVIO highlighted that Roma and Traveller women are discriminated against when seeking protection and support.

In the field of education, several judgments of the Court are under enhanced supervision since they raise structural problems relating to discrimination. Educational segregation of Roma children, alongside residential segregation and forced evictions and migration, intensifies their exclusion from education. These challenges further limit the impact of social inclusion policies targeting Roma and Traveller communities, especially the ones with migrant or nomadic backgrounds.

The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights recommended stronger action to uphold the human rights of Roma and Travellers during the monitoring visits to several member States.<sup>35</sup> The ACFC also urges states to take resolute action to address the recurring discrimination and violations of rights experienced by Roma and Travellers. In recent years, efforts were made to assist member States in improving desegregation policies and to integrate all Roma and Traveller children into mainstream education. This included the provision of comprehensive guidelines for desegregating schools and adjusting catchment areas with

34. [Conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights 2023](#) (Children, Family and Migrants).

35. [Thematic work on Roma and Travellers – Commissioner for Human Rights](#).



the aim to promote inclusive schooling of Roma and Traveller children; assistance regarding the development of national desegregation strategies; support to local-level desegregation initiatives; and facilitation of peer policy exchanges with ministries of education and civil society organisations on the topic of desegregation. To ensure the protection of children's rights and to allow for an inclusive educational environment of Roma and Traveller girls and boys, further guidance and support is needed.

In addition to addressing systemic discrimination and promoting inclusive education, protecting the traditional nomadic<sup>36</sup> way of life of certain Roma and Traveller groups remains a crucial yet often overlooked aspect of their cultural rights. For communities such as the Travellers/Gens du voyage, Yenish, Kale, and Manouches, mobility is an essential element of cultural identity and social organisation. However, many individuals and families who maintain a nomadic way of life continue to face structural barriers, including the criminalisation of unauthorised encampments, a lack of adequate halting and transit sites, and discriminatory local policies that restrict freedom of movement. These obstacles not only undermine the enjoyment of economic and social rights, but may also lead to violations of civil rights and increased marginalisation.

### **The priority pursues the following specific operational objectives:**

- Providing advice and support to public authorities in structural implementation of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights related to Roma and Travellers, in order to uphold their human rights, thereby promoting justice and compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Strengthening capacities of relevant public authorities, including policy makers, police officers and legal practitioners, on recognition and investigation of various manifestations of antigypsyism, gender-based violence, sexism and intersectional discrimination and effective protection of the human and social rights<sup>37</sup> of all Roma and Travellers;

36. The nomadic way of life, as an expression of private and family life, is protected under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to respect for one's private life, family life and home.

37. Rights related to civil registration, education, employment, health, housing and social protection.

- ▶ Developing, promoting and implementing Council of Europe standards and tools on desegregation, inclusive and gender-sensitive quality education for Roma and Traveller children;
- ▶ Supporting member States and relevant stakeholders in recognising, respecting, and protecting the right to live a nomadic way of life;
- ▶ Building and strengthening capacities of Roma and Traveller civil society organisations, including women and youth organisations, to promote and use Council of Europe standards and tools and support them in their efforts to systematically monitor, document and report antigypsyist incidents and violations of human rights of Roma and Travellers.

### **Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:**

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- ▶ Co-ordinate activities of relevant sectors within the Organisation to provide guidance to member States to design and implement specific actions for the structural implementation of Roma and Traveller-related judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as of relevant monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe;
- ▶ Implement and enhance capacity-building measures for police officers and legal practitioners on handling racially motivated crimes, hate speech and discrimination cases with a focus on Roma and Travellers, and including gender-based violence, sexism and intersectional discrimination faced by Roma and Traveller women and girls;
- ▶ Increase co-ordination and networking with the equality bodies, human rights and ombudsman institutions of the member States to enhance the exchange of experience and knowledge on Roma and Traveller complaints;
- ▶ Disseminate existing Committee of Ministers recommendations relating to Roma and Traveller issues and follow up on their implementation by the member States, in particular Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)1<sup>38</sup> on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls. Develop, as needed, new standards with member States on topics relevant to the protection of Roma and Traveller rights;
- ▶ Provide support to member States to ensure better protection of rights related to housing, education, employment, healthcare and social protection;
- ▶ Provide support to member States in developing policies and implementing standards on inclusive gender-sensitive quality education and desegregation, based on the instruments adopted by the Council of Europe and other relevant partners in this field;
- ▶ Provide capacity-building opportunities for Roma and Traveller civil society, including women and youth organisations, to utilise Council of Europe standards, tools and mechanisms for better protection of Roma and Traveller rights, as well as systematically monitor, document and report antigypsyist incidents.
- ▶ Utilise relevant platforms to facilitate networking, exchange of views and co-ordinate action regarding the protection and promotion of human and social rights of Roma and Travellers within the Organisation, with member States, other international organisations and national partners, as well as civil society and the academic community;
- ▶ Support member States in developing legal and policy frameworks that ensure sufficient, accessible, and culturally appropriate stopping places and services, while also strengthening co-operation with relevant stakeholders to monitor violations of rights in this area and promote positive narratives around mobility as a legitimate form of cultural expression.

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38. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2024\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls](#)





### **Priority 3: Promoting democratic governance and increasing active participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life**

Without active public and political participation of Roma and Travellers in essential societal processes, there is limited potential for advancing policies for creating socio-economic opportunities for them and their access to services, especially for those facing types of vulnerability<sup>39</sup> and intersectional discrimination. The Council of Europe's monitoring bodies, including ECRI, the ACFC, and the ECSR, have consistently highlighted these issues and called for targeted, rights-based interventions. Their findings underscore the urgent need for co-ordinated, member state-led actions that actively dismantle structural inequalities and promote the full and equal participation of Roma and Travellers in all aspects of public life.

The prevalent invisibility of Roma and Travellers in the political arena can lead to the isolation of communities, making them easy targets for vote-buying, tokenism, exploitation or neglect, which further undermines their ability to advocate for their rights and interests. Respecting the dignity and agency of Roma and Travellers, as a strategic imperative for democratic integrity, societal cohesion, and peace, is often overlooked. By addressing these challenges, mobilising relevant stakeholders and providing space for the empowerment of all Roma and Travellers, member States can achieve progress in advancing the inclusion of Roma and Travellers and strengthen democracy and human rights protection.

Various consultation mechanisms and Dialogue meetings with Roma and Traveller civil society, including international Roma and Traveller women's conferences, underscored the need to address discrimination faced by Roma and Traveller women and girls and provide space for their full public and political participation. The Committee of Ministers emphasised that equality for Roma and Travellers and gender equality are central to human rights, democracy, good governance, and sustainable development. This was also acknowledged in the 10 Principles of Democracy<sup>40</sup> adopted in Reykjavik in 2023. The low participation of Roma and Traveller women in political and public life requires specific measures to address existing barriers.

39. For example by women, youth, children LGBTI, elderly, persons with disabilities and victims of climate and natural hazards.

40. [Appendix III of the Reykjavik Declaration](#).

In 2023, Roma youth participation<sup>41</sup> was highlighted as essential for protecting democracy and fostering active citizenship. The Committee of Ministers recommended addressing antigypsyism, inequalities, and policy gaps to ensure the inclusion of Roma and Traveller youth in public and political life. Along the same line, the empowerment of women and girls<sup>42</sup> as agents of change remains a prerequisite for ensuring active public and political participation.

Furthermore, “Giving a voice to every child”<sup>43</sup> is a priority of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), stemming from the right of children to be heard regarding decisions that directly affect them. This priority underscores the importance of child participation as a fundamental right and a cornerstone of democratic societies, and calls on member States to create inclusive, safe, and supportive environments where children can actively engage and influence policies and practices that shape their futures. However, children are often excluded from consultation processes and empowerment opportunities, which would naturally prepare them to become active citizens in their communities. Through its co-operation programmes with the European Union, the Council of Europe invests in strengthening participatory governance by empowering Roma communities – including children and youth – to engage in local decision-making processes. Initiatives under the joint EU-CoE ROMACT and ROMACTED programmes have helped ensure that Roma and Traveller children are not only protected under relevant legal frameworks but are also actively involved in shaping the policies and services that affect their lives, in line with the priorities of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027).

Both community members and mainstream society should recognise the transformative potential of Roma and Travellers for social and political change and how their active participation and community contribution can lead to stronger social cohesion. Political education through Roma Political Schools<sup>44</sup> has the potential to contribute to all core pillars proposed by the Secretary General in “The New Democratic Pact for Europe”<sup>45</sup> to reflect the dynamic initiated at the Reykjavik summit in 2023. Thus, Roma Political Schools can promote learning and practicing democracy, as well as protecting and innovating democracy. Implemented by civil society organisations or the academic sector, Roma Political Schools have the potential to empower voters, prepare electoral candidates, and enhance understanding of party politics. They also equip elected candidates with advocacy tools and provide an academic framework to integrate topics on Roma and Traveller rights and inclusion goals. This is especially important for ensuring greater involvement of Roma and Traveller women and youth in all aspects of policy development, thereby incorporating the gender and youth perspective<sup>46</sup> in decision-making, as foreseen in the Reykjavik Declaration.

The capacity-building tools<sup>47</sup> developed in the areas of participatory strategic planning and governance, participatory and programme budgeting, and access to resources for community development are particularly crucial for engaging relevant stakeholders and Roma and Traveller communities in the local and national policy decision-making processes, as well as in advocating for more sustainable change. Revitalising democracy is only fully achieved if all segments of society participate on an equal footing so that they gain a voice to advocate for specific

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41. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2023\)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Roma youth participation.](#)

42. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2024\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls.](#)

43. Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027), priority area 5.

44. [Roma Political Schools.](#)

45. [Building a new democratic pact – Concept note](#) (2025).

46. [Council of Europe Youth perspective.](#)

47. Tools and knowledge were built through the implementation of [JP EU-CoE ROMACT](#) and [JP EU-CoE ROMACTED](#).



matters affecting their lives. On the other hand, it also remains essential that public authorities are capacitated to ensure the enjoyment of human and social rights by Roma and Travellers by supporting the social inclusion of marginalised communities, in line with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe. These aspects were also underlined in the conclusions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Dialogue meeting with Roma and Traveller civil society organisations, the final evaluation of the Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025), and the evaluations of the Roma Political Schools and of the Joint EU-CoE Programme ROMACTED.



### **The priority pursues the following specific operational objectives:**

- ▶ Raising awareness and building capacities of Roma and Traveller communities on civic engagement and political participation, with a specific focus on including and protecting persons affected by specific vulnerabilities;<sup>48</sup>
- ▶ Strengthening capacities of public authorities' relevant services and building partnerships to ensure better inclusion of Roma and Travellers at local, national and regional level while considering the persons affected by specific vulnerabilities<sup>49</sup> within Roma and Traveller communities;
- ▶ Promoting innovative models of political and civic education on Roma and Traveller inclusion and the protection of their rights, in close collaboration with Roma and Traveller civil society organisations and academic sector.

48. Specific type of vulnerabilities faced by women, youth, children LGBTI, elderly, persons with disabilities and victims of climate and natural hazards.

49. Ibid.



### Council of Europe action in this area will seek to:

- ▶ Promote, disseminate and follow up on the implementation by member States of relevant CM recommendations (i.e. CM Rec(2023)4<sup>50</sup> on Roma youth participation, CM Rec (2024)1<sup>51</sup> on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls) notably regarding positive action measures, awareness-raising measures for decision-makers, capacity-building and empowerment of Roma and Traveller youth, women and girls;
- ▶ Build national, regional and local partnerships to ensure the protection of the human rights of Roma and Travellers by public authorities, in line with the Council of Europe standards and the objectives of other international organisations;
- ▶ Establish co-operation with relevant academic structures for developing and implementing programmes on political education on Roma and Traveller inclusion;
- ▶ Co-operate with Roma and Traveller networks and civil society organisations, including women and youth organisations, in designing and implementing education programmes and capacity-building activities on strengthening democratic and political participation, advocacy for rights and civic engagement;
- ▶ Establish co-operation and joint actions on democratic participation with relevant Council of Europe sectors (Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Regional and Local Authorities, Commissioner for Human Rights, Venice Commission, the Council of Europe Development Bank, etc.), including in the field of public and political participation of persons affected by specific vulnerabilities within Roma and Traveller communities;
- ▶ Strengthen co-operation with the European Union, while establishing and maintaining constructive partnership with international partners (European Union, OSCE, UN) and Roma and Traveller organisations and networks.

50. Recommendation CM/Rec(2023)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Roma youth participation.

51. CM/Rec(2024)1 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls.

# Institutional setting and working methods

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## Strategy design

This Strategy resulted from a broad consultation process, carried out with the Council of Europe member States, within the Organisation and with the relevant external stakeholders. The drafting group was set up during the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of ADI-ROM in May 2024, with the participation of the Czech Republic, Hungary, France, the Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, as well as several participants and observers of the ADI-ROM (Advisory Council on Youth, Roma Education Fund, European Roma Grassroots Organisation Network, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture, ternType International Roma Youth Network, ROMEUROPE). In parallel, consultations were carried out with Roma and Traveller civil society organisations during the Dialogue meetings and relevant Council of Europe sectors during the meetings of the Inter-Secretariat Taskforce on Roma and Traveller Inclusion.

The Strategy outlines the action of the Council of Europe and offers support to member States to ensure better outcomes in relation to equality and inclusion of Roma and Travellers and consolidate results from the previous Action Plans in this field, while using the institutional capacity of the Council of Europe and available tools and standards.

The Strategy follows a comprehensive **human rights approach**, with a strong focus on the principles of equality, gender equality and non-discrimination, and participation and inclusion.

## Institutional setting

Implementation of the Strategy will be overseen by an intergovernmental structure (CDADI and its subordinate body ADI-ROM), which ensures co-ordination and co-operation among member States (for example through intergovernmental peer reviews and support activities) and with other relevant Council of Europe advisory and monitoring bodies (for example, the ACFC, ECRI and the Commissioner for Human Rights). Member States are specifically encouraged to consult and involve civil society organisations in data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy.

## Working methods

The Strategy provides a specific framework and tools to the Council of Europe and member States to foster inclusion of Roma and Travellers. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of new and existing standards and tools, organisation of capacity-building activities and production of relevant resources and guidelines, awareness-raising activities (including thematic campaigns), as well as the provision of platforms for discussing new trends and emerging issues where policy and legislative responses are necessary, in line with the relevant national legislative framework.

Mainstreaming and reinforcing the work on Roma and Traveller rights and equality in general into relevant Council of Europe sectors is among the essential working methods of the Strategy. Those sectors are invited to take initiatives within the scope of their mandate and resources.

A gender mainstreaming and intersectional approach will be adopted for the implementation of the Strategy.

## Partnerships

The transversality of the Strategy assumes that all relevant Council of Europe institutions (the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Commissioner for Human Rights), and sectors, advisory and monitoring bodies (ECRI, ACFC, COMEX, etc.) actively refer to and contribute to the implementation of the Strategy within the scope of their mandate.

Partnerships will be strengthened with European institutions and agencies, other international organisations and foundations, equality bodies, national human rights institutions, and mainstream and Roma/Traveller civil society. In this context, the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society, established by the Committee of Ministers in 2015, is of particular significance and will play a role in engaging Roma and Traveller non-governmental organisations, including women and youth organisations, and individuals in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. Furthermore, the existing Memorandum of Understanding with ERIAC provides an institutional framework for joint work, and closer strategic alignment needed for the implementation of the Strategy in the period 2026-2030.

## Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility guidelines will be developed to promote the Strategy and results achieved. The main communication will be carried out through the official website of the Roma and Travellers Division ([www.coe.int/roma](http://www.coe.int/roma)) and through designated social media channels.

Regular communication will be maintained with the Council of Europe's Media Department for a specific communication about milestone events and results.

Work in this area will continue to:

- ▶ Increase the visibility of Council of Europe standards, resources, co-operation activities and their results in the area of Roma and Traveller inclusion;
- ▶ Raise awareness of Roma and Traveller issues and contribute to challenging stereotypes and changing negative attitudes;
- ▶ Promote good practices and data collection at local, national and regional levels;
- ▶ Give visibility to strategic partnerships inside and outside the Council of Europe.



# Resources

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## **Budget**

Key resources linked to the implementation of the Strategy will include those assigned to the Roma and Travellers Division, either through the ordinary budget or through extra-budgetary resources.

## **Other resources**

Other operational entities of the Council of Europe will contribute with their ordinary budgets and extraordinary resources for activities which will be jointly developed and implemented within the framework of the Strategy.

The protection of the rights of Roma and Travellers lies at the core of the Council of Europe's mission and is part of its mandate to uphold human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

The renewed strategic commitment to Roma and Traveller inclusion advances effective action by the Council of Europe and its member States to implement existing binding and non-binding standards, promote and protect the rights of Roma and Travellers, and improve their inclusion into society on an equal footing with other citizens throughout Europe.

The overall objective of the Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2026 - 2030) is to further advance towards equality and ensure the protection of human rights of Roma and Travellers in the Council of Europe's member States, with a focus on the three priorities:

- ▶ Increasing and promoting knowledge and awareness about Roma and Traveller communities to combat antigypsyism and prejudice while fostering a sense of pride in Roma and Traveller identities;
- ▶ Ensuring equal rights, dignity, and gender equality for Roma and Travellers by effectively implementing legislation and policies across all areas of life;
- ▶ Promoting democratic governance and increasing active participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life.

**[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)**

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member States, including all members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 46 member states. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 612 elected officials representing more than 130 000 local and regional authorities.

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