

REPORT ON THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

“ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-GYPSYISM IN THE ENLARGEMENT REGION”

13-14 February 2018, Berlin, Germany



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List of Abbreviations

CEU	Central European University
CEPS	Centre for European Policy Studies
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoKuZ	Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma
EC	European Commission
ERGO network	European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network
ERIAN	European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union





This document serves as a report from the regional conference “*Addressing Discrimination and anti-Gypsyism in the Enlargement Region*” organized in Berlin on 13 and 14 February 2018. The report first presents the conference aim and background, followed by an overview of its delivery. The report concludes with a list of the main conclusions, including recommendations and challenges identified.

1. Background and methodology

The regional conference brought together the National Roma Contact Points from the Western Balkans and Turkey, along with the primary responsible government officials dealing with the priority areas of education, employment, housing, and health, as well as officials dealing with discrimination (Equality Bodies and/or Ombudspersons). The regional workshop also provided for participation of one Roma civil society representative per participating economy. Guests and experts of the workshop included relevant persons from Germany and other European Union (EU) Member States, and from relevant intergovernmental and international organizations.

The conference brought together more than 80 participants and took place in the *Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma (DoKuZ)* in Berlin.

The main objectives of the conference were to:

- Increase the knowledge and understanding of the Western Balkans and Turkey officials about the discrimination faced by Roma, and what they are put through by discriminatory practices they face;
- Understand the historical background of the discrimination and anti-Gypsyism phenomenon;
- Contribute to the alignment of the discourse at the regional level with the discourse at the EU level in order to cope with the developments in the field of fight against discrimination and anti-Gypsyism.

The conference was organized shortly after publishing the [EU Communication on Enlargement](#), adopted on 6 February 2018, which emphasized that “decisive efforts are needed to protect minorities and fight discrimination, notably against the Roma - for whom social inclusion should be more robustly promoted - and the LGBTI community. Equality between women and men must also be ensured and domestic violence tackled”*. This statement explicitly called the enlargement region to improve treatment of Roma, and to take the gender perspective in account. Both of these issues were tackled in the conference in Berlin. The conference gave the enlargement region an opportunity to reflect on their current practices, think about how to further improve them, and finally assist the economies in paving their path to the EU membership. Furthermore, the conference served as a platform for

* [EU Communication on Enlargement](#)





exchange of experiences among the economies of the enlargement region and with the EU Member States.

This conference was the first of its kind focusing on the Western Balkans and Turkey. As the Roma Integration 2020 participating governments are working on strengthening their systems to fight discrimination against Roma, it is important that government officials working on Roma integration better understand the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism in order to be able to devise approaches to tackle it. In order to successfully fulfil the conference objectives, relevant individuals from Germany were invited to participate in the conference in order to share relevant research on the concept of anti-Gypsyism, promising German and EU practices, and initiate constructive discussion. The promising practices can be mirrored in the enlargement region in the future.

2. Conference Delivery

This section provides an overview of the presentations of panellists in the conference, and the main discussions which followed.

2.1. Day one

The first day of the conference was focused on explaining the concept of *anti-Gypsyism* from a more academic point of view. Furthermore, the psychological mechanisms by which it forms and lasts, as well as its purpose for the mainstream societies were presented.

2.1.1. Opening Session

The conference was opened by the Deputy Secretary General of the *Regional Cooperation Council*, Mr Gazmend Turdiu who thanked the participants for attending and to the *Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma* for hosting the conference. Drawing attention that government partners are the main drivers to implement change and improve position of Roma, Mr Turdiu invited participants to use the conference to discuss discrimination Roma face and look for common approaches to revert the situation.

Mr Turdiu's address was followed with an address by the *Special Representative of the German Federal Foreign Office for relationships with Jewish organizations and international aspects of matters of Sinti and Roma* H.E. Mr Felix Klein. Arguing that a working definition of anti-Gypsyism would give opportunity to recognize and fight this phenomenon, Mr Klein gave a comparison with positive effects introduced by the recently agreed working definition of antisemitism. The definition of antisemitism is becoming internationally recognized, and while not legally binding, it is a common working definition continuously endorsed by various international bodies and governments. Consequently, it became a useful tool to identify and combat instances of antisemitism, as well as include the concept in education, integration policies, and law enforcement. Similar effect would be brought about by agreeing on a working definition of anti-Gypsyism and integrating it in relevant policies.





The Director of the *German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency* Ms Christine Luders reminded that Roma and Sinti number the largest minority in Europe which must not be left behind on the European path, that Europe needs to better hear their needs, and that all future decisions concerning Roma need to be agreed with Roma themselves.

The opening remarks were closed by the address of Mr Romani Rose, who is a Chairman of the *Central Council of German Sinti and Roma*, and a prominent Romani civil rights activist. Mr Rose drew attention that causes of anti-Gypsyism lay with the structures of racist attitudes and actions of the mainstream societies in Europe which are rooted in European societies for centuries. He further stressed the necessity to increase awareness about anti-Gypsyism of European political leaders, as anti-Gypsyism is the societal problem fundamentally challenging European principles of democracy and rule of law. Regretting the widespread ignorance of Roma history and Roma Holocaust in Europe, Mr Rose highlighted that the precarious position of Roma and inhumane living conditions they face cannot be taken for granted. Awareness must be raised that Roma minority is not responsible for its social disadvantage and exclusion. Mr Rose emphasized the important role of the conference in the awareness raising, especially in the light of progress of right-wing and populist movements in wider Europe.

The conference was organized with the same intention - to be a first step towards understanding the concept of anti-Gypsyism in the enlargement region, and recognizing that the problem of anti-Gypsyism persists and exists in these societies. Only after these pre-conditions are met, the region will be able to move towards devising effective policies to tackle the phenomenon.

2.1.2. Panel I - Anti-Gypsyism: Defining the Phenomenon

The Director of the *European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network* (ERGO network), Ms Jamen Gabriela Hrabanova, and the CEO of the *Society for Anti-Gypsyism Research* Mr Markus End presented in the first panel. The panellists focused on presenting and explaining the definition of anti-Gypsyism included in the [*Anti-Gypsyism - a reference paper*](#) document issued by the *Alliance against Anti-Gypsyism*.

The need for definition came about because of the lack of common understanding of the scope, depth and implications of anti-Gypsyism which hindered the formulation of successful answer to tackle it by policy and decision makers. A precise understanding of the concept is necessary in order to understand its full impact. As explained, usually the term is used and understood in a very narrow sense to refer to anti-Roma attitudes and behaviour, while forgetting that it is a much wider concept (and to a large extent subconscious) which also includes implicit and hidden manifestations. As Ms Hrabanova explained, anti-Gypsyism is not only about what is being said and is being done, but is also about what is not being done for Roma. Hence, one of its important manifestations is carelessness for Roma by the institutions and the wider society.





The working definition:

“Anti-Gypsyism is a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigma ‘gypsy’ or other related terms, and incorporates:

- 1. a homogenizing and essentializing perception and description of these groups;*
- 2. the attribution of specific characteristics to them;*
- 3. discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background, which have a degrading and ostracizing effect and which reproduce structural disadvantages.”*

The term is being gradually recognized in key texts and is even included in the [2015 European Parliament’s \(EP\) Resolution on the occasion of the Roma Day](#), while the European Commission (EC) uses it in its reports on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 by the EU member states. The concept of *anti-Gypsyism* is becoming a useful tool to understand the phenomenon in a coherent manner, and devise effective policies to tackle it.

The panellists noted that the definition uses word ‘antigypsyism’, which does not contain a hyphen. The use of hyphen is avoided in order to stress that in reality there is no presence of ‘gypsyism’. On the contrary, ‘gypsyism’ is a construction of the dominant society who carries anti-Gypsyist attitudes. The panellists noted that anti-Gypsyism is a form of racism, and as such it is not a problem of those discriminated, but a problem of the mainstream society (it is about mainstream society’s attitudes). As with other forms of racism, the population carrying such attitudes is ignorant of the ‘other’ group and its culture and values. Hence, the majority population is often not able to differ Roma from other groups due to their perceived sameness. Consequently, often people who do not belong to Roma group will come under the attack of anti-Gypsyism. The fact that not only Roma are victims of anti-Gypsyism is yet another proof of the claim that racism goes together with mainstream population’s ignorance of the ‘other’ group.

This definition points out that mainstream population needs to be targeted in combating racism and anti-Gypsyism, giving an opportunity to shift the focus in policy-making from the minority to the majority population. The policies in thematic priorities of education, health, housing, employment, civil registration and similar remain very important. However, policy-makers and the society itself must understand that these policies are only mitigating the final effects of anti-Gypsyism and the consequent exclusion of Roma. In order to ensure long-lasting effect of any policy targeting Roma people, the root cause must also be targeted. In this case, it is anti-Gypsyism and the projections of the mainstream society.

Anti-Gypsyism has a high level of social acceptance and legitimacy in public. There is no moral stigma attached to it, as in case of other forms of racism. This is to a large extent a consequence of the latent dimension of anti-Gypsyism. It exists at the unconscious level of mainstream populations. A strong example displaying the destructive effect of the latency of





anti-Gypsyism was given by the representative of Serbian civil society pointing out that Roma keep being perceived as ‘others’, to whom the state is ‘granting’ services, but without a sense of the inherent obligation to do so. Such a narrative is problematic, as already from the starting point Roma are not perceived as citizens. The Serbian representative argued that the narrative should change to the state providing services to its citizens (in this case Roma) based on the political concept of ‘*social contract*’.

Mr End explained that it is very important to understand the pattern, the psychological mechanism by which anti-Gypsyism formulates itself, and the purpose it serves for the *In-group* (mainstream non-Roma), in order to systematically approach the problem. Any form of prejudice, racism, (including anti-Gypsyism), has three elements which serve the following purposes:

1. **Homogenizing the *In-group*** – as a first step two separate groups are created in the minds of the *In-group*, as opposed to the *Out-group*. Both groups are perceived as stable, essential, and homogenous. Previously a concept of *race* was used to refer to such differences. The idea of existence of the homogenous *Out-group* helps the *In-Group* to perceive itself as also homogenous and historically rooted.
2. **Ascribing the characteristics to groups** – the second step is to ascribe values and norms to the groups. Virtues and positive characteristics are ascribed to the *In-group*, while deviant characteristics are ascribed to the *Out-group*. *Out-group* serves as a counterpart to the virtues of the *In-group*, and serves the purpose of stabilizing the *In-group*.
3. **Judging** – The *Out-group* is judged based on the *In-Group* member’s relationship to the *In-Group*. For example, in case that a member assesses the *In-group* negatively, he might assess the *Out-group* positively. This remains problematic as the *Out-group* and its individual members remain judged not based on their actual group and individual characteristics. Consequently, prejudices remain strong and can easily be reverted to the negative judgement of the *Out-group*. In case of negative judgement of the *Out-group* and stigma being attached to it, discriminating practices emerge against the whole group, resulting in the discrimination and reproducing structural disadvantages.

This theory has shown that anti-Gypsyism served and continues to serve the purpose of identity building of the European nation states. Mr End argued that as such, it is a structural pattern of those states which legitimizes discrimination, exclusion and persecution of those stigmatized as ‘gypsies’. The theory further shown the relationship between the discourse and practice, and that anti-Gypsyism can take on different forms which all need to be recognized to successfully fight it.

The expressions of anti-Gypsyism can go from the very extreme to more subtle and hidden manifestations. Anti-Gypsyism moves on a scale from malevolent to benevolent and as long





as one group is regarded as ‘others’, such attitudes remain a form of racism. Even in cases when the *Out-group* is positively assessed, the gap between mainstream and the minority group remains strong and valid. Consequently, the relationship exhibits potential to turn to worse, especially in times of social and economic crisis. Hence the fight against racism and anti-Gypsyism should be constant, systematic and long-term, as it is the only way to get to the bottom of the problem of anti-Gypsyism.

The panellists offered potential solutions in tackling anti-Gypsyism. They pointed out that it is necessary to strengthen the alliance-building among civil society and improve the capacity of civil society to respond to anti-Gypsyism. For this purpose a systematic approach should be devised, which will be explained later in the report.

The panellists argued that is also necessary to strengthen links to academia and knowledge-production and collect evidence that captures the multidimensional character of anti-Gypsyism. In order to successfully collect evidences, structures for monitoring should be improved. Existing monitoring structures covering various forms of racism, hate speech, hate crime and policy implementation should be revised so to effectively document complex variation of dimensions and manifestation of anti-Gypsyism.

However, the panellists noted that the ultimate responsibility in combating anti-Gypsyism lies with governments. Governments need to adopt a diversified set of instruments covering at least criminal justice, equality measures, and awareness raising. Additionally, the governments need increased responsibility of duty bearers to respect, protect and fulfil human rights commitments that bind them under the international law.

2.1.3. Panel 2: In the Shoes of Roma – Experiential Learning Exercise

In the second panel, the trainers from the *Police Education and Training Unit of the Czech Republic* (Training Unit) implemented an *experiential learning* exercise with the participants. The Training Unit is implementing an innovative approach to the police education and training, following the principle of *experience based pedagogy* which aims to put trainees outside their comfort zone to deal with the fear of unknown and enter the area of learning new concepts. This way, one of the backgrounds of prejudices, the fear of unknown, is also tackled. The approach simulates inverted roles, giving government officials the opportunity to experience the position of individuals receiving services by the state. In this case, the relationship of Roma people with the authorities was simulated. The final aim was to better understand the position of Roma, and the dynamics of relation between Roma and institutions.

The game implemented was based on a variation of the *prisoner’s dilemma*. It was conceptualized in such a way that the worst outcome occurs when participants do not cooperate. Participants were divided into six groups, where two groups played with each other.





After the game, a debriefing exercise started, explaining the purpose of the game, and investigating into the participants feelings about it. The participants shared a common feeling of dissatisfaction with the end result, as there were no winners in the game. The trainers explained how the game demonstrates the psychological principle of the *inner* vs. *outer* group relationship. While both groups function similarly, the *inner* group tends to rationalize and justify its own actions, but condemns similar behaviour of the outer group. The end result is increasing mistrust, which creates conflict and prejudices and guides the general behaviour towards the outer group.

This exercise explained the mistrust of Roma towards the institutions which often fail to protect them and provide Roma with the guaranteed services. Furthermore, it also served to demonstrate the mechanism of the latent conflict of institutions towards Roma. As already explained above, a lack of understanding of Roma and their position, *them* being perceived as an *outer* group, creates a situation in which the institutions dealing with Roma are also frustrated. Consequently, the institutions perceive Roma as the problem, while not accepting their own part of the responsibility.

The discussion continued to infer which would be the appropriate approaches to alleviate this precarious situation, better implement Roma Integration Strategies and Action Plans, and finally improve the position of Roma. The participants discussed that it is the states' responsibility to care and provide services to Roma, as guaranteed by constitutional rights of citizens. The participants further agreed that not only more financial resources are needed, but also more human resources. To successfully improve the position of Roma, more government officials should work with them, and receive appropriate training to work with such a specific vulnerable group. Additionally, Roma need to be empowered to work together with governments and participate in tackling anti-Gypsyism. Finally, participants discussed that there is the need to hear the voice of Roma and non-Roma when discrimination occurs, as well as to prosecute discrimination cases one by one.

2.1.4. Visit to ERIAC

The first day was concluded with a visit to the *European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture* (ERIAC). The participants were able to see the first permanent exhibition of Romani artists, learn more about the Romani influence to the European culture and art in history, and about ERIAC's work and outreach program.

2.2. Day two

While the first day of the conference focused more on demystifying the concept of anti-Gypsyism, the second day was focused on practical examples of German and EU level activities fighting anti-Gypsyism in practice. The participants had an opportunity to hear about the promising practices and contemplate whether similar practices can be mirrored in the enlargement region.





2.2.1. Panel 3: EU & German Policies Addressing Anti-Gypsyism

Ms Christina Herkommer from the German *Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth* presented Germany's anti-racism policy. The focus was on the *Federal Programme for Democracy* and its elements relevant to fight anti-Gypsyism and discrimination. The *Federal Programme* funds actions at the local, regional, and federal level. It is focused on civic engagement, democratic practice, and prevention of extremism. The overview of approaches at different levels is presented here:

- **Local level** – civil society organizations (CSOs) work together with municipalities to tackle specific local problems. The action concepts are devised by both partners. Besides funding allocated for activities to solve local problems, there is also a separate funding allocated to promote participation, public relations and networking. Separate funding is also allocated for youth participation via youth forums.
- **Regional (lander) level** - Concepts and strategies are developed through *democracy centres*, which provide counselling for the victims of hate crimes, but also for those who want to disengage with the right wing extremism. Separate funds are allocated for the establishment of pilot projects aimed at prevention of radicalization on religious grounds.
- **Federal level** – CSOs which operate nation-wide receive funding for their structural development. The CSOs in question were already active in the field, but with increased financing by the German state they are able to build up and professionalize their activities and identify new challenges. In addition to this, pilot projects tackling group focused enmities (antisemitism, islamophobia, anti-Gypsyism) exist. These pilot projects test new and innovative methods. When methods are successful they are transferred to the educational structures and taken up by the governmental institutions.

In case tested methods do not prove effective, the CSOs can continue to test new methods until an appropriate approach is devised. This is allowed as both structural and pilot projects have a funding period of 5 years, ensuring stronger planning reliability. This approach accounts for the fact that CSOs are non-profit oriented and often struggle to ensure financial resources for their activities. All programmes are evaluated after a certain time by the *German Youth Institute*. This gives CSOs more independence in their work and in their choice of topics to deal with.

German measures focused on anti-Gypsyism aim to counter prejudices and stereotypes of the mainstream society, but also to develop empowerment and counselling structures for German Sinti and Roma. This means that the approach is two-fold as it targets both mainstream society and Roma.

Ms Herkommer concluded to highlight the main strengths of the German approach that may be multiplied in the enlargement region, which are:





- **High regard for civil society** - promoting local initiatives, fostering networks, using the valuable expertise CSOs and local authorities already have;
- **Long-term funding for CSOs** - acknowledging that not every method will work, which allow mistakes and testing different possible strategies and approaches
- **Broad range of target groups:** Roma, youth, multipliers (educators, teachers), etc.
- **Measures aimed at both mainstream society and Roma.**

The participants discussed that future policies should focus on the development and empowerment and treat Roma as equal partners. The paternalistic approach where Roma are represented as victims needs to be abandoned. During the conference, participants discussed that societies need to invest in Roma and use their full potential as a young population.

Ms Herkommers's presentation was followed by the presentation of the Member of the European Parliament Ms Cornelia Ernst on the [EP Report on Fundamental Rights Aspects in Roma Integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism \(2017/2038\(INI\)\)](#) (EP Report) as well as the current situation in the EU regarding the fight against anti-Gypsyism. Ms Ernst pointed out that the EP proposals to mark 2 August as the international day to commemorate the victims of the Roma Holocaust and include the Roma victims in the commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27th January, were accepted by the EC. This was a first step for the EU to accept the existence of anti-Gypsyism in the history and present.

Ms Ernst further stressed that a new trust between Roma and non-Roma is needed. In order to do that it is necessary to research and document the persecution of Roma throughout the Europe's history. The *EP report* discussed the slow progress in improving the position on Roma and the fact that measures are not binding for the EU member states. The EP called for suspending funding in cases of occurring practice of EU member states misusing funds for Roma. Ms Ernst especially condemned some aspects of institutional anti-Gypsyism, such as the police practice of ethnic profiling, excessive stop and search of Roma individuals or raids in Roma settlements, instances of physical abuse, as well as the denial of rights during interrogations. Furthermore, in the field of education, the EP called for discontinuing school segregation, overrepresentation in special schools, Roma only schools, separate classes, and special container schools. She also pointed out that all governments need to put an end to the statelessness of Roma.

In its report, the EP also called for more effective spending for Roma targeted policies and integration policies which address institutional anti-Gypsyism and racist barriers in education, employment and urban planning. To ensure this happens, the structural errors of Roma Integration Strategies and Action Plans should be corrected to include measures combating anti-Gypsyism. The Serbian government representative stated that Serbia has devised a special rulebook with indicators for recognizing discrimination in education, which is yet to be adopted. The participants discussed that formulating similar rulebooks would be beneficial for the enlargement region.





In order to enhance the position of Roma, Ms Ernst mentioned some of the concrete measures proposed in the *EP Report*:

- Promoting recruitment of Roma in the EU public media to fight stereotypical and simplified portrayal of Roma. The key to improve this is also to strengthen the Roma organizations media networks.
- Secure better access to employment ensuring long-term employment of Roma through improved funding opportunities at the EU level.
- Ensuring access to public goods (water, electricity) is a fundamental right guaranteed to everyone in the EU.
- Include a specific chapter on women's rights and gender equality in the EU member states' National Roma Integration Strategies after 2020, together with gender mainstreaming measures in each section of these strategies. Funding needs to be allocated for all gender mainstreaming measures included.

Ms Ernst further stressed that the EP called on the EU and its member states to support Roma communities through stronger financial support in the post-2020 framework. The financial support needs to be devised to better reach Roma and be used more effectively than it was so far.

Ms Ernst advised the participants from the enlargement region to use the next cycle of IPA programming to request more funding for Roma integration, as well as to mirror the *EP report* recommendations. The enlargement economies should do what exactly they need for Roma and devise several targeted programmes. She further argued that it is important to include Roma representatives in the programming cycle of IPA, expressing hope that the next EU funding will be more operational, anti-Gypsyism will be placed in the focus of the post-2020 EU Roma Framework, and funding will efficiently reach Roma. The participants continued to argue that the EU sends an unclear message to the Western Balkans and Turkey. The participants called for better streamlining of different project and strategies related to antidiscrimination, and the need to increase their effectiveness.

Ms Ernst concluded by stating that there is much reason for optimism, as the EP is more united on the question of Roma than it was before. Additionally, much of the position of the EP is backed by the EC, and should be mirrored in the enlargement region in the future. Finally, the participants discussed that the fight against anti-Gypsyism should be embedded in a structured integrated policy combatting racism in all forms.

2.2.2. Panel 4: Practices and Strategies to Combat Anti-Gypsyism

The second panel of the day 2 was also focused on sharing experiences from the EU which can be useful for the enlargement Region, as well as on the ways to identify and combat institutional anti-Gypsyism.





Mr Guillermo RUIZ from *Sozialfabrik* presented some of the results of the monitoring of anti-Gypsyism in German institutions and society performed under the EU funded [Roma Civil Monitor](#) project. He pointed out that monitoring of anti-Gypsyism proved to be very difficult as it manifests in different forms and different fields of life. Consequently, various methods must be used to monitor it depending on particular situations. Considering that the project cannot do a comprehensive analysis of the whole German society, qualitative methods are predominantly used. The project performs monitoring of anti-Gypsyism in areas such as hate crime, hate speech online, media, political discourses, right wing extremism, police, judiciary, but also arts and cultural products.

It is paramount to call into question the behaviour of police and judiciary towards Roma whenever they are subjected to anti-Gypsyist bias. The project monitors cases of racial profiling of Roma and those perceived as Roma by the police. The project also investigated whether police collects data about the alleged perpetrators of hate crimes motivated by anti-Gypsyism. When it comes to judiciary, the project monitors whether prosecutors and judges demonstrate that they are aware of anti-Gypsyism as a motivation for hate crimes, even when targets are not Roma but perceived as Roma (an example of attacks on the Romanian community in Germany was presented).

The monitoring exercise found out that the largest problem remains in non-recognition of anti-Gypsyism, together with lack of awareness about anti-Gypsyism at all levels. Most of the society is not even familiar with the Roma Holocaust. This is combined with lack of political will to improve the situation, but also lack of knowledge about Roma. Finally, monitoring is lacking both by institutions and by CSOs, which rarely use the term *anti-Gypsyism* in their work. The end result is lack of action against anti-Gypsyism.

Mr Ruiz ended his presentation with a recommendation to recognize anti-Gypsyism and include fight against anti-Gypsyism in the National Strategies on Roma Integration. He spoke about the necessity to establish monitoring mechanisms, and review legislation and policies to make them sensible to the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism. Finally, he argued that police officers, prosecutors, judges, journalists, politicians, teachers and other civil servants should be trained on anti-Gypsyism to be able to combat it and to put an end to the institutional discrimination of Roma. To better tackle it, guidelines for recognizing and addressing anti-Gypsyism should be developed.

Ms Anna Striethorst, the Senior Policy Officer of the Open Society Foundations' *Roma Initiatives Office* presented the research on [Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism](#) by the *Centre for European Policy Studies* (CEPS). Ms Striethorst presented some of the results of the research, including most common manifestations of anti-Gypsyism as well as about the promising practices in some of the EU member states. A large majority of respondents agreed that combatting anti-Gypsyism needs to be led by the state, with only some of the responsibilities delegated to the nongovernmental sector.





When speaking about promising practices, Ms Striethorst presented the policies in the following states:

- **Sweden** – The state decided to reconcile with its history by issuing a paper [*Dark Unknown History*](#) recognizing the prosecution of Roma in the 20th century. Furthermore, a Commission on Anti-Gypsyism was established to serve as a monitoring body on anti-Gypsyism. The integrated *Action Plan on Racism* was also devised, with anti-Gypsyism included in it. Sweden also devised crisis response for hate speech in the media.
- **Romania** – The state celebrated the end of slavery of Roma in Romania in 2016. The action was coupled with research and educational materials on slavery, with important state officials speaking publicly about the issue, and leading by example. Additionally, a pedagogical kit about Roma slavery in Romania was devised, and educational materials to include information about Roma slavery and anti-Gypsyism in the schoolbooks were tested.
- **Spain** – The state formed a specialized unit to combat hate crime within its prosecutor offices in each Spanish province. This way, hate crimes are examined by an expert team. While not focused only on anti-Gypsyism, it is a part of the units' mandate to also combat anti-Gypsyism.
- **The United Kingdom** – Local alliances were formed in the county of West Midlands to promote diversity and combat hate crime. Various groups gather to discuss how to address racism and tackle problems at the municipal level.

The research on combating institutional anti-Gypsyism further found out that successful initiatives have three common elements, which are presented below:

- **Governments take ownership** – while civil society can make an active contribution. It is important that initiatives include both Roma and non-Roma staff even in cases when measures are focused on the mainstream population. This way Roma are engaged when deciding on measures and choosing the ones that are most appropriate.
- **Need to differentiate further between improved public services from policies against discrimination and policies against racism** - for example, increasing literacy and school attendance is primarily an improved public service. However, in cases when Roma are rejected school enrolment, a policy tackling that issue is tackling discrimination.
- **Funding needs to be increased**, both at the institutional level and for the CSOs who can test innovative methods to combat anti-Gypsyism and racism.

Finally, Ms Striethorst announced that a new study by the *Roma Initiatives Office* on the behaviour of civil servants (health professional, teachers, social workers etc.) and their treatment of Roma will be published soon.





Mr Georgi Ivanov from the CSO *Amaro Foro* presented the project *Contact Point for Socially Disadvantaged European Citizens (Roma and Non-Roma)*. The CSO *Amaro Foro* documents and monitors cases of anti-Gypsyism in various aspects of life, and offers support to those affected. The monitoring found out that discrimination exists both at structural level (general suspicion of fraud and proclivity for crime ascribed to Roma), and on individual level when people are denied services, employment, or housing rental for the reason of being Roma. Some of the collected real-life examples of anti-Gypsyism were presented. In order to empower those affected by anti-Gypsyism the CSO *Amaro Foro* supports newly arrived EU citizen in the process of their integration in Germany. To do this, the organization reaches people who do not have social networks, provide them with the information about existing possibilities and works to connect them with service providers. Mr Ivanov pointed out that the number of reported incidents of anti-Gypsyism is increasing, but that the challenge remains, mostly because people are not aware of their rights or because of their fear to be victimized.

Ms Sanela Besic from the CSO *Kali Sara* presented her experiences in tackling anti-Gypsyism in the context of education and awareness raising on Roma Holocaust. As the most blatant example of discrimination, Ms Besic reiterated to the reluctance to implement the European Court on Human Rights decision against Bosnia and Herzegovina, which found that Bosnia and Herzegovina discriminates Roma and other minorities in the electoral processes. Ms Besic also pointed out to the widespread unawareness of anti-Gypsyism. She provided examples of unawareness of Roma Holocaust even in the research institutions, particularly the state archives containing valuable evidence which has never been reviewed. Ms Besic called for including information on Roma in schoolbooks so that the education system can offer the youth belonging to the mainstream population an alternative point of view on Roma.

2.2.3. Panel 5: Reflections and Conclusions

The Consultant of the *Central Council of German Sinti and Roma* Mr Stephan MULLER spoke about instances of anti-Gypsyism observed in the Western Balkans. The presentation aimed to provide examples of how anti-Gypsyism is expressed in the Western Balkans, and initiate follow up discussion on how it can be combated.

Mr Muller once again stressed the value of the concept of *anti-Gypsyism*, and that it is the first step towards recognizing and combating it. He pointed out that the state is initially responsible to provide services to its citizens, and that all actions must follow the rights based approach, where institutions as duty bearers are obliged to respect their constitutional and international human rights obligations.

Mr Muller looked into some of the specific examples of anti-Gypsyism in the enlargement region, especially underlining the stigmatization of Roma in states involved in recent wars. Mr Muller called for initiating public discussions on role and position of Roma during and after wars to challenge the current discourse about their role in wars. The current discourse in all of the states involved present Roma as fighting on the opposite side. This discourse is





useful for nation building and homogenizing mainstream societies, but damages the perception of Roma and their position in the respective states.

Mr Muller provided examples of anti-Gypsyism in the public and private sphere in the enlargement region. In the public sphere, quotas for employment of Roma minority in public institutions are not adhered to, while immigration workers continue to enforce racial profiling. Mr Muller especially criticized the fact that all stakeholders accept as normal that laws and policies targeting Roma are rarely enforced and argued that the normality of non-implementation is in itself a form of anti-Gypsyism. In the private sphere, Mr Muller underlined the inefficiency of affirmative measures, maintaining that some of the existing measures should be reviewed due to their inefficiency. Primarily, he referred to self-employment measures which are not sustainable and should exist only as a side measure, and incentives to private sector to employ Roma. The latter is problematic as employers mostly refuse to employ Roma even with financial incentives.

Mr Muller continued to point out that the dominant narrative about migration of Roma from the Western Balkans to the EU only refers to bad socio-economic situation of Roma as a reason for migrating. The narrative fails to infer into reasons which brought such an socio-economic situation. Emphasizing that anti-Gypsyism is the reason behind poor socio-economic situation of Roma, Mr Muller maintained that the unawareness of existence of anti-Gypsyism by both states' and nongovernmental actors must be addressed first. Only after recognizing anti-Gypsyism in the enlargement region, the region will be able to combat it.

During the discussion which followed, the participants pointed out that Roma do not have passive political right in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as that Roma victims are not recognized in any of the Balkan wars.

The conference was concluded with the participants' visit to the *Memorial of the Sinti and Roma of Europe murdered under the National Socialist regime*.

3. Conclusions – Challenges and Recommendations

This section provides an overview of the main conclusions presented by panellists and reached in discussions during the conference. The section also includes the main challenges observed and recommendations identified in order to combat anti-Gypsyism.

Necessity to recognize the existence of Anti-Gypsyism

The enlargement region is largely unaware of the existence of anti-Gypsyism. When used, the term is understood in a narrow sense as discriminatory behaviour against Roma, which is not encompassing all its forms and ways of expression. Anti-Gypsyism also encompasses the lack of action to provide services and ensure equal rights of Roma. Anti-Gypsyism is largely subconscious. Its latent dimension endures the longest in any society, and has the most detrimental effects for Roma and those perceived as Roma.





Roma should stop being perceived as ‘others’ and the ‘outer group’, but as citizens, both by institutions and the wider society.

In order to be able to combat anti-Gypsyism, the societies need to understand anti-Gypsyism in all of its dimensions and manifestations, and understand the relation between the discourse and practice. Furthermore, a precise definition of anti-Gypsyism is needed in order to recognize its full impact on the population targeted by it. The enlargement region can start by using the working definition provided in the [Anti-Gypsyism - a reference paper](#) document, and adapt it to the realities of their societies if needed.

The civil society can help in recognizing the existence of anti-Gypsyism by piloting project measuring social distance and mistrust between Roma and non-Roma through qualitative research. The qualitative research could also measure anti-Gypsyist attitudes in the mainstream population. Similar researches can serve as a first step towards investigating the extent of anti-Gypsyist attitudes in societies. The governments should on the other hand research archive data and investigate if there was prosecution of Roma during their history, but also at present, and share findings with the wider society.

Including Anti-Gypsyism in Roma targeted and mainstream policies

The concept of *anti-Gypsyism* together with measures to combat it should be included in Roma integration Strategies and Action Plans, as well as other anti-discrimination policies. This is currently not the case, as anti-Gypsyism is not treated as a separate issue. Measures against anti-Gypsyism should also be included in all the mainstream policies that can be beneficial for Roma.

A rulebook/guide on recognizing anti-Gypsyism in its different dimensions and manifestations, with concrete indicators, should be developed to be used by governmental institutions and CSOs.

Shifting the focus of Roma integration measures

Anti-Gypsyism is not about Roma but about mainstream population and its projections and attitudes. It is why attention needs to shift to the mainstream society. The focus needs to be on the prevention of anti-Gypsyism, radicalization and racism. As long as measures for improving the socio-economic situation of Roma are implemented without fighting the causes for such situation, namely anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, the results will not be long-lasting and the problems will continue to perpetuate. It is important to understand that the socio-economic situation of Roma is a consequence of anti-Gypsyism, and not revert cause and effect.





Besides measures targeting the mainstream society, measures targeting Roma should focus on empowerment, and not further victimization of Roma. It is important to have in mind that Roma as a young population have a great potential which should be utilized.

A diversified set of instruments tackling multifaceted nature of anti-Gypsyism needs to be developed.

Roma integration measures in public and private sphere which prove inefficient need to be revised. Civil society can serve to test innovative measures which can be later adopted as national policies.

Gender component

The Western Balkans and Turkey should consider treating discrimination against Roma women as a horizontal issue in Roma Integration Strategies and Action Plans, mirroring the proposal by the EP to the EU member states. All thematic sections should include gender mainstreaming measures together with financial allocations to implement the measures. Because of the danger of multilayer vulnerability of women, specialized structures should work to improve the position of Roma women.

Clear responsibility combined with partnership

The governments must take responsibility for improving the socio-economic position of Roma to equal that of the mainstream society. Both the causes (anti-Gypsyism and discrimination) and the consequences (marginalization and exclusion) should be addressed. The governments need to recognize Roma and take a *right based approach* based on their constitutions and international human rights obligations. Municipal level needs to be engaged more.

Roma need to be equal partners when devising policies and actions relevant for Roma. Roma and non-Roma staff should cooperate both when devising actions targeting Roma, as well as those targeting the mainstream society. This is the way to ensure that appropriate actions are chosen, as well as to build trust between Roma and non-Roma and narrow the social distance.

The practice of not implementing Roma integration policies need to be abandoned by the state, as it is one of the most harmful aspects of anti-Gypsyism. Anti-Gypsyism and discrimination towards Roma must not be tolerated.

CSOs can serve as partners, but cannot take the lead in the fight against anti-Gypsyism.





Financial and Human Resources

To better implement Roma integration measures, more financial and human resources are needed at the institutional level. Additional personnel specialized in dealing with vulnerable Roma needs to be trained and/or employed.

The governments should allocate more resources to the civil society, as to protect them from financial uncertainty and allow them to test innovative actions.

The enlargement region should use the opportunity to ensure more financial resources for Roma relevant policies and combatting anti-Gypsyism through the next cycle of IPA funding. The enlargement region should devise comprehensive programmes with diversified set of measures. Roma communities need to be included in the programming and negotiations with the EU, so to give input about its needs. In the post 2020 EU Roma Framework agenda, measures need to be better streamlined and more operational.

Combatting anti-Gypsyism at the institutional level

In order to combat institutional anti-Gypsyism, personnel of institutions dealing with Roma (education, health, police, judiciary, etc.) should be educated and trained on the meaning and significance on anti-Gypsyism, as well as how to recognize it. They should be further trained on working with vulnerable groups, in this case Roma. Rulebooks/guides for recognizing anti-Gypsyism should be formulated, adopted and used in the workplace.

The institutional discriminatory practices in education, health, employment, police and judiciary explained throughout the report need to be abandoned.

Roma should be given more access to the public employment.

Changing the narrative

Measures combating institutional anti-Gypsyism should be coupled with measures in education and media raising awareness about the issue of anti-Gypsyism and bringing Roma culture closer to the wider population.

In the area of education, information about Roma, their history and culture, need to be included in the curriculum. This is one of the ways to revert the societies' prejudices reproduced throughout generations. To do this, Roma history and culture should be further researched at the institutional level.

Roma recruitment in the public media needs to be promoted in order to fight the stereotypical portrayal of Roma. Roma organizations media networks should be established or further strengthened.





Monitoring anti-Gypsyism

Data on instances, schemes and provisions/practices amounting to anti-Gypsyism are currently not collected by the authorities. Systems for data collection on this topic should, thus, be established and implemented continuously. Instances of hate crimes and hate speech should be checked for their anti-Gypsyist background. Hate crime and hate speech specific indicators for recognizing and reporting anti-Gypsyism should be developed to assist in and standardize this process.

Monitoring of hate crime should be done by the police and by the judiciary at institutional level. Special focus needs to be monitoring of media. The media tend to give simplified portrayal of Roma and other minorities, while it also has a strong impact on the formation of attitudes of the wider population.

The enlargement economies need to improve the existing monitoring structures to be able to comprehensively monitor anti-Gypsyism. The economies should also consider the possibility to follow the example of Sweden and Spain and form commissions on anti-Gypsyism as well as specialized units to combat hate crime. The commissions would serve as points for monitoring instances of anti-Gypsyism (including in media), while the specialized unites would be staffed with experts on recognizing and combating anti-Gypsyism, hate crime, and hate speech.

CSOs can help in the monitoring of anti-Gypsyism by piloting monitoring projects in different areas of life, and presenting the results to the wider public, but the institutions must take on the main responsibility in combating anti-Gypsyism.

