

European
Roma
Grassroots
Organisations
Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

ERGO
Network



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Looking back – a word from the Director
- 4 ERGO Network in numbers
- 5 Our team
- 6 First virtual Annual Members' Meeting
- 7 ERGO Network members
- 8 ERGO Network in times of Covid-19: Solidarity, research and advocacy
- 9 The role of Social Economy in supporting Roma social and economic inclusion
- 10 EU Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030
- 12 European Semester & European Pillar of Social Rights
- 14 A Place for All
- 15 Peer education to counter antigypsyist online hate speech
- 16 Roma Included in Social Europe
- 18 New Solutions to Old Problems: Exchange of new type of approaches in the field of Roma integration
- 19 Roma women – POWER OF CHANGE in the Western Balkans and Turkey
- 20 Roma Civil Monitor
- 21 Pushed to the Wastelands – Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe
- 22 Highlights of our members
- 24 Finances
- 25 Communications
- 26 Looking forward



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ERGO Network

ABOUT US

ERGO Network is a young and dynamic organisation established in 2008 by a small group of NGOs who shared the observation that everyday realities of Roma communities were hardly taken into account in policy development and implementation. Today we have 32 member organisations all over Europe. Founded on the philosophy of active citizenship, shared responsibility and grassroots empowerment, ERGO Network members aim to convince policy makers that positive change for Roma is possible when antigypsyism is recognised and tackled as the root cause for inequality, and when Roma can take part in civic life as equal stakeholders. To achieve this, we advocate for better policies and policy implementation on national and European level rooted in evidence-based research, we organise public campaigns, build the capacity of Roma activists and provide spaces for networking and mutual learning.



Gabriela Hrabanova
ERGO Director

LOOKING BACK A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

The year 2020 was a transformative year by all means for everyone on this planet. We were all caught in isolation in our homes, staying in small bubbles of our families and few friends, and our only external contacts happened digitally. We would never have imagined this possible before 2020. Many of us experienced loss of family members and friends due to Covid-19, many lost jobs; income and mental health derogated. Roma communities were hit the hardest and many ERGO Network members immediately provided humanitarian support on the ground. At the same time, our role as human rights advocates remained strong. Together with partners from 13 countries across the whole of Europe, we prepared an in-depth study about the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Roma and Travellers.

We learned to operate in the online world and even without in-person interactions, we managed to bring results to our work. In 2020 we built even strong connections between the ERGO team and our network members. Since the start of the pandemic, we organized regular online solidarity calls to support each other, share knowledge and motivation.

We continued the implementation of our work programme 'Roma Included in Social Europe (RIISE)', funded through a Framework Partnership Agreement with DG Employment. We invested in our core advocacy work around the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Semester

and of course we worked hard to influence the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation that was adopted in 2020. Together with the EU Roma Coalition and the Alliance Against Antigypsyism we succeeded to leave our mark especially in the document's shift from a social inclusion to a human rights and empowerment perspective and the strong recognition of antigypsyism.

In 2020, we closed the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project through which we engaged with more than 90 civil society organizations to monitor Roma inclusion policies across the EU, and also invested into our new long-term projects "PECAO" (Peer educators to

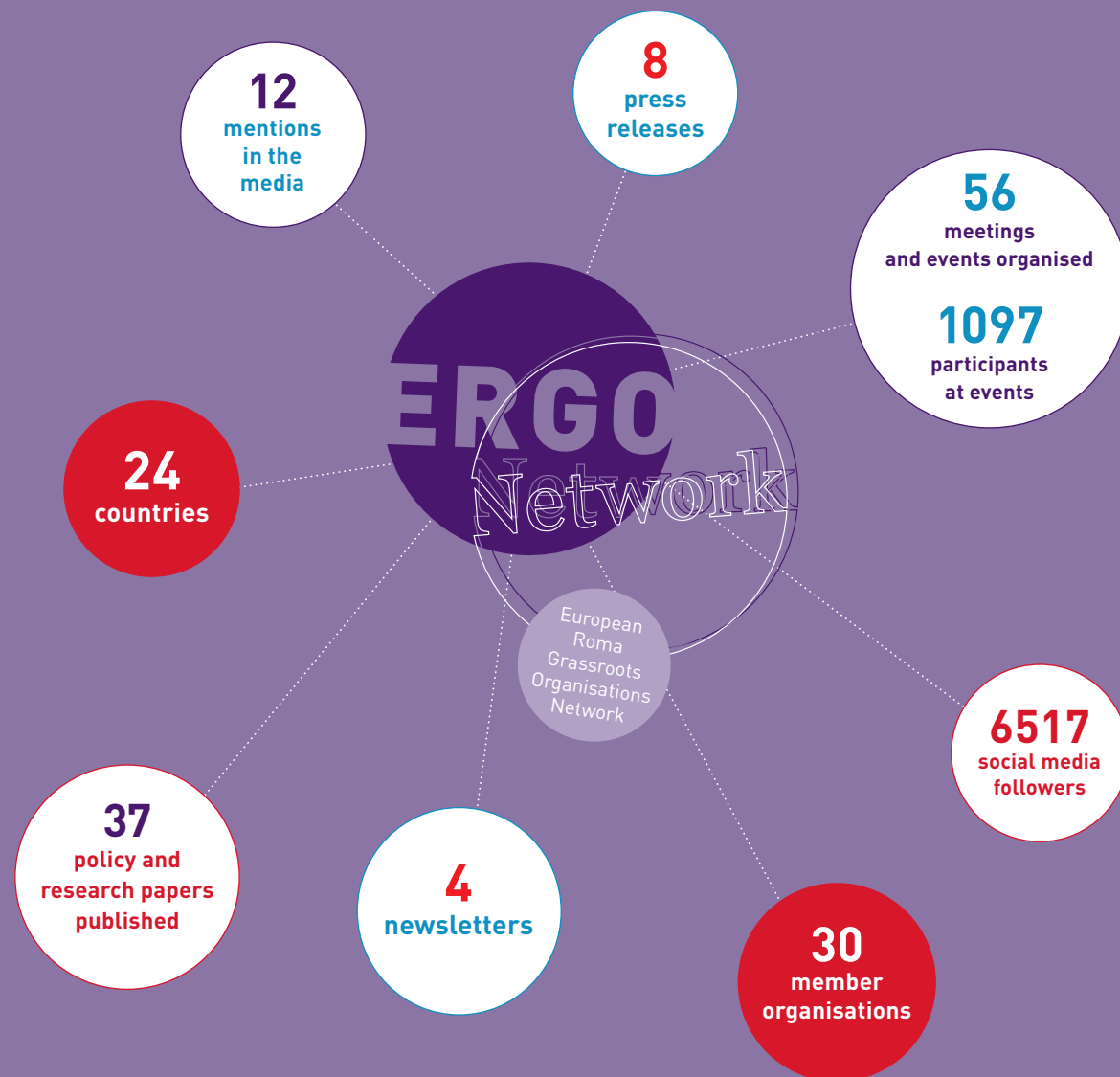
counter antigypsyism online), "New Solutions to Old Problems" to bring member organisations closer together and promote bottom-up approaches to Roma inclusion and "Power of Change" to empower Romani women in the Western Balkans and Turkey. To mention one more highlight, together with the European Environmental Bureau, ERGO Network for the first time tackled the important topic of environmental racism against Roma by contributing to the report 'Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe'.

There have been many more achievements and activities in 2020 and I hope you will turn these pages to find out about them in detail.

All the work would not happen without the great team in the ERGO Network office and all committed members.

Thank you! And STAY SAFE!

ERGO NETWORK IN NUMBERS



OUR TEAM



BOARD MEMBERS

Soraya Post (co-chair)
 Stanislav Daniel (co-chair)
 Adriatik Hasantari (vice-chair)
 Biser Alekov
 Lili Makaveeva
 Martin Mata (treasurer)

STAFF MEMBERS

Jamen Gabriela Hrabáňová (Director)
 Carmen Tănăsie (Policy Officer)
 Christine Sudbrock (Programme and Communications Manager)
 Amana Ferro (Senior Advocacy Adviser)
 Isabela Mihalache (Senior Policy Officer)
 Mustafa Jakupov (Policy and Project Coordinator)
 Said el Harchi (Financial Manager)
 Izabela Tiberiade (ESC volunteer)



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Integro Association
Bulgaria



RROMA
Macedonia



Life Together
Czech Republic



Roma Active
Albania
Albania



Policy Centre for
Roma and Minorities
Romania



FIRST VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING

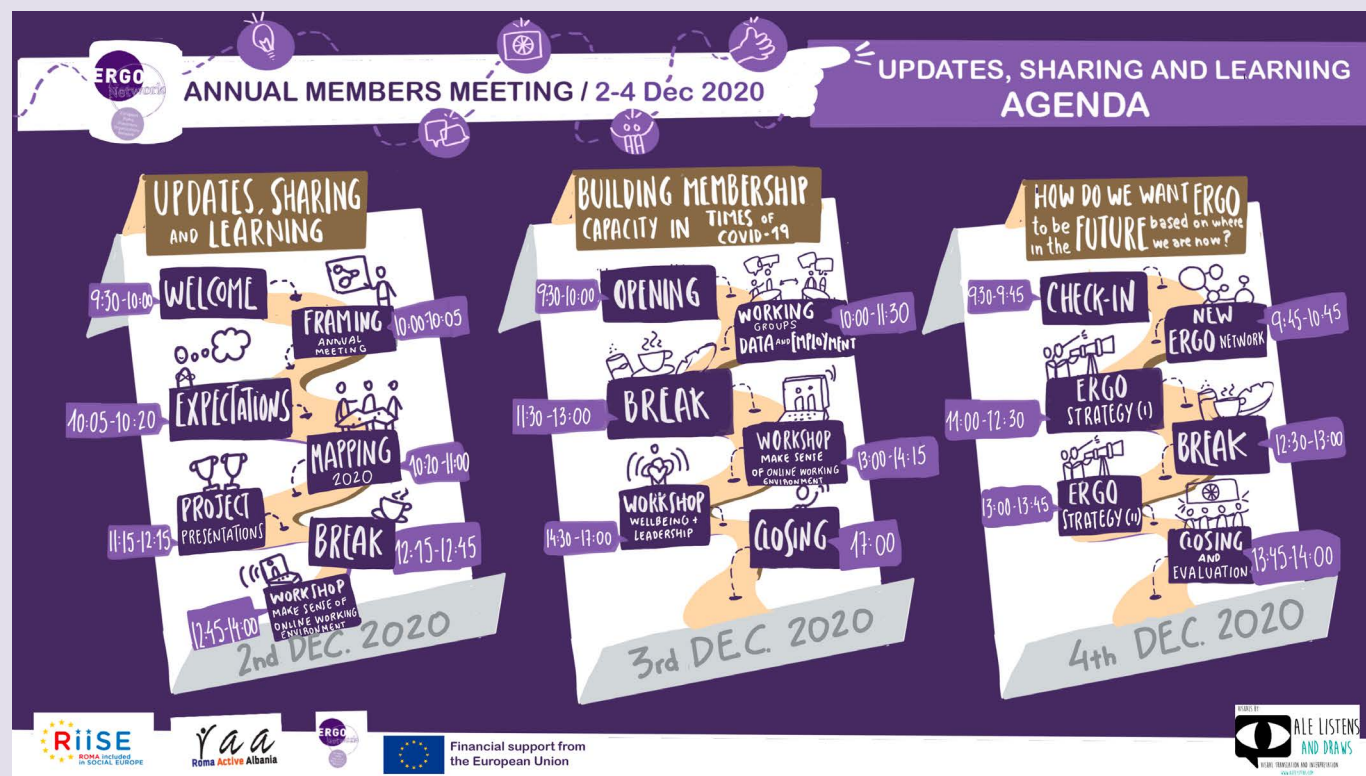
Once a year ERGO Network brings together all its members in the Annual Members Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to engage members in a consultation process about ERGO's activities and strategy, as well as to share experiences from the national level and provide an opportunity to share skills and knowledge.

The [Annual Members Meeting](#) in December 2020 was the first ever that was held online. While we missed sharing social time together, the meeting was still participative

and interactive. The members participated in working group sessions on data collection and employment, learned about ERGO's work in 2020, shared their experiences, laid

the basis for another 10-year strategic work plan of ERGO network and agreed to the final steps for legally moving our organisation to Belgium.

To make more sense of and keep sane in the new online working environment, the ERGO Network staff additionally offered workshops to the membership on using Zoom effectively and on wellbeing.



ERGO NETWORK MEMBERS



- Roma Active Albania
- Romano Centro, Austria
- Centre de Médiation des Gens du Voyage et des Roms, Belgium
- OTAHARIN, Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Integro Association, Bulgaria
- Slovo 21, Czech Republic
- Life Together, Czech Republic
- Roma Association Zagreb and Zagreb Country, Croatia
- Amaro Drom, Germany
- La Voix des Roms, France
- Butterfly Development, Hungary
- Autonómia Foundation, Hungary
- Romaversitas, Hungary
- Pavee Point, Ireland
- Upre Roma, Italy
- Advancing Together, Kosovo
- Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, Kosovo
- Vilnius Roma Community Centre, Lithuania
- Rroma, Macedonia
- Mladi Romi, Montenegro
- Utrecht Roma Association, Netherlands
- Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities, Romania
- Nevo Parudimos, Romania
- Centre of Resources for Social Inclusion, Romania
- Roma Advocacy and Research Centre, Slovakia
- FAGIC, Spain
- Kaskosan, UK
- National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, UK
- Roma Forum, Serbia
- Roma Women Fund Chiricli, Ukraine

ERGO Network CONNECTING SINCE 2008

ERGO NETWORK IN TIMES OF COVID-19: SOLIDARITY, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

2020 saw the sudden emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, completely changing everyone's ways of working and living together. For ERGO Network it meant that our transnational meetings – so vital for learning from each other, networking and keeping the motivation of activists – had to move to the virtual sphere.

For Roma communities on the ground the changes were much more dramatic and life-threatening. Marginalized Roma and Travellers are amongst the most affected and impacted by Covid-19, mainly due to their devastating living conditions and exclusion, triggered by widespread anti-gypsyism. During the pandemic many Roma and Travellers living in poverty found it very hard to protect themselves from getting the virus because of lack of access to water and sanitation. This was even harder for those living in segregated and informal settlements and/or improvised shelters.

ERGO's members from the start filled gaps left by authorities and supported local communities with food parcels, masks and sanitary products, helped children to do their school work remotely and informed about protection rules. They also played a crucial role in informing the EU institutions and media about violations of fundamental rights in EU Member States' responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on our members' evidence, ERGO Network asked the EU institutions in several meetings as well as [papers](#) and open letters (for example to [Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli](#), to [Commission President Ursula von der Leyen](#) and Council President Charles Michel, to [Olívér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement](#)) to prioritise addressing the vulnerability of Roma during the coronavirus pandemic and in the EU's recovery plan. Making sure that Roma are not left behind in this crisis was the key message



to decision-makers in all our work throughout the year.

Together with partners from seven EU Member States, five Western Balkan countries and Turkey, ERGO Network also prepared an [in-depth study](#) about the devastating impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had and continue to have on Roma and Travellers across Europe. Besides data on key areas of access to education, employment, basic needs, health and housing, migration, discrimination and gender aspects, it also includes recommendations from the respondents themselves as well as from ERGO Network.



THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ECONOMY IN SUPPORTING ROMA SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

POSITION PAPER

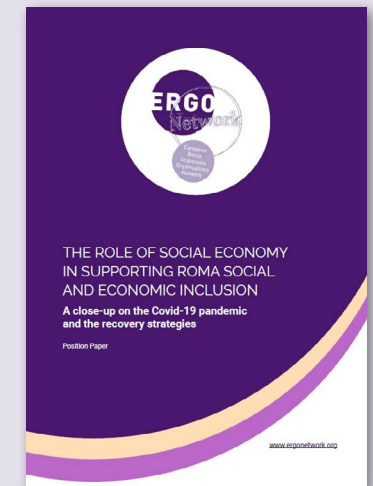
In 2020, ERGO Network explored the role of social economy in supporting Roma social and economic inclusion, in the run-up to the European Commission's envisaged Action Plan on Social Economy that is foreseen for 2021.

Traditional business models are based on a philosophy of maximising profit (or return on investment), which is then distributed to investors or owners (shareholders). Conversely, social economy is a model where the profit is entirely reinvested in the expansion of the enterprise, and/or used to finance social inclusion and community development projects.

An [ERGO Network position paper](#), based on an extensive data collection exercise

with the ERGO Network membership, investigated the role of social economy in supporting Roma rights and inclusion, particularly in the aftermath of Covid-19, and put forward policy proposals. Case studies of successful Roma- and Traveller-led social enterprises in Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey were also featured.

The paper aims at exploring the positive interplay between the role of social economy in today's development models and Roma rights and inclusion, particularly in the context of the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing recovery. It reviews what is needed at national level in order to build strong, sustainable social economy enterprises, which contribute in a positive way to the social and economic inclusion of Europeans of Romani origin



across the continent, anchored in actual realities and needs in Roma communities at the grassroots level.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On 17 November, ERGO Network held its annual public event, organised this year together with Social Economy Europe, and hosted by the European Parliament Social Economy Intergroup. The [online conference](#) was dedicated to debating the key role that social economy can play in delivering on, and ensuring, Roma equality, inclusion, and participation.

The event served as the formal launch of ERGO Network's position paper "The role of



Social Economy in supporting Roma social and economic inclusion in the Covid-19

pandemic and recovery", rooted in an extensive data collection exercise across ERGO Network's national membership. The event equally aimed to showcase concrete good practices of Roma- and Traveller-led social enterprises on the ground, as well as to put forward positive ways to ensure that the potential of social economy to support Roma inclusion is placed at the heart of recovery packages and the upcoming Action Plan on Social Economy, in full alignment with the recently released EU Roma Strategic Framework.

EU FRAMEWORK FOR ROMA EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION UNTIL 2030

In 2020, the new EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation until 2030 was published by the European Commission – an important milestone in ERGO's advocacy work. Together with our partners in the [European Roma Policy Coalition](#) ERGO Network greatly influenced the new Strategic Framework, leaving our mark especially in the document's shift from a social inclusion to a human rights and empowerment perspective and the strong recognition of antigypsyism.

Together with our coalition partners, ERGO Network submitted a list of indicators for the future framework, with a special focus on participation. ERGO Network also

[responded to the Commission's Roadmap](#) setting out the post-2020 Roma Equality and Inclusion policy, urging for an ambitious and binding commitment from the EU with

the new framework, including ensuring a fundamental rights, anti-racism and empowerment approach; improved governance, policy mainstreaming, and effective implementation; and increased technical and financial investment of the EU and Member States.

At the end of August 2020, ERGO Network sent [a letter](#) to the President of the European Council, the German Council Presidency and EU Commissioner for Equality, asking them

to accelerate the adoption of the Council Recommendation on Roma to actively promote boosting the Roma inclusion process by initiating the discussions in the Council working groups. The [Council Recommendation](#) on Roma has since been adopted in the beginning of 2021, constituting the strongest Roma policy in the EU to date.

On 8 October 2020, ERGO Network welcomed the adoption of the new framework by the European Commission. While it still has shortcomings and leaves too much flexibility to EU Member States, it takes into account many of our recommendations. ERGO shared this [assessment](#) also through active participation in the High-Level Conference launching the new framework.



Now the ball is in the field of EU Member States. For their development of National Roma Strategic Frameworks, ERGO Network developed an extensive set of [recommendations](#) that is now being used by national civil society in their advocacy work.



EUROPEAN SEMESTER & EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

EUROPEAN SEMESTER

ERGO Network's engagement with the European Semester has shifted gears and taken a big step forward during 2020, both at EU and national level. This translated into more and better engagement with associated policy processes and increased credibility and added value of the organisation and its members as reliable and expert partners and stakeholders.

ERGO Network has, on the one hand, built its members' capacity to engage in the processes, and on the other hand also conducted its own targeted advocacy. Our members were supported to engage in the process at key moments, including through the preparation of a dedicated Briefing about the changes brought about to the European Semester in September 2020 by the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent focus on the Recovery and Resilience Facility.



ERGO Network and its members prepared responses analysing the Country Reports ([Winter Package](#)) and the Country-Specific Recommendations ([Spring Package](#)) for 2020, assessing to what extent Roma rights and inclusion and other relevant issues were prioritised in the texts. An analysis of the [Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy 2021](#), and of the subsequent [Joint Employment Report](#), were also prepared.

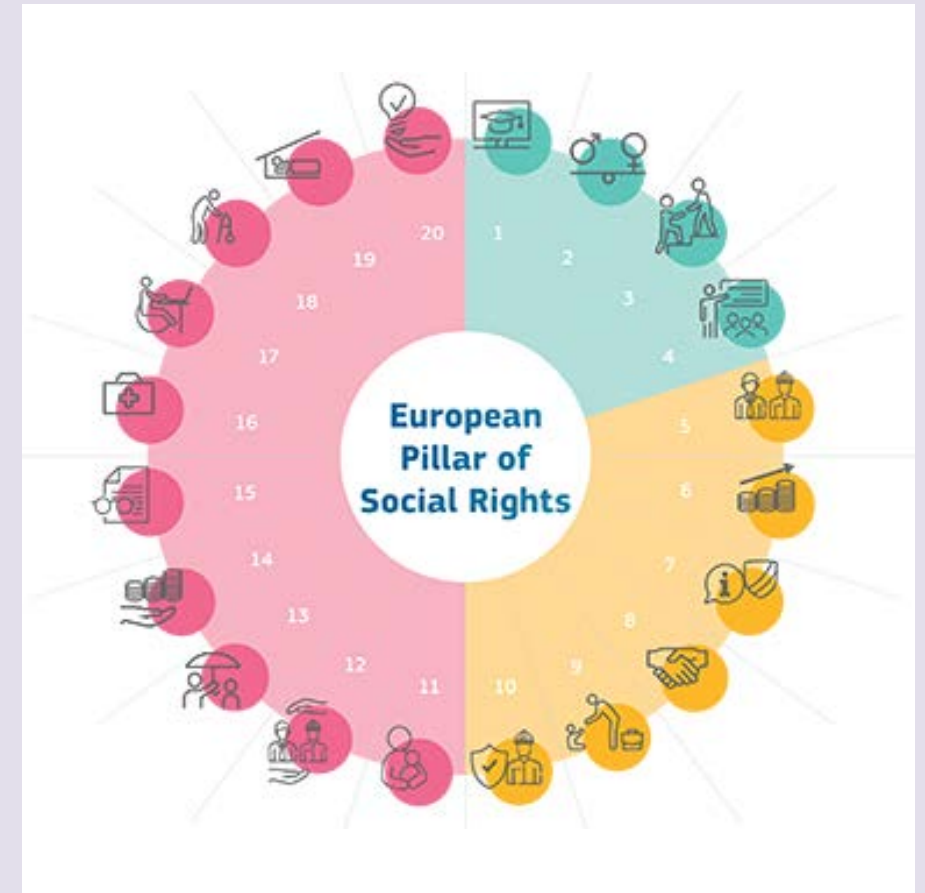


We worked closely with the Social Platform on European Semester advocacy and provided input to European Parliament reports and strategic dialogues with the European Commission. Finally, ERGO Network members had the opportunity to exchange views with the [cabinet of the European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit](#).

EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit. The Pillar sets out [20 key principles](#) that should guide the EU towards a strong social Europe that is fair and inclusive. As a fairly new EU instrument, ERGO Network supported its members in understanding the Pillar and using it in their work on national level, preparing a [Guidance Note](#) for members to better engage with this opportunity.

In 2020, the European Commission started its work on the Pillar's Action Plan, for which ERGO Network submitted a [comprehensive response](#), prepared in close cooperation with members with the aim to place Roma inclusion at the heart of the proposals. Concerns about mainstreaming Roma rights and inclusion in the Social Pillar were steadfastly tracked and fed throughout our entire work on the European Semester, the EU Roma Framework, Covid-19, the MFF and other EU funds. We also engaged in joint advocacy towards the Action Plan in the framework of our work with the Social Platform and as a new member of the EU Alliance for Investing in Children.



Additional thematic work on specific Social Pillar principles was also carried out by inputting to EP reports, EC consultations and activities of other civil society organisations in the areas of employment, education, equal opportunities, [childcare and support to children](#), youth, minimum income and social protection, health and long-term care, old age, housing and homelessness, and access to services.

A PLACE FOR ALL

ERGO Network continued its work around employment opportunities for the Roma with the campaign “A Place for All”. With the campaign we raise employers’ awareness of the benefits of an inclusive and diverse workplace and of the motivation and competencies of young Roma, and highlight employers good practices in diversity and inclusion to encourage others to follow their example.

In this first year, 20 employers from Central Europe signed the [A Place for All](#) pledge, shared their good practices and promised to ensure inclusion of Roma and generally diversity of employees at their work places. Through ensuring diversity and inclusion, these employers don’t only help to break the cycle of poverty, discrimination and exclusion of marginalised communities, give people back their dignity and help counter antigypsyism; they also invest in their own company: a diverse workforce increases emotional intelligence, creativity and productivity in any workplace and builds trust with minority customers. A dedicated Campaign Guide was prepared for members to approach employers.

As part of the campaign, together with the Romani Early Years Network (REYN) of the International Step-by-Step Association (ISSA), ERGO Network also organised the successful online human library “[Dream to Grow: How to make Europe’s labour markets a place for all](#)”. During this online event, Romani professionals shared their personal journeys to meaningful employ-



ment as “human books” with the audience. All of them overcame discrimination on many different levels with the help of teachers, civil society organisations and family members and are now contributing

to society through their jobs, be it as a post office clerk, a kindergarten teacher or a journalist. You can read and watch their [inspiring stories](#) as comic strips on our website.

PEER EDUCATION TO COUNTER ANTIGYPSYIST ONLINE HATE SPEECH

ERGO Network has been fighting antigypsyism since its creation and now continues to do so also in the digital space through its project “PECAO” ([Peer Education to Counter Antigypsyist Online Hate Speech](#)).

The project, funded by the European Commission and Google.Org and including 10 member organisations, counters antigypsyist hate speech online by working with young people, using a combination of peer education and monitoring in order to obtain two-fold results: the peer education methodology will achieve a direct change

in attitudes and actions of a high number of young people, and the monitoring will contribute to better understanding and a more systemic change of policies through advocacy based on the results.

While the first year of the project was of course heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, the project partners still managed to kick it off successfully. Many peer educators still managed to come together in Bulgaria during the summer to attend a training on peer education and data collection methodology. Those who could not travel joined an online training instead.



Later in the year, teams of Roma peer educators in ten countries have started to educate their peers on recognising, reporting and countering antigypsyist hate speech online! They also started to collect data on online hate speech in order to better understand this phenomenon. The data collection will result in a comprehensive report on antigypsyist hate speech published at a later stage in the project, as well as in advocacy activities on better anti-discrimination policies that take into account the online sphere, led by ERGO Network.

Follow the project on its [facebook page](#).

Funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) with co-funding from Google.org: Integro Association (Bulgaria), Nevo Parudimos (Romania), Federation of Catalan Roma Associations (FAGIC), Spain, Romaversitas (Hungary), Romanonet (Czech Republic), ERGO Network (Belgium).

Funding from the Google.org Impact Challenge on Safety in the framework of ERGO Network's project Peer education to counter antigypsyist online hate speech: La Voix des Rroms (France), Upre Roma (Italy), Roma Women Fund Chiricli (Ukraine), RROMA (North Macedonia), Roma Active Albania (Albania).

ROMA INCLUDED IN SOCIAL EUROPE

Through our framework partnership agreement with DG Employment called “Roma Included in Social Europe”, ERGO Network receives an annual operating grant from the European Commission’s EaSI programme. Most of ERGO Network’s activities are funded thanks to this generous support. RIISE constitutes a rich annual programme focusing on capacity-building of Roma grassroots organisations, advocacy at national and EU level as well as research, all contributing to building a real bridge between Roma grassroots communities and EU policy-making.

Here are some examples of activities in our 2020 RIISE work programme:

COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

For many years, ERGO Network together with its members promotes the participation of Roma in Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). Our work includes monitoring of Roma inclusion in the CLLD cycle in key countries as well as capacity-building of Roma activists and Local Action Groups to increase the participation of Roma in CLLD.

In 2020, ERGO Network together with Slovo 21 (Czech Republic), Integro Association (Bulgaria) and Nevo Parudimos (Romania) undertook an in-depth analysis of the full CLLD cycle from 2014-2020, from a Roma perspective. The resulting [evaluation report](#) assesses the quality of Roma inclusion in development strategies and funded projects, and looks at the empowerment of Local Action Groups and Roma through increased knowledge of CLLD. The report also provides recommendations on improvements in the CLLD process to foster Roma inclusion for the next programming period and showcases good practices of CLLD projects which put the Roma at their core.



MISUSE OF EU FUNDS

ERGO Network continued to invest in the capacity of its members regarding their understanding and role in monitoring EU funds spending on Roma. Four ERGO Members in the EU Member States with the highest Roma population conducted [case studies](#) to highlight how funds aimed at Roma integration in their countries have been misused at various stages of the project cycle. In connection with this work, ERGO developed a set of related guidelines on the violations of the Fundamental Rights Charter in ESIF funds.

The work has increased the awareness about possibilities to launch complaints at national and EU level based on violations of EU law and in particular the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, based on a thorough monitoring and evaluation of EU funds design and implementation with respect to Roma.

NATIONAL ROMA CIVIL SOCIETY COALITIONS

For many years, ERGO Network supports coalition-building of Roma civil society in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Czech Republic thanks to the support of DG Employment. The coalitions have since grown in size and influence. In 2020, all coalitions engaged in the development of national Roma integration strategies – partly directly as recognised civil society partners, and – where governments restrict civil society participation – as warning voice from the outside.

The “Intellect” coalition in Bulgaria is coordinated by Integro Association. The coalition “Romanonet”, initially coordinated by Slovo 21, has since been formalised and has its own legal structure and coordinator. In Romania, the Roma Forum Coalition is coordinated by Nevo Parudimos. In Slovakia, the Roma Advocacy and Research Centre coordinates a loose coalition of Roma CSOs active in the areas of education and combatting antigypsyism. Finally, in Hungary, for the first time the organisation Idetartozunk coordinated a wide coalition of Roma CSOs.

ANTI-BIAS TRAINING FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Very often, access to services is restricted for Roma because of the antigypsyism of service providers such as public employment offices, offices to receive social benefits etc. This starts with the “front-line” public servants who personally meet clients, explain processes, receive their documents and so on.

In order to address this situation, ERGO Network has developed an “anti-bias training for service providers” – a training aimed at public servants in order to recognize and understand the dynamics of antigypsyism and the impact it has on Roma or related groups, understand and be able to apply relevant legislation, develop and apply knowledge, skills and attitudes to respond to antigypsyism and discrimination and promote positive narratives and inclusive policies.

The training has already been trialled with our member Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (Vora) in Kosovo, and in 2021 will be trialled by Nevo Parudimos Association in Romania and RAVS Slovakia.

NEW SOLUTIONS TO OLD PROBLEMS: EXCHANGE OF NEW TYPE OF APPROACHES IN THE FIELD OF ROMA INTEGRATION

2020 saw the start of an exciting long-term project, bringing together 10 ERGO Network members coordinated by Nevo Parudimos.

There has been progress in identifying the causes of social exclusion of Roma, but when it comes to designing solutions, we face a general paralysis on how to tackle the multi-layered challenges. Top down approaches – developed far from the communities – leave little room for innovation. Practitioners agree that grassroots approaches work and bring good results for social inclusion and human rights, but most donors are still reluctant to support such small-scale initiatives.

Our project brings together organisations who are rooted in local communities and work successfully on a small scale in local contexts. Our consortium spans from Lithuania to Turkey, including Roma CSOs from inside and outside the EU.

The project aims at supporting Roma communities in adapting and implementing inclusion and empowerment projects that have already been tried and tested with success by other partners. At the same time we want to create a more favourable environment for bottom-up approaches to Roma integration, breaking the vicious circle of cynicism that 'nothing can be changed'.

The Covid-19 pandemic slightly delayed the start of project activities, but nevertheless the partners were busy in the second half of 2020, identifying good practices of their organisations to share with others and learning more about how to present and communicate the excellent work they are already doing. The project included also the translation of ERGO's [transparency criteria](#) into three additional languages – Lithuanian, Bulgarian and Romanian. In 2021, during a Project Market the partners will pair up to help implement each other's good practices in their organisations. At the same time, the project includes advocating

for more and better bottom-up funding opportunities of Roma inclusion and empowerment programmes.

The project "New solutions to old problems – exchange of new type of approaches in the field of Roma integration" is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation.

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants grants



ROMA WOMEN – POWER OF CHANGE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

The new project "Romani women POWER of CHANGE in the Western Balkans and Turkey" is managed by Roma Active Albania and includes ERGO Network and its member organisations Zero Discrimination (Turkey), Otaharin (Bosnia & Hercegovina), RROMA (North Macedonia), Voice of Roma Ashkali and Egyptians (Kosovo) and Roma Forum Serbia.

The project empowers Roma women to increase their participation in local and national policy and decision-making processes through constructive dialogue with national and local governments. It sets up national facilitating structures that support Roma women and Roma women CSOs to develop and implement advocacy strategies. The capacity building of Roma women and CSOs strengthens their confidence, knowledge, skills and leadership. This will enhance their position vis-à-vis public authorities and other stakeholders.

During 2020 we built synergies with other initiatives in the region and beyond and laid down the prerequisites for the implementation phase. RAA and ERGO meet in Brussels with representatives of the European Commission to further elaborate the strategy of the project. Each partner also started to set up their national support team, along with a country specific plan, clarifying the delivery of capacity building

for Roma women and advocacy through networking.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 our network of organisations immediately started to monitored the situation at grassroots level, identified hotspots and monitored the coverage of humanitarian aid. All partners kept close communication with the central government and municipalities and negotiated possible support measures. To push for the implementation of support measures, we also issued an appeal to the European Commission and the European Council to make the post-2020 EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality and Inclusion a top priority in its Covid-19 response.

Moreover, in cooperation with the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma we sent a letter to the Federal government of Germany, European Commission and government of the Western Balkans countries to urge them to react to the impact and risk of Covid-19 pandemic on Roma communities.



Funded by the European Union's IPA programme.



ROMA CIVIL MONITOR

From 2017-2020, ERGO Network was a partner in the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, coordinated by the Central European University Center for Policy Studies.

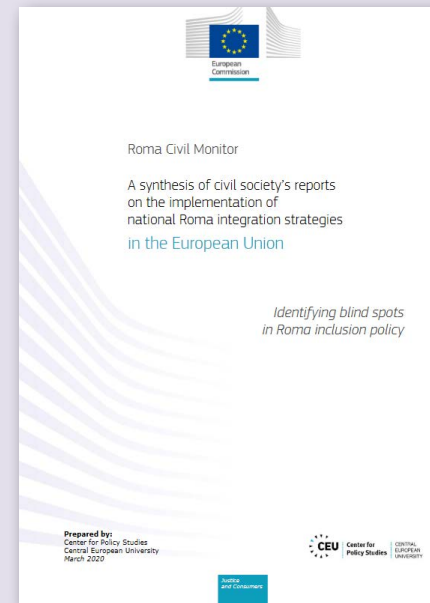
Within the Roma Civil Monitor pilot's third cycle, more than 90 civil society organisations and experts from 27 EU Member States have analysed discrepancies between the EU Member States' declared policies on Roma integration and how those policies are implemented in practice. The results, presented in the third [Synthesis Report](#) of the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, is grounds for serious concern as they represent the main obstacle for successful inclusion of Roma and their participation in the society.

This final monitoring cycle follows two cycles spent investigating governance issues and enforcement of antidiscrimination, investigating how antigypsyism is being combated, and investigating aspects of Roma access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. During the third phase of the monitoring, gender-related issues, youth inclusion and political participation were some of the "blind spots" reviewed.

The Synthesis Report reveals that anti-gypsyism has not been sufficiently tackled by the Member States' public policies due to weak institutional protections in place, creating the societal backdrop against which many other problems develop with respect to including Roma. Much more effective awareness-raising and education of the public about Roma is needed, including the promotion of Roma culture and including such material in mainstream educational curricula.

The information collected by the project to date has been made available online in a form of [fiches organised by country or by theme](#). All of the monitoring reports produced by the project are available on the [project website](#), as are synthesis reports summarising the findings for each phase of the project.

The European Commission has launched a call for the continuation of this important project, for which ERGO Network has submitted a tender together with its partners.



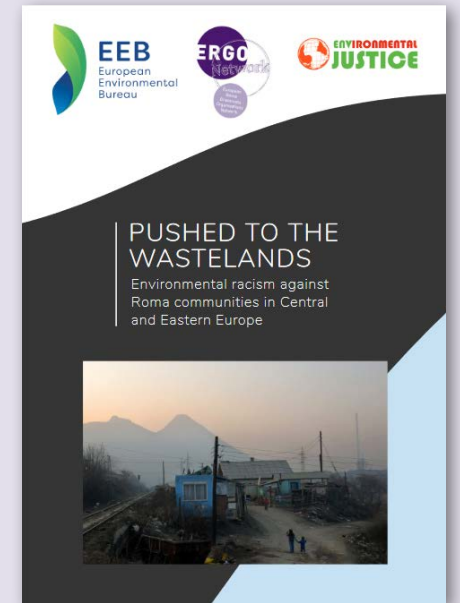
PUSHED TO THE WASTELANDS – ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AGAINST ROMA COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Together with the European Environmental Bureau, ERGO Network for the first time tackled the important topic of environmental racism against Roma. The report 'Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe' investigates the environmental racism faced by Europe's Roma. By analysing numerous cases studies in Central and Eastern Europe, the report highlights a pattern of systemic and systematic discrimination against many Roma communities which pushes them out into marginal and polluted lands and neighbourhoods, and deprives them of access to basic environmental services and public utilities. This has severe repercussions for their health and welfare.

Unequal exposure to environmental burdens is one of many dimensions of antigypsyism. This report shows that environmental racism against Roma communities is a structural and widespread problem in the countries researched in the EU and its immediate neighbourhood. Spatial segregation plays a decisive role in enabling environmental racism. It often coincides

with less favourable environmental conditions. The majority of Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe live in segregated settlements on the outskirts of smaller towns, isolated villages, or urban or semi-urban ghettos that are regularly deprived of basic environmental necessities and are more prone to environmental hazards. The 32 cases identified and analysed by this report directly affect around 154,000 people living in Roma communities. Most situations are cases of discrimination regarding water and waste management and access to related infrastructure. In smaller numbers, cases include conflicts around industrial sites, conflicts over land, as well as development projects linked to tourism or environmental protection.

The report has been widely acknowledged by the media, other civil society organisations and the European Institutions. It has been presented in the European Parliament before the start of the pandemic and in an online conference. The new EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation for the first time addresses environmental racism.



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR MEMBERS

CENTRE DE MÉDIATION DES GENS DU VOYAGE ET DES ROMS, BELGIUM - ROMALETTERS

The "romalettre" project is aimed at Roma families from Central and Eastern Europe who want to learn French. These classes are organised at school in Charleroi and as after class hours in Namur and Verviers. Initially organised for homeless families, all Roma pupils can now benefit from this project. More than language competencies, through Romalettres Roma children become more confident and more integrated in school dynamics. During the pandemic we had to stop the classes inside the school, but continued to provide online homework support in Namur and Verviers.



NEVO PARUDIMOS - SOCIAL INSERTION ENTERPRISE

In November 2020, Nevo Parudimos Association set up a social insertion enterprise with the aim of including vulnerable groups in the labour market. The initiative is part of the relocation and inclusion steps implemented by Nevo Parudimos Association in the city of Resita. The company is called Nevo Parudimos Servicii and operates in the fields of construction, interior renovation, cleaning and green spaces, with employees who are exclusively part of vulnerable groups in the Caras-Severin County.

The company currently has five employees living in segregated communities in Resita, all of them facing economic problems. The enterprise currently works in partnership with the City Hall on the renovation of



social housing to which the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods will be relocated. We want the company to become sustainable in order to offer as many stable jobs as possible for marginalised people in our city.



ROMANO CENTRO - STRONG GIRLS

Strong Girls is a workshop for female Romani teenagers. The workshop provides the opportunity to exchange views, challenge own experiences and ideas and open new ways to define their roles within their community and for their own development from a gender sensitive perspective. The project is carried out by Romani women who also act as role models and mentors for the young Roma women. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic situation, interest in the workshop was high in 2020 and a welcome opportunity for exchange and reflection.

ROMA FORUM UTRECHT - ANTIGYPSYISM POLITICALLY RECOGNISED IN THE NETHERLANDS

In October 2020 a motion by Selçuk Öztürk (MP for the DENK party) on antigypsyism and how to combat it has been adopted by the majority of the Dutch National Parliament. More than 75 years after the Roma Genocide/Roma Holocaust of the Second World War, antigypsyism finally has been officially recognized in the Netherlands. This political recognition, thanks to Mr Öztürk's motion, obliges the Dutch government to improve the legal position of Roma. Roma grassroots activism and advocacy play a crucial role and together with our political friends we shall make steps forward to tackle antigypsyism.

FAGIC - BUTSARNE ROMNJA - WORKING ROMA WOMEN

Butsarne Romnja is a project for and with women and promotes quality employment. The project facilitates access to municipal services, especially those linked to the promotion of employment. The Roma community in general and more specifically Roma women do not usually access these services for many different reasons, among them ignorance or mistrust. Therefore the project developed concrete actions facilitating access to services for young Roma women in Barcelona, ensuring that they have the same opportunities as any other woman in the city.



ROMAVERSITAS FOUNDATION - YOUNG ROMA STAND AGAINST HATE SPEECH

In January 2021, a roundtable discussion on online antigypsyist hate speech was organized jointly by Romaversitas Foundation and Ame Panzh, followed by a large number of interested people via TV Baxtale's webcast. The members of Ame Panzh discussed the most important aspects of hate speech and anti-hate speech legislation, the role of public media in spreading or curbing the spread of hate content, as well as the contribution of big-tech companies. They also

provided the audience with advice on how to protect themselves from online hate speech. The discussion was built on the experiences of Romaversitas' peer educators, who also provided examples from their monitoring activities. The peer educators monitor online hate speech, organize peer educator activities and raise awareness to online antigypsyist hate speech in the framework of the PECAO project coordinated by ERGO Network.

INTEGRO ASSOCIATION - YOUNG ROMA TEACHERS

Integro Association, together with the Trust for Social Alternative - Sofia, started the implementation of the project "Young Roma Teachers". The project aims to employ representatives of the local Roma community in local kindergartens, thus creating role models for young children and providing opportunities for professional development of young people in the community.

Integro Association selected 7 participants who now receive support for additional lessons in subjects necessary for applying to the university, mentoring support and internship in kindergartens. After becoming students, the young people can be employed by kindergartens according to their needs. In the second year of participation in the project, Integro Association will support their higher education by paying their semester fees and provision of a monthly stipend, depending on their semester grades.

FINANCES

This paragraph provides a summary of ERGO Network’s Annual Financial Report 2020, namely the balance sheet, the profit and loss account and the auditor’s report, which has been issued by Blömer accountants en advisers B.V.

SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020 (IN EUROS)

ASSETS	31 December 2020	PROFIT AND LOSS	2020
Fixed Assets	11.428,00	INCOME	
Other assets	-	Net Sales	-
Receivables	6.523,00	Other revenues	789.291,00
Others receivables and accrued assets	436.269,00	Total Operating Revenues	789.291,00
Cash and short term deposits	499.082,00	Exceptional revenues	-
Deferred Charges	-	Financial revenues	74,00
Accrued Income	-	TOTAL INCOME	789.365,00
TOTAL ASSETS	953.302,00		

LIABILITIES	31 December 2020	EXPENDITURE	
Equity (Reserves)	97.031,00	Staff	316.887,00
Result 2020	29.232,00	Other operating costs	440.160,00
Trade payables	20.220,00	Depreciation	2.584,00
Payables relating to taxes & social security contributions	1.199,00	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	759.631,00
Accrued charges	-	Exceptional costs	-
Other liabilities & accrued expenses	805.620,00	Financial charges	502,00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	953.302,00	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	760.133,00

		PROFIT/(-) LOSS 2020	29.232,00
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In accordance with your instructions we have compiled the financial statements included in this report 2020 of Stichting ERGO Network, Utrecht, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2020, the statement of income and expenses for the year then ended and the notes.

Management’s responsibility

The distinctive feature of a compilation engagement is that we compile financial information based on information provided by the board of directors of the entity. The board of directors is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information provided and completeness of the financial statement thereon.

Accountant’s responsibility

Our responsibility as accountant is to perform our engagement in accordance with Dutch Law, including the professional and ethical requirements applying to accountants. In accordance with the professional standard applicable to compilation engagements, our procedures were limited primarily to gathering, processing, classifying and summarizing financial information. Furthermore we have evaluated the appropriateness of the accounting policies which are used to compile the financial statements, based on the information provided by management. The nature of our procedures does not enable us to express any assurance on the true and fair view of the financial statements.

Confirmation

Based on the information provided to us, we have compiled the financial statements using the accounting policies as included in Guide-line RJ 640: Not for profit organisations

Blömer accountants en advisers B.V.

On its behalf,
Mr. Dres. J.N. Witteveen RA
Krijtwal 1, 3430 Nieuwegein
The Netherlands

DONATIONS

ERGO Network has received an operating grant of the European Commission’s EaSi programme for the project “Roma Included in Social Europe”.



ERGO Network was a partner of Roma Active Albania in the project “Roma Women - Power of Change in the Western Balkans and Turkey” awarded by DG Near of the European Commission.



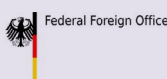
ERGO Network received funding from the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) for the PECAO project.



ERGO Network received funding from the Google.Org Impact Challenge on Safety for the PECAO project.



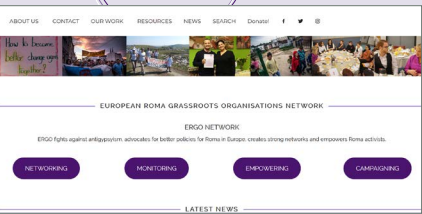
ERGO Network has received funding for the project “Roma participation in the Post 2020 EU Roma Strategic Framework” from the German Federal Foreign Office.



ERGO Network was a partner of Nevo Parudimos in the project “New solutions to old problems - exchange of new type of approaches in the field of Roma integration” funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Regional Cooperation.

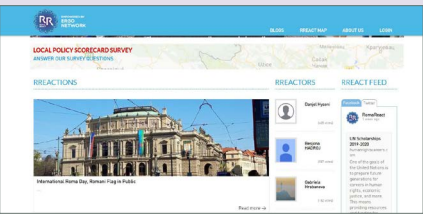
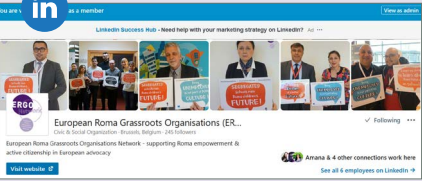
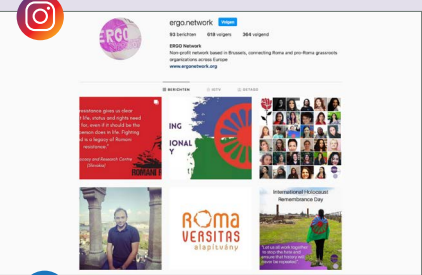


COMMUNICATIONS

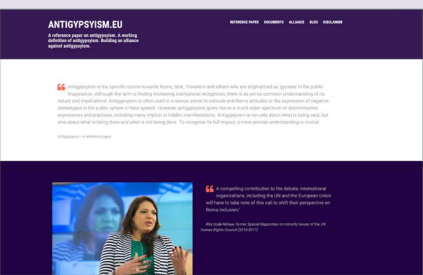


www.ergonetwork.org is the main source of information for visitors who are interested in ERGO’s work. It provides a thorough overview of our areas of work and structure, a platform for our policy papers and regularly shares news and issues happening in Europe in relation to Roma.

Through our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) profiles, the ERGO Network team can quickly share updates, react to political developments and engage with followers.



The website www.RomaReact.org with its corresponding social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter is an important hub for opinion and information sharing among Roma activists across Europe. It is a space for Roma and non-Roma who want to shape the public debate on Roma inclusion, share everyday Roma realities and challenge stereotypes and prejudices. Everyone can open an account on RomaReact and post their stories in order to change the narrative on Roma inclusion.



On www.antigypsyism.eu visitors can access the [reference paper on antigypsyism](#), published by the Alliance against Antigypsyism, and find blog posts about recent developments concerning the recognition of and fight against antigypsyism in Europe.

LOOKING FORWARD

ERGO Network is going from strength to strength! After a very successful year 2020, we will be even more active in 2021. Our core advocacy work around the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Semester and of course the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation will surely continue, as will our long-term projects “PECAO” to counter antigypsyist hate speech, “New Solutions to Old Problems” to bring member organisations closer together and promote bottom-up approaches to Roma inclusion, and “Power of Change” to empower Romani women in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Next to this ongoing work, we also have new projects and topics on our agenda! In 2021 we kick off the project Chachipen (meaning “truth”), coordinated by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) to advance the recognition and response to historically-rooted and systemic antigypsyism. ERGO Network is also involved in INACH’s Re-Act

project, developing, collecting and providing educational materials and tools for the prevention of racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance.

As our work is increasingly recognized within civil society and in other sectors, the ERGO Network team is also asked to engage more and more with new partners – be it from delivering antigypsyism trainings for entities such as Vodafone or the British Council, to providing input to civil society organisations in fields as diverse as disability, age, artificial intelligence and more.

The growth of ERGO Network will in 2021 also be reflected in profound legal changes. ERGO Network will move its legal seat from the Netherlands to Belgium to make its operations more efficient, and will be transformed from a foundation to an association, giving its members more ownership over the organization and becoming more democratic.



European
Roma
Grassroots
Organisations
Network



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