

THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

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Active Support to Employment



40% of Roma reported feeling discriminated against when looking for work, as well as every fourth Roma and Traveller in six countries.



45% of non-Roma think that not enough is being done to promote diversity in the workplace in what concerns Roma workers, while only 64% would feel comfortable having a Roma co-worker.



26% of men and 11% of women among Roma and Travellers in six countries think it is hopeless to look for a job or think they will not be hired because of their Roma and Traveller background.



25% of all Roma and Travellers who had looked for work in the 12 months preceding the survey felt discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity.

The umbrella term "Roma" encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.), as defined by the European Commission.

Public Employment Services, and particularly private employment agencies, often engage in 'creaming' practices, where those easiest to place are supported first, while those furthest from the labour market, which often include Roma jobseekers, are left behind.

An "employment-first" approach doesn't always work when dealing with people in complex, difficult circumstances such as poverty, debt, low skills, poor health, inadequate housing, etc.

These require tailored, integrated approaches, rooted in the reality of each individual and providing comprehensive pathways, which begin with adequate income and quality services. This approach is particularly relevant in a post-pandemic reality, with Roma communities having been disproportionately hit by Covid-19 and associated measures.

Lastly, diversity is not considered an asset in the labour market, and discrimination in the job market - on behalf of employment services, employers, other employees etc. - is insufficiently tackled.



Having more Roma in employment breaks the cycle of poverty and disadvantage, helps counter widespread discrimination, creates positive role models and contributes to a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Employment is one of the four sectoral priorities of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, while decent work is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (8).

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Recommendations



- End structural discrimination in access to employment and in the workplace by supporting the full implementation of the Racial Equality and the Employment Equality Directives, with a specific emphasis on combatting antigypsyism.
- Ensure that Public Employment Services have the necessary resources to adequately support Roma jobseekers in a personalised way, rooted in a comprehensive Active Inclusion approach, including enabling services and adequate income support, and developed with the full ownership of the beneficiaries.
- Invest in infrastructure and quality, affordable and accessible public services such as childcare and healthcare for the Roma, which can greatly contribute to stimulating their employment, as well as their productivity and job performance.
- Strengthen measures supporting initial work experience or providing on-the-job training, including apprenticeships, internships, entry-level positions, social economy, subsidised and adapted workplaces, lifelong learning, access to opportunities for progression by using the full potential of the European Social Fund (ESF).
- Promote positive narratives of diversity in the workplace - provide anti-discrimination training for Public Employment Services, employers, and staff; sanction any occurrence of discrimination; invest in adapted workplaces; reward diversity employers.
- Bring together all stakeholders: Roma and non-Roma job seekers, workers and employers, public and private employment services, Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations, local authorities, etc. to identify and implement positive solutions.

Sources

- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey - Roma, 2017
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Roma and Travellers in Six Countries, 2020.

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This snapshot is an excerpt from ERGO Network's position paper [How to ensure that the European Pillar of Social Rights delivers on Roma equality, inclusion, and participation?](#), October 2020.