

## END RACISM TO BUILD A STRONGER EUROPE

The forthcoming 2024 European Elections will take place against a backdrop of rising racism, xenophobia and intolerance across the continent. The undersigned anti-racist civic organisations invite European political parties to support this pledge to publicly demonstrate their commitment to anti-racism and to ensure that elections will be conducted without inciting hatred or prejudice.

1

### A true European Union of equality, free of racism

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. However, many individuals, groups, and communities in the EU continue to face racism, xenophobia and discrimination on a daily basis. Structural forms of racism permeate sectors such as employment, housing, and health.



**We demand that the fight against all forms of racism, including antigypsyism, is made a high political priority.**

**Mainstream political parties must remain committed and ensure that the fight against everyday discrimination, structural and institutionalised racism, are prioritised in our Union.**

2

### Countering antigypsyism as a specific form of racism

Roma, Sinti and Travellers are often described as the largest and most discriminated ethnic minority group in the EU. Antigypsyism against this group remains the "last socially accepted form of racism". According to the Fundamental Rights Agency, 80% of Roma live below the at-risk-of poverty threshold, and a third of Roma people reported having experienced some form of harassment and physical violence. This situation cannot be changed through a "socio-economic" approach that some Member States try to take in their national Roma strategies.



**We demand that the fight against antigypsyism is made a key priority and that political leaders commit to responding to antigypsyism in all its manifestations, by allocating adequate resources, raising awareness and supporting truth and reconciliation processes.**

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### Inclusive participation and significant representation of minorities in European Parliament elections

Democracy is founded on the principles of equality and the right of every citizen to participate in the decision-making process. Minority representation ensures that all segments of society have a voice in shaping policies and laws that affect their lives. Electoral campaigns that reflect the diversity of populations are more legitimate, fair and inclusive, enhancing social cohesion and reduce feelings of exclusion or marginalisation. Furthermore, the inclusion of minority politicians can challenge negative stereotypes and biases against them.



**We demand that national political parties reach out to racialised groups, including Roma, and empower them to run as candidates for the EU elections. Real commitment is manifested when minority candidates are included in the "winning" places on the electoral lists.**

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### Countering hate speech and hate crimes

Hate speech and hate crimes are among the most severe manifestations of racism and xenophobia; there has been a steady increase in hate speech and hate crime in Europe, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, up to nine in ten hate crimes and hate-motivated attacks in the EU are not reported and are therefore not sanctioned.



**We demand strong political leadership in fighting hate speech and hate crime through firm and speedy actions in concrete incidents.**

**The upcoming Parliament should implement more efficiently the prohibition of hate speech alongside defamatory language and incitement to discrimination inside the Parliament.**

5

### Policing free of prejudice and racism

While some National Action Plans Against Racism mention the use of profiling as a legitimate police tactic, profiling by law enforcement is almost exclusively based on racial or ethnic criteria and those who are racially profiled face criminal prosecution, punishment, and a range of other consequences that impact their lives for years to come.



**We demand that tackling racism in policing and law enforcement in the EU should be prioritised in the existing legal framework.**



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### De-criminalisation of migration

The continued criminalisation of migrants and refugees, and the blurred lines between law enforcement and immigration enforcement, lead to increasing discrimination and victimisation against certain racialised groups.

Criminalising people on the basis of their migration, residence or nationality/citizenship status can lead to a number of other human rights violations, including discriminatory profiling, arbitrary arrest and detention, family separation, and the inability to access critical health care, housing, education or other rights.



**We demand that migrants and refugees in irregular situations are not treated as criminals, or as security threats.**

**EU and Member States should develop safe and inclusive pathways to migration and international protection, which will not only prevent other human rights violations but also their social marginalisation in society and increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.**

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### Institutions and parties that represent the diversity of Europe

To date, the workforce of EU institutions is unrepresentative of the diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds among its citizenry, including Roma. The leadership and decision-making structures of the EU must lead by example and take concrete action to address this underrepresentation.



**We demand that all EU institutions, political parties, and groupings improve the representation of people with diverse backgrounds, including Roma, among their political leadership and administrative and operational structures.**

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### Improving economic development through better inclusion of racialised minorities

The ageing of Europe's population remains a growing concern for the continent's long-term economic performance. By contrast, Roma and other racialised communities constitute a younger demographic and could therefore play a big part in Europe's economic development.

At the same time, diversity brings many economic benefits to a workplace. However, racialised communities have the largest rates of unemployment, are more often working in underpaid jobs and face discrimination at the workplace.



**We demand that economic policies benefit racialised people, including migrants and refugees: this includes supporting minority-owned businesses, offering job training, prioritising employment opportunities to marginalised communities, recognising qualifications and ensuring fair wages for all.**

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### Maximising EU funding to tackle racism and safeguarding civic spaces

Anti-racism organisations struggle to respond adequately to growing concerns and acts of racism and intolerance. Freedom of expression and access to information have been restricted in some Member States, often under the pretext of fighting disinformation, while human rights defenders, watchdogs and activists are particularly targeted by restrictions, retaliatory measures and surveillance. National funding possibilities are shrinking, and philanthropy is becoming scarce.



**We demand that the EU institutions secure funding for activities that contribute to safeguarding EU values and fundamental rights, including grassroots initiatives, structural support for CSOs, and specific emergency funding and practical support for human rights defenders at risk.**

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### Ensuring environmental justice

Tackling climate change and environmental degradation as one of the EU's highest political priorities must not ignore Europe's racialised communities. Racialised communities in Europe are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, are disproportionately affected by environmental burdens and are denied equal access to environmental resources and services.



**We demand that climate justice against racialised minorities is addressed in all policies aimed at tackling the climate crisis, to ensure that all people, regardless of race and ethnicity, are guaranteed protections from the worst effects of climate change.**

# KEY DEMANDS FOR ALL EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES PRIOR TO 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

## SIGNATURES



1. European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network)
2. European Network on Statelessness
3. Eurochild
4. Phiren Amenca International Network
5. Integro Association, Bulgaria
6. Trajosko Drom, Sweden
7. Zero Discrimination Turkey
8. RomanoNet, Czech Republic
9. Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Ireland
10. Roma Support Group, United Kingdom
11. Fundacion Secretariado Gitano, Spain
12. Roma Forum Serbia
13. Central Council for German Sinti and Roma, Germany
14. India ki Rasta, Netherlands
15. Centre de Médiation des Gens du Voyage et des Roms en Wallonie, Belgium
16. Advancing Together, Kosovo\*
17. La Voix des Roms, France
18. Roma Community Centre, Lithuania
19. Ciricli, Ukraine
20. Romano Centro, Austria
21. Nevo Parudimos, Romania
22. Otaharin, Bosnia and Herzegovina
23. Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, Kosovo
24. Minority Initiative, Serbia
25. Roma Advocacy and Research Centre, Slovakia
26. Autonomia, Hungary
27. Amaro Drom e.V., Germany
28. Federació d'Associacions Gitanes de Catalunya (FAGIC), Spain
29. Jaw Dikh Foundation, Poland
30. Roma Association, North Macedonia
31. Roma Active Albania
32. Romaversitas, Hungary
33. Soraya Post, former European Member of the Parliament, Sweden
34. Anabel Carballo-Mesa, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Geography and History, University of Barcelona