

# SNAPSHOT: SITUATION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

## ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

**19%** of Roma live in households **deprived of light.**

**25%** of Roma reported **leaking roofs, damp walls, or rot in window frames.**

**1-in-5** Roma live in homes whereby there is **no indoor tap water.**

**34%** of Roma live in homes **without indoor shower or bathroom.**

**33%** of Roma live in homes **without an indoor toilet.**

**1-in-4** Roma and Traveller in five countries does not have a **bank account.**

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Roma communities across Europe continue to face structural and intersecting barriers in accessing essential services that are affordable, inclusive, and of adequate quality. Basic utilities such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, and heating remain out of reach for many Roma families due to the prohibitive costs relative to their very low income levels, or because of the complete absence of infrastructure where they live, particularly in informal or segregated settlements.

These areas, featuring a high level of geographic and spatial exclusion, are also far from key services such as healthcare, education, childcare, elderly care, or employment offices. Public transport is either unaffordable, unreliable, or entirely unavailable, significantly limiting Roma people's mobility and access to opportunities.

Affordability is a significant barrier for the Roma to benefit from a wide range of essential and social services, including basic utilities, as they experience very high rates of monetary poverty and extremely limited disposable income, if any at all. Energy poverty is particularly rampant, given recent spikes in international fuel prices as well as the fact that most Roma housing is profoundly inadequate to withstand the cold, requiring constant heating.

Administrative and legal barriers further compound this exclusion. A substantial number of Roma lack personal identification documents, a situation exacerbated by the absence of a registered legal address, which is both a cause and a consequence of exclusion from formal housing systems. This makes it extremely difficult to access a wide range of public and private services, including opening a bank account, enrolling in public healthcare, or applying for social protection and income support.

Meanwhile, the growing shift toward digital service delivery has widened the gap, as many Roma lack access to digital devices, internet connectivity, and digital literacy, leaving them isolated from online education, telehealth, job applications, and public e-services, as well as from information and digital citizenship and participation opportunities.

Antigypsyism and intersectional discrimination significantly hinder the Roma from accessing essential services. Negative stereotypes about people in poverty are amplified by racism and other biases, leading to disrespect, substandard treatment, or denial of services. Antigypsyism remains widespread among service providers, contributing to systemic neglect, exclusion, and a persistent failure to invest and adapt services to Roma needs.

Public service provision remains a crucial safeguard against the growing marketisation of the common good, where increasing privatisation means users can only access what they can afford – or go without.

This approach undermines commitments to solidarity, social inclusion, and equality, as for-profit providers prioritise profit over people.



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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.), in accordance with terminology used by the [European Commission](#).

## Recommendations:

- **Urgently address the lack of access to clean water, adequate sanitation, electricity**, and related infrastructure in Roma communities by reconnecting families or settlements cut off from utilities and implementing targeted subsidies to help low-income households cover utility costs.
- **Prioritise infrastructure investments that align with environmental sustainability** and climate resilience goals, and involve Roma communities in planning and decision-making to ensure culturally appropriate solutions.
- **Develop inclusive, accessible, and affordable transport systems**, that connect Roma settlements to essential services, schools, and employment hubs, with particular focus on informal and segregated settlements. Subsidize or cap transport fares to protect vulnerable users, introduce flexible community-based transport solutions, and improve physical accessibility to public transport for people with disabilities and elderly Roma.
- **Take immediate and coordinated measures to provide identity documents** and to tackle the lack of legal residence status, by simplifying registration procedures, reducing administrative barriers, and providing outreach support. Ensure that Roma have access to free legal aid and information on their rights to secure documentation
- **Implement comprehensive digital inclusion policies**, that provide Roma with affordable or free access to digital devices (computers, smartphones, tablets), reliable internet connectivity, and electricity. Complement with tailored digital literacy and skills training programs designed together with Roma communities.
- **Invest in community-based and social economy services that create local jobs and address specific Roma needs**, such as culturally sensitive healthcare, early childhood education, social support, and mental health services.
- **Rigorously combat all forms of discrimination, including antigypsyism, across public and private service providers**, by strengthening anti-discrimination legislation, improving complaint and redress mechanisms, and mandating comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion training.



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