



EUROPEAN ROMA GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS (ERGO) NETWORK

KEY MESSAGES FOR THE MEETING WITH THE CABINETS OF EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT ROXANA MÎNZATU AND COMMISSIONER HADJA LAHBIB

27 January 2026

The European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network is a coalition of Roma and pro-Roma civil society groups across Europe. Formally founded in 2008, the network brings together 42 members from 27 countries (18 of which are EU Member States, and 9 non-EU). ERGO Network acts as the bridge between grassroots realities and policy-making.

ERGO Network mobilises grassroots, national, and international organisations to combat antigypsyism, alleviate Roma poverty, amplify Roma civil society participation, and advocate for effective social inclusion policies. We raise awareness through public campaigns, empower Roma activists, and create spaces for networking and learning to bring positive changes to Roma communities.

We envision a Europe where Roma enjoy equality, social and political participation, free from antigypsyism, poverty, and social exclusion.

KEY MESSAGES

ROMA INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM

1. Antigypsyism is the decisive barrier to Roma inclusion

ERGO Network welcomes the EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026–2030, in particular its recognition of antigypsyism as a specific form of racism and of structural and intersectional discrimination as systemic EU challenges. However, ERGO's civil society evidence on the implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework (2021–2025) shows that antigypsyism remains the primary obstacle to Roma inclusion across education, housing, employment and access to services. Where antigypsyism is not explicitly addressed, Roma inclusion measures remain largely symbolic and fail to deliver sustainable impact.

2. The 2026 mid-term review must shift the Roma Framework from commitments to delivery

The European Commission's mid-term review of the EU Roma Strategic Framework in 2026 is a pivotal moment to correct course. It should:



Align implementation of the Roma Framework and the Anti-Racism Strategy, including stronger coordination between responsible ministries at national level and systematic exchange of knowledge, expertise, good practices and resources;



Translate political recognition into operational and enforceable measures, through dedicated budgets, clear indicators and targets – especially on combating antigypsyism and segregation – and meaningful Roma participation in implementation, monitoring and evaluation;



Position antigypsyism as a core Union of Equality priority, not a marginal social issue, including through high-level political initiatives such as a European Roma Summit in 2028 and clear Roma prioritisation in the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework.

3. Implementation must be built around four non-negotiable pillars

Based on ERGO Network's evidence-based recommendations, effective implementation of the EU Roma Framework for 2026–2030 requires:

(1) Antigypsyism made explicit, measurable and enforceable

Antigypsyism must be operationalised in National Roma Strategic Frameworks and National Action Plans Against Racism, with clear objectives, indicators and accountability mechanisms, supported by independent Equality Bodies.

(2) Stronger accountability and coherent monitoring

EU and national monitoring systems must be better aligned, follow-up on national commitments must be transparent, and civil society and FRA expertise must be systematically integrated into monitoring and review processes.

(3) Meaningful Roma participation beyond consultation

Roma civil society participation must be structured, resourced and rights-based, ensuring real influence over policy design, implementation and monitoring at national and local level.

(4) Political ownership and institutional capacity

National Roma Contact Points need stronger mandates, political backing and cross-ministerial authority, supported by clear expectations and guidance from the Commission.

4. Roma civil society is a partner in delivery, not just a stakeholder

ERGO Network stands ready to act as a strategic partner to the Commission and Member States in implementation, monitoring and evaluation, building on community-led monitoring tools and long-standing grassroots expertise.

Read our report on the implementation of the EU Roma Framework [here!](#)

PRIORITISE REDUCING ROMA POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION



Systematically integrate Roma-related issues into the **European Semester** and specifically issue CSRs where poverty, education, employment and housing gaps are documented, in a holistic way, as exemplified by Romania's 2025 CSR.



Ensure clear links between the upcoming **Second Social Pillar Action Plan** and its targets and the Union of Equality, particularly in what concerns the EU Roma Strategic Framework and the new Anti-Racism Action Plan.



Incorporate the existing Roma poverty-reduction target in the upcoming **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** and provide for disaggregated data collection and monitoring of progress, including based on ethnicity.



Strengthen the implementation of the **Child Guarantee** for Roma children, already one of the explicit target groups, left behind by most Member States.



In all above processes, make the fight against **intersectional discrimination, and particularly antigypsyism**, a cross-cutting priority, and make the meaningful **partnership with (Roma) civil society** a quality criterion for the design, implementation, and monitoring of these key EU frameworks.

Read our position paper on ending Roma poverty in Europe [here](#), our analysis of the most recent Autumn Package [here](#), and check out our Social Pillar campaign "Snapshots of Roma in Europe" [here](#)!

DON'T LEAVE THE ROMA BEHIND IN THE NEXT MFF!



Explicitly name Roma in the MFF and EMPL instruments and maintain the enabling conditions. While the 14 percent social target is a positive step, without explicitly naming Roma there is no guarantee that funding will reach Roma communities. Explicit inclusion is necessary to ensure visibility, accountability, and traceability under ESF+ and other social funds. Without enabling conditions, the Roma Framework will neither be properly considered nor effectively implemented.



Restore binding partnership with Roma civil society. The removal of the explicit partnership obligation weakens Roma participation. Binding, enforceable requirements to involve Roma-led organisations in design, implementation, and monitoring must be restored, supported by capacity-building funding and Roma-specific data collection.



Strengthen monitoring and accountability. Independent civil society, especially Roma-led NGOs, must be formally involved in monitoring national and regional plans. Roma-disaggregated data is essential to verify whether social spending benefits those most affected by poverty and exclusion.



Protect the 14 percent social target from dilution. The social target should be a binding minimum baseline, ring-fenced and legally anchored, with corrective mechanisms where social spending declines, particularly in Member States with high Roma exclusion.



Link funding to anti-discrimination commitments. Compliance with anti-discrimination law, National Roma Strategic Frameworks, and Anti-Racism Action Plans should be a condition for funding, monitored through the European Semester and EMPL performance reviews.



Ensure Roma inclusion in employment and skills transitions. Green and digital transitions must include targeted measures for Roma access to jobs, skills, reskilling, and inclusive labour market through EMPL-funded programmes.

Read our key messages on the next Multiannual Financial Framework [here](#) and [here](#)!

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