

# **ANTIGYPSYISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

**FACTSHEET WITH  
CASE STUDIES AND  
GOOD PRACTICES**

**ERGO**  
N E T W O R K



# ABOUT ERGO NETWORK

ERGO Network brings together Roma and pro-Roma civil society organisations from across Europe to fight discrimination, promote equality, and strengthen Roma participation in policy-making. Through advocacy, capacity-building, and grassroots empowerment, ERGO Network works to ensure Roma communities are heard at local, national, and European levels.

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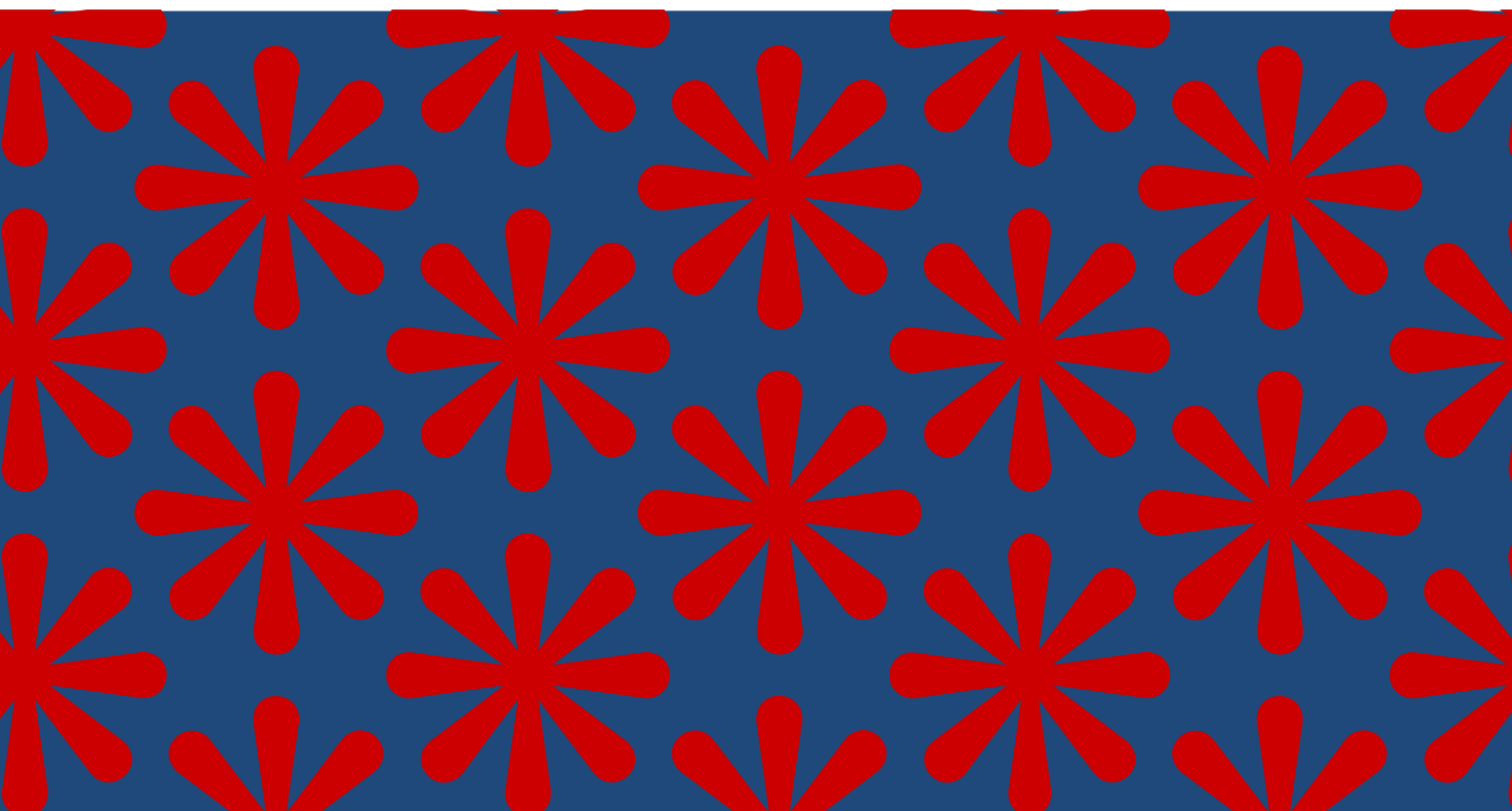
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# BACKGROUND AND ROOTS OF ANTIGYPSYISM

Antigypsyism in the Czech Republic is deeply rooted in historical persecution, including the near-total extermination of Czech Roma and Sinti communities during the Holocaust. Most Roma currently living in the country are descendants of post-war migrants from present-day Slovakia, originating from diverse regions and backgrounds.

State-led integration policies during the communist period disrupted traditional Roma social structures, while the socio-economic transition after 1989 disproportionately affected Roma communities. These developments contributed to long-term segregation in housing, education, and employment, which continues to shape the lived experiences of Roma today.

Historical experiences of state surveillance and bureaucratic repression have also fostered mistrust towards public institutions, influencing low levels of self-identification and civic participation.



# CURRENT MANIFESTATIONS OF ANTIGYPSYISM

Antigypsyism in the Czech Republic manifests across multiple, interlinked dimensions, including interpersonal discrimination, institutional practices, and structural exclusion.

## Discrimination, harassment, and fear of visibility

- Official estimates indicate that approximately **250,000 Roma and Sinti** live in the Czech Republic, while only **21,691 people declared Romani nationality** in the 2021 census.
- According to the **FRA Roma Survey (2021)**, **34% of Roma experienced verbal or physical harassment** due to their ethnicity.
- The significant gap between estimates and census data reflects persistent discrimination, fear of stigmatisation, and limited trust in public institutions.

## Institutional and Structural Antigypsyism

- Antigypsyism is embedded in institutional practices, particularly in **education, housing, employment, and access to public services**.
- While antigypsyism is formally recognised in policy frameworks, implementation remains weak and fragmented.
- The **Roma Civil Monitoring (RCM) reports on the Czech Republic** document widespread and persistent discrimination against Roma, notably in housing, employment, and access to public spaces.





## Housing Exclusion and Spatial Segregation

- Roma are disproportionately affected by **housing poverty** and residential segregation.
- **Discriminatory practices** by private landlords, limited access to municipal housing, and concentration in socially excluded localities reinforce spatial segregation.
- Exploitative housing arrangements contribute to **cycles of poverty, indebtedness, and social exclusion**.

## Labour Market Discrimination

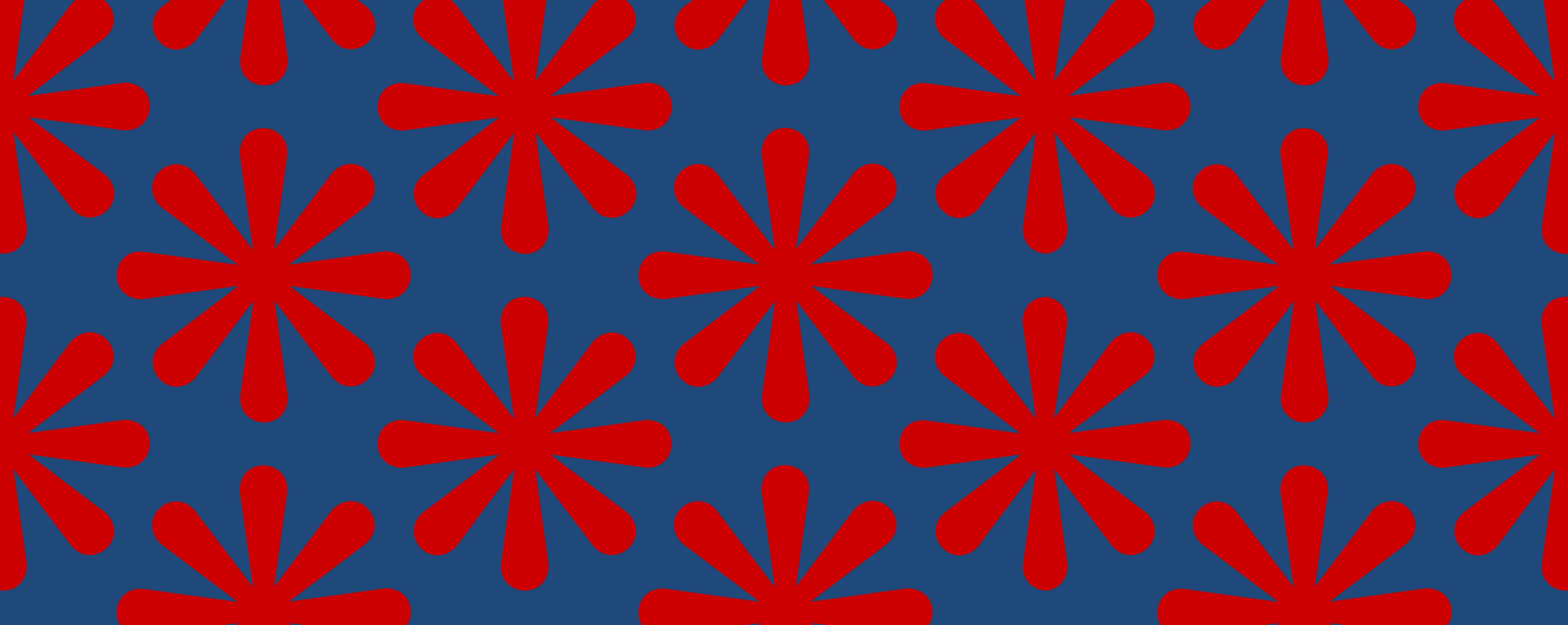
- Roma face persistent labour market discrimination, often in indirect or hidden forms.
- The **absence of ethnicity-disaggregated data** limits the assessment and effectiveness of employment policies.
- **Debt, foreclosures, and insecure employment** further exacerbate economic marginalisation.

## Discrimination in Health Care and Services

- Discrimination against Roma in access to healthcare remains a documented problem.
- Roma living in structurally disadvantaged regions face compounded barriers due to **the limited availability of services and the weak enforcement of anti-discrimination standards**.

## Stereotypes, Stigmatisation, and Public Discourse

- Roma are frequently portrayed in public discourse primarily in relation to poverty, dependency, or social problems.
- Positive representations of Roma contributions to society and the **existence of a Roma middle class remain marginal**, reinforcing symbolic antigypsyism.



## Structural Antigypsyism in Education

- Education is one of the clearest areas where antigypsyism manifests structurally.
- In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Roma children in the Czech Republic were disproportionately placed in schools for children with special educational needs, violating their right to education (**D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic**).
- Despite subsequent reforms aimed at inclusive education, **segregation persists due to strong local autonomy, segregated housing patterns, and discriminatory practices** at the school level. The issue's continued relevance is reflected in the **ongoing supervision of the ECtHR judgment** by the Council of Europe.

## Institutional Framework

- The main governmental body addressing Roma inclusion is the **Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs**, chaired by a government member and comprising representatives of pro-Roma organisations. The Council oversees the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation, monitored by the Commissioner for Roma Minority Issues.
- **Roma coordinators operate at the regional level** in all 14 regions, and municipalities with extended competencies are expected to employ Roma community coordinators. While this framework is formally established, its **effectiveness varies significantly depending on political priorities, administrative capacity, and available funding**.

# CASE STUDIES AND GOOD PRACTICES

## Case Study 1: School Desegregation through Local Cooperation Municipal-NGO Partnerships

In several municipalities, cooperation between local authorities and civil society organisations has helped reduce school segregation. Cities such as **Krnov and Velké Hamry** have invested in inclusive education measures, combining targeted funding, cooperation with NGOs, and engagement with parents and schools.

### Key success factors:

- political commitment at the local level
- cross-sectoral cooperation (education and social services)
- sustained engagement beyond short-term projects

## Case Study 3: Memory, Recognition, and Countering Symbolic Antigypsyism

For decades, a pig farm operated on the site of the **former Roma concentration camp in Lety u Písku**, symbolising institutional neglect of Roma suffering during the Holocaust. Sustained advocacy by Roma and pro-Roma organisations led to the state's purchase of the site in 2020.

**In 2024, a memorial was opened**, creating a space for remembrance, education, and dialogue. This process represents a key example of addressing symbolic antigypsyism through historical recognition.

## Case Study 2: Civil Society Leadership in Inclusive Education

Civil society organisations play a crucial role in countering antigypsyism in education:

- **IQ Roma servis** works with parents and schools in Brno to promote inclusive education and prevent segregation.
- **Nová škola** supports pupils from minority backgrounds and develops inclusive teaching methodologies.
- **Člověk v tísni** (People in Need) provides educational support in segregated areas and advocates for systemic policy change.

These organisations combine direct support with advocacy, ensuring that local experience informs national debates.

## Case Study 4: Roma Media and Counter- Narratives

Roma-led and pro-Roma media initiatives challenge stereotypes and increase visibility:

- **Romea.cz** provides independent journalism on Roma-related issues.
- **O Roma vakaren** is the only Roma-focused programme in public broadcasting and one of the few platforms for the Romani language.
- **tuke.tv** engages younger audiences through digital media.
- Roma literature and research are supported by the **KHER publishing house** and the **journal Romano Džaniben**.

These initiatives contribute to pluralistic public discourse and cultural representation.



# REMAINING CHALLENGES

Despite positive developments, antigypsyism remains deeply embedded in institutional practices:

- **persistent segregation** in education and housing
- **uneven implementation** of anti-discrimination policies at local level
- extremely **low Roma political representation**
- continued **exposure to hate speech** and harassment

Long-term progress requires sustained political commitment, adequate funding, and meaningful participation of Roma communities.

## SOURCES

- FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022), Roma Survey 2021
- European Court of Human Rights, D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic
- Roma Civil Monitoring (RCM) reports on the Czech Republic
- Strategie rovnosti, začlenění a participace Romů 2021–2030 (2025)
- Výzkumná zpráva (2022), Ministry of Education
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