

SNAPSHOT: SITUATION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

44%

of Roma children aged from 3 up to the age of starting **compulsory education** are enrolled into the education system.

The rate of the general population is

93%

27%

of Roma aged 20-24 have attained **upper secondary education**,

The rate of the general population is

84%

71%

of Roma aged 18-24 **drop out of the education system** before the upper secondary education.

Since 2016, the **segregation** of Roma children increased by 8% while the rate of **discrimination** against Roma in education increased from 7% to 11%

8%

7% to

11%



ERGO
NETWORK

Access to education is one of the four thematic objectives of the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. And yet, Roma pupils and students across Europe continue to be systemically denied their right to quality and inclusive education. From early childhood, they face deep-seated structural discrimination, generational poverty, and institutional neglect that systematically excludes them from equal learning opportunities. These barriers manifest early and multiply over time, leading to lower participation and completion rates in both education and training, and perpetuating a vicious cycle of social exclusion, marginalisation, and limited access to the labour market and social participation.

The majority of Roma children remain excluded from early childhood education and care (ECEC), primarily due to a chronic lack of community-based, culturally sensitive, and affordable facilities. Even where 'free education' is nominally available, hidden costs – such as transportation, school meals, materials, extracurricular activities etc – remain prohibitive for many Roma families living in poverty.

Segregation remains a widespread and toxic reality in educational systems across the EU, further entrenching social divisions and reinforcing antigypsyism. The absence of majority language support, coupled with material deprivation and lack of a learning-conducive environment at home, lead to the disproportionate and unjust placement of Roma children in special school designed for pupils with learning disabilities.

These institutional practices are both discriminatory and counterproductive, and they breed a sectioned view of society which leads to further discrimination, exclusion, and inequalities. Additionally, Roma pupils are too often penalised – through poor grades, absenteeism records, and even expulsion – because of systemic factors such as poverty, digital exclusion, and cultural alienation.

Roma adults are also missing sufficient and adequate second-chance education pathways and flexible learning systems that accommodate the realities of Roma learners. Roma workers face significant difficulties, not least antigypsyism, in accessing upskilling and lifelong learning opportunities. These are evermore important if we aim to ensure that the Roma, and particularly Roma youth, can reap the benefits of the green and digital transition.

Education mediators, particularly those from Roma backgrounds, are underutilised, despite their key role as essential bridge-builders between communities and schools. Last but not least, there is still no formal integration of Roma history, culture, and language into national curricula, including the remembrance of the Roma Holocaust.

The recommendations below reflect a rights-based, intersectional, and participatory approach to education that is essential for fulfilling the EU's commitments under the Roma Strategic Framework, the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the European Child Guarantee.



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N E T W O R K

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:

- Provide for **targeted and inclusive implementation of the European Child Guarantee**, by ensuring that the specific educational rights and needs of Roma and other marginalised children are prioritised at all levels of education policy and practice. This must include concrete, measurable actions to close the educational achievement gap between Roma and non-Roma children and ensure full participation, retention, and success in education.
- **Dismantle structural antigypsyism in education**, by banning Roma-only schools and classes, ending the misplacement of Roma pupils in special education, and holding educational authorities accountable for any discriminatory practices through clear legal and disciplinary mechanisms.
- **Legally enforce desegregation** and recognise school segregation as a violation of international and EU law. Member States must amend national legislation in line with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the EU Race Equality Directive, and implement robust, time-bound desegregation strategies backed by adequate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- **Ensure access to quality, affordable services** in marginalised communities, including comprehensive support services for Roma families, covering access to adequate housing, healthcare, nutritious food, school materials and equipment, transport, digital tools (including Internet and devices), and the necessary training to use them. Education cannot be effective without addressing the social and material conditions in which children learn.
- **Invest in universal, free, and inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)**, prioritise early intervention by removing both financial and non-financial barriers to ECEC for Roma and other disadvantaged children. Support culturally sensitive, community-based ECEC services, with Romani-speaking staff and inclusive curricula.
- **Prevent early school-leaving**, by tackling its root causes, especially among Roma girls, by ensuring access to tailored academic, social, and emotional support. This includes school mediators, in-class assistants, language acquisition support, after-school homework help, and the provision of free school meals as standard.
- **Advance gender equality and inclusive education**, eliminate all gender disparities and ensure that education systems meet the needs of all children, including Roma, children with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ youth, and indigenous and migrant communities. Invest in child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive school infrastructure and promote non-violent, inclusive, and safe learning environments.
- **Foster positive narratives and diversity**, embed the teaching of Romani history, culture, and language – including the Roma Holocaust and slavery – into national curricula. Work with Roma academics, civil society, and communities to develop culturally accurate textbooks and teaching materials and promote intercultural understanding and respect across all school levels.
- **Strengthen training and lifelong learning** for Roma youth and adults, by scaling up targeted programmes under the Youth Guarantee, funding second-chance education opportunities, recognising non-formal learning, and removing systemic barriers to upskilling in the context of green and digital transitions.
- **Promote genuine participation and co-creation** in educational policy and practice and establish participatory mechanisms that bring together all stakeholders – Roma and non-Roma pupils, parents, teachers, school staff, local authorities, and civil society organisations – as partners in the design, implementation, and monitoring of initiatives.

