



European Commission releases the Spring Package 2025

What's in it for Europe's Roma?*

On 4 June 2025, the European Commission published the **Spring Package** in the framework of the **2025 European Semester**, comprising (among others) 27 [Country Reports](#), 27 [Country-Specific Recommendations](#), and a [Communication on the Spring Package](#). ERGO Network and its national members reviewed the Package, to see to which extent it explicitly mentions Roma rights and inclusion, ethnic minorities, discrimination, and racism (including antigypsyism), as well as to assess whether national civil society was involved in the drafting of its documents.

Key Findings

1. **The Communication on the Spring Package mentions the Roma once**, exclusively regarding increasing their labour market participation – but nothing on health, housing, education, discrimination.
2. **9 Country Reports include references to the Roma (BG, CZ, GR, HU, IE, RO, SK, SI, ES)** in 2025, one more than in 2024, but still insufficient, as the Roma live in 26 EU Member States.
3. **There are 5 Country-Specific Recommendations on Roma (BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK)**, who are also mentioned in **7 Preambles (same + GR, ES)**, a significant improvement since before 2019.
4. **Ethnic minorities feature in 3 Country Reports (BG, CZ, SK)**, and **discrimination is mentioned in 8** of them (AT, BE, CY, IT, IE, PT, ES, SE). **None** of the terms appear in **any part of the CSRs**.
5. **(Roma) Civil society was poorly associated to the drafting of the Country Reports**, but it is mentioned in **8 of them (EE, FR, GR, MT, PT, RO, SI, SE)**, and in **all Preambles** of the CSRs.



Overall remarks

The **European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network welcomes the explicit mentions of the European Roma in the Communication on the Spring Package**. The text stresses that “*The labour market participation of women and underrepresented groups (such as older workers, youth, low-skilled, persons with disabilities, Roma and people with a migrant background) is key, also in view of the shrinking working-age population, as emphasised in the Union of Equality Strategies.*” (page 14, our underlining).

Additionally, a footnote explains the Union of Equality, listing its strategies aimed to “*promote equal opportunities in the labour market and in education for women and disadvantaged groups such as persons with disabilities, and those with a minority racial or ethnic background, including Roma*” (page 14, our underlining).

The first quote is **nearly identical to the usual** sentence that concerns the Roma in the Communication accompanying the Spring Package every year. While we rejoice to see Europe’s largest minority explicitly referenced, it is unfortunate that the approach continues to be **anchored primarily in the perspective of reducing labour market shortages** and employment gaps, rather than stemming from a comprehensive, rights-based, wellbeing approach.

Furthermore, we **lament the absence of any other reference** to other crucial elements, such as education, health, housing, access to rights, equality, and participation. This development is in stark contrast with **last year’s Communication on the Spring Package, which included an additional reference** to the rising cost of living and the devastating impact of inflation, including hunger and energy poverty.

The **Union of Equality is equally narrowly reduced** to “equal opportunities in the labour market and in education”, and the **EU Roma Strategic Framework is not even mentioned** by name, much less comprehensively mainstreamed.

There are **no additional references to ethnic minorities or racism**. There are **two welcome references on anti-discrimination**, acknowledging the **slow progress registered** in this area in what concerns the implementation of the 2019–2022 Country-Specific Recommendations, and highlighting the importance of ensuring non-discrimination, promoting gender equality and improving equality mainstreaming.

The Communication explicitly states that “The Competitiveness Compass for the sets out the priorities and actions guiding the work of the Commission over the next five years, establishing **competitiveness as an overarching objective**” (our bold), and furthermore that **competitiveness will underpin all sectors**, as well as **inform the Country-Specific Recommendations**. From the perspective of social rights, this is a **catastrophic approach**, which will prioritise support to the private sector and business development at the expense of social inclusion and equality. This will also be **reflected in the next EU budget**, as of 2028.

The structure of the Communication follows no longer follows the previous four guiding dimensions of macroeconomic stability, productivity, environmental sustainability, and fairness. Instead there are **7 Key Competitiveness Challenges**, strongly based on those identified in the Competitiveness Compass released earlier this year, though somewhat rephrased:

3.1 Macroeconomic developments

3.2 Closing the innovation gap

3.3 A joint roadmap for decarbonisation, competitiveness and security

3.4 Simplifying the regulatory environment

3.5 Making the most of Europe’s Single Market

3.6 Financing competitiveness and a Savings and Investments Union

3.7 Promoting skills and quality jobs while ensuring social fairness

From one in four, **social fairness is now one in seven** key areas, and the phrasing leaves no doubt that **the focus is on employment and skills**, which are dimensions needed to boost competitiveness, rather than on social rights, which seem to come as an afterthought. Nevertheless, **the addition of ‘quality’ in front of jobs is welcome**.

The section dedicated to **social fairness** makes some very important points about **inclusive labour markets**, as well as about high-quality and affordable early childhood education and care and social and long-term care, adequate adaptations for persons with disabilities, and improving working conditions. These are important points, despite the fact that **the care agenda should be an objective in itself**, and not just a labour market enabler. It stops short of recommending adequate wages, instead opting for “careful monitoring” and “balancing [...] competitiveness and [...] cost of living”. **Migration and mobility are also instrumentalised** in the quest for more workers to respond to business needs.

While **references to inclusive education are welcome**, the bulk of the wording on education in the social fairness section is dedicated to labour market skills, with no mention whatsoever of the value of education for human and personal development, for social participation, for societal advancement, or for vibrant and resilient democracies.

We wholeheartedly welcome **the explicit call to curb poverty, including child poverty**, in line with the headline target of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as to invest in **adequate and efficient social protection, inclusion and pension** systems, to **foster access to affordable housing, and social services**, to **ensure non-discrimination** and **improve equality mainstreaming**, to **resilient health and long-term care systems**, and to **support the most vulnerable in the green and digital transitions**.

We also salute the **piloting of the Social Convergence Framework**, a new monitoring tool for social objectives, now fully integrated into the European Semester. The communication includes a box summarising the results of the first exercise, which identified 10 countries who were not on track, and the results were integrated into the Country Reports and Country-Specific Recommendations for those countries.

A second box in the same section deals with **access to adequate housing**. While it makes some welcome points about rising housing costs and the need for independent living, the whole framing is still **from a perspective of supporting labour market needs and productivity**. There is no rights-based approach, **no affirmation of the right to housing**, and an explicit **overreliance on the housing market**, with barely a word in passing about the role of social housing.

As every year, the Communication includes a **wide range of Annexes**, covering an overview of the thematic areas in the CSRs, monitoring of the previous CSRs' implementation, monitoring of the delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals, and key findings of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure. The **European Pillar of Social Rights is barely mentioned** outside the social fairness section and the Communication does not include an Appendix tracking the EU's progress on the Social Pillar implementation.

Overall, **social inclusion is not sufficiently mainstreamed** through the other three dimensions. While **poverty is mentioned 8 times** in the document, nearly all references are in the Fairness chapter, most of them in the same paragraph. There is **not a single reference to social economy**, despite the current mid-term review of the EU Social Economy Action Plan, which is a missed opportunity.

The Communication pays even **less attention to stakeholder engagement than in previous years**, which is a regrettable step back, at a time where we would have expected the commitment to civil dialogue to be reaffirmed and further strengthened, and as the EU is preparing to launch its first Civil Society Strategy. Just as last year, **civil society is only explicitly mentioned once**, in the very last sentence of the document.

There is also only **one reference to social partners**, in the same sentence as civil society, a watering down from last year's three. Involvement of national stakeholders is no longer stressed in relation to the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, or the Social Pillar Action Plan.

We further **salute the inclusion of Roma concerns in the Employment Guidelines** for 2025, a yearly document highlighting common priorities and targets for employment and social policies, providing the basis for the Country-Specific Recommendations. Last year, the Guidelines have been expanded and enriched from the previous set, while this year they **remained pretty much unchanged from last year**.

The Proposal for a Council decision features **4 references to the Roma**, including synergies with the EU Roma Strategic Framework, though once again only reduced to its employment objectives. The text also includes a **strong call to tackle discrimination and poverty** (including, explicitly, that **of Roma**).

For the first time last year, **the Roma were also explicitly included in the Guidelines themselves**, which we warmly welcomed. Guideline 6, *Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, lifelong acquisition of skills and competences*, speaks of activating and enabling those who can participate in the labour market, “including [...] **people from marginalised Roma communities**” (our bold).

Equally, **Guideline 7**, *Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue*, contains a reference supporting those furthest from the labour market to access employment, “including people with a migrant background and **marginalised Roma people**” (our bold). These Guidelines remain valid for 2025.

Once again, dismayingly, **both references are to Roma employment**, while overlooking all other aspects of the EU Roma Strategic Framework – health, housing, education, as well as antigypsyism, poverty, and participation. This gives the impression that the **Roma only count for Europe’s decision-makers as a desirable workforce**, rather than recipients of a rights-based approach that would aim at their inclusion, good living, and wellbeing.

Roma in the Country Reports 2025

The European Commission has prepared **Country Reports** for all 27 Member States, providing a “thorough analysis of economic, employment and social developments within Member States, **in line with the framework of the Competitiveness Compass.**” (our bold). Sadly, this focus prioritises profit margins over social inclusion, human rights, and equal opportunities.

The Country Reports highlight, for each Member State, the **key challenges affecting competitiveness and prosperity**, as well as **track progress** made in implementing **past Country-Specific Recommendations**, delivering on the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), **absorbing EU Funds**, and **adhering to reformed fiscal rules**. The latter focus on funds and fiscal rules is new, while a previous stated objective, or monitoring the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan, is no longer mentioned in the accompanying Communication.

Only **9 Country Reports include references to the Roma (BG, CZ, GR, HU, IE, RO, SK, SI, ES)** in 2025, one more than in the previous year given the addition of Spain, a first in many years. For the 8 Member States whose Country Reports included the Roma in previous years (BG, CZ, GR, IE, HU, RO, SK, SI), we are delighted to see that **the number of these references has substantially increased** from 2024 in the Reports for the Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, while it has slightly decreased in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the Roma live in 26 EU Member States, some of them comprising significant Roma communities, there were **no other references in the remaining Country Reports**.

Disappointingly, only **1 Country Reports (BG) includes a references to minorities**, in the context of digital inclusion, and **only 2 Country Reports (CZ, SK) refer to ethnic groups**, regarding disaggregated data collection to support Roma employment, and inactivity of some categories, respectively. This is one less than in 2024, and once again the latter two relate to labour market participation.

This is **amply insufficient for a real commitment to support equal opportunities** for racialised communities, particularly given that the accompanying Communication highlights the **very slow progress of Member States on mainstreaming equality**. Furthermore, we would have liked to **see these references in more – if not all – Country Reports**, given widespread racism as well as intersectional discrimination across the European Union.

While, just like in previous years, there are **no mentions of antigypsyism or racism** in any of the Country Reports, there are **references to discrimination in 8 of them** (AT, BE, CY, IT, IE, PT, ES, SE), one more than last year. We particularly welcome wording about the discrimination faced by the **Roma and Travellers in Ireland**, highlighted in five separate instances in the Irish Country Report, but **without naming antigypsyism as such**.

Regarding the other countries, mentions of discrimination in their Country Reports are about **older workers** (Austria, Belgium), **migrants** on the labour market (Austria, Belgium, Spain), **people with disabilities** on the labour market (Cyprus), and overall **access to equal opportunities** (Sweden). While it is positive to see discrimination acknowledged, we can't help but notice that it **mainly concerns access to the labour market**, without references to all other areas of life where it acts as a powerful barrier to rights, resources, and services. Additionally, it is regrettable that **discrimination is not a cross-cutting dimension across all Country Reports**, on a multitude of intersectional grounds, as a key root causes of poverty and exclusion.

ERGO Network members are **generally pleased with the number, quality, and accuracy of the references** in the Country Reports which include Roma-specific content (BG, CZ, GR, HU, IE, RO, SK, SI, ES). However, several of our members share the view that other equally **important aspects of Roma inclusion and wellbeing are missing**, thus undermining a cohesive, comprehensive approach that would yield results. Our members feel that, while Country Reports may be effective at capturing the difficult socio-economic situation of the Roma, **the roots of these challenges are ignored**, and they remain unaddressed in the **absence of solid policy proposals** in the Country Reports themselves.

In **Bulgaria**, while this year's Country Report contains significantly more findings on the situation of the Roma compared to previous years, the **recommendations remain limited** to the areas of employment, education, and certain social services. Once again, **some of the most pressing issues for the Roma community are missing** from the analysis, such as poor housing conditions affecting large segments of the Roma population, deteriorated or missing technical infrastructure, and a high number of dwellings with unclear or illegal status. Without resolving these issues, it is felt that the proposed measures and activities are unlikely to achieve meaningful results or impact.

In the **Czech Republic**, our members are of the opinion that **the references to the Roma in the Country Report align with widely recognised structural issues** affecting Roma communities in the Czech Republic, such as poverty, exclusion, lack of disaggregated data, antigypsyism, and unequal access to housing. However, there is **no link to the NRRP**, not enough data regarding **ongoing segregation in schools**, and also **nothing on the green transition** and its impact on excluded Roma localities, as it might deepen existing inequalities and housing poverty.

In **Greece**, it is considered particularly disturbing by our members that the Country Report **does not mention antigypsyism**, which is also the case for the Greek Roma Strategic Framework. This is **a tremendous missed opportunity**, because recognising the phenomenon is an absolute prerequisite for combating it.

In **Hungary**, our members provided mixed feedback regarding the way Roma concerns are included in the Country Report. While **some of the references are deemed welcome** – particularly in what concerns Roma poverty and educational attainment, **others were heavily criticised** – **particularly the 300 Settlements programme**, which was deemed poorly planned, underfunded, lacking transparency and social work support, not tackling segregation and perpetuating a model of outsourcing to charities risks weakening public services. The report also lacks critical data on early school leaving and segregation among Roma students, masking how Hungary's education and labour policies continue to undermine Roma youth's long-term inclusion and mobility.

In **Ireland**, the 20 separate and joint **references to Travellers and Roma are welcome**, as is the explicit mention of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II. Our members are also encouraged to see discrimination acknowledged, but are equally disappointed that the term “racism” – both individual and systemic – is absent, despite being the greatest barrier Travellers and Roma face in accessing services, housing, education, and healthcare.

In **Romania**, our members state that it is **encouraging that the Roma are mentioned several times** in the Country Report and that these references are in relevant sections. They also appreciate that the focus on **rural-urban divides provides some useful insight**. However, aside highlighting existing issues, the Report rehashes known statistics and **remains superficial**, reflecting a lack of real commitment **and no concrete solutions to address issues like segregation or employment challenges**.

In **Slovakia**, our members’ assessment is that, while it is important that the document includes references to Roma, these are **insufficiently articulated and inadequately addressed**, lacking long-term vision for inclusion and desegregation. **Job-creation alone is not enough** to reduce segregation, racism, and discrimination, **the aim should be reducing and ultimately eliminating exclusion** in all areas.

In **Spain**, it is felt by our members that, while the inclusion of Roma concerns in the Country Report is a positive step, but the **mentions are limited and overly general**. The housing situation in Spain is **far more severe than described**, involving deep residential segregation, very limited access to social housing, and Roma families living for years in substandard conditions without state intervention. The Country Report fails to address these issues with the seriousness they require **and does not link them to Spain’s Recovery Plan or the National Roma Strategy**.

Civil society is mentioned in 8 Country Reports (EE, FR, GR, MT, PT, RO, SI, SE), the same number as 2024, but not the same countries, with the exception of Greece and Slovenia. There are **hardly more than one punctual reference** in each of the 8 Reports, dealing with prevention of risk-taking behaviours in youth (EE), involvement in the green transition and the solidarity pact (FR), **working with vulnerable groups, including Roma** (GR), working with people experiencing homelessness (RO), dispensing entrepreneurial education (SE) and **improving civil dialogue** (MT, PT, SI). These references remain **minimal and tokenistic**, and do not demonstrate a real commitment to civil society involvement.

Our members are of the belief that the European Commission is **missing a great opportunity** to call on Member States to foster **wide and pro-active stakeholder participation**, in order to ensure both **evidence-based solutions, as well as ownership and transparency**. The desk officers in the European Commission, as well as the European Semester Officers stationed in Member States, can play a significant role in **bridging the civil dialogue gap, by reaching out to civil society organisations**, particularly those representing marginalised and vulnerable communities, such as the Roma, in order to ensure that their concerns are taken on board in an adequate way in the Country Reports.

Roma in the Country-Specific Recommendations 2025

For the **Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs)** this year, the European Commission **finally steps away from the same three dimensions for all Member States**, which have been standard procedure for the past years: fiscal policy, National Recovery and Resilience Plan, and the clean energy transition. This year, “the CSRs provide **comprehensive and coherent policy guidance**” (our bold) on investment priorities in each Member State. The approach critically reviews the outstanding stock of 2019-2024 CSRs and merges it to emerging challenges, to provide a **consolidated set of recommendations**.

All countries received a first CSR on increasing their defence spending, which is worrying as fears mount that vital support for social inclusion, social protection, and social services will be curtailed as a result, since these areas are not explicitly redlined. As the implementation of the **National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)** enters its final year, a second CSR for all Member States has been tailored to reflect the scale and urgency of the remaining required actions in each country. Most countries received a minimum of 3 CSRs, but some up to 6, and **nearly all Member States received a recommendation dealing with social issues** in some shape or form.

In a return to – and an improvement from – 2019, five Member States received a Country Specific Recommendation on Roma inclusion, namely Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. In 2019, there had been 4 (minus the Czech Republic), and in the years since, only Hungary and Slovakia received an explicit CSR on Roma, in different years.

Of these, **four out of five Roma CSRs deal with education** (BG, CZ, HU, SK), while Romania’s presents the most comprehensive, wrap-around, integrated approach:

“Reduce poverty and social exclusion risks by extending social protection and improving its effectiveness, including through better access to quality essential and enabling services, focusing on integrated social, health, educational and employment services, in particular for Roma and other disadvantaged groups, while maintaining fiscal sustainability.”

The **Roma are also mentioned multiple times in the Preambles** of the Country-Specific Recommendations of the five countries that included a CSR on them. The analysis in the Preambles goes beyond what is included in the CSR itself, and additionally deals with poverty (BG), employment (BG, CZ, HU, SK), education (HU, SK), poverty (RO). In addition to these five countries, the Roma were also **mentioned in two additional Preambles**, for Greece (about employment) and Spain (about poverty).

We are very pleased with these comprehensive Roma references in **seven Preambles and 5 Country-Specific Recommendations**. However, we again notice **increased attention paid to employment** and to education for labour market needs. While it is very positive to see Roma poverty included, it is **regrettable that other dimensions of the EU Roma Strategic Framework are not included**, such as health, housing, antigypsyism, or participation.

Furthermore, the living conditions, quality of life, and wellbeing of Roma are not improving in the other Member States either, and - given the very limited progress - **we would have liked to see the Roma mentioned in much more Country-Specific Recommendations**. The opportunity was lost to **highlight gaps in the NRRPs**, as well as to target those countries whose Plans do not mention the Roma at all. This approach would have also **strengthened links with the delivery of the EU and National Roma Frameworks**.

Other important concepts for Roma rights and inclusion, such as **ethnic minorities, antigypsyism, racism, and discrimination are completely absent from all 27 Country-Specific Recommendations**. This trend is, unfortunately, consistent with the Spring Packages of the previous years, which also included no references to any of these issues. These are strikingly absent dimensions in the current climate, where **discrimination is rampant all across Europe** for all racialised communities, including the Roma.

Our other national members voiced their disappointment that the Roma were not mentioned at all in their Country Reports or Country-Specific Recommendations:

"We express deep concern that the Country Report and Country-Specific Recommendations ignore the situation of Roma in Austria, especially their socio-economic challenges. Despite Austria's overall wealth, many Roma live in poverty and face severe social exclusion. Our daily work shows that Roma families often struggle below the poverty line, with women and single mothers especially disadvantaged. Key issues include low education levels, poor German language skills, precarious housing, legal insecurity, and low-paid work. The Roma also struggle with health problems, family burdens, and debt. Access to stable, well-paid jobs is crucial, and urgent, coupled with targeted action, particularly in education, to reduce Roma poverty.

Romano Centro, Austria

"The documents do not remark that very poor socio-economic conditions and rising discrimination and racism pose serious risks for Roma and Travellers. A major concern is the lack of effective Traveller accommodation policies, and recently Belgium also saw its first case of racist violence against peaceful Traveller families. Roma integration is also hindered by complex national politics and fragmented representation. However, small-scale projects in education, employment, and mediation show promise. The arrival of Roma refugees from Ukraine has gathered a lot of sympathy, while local Roma families in Belgium ended up overlooked."

Centre de Médiation des Gens du Voyage et des Roms, Belgium

"The Spring Package documents for Finland overlook the Roma, despite the fact that recent social and economic reforms, like cuts to housing support, are already exacerbating homelessness and poverty among Roma communities. The Country Report fails to acknowledge the specific challenges that Roma in Finland face when it comes to employment, elderly care, and access to services, ignoring both their marginalization and the impact of structural racism. This silence is unacceptable, given the real and growing inequalities Roma people experience in our country."

The Finnish Roma Association, Finland

"Regrettably, once again, the Country Report and Country-Specific Recommendations for France totally elude Roma, despite the existence of a National Roma Framework. France officially considers "Roma" an irrelevant category for public policy, yet references antigypsyism and issues affecting "gens du voyage" and shantytowns in various documents. While antigypsyism is acknowledged in France's anti-racism plan, the real test of political will lies in actual implementation, which civil society and the European Commission must keep pushing for."

La Voix des Roms, France

"We are dismayed that the German Country Report and Country-Specific Recommendations fail to mention Roma and Sinti communities, and to acknowledge the racism and antigypsyism they face. This oversight is alarming, especially as far-right narratives fuel rising discrimination, including in the media and political discourse. Our work shows that over a third of the 1,628 reported antigypsyist incidents involved minors, and many occurred in schools. Urgent awareness-raising among teachers and education staff is essential to combat segregation and protect Roma and Sinti children."

Amaro Drom, Germany

"Inexplicably, the 2025 European Semester Spring Package does not include any references to Roma and Sinti communities in Italy. This omission is contradictory to well-documented field evidence of the fact that they experience high socio-economic vulnerability. It also contradicts Italy's and the EU's own strategic commitments to Roma inclusion, undermining the principles of social justice and the European Pillar of Social Rights. These communities urgently need access to essential services, employment, and participation in governance."

ROMNI Association, Italy

"We are very disappointed to see that, once again, the Roma are not mentioned in the Country Report or Country-Specific Recommendations for Lithuania this year, although this was not unexpected given previous years. The expectation is that social policies will solve the problems that the Roma community faces, but this will not be the case without targeted inclusion, because antigypsyism keeps being ignored."

Vilnius Roma Community Centre, Lithuania

"The documents from the European Commission for the Netherlands completely ignore the Roma community and the ongoing problem of antigypsyism. Roma-led organisations do not receive proper support or funding, and are not included in decision-making. Instead, non-Roma actors lead most of the work, but without real results. It's also very worrying that antigypsyism is missing from the 10-point action plan of the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism, which shows a further lack of recognition for the discrimination Roma face in the Netherlands today."

India ki Rasta, The Netherlands

"Neither the Country Report for Poland nor the Country-Specific Recommendations make any reference to the Roma population or the challenges they face. This omission is regrettable, as it gives the impression that the issue is being deliberately overlooked—perhaps to avoid acknowledging a situation that would compel governmental action. A similar reluctance can be observed in the government's refusal to engage with the concept and broader definition of antigypsyism, which continues to be ignored. The European Commission could play a more active role in ensuring that these critical issues are brought to the forefront of the national policy agenda."

Fundacja Jaw Dikh, Poland

"We regret that neither Sweden's Country Report nor the Country-Specific Recommendations for 2025 address the persistent inequality, discrimination, and racism faced by Roma and other marginalized minorities. Despite Sweden's National Roma Inclusion Strategy having been in place since 2012, tangible improvements in key areas such as education, employment, housing, and health remain insufficient. A clear prioritization by the European Commission on these issues could significantly strengthen efforts to combat antigypsyism and promote genuine Roma inclusion within national policies."

Trajosko Drom, Sweden

Positively, **all 27 Country-Specific Recommendations** (or all Member States, except Cyprus and Spain), **include the same reference to civil society** in the Preambles to their Country-Specific Recommendations, which is identical to last year: *"The systematic involvement of local and regional authorities, social partners, **civil society** and other relevant stakeholders remains essential to ensure broad ownership for the successful implementation of the recovery and resilience plan"* (our bold).

This is a very welcome reference, which we **hope national Governments will heed accordingly**, given that our members report that national civil society engagement in the design, delivery, and monitoring of the NRRPs has left a lot to be desired.

Unfortunately, **none of the CSRs themselves refer to civil society**, while this was the case in 2022 for Hungary, then creating a useful precedent. Equally, while full involvement of civil society in the Recovery and Resilience Plans is welcome, **civil dialogue should be the norm also for other – in fact – for all – policy processes** of the European Semester, as well as at national level.

We stress that involving beneficiaries and their civil society organisations in policy processes in a structured and meaningful way should be **an essential component of democracy and policy-making**, in order to both foster **broad ownership** of the solutions, as well as to ensure their **effectiveness**.

Conclusions

ERGO Network and its members are **delighted to see a return of Roma CSRs**, with 5 Member States receiving one, on the backdrop of the overall return to more comprehensive recommendations, including on social inclusion for most countries. We are equally **pleased with a high number of references to the Roma and their plight in as many as 9 Country Reports**.

However, whereas **the Roma are present in all Member States except Malta**, and experience rates of poverty and social exclusion of over 80% in most of them (and almost 100% in some), we **would have liked to see them more comprehensively mainstreamed** in the Spring Package, including for a number of other Member States.

The recurrent focus on competitiveness as well as productivity and curbing public spending spells **dire times for social inclusion, human rights, and equality**. It is our members' experience that, unless the Roma are explicitly named as key target beneficiaries of support measures, and unless specific measures and resources are dedicated to them, **mainstream initiatives and broad national and EU funds end up not reaching them**.

Our members equally express disappointment that issues of **discrimination and antigypsyism are largely absent from the present Package**, while these phenomena have increased in recent years. The fact that the country analyses and recommendations **do not seek to establish explicit synergies with the EU and national Roma Frameworks**, and with the National Action Plans against Racism, is considered a significant missed opportunity.

Finally, ERGO Network members deplore the **lack of recognition and support given to civil society organisations** in the two country documents, given that most of them are not only **on the frontlines**, providing essential support to communities in need, but they equally possess the knowledge, expertise, and **direct links to beneficiaries** which are needed to inform the design of **sustainable and effective public policies**.

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*This response was drafted by **Amana Ferro** (a.ferro@ergonetwork.org), Senior Policy Adviser with the **European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network**'s Brussels office. It builds on a data collection exercise carried out in June 2025 and on the responses received from ERGO Network members in **Austria** (Romano Centro), **Belgium** (Centre de Médiation des Gens du Voyage et des Roms en Wallonie), **Bulgaria** (Integro Association), **Czech Republic** (Slovo 21, RomanoNet), **Finland** (Finnish Roma Association), **France** (La Voix des Rroms), **Germany** (Amaro Drom), **Greece** (Roma Women Association of Dendropotamos), **Hungary** (Autonómia Foundation, Romaversitas), **Ireland** (Pavee Point), **Italy** (Romni aps), **Lithuania** (Vilnius Roma Community Centre), **The Netherlands** (India ki Rasta), **Poland** (Jaw Dikh Foundation), **Romania** (Roma Center for Health Policies Sastipen, Policy Center for Roma and Minorities), **Slovakia** (Roma Advocacy and Research Centre), **Spain** (Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia - FAGiC), and **Sweden** (Trajosko Drom). The present response was endorsed by members in July 2025.*

* 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](#).