

Roma access to quality and affordable housing



ERGO
N E T W O R K

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What is ERGO Network?



- European umbrella organization
- **32 organisations in 26** European countries
- Representing **grassroots Roma communities**
- Founded in **2008**.

Objectives:

- **combat antigypsyism, poverty, inequality**
- **strengthen Roma civil society**



ERGO Network research report - 2023

Roma access to quality and affordable housing was chosen as thematic focus topic for ERGO Network in 2023.

Researchers in **six countries** (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Spain) prepared national **case studies**.

Additional benchmarking evidence: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Turkey, and Ireland.

➔ **EU synthesis report** with national and EU recommendations.



KEY MESSAGES

1. Roma living conditions are significantly worse than those of the majority, while most Roma experience de facto homelessness.

Urgent and significant investment is needed to improve the structural condition of the dwellings that most Roma inhabit, including their connection to utilities, to render them compliant with UN definitions.

2. Most Roma live in segregated communities and / or informal settlements, many exposed to environmental hazards.

We need comprehensive desegregation plans with clear targets, including the legalisation of irregular housing situations and tackling the environmental impact of unsuitable locations.

3. High costs of housing and overcomplex administrative procedures further reduce Roma access to housing.

Roma housing and energy poverty must be addressed through better access to income and better regulation of the housing and utilities market, while associated bureaucracy should be simplified.



KEY MESSAGES

4. The Roma continue to face antigypsyism and forced evictions.

Anti-bias training must be compulsory for all housing actors, including local authorities, alongside strong anti-discrimination legislation; evictions should be a last resort, and must entail due notice and the provision of decent alternative housing.

5. Social housing holds great potential for Roma housing, but it is currently under-utilised.

The social housing stock needs to be expanded and improved, while its allocation should follow a rights-based, housing-first approach, reducing conditionality and unaffordability and ensuring that vulnerable groups such as the Roma are prioritised.

6. Roma communities and their civil society organisations must be involved, to co-create sustainable ways forward.

Policy makers and all housing actors must cooperate with Roma stakeholders and their civil society representatives to ensure evidence-based solutions, support disaggregated data collection, foster common understanding, bridge cultural gaps.



The EU Affordable Housing Plan (2025)

What we welcome:

- Recognition that **Europe faces a structural housing crisis**
- Explicit **acknowledgement of Roma** as groups disproportionately affected
- Focus on **affordability, housing quality, sustainability, preventing homelessness**
- Useful potential through future instruments such as the **Affordable Housing Act** and integration in the **European Semester**

What is missing:

- **Roma mentioned only once** – it feels symbolic rather than embedded
- No serious mainstreaming of **antigypsyism or racial discrimination**
- No concrete measures on **segregated Roma neighbourhoods, informal settlements, forced evictions, discriminatory allocation practices**.
- Limited reflection on Roma in insecure or informal housing and **renovation and energy-efficiency schemes**
- No clear **safeguards to ensure EU funds** do not reinforce segregation

➤ **Read our full analysis [here!](#)**



Policy recommendations

- **Recognise antigypsyism** as a root cause of Roma housing exclusion, with anti-bias training, legislation, and complaints.
- **End segregation and forced evictions**, with national desegregation plans and preventing the use of EU funds for it.
- **Invest in adequate, affordable housing**, with expansion of public, social, cooperative, and non-profit housing and supporting the regularisation of informal settlements.
- **Guarantee access to essential services and energy**, with connecting communities to the grid and protecting low-income households from utility disconnection.
- **Remove administrative exclusion**, with simple processes and dedicated, in-person support for vulnerable applicants.
- **Use EU tools to deliver results**, such as the Affordable Housing Plan, Affordable Energy Plan, Social Climate Fund, MFF, European Semester, with Roma specific indicators.



EUROPE CAN BE NEITHER COMPETITIVE, NOR JUST, NOR INCLUSIVE, NOR SUSTAINABLE WHILE MILLIONS OF ROMA REMAIN LOCKED OUT OF DECENT HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES SUCH AS ENERGY.



Thank you for your attention!

- **Read** the [report on Roma housing](#)
- **Read** the [response to the Affordable Housing Plan](#)
- **Find out** more: www.ergonetwork.org
- **Contact** us: florinbotonogu@gmail.com
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