



EUROPEAN COMMISSION RELEASES PROPOSAL TO FIGHT HOUSING EXCLUSION *WHAT'S IN IT FOR EUROPE'S ROMA¹?*

On 6 May 2026, the European Commission published a [proposal for a Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion](#), as part of a comprehensive Social Package which also includes the EU's first-ever Anti-Poverty Strategy, a communication on strengthening the European **Child Guarantee** and one on the rights of **persons with disabilities**. **ERGO Network has closely engaged with the right to adequate and desegregated housing for Roma** communities across Europe, including through our 2023 comprehensive report on [Roma access to quality and affordable housing](#) and our [response to the Affordable Housing Plan](#). **Roma across Europe face entrenched housing exclusion**, including segregation, informal settlements, unsafe and overcrowded dwellings, energy poverty, environmental hazards, lack of basic services, frequent forced evictions, and rampant antigypsyism, including from social housing providers. We have **reviewed the European Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation** in light of these findings, and the results of this exercise are reprised below in this response paper.

¹ 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](#).

ERGO Network warmly welcomes that **the Roma are explicitly mentioned** in the proposal for a Council Recommendation **10 times**, of which 7 in the accompanying explanatory text, and 3 in the draft Council Recommendation (in its Recitals). Moreover, the **EU Roma Strategic Framework is clearly linked**, as well as its dedicated housing target, in the accompanying text as well as Recital 6 of the Recommendation itself. The introductory text also mentions how “people from racial and **ethnic minorities face discrimination and barriers in housing**” and “Racialised communities, including **Roma, face unequal conditions in access to housing** and disproportionate risks of overcrowding, poor living conditions, homelessness and segregation” (our bold). The concern is then reprised in Recital 28 of the Recommendation.

There are a few other **references to race** (6, including racism, racial background, and racialised communities), **ethnic** background (4), and **minorities** (2), which is very positive. However, although the introductory text and recitals refer several times to Roma (and minorities) and acknowledge them as a group at particular risk of housing exclusion, **this recognition is not translated into the operative provisions of the Recommendation**. Consequently, the text lacks concrete, actionable measures specifically aimed at addressing Roma housing exclusion, which is a **glaring missed opportunity**, in our view.

More encouragingly, **discrimination is mentioned 15 times in the document**, which is very appreciated in a context where EU social policy initiatives often tend to overlook this important dimension. These references are more evenly spaced throughout the text:

- **In the introductory text**, acknowledging it as a **barrier to accessing housing**, including for racialised communities, LGBTIQ+ individuals, people experiencing homelessness etc.
- **In the recitals**, specifically (1), (6), (20), (21), (41), echoing the above acknowledgement.
- **In the provisions of the Recommendation**, where Member States are recommended to “**ensure equal treatment** of people at risk of discrimination in access to adequate housing and essential services” (point 5i), and enact “measures to **prevent and address stigmatisation and discriminatory practices** in access to housing such as transparent criteria for social housing waiting lists, **anti-bias training** for housing professionals and **support services for tenants facing discrimination**” (point 6j) (our bold).

While we **regret the lack of specific, dedicated Roma measures** in the operational part of the Recommendation, and while **antigypsyism as such is not mentioned**, ERGO Network is very pleased with the references above. We particularly **appreciate the recognition of the plight of racialised communities** in Europe, including ethnic minorities such as the Roma, when trying to access housing, energy, and essential services, as well as of the **key role that intersectional discrimination, including racism, plays** in creating powerful barriers that continue to reinforce housing exclusion for these groups.

We warmly welcome the attention dedicated in the introductory text to **forced evictions**, where elements such as mitigation measures, due process, eviction prevention, legal remedies, notice, and alternative accommodation are mentioned. This is reprised in **Recitals (31) and (41), dedicated to preventing forced arbitrary evictions**, but which go into much fewer details. In the operational part, Member States are recommended to **“strengthen the prevention from and protection against forced and arbitrary evictions**, particularly for families with children, with special attention to single parent households. Member States should ensure transparent, timely procedures respecting proportionality, due process and effective remedies, while respecting landlords’ rights” (point 5d, our bold). While it is incredibly useful to have this language included, **the antigypsyism element feels overlooked**.

In overall terms, we welcome the proposal for a Council Recommendation as evidence of the European Union’s **commitment to tackle the ongoing housing crisis**, by providing affordable housing solutions and by tackling housing exclusion, particularly for the groups most exposed to it. The proposal is **rights-based** and links housing exclusion to poverty, as well as to key frameworks such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Social Charter, the Lisbon Declaration, the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Affordable Housing Plan, the European Child Guarantee, and the Union of Equality strategies, among others. This is useful because it **frames housing exclusion as a matter of dignity, social rights, and poverty reduction**, emphasising person-centred, housing-led solutions, and integrated services.

We further appreciate that **housing exclusion is understood more broadly than rough sleeping**, using the full European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (**ETHOS**), which also looks at insecure and inadequate housing, including overcrowding, substandard dwellings, lack of basic facilities, and threats of eviction. **This is very relevant for Roma**, since many of them experience de facto homelessness under the ETHOS definition. The **focus on quality of housing and on prevention** is strong and useful. Early-warning systems, rent and mortgage arrears mediation, debt counselling, legal assistance, emergency rental support, eviction prevention, and support for households at risk all respond to real problems faced by Roma families living with insecure tenure, utility arrears, rent arrears, or the constant threat of eviction.

We salute the fact that Member States are invited to “adopt or revise **strategic frameworks on fighting housing exclusion and homelessness** on the basis of person-centred, housing-led and integrated policies” (point 3a, our bold), as well as “set **relevant, time-bound, achievable and measurable objectives**” (point 3d, our bold). The proposal also calls for **regular, comprehensive, comparable and disaggregated statistics** on housing exclusion and homelessness at national and local level, including for hard-to-reach and undercounted groups, and links this to early-warning systems, needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation (point 4). However, **voluntary, anonymous, rights-compliant data disaggregated by ethnic background as such is not mentioned**, nor is an invitation to combine quantitative data with **community-based monitoring and qualitative evidence** from Roma communities.

Among many **positive provisions** to prevent **housing exclusion**, support those experiencing **homelessness**, and ensure access to adequate and **secure housing solutions**, the text recommends that no child should lack adequate housing and that support systems should **prevent unnecessary family separation**. This is very relevant for Roma families, where poverty, poor housing, overcrowding, or informal settlements are too often misread as neglect, resulting in children being removed from families. The text further **recognises administrative barriers**, and notes that requirements such as proof of permanent residence can **prevent people experiencing homelessness or housing exclusion from accessing assistance**.

The proposal **references the EU Social Economy Action Plan** and recognises that social economy actors can contribute to affordable and inclusive housing, legal and practical support for tenants, work integration, and broader social inclusion, in Recitals (5), (26), (27), (37), and (38). It also names **housing cooperatives**, social rental agencies, limited-profit housing associations, community land trusts and other non-profit/public-interest models as **tools to expand affordable supply, reduce exposure to speculation, and mobilise land, dwellings and investment**, in points 5f, 8e, 8f, 13c, and 13f. This is positive, because it opens the door to housing solutions that are not purely market-driven and that can be more community-rooted and affordable. However, while social economy should be properly funded and supported, it must **complement, not replace, public responsibility**, as public authorities must remain responsible for rights, standards, affordability, non-discrimination, desegregation and long-term housing supply.

The text includes a number of measures dealing with increasing housing supply and ensuring adequate funding. Importantly, the Recommendation does **not create a new funding envelope**, but instead encourages Member States to make better use of existing national resources and EU instruments, including ESF+, ERDF, Erasmus+, InvestEU, RRF and future MFF tools, acknowledging that stable and sustainable funding is key in order to effectively tackle housing exclusion. However, **absent dedicated additional funding, earmarking for the most excluded communities, and Roma-specific safeguards**, doubts remain about the scale of ambition that Member States will embark on, and whether this will be enough for Roma communities.

From a governance perspective, we **welcome the strong monitoring through the European Semester**, though we feel **reporting every five years is insufficient** to make a significant difference. We are also pleased with the recommendations for **cooperation with stakeholders** including civil society and people with lived experience of housing exclusion. However, the proposal does not say **how participation will be structured, resourced, or translated into decision-making**, it does not require Member States to create national housing-exclusion platforms, and it does not specify how **racialised communities, people in informal settlements, families facing eviction, or people without a legal address** will be consulted.

Less encouragingly, **desegregation is not sufficiently present**. The proposal speaks about inclusive neighbourhoods and place-based policies, but it **does not clearly require Member States to prevent, reduce, and reverse residential segregation**, and to ensure that housing policies, urban regeneration, social housing, renovation, and EU-funded investments do not create, maintain, or deepen segregation. This is very disappointing for Roma housing inclusion, as most of them live in segregated communities and/or informal settlements, often exposed to environmental hazards. **Informal settlements as such are not properly addressed**. While the text refers to insecure and inadequate housing and non-conventional structures, it does not tackle regularisation or legalisation of informal settlements. Finally, the text **does not sufficiently address environmental racism and energy poverty**. The proposal mentions energy performance and environmental threats, but it should more clearly address the fact that many Roma settlements are located near landfills, polluted sites, flood-prone areas, industrial zones, or other hazards, and that Roma are often left behind by renovation, energy-efficiency, and Social Climate Fund measures.

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While the proposal for a **Council Recommendation is generally very strong, timely, and useful** as an operational EU instrument on housing exclusion, it will **only deliver for Roma if it explicitly tackles antigypsyism, including segregation, informal settlements, and forced evictions**, and if it ensures the meaningful participation of Roma communities and civil society.

ERGO Network **largely welcomes the proposal**, while we will continue to advocate for a stronger focus on Roma rights and inclusion in its implementation, and we **stand ready to engage constructively and support all efforts** that deliver improvements on Roma housing in Europe.

*For more information on ERGO Network's work on Roma access to housing and energy, please contact Senior Policy Adviser **Amana Ferro** – a.ferro@ergonetwork.org*

* While artificial intelligence-based tools may have been used to support the preparation of this publication, the content, analysis, and final outputs were developed, reviewed, and approved exclusively by human authors.