

# SNAPSHOT: SITUATION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

## SECURE AND ADAPTABLE EMPLOYMENT, WAGES & HEALTHY, SAFE AND WELL- ADAPTED WORK ENVIRONMENT

**54%**

of Roma who are aged from **20-64** are **in paid work**, a number that is unchanged from 2016.

**38%**

of Roma women aged from 20 to 64 are **in employment** compared with

**69%**

of Roma men.

**47%**

of Roma aged 16-24 are **neither in education, employment, or training.**

**61%**

of Roma women and

**33%**

Roma men are **neither in education, employment, or training.**

**36%**

of Roma above age of 16 have experienced **discrimination when looking for work** in the last 12 months.



**ERGO**  
NETWORK

Many Roma across Europe face a cycle of poverty and low skills due to a lack of early support and intergenerational disadvantage, which confines them to precarious, low-paid, and low-prestige employment. This is compounded by widespread antigypsyism and discrimination, both in hiring and within workplaces.

Exploitative recruitment agencies and employers frequently take advantage of the fact that the Roma have limited knowledge of labour rights, as well as restricted mobility due to family ties. Consequently, Roma workers may receive lower pay (the ethnic pay gap, leading also to an ethnic pension gap) and face working conditions, limited social security entitlements, weak employment rights, and fewer promotion or training opportunities.

They are also routinely assigned dangerous or undesirable tasks, not paid overtime, and not provided with the necessary health and safety equipment. Roma workers are disproportionately found in physically demanding sectors like agriculture, construction, hospitality, healthcare, and public services, often in frontline roles that heighten their vulnerability to health risks.

Pushed to the margins of the formal labour market, many Roma are forced to rely on atypical employment – such as street vending, crafts, or seasonal work – which lacks labour protections and social security. Some were forced by extreme poverty into hazardous activities like unregulated waste collection.

Training and upskilling opportunities for Roma workers are often lacking, leaving them trapped in low-skilled jobs with little chance for career progression. This is partly due to employers' reluctance to invest in training and partly due to antigypsyism that excludes Roma from available programs.

Workplace discrimination against Roma is pervasive, including – in addition to the above – harassment and derogatory treatment by employers, coworkers, and clients. Many Roma hesitate to report such abuses due to fear, shame, or distrust in the system. Despite existing anti-discrimination laws and some diversity initiatives, most countries fail to address these issues adequately.

Combatting antigypsyism in employment requires far stronger, comprehensive measures not only within workplaces, but across society at large to break this persistent cycle of exclusion and disadvantage and ensure that the Roma can access secure and adaptable employment, with decent wages and a healthy, safe, and well-adapted work environment.



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](#).

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N E T W O R K

## Recommendations:

- **Promote fair remuneration** by establishing statutory minimum wages at no less than 60% of median wages, using methodologies like reference budgets, and encouraging wage transparency along with ethnic- and gender-neutral job evaluations to address pay gaps and discrimination in wage bargaining.
- **Develop and enforce a comprehensive definition of job quality** applicable across all sectors, protecting all workers, and support trade unions and collective bargaining. This should cover wages, job security, employment rights, social security, health and safety and adaptable workplaces, access to training, career progression, work-life balance, and job satisfaction.
- **Implement concrete, comprehensive strategies to combat antigypsyism and promote diversity in the workplace**, with mandatory anti-bias and equality training for recruiters, employers, and all staff. Strengthen workplace anti-discrimination legislation with effective enforcement and monitoring and use EU funds to launching broad public campaigns to address societal discrimination.
- **Regularize informal and atypical work**, by ensuring that seasonal workers, craftspeople, traders, artists, and other self-employed individuals are covered by employment legislation, guaranteeing access to decent work rights and social security.
- **Combat undeclared work** by penalizing exploitative employers rather than vulnerable workers, and expand protections and access to information for the latter to prevent exploitation.
- **Support the creation of quality, sustainable jobs that the Roma can access**, including subsidised public employment and other community-based public ventures that create jobs as well as respond to local needs for goods and services.
- **Invest in social economy initiatives and Roma social entrepreneurship**, especially Work Integration Social Enterprises, to offer quality jobs and upskilling to those furthest from the labour market.



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