



European Commission releases the Spring Package 2026

What's in it for Europe's Roma¹?

On 3 June 2026, the European Commission published the **Spring Package** in the framework of the **2026 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 what extent it explicitly mentions Roma rights and inclusion, ethnic minorities, discrimination, and racism (including antigypsyism), as well as to assess civil society engagement with these documents and the European Semester process.

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. **13 Country Reports include references to the Roma (BG, CZ, EE, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, PT, RO, SI, SK, ES)** in 2026, four more than in 2025, but still insufficient, as the Roma live in 26 EU Member States.
3. **There is no Country-Specific Recommendation on Roma**, a tremendous step back from 2025 with 5 Roma CSRs (BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK); the Roma are mentioned in **8 Preambles**, one more than in 2025.
4. **Ethnic minorities appear in 7 Country Reports (BG, HU, HR, IE, LV, RO, SK) and discrimination is mentioned in 13 (BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, FI, FR, IE, NL, PL, RO, SK, ES)**, 5 of which about the Roma.
5. **(Roma) Civil society was unevenly involved in the Country Reports**, but it is **mentioned in 10 of them (BG, CZ, DE, DK, HU, IE, PL, PT, RO, SK)**, and in **all Preambles** of the CSRs.

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](#).

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 *“Several Member States, for example Greece, Sweden, Lithuania, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia, are encouraged to tackle labour shortages, including by [...] supporting the labour market integration of underrepresented groups, such as persons with disabilities, younger and older people, people with a migrant background and Roma”* (page 18, our underlining). Additionally, a footnote in page 19 lists the full set of strategies comprised by the Union of Equality, including the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020–2030.

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 reference to other crucial elements**, such as education, health, housing, access to rights, equality, and participation. The **EU Roma Strategic Framework is barely acknowledged by name**, as opposed to being comprehensively mainstreamed. There are **no additional references to ethnic minorities, racism, or non-discrimination**.

The Communication explicitly states that “The **Competitiveness Compass remains the guiding framework** for this European Semester cycle”, but also affirms that the EU will be “upholding its commitment to implementing the **European Pillar of Social Rights** and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.” (our bold). This Spring Package will focus, in particular, on **assessing the progress made in implementing the 2025 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs)**, which was the first set of comprehensive CSRs issued by the European Commission towards the end of the implementation of the National Recovery and Reform Programmes (NRRPs).

Just like last year, the structure of the Communication loosely follows the **7 Key Competitiveness Challenges**, strongly based on those identified in the Competitiveness Compass released last year, though somewhat rephrased and with additional elements included (our underline below):

1. Responding to emerging threats, with subsections on the energy crisis, economic security, and defence readiness
2. Ensuring macroeconomic stability
3. Strengthening the EU's competitiveness, which is the most comprehensive section and which includes a large number of subsections, namely
 - Channelling savings towards productive investments to boost competitiveness
 - Closing the innovation gap
 - Delivering simple and digital public services
 - Making the most of the single market
 - Accelerating an affordable clean energy transition and decarbonisation
 - Promoting skills, education and quality jobs
 - Social fairness
 - Increasing the affordability of housing
 - Economic, social and territorial cohesion

This is a **considerable improvement from last year's** communication, where there was a single section dedicated to social rights, and it was mainly focussed on employment and skills. In contrast, this year there are **four distinct subsections on the topic of social inclusion**, namely those dealing with skills, education and quality jobs; social fairness; increasing the affordability of housing; and economic, social and territorial cohesion. Conversely, the **social dimension is rather poorly mainstreamed** in other sections of the communication.

The subsection on skills, education, and quality jobs is still concerned with **boosting competitiveness and human capital**, and it also questionably praises Belgium for restricting unemployment benefits. However, for 2026, it announces a multitude of **positive active labour market policies** (ALMPs) in the CSRs for different Member States, including the mention of the Roma referenced above, and **highlights quality jobs and inclusive education initiatives**.

The subsection on social fairness reports **some progress on the 2025 CSRs on social protection and inclusion**, particularly in what concerns better social security coverage, pension reforms, healthcare and long-term care, which are welcome. However, it points to **the need for further action to reduce poverty**, improve income support and access to social services, while tackling territorial disparities and affordability. In this context, it links to the recently adopted first-ever **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy** and strengthened **European Child Guarantee**, as well as to the **Union of Equality** and its strategies, reaffirming the EU's efforts to fight discrimination (as mentioned).

The subsection on increasing the affordability of housing looks at remaining challenges, such as severe **housing shortages, rising homelessness and declining affordability**, and increasing inequalities. It praises some Member States for improving their social housing supply, and **proposes an ambitious set of CSRs for 2026** to address these. Additionally, it references the added value of EU action on housing, including **the recently adopted Affordable Housing Plan and the upcoming Affordable Housing Act**, as well as other relevant EU initiatives and funding opportunities in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

Finally, the subsection on economic, social and territorial cohesion rightly stresses that unequal access to infrastructure and services, and **territorial disparities are key barriers to cohesion**, particularly in remote or disadvantaged regions. The 2026 CSRs include calls for **better access to key public services**, stronger local and regional governance, better connectivity of remote areas, and EU action to **support the "right to stay"** in people's home regions, which can help reduce exclusion and ensure more equal access to opportunities and services.

We salute the **continuation of the Social Convergence Framework**, a recently introduced 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 9 countries that still faced challenges in reducing poverty and social exclusion. The results were integrated into the Country Reports and multilateral surveillance for those countries.

A second box in the same section deals with an **overview of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**, which supported, over the past 5 years, a number of reforms and investments in Member States, in areas such as inclusive education and training, active labour market policies, adequate social protection, healthcare and long-term care, and affordable and social housing.

As every year, the Communication also features a **wide range of Annexes**, including a very useful **overview of the thematic areas in the CSRs** for 2026, according to which the bulk of this year's recommendations focus on skills, quality jobs, and social fairness, followed by energy, transport, and environment. The **fewest Recommendations deal with competitiveness, business environment, and financing**. This is an interesting and very welcome shift.

The Annex monitoring the **implementation of the previous CSRs** reveals that **only 50% registered some or substantial progress**, while 50% recorded limited or no progress. However, the communication elects to call this a success. Other Annexes deal with progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and key findings of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure. The **European Pillar of Social Rights is only mentioned once in the entire communication**, and there is no Annex tracking the EU's progress on the Social Pillar implementation.

The Communication pays even **less attention to stakeholder engagement than in previous years**, which is a regrettable step back, at a time when 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 and social partners are only explicitly mentioned once**.

We further **salute the inclusion of Roma concerns in the Employment Guidelines** for 2026, a yearly document highlighting common priorities and targets for employment and social policies, providing the basis for the Country-Specific Recommendations.

This year, the Guidelines have been **updated and enriched** from the previous set, in order to **strengthen links to job quality, poverty reduction, and skills development**, linking to new initiatives such as the Quality Jobs Roadmap, the Anti-Poverty Strategy, and the Council Recommendation on Human Capital, respectively. While the **proposal for a Council decision** features no references to the Roma (unlike last year), it does include **two mentions of the fight against discrimination** (still, watered down from last year).

Just like last year, **the Roma are also explicitly included in the Guidelines themselves**, which we warmly welcome. **Guideline 6**, *Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, lifelong acquisition of skills and competences*, speaks of removing disincentives to, and providing incentives for, labour market participation for a number of groups, “including [...] **Roma**” (our bold). Equally, **Guideline 7**, *Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue*, contains a reference to activating and enabling those who can participate in the labour market, “including [...] **people from Roma communities**” (our bold).

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 2026

The European Commission has prepared **Country Reports** for all 27 Member States, providing a detailed analysis of each country's economic and social developments and challenges, as well as an assessment of the extent to which these are addressed by national policies.

The Country Reports follow the same structure for all countries and are **constructed around four key sections**, namely (our underline below):

- Economic developments and key policy challenges
- Innovation, business environment and productivity
- Decarbonisation, energy affordability and sustainability
- Skills, quality jobs and social fairness

They also **track progress** made in implementing **past Country-Specific Recommendations**, and include a long list of Annexes, notable among which are overviews of the labour market situation, of social policies in the country, of education and skills, and of healthcare and health systems, as well as a **new Annex on housing** and the yearly Scoreboard of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In 2026, **13 Country Reports include references to the Roma (BG, CZ, GR, EE, HU, HR, IT, IE, PT, RO, SI, SK, ES)**, compared to 9 in the previous year, with the welcome addition of Estonia, Croatia, Italy, and Portugal. For the 9 Member States whose Country Reports also included the Roma in previous years, we are delighted to see that **the number of these references has substantially increased** in 5 countries (BG, CZ, HU, SK, ES) and stayed the same in the other 4 (GR, IE, SI, RO).

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**.

Encouragingly, **7 Country Reports mention ethnic minorities** (BG, HU, HR, IE, LV, RO, SK), even if just once or twice, including a particularly valuable reference in Ireland to disaggregated data for Roma and Travellers. This is a **net increase from 2025**, where only the Country Report for Bulgaria referred to minorities, and another two Country Reports, for the Czech Republic and Slovakia, mentioned ethnic groups. While the increase is positive, this is **far from sufficient for a real commitment to support equal opportunities** for racialised communities, and we would have liked to **see these references in more – if not all – Country Reports**, given that 1 in 7 Europeans belongs to an ethnic minority in their country of residence.

Equally positive, **references to discrimination appear in 13 Country Reports** in 2026, compared with 8 in 2025. Even more importantly, in 5 of them (CZ, IE, RO, SK, and ES) these are explicitly about Roma, while the **Romanian Country Report is the only one to explicitly mention racism and antigypsyism**. If we are not mistaken, this is the **first time antigypsyism is mentioned** in any Country Report since the beginning of the European Semester. The references in other countries are about **housing** (BE, BG, CY, DK, FR, IE, NL, PL), **age discrimination in hiring** (BE), discrimination against **women and foreign workers** on the labour market (FI), discrimination against **migrants, non-EU nationals, and mobile EU workers** (FR, NL), and discrimination against **LGBTQIA people** (CY). Once again, we would have liked to see the fight against intersectional discrimination as a **cross-cutting dimension across all Country Reports**.

ERGO Network members are **generally encouraged by the increased number of Roma references** in the Country Reports. However, they consistently stress that the **analysis remains too descriptive, technocratic, and insufficiently structural**, with limited attention to the ethnic dimension of inequality and to discrimination as root causes of exclusion. Key gaps concern **antigypsyism and racism**, segregation, housing insecurity, access to employment and healthcare, and **weak implementation of National Roma Frameworks**. Our members also regret the lack of clearer monitoring and stronger links with the EU Roma Strategic Framework, as well as the **limited ability of the Country Reports** to trigger actual policy change.

In **Bulgaria**, members feel that, while this year's Country Report **repeatedly acknowledges the high levels of poverty and social exclusion**, as well as educational inequalities and inadequate housing conditions, the analysis remains **largely descriptive** and does not sufficiently address **structural drivers such as antigypsyism**, spatial segregation, housing insecurity, and the risk of forced evictions. The multidimensional nature of poverty is not recognised, and **insufficient attention is paid to Roma children** and to the need for integrated family support.

In the **Czech Republic**, our members are of the opinion that the Country Report correctly identifies important challenges affecting Roma, but **the analysis remains too general** and pays insufficient attention to the ethnic dimension of inequality. It overlooks significant issues such as **housing exclusion, residential segregation and discrimination**, including the intersecting discrimination faced by some **Roma LGBTQ+ people**. While the Report explicitly acknowledges the **segregation of Roma children in education**, it does not assess whether existing measures are actually reducing it. More broadly, the Report **fails to name antigypsyism as a structural form of racism**, and also does not examine whether public policies and EU funds effectively reach Roma communities.

In **Greece**, our members regret that the Country Report **does not sufficiently address key Roma concerns** and provides no meaningful assessment of progress in implementing the National Roma Strategy 2021–2027. They also highlight the continued **failure to recognise and tackle antigypsyism**, despite persistent racist discourse and incidents, including in public and political life. This discourse contributes to the **labelling of Roma neighbourhoods as “red zones”**, which are heavily stigmatised and lead to the discriminatory treatment and exclusion of their residents.

In **Hungary**, our members acknowledge that the Country Report recognises important challenges affecting Roma, but they consider the **analysis too technocratic and insufficiently structural**, ignoring persistent segregation in education, the overrepresentation of Roma in public works, exclusionary housing support schemes, environmental inequalities, and discrimination and segregation in healthcare. Most importantly, the Country Report **fails to name antigypsyism as a key driver of exclusion**, while overlooking data gaps and Roma cultural and linguistic rights.

In **Italy**, it is felt by our members that the **single reference to Roma is a limited improvement** but remains far from sufficient. The Report provides **no meaningful analysis of Roma exclusion** and makes no links to either the EU or the National Roma Strategic Framework. This represents a **missed opportunity to use the European Semester** to address antigypsyism and structural discrimination and to treat Roma inclusion as a priority.

In **Ireland**, our members welcome that **discrimination is explicitly named several times** in the Country Report, following sustained efforts by Traveller and Roma representatives. Nonetheless, they remain **disappointed that racism itself is not specifically named**. The broader move away from explicitly naming the Roma and other groups in favour of generic references to “vulnerable groups” risks allowing Traveller and Roma concerns to vanish from the policy agenda.

In **Romania**, our members consider the **increased number of references to Roma a step forward**, particularly welcoming the explicit mentions of **antigypsyism and racism**, as well as the National Roma Inclusion Strategy, and the role of Roma NGOs. However, they stress that there is a **need for much more in-depth analysis** of issues such as school segregation and early childhood education and care, poor housing and basic infrastructure, and labour market exclusion.

In **Slovakia**, our members opine that the **increased number of references to Roma is a positive development**, and broadly welcome that the Country Report reflects the main challenges faced by Roma communities. However, they stress that the **analysis remains insufficiently structural**, with too little emphasis on persistent discrimination and on implementation gaps in existing inclusion policies. A **stronger assessment of progress is needed** on issues such as educational segregation, adequate housing, quality employment, and equal access to healthcare.

In **Spain**, our members consider the **increased number of references to Roma an important improvement** compared with last year, but stress that these remain **insufficient**. In particular, the Country Report lacks **concrete measures to tackle antigypsyism** and structural discrimination, as well as clearer monitoring of the implementation of the **National Roma Strategy**.

Civil society is mentioned in 10 Country Reports (BG, CZ, DE, DK, HU, IE, PL, PT, RO, SK), which is two more than in 2025. In most cases, however, there is **only one isolated reference**, with Denmark featuring two mentions and Romania standing out with six general references, including two to Roma NGOs. Slovakia also includes one reference to civil society **specifically in a Roma context**. Overall, however, civil society remains only marginally reflected across the Country Reports, with references too tokenistic to demonstrate a systematic commitment to meaningful civil dialogue and involvement in the European Semester process.

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 **evidence-based solutions, ownership by the beneficiaries, 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 adequately reflected in the Country Reports.

Roma in the Country-Specific Recommendations 2026

There is not a single Country-Specific Recommendation mentioning the Roma in 2026, in a shocking setback from last year, which featured five Country-Specific Recommendations that explicitly referred to Roma inclusion, namely Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. In 2019, there were four (minus the Czech Republic), and in the years in between, only Hungary and Slovakia received an explicit CSR on Roma, in different years.

This is a **catastrophic step back**, which most likely **will result in Roma inclusion being deprioritised** in national policies. The CSRs remain the most important lever the European Commission has to ensure that Member States deliver on their commitments under the EU Roma Strategic Framework. ERGO Network is dismayed at this **tremendous missed opportunity**, as experience has shown for decades that **the Roma are the first to be forgotten unless explicitly named** in programmatic policy and funding documents.

More encouragingly, the **Roma are mentioned in 8 Preambles to the Country-Specific Recommendations** (BG, CZ, GR, HU, IE, RO, SK, ES), ranging from five separate references in Bulgaria and Hungary to only one in Greece and Ireland. Of the total 25 Roma references, **the largest share refer to employment**, labour market participation, and skills (10 references, in BG, CZ, GR, HU, IE, SK), while the remaining deal with **education and segregation** (7 references, in BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK, ES), **poverty and social exclusion** (4 references, in BG, HU, RO, ES), **housing**, residential segregation and basic infrastructure (2 references, in HU, SK), access to **services** (1 reference, in RO) and **Cohesion Policy** (1 reference, in SK).

While we are delighted with these extensive references in the Preambles, **they do not make up for the lack of any actual CSR** referring to Roma inclusion. Additionally, it is again important to note the predominance of the employment narrative, indicating that the **Roma are still primarily perceived as a convenient, untapped labour source**. The priority is still clearly getting Roma into jobs, while other important dimensions and objectives of the EU Roma Framework, such as **education, housing, healthcare and services receive very limited attention**.

Apart from the Roma references above, **none of the Country-Specific Recommendations mentions ethnic minorities**, whether in the Preamble or the text of the Recommendations themselves. There is a **single reference to discrimination** (in the Preamble for PL), in the context of access to housing (not about Roma). 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.

All countries received a first CSR dealing with **macroeconomic issues**, revolving around **accommodating defence spending** while maintaining the recommended net expenditure ceilings. In other words, defence spending seems exempt from efforts to ensure financial sustainability, while at the same time, for some countries, **explicit cuts to social support are being recommended**, such as enforcing targeted, rather than universal, interventions. All countries also received a second CSR on the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, being urged to sustain implementation momentum and ensure continuity of reforms and investments. This is important, insofar as some very useful social and inclusion measures are ongoing as part of the RRF. A third recommendation deals with **competitiveness and structural reforms**, consistent with the Competitiveness Compass objectives, focussed on innovation, investment, productivity, research and development. A fourth typically focusses on **energy and the environment**, mainly supporting decarbonisation, electrification, reducing fossil fuel use, and strengthening energy resilience.

Positively, **every single Member State receives at least one social CSR**, while six countries (DK, HU, LT, PT, RO, ES) even receive two Recommendations dedicated to social rights and inclusion. However, **these are also primarily concerned with employment**, labour shortages, and active labour market policies – in as many as 25 out of 27 Member States. Though **education is tackled in all 27 Member States’ CSRs**, most references are about skills and their labour market relevance, still **following a ‘human capital’ approach**. Regarding other aspects, **healthcare and long-term care** are mentioned in the social CSRs for 18 countries, **poverty, inequality and social protection** for 13, **housing** affordability for 10, and **early childhood education and care** for 9 countries.

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

"The Roma are not explicitly identified as a target group in the Country-Specific Recommendations, despite the fact that the Country Report clearly identifies them as the group facing the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion and the most significant challenges in education, employment, healthcare and housing. This approach is likely linked to the increasing emphasis on mainstreaming Roma-related issues within broader policies targeting vulnerable and underrepresented groups. But in the Bulgarian context, the absence of an explicit reference to Roma creates a risk that their specific needs and challenges may fall outside the focus of implementation."

Integro Association, Bulgaria

"The Spring Package should include a focus on Roma issues. Economic, social, employment, structural, and budgetary policies must systematically mainstream Roma inclusion and reflect a deep understanding of the situation of Roma communities. The implementation of the National Roma Strategy up to 2030 is at risk of being adversely affected by high unemployment, cuts to social benefits, and unequal and unaffordable access to housing, as well as insecurity and instability within Roma civil society."

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 Rroms, France

"We are concerned that the 2026 European Semester package for Germany does not acknowledge the persistent inequalities affecting Roma and Sinti communities, particularly young people, despite ongoing challenges related to educational attainment, labour market participation, poverty risks, and experiences of antigypsyism. Ignoring these structural barriers risks leaving one of the country's most disadvantaged groups invisible in key socio-economic policy processes. The European Commission should ensure that Roma inclusion, equal opportunities, and the fight against discrimination become an integral part of the European Semester cycle."

Amaro Drom, Germany

"It is disappointing that there are no Country-Specific Recommendations on Travellers or Roma. Referring to them only as vulnerable groups is also very disappointing and a regressive step, as Travellers and Roma could slip off the agenda if not explicitly named."

Pavee Point, Ireland

"It is particularly concerning that neither the Country Report nor the Country-Specific Recommendations establish any clear connection with the EU Roma Strategic Framework or the National Roma Strategic Framework. Roma and ethnic minorities are still not being treated as a real political priority by the European Commission within the European Semester process for Italy. This represents a missed opportunity to use the European Semester as a meaningful tool to address antigypsyism, structural discrimination, and inequalities affecting Roma in Italy. The Commission should ensure that future Country Reports and Recommendations include a stronger, more explicit, and rights-based analysis of Roma inclusion, with concrete links to EU and national commitments."

ROMNI Association, Italy

"We note with deep regret that, year after year, the situation remains unchanged. The European Commission, in its assessment of the situation in Lithuania, continues to overlook the issues affecting Roma and discrimination against them. Despite numbering only around 2,000 people, the Roma in Lithuania face the same manifestations of intolerance as Roma communities in countries where they are a much larger share of the population. Antigypsyism remains pervasive."

Vilnius Roma Community Centre, Lithuania

"The European Commission completely ignores the Roma community and the ongoing problem of antigypsyism. Antidiscrimination services are just functioning as window dressing in a country where there are continuous protests against refugees and migrants. Roma from Ukraine do not get the same treatment as the Ukrainians with blond hair and blue eyes."

India ki Rasta, The Netherlands

"Neither the Country Report for Poland nor the Country-Specific Recommendations make any meaningful reference to Roma communities or the challenges they continue to face. This omission is particularly troubling given the persistent socio-economic inequalities and discrimination experienced by many Roma in Poland. It contributes to the marginalisation of Roma-related concerns within national policy debates and weakens accountability for addressing them. A similar lack of engagement can be observed in the government's reluctance to acknowledge and address antigypsyism as a specific form of structural racism. The European Commission could take a more active role in highlighting Roma inclusion and the fight against antigypsyism."

Fundacja Jaw Dikh, Poland

"We are deeply concerned that neither Sweden's Country Report nor the Country-Specific Recommendations for 2026 acknowledge the structural discrimination, racism and antigypsyism affecting Roma and other marginalised minorities. Sweden's National Roma Inclusion Strategy has now been in place since 2012, yet Roma communities continue to face significant barriers in education, employment, housing and health, with limited evidence of concrete progress. By overlooking these issues, the European Commission misses an important opportunity to hold Sweden accountable and to strengthen national efforts towards genuine Roma inclusion and equality."

Trajosko Drom, Sweden

We appreciate that **all 27 Country-Specific Recommendations include the same reference to civil society** in the Preamble, which is near-identical to last year's sentence: "The systematic, meaningful and timely involvement of local and regional authorities, social partners, **civil society** and other relevant stakeholders remains essential in order to ensure broad ownership for the successful implementation of the Union's funding instruments, as well as in the context of the European Semester." (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. 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 and ensure their **effectiveness**.

Conclusions

ERGO Network and its members are **dismayed by the disappearance of Roma CSRs**, with not a single Member State receiving a Recommendation on Roma inclusion, as opposed to 5 Member States last year. 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**. At the same time, the European Semester remains the best instrument to **deliver on the commitments under the EU Roma Strategic Framework**.

While we appreciate the **increased number of Roma references in the Country Reports (13)**, as well as more attention paid in general to ethnic minorities and discrimination, **this is not enough if it is not translated into concrete, measurable policy triggers** through the CSRs. The **Roma are present in all Member States except Malta**, and experience rates of poverty and social exclusion of over 70% in most of them (and almost 100% in some), so we **would have liked to see them adequately included** in the Spring Package, not least through the CSRs.

The recurrent focus on competitiveness as well as productivity and curbing public spending signals **difficult times for social inclusion, human rights, and equality**. Our members also 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 Country Reports and Country-Specific Recommendations, given that most of them are not only **on the frontlines**, providing essential support to communities in need, but also 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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* 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.