

## Conference Report

# Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming the Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment

7 March 2024  
Warsaw, Poland



## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Background and Analysis .....	4
Opening Session .....	5
State Efforts on Addressing the Situation of Roma Communities.....	6
Mapping the Key Challenges in Socio-Economic, Civil and Political Areas: Putting Forward Recommendations .....	8
Mapping the Key Challenges in Other Thematic Areas: Putting Forward Recommendations	11
Engagement by Intergovernmental and International Stakeholders.....	12
Presenting an Outcome Position: Overcoming the Challenges Experienced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment.....	14
Facilitated Discussion Between Civil Society, Authorities and Other Stakeholders on Potential Ways Forward.....	14
Concluding Remarks.....	15
<i>ANNEXE 1: Conference Agenda .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>ANNEXE 2: Respective Mandates .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>ANNEXE 3: Summary of Key Challenges and Recommendations in Civil and Political Areas..</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>ANNEXE 4: Summary of Key Challenges and Recommendations in Socio-Economic Area.....</i>	<i>24</i>

*This report should not be interpreted as comprising official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, an opinion of the OSCE or of any particular OSCE participating State. The content of this report reflects opinions expressed by participants in the event, which took place on 7 March 2024.*

## Introduction

The conference **“Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming the Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment”** was organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in partnership with the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience and Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights on 7 March 2024, in Warsaw, Poland.<sup>1</sup> This one-day event brought together 50 participants (26 women and 24 men), including experts and representatives from **Roma civil society, state authorities of Ukraine** as well as **international organizations and agencies**.

The key objective was to **create space for constructive and meaningful dialogue** between civil society, state representatives and international organizations to discuss the challenges facing Ukrainian Roma in a war time and elaborate ways to overcoming these issues through policy, advocacy and empowerment.

The conference was preceded by one-day **workshop**, held on 6 March 2024, in Warsaw, Poland, with participation of **Roma civil society, activists** and **human rights defenders** (8 men and 17 women) from Ukraine. Participants mapped out the concerns facing Ukrainian Roma, including the most vulnerable such as forcibly displaced, women and children, since 24 February 2022. Participating civil society were in lead of discussions and put forward a coagulated list of existing challenges and recommendations.<sup>2</sup> The conference, held on 7 March, presented an opportunity for the workshop’ participants to voice the identified issues and directions for action to state authorities of Ukraine and international community.

Based on these discussions, ODIHR prepared the present **report** which includes an account of **key conclusions** and **recommendations**. Following these events, ODIHR will maintain its regular and meaningful dialogue with both civil society and state representatives. The Office will also keep its partnership with other intergovernmental and international organizations present in Ukraine, most of them gathered under the Roma Coordination Group<sup>3</sup>, a platform initiated and facilitated by the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine. This will foster better coordinated efforts to ensure appropriate support towards Roma in Ukraine and to secure relevant assistance and support to domestic authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> [Fostering dialogue between Roma civil society and Ukrainian government discussed in Warsaw](#), ODIHR, 7 March 2024; [Workshop and Conference “Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming the Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment”](#), ODIHR.

<sup>2</sup> See Annexes 3 and 4 for more information.

<sup>3</sup> The [Roma Coordination Group](#) is an informal forum that brings together intergovernmental organizations involved in the protection of human rights, national minorities, particularly Roma, as well as humanitarian response for vulnerable groups, and technical support to the Ukrainian government on the implementation of legislative reforms concerning Roma. The Group is composed of 24 members representing Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, European Commission, ODIHR, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

## Background and Analysis

The Russian Federation's military attack in Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, has led to tremendous civilian suffering, documented by reports of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.<sup>4</sup> Through its **“Advancing the Human Dimension of Security in Ukraine” project** and other avenues,<sup>5</sup> ODIHR has been striving to uphold the human dimension of security in the country by advancing the respect for human rights, strengthening democratic institutions and promoting tolerance in society. It is with this goal, ODIHR continued to deliver needs-based and timely support to Ukraine and, in particular, to its civil society organizations and institutions. These include tracking Roma rights and addressing their needs, capacity-building for human rights defenders on human rights monitoring in a conflict setting, strengthening efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and furthering gender equality. The Office also supports mainstreaming the rights of people with disabilities during crises, empowering youth to foster inclusion, and enhancing the capabilities of national actors on violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The ongoing armed conflict has led large numbers of population, including Roma, to flee Ukraine and seek refuge and protection in other regions of the country and in other OSCE participating States.<sup>6</sup> In line with the mandate provided by the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area<sup>7</sup>, ODIHR put in place **human rights monitoring efforts in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries** to document to what extent the rights of forcibly displaced Roma, both refugees and internally displaced (IDPs), are protected and fulfilled.<sup>8</sup> The Office identified that displaced Roma have been subject of discrimination, biased treatment and intolerance, with reported incidents of violence. This has been observed throughout their displacement journey – from the outbreak of hostilities and evacuation to securing housing and temporary shelter, and accessing humanitarian aid, information, documentation, facilities for displaced persons, education and employment. Roma women have been particularly affected by manifestations of intersectional discrimination and abuse.<sup>9</sup>

ODIHR also provided **forum for discussions** among **Roma civil society** and **activists** on main issues and challenges affecting Roma refugees fleeing Ukraine and those who remained in the

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<sup>4</sup> [Interim reports on reported violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine](#), ODIHR.

<sup>5</sup> More information at: [ODIHR in Ukraine | OSCE](#).

<sup>6</sup> [UNHCR operational data portal](#) report that more than 5,9 million refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe as of 16 May 2024.

<sup>7</sup> See Annex 2 for information on the respective mandate.

<sup>8</sup> [Monitoring and addressing the human rights challenges faced by Roma fleeing Ukraine discussed at ODIHR event](#), ODIHR, 3 October 2022.

<sup>9</sup> ODIHR human rights monitoring efforts focusing on Roma; [Monitoring and addressing the human rights challenges faced by Roma fleeing Ukraine discussed at ODIHR event](#), ODIHR, 3 October 2022; [The human rights situation of displaced Ukrainian Roma raises concerns amidst continuing prejudice](#), ODIHR, 12 October 2023; [Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area - Fourth Status Report](#), ODIHR, 8 December 2023, pp. 40, 78, 79.

country. To that end, in May 2022, the Office organised a thematic meeting of the International Roma Contact Group focusing the discussions on the impact of the armed conflict in Ukraine on Roma population.<sup>10</sup> As a result, participants articulated a coherent message comprising their collective analysis of existing challenges and a set of recommendations addressed to the OSCE participating States, OSCE structures and other relevant stakeholders.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, ODIHR facilitated the **participation of Ukrainian Roma civil society to the OSCE human dimension events** such as Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings in 2022-2024 and Warsaw Human Dimension Conferences in 2022 and 2023. Moreover, within the framework of Warsaw Human Dimension Conference over the past two years, the Office organised side events where civil society reflected upon the human rights condition of Roma communities affected by the war.<sup>12</sup>

In October 2023, ODIHR launched a **capacity building initiative** that provided **Roma and pro-Roma human rights defenders from Ukraine** with needed tools and mentorship on human rights monitoring and open-source investigations.<sup>13</sup> This equipped the respective defenders with knowledge and skills to investigate the human rights violations experienced by Roma in a war time through monitoring activities. Thus, the monitors develop a detailed report with identified concerns which constitutes a solid tool for further advocacy.

Building on these efforts, the present conference allowed to **enhance the communication among civil society, state authorities and international community** and **identify synergies** towards addressing the needs of Roma affected by the war. The event provided venue for an **open exchange** and **reflections** between and among various stakeholders, an approach which was positively assessed by participants. The conference modalities included an opening session and six consecutive sessions<sup>14</sup>, producing a number of specific recommendations and conclusions outlined in this report.

## Opening Session

The opening plenary highlighted the **importance of dialogue between governmental entities and Roma civil society**, as a key to build joint efforts on addressing the concerns facing Roma. Speakers emphasised that the conference represents an important platform for state, civil society and international partners to reflect upon main difficulties lived by Ukrainian Roma and come up with sustainable and needs-based solutions in this respect.

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<sup>10</sup> [Roma and Sinti populations in crisis situations: International Roma Contact Group thematic meeting with a focus on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine](#), ODIHR, 31 May 2022.

<sup>11</sup> [International Roma Contact Group: OSCE states must treat Roma refugees from Ukraine equally and Ukraine must treat internally displaced Roma like other IDPs](#), Romea website, 10 August 2022.

<sup>12</sup> [Monitoring and addressing the human rights challenges faced by Roma fleeing Ukraine discussed at ODIHR event](#), ODIHR, 3 October 2022; [The human rights situation of displaced Ukrainian Roma raises concerns amidst continuing prejudice](#), ODIHR, 12 October 2023.

<sup>13</sup> [Democracy and Human Rights in the OSCE – Annual Report 2023](#), ODIHR, pp. 46-47.

<sup>14</sup> See Annex 1 for more information.

The Spokesperson of **ODIHR** pointed out that observing Roma rights remains paramount on OSCE programmatic agenda. In this view, the Office has monitored the human rights situation of forcibly displaced Roma, both in Ukraine and in its neighbouring countries, since 24 February 2022. ODIHR also built the capacity of Roma and pro-Roma human rights defenders, and facilitated venue and participation of Roma in the OSCE human dimensions platforms.

The Head of **Council of Europe Office in Kyiv** stressed the need of ensuring that the Strategy Promoting the Realization of the Rights and Opportunities of Persons belonging to the Roma National Minority in Ukrainian Society for the period up to 2030 (National Roma Strategy)<sup>15</sup> addresses the particular concerns of various groups, such as Roma women, youth, children, stateless people, Roma lacking identification documents (IDs) and elderly, as well as those with disabilities.

The Deputy Head of the **State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience** underlined that the conference is a timely and fit platform to take stock of the human rights situation of Roma affected by war. The Representative of the **Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights** recognised that the ongoing war has significantly affected Roma populations resulting in forced displacement, increased prejudice and exacerbated already existing socio-economic difficulties.

Speakers emphasised that existing challenges are extremely complex and multi-layered. In order to address them, coordinated efforts among civil society, state and international partners are crucial to find solutions. The critical role played by Roma civil society for advancing the rights of Roma, despite numerous barriers, should be recognised accordingly. The vital support provided by the government towards Roma in a war climate was also commended.

## State Efforts on Addressing the Situation of Roma Communities

During this session state authorities presented their **efforts** directed on protection and fulfilment of the human rights of Roma in the context of the war and highlighted the **milestones reached** in advancing inclusion of Roma, including the adoption and implementation of the National Roma Strategy. Government representatives reflected upon ways in which these efforts relate to **wider contexts**, such as EU accession, post-war recovery and minority inclusion. Speakers also examined the **obstacles and limitations** they are coping with in light of the ongoing war. Finally, speakers shared practices of cooperation with non-governmental sector, but also discussed perspectives on how civil society and intergovernmental organizations can support state towards better inclusion of Roma.

An official of the **State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience** highlighted their crucial role in developing Roma-related policy, namely the National Roma Strategy and recently adopted Action Plan for 2024-2025 to support the realisation of

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<sup>15</sup> [Decision No. 866-p on approval of the Strategy for Promoting the Realization of the Rights and Opportunities of Persons Belonging to the Roma National Minority in Ukrainian Society for the Period up to 2030](#), Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 28 July 2021, Kyiv.

Strategy<sup>16</sup>. One of the tools to monitor the implementation of National Roma Strategy is the reactivation of the Interdepartmental Working Group where the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience plays a leading role. The Service's function is essential also in combating discrimination and fulfilment of Ukraine's international obligations in the human rights arena.

The **Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights** presented their work within the Department on National Minorities, and cooperation with civil society on monitoring the rights of Roma. One key aspect of their work included identifying Roma without IDs and assisting them through the process. The Commissioner's representative reported that the Office has been monitoring and documenting systemic violations of Roma rights since 24 February 2022. Among such violations were noted denial of employment, limited access to accommodation and public services, obstructed access to medical services, low-quality education and poor access to education for Roma children, and inappropriate documentation of Roma, including of women and children.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** recognised that the human rights situation of national minorities and indigenous people had worsened in view of the war. According to a Ministry's representative, the dialogue between state authorities and Roma community has potential for efficient results. Also, it was emphasised Ministry's participation in designing the Action Plan for 2024-2025, namely provisions addressing the role of the National Police of Ukraine in preventing ethnic-based conflicts.

A representative of the **Ministry of Justice** presented the state programmes focused on social support for low-income families and with new-born children as well as a special initiative for obtaining IDs outside of Ukraine. During this armed conflict, a significant number of Roma has been displaced and the demand for documents has increased. This issue was addressed through the Unified State Automated Register that helped quickly providing necessary documents to Roma IDPs. Ministry's representative highlighted that significant work was invested to improve the access to documentation for Roma, however remaining shortcomings must be addressed. The speaker noted that existing state initiatives have to continue, including through awareness raising. The importance of cooperation with Roma civil society has been highlighted while recognising their synergy with the community and constructive dialogue with the Ministry. As a result, this helps the Ministry of Justice to improve their services to Roma citizens.

The **State Migration Service** introduced a pilot project aiming at assisting Roma in the Transcarpathian region in obtaining IDs. Many specific cases were discussed outlining the key elements of the problem. It was also emphasised that cooperation with Roma civil society sector makes the process of documentation more efficient and adds up to state's efforts in this direction. The State Migration Service announced about potential possibilities to increase its presence abroad, with a branch opening soon in Munich, Germany. This will allow to better assist Ukrainian refugees, including Roma, in resolving ID-related concerns.

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<sup>16</sup> [Decision No. 1197-r on approval of the Action Plan for 2024-2025 on the Implementation of the Strategy for Promoting the Realization of the Rights and Opportunities of Persons Belonging to the Roma National Minority in Ukrainian Society for the Period up to 2030](#), Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 22 December 2023, Kyiv.

Representatives of the **Transcarpathian Regional State Administration** stated that the respective region received the largest number of IDPs, including Roma. They acknowledged that Roma are facing specific concerns such as lack of IDs and hate speech. On the other hand, speakers pointed out at limited state financing in their region which inhibit their possibilities to meet the particular needs of Roma. Local officials encouraged participation of Roma activists and human rights defenders in public and political life to ensure that their voices are heard throughout the decision-making process in the region.

The **Pantayiv Settlement Council** noted that their community became a transit point for IDPs among which a significant number were Roma. The community stayed engaged with Roma IDPs since 24 February 2022, at first providing humanitarian aid and later transitioning its focus on Roma youth and their stand in social life.

State authorities acknowledged that Roma are facing particular and multi-layered concerns. Among key issues mentioned multiple times throughout this session was poor documentation in Roma communities which gained significant traction since 24 February 2022.

### **Key recommendations and conclusions**

- ❖ Participants recognised that constructive dialogue between state authorities and Roma community is an effective tool for structuring present and future cooperation. In particular, the discrimination facing Roma population in Ukraine and abroad requires increased cooperation and coordination between and among state authorities and civil society for more targeted and effective assistance.
- ❖ State authorities shall continue to provide a coordinated response to the array of challenges facing Roma communities, including limited access to medical support, lack of access to education for Roma children, poor and obstructed access to accommodation, inadequate documentation and discrimination in employment. Increased attention should be paid also to creating economic opportunities to Roma communities.
- ❖ Investing in the leadership capacity of Roma activists and advocates will enable more active and meaningful presence in the public and political life. This will positively impact public policy as well as cooperation between Roma communities and local and national authorities.

## **Mapping the Key Challenges in Socio-Economic, Civil and Political Areas: Putting Forward Recommendations**

This session put in focus the key **challenges in socio-economic, civil and political areas** as well as **recommendations** identified by Roma civil society.<sup>17</sup> Participants particularly reflected

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<sup>17</sup> The presented recommendations were discussed by Roma civil society representatives during the workshop “Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming the Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment” organised by ODIHR in partnership with Council of Europe Office in Ukraine on 6 March 2024, in Warsaw, Poland.



upon obstacles preventing full and equal realisation of the human rights of Roma, including women in the context of the war, as well as barriers that prevent meaningful participation of Roma in all processes affecting their lives.

The representatives of Roma non-governmental organizations and advocates discussed the **main challenges** and **possible solutions** as elaborated during the workshop organised by ODIHR in partnership with Council of Europe Office in Ukraine on 6 March 2024.<sup>18</sup> They examined the role of civil society in the decision-making process, analysed cases of multiple forms of discrimination and hate speech experienced by Roma IDPs, and emphasised the necessity of ensuring a non-discriminatory approach in education, employment and social services. **Discrimination** continues to be a long-lasting concern which prevents Roma from fully enjoying their human rights thus obstructing their access to employment, temporary accommodation and other services vital in the current climate.

Particular attention was paid to **the gender considerations** and different ways in which the war has affected Roma women and men, boys and girls. In particular, participants noted that lack of documents has disproportionately affected women and children. The war has increased pressure on mental health culminated in emerging gender-based violence that has a worrying impact on Roma women. On a longer-term perspective this issue may affect to a higher degree the engagement of Roma women in public and political life.

Roma civil society highlighted their readiness to **cooperate with the state authorities** to overcome existing obstacles. Building the capacity of Roma activists and advocates and strengthening their cooperation with authorities will positively impact the local communities. This requires active Roma advocates who will promote the interests of local communities and shift the focus towards solutions. A **good practice** is Chirikli's Roma Political School supported by the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> The programme provided a set of skills and knowledge to Roma advocates on solving systemic problems through deepening interaction and partnership with the authorities.

Participants highlighted that **understanding the needs and up-to-date concerns of Roma refugees and IDPs** is critical for informing adequate and timely support and assistance in a war time. The growing number of hate crime and hate speech instances is of a great concern and requires immediate attention from relevant authorities. It is also paramount training for authorities and raising awareness in the area of tolerance and non-discrimination to prevent further stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination towards Roma population.

**Poor of access to education** is yet another issue that has long-term implications. Participants discussed the importance of education and the need for creating suitable conditions for children and adult learning, including promoting hybrid forms of education for adults. This is especially important for Roma women with children. The pre-school preparatory programmes, particularly for Roma children with disabilities, are needed to help fill the gap between Roma and non-Roma education. Authorities should also address the shortcomings in recognising disability status of Ukrainian disabled people in the EU. Discrepancies in the

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<sup>18</sup> See Background and Analysis section and Annex 3 and 4 for more information.

<sup>19</sup> [Roma Political School 2021 launched in Ukraine](#), Council of Europe, 26 August 2021.

relevant systems in Ukraine make registering the disability status in the EU based on the Ukrainian medical records hardly possible.

### **Key recommendations and conclusions**

- ❖ Participants flagged that international organizations, state authorities and civil society lack coordination in response to existing challenges related to Roma community. Overlapping efforts do not allow to timely address existing challenges which are complex in its nature. Thus, participants recommended to strengthen partnerships and collaboration among various stakeholders to efficiently resolve problems faced by Roma communities.
- ❖ With the goal of deepening interaction and partnerships with the Roma community, it was recommended to engage and regularly consult Roma in the processes affecting their lives at all levels of government.
- ❖ It was pointed the need for training and awareness raising among local government, teachers, law enforcement and other entities on preventing and addressing discrimination and overcoming bias towards Roma.
- ❖ Participants recommended regular dialogue between the Ministry of Education and Roma civil society to address the issues relating to education of children and adults, including restoring the possibility of schooling among adult population.
- ❖ Participants recommended to resume the activities of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Coordinating the Implementation of the Strategy led by the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience to ensure that progress achieved towards Roma inclusion is monitored and reported on as such.
- ❖ Law enforcement structures, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant entities shall ensure timely response and action directed on preventing and addressing discrimination and hate crimes targeting Roma.
- ❖ The importance of strengthening the capacity of Roma advocates and defenders, with particular focus on Roma women and youth, should be a priority and must be addressed through comprehensive training programmes.
- ❖ Measures for local integration of Roma refugees in the host countries and Roma IDPs in-country respectively should be dealt with priority. Domestic authorities shall deploy Roma mediators in the respective regions and ensure appropriate training for them.

## Mapping the Key Challenges in Other Thematic Areas: Putting Forward Recommendations

During this session, participants brought into discussion the **obstacles in other thematic areas** as mapped during the workshop held on 6 March 2024 and put forward recommendations in this respect.<sup>20</sup> Participating civil society guided through specific barriers affecting meaningful participation of Roma in all processes affecting their lives, as well as the right to equality and non-discrimination and gendered aspects of such challenges.

Much of the conversation focused on the **issue of civil registration and IDs**. Lack of documentation is a transversal problem limiting the access of Roma to state-provided services. This is particularly concerning for Roma IDPs who cannot access entitlements and benefits made available for displaced groups. Discussions also brought attention to the cases of **removing Roma children** from families displaced abroad. Mechanisms for returning children through the court and local services were examined with the representatives of the Parliament's Commissioner for Human Rights and State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience, who provided guidance for such situations. Namely, the Commissioner's official emphasised the importance of addressing known cases through submitting an appeal to the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, which then sends further requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and respective consulates.

The discussion further inspected the issue relating to obtaining Ukrainian documents by **Roma who were granted IDs by the Russian Federation** and/or occupying authorities. Roma refugees who were forcibly evicted from Mariupol to Russian Federation are unable to obtain documents neither in the Russian Federation nor in Ukraine. They also suffer from lack of access to legal aid to restore their right of access to documents. Participants highlighted the role played by intergovernmental organizations and paramount cooperation with Roma civil society to address the concerns in this and other areas.

Participants shared some **good practices** that could be replicated in various parts of the country. For instance, in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian region, authorities put in place a **simplified passporting mechanism** for Roma. Roma civil society has been pro-active and ensured regular communication with Mukachevo local authorities. It was noted that Roma population still lacks up-to-date information about required payments for state services, such as renewal of passports and IDs, which is a significant challenge for low-income Roma families. Another good practice is the support provided by the Ministry of Justice in Transcarpathia and Ivano-Frankivsk. Such support comprises **assessing the documentation situation** among Roma communities through the lenses of Serbia's experience, namely cancellation of payment duties for vulnerable groups. In Cherkasy region, a Roma non-governmental organization "Right to Defence" has established strong relations with the Social Security Administration and provides **free legal aid** that has a notably positive impact.

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<sup>20</sup> See Background and Analysis section and Annexes 3 and 4 for more information.

The existing 124 Roma-densely populated communities in Transcarpathia are in a critical socio-economic situation and need support from authorities and international community in a coordinated and efficient manner.

### Key recommendations and conclusions

- ❖ Participants emphasised the need to involve the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and respective consulates in resolving the removal of children from families living in Russian Federation-occupied areas of Ukraine, as well as those displaced in Germany. Moreover, it was recommended to open patronage services at Ukraine's consulates to register children who are under temporary protection abroad.
- ❖ Participants called for further analysis of Serbia's experience as with regards to cancellation of payments for the restoration and obtaining duplicates and extracts of IDs and other necessary documentation. It was recommended to learn from other countries' good practices on addressing registration and documentation issues.
- ❖ Participants recommended to create working groups in the countries where Ukrainian refugees, including Roma, are displaced to inform parents about the reasons for child removal. Furthermore, opening additional branches of the State Migration Service abroad was considered critical.
- ❖ Participants emphasised the need to apply the provisions of the Law on Free Legal Aid<sup>21</sup> in a consistent and considerate manner to Roma. It is also important to strengthen cooperation with local governmental bodies to ensure efficient access to free legal aid for local Roma communities.
- ❖ Participants agreed that more awareness raising initiatives among Roma communities guiding through processes related to obtaining documentation are needed.

## Engagement by Intergovernmental and International Stakeholders

This session provided venue to the representatives of intergovernmental organizations and international partners to introduce their **programmatic plans** and **activities for supporting Roma** in Ukraine. Representatives of international community shared their experience of working with Roma civil society to ensure better support and assistance to Roma in view of the war.

The **Office of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities** conducts programmatic work based on its policy development and conflict prevention mandate. Prior to February 2022, the Office conducted a comprehensive training programme for civil servants on non-discrimination and also focused on multilingual education in schools. Currently, the Office launched a study in Ukraine to assess the awareness of the population vis-à-vis the legislation on national minorities.

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<sup>21</sup> [The Law of Ukraine No. 3460-VI about free legal aid](#), 2 June 2011, Kyiv.

The **Office of the European Union in Ukraine** reported on the preparation stage for Ukraine to start accession negotiations, including reforms on full respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. The EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation<sup>22</sup> was mentioned as a guiding basis for the Ukrainian government. It was further noted that there are four conditions that Ukraine should fulfil before negotiations begin, and one of them is the legislative framework for national minorities extending to Roma as well. It is important that national minorities, including Roma people, are included in the recovery and reconstruction programmes of Ukraine.

The **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women** (UN Women) collaborates closely with Roma women to ensure their views and needs are taken on board when programmes are designed, especially humanitarian programmes targeting Roma. In February 2024, UN Women jointly with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Organisation for Migration, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund engaged in dialogue with Roma women from the Transcarpathian region and as a result it was created a working group aimed to assist the UN agencies in the design of programming efforts. In addition, UN Women together with UNHCR and Roma women's organizations will conduct a survey on existing gender concerns among Roma communities in Transcarpathian region.

The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** highlighted their partnership with authorities, namely the State Migration Service and the Ministry of Justice, focusing on improving access to identification and birth registration for displaced Roma.

The **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights** has prioritised data collection in the EU countries in light of their mandate. The Agency closely cooperates with the UNDP and the World Bank and has harmonised data collection indicators and research methodology, while planning the next round of research on economic vulnerability to be published in 2025.

The **United Nations Development Programme's** representative presented the methodology of a joint study with the World Bank on the socio-economic situation of Roma in Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia to be published in the upcoming years. The research aims to create a reliable database to inform further policy development. The research will engage Roma and non-Roma communities living in close proximity. The methodology will include both quantitative and qualitative data to capture statistical information, personal stories of the respondents and expert opinion as well.

### **Key recommendations and conclusions**

- ❖ Roma civil society recommended to maintain an ongoing dialogue with international community to ensure that international assistance programmes and projects adequately respond to Roma communities' needs, realities and aspirations.

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<sup>22</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2020) 620 final, [EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030](#), 7 October 2020, Brussels.

- ❖ Participants highlighted the importance of having in place effective coordination mechanisms and platforms among intergovernmental organizations, civil society and authorities. These venues will help to discuss and synergise the programmatic efforts at various stages, from development to evaluation.

## Presenting an Outcome Position: Overcoming the Challenges Experienced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment

This session took forward a discussion regarding a **joint position** calling for **synergetic partnership between Roma communities, civil society, state authorities** and the **international community**. The position was thought and devised during the workshop held on 6 March 2024 with participation of Ukrainian Roma civil society.<sup>23</sup> In discussing the draft position, participants reiterated the key challenges facing Roma in the context of the war.

The elaborated document captures following directions for potential action to address the existing concerns aiming for an inclusive Ukraine:

- To develop and put in place a mechanism for strengthened partnership between Roma civil society, state authorities and international and intergovernmental organizations to ensure coordinated and joint efforts.
- To ensure effective implementation of the 2030 National Roma Strategy, including through advocacy and awareness raising measures to advance an inclusive society.
- To encourage a meaningful and open dialogue between Roma community and state through applying the principle of transparency regarding the use of state' financial, administrative and human resources.
- To take into account the perspectives and experiences of Roma throughout policy making processes and support their participation in policy development as a key aspect of effective integration of Ukraine into the EU.
- To encourage research and analysis of the situation of Roma and ensure these data are available and considered in the design of measures, programmes and policy making.
- To involve Roma civil society and human rights advocates in the reconstruction and recovery dialogue in the post-war Ukraine.

Furthermore, the conference' participants viewed this collective position as an **effective tool for advocacy** for better protection and fulfilment of Roma rights in Ukraine and abroad.

## Facilitated Discussion Between Civil Society, Authorities and Other Stakeholders on Potential Ways Forward

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<sup>23</sup> The workshop "Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming the Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment" was organised by ODIHR and Council of Europe Office in Ukraine on 6 March in Warsaw, Poland.

The civil society raised particular concerns in the **temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine** such as issues facing Roma youth, enforced passportisation by the Russian Federation, loss of and further inability to obtain Ukrainian IDs as well as existing difficulties when fleeing Ukraine's occupied territories. It was further noted that many Roma families remain in the territories without access to medicine and education due to lack of passports. Those who were granted Russian citizenship have experienced excessive prejudice and labelled as "collaborators". Moreover, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights emphasised that Ukrainian citizens who reject forced passportisation face death threats. The Ukrainian authorities consistently highlighted the need to preserve the lives of all Ukrainian citizens.

Participants noted the value added by **Roma and their contribution** to the national defence efforts, as well as to the humanitarian and civil sectors. Participating stakeholders underlined the need of recognising and acknowledging the role played by Roma through positive storytelling. For instance, the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience briefed on its recent publication that showcases the stories of national minorities, including Roma, who engage actively in humanitarian and advocacy action, and participate in defence.

### **Key recommendations and conclusions**

- ❖ Participants consistently highlighted the need to continue building and strengthening the capacity of Roma activists, advocates, and human rights defenders in areas covering humanitarian work, human rights, migration, safety and security and others to equip with essential knowledge and skills on addressing the existing and emerging concerns facing Roma.
- ❖ The local government, international community and civil society play an important role in growing and supporting young Roma activists, including women, through empowerment and capacity building to enhance their political and public potential.
- ❖ Participating civil society and authorities emphasised the importance of recognising the valuable contribution of Roma in defence, humanitarian and civic efforts which may positively influence the public opinion and combat stereotyping towards Roma.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The **challenges facing Roma in Ukraine are deeply rooted and complex** and require joint action from the government, civil society, and international community to address discrimination, improve living conditions, and ensure that Roma people can fully exercise their rights and participate equally in the society. Roma in Ukraine have historically faced systemic discrimination, social exclusion, and economic marginalisation. These challenges are compounded by lack of formal recognition and representation, making it difficult for their concerns and needs to be addressed adequately within the political and social frameworks of

the country. The ongoing war and geopolitical instability in the region only exacerbated these challenges, underlining the importance of the urgent response.

**Efforts to support Roma communities** have been undertaken by various international organizations, non-governmental organizations and authorities, focusing on providing humanitarian aid, legal and empowerment support, access to various services and advocacy for equal rights and inclusion. However, progress has been slow, and many challenges remain, including overcoming deep-seated prejudice, in particular gender stereotyping, ensuring provision of basic services, and creating opportunities for economic, social and political participation. An **open and mutually beneficial dialogue** is the foundation for guaranteeing these challenges are addressed through coordinated advocacy, policy and empowerment.



## **ANNEXE 1: Conference Agenda**

### **09:30 – 09:50 Opening Remarks and Tour de Table**

*Moderator: Cristi Mihalache, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues/Chief of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*

- Katya Andrusz, Spokesperson, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Maciej Janczak, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine
- Ihor Lossovskiy, Deputy Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience
- Mykhailo Spasov, Representative of the Commissioner for Equal Rights and Freedoms, Rights of National Minorities, Political and Religious Beliefs

### **09:50 – 10:00 Presenting Conference Modalities**

*Moderator: Cristi Mihalache, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues/Chief of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*

### **10:00 – 10:45 State Efforts on Addressing the Situation of Roma Communities**

*Moderator: Viola Popenko, Project Officer, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity, Council of Europe Office in Ukraine*

- State Service for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience
- Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- State Migration Service
- Transcarpathian Regional State Administration
- Pantayiv Settlement Council

10:45 – 11:15 Coffee break

### **11:15 – 12:45 Mapping the Key Challenges in Socio-Economic, Civil and Political Areas. Putting Forward Recommendations**

*Moderator: Kateryna Ryabiko, Consultant, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*

12:45 – 14:00 Lunch break

**14:00 – 15:00 Mapping the Key Challenges in Other Thematic Areas (continuation). Putting Forward Recommendations**

*Moderator: Taiia Avram, Consultant, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

**15:30 – 16:00 Engagement by Intergovernmental and International Stakeholders**

*Moderator: Zemfira Kondur, Project Coordinator, Council of Europe Office in Ukraine*

- OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- UN Women in Ukraine
- Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- United Nations Development Programme

**16:00 – 16:30 Presenting an Outcome Position: Overcoming the Challenges Experienced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment**

*Moderator: Ihor Lossovskiyi, Deputy Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience*

**16:30 – 17:15 Facilitated Discussion Between Civil Society, Authorities and Other Stakeholders on Potential Ways Forward**

*Moderator: Mykhailo Spasov, Representative of the Commissioner for Equal Rights and Freedoms, Rights of National Minorities, Political and Religious Beliefs*

**17:15 – 17:30 Concluding Remarks**

- Cristi Mihalache, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues/Chief of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Zemfira Kondur, Project Coordinator, Council of Europe Office in Ukraine
- Ihor Lossovskiyi, Deputy Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience
- Mykhailo Spasov, Representative of the Commissioner for Equal Rights and Freedoms, Rights of National Minorities, Political and Religious Beliefs

## ANNEXE 2: Respective Mandates

The **Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area** (Action Plan)<sup>24</sup> along with the Ministerial Council Decisions No. 6/08<sup>25</sup>, 8/09<sup>26</sup> and 4/13<sup>27</sup> provide **ODIHR** a distinctive mandate on working with and for Roma and Sinti populations, including throughout crisis and post-crisis settings and times.<sup>28</sup> Stipulations of the Action Plan read that OSCE participating States have **to ensure protection** of displaced people in a non-discriminatory manner in accordance with international standards in this respect. More specifically, in a crisis situation, states are recommended to consult Roma populations in order to inform adequate tailored measures<sup>29</sup> and to develop programmes with durable solutions for affect Roma communities<sup>30</sup> while paying special attention to the needs of women and children<sup>31</sup>. The task of ODIHR in connection to these stipulations is to respond to crisis situations through cooperation with state authorities to guarantee protection of Roma at risk<sup>32</sup> and to facilitate dialogue between state and civil society<sup>33</sup>.

The **Council of Europe** has a mandate to facilitate dialogue among member states and civil society to ensure protection of Roma communities in line with its **Strategic Action Plan on Roma and Traveler Inclusion 2020-2025**. The Plan provides a framework adaptable to country-specific conditions, serving as a roadmap and practical tool for the design, implementation, and adjustment of programmes and actions.<sup>34</sup> The Council' work focuses on combating discrimination and antigypsyism, fostering equal opportunities, diversity, and social inclusion. The ongoing efforts underscore the importance of addressing discrimination and advocating for the rights of Roma and Travelers across member states.

According to the Article 101 of the Constitution of Ukraine, the **Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights** implements the Parliamentary control over the protection of human rights and citizen's constitutional rights and freedoms. The Commissioner has a broad mandate to make proposals for legislation reforms on the protection of human rights

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<sup>24</sup> [OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 3/03](#), "Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area", Maastricht, 1-2 December 2003.

<sup>25</sup> [OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/08](#), "Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area", Helsinki, 5 December 2008.

<sup>26</sup> [OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/09](#), "Enhancing OSCE efforts to ensure Roma and Sinti sustainable integration", Athens, 2 December 2009.

<sup>27</sup> [OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/13](#), "Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area, With a Particular Focus on Roma and Sinti Women, Youth and Children", Kyiv, 6 December 2013.

<sup>28</sup> MC 3/03, *op. cit.*, chapter VII.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, para 107.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, para 109.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, para 112.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, para 114.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, para 122.

<sup>34</sup> [Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#), Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 1365<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, 22 January 2020.

and freedoms and to initiate constitutional submissions to the Constitutional Court. The Commissioner also monitors compliance with established human rights standards by the relevant state bodies as well as conducts visits to places of detention.<sup>35</sup> The rights of national minorities, including Roma as well as religious or belief communities, are at the centre of the Commissioner's mandate.

The **State Service for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience of Ukraine** belongs to the central executive authorities subordinated to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine created to facilitate the development of openness, responsibility and unity within the Ukrainian society in all its diversity. The two main tasks of the State Service are to initiate proposals shaping the state policy in the area of interethnic relations, religion and protection of rights of indigenous people and national minorities, and to ensure implementation of these policies.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See more at: [Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights - About us \(ombudsman.gov.ua\)](https://ombudsman.gov.ua/en/about-us).

<sup>36</sup> See more at: [Про службу | ДЕСС \(dessa.gov.ua\)](https://dessa.gov.ua/en/about-us).

## ANNEXE 3: Summary of Key Challenges and Recommendations in Civil and Political Areas<sup>37</sup>

Challenges	Recommendations
<b>Access to identification documents (IDs)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor documentation and/or lack of IDs is a cross-dimensional problem that affects all groups of rights.</li> <li>• Procedures related to renewing lost IDs as well as those of obtaining IDs for first time applicants are complex and bureaucratic.</li> <li>• Lack of documentation limits the freedom of movement, especially for women.</li> <li>• Roma from temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine who do not have IDs cannot flee to safer regions and/or countries.</li> <li>• Court proceedings for obtaining documents certifying Ukrainian identity and citizenship for persons who moved from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are difficult to understand and follow.</li> <li>• Lack of IDs obstructs the access to education for Roma, particularly for girls, and limit political and public participation on a long-term run.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To simplify the procedure for renewing and obtaining IDs for first time applicants and for persons who fled temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.</li> <li>• Civil society shall collaborate closely with relevant state authorities with a view of advocating for simplification of ID-related processes.</li> <li>• To learn good practices from other countries on addressing lack of civil status registration and documentation.</li> <li>• To ensure effective procedures for the renewal of Ukrainian ID for those arriving from temporarily occupied territories.</li> <li>• To streamline the access to judicial renewal of documents, including free legal assistance services for persons who do not possess IDs.</li> <li>• To engage Roma mediators in raising awareness among Roma communities regarding the need for IDs and guide them through appropriate procedures as well as to refer to relevant institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Protection from discrimination and hate crime</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing anti-Roma sentiments lead to prejudice and discrimination which limits the realisation of full spectrum of human rights.</li> <li>• Discriminatory practices obstruct the inclusion of Roma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2030 National Roma Strategy should have a particular focus on combating discrimination and ensuring full realisation of human rights.</li> <li>• To allocate sufficient funding for the implementation of the 2030 National Roma Strategy and to ensure adequate resources</li> </ul>

<sup>37</sup> As mapped out and further compiled by Roma civil society participating at the workshop “Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment” organised by ODIHR in partnership with Council of Europe Office in Ukraine on 6 March 2024, in Warsaw, Poland.

communities and significantly limits their political potential, including participation in decision-making process.

- Cases of hate speech against Roma are on the rise with poor attention and reaction from relevant authorities.

for anti-discrimination, advocacy and awareness raising programmes.

- To document, report and address discriminatory practices and hate crime towards Roma by authorities in charge.
- To provide relevant training for authorities to combat prejudice, discrimination and hate crime towards Roma.
- To build partnerships between authorities and civil society for better coordination aiming for protecting Roma from discrimination and hate crime.
- To combat stereotyping and prejudice towards Roma, including through promoting successful and positive storytelling in mass media.

#### Roma women

- Lack of documentation remains acute specifically among Roma women and children.
- Roma women are facing increased risk of gender-based, human trafficking and exploitation due to multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities i.e., lack of awareness about their rights, poor education, lower income and higher rates of unemployment, intersectional discrimination etc.
- The war has increased pressure on mental health culminated in emerging gender-based violence that has a worrying impact on Roma women.

- To design and put in place raising awareness and empowerment programmes on women's rights, gender-based violence and exploitation, targeting Roma women and youth with support of Roma mediators and civil society.
- To develop gender-related training programmes for Roma mediators on ways to assist Roma women who are victims of gender-based violence and abuse.
- To enhance cooperation between Roma non-governmental organisations and Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine to document cases of the conflict-related sexual violence among Roma women.
- To promote sexual and reproductive health training in Roma communities, targeting particularly Roma girls.
- To ensure empowerment measures for Roma women and girls on political and public participation.
- To put in place measures for adult education among Roma women and extracurricular learning opportunities for girls.

#### Participation in public and political life

- Poor coordination among civil society, authorities and international community leads to inadequate and scattered support

- To structure and fortify cooperation between various stakeholders and built joint programmatic intervention directed at simplifying documentation procedures,

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that do not fully meet the needs of Roma.

- It was observed a gradual decrease in funding in relation to Roma non-governmental organizations from donor entities.
- Roma without documentation are unable to exercise their right to vote as well as other types of rights from this political spectrum.
- Roma civil society organisations were forced to shift their programmatic focus on humanitarian aid and therefore less attention is directed towards socio-economic, civil and political issues.

ensuring effective implementation of 2030 National Roma Strategy, and guaranteeing full respect for Roma human rights.

- To support advocacy and political participation programmes for Roma civil society, activists and human rights defenders.
- To addressing existing shortcomings in legislation application and improve consultation mechanisms between civil society and authorities.
- To ensure support for relevant state entities and officials, including through training, on effective implementation of Roma-related policies, including the 2030 National Roma Strategy.
- To devise and put in place effective monitoring and evaluation tools for the 2030 National Roma Strategy, including audit.

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### **Integration and reconstruction**

- Roma IDPs and refugees are facing stereotyping and prejudice in host communities which hinders their full and effective integration.
- Local Roma civil society possess limited resources to ensure complex and needed assistance to Roma IDPs and refugees.
- Voices of Roma are not included in the reconstruction dialogue which on a long-term run will lead to adoption of redevelopment and reconstruction measures that do not target Roma, among the most vulnerable groups.

- To build partnerships between Ukrainian Roma civil society organisations and mainstream human rights organizations from host countries and communities to join forces towards addressing human rights concerns facing Roma refugees and IDPs.
  - To support meaningful dialogue between Roma civil society and authorities in host communities for full and effective integration of Roma refugees and IDPs.
  - To ensure that the needs of Roma are reflected in the recovery and reconstruction plans of Ukraine.
  - To put in place measures for Roma refugees supporting their local integration in host communities and European community in general.
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## ANNEXE 4: Summary of Key Challenges and Recommendations in Socio-Economic Area<sup>38</sup>

Challenges	Recommendations
<b>Access to social security</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many Roma are lacking awareness of their socio-economic rights and ways for remedy, as well as available social services provided by the state.</li> <li>• Roma IDPs reported receiving long-delayed housing allowances.</li> <li>• Roma often face discrimination during registration of social benefits and pensions and consultations with social protection authorities.</li> <li>• A significant number of Roma are lacking registered place of residence/stay.</li> <li>• In some regions, local government representatives do not have access to Roma communities.</li> <li>• Some administrative centres refuse to provide more than one type a service per day thus making difficult the access for families, particularly women with children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure timely payments for IDP housing allowance.</li> <li>• To conduct anti-discrimination training for social and administrative workers to ensure provision of social benefits and services without discrimination.</li> <li>• To simplify the dispute procedures on refusals of various types of socio-economic assistance.</li> <li>• To create working groups/initiatives within the local self-government with participation of representatives of Roma community to monitor the situation, communicate the needs and address the issues of the local community.</li> <li>• To employ Roma within the structures that provide social services.</li> <li>• To raise more awareness in marginalised Roma communities on the full catalogue of state-provided social services.</li> <li>• To continue monitoring the provision of services by social welfare administrations.</li> <li>• To allow flexibility in choosing a payment method for services, especially for the services of the State Migration Service.</li> <li>• To simplify the procedure for registration of paternity during the martial law.</li> </ul>
<b>Rights of people with disabilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of a default extension of the disability status.</li> <li>• Exposure to corruption during the procedure of obtaining a disability status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are prioritised during provision of social services.</li> <li>• To make more accessible the procedure for obtaining a disability status.</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> As mapped out and further compiled by Roma civil society participating at the workshop “Mapping the Challenges faced by Ukrainian Roma in a War Time and Overcoming Obstacles through Policy, Advocacy and Empowerment” organised by ODIHR in partnership with Council of Europe Office in Ukraine on 6 March 2024, in Warsaw, Poland.



- Reported cases of refusal to assign a disability status despite evident disability.
- To strengthen cooperation between Ukraine and host countries for mutual recognition of the disability status.

#### Access to health care

- Refusal of doctors to sign declarations with representatives of Roma community.
- Recorded cases of extortion and bribery for concluding a declaration with a family doctor.
- Documented cases of discrimination towards Roma in access to health care services during the martial law.
- The “Affordable Medications” programme includes a limited list of medicines and thus people in need of other medications have to cover the related costs. This affects disproportionately Roma without income.
- Documented cases when medical workers providing help for persons with war-resulting injuries did not alert the relevant law enforcement entities.
- To conduct raising awareness campaigns within Roma communities about free access to health care.
- To provide training for medical personnel on non-discriminatory principle in health care.
- Monetisation of services with targeted use, for example, purchase of medicines that are not included in the list of “Affordable Medications” programme.
- To open psychological centres and employ professional visiting groups within Roma communities with a view of documenting and addressing mental health among Roma.
- To ensure access to pro bono mental health services without a referral from the family doctor.
- To conduct awareness campaigns to prevent and remove stigma on mental health care.
- To devise programmes for psychological care for Roma affected by the war.

#### Access to education

- Many Roma children do not attend school due to lack of funds to purchase school-related materials, clothing and lack of transportation.
- Poor and substandard living conditions (lack of infrastructure, access to clean water, heating, etc.,) also prevent Roma pupils from attending school.
- Recorded instances of refusal to enrol Roma children in educational institutions with free of charge educational services.
- Segregation of Roma children in schools and low-quality education in segregated settings.
- Roma IDP children are unable to transfer to full-time in person
- To establish an independent working group to monitor and assess the education-related indicators of the 2030 National Roma Strategy and other relevant programmes and ensure development and implementation of local measures in education area.
- To improve the quality of education in segregated schools and to ensure that desegregation of such settings.
- To conduct training among teaching staff on non-discriminatory and equality approach in education.
- To ensure monitoring and assessment of the quality of remote education.
- To introduce a simplified procedure for enrolling IDP children in school in the host communities.

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- education due to the refusals from local schools.
  - Poor quality of online education learning.
  - To raise awareness among Roma communities on the importance of education.
  - When possible, local authorities to provide necessary school materials free of charge to Roma children in need.
  - To improve the quality of food in schools and school transportation for children living in remote areas.
  - To study good practices in the field of education of Roma children.
  - To introduce vocational training for Roma girls and women and raise awareness on professional technical education opportunities.
  - To raise awareness among Roma students on state-provided support i.e., social scholarships.
  - To increase the participation of Roma in higher education through introducing quota for Roma students.

#### **Access to employment**

- Roma face discrimination and prejudice in access to employment.
- Roma poorly benefit from employment opportunities and are subjected to various obstacles when registering with job centres due to lack of IDs and education.
- Loss of income in the context of the war, as well as job and wage cuts.
- To ensure proper monitoring of the implementation of the legislative labour provisions, including soft legislation.
- To make available grants for business and start-ups and to invest in social entrepreneurship.
- To conduct information campaigns among Roma on available programmes and opportunities in state job centres.
- To develop and fund programmes within job centres aimed for persons without vocational, technical, or higher education.
- To facilitate communication between personnel of job centres and Roma beneficiaries.

#### **Access to housing**

- A significant number of Roma are living in illegal settings and housing and substandard living conditions i.e., lacking electricity, poor infrastructure and communications etc.
  - Roma IDPs are facing discriminatory treatment in places
  - To put in place simplified procedures for housing legalisation and develop a compensation mechanism for lost or damaged housing that was not legalised in time.
  - To make available more social housing opportunities for IDPs and to prioritise the
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of temporary residence and IDP shelters.

- Social housing opportunities are scarce and Roma poorly benefit as such.

most vulnerable categories of population e.g., persons with disabilities.

- To monitor the decisions regarding compensation allowances and housing damage under the E-Recovery programme.
  - To ensure that people who have lost their housing since 2014 benefit from compensation.
  - To make more accessible the compensation mechanism for damaged or lost housing where relevant documents are missing and there is lack of access to archives/registries.
  - To provide funding to IDP shelters and other places for temporary residence for IDPs as well as to ensure free housing for IDPs.
  - To introduce simplified procedures of house legalisation in places of compact residence of Roma who have been residing there for 50 consecutive years or longer.
  - To improve living conditions and housing infrastructure in places densely populated by Roma who are living in substandard settings.
  - To maintain preferential conditions for non-payment of utility services for low-income families and families in difficult life circumstances during the wartime.
-