



**OSCE ODIHR
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2019
September 26, 2019**

Statement on combating antigypsyism

by European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network

Excellencies,

ERGO Network is an organisation that promotes equality of rights for Roma and a racism-free society. We are part of the Alliance against Antigypsyism. The Alliance is a strong coalition of civil society organisations who are advancing an understanding of antigypsyism as a specific form of racism and striving to strengthen the political will and institutional mechanisms to address, monitor, combat and sanction antigypsyism in Europe.

It is essential to see that antigypsyism is not a 'minority issue'. To combat antigypsyism, our attention needs to shift to the mainstream societies while simultaneously raising the usually silenced voices of those dramatically affected by it. Antigypsyism motivates violence, hate speech and discrimination by individuals and movements, and is also widely accepted in mainstream society and state institutions. This makes tackling it both more urgent and more difficult.

Many civil society organisations, the European Parliament, the European Commission, United Nations and other institutions and organisations highlight the persistent antigypsyism at all levels of European society, despite the efforts undertaken under strategies and action plans for Roma and national legislative frameworks against discrimination and hate crime.

In this context, we call on OSCE participating states to take stock of the situation and adopt complementary policy measures to respond to the deep challenges experienced by Roma in Europe.

ERGO Network calls upon the OSCE Participating States

RECOGNISING PRESENT AND HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- To prioritise the fight against antigypsyism and to mainstream and operationalise it in all relevant institutional structures, policies and legislation, including funding instruments;
- To implement concrete, targeted, proactive and reactive measures to respond to antigypsyism and all its manifestations such as discrimination, hate-speech and hate-crime and establish clear targets and specific and measurable indicators that would be used for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation;



- To educate law enforcement officers, teachers, judiciary and civil servants, social workers and other state employees in close collaboration with Romani and anti-racist civil society organisations, experts and activists to identify antigypsyism in order to effectively prevent and counter the phenomenon;
- To recognise the historical dimension of antigypsyism and demonstrate responsibility of the institutions towards Romani communities;

COLLECTING DATA AND MONITORING ANTIGYPSYISM

- To invest financial and other resources to strengthen the role of civil society as watchdog organisations of fundamental rights and empower civil society to advocate for changes and feed into relevant policy and legislative processes;
- To invest efforts into analyzing the impact of antigypsyist behaviour and structural antigypsyism on Roma living in deep poverty, Romani women, elder persons, youth, children, Roma migrants and EU mobile Roma, LGBTIQ+ and persons with disabilities;
- To encourage and support national human rights institutions, equality bodies and ombudspersons in equality data collection and reporting on cases of antigypsyism; establish an obligation of the relevant institutions at national and local level to collect disaggregated data on hate-speech and hate crimes committed with antigypsyist motivation, including intersectional data, to allow analysis of trends;

ENABLING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- To counter and sanction hate-speech in public discourses: in the media, academia, among politicians, state authorities and civil servants, in particular by fostering counter-narratives for inclusive society and by ensuring the meaningful participation of Roma in supervisory structures;
- To fully implement all relevant policies and legislation that respond to hate-speech and hate-crime and, if necessary, amend legislative frameworks to enable the right for civil society to litigate against antigypsyist speech;
- To train state officials in order to recognise antigypsyism as bias motivation, including intersections of antigypsyism with nationality, language, religion, gender, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation; this should be made mandatory, especially for judges; to ensure that antigypsyist crimes and misdemeanours are recognised by police, prosecutors and the courts as motivated by antigypsyism and prosecuted as such;



- To set up and/or support programmes and/or initiatives for supporting the victims and potential victims of antigypsyist crimes, speech, discrimination and misdemeanours, especially in addressing underreporting and other obstacles to access to justice;

ENDING ALL FORMS OF STRUCTURAL ANTIGYPSYISM IN ALL PARTS OF SOCIETY

- To address and end any form of structural antigypsyism, including all forms of segregation, forced evictions, environmental racism and other manifestations of antigypsyism in education, employment, health and housing;

STRENGTHENING ROMA LEADERSHIP, PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND SELFORGANISATION

- To treat Roma and Sinti as equal partners, support and finance free, independent and diverse self-organisation and other forms of empowerment, including promoting leadership and recruiting Roma for high-level positions in public administrations at all levels;