



**CENTRAL COUNCIL** of German Sinti & Roma



## **CHACHIPEN - Paving the way for Truth and Reconciliation Process to address antigypsyism in Europe: Remembrance, Recognition, Justice and Trust-Building**

**1<sup>st</sup> of February 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2023**

The '**CHACHIPEN**' means '*truth*' in the Romani language, pursues the key objective to advance the recognition and response to historically-rooted and systemic antigypsyism to achieve justice, equality, non-discrimination and the full participation of Roma as equal citizens across Europe. The project employs an innovative approach, through the model of Truth and Reconciliation Processes (further TRP), to review the past rights violations and ongoing structural discrimination of Roma that hinders the implementation of the EU non-discrimination acquis.

### **PARTNERSHIP**

#### **Steering Group:**

- CEPS think-tank (coordinator)
- Central Council of German Sinti and Roma (Central Council)
- European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO)

#### **National Partners:**

- Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña (FAGiC) in Spain
- Asociația Fast Forward in Romania

#### **Supporting partners:**

- Council of Europe Roma Team
- European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
- European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)
- OSCE-ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI)

#### **Advisory Board:**

- Ms Soraya Post, Swedish politician/former MEP/ former member of Swedish Commission on Antigypsyism
- Dr Markus End, Member of the Independent Commission on Antigypsyism of the German government
- Dr Ismael Cortes, Roma rights advocate and Member of Parliament in Spain
- Ms Mirjam Karoly, former Chief of the OSCE ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues



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**FAGiC**  
Federació d'Associacions Gitanes de Catalunya



## THE CONTEXT

The European Commission has stressed that “the most successful actions do not just align with, but rather transform mainstream structures and policies by fighting prejudices and stereotypes and building a positive image of Roma among policy-makers and other stakeholders”.<sup>1</sup> In October 2020, the European Commission has launched the new Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020-2030.<sup>2</sup> The CHACHIPEN project aims at understanding and raising-awareness about antigypsyism in societies across Europe with an innovative transitional justice-like approach as a way to transform the shared historical narrative that also acknowledges the contribution of Roma to Europe.

The project partners have successfully piloted this approach. CEPS and the Alliance against Antigypsyism (that includes ERGO Network and Central Council for German Sinti and Roma), have previously produced a landmark study entitled “Scaling up Roma Inclusion strategies”.<sup>3</sup> It aimed at learning from South African, Canadian, Australian TRP experiences as well as from the Swedish Commission on Antigypsyism. These lessons informed and innovated the envisioning of a post-2020 EU Roma policy.

The CHACHIPEN project will combine participatory research, strengthening advocacy capacity among Roma activists and communities, and targeted awareness-raising activities among policymakers, the media, and public institutions. The project aims to learn from TRP experiences in Sweden and Germany and to use them to advance the TRP in Romania and Spain. It also promotes such an approach at the EU level to inspire the other Member States to start similar processes as a way to rebuild trust, cooperation and reconciliation among the Roma communities and majority society institutions as an essential step towards effective delivery of non-discrimination and equality. The European Commission has also committed itself with the new EU Roma Strategic Framework 2030 to ‘raise awareness on Roma history and culture, and promote truth and reconciliation’.<sup>4</sup>

## THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES

1. **To investigate truth** by analysing and understanding what happened to Roma across the EU and in the specific Member States and how Roma have contributed to the history of Europe, and most importantly, how antigypsyism became an institutionalised form of racism.
2. **To map states of play** in acknowledging the dark chapters of antigypsyism across the EU and providing the more in-depth analyses as it concerns Germany, Sweden, Spain and Romania.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2019) Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies – 2019, COM(2019) 406 final, Brussels, 5 September 2019, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, DG JUST (2020), “The new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation (full package)”, 7 October. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_en).

<sup>3</sup> Carrera et al. (2019) “Scaling up Roma Inclusion Strategies: Truth, reconciliation and justice for addressing antigypsyism”. 18 February 2019. Brussels, CEPS. <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/scaling-roma-inclusion-strategies-truth-reconciliation-and-justice-addressing>

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, DG JUST (2020), EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020 – 2030, COM(2020) 620 final, Brussels, 7 October, p. 16.



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3. **To learn from promising experiences** of setting up independent expert commissions on antigypsyism in Sweden and Germany, to advance the public understanding of antigypsyism, and the impact of this dark history on the present of Roma communities.

4. **To empower Romani** activists to advocate for Truth and Reconciliation processes and ensuring their co-ownership of the process by building up their capacity and designing, implementing and monitoring such transitional justice-like processes.

5. **To raise awareness about antigypsyism** in society, in particular among duty-bearers, and to promote the potential of truth and reconciliation processes for achieving equality, non-discrimination and full participation of Roma.

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACTS

The project structures **activities** in three key working areas (Work Packages):

- **Research and knowledge building** through exchanging promising practices on truth and reconciliation processes – led by CEPS in cooperation with all partners.

### Key dates:

- **State of the Art Report** - from in February 2021 to July 2021 (M6);
  - **National research phase** – from July 2021 to January 2022 (M12);
  - **Strategic visioning exercise** – by May 2022 (M16);
  - **Comparative report** – by September 2022 (M20);
- **Advocacy capacity-building of Roma civil society** with a focus on Romania and Spain, led by ERGO with national partners, FAGIC leading the way in Spain and ARESEL in Romania in cooperation with all partners.

### Key dates:

- **Advocacy guidelines** – From February 2021 by June 2021 (M5) public interim version and by August 2021 (M19) final with policy recommendations;
  - **International exchange and mutual learning in-person meeting in Berlin** with participants from CSOs in ES, DE, RO and ES – by January 2022 (M12);
  - **National advocacy coalition plan** – by April 2022 (M15);
  - **Launching the TRC advocacy with a wide alliance, round table and press and media action** by September 2022 (M20);
- **Awareness-raising activities** for the recognition of antigypsyism and to promote therefore the need and potential of truth and reconciliation processes led by Central Council in cooperation with all partners.

### Key dates:

- **Awareness-raising materials/ infographics** – by January 2022 (M12);
- **Audiovisual testimonies and visual narratives** – by May 2022 (M16);
- **Final CHACHIPEN conference** – around September 2022 (M 20);
- **Social media and communication activities** – until end of January 2023 (M24).



By addressing past injustices, the project aims to have the following **results and impacts** to the fight against ongoing institutional forms of antigypsyism:

- Learning from promising Truth and Reconciliation Processes (TRP) in Sweden and Germany to pave the way for future processes in Romania and Spain. Such TRP processes will be based on and will further strengthen Roma participation.
- TRP will deepen the understanding and recognition of antigypsyism among Roma and non-Roma communities. In particular, we aim to promote the definitions of antigypsyism that have been endorsed by civil society,<sup>5</sup> European Commission High Level-Working Group,<sup>6</sup> presidencies of the Slovak and Austrian Presidency EU Council conclusions,<sup>7</sup> and most recently, by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).<sup>8</sup>
- We believe that recognition of antigypsyism will help to transform the narrative, particularly with state institutions and duty-bearers. Previous research by CEPS on antigypsyism has shown that recognising historically-embedded antigypsyism is the most important step towards addressing ongoing Roma discrimination in vital areas of life, such as housing, education, employment, healthcare and access to justice.<sup>9</sup>
- The project strengthens the capacity of Roma and pro-Roma civil society in Romania and Spain to develop, promote and advocate for a comprehensive action plan backed up by evidence-based policy recommendations to combat antigypsyism, with a priority on TRP processes. This “pilot project” can thus contribute to the development of successful models for the post-2020 EU Roma Equality and Inclusion policy.
- CHACHIPEN will promote EU fundamental rights and rule-of-law approaches that are needed to capture institutional manifestations at the EU, national, regional or local levels. The research, awareness-raising, capacity building and networking activities will be instrumental in capturing such manifestations and further scrutinising them at the relevant EU venues.
- Research, advocacy and capacity-building as well as awareness-raising will contribute to promoting and rebuilding trust between Roma and non-Roma communities. Knowledge and processes co-created during this project will advance the recognition of antigypsyism as a critical issue that has been hindering effective delivery of equality and non-discrimination in European society.
- Personal testimonies will also open new ways for Roma and non-Roma to relate to each other through the lens of human compassion, apology/forgiveness, solidarity, but most important – equality. Transitional justice-like approaches, therefore, provide an opportunity for building trust and aiming for reconciliation in the future.

<sup>5</sup> Alliance against Antigypsyism (2016) Antigypsyism – a reference paper, by ERGO, Central Council and ENAR (see: [http://antigypsyism.eu/?page\\_id=17](http://antigypsyism.eu/?page_id=17)).

<sup>6</sup> EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance (2018) “Conclusions paper on Antigypsyism increasing its recognition to better understand and address its manifestations.”

<sup>7</sup> Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU (2016), Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration - Draft Council Conclusions, 14294/16, Brussels, 18 November; Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU (2019) “Conference on anti-Gypsyism: How to address anti-Gypsyism in a post-2020 EU Roma Framework? Expert recommendations”, Vienna.

<sup>8</sup> International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) (2020) “Working Definition on Antigypsyism/Anti-Roma Discrimination”, 8 October. <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antigypsyism-anti-roma-discrimination>

<sup>9</sup> Carrera et al. (2019) “Scaling up Roma Inclusion Strategies: Truth, reconciliation and justice for addressing antigypsyism”. 18 February 2019. Brussels, CEPS. <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/scaling-roma-inclusion-strategies-truth-reconciliation-and-justice-addressing>.

