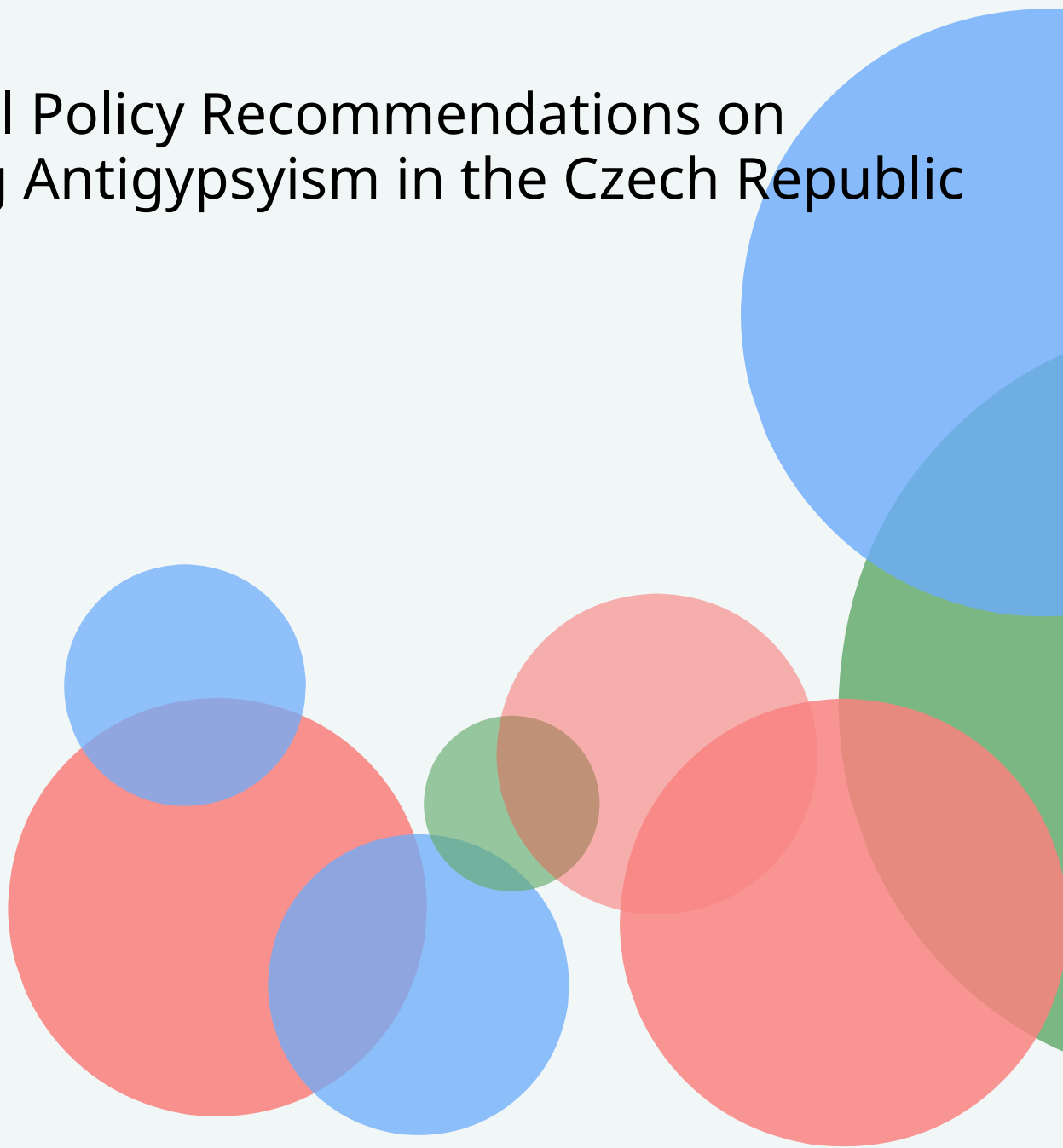


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National Recommendation

# National Policy Recommendations on Fighting Antigypsyism in the Czech Republic



Slovo 21

2025

## The JEKHIPE Project

*Reclaiming Our Past, Rebuilding Our Future: New Approaches to Fighting Antigypsyism (JEKHIPE)* is a CERV-funded project aimed at improving the lives of Roma by addressing systemic and institutional antigypsyism, promoting transitional justice, fostering knowledge-building and awareness, and strengthening Roma identity and participation. It is a follow-up to an earlier CERV project called 'CHACHIPEN', officially titled 'Paving the way for a Truth and Reconciliation Process to address antigypsyism in Europe. Remembrance, Recognition, Justice and Trust-Building'. Concluded in 2023, CHACHIPEN introduced an innovative transitional justice-based approach to raising awareness of systemic injustice and ongoing antigypsyism in policymaking, while advocating for a comprehensive truth and reconciliation strategy.

JEKHIPE focuses on multiple levels of policy-making, including research, monitoring, advocacy, networking, alliances building, awareness raising, capacity building, and empowerment. It aims to engage with national and European institutions, academia, politicians, justice mechanisms, state authorities, civil society, and Roma communities themselves to challenge the status quo on approaching Roma issues, particularly antigypsyism, and propose mechanisms for increased accountability by national governments.



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## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Context and urgency of antigypsyism at the national level

Antigypsyism in the Czech Republic represents a deeply rooted, historically conditioned, and structural phenomenon that systematically limits life opportunities and threatens social cohesion. It is not merely a collection of isolated prejudices, but a persistent societal force, manifesting in alarming socio-economic inequalities and extremely negative attitudes from the majority population. According to a 2025 survey by the Public Opinion Research Center (CVVM), Roma are, along with Arabs and Russians, the least favoured ethnic groups in Czech public opinion, with 56% of respondents expressing antipathy toward them. This pervasive aversion directly translates into real-life conditions, as shown by data from the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs (RILSA) for 2023/2024: the income poverty rate among the Roma population is 46.8%, compared to 9.8% in the general population. Additionally, the Jekhipe project survey reveals that key stakeholders view the most severe impacts of antigypsyism in the areas of access to housing (80%) and equality before the police and courts (80%). The current national strategy is also perceived as ineffective, with 80% of respondents rating its practical impact as negligible.

The urgency of this issue lies not only in the moral obligation to protect minority rights, but also in its severe and measurable impact on Czech society as a whole. Systematically excluding hundreds of thousands of citizens from full participation in the education system and labor market represents a huge loss of human and economic potential for the country. Keeping a large portion of the population trapped in a cycle of poverty and dependence creates significant fiscal costs and reduces tax revenues. Ongoing segregation and discrimination also deeply erode social cohesion, increase societal tension, and provide fertile ground for extremist and populist political forces that threaten democratic stability. Ignoring antigypsyism is therefore not only a failure in human rights protection but a strategic mistake that undermines economic prosperity, internal security, and the country's international reputation. This is evidenced, for example, by the European Commission's long-standing proceedings against the Czech Republic due to persistent discrimination against Roma children in education. Combating antigypsyism must therefore not be seen as a peripheral agenda but as a key condition for the healthy and sustainable development of Czech society as a whole.

### 1.2 Brief overview of methods

These recommendations are based on a thorough analysis and synthesis of several key data sources, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The primary foundation is the Jekhipe project's questionnaire survey, which specifically maps perceptions of the impacts of antigypsyism and evaluations of current policies among

key stakeholders from public administration, Roma civil society, and experts. This primary data is complemented by stakeholder mapping, which identifies and analyses key institutions and individuals influencing Roma-related policies. Further context and deeper understanding are provided by an analysis of secondary data, including: a representative quantitative survey on the socio-economic situation of Roma (RILSA); in-depth qualitative research on lived experiences of discrimination; public opinion surveys (CVVM); analyses of educational segregation (PAQ Research, STEM); recommendations from the Public Defender of Rights; and critical assessments of national strategies and specific policies based on civil society monitoring reports (Roma Civil Monitor).

### 1.3 Key messages and recommendations

The data analysis revealed several key findings that form the basis for the following strategic recommendations. Most notably, the current strategy is failing due to a lack of political will, which was identified as the greatest obstacle by 40% of respondents in the Jekhipe project's questionnaire. The findings also highlight that historical injustices, such as the Romani Holocaust and forced sterilizations, are far from being issues of the past: a full 100% of respondents believe addressing them is crucial to tackling present-day antigypsyism. Based on these insights, we present ten key recommendations:

1. Launch a transitional justice process: Establish an independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate historical injustices, including forced sterilizations and the state's failure to protect Roma from racist violence. This step is seen as essential to rebuilding trust (according to Jekhipe survey respondents).
2. Strictly enforce desegregation in education: Implement and enforce legislative and methodological tools to end all forms of school segregation. According to PAQ Research and STEM, 16% of Romani pupils attend segregated schools and another 15% are placed in segregated classrooms within mainstream schools. Local authorities must proactively create fair school catchment areas, as recommended by the Public Defender of Rights.
3. Integrate Romani history and culture into school curricula: Make the teaching of Romani history, culture, and the Holocaust a mandatory part of the national education framework to counteract stereotypes from an early age.
4. Strengthen legal protections against housing discrimination: Introduce effective sanctions for housing discrimination and systematically use verifiable methods such as situation testing. Housing was identified as the most problematic area (80% of Jekhipe survey respondents).
5. Ensure equal access to justice and reform policing practices: Establish mechanisms for monitoring and addressing ethnic profiling by police and ensure that judges and

prosecutors receive training on antigypsyism. The low levels of trust in the justice system (37.2%) and police (46.9%) are alarming.

6. Systematically combat hate speech: Create specialized police units for the effective prosecution of online hate speech and consistently sanction antigypsyist rhetoric in public and political discourse.

7. Reform employment support systems: Focus on removing barriers to labor market entry, such as debt traps and low qualifications, and promote flexible employment models for Roma women, whose employment rate is only 29.5%.

8. Reform the funding system for Romani NGOs: Reduce administrative burdens, lower co-financing requirements, and ensure long-term, sustainable support for community-based and advocacy organizations, which respondents (40% ) identified as key agents of change.

9. Introduce mandatory ethnically disaggregated data collection: Systematically and anonymously collect data in key sectors (education, housing, health, justice) to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of all policies.

10. Address energy poverty and environmental injustice: Develop targeted programs to support housing renovations and insulation in socially excluded areas, and ensure equal access to subsidies (e.g., New Green Savings), as Romani households are disproportionately affected by energy poverty and live in worse environmental conditions.

## 1.4 Intended impact on national policy and Roma inclusion

The aim of these recommendations is to shift national policy from formal strategies, whose practical impact remains minimal, toward the implementation of concrete, measurable, and systemic changes. Consistent implementation of the proposed measures will help dismantle the structural barriers that prevent Roma from fully participating in society. The expected outcomes include restoring the critically low trust of the Roma community in state institutions, significantly improving their socio-economic status, and fostering a more just and inclusive society—one in which equal opportunities are not merely a declared ideal, but a lived reality for all citizens of the Czech Republic.

## 2. National Context and the Role of Jekhipe

### 2.1 Structural nature of antigypsyism in the Czech Republic

Antigypsyism in the Czech Republic is not merely a sum of individual prejudices, but a deeply rooted, historically conditioned, and structural phenomenon that systematically limits life opportunities and threatens social cohesion. Its manifestations and impacts have persisted across various political regimes, from the democratic First Republic, through the totalitarian period, to the present day, making it an integral, albeit negative, part of the societal framework. This historical continuity has shaped institutional settings and social norms in ways that systematically disadvantage and exclude Roma. Qualitative research describes this reality as a constant “tax on existence” that Roma are forced to pay in every aspect of their lives, solely because of their origin. This is not a metaphor, but a reflection of daily life, which carries tangible economic, social, and psychological costs. The structural nature of antigypsyism is reflected in the functioning of key institutions, such as the education system, the labour market, housing access, policing, and the justice system, which often operate based on unconscious or explicit stereotypes, thereby actively reproducing inequality and social exclusion. The burden of antigypsyism compels Roma to remain constantly vigilant, under permanent scrutiny by the majority, whether at school, in the workplace, or in public spaces. This results in an enormous and exhausting psychological strain, forcing them to expend significantly more effort just to achieve the same outcomes as members of the majority population.

### 2.2 Historical and current manifestations

To fully understand the present situation, it is essential to analyse both the historical roots and current manifestations of antigypsyism. These two dimensions are inseparably linked and reveal persistent patterns of exclusion.

The historical roots of antigypsyism in the Czech context run deep, but its modern institutionalized form began to take shape in the 19th century, when orientalist literature and early encyclopedias portrayed stereotypical views of Roma as objective “facts.” This discourse was further reinforced during the First Czechoslovak Republic with the adoption of Act No. 117/1927 Coll. on “Wandering Gypsies,” which introduced special registries, restricted freedom of movement, and institutionalized police surveillance of the Roma population. This legislative framework laid the groundwork for later persecution, culminating during World War II in genocide carried out in concentration camps established by the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, such as those in Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu. The consequences were devastating: out of approximately 6,500 Roma and Sinti living in the Protectorate, only 583 survived the camps. After 1948, the communist regime officially declared

equality, but in practice continued a policy of repression through forced assimilation. The clearest symbol of this was Act No. 74/1958 Coll. on the Permanent Settlement of Nomadic Persons. This policy was accompanied by systemic forced sterilizations of Roma women, which began in the 1960s and, driven by eugenic motivations, continued even after 1989. Following the fall of the communist regime, built-up social tensions erupted in a wave of brutal, racially motivated violence and murders committed by extremist groups, incidents that were neither sufficiently condemned by society nor adequately addressed by the state. This period also laid the foundations for deepening segregation in housing and education, the effects of which remain visible today.

Current manifestations of antigypsyism are documented through both qualitative accounts of lived experiences and hard statistical data that expose a stark gap between the Roma minority and the majority population. A persistent negative public attitude forms the backdrop. According to a May 2025 CVVM survey, 56% of the Czech public view Roma unfavourably, representing the highest level of antipathy toward any minority group. Another survey by the same agency in 2023 showed that 63% of Czechs consider coexistence with Roma to be “bad.” These attitudes directly impact all key areas of life. In education, the most severe manifestation is persistent segregation, despite international condemnation in the case of *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*. According to PAQ Research and STEM, 16% of Romani students attend fully segregated schools and another 15% are placed in segregated classes within mainstream schools. This practice, often caused by misdiagnosis and placement into schools with reduced curricula, results in vast educational disparities. As a result, 59.6% of Roma aged 20–64 have attained only primary education at most, compared to just 5.9% in the general population. Low education levels directly impact labour market outcomes. The employment rate of Roma aged 20–64 is 45%, nearly half that of the general population (81.3%). Those who do find work often face precarious conditions—50.5% are employed on fixed-term contracts, compared to just 6.7% in the majority population. This situation directly contributes to extreme poverty: 34.6% of Roma live in severe material deprivation, ten times more than in the general population (3.4%). Housing is the area where antigypsyism is most visibly manifested, confirmed by 80% of respondents in the Jekhipe project survey. Over 44% of Roma live in residentially segregated areas, and nearly 90% live in overcrowded households (compared to 16% in the general population). They face open discrimination when searching for housing, as evidenced by situation testing in the Plzeň region, where real estate agents often falsely told Romani applicants that a flat was already taken. To this is added digital and environmental exclusion. Romani households are disadvantaged in internet access (19.1% have no connection compared to 14% in the general population) and are more likely to live in polluted areas (24.5% vs. 7.9%) and areas with high crime rates (33.8% vs. 6.6%). In everyday life, Roma are subjected to constant microaggressions, distrust from public institutions and healthcare providers, and hate speech on social media. The

Jekhipe project survey confirms that key stakeholders view the most severe impacts of antigypsyism as occurring in access to housing (80%) and equality before the police and judiciary (80%).

## 2.3 Key gaps in policy, enforcement, or recognition

Despite the existence of strategic documents, there are critical gaps in national policy. The first and most significant is the lack of effective implementation and the focus on symptoms. Although the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2021–2030 (NRSF) exists, its actual implementation is weak. As confirmed by the Jekhipe project survey, 80% of respondents rate the strategy's real-world impact as ineffective. Policies often address only the consequences (e.g., social work in excluded localities) instead of tackling root causes such as systemic discrimination and deeply ingrained prejudice.

The second gap lies in the weak enforcement of the law. Anti-discrimination legislation is ineffective in practice. A report by the Public Defender of Rights (2015–2019) shows that legal protection against discrimination is difficult to access and often unsuccessful for victims. According to RILSA data, only 5.3% of discrimination victims reported their most recent incident, which correlates with extremely low levels of trust among Roma in the police and judiciary (trust in the courts stands at only 37.2%).

The third and perhaps most fundamental gap is the lack of recognition and redress for historical injustices. The state has yet to fully acknowledge and address past wrongs, such as forced sterilizations, which hinders the process of reconciliation and trust-building. The absence of transitional justice mechanisms represents a major shortcoming in the country's human rights policy and in the approach to Roma as full and equal members of society.

## 2.4 How the Jekhipe project contributes to filling these gaps

The Jekhipe project is specifically designed to address these identified gaps. Its unique contribution lies in the systematic collection and analysis of data on lived experiences and the perspectives of key stakeholders, creating a strong evidence base for targeted advocacy. According to the project's own survey respondents, the most valuable aspect of Jekhipe is precisely its ability to synthesize data and produce expert materials that can be used for political lobbying and media outreach. The project thus enables the real impact of antigypsyism to be documented through concrete stories and data, allowing for the formulation of targeted recommendations based on clearly identified needs. At the same time, it strengthens the voice of civil society by equipping it with a powerful tool for advocacy work.

## 2.5 The value of civil society and transitional justice in this effort

Roma civil society plays an essential role in this effort. It is often the only actor that systematically monitors state failures, provides direct support within communities, and advocates for the interests of Roma at the political level. Its involvement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies is a necessary precondition for any meaningful change. In this context, the concept of transitional justice is crucial, something strongly affirmed by the Jekhipe project survey, where 100% of respondents stated that addressing historical injustices is highly important for tackling present-day antigypsyism. Acknowledging past wrongs, providing redress for victims, and establishing safeguards to ensure non-repetition are steps without which trust between the Romani community and state institutions cannot be rebuilt. And yet it is precisely this trust that forms the foundation for the success of any integration policy and for building a truly equal and just society.

The relationship between the Czech state and the Romani minority has been deeply scarred by centuries of systematic injustice, which has never been fully acknowledged or remedied. Current manifestations of antigypsyism and alarming socio-economic inequalities therefore cannot be seen as isolated problems, but as the direct consequence of continuous historical injustice in which the state was either actively complicit or failed to prevent. Standard political and legal tools have proven inadequate in addressing this situation, as they focus only on partial symptoms and ignore root causes. This is why it is essential to adopt a comprehensive approach based on the principles of transitional justice, which alone offers a path toward genuine recognition, redress, and social reconciliation.

## 2.6 Ethical imperative: Recognition as the foundation of restoring trust

From an ethical standpoint, coming to terms with the past is a moral duty of a democratic state. Historical wrongs, from the genocide of Roma during the Second World War, through policies of forced assimilation and unlawful sterilizations under the communist regime, to the state's failure to protect

Roma from racist violence after 1989, have left deep and transgenerational trauma. This trauma manifests not only in individual suffering, but also in a collective loss of trust in state institutions, perceived not as protectors but as perpetrators of injustice. Qualitative research shows this mistrust is one of the main reasons Roma do not report discrimination and why they feel like second-class citizens. Ignoring this history is itself a form of ongoing injustice. It enables myths and prejudices to spread in the public space and obstructs the creation of a society based on mutual respect. As confirmed by 100% of respondents in our survey, addressing historical wrongs is absolutely key to

combating present-day antigypsyism. A transitional justice approach, whose first pillar is recognition of the truth about the injustices committed, is thus the fundamental ethical step toward restoring dignity to victims and renewing the legitimacy of the state itself.

## 2.7 Legal justification and international examples

From a legal perspective, transitional justice is justified where standard legal mechanisms have failed. In the Czech context, it is clear that ordinary judicial and administrative proceedings have not delivered justice to victims of massive and state-organized abuses, such as forced sterilizations. Although a partial step was taken with the adoption of Act No. 297/2021 Coll., its implementation highlights the limits of such a solution: the process is slow and places an unreasonable burden of proof on victims. Transitional justice offers a more comprehensive framework that goes beyond individual compensation and aligns with international standards. This approach is not unique—democratic states have used it to come to terms with their own dark pasts:

- Reckoning with the Holocaust and the fate of Jews: After World War II, the world confronted Nazi crimes not only through the Nuremberg Trials but also through property restitution, financial reparations from Germany, and laws against Holocaust denial. Building memorials and museums also plays a key role as a permanent reminder and a guarantee of non-repetition.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada: To address the trauma of forced assimilation and abuse of Indigenous peoples in residential schools, the Canadian government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Its work included collecting thousands of testimonies, documenting the truth, and formulating 94 recommendations for government action in education, culture, health, and justice.
- Debate on reparations for African Americans in the USA: In recent years, debate has intensified in the US about various forms of reparations for slavery and the subsequent era of systemic discrimination (the so-called Jim Crow laws). These discussions go beyond financial compensation to include investments in communities, educational programs, and institutional reforms aimed at redressing persistent socio-economic inequalities.

These examples show that transitional justice is not a radical demand but a legitimate and proven tool that democratic societies use to heal historical wounds. For the Czech Republic, adopting this approach is not only a fulfillment of international human rights obligations but above all the only way to break the cycle of mistrust and lay the foundations for truly equal and just coexistence.

### 3. Policy analysis

In the Czech Republic, a set of policies aimed at the inclusion of the Roma minority exists, with the key document being the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation 2021–2030 (NRSF).

This strategy builds on previous frameworks and reflects the recommendations of both the European Union and the Council of Europe. It addresses areas such as education, employment, housing, health, and anti-discrimination. Although it presents an ambitious plan, its implementation often falls short in practice. The European Commission, in its reports (e.g. the 2014 report), has repeatedly stated that progress on Roma inclusion in the Czech Republic is insufficient and uneven. Many measures tend to address the symptoms of social exclusion, while systemic causes, such as deeply rooted antigypsyism, remain unaddressed.

Another major issue is the low level of accountability and coordination among institutions responsible for policy implementation. Functional and transparent mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress are lacking, which hinders effective governance and prevents timely responses to emerging problems. The fragmentation of responsibilities across ministries, regional authorities, and municipalities further obstructs the creation of a coherent and sustainable framework for Roma inclusion. Research (e.g., Roma Civil Monitor) points to the fact that many interventions are short-term and lack continuity, reducing their impact.

In education, there has been some progress toward inclusion, particularly through the introduction of support measures and improved access for Roma children to mainstream schools. However, persistent segregation, especially through so-called practical schools and special classes, remains a serious obstacle. This segregation is not only the result of institutional mechanisms but also of entrenched stereotypes and low expectations from teachers and educational institutions, which negatively affect the academic outcomes of Roma pupils (PAQ Research, STEM). These issues are echoed in the long-term monitoring of the *D.H. v. the Czech Republic* case at the European Court of Human Rights, where the Czech Republic has been criticized for violating the right to equal access to education.

In housing, there is a high level of residential segregation, discrimination in the rental market, and a lack of adequate measures to support social housing. Situation testing conducted in regions such as the Plzeň Region confirms that Roma families often face rejection and prejudice from real estate agencies and landlords. This situation is partly the result of weak enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and insufficient oversight by state institutions.

In employment, Roma communities remain significantly disadvantaged. According to RILSA data, the employment rate of Roma is roughly half that of the majority population. Discrimination in the labour market, low qualifications, limited transportation options, and other structural barriers reduce their chances of finding stable employment. Despite employment support and retraining programs, their impact remains limited, partly because they fail to address deeper causes such as antigypsyist rhetoric and employer prejudice.

The justice system and policing practices also suffer from inadequate protection against discrimination and ethnic profiling. Research and reports from the Public Defender of Rights consistently emphasize the low level of trust Roma have in law enforcement and the limited ability of these institutions to effectively respond to racially motivated violence and discrimination.

In summary, antigypsyism remains a structural challenge in the Czech Republic that current policies fail to fully address. A lack of political will, weak institutional accountability, and persistent social prejudices undermine efforts to effectively include Roma communities. External evaluations from the European Union and independent research institutions confirm this, highlighting the need for fundamental changes in the approach to inclusion policy, including the systemic combatting of antigypsyism at all levels of society and public administration.

### 3.1 What policies currently exist (and where they fall short)

The Czech Republic's main strategic document on Roma inclusion is the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation 2021–2030 (NRSF), which builds on the previous Roma Integration Strategy up to 2020 and aligns with the EU Strategic Framework for Roma. The NRSF is a comprehensive document that defines objectives and measures in key areas such as combating antigypsyism, education, employment, housing, and health. It is complemented by the Social Inclusion Strategy 2021–2030, which targets broader groups at risk of exclusion. Legal protection is formally provided under the Anti-Discrimination Act (Act No. 198/2009 Coll.).

Despite the existence of these policy frameworks, they often fail in practice due to several critical shortcomings. The primary issue is weak and fragmented implementation. The 2023 implementation report for the NRSF states that out of 155 total measures, 44 were marked as “not implemented” and 49 as “partially implemented,” meaning that more than half of the measures are not fully realized. Responsibility is dispersed across multiple ministries, regional authorities, and municipalities, while an effective and strong coordination and monitoring mechanism is lacking. This failure is echoed in the Jekhipe project's survey, in which 80% of key stakeholders rated the practical impact of the current strategy as negligible, and 40%

identified the lack of political will as the main obstacle. Moreover, many policies focus on addressing symptoms (e.g. social welfare) rather than tackling structural causes, such as systemic discrimination in education or in the housing market.

## 3.2 Trends in implementation

### **Education:**

A key reform, the 2016 amendment to the Education Act, was intended to lead to desegregation and the promotion of inclusive education. However, an analysis by PAQ Research and STEM shows that even five years after its adoption, the number of Romani pupils placed in special classes has not significantly decreased. Segregation persists, both in the form of ethnically homogeneous schools (16% of Romani pupils) and segregated classes within mainstream schools (15% of Romani pupils). Recommendations by the Public Defender of Rights for the active creation of equitable school catchment areas by local authorities are not being systematically implemented. While the 2023 NRSF implementation report acknowledges some progress in meeting education-related measures, it also concedes that several key tasks remain unmet. These include systemic support for pupils with a different mother tongue, including speakers of Romani ethnolects of Czech.

### **Housing and energy poverty:**

In the area of housing, ongoing discrimination and a lack of accessible social housing remain prevalent. Romani households are also disproportionately affected by energy poverty. While 6.1% of households in the general population are unable to keep their homes adequately warm, this figure rises to 16.9% among Roma. Programs such as New Green Savings Programme Light, which could offer support, are often inaccessible to Roma living in rental housing or in substandard conditions.

### **Access to justice:**

Trust in the justice system among Roma is critically low. Only 37.2% of Roma trust the courts, and 46.9% trust the police. The Public Defender of Rights' report on court decisions in discrimination cases (2015–2019) confirms that victims of discrimination face significant barriers in proving their cases, and that courts often fail to recognize indirect discrimination.

### **Digital inclusion:**

Although digital literacy is becoming increasingly essential, 19.1% of Roma still lack internet access, which is a rate 5 percentage points higher than in the majority population. This digital divide further hinders access to education, employment, and public services.

## Gaps in accountability or institutional response

A key shortcoming is the lack of clearly defined and enforceable accountability. For example, the Agency for Social Inclusion, intended to be the main driver of change at the local level, has been criticized in external evaluations for its vaguely defined role, insufficient focus on outcomes, and weak connection between its activities and tangible improvements in the field. Its work is often perceived as procedural and bureaucratic, with little real impact on removing structural barriers. Similarly, the monitoring committee for the implementation of the NRSF met only once in 2023 and adopted no resolutions, reflecting a formalistic approach and a lack of political will to enforce the strategy. Responsibility for addressing school segregation is shifted to local authorities (municipalities), who often lack the motivation, resources, or methodological support to implement politically unpopular desegregation measures.

### 3.3 Where and how antigypsyism remains unaddressed

Antigypsyism remains systematically unaddressed in several key areas. First is law enforcement, where victims of discrimination and hate speech often encounter reluctance and prejudice from the police, along with low success rates in court proceedings. Although the Czech government adopted a working definition of antigypsyism in 2024, it remains a non-binding document with no tangible impact on the practices of criminal justice authorities. The second area is political and media discourse, where antigypsyist rhetoric is frequently used to gain political advantage. Media outlets often reproduce harmful stereotypes without facing meaningful consequences or accountability. The third and perhaps most serious area is the continued silence around historical injustices. The absence of a broad public debate and the lack of official recognition and redress for past wrongs, such as forced sterilizations, allows prejudices and historical myths to persist and be passed on to future generations.

### 3.4 Connection of insights from own research and external sources

Data from the Jekhipe project's questionnaire survey strongly correlate with and confirm findings from external research. For example, the fact that 80% of respondents identified access to housing as the most serious impact of antigypsyism is fully aligned with RILSA's findings, which reveal widespread residential segregation and overcrowding in Romani households, as well as conclusions from the Public Defender of Rights regarding widespread discrimination in the housing market. Similarly, the perception of equality before the police and courts as the second most pressing issue (also cited by 80% of Jekhipe respondents) reflects the extremely low levels of trust in these institutions recorded in RILSA's surveys, as well as qualitative data pointing to feelings of injustice and fear in interactions with law enforcement. The scepticism

toward the effectiveness of the NRSF, expressed by 80% of Jekhipe respondents, directly mirrors the findings of official implementation reports, which show a high number of unfulfilled or only partially implemented measures. This synergy between primary and secondary data lends exceptional weight and relevance to the policy recommendations presented in this report.

## 4. Stakeholder Mapping

To understand the ecosystem of influence and effectively plan advocacy activities, it is essential to conduct targeted stakeholder mapping. The following table analyses selected key actors who, according to the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation and other relevant documents, are responsible for combating antigypsyism and promoting Roma inclusion. The table assesses their role, power, and available tools, and proposes strategies for effective engagement.

Stakeholder	Role & Relevance	Power/Influence/Support	Tools They Hold	What Influences Them	Advocacy Message	Engagement Strategy
Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (ÚV ČR)	Central coordination and methodological role for Roma inclusion. Responsible for strategy development, monitoring, and high-level advocacy.	Low direct power, high potential influence (proximity to executive branch), high support (by nature of its role).	Coordination, methodological guidance, preparation of materials for government, grant programs, public communication, initiation of legislative changes.	Political will of the Prime Minister and government, pressure from civil society, international commitments, available financial and human resources.	"Effective coordination and adequate resources are key to fulfilling the government strategy. Without strong leadership, change	Strategic partnership, providing data and analysis for government discussions, supporting negotiations for increased budget and capacity, joint

					cannot be driven."	media outputs.
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT)	Key actor for education reform, desegregation, and implementation of inclusive measures. Responsible for curriculum and education funding.	High power (curriculum, legislation, funding), medium influence (resistance to inclusion from public and some experts), low support (for active desegregation).	Framework curricula, laws, regulations, methodologies, funding programs (EU funds), Czech School Inspectorate.	EU pressure (infringement procedure), Ombudsman's recommendations, NGO activities, attitudes of local school authorities, public opinion.	"Equal access to quality education is an investment in the country's future. Segregation harms all children."	Strategic partnership, participation in working groups, presenting data on the impacts of segregation, publicizing success stories in inclusive education.
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV)	Key role in employment, social benefits, social services, and social housing. Manages key	High power (legislation, benefits system, EU fund distribution), high influence (direct impact on living conditions), mixed support	Laws (on employment, on material need), active labour market policies (retraining), social	Economic and labour market conditions, government's social policy priorities,	"Targeted support for Roma employment and removing labour	Presenting analysis on employment barriers, proposing adjustments to labour

	operational programs.	(focuses more on poverty than antigypsyism).	services, funding calls (OPZ+).	pressure from employers and trade unions, demographic trends.	market barriers benefit the entire economy."	market tools, cooperation on social enterprise and employment projects.
Ministry for Regional Development (MMR)	Responsible for housing and regional development policy. Oversees the Agency for Social Inclusion.	High power (housing policy, IROP), medium influence, low to mixed support.	Housing concepts, funding programs (IROP, SFPI), housing support legislation.	Government policy priorities, real estate market conditions, pressure from municipalities and developers, NGO activity.	"Accessible, non-discriminatory housing is a foundation for successful integration and social cohesion."	Sustained pressure for an effective housing support law, support for municipalities in using funding for social and affordable housing.
Ministry of Justice (MS ČR)	Responsible for legal and policy reform in (anti-)discrimination, hate crimes, and	High power (legislation), medium influence (depends on political will), low support (for Roma-	Legislative tools (laws, regulations), guidelines for courts and prosecut	International pressure (ECtHR rulings, EU procedures), media attention, civil	"Justice reform must include Roma voices. Consistently punishing	Bilateral meetings, providing analytical documents and data, strategic litigation,

	access to justice.	specific issues).	ors, grant programs	society pressure, government political priorities.	discrimination is a corner stone of the rule of law."	media campaigns highlighting justice failures.
Ministry of the Interior (MV ČR)	Responsible for public order, safety, oversight of municipalities, and crime prevention. Oversees Czech Police.	High power (executive, enforcement), high influence (affects sense of safety and justice), low support (due to historical mistrust, ongoing bias).	Police: investigation, supervision. Ministry: crime prevention, municipal guidelines, legislation.	Political culture and discourse, media image, NGO pressure, internal education and institutional culture.	"Safety and trust are mutual. Professional and non-discriminatory policing serves all citizens."	Push for an independent oversight body, systematic police training, support for community policing, recruitment of Roma officers.
Ministry of Health (MZ ČR)	Responsible for healthcare access and quality, addressing health inequalities, and compensating forced sterilization victims.	High power (legislation, insurance regulation), low influence (limited ability to affect doctors' practices), very low support (health-related strategy goals)	Laws, regulations, methodological guidelines, grant programs, oversight of public health offices.	Pressure from professional chambers (CMA), insurers, pharmaceutical firms, civil society, and international	"Equal access to healthcare is a human right. Addressing health inequalities and redressing past	Persistent pressure for fair and timely compensation for forced sterilization victims. Advocacy for

		most often unmet).		institutions.	harms is a duty of the state."	systematic funding of health mediators and doctor training.
Civil Society / NGOs	Represent Roma interests, provide services, monitor policies, and engage in advocacy.	Low power, low to medium influence (depending on topic and visibility), high support (within communities and among some experts).	Community work, data collection, analysis, media work, advocacy, legal aid, strategic litigation.	Availability of funding, political climate, openness of institutions to dialogue, international support.	"Solutions must be created with us, not about us. Our experience and knowledge are key to successful policies."	Coalition-building, data-driven advocacy, strategic communication and media engagement, strengthening Roma participation in public life.
Public Defender of Rights (VOP)	Independent institution protecting individuals from misconduct by authorities. Monitors rights compliance	No direct power, high moral and media influence, strong support (by function).	Investigations, recommendations, annual reports, situation testing, legislative advice.	Level of respect from government and legislature, media interest, quality of submitted cases.	"Protecting people from discrimination and mistreatment by authorities is a	Strategic submission of complaints, using VOP reports and recommendations as core advocacy

	and issues recommendations.				pillar of a democratic rule of law."	tools, publicizing key findings.
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## 5. Key Survey Findings and Analysis

For the purposes of this document, a targeted questionnaire survey was conducted among key stakeholders from public administration, Roma civil society, and expert circles. The aim was to map their perceptions of the main challenges in combating antigypsyism, assess the role and contribution of the Jekhipe project, and gather proposals for concrete actions for both the government and civil society. The results provide a unique insight into the thinking of these actors and serve as a key basis for formulating policy recommendations.

The survey clearly identified where stakeholders perceive the most severe impacts of antigypsyism on the lives of Roma. On a scale from 1 (least severe) to 10 (most severe), the areas identified as most problematic were access to housing and equality before the police and the courts, with 80% of respondents rating both as highly serious issues (scores of 8–10). These were followed, with a slight gap, by access to employment (60%). This data confirms that structural discrimination in fundamental areas of life is perceived as a core issue.

A crucial finding is the unanimous stance on the importance of addressing historical injustices. A full 100% of respondents believe that dealing with past wrongs, such as the Romani Holocaust and forced sterilizations, is highly important for tackling current antigypsyism (with an average rating of 9.5 out of 10). This signals a strong demand for transitional justice processes, which have not yet been systematically applied in the Czech context. Stakeholders perceive that without acknowledging and addressing past injustices and suffering, it is not possible to build trust effectively or resolve present-day challenges.

### 5.1 View on the Role and Contribution of the Jekhipe Project in Its Final Phase and Future Initiatives

Respondents see the primary contribution of the Jekhipe project in its ability to connect diverse sources of information and generate materials for advocacy work. The most significant added value identified was the synthesis of data and the creation of expert materials for lobbying and advocacy. The project is perceived as a platform capable of

providing missing data and arguments to support negotiations with policymakers. This perspective aligns closely with the project’s own stated objectives: to “build knowledge on historical and institutional antigypsyism” and to “develop policy recommendations for decision-makers.”

## 5.2 Stakeholder Proposals for Actions to Be Taken by Government and Civil Society

When asked what steps the government should take, respondents largely agreed on several key priorities. The most frequently mentioned demand was the legal codification of the definition of antigypsyism and the introduction of effective sanctions. Respondents also emphasized the importance of strict enforcement of existing laws, particularly the Anti-Discrimination Act, and ensuring equal access to justice.

For civil society, respondents identified its most effective role as advocacy and watchdog monitoring, a view held by 40% of those surveyed. Other important roles included education and awareness-raising (30%) and the provision of direct services and community work (20%). These findings indicate that civil society is seen as a key actor responsible for applying pressure on state institutions and holding them accountable.

## 5.3 Proposals on How Civil Society Can Motivate the State to Act

According to respondents, the most effective strategy for motivating the state to take action is strategic communication and media coverage of key issues. Another frequently mentioned approach

was the building of broad coalitions with other stakeholders (academics, international organizations, and segments of the political spectrum), as well as the use of international mechanisms, including submitting complaints to the European Court of Human Rights or the European Commission. Importantly, the systematic presentation of data and analyses, such as those produced by the Jekhipe project, is seen as a critical foundation for successful advocacy.

## 6. Policy Recommendations

Based on a comprehensive analysis synthesizing data from external research, government reports, civil society monitoring, and especially the findings from the Jekhipe project survey, we present the following set of policy recommendations. The goal is not merely to propose isolated changes, but to initiate systemic reforms that will lead to real and sustainable improvements in the situation of Roma in the Czech Republic and strengthen social cohesion across society.

1. Ensure Just Compensation and Expand Transitional Justice Processes

While the adoption of Act No. 297/2021 Coll. marked a significant step toward compensating victims of forced sterilization, the implementation of the law has revealed serious shortcomings, repeatedly highlighted by civil society and international institutions. At the same time, 100% of respondents in our survey affirmed that addressing other historical injustices is crucial for tackling current antigypsyism. We therefore recommend that the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and the Czech Parliament establish an independent commission to investigate additional forms of historical wrongdoing, such as the state's failure to protect Roma from racist violence in the 1990s or the impacts of past assimilation policies.

## 2. Codify the Definition of Antigypsyism in Law and Ensure Its Consistent Enforcement

The adoption of a working definition of antigypsyism by the Czech government in 2024 was an important symbolic step. However, for it to have real and lasting impact, it must be embedded in legislation. The Ministry of Justice and the Czech Parliament should initiate an amendment to the Criminal Code and other relevant legislation to equip law enforcement and judicial authorities with a clear legal basis for prosecuting not only physical attacks but also hate speech online. In parallel, the Czech Police should establish specialized units and methodologies for addressing this form of crime, the monitoring of which remains insufficient, as noted in government reports.

## 3. Active and Systemic Elimination of Segregation in Education

Even more than 15 years after the ECtHR ruling in *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*, it must be acknowledged that the state continues to fail in eliminating segregation. According to an analysis by PAQ Research and STEM, 16% of Romani pupils attend fully segregated schools and another 15% are placed in segregated classrooms within mainstream schools. It is therefore essential that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT), in cooperation with school founders (municipalities and towns) and the Czech School Inspectorate, takes active and systemic steps to enforce desegregation. Declarative support for inclusion is not enough; concrete and binding measures must be adopted, such as a binding methodology for developing corrective desegregation plans and the introduction of financial sanctions for passive school founders.

## 4. Strengthen Legal Protection Against Housing Discrimination

In the area of housing, which 80% of our survey respondents identified as the most critical, it is essential to strengthen legal protection against discrimination. For the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the Ministry for Regional Development (MMR), this means adopting an amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act with a specific focus on housing, which would increase penalties and facilitate the burden of proof. This must also include the introduction and funding of systematic situation testing as a tool for detecting and proving discrimination.

## 5. Address Energy Poverty and Environmental Injustice

At the same time, it is necessary to address energy poverty and environmental injustice, which disproportionately affect Roma households. The Ministry of the Environment must ensure that programs such as New Green Savings are genuinely accessible to low-income households in socially excluded localities, which is also one of the stated goals of the Roma Integration Strategy.

## 6. Ensure Equal Access to Justice and Reform Police Practices

To restore trust, which is alarmingly low at 46.9% for the police and 37.2% for the courts, it is essential to ensure equal access to justice and to reform police practices, as recommended by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights. The Ministry of the Interior and the Czech Police must introduce mandatory and regular training on antigypsyism and ethnic profiling and establish an independent mechanism for investigating complaints.

## 7. Employment Support Reform with a Focus on Women

Employment support must be reformed to address barriers such as debt and low qualifications, which prevent access to the labour market, especially for Roma women, whose employment rate is only 29.5%. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV) should develop programmes specifically targeting these barriers and support the creation of social enterprises.

## 8. Reform the Funding System for Roma Non-Profit Organizations

For long-term sustainability, it is essential to reform the funding system for Romani non-profit organizations. These are perceived as key agents of change (40% of survey respondents), yet they face bureaucratic barriers. The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and all ministries must simplify grant rules, reduce co-financing requirements, and ensure stable, multi-year funding for community and advocacy organizations, as foreseen by the Strategy.

## 9. Strengthen Institutional Capacity for Roma Inclusion

Reports on the implementation of the NRSF repeatedly state that insufficient capacities within the Office of the Government and the Commissioner's Secretariat are among the main reasons for the strategy's lack of fulfilment. In the short term, the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic must increase the number of systemized positions in the Department for Roma Affairs and in the Commissioner's Secretariat and ensure an adequate budget for their operations.

## 10. Improve Access to Healthcare and Addressing Health Inequalities

Reports on the implementation of the Strategy show that health is among the most neglected areas, with the highest number of unfulfilled measures. The Ministry of Health must ensure systematic funding for health mediators and introduce mandatory training for healthcare professionals in culturally sensitive care.

#### 11. Introduce Mandatory Collection of Ethnically Disaggregated Data

An essential recommendation is to introduce mandatory collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity. Without reliable data, it is impossible to effectively plan, monitor, or evaluate any policy, which has been a consistent criticism in all monitoring reports. The Czech Statistical Office and all ministries should, in the medium term, develop and implement a clear, legally grounded methodology for the anonymous collection of such data.

#### 12. Systematically Suppress Hate Speech in the Public Sphere

Hateful statements by politicians and the spread of disinformation in the media normalize antigypsyism and create an atmosphere of fear. It is essential that the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting and law enforcement authorities consistently prosecute expressions of antigypsyist rhetoric, and that public media literacy is strengthened.

## 7. Future Outlook and Sustainability

### 7.1 What can be realistically achieved by the end of Jekhipe

By the end of the Jekhipe project, it is realistic to finalize and publish this analytical document and its recommendations in both Czech and English. Strategic discussions can be initiated with key stakeholders (e.g. with the Ministry of Education on revising the national curriculum, or with the Office of the Government on simplifying grant procedures), using the document as a tool for targeted media and advocacy campaigns. The project can also pilot one of the educational modules on antigypsyism or organize a roundtable on transitional justice, laying the groundwork for future activities.

### 7.2 What structures or partnerships should be institutionalized post-project

To ensure sustainability, it is essential to formalize and secure long-term funding for permanent platforms that facilitate dialogue between Roma civil society and state institutions. A national alliance of Roma and pro-Roma NGOs should be established, with a shared advocacy strategy capable of systematically advancing the proposed recommendations over time. It is also crucial to strengthen and institutionalize the role of regional Roma coordinators and ensure their independence and sufficient capacity.

## 7.3 How civil society can sustain momentum and advocacy

Sustaining momentum requires strategic communication and advocacy. This includes regular monitoring of the implementation of recommendations, publicizing both successes and failures, building coalitions with other stakeholders (academics, international organizations, media), and actively involving the Roma community in advocacy efforts to ensure grassroots pressure for change. Leveraging international platforms such as the European Roma Week is crucial for maintaining international pressure on the Czech government.

## 7.4 Recommendations for follow-up efforts or future funding

It is essential to ensure long-term and stable funding for Roma organizations engaged in advocacy and watchdog activities. Future projects funded by national and European sources (e.g. OPZ+, EEA and Norway Grants) should focus on the implementation and piloting of specific recommendations from this document (e.g. creation of a guarantee fund in one region, piloting desegregation measures in selected schools) and on the systematic measurement of their impact. It is also crucial to allocate resources for applied research targeting specific groups, such as Roma women or LGBTQ+ individuals, as foreseen in the National Roma Strategic Framework.

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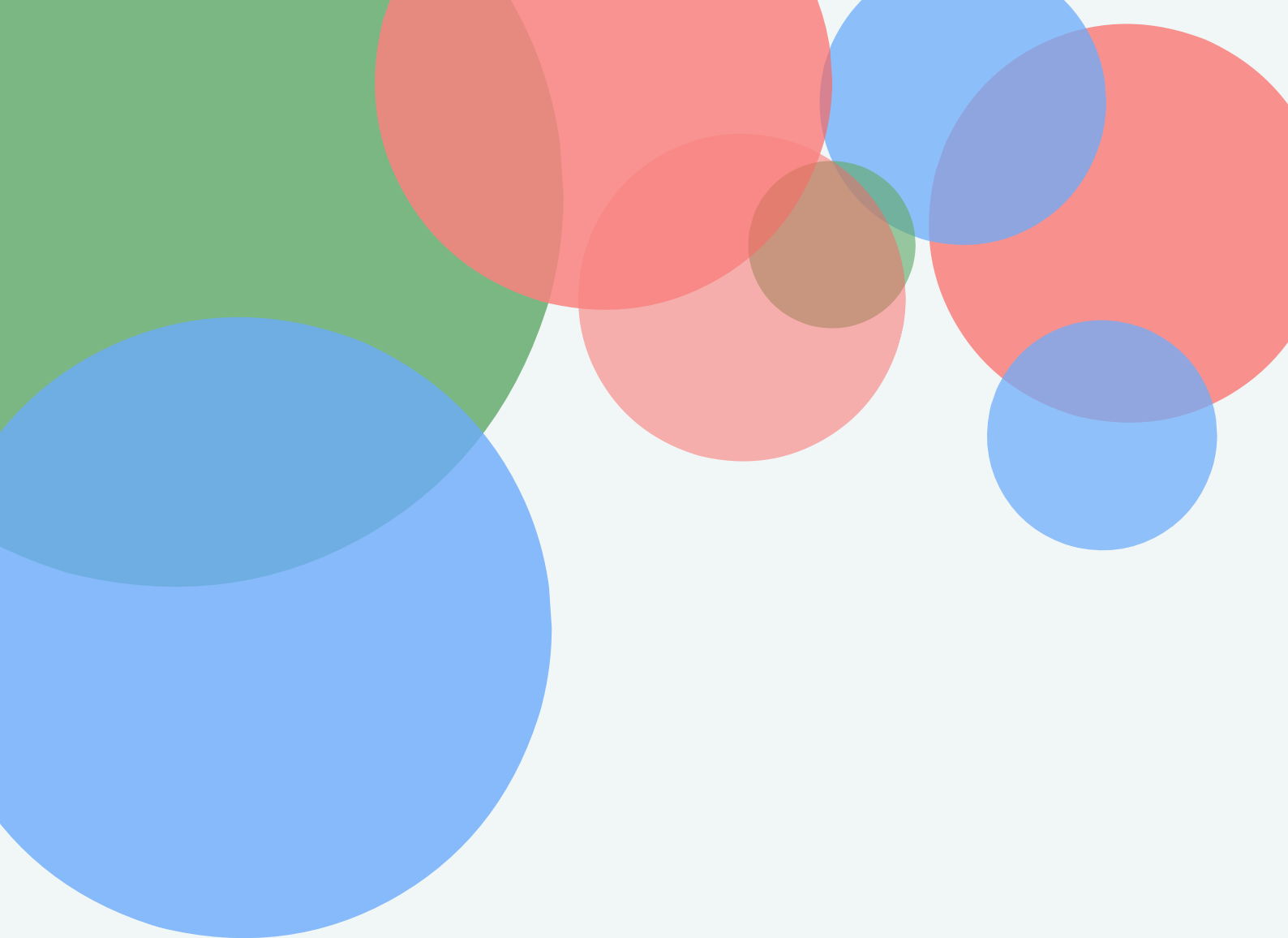
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# JEKHIPE

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