

---

Research Brief

# Latest Developments, Strategies and Recommendations to Combat Antigypsyism in Romania



Iulius Rostas

2025

---

Coordinated by CEPS, Centre for European Policy Studies



**JEKHIPE**  
RECLAIMING OUR PAST, REBUILDING OUR FUTURE:  
NEW APPROACHES TO FIGHTING ANTIGYPSYISM

## The JEKHIPE Project

The JEKHIPE project, Reclaiming our past, rebuilding our future: new approaches to fighting antigypsyism against Roma, 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.

---

[Iulius Rostas](#) is Visiting Professor at National University of Political Studies and Public Administration Bucharest, Romania.

The JEKHIPE County Briefing has been coordinated by CEPS.



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



## Abstract

This Country Briefing provides relevant policy or legal updates regarding transitional justice initiatives to address antigypsyism in Romania. In November 2022, the first report on transitional justice initiatives in Romania was prepared as part of the EU-funded CHACHIPEN project. The initial report was intended as a baseline for measuring progress in combating historically rooted antigypsyism in Romania through the use of transitional justice tools, including Truth and Reconciliation processes.

## Contents

Abstract.....	2
1. Key findings of the CHACHIPEN Country Report on Romania .....	4
2. Updates and latest developments in national policy .....	6
2.1. School Segregation .....	6
2.2. Policing .....	7
2.3. Culture .....	9
2.4. Implementation of the National Roma Strategy .....	9
3. Overview of discrimination-related data.....	13
4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations .....	15
References .....	18

## 1. Key findings of the CHACHIPEN Country Report on Romania

The 2022 CHACHIPEN report 'Antigypsyism in Romania' provides a comprehensive analysis of the historical roots, current manifestations, and governmental efforts to address antigypsyism in Romania. What follows summarizes the key findings of the report, highlighting the persistent challenges faced by the Roma community and the limitations of current approaches to combating antigypsyism.

Historically, two major events have significantly shaped the current status of Roma in Romania: slavery and the Holocaust. Roma slavery in the Romanian principalities of Walachia and Moldova lasted from the 14th century until 1855-1856. This prolonged period of enslavement has had lasting impacts on Roma socioeconomic status and societal perceptions. During World War II, the Romanian government under Marshal Ion Antonescu deported over 25 000 Roma to Transnistria. The International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania estimates that approximately 11 000 Roma died during these deportations. However, the report suggests this figure may be an underestimate, as the full extent of Roma suffering during this period remains understudied. The report highlighted a significant gap in historical research and recognition of these events. For instance, while a Commission for the Study of Roma Slavery was established in 2007, it has yet to produce a final report. This lack of comprehensive research perpetuates a limited understanding of the historical injustices faced by Roma in Romania.

The 2022 report identifies several key areas where antigypsyism has continued to manifest in contemporary Romanian society:

1. Negative Perceptions: A 2020 survey revealed that 70 % of Romanians do not trust Roma. Moreover, nearly one-third of the population regards Roma as a 'problem', with almost one in ten considering them a 'threat'.
2. Educational Segregation: Roma children face disproportionately high rates of school segregation. A 2016 monitoring report found that 20.1 % of schools practiced some form of segregation. This segregation contributes to significant educational disparities between Roma and non-Roma students.
3. Discrimination in the Justice System: The report cites numerous instances of police violence against Roma, as well as discriminatory practices in law enforcement and the administration of justice. For example, a study from 2002 found that Roma comprised 17.2 % of the prison population, despite representing only about 2.5 % of the total population according to the 2001 census.

4. Environmental Racism: The report documents cases of forced evictions of Roma communities and their relocation to polluted or hazardous areas. One striking example is the Pata-Rat case in Cluj-Napoca, where Roma families were forcibly relocated to an area near a garbage dump.

5. Exclusion from Knowledge Production: Despite a growing number of Roma with higher education degrees, very few hold senior academic positions. The report notes that there are no Roma full-time senior professors at Romanian universities, apart from two junior academics at the Romani Language Chair of the University of Bucharest.

6. Lack of Identity and Cultural Representation Institutions: Unlike other minorities in Romania, Roma do not have state-funded cultural institutions such as museums or theaters dedicated to their history and culture.

The 2022 report analyzes several governmental initiatives aimed at addressing antigypsyism, while also highlighting their limitations:

1. National Strategy for Roma Inclusion: Romania has adopted strategies for Roma inclusion, with the latest covering 2022-2027. While this strategy acknowledges antigypsyism, the report suggests its impact may be limited due to unclear budgeting and implementation mechanisms.

2. Law on Combating Antigypsyism: In 2021, Romania passed a law to combat antigypsyism. However, experts interviewed for the report expressed skepticism about its potential impact, citing concerns about implementation and the law's similarity to existing anti-discrimination legislation.

3. Anti-discrimination Legal Framework: While Romania has had anti-discrimination laws since 2000, their impact on systemic issues like school segregation has been limited. The report points out that the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) faces challenges related to political influence and limited powers.

4. Symbolic Recognition: The government has taken steps to recognize aspects of Roma history, such as establishing commemorative days for Roma liberation from slavery and the Roma Holocaust. However, these measures have not been accompanied by substantive actions for justice or compensation.

## 2. Updates and latest developments in national policy

Since 2022, there were several measures taken by the authorities in Romania to tackle antigypsyism. These measures were aimed at combating segregation, improving the relation between Roma communities and police, institutional building for promoting Romani culture and history, and implementation of Roma policies with a specific focus on antidiscrimination.

### 2.1. School Segregation

Romania has been taking steps to address the issue of school segregation through a series of legislative and administrative measures. Over the past few years, the Ministry of Education has issued multiple orders to establish and refine a national body dedicated to combating segregation and promoting inclusive education. The journey began in 2019 with the issuance of Order No. 3141/2019 by the Minister of National Education. This order established the National Commission for Desegregation and Educational Inclusion (Comisia Națională pentru Desegregare și Incluziune Educațională)<sup>1</sup>. The commission's initial setup was later modified by Order No. 3665/2021, which revised its organization and functioning<sup>2</sup>. Most recently, in January 2024, the Ministry of Education issued Order No. 6832/2023, which approved a new regulation for the organization and functioning of the National Commission for School Desegregation (Comisia Națională pentru Desegregare Școlară)<sup>3</sup>. This latest order suggests a slight shift in focus, with the commission's name now explicitly mentioning school desegregation.

Despite these administrative changes, the commission's progress in implementing concrete measures has been slow. It took approximately three years from its initial establishment for the commission to adopt indicators for monitoring segregation and to begin discussions on a draft strategy for monitoring school segregation. This prolonged timeline raises questions about the effectiveness of the commission and the priority given to desegregation efforts within the Romanian education system. The repeated renaming and restructuring of the commission, while potentially aimed at improving its function, may have also contributed to delays in implementing substantive actions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Order No. 3141/2019 of the Minister of National Education, published in the Official Monitor of Romania, Part I, No. 154 of February 27, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Order No. 3665/2021 of the Minister of National Education, published in the Official Monitor of Romania, Part I, No. 464 of May 4, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education Order No. 6832/2023, published in the Official Monitor, Part I No. 73 of January 26, 2024.

## 2.2. Policing

The recent report of the Government highlights several initiatives aimed at improving relations between Roma communities and law enforcement officials, particularly through training and education programs<sup>4</sup>. The Romanian Police Academy has implemented various courses and workshops focused on combating discrimination, understanding Roma culture, and addressing hate crimes. These efforts include integrating topics on human rights, anti-discrimination, and multicultural understanding into the curriculum for police cadets, and ongoing professional development for active officers. A significant development is the extension of a protocol between the National Agency for Roma (NAR) and the Police Academy to all police officer schools, aimed at recruiting and training Roma officers as a means of improving policing in Roma communities. This initiative has the potential to increase cultural understanding and representation within law enforcement.

However, these efforts appear to be insufficient in addressing the deep-rooted issues of mistrust and discrimination between Roma and law enforcement agencies. Human rights groups have continued to report cases of police violence against Roma<sup>5</sup>. Ethnic profiling of Roma individuals<sup>6</sup>, and cases of violence against Roma<sup>7</sup> continued during the period. Ethnic profiling can be defined as ‘the practice of police and other law enforcement officers relying, to any degree, on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin as the basis for subjecting persons to investigatory activities or for determining whether an individual is engaged in criminal activity<sup>8</sup>’ and might include disproportionate stop-and-searches, traffic stops, the use of surveillance technology for facial identification, or intelligence surveillance programs. While it is often argued by law enforcement agencies that profiling, including

---

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Prime Minister and National Agency for Roma (2024) Annual Report regarding the progress in implementing the Strategy of the Romanian Government for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027, presented to the Cabinet meeting on September 25, 2024, Bucharest, <https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/RAPORT.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> The European Roma Rights Center has reported cases of police violence targeting Roma. On the night of Friday 14 July 2023, a 33-year-old Romani man died in a police station in Arad after police officers beat him (the Visan case). On 19 June 2022, a 37-year-old Romani man from Piatra Neamț alleged he was beaten by police officers and presented visible signs of violence after leaving the police station (Piatra Neamț case). For a list of cases see ERRC’s reports, available at: [https://www.errc.org/search?country=173&theme=&area=2&keyword=&search\\_submit=](https://www.errc.org/search?country=173&theme=&area=2&keyword=&search_submit=).

<sup>6</sup> Judit Ignácz (2024), ‘Standing Against Ethnic Profiling: The Fight For Romani Youth Rights In Romania’, ERRC, 9 February, <https://www.errc.org/news/standing-against-ethnic-profiling-the-fight-for-romani-youth-rights-in-romania>.

<sup>7</sup> Judit Ignácz (2024), ‘Romani Mother And Children File Criminal Complaint Over Violent, Racist Attack In A Playground In Bacău, Romania’, ERRC, 8 February 2024, <https://www.errc.org/news/romani-mother-and-children-file-criminal-complaint-over-violent-racist-attack-in-a-playground-in-bacau-romania>.

<sup>8</sup> This definition of racial profiling is part of the Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, South Africa, 31 August to 8 September 2001, para. 72, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Durban\\_text\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Durban_text_en.pdf).

racial profiling is part of their mandate to fight criminality, human rights groups, and activists most often regard racial profiling as a form of discrimination against minorities and especially, against people of color<sup>9</sup>.

Racial profiling of Roma represents 'one of the most visible and frequent expressions of institutionalized antigypsyism. It shows the failure of the state to protect equally the rights of its citizens. Since Roma are targeted by police presumed to be criminals, the presumption of innocence is lost from the outset. If there is no presumption of innocence there is no freedom. If there is no presumption of innocence there is no rule of law<sup>10</sup>'. The style of policing where ethnic profiling, violence against individuals, and over-policing of Roma communities, combined with the impunity for the perpetrators, makes the police one of the most oppressive institutions of the Romanian state.

The 2023 Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities report on Romania found that antigypsyism continues to constitute a serious societal problem and expressed concern about the prevalence of police misconduct and excessive use of force, including lethal force, against Roma, noting that 'no substantial progress has been made in ensuring professional and non-biased behavior by law enforcement officials vis-à-vis persons belonging to the Roma community<sup>11</sup>'. This ongoing issue underscores the gap between policy initiatives and real-world practices, suggesting that more comprehensive and systemic changes are needed to address prejudices and abuses within law enforcement agencies. The persistence of police violence against Roma individuals highlights the urgent need for more robust accountability mechanisms, enhanced community engagement, and a fundamental shift in police culture towards respecting and protecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of ethnic background. As a way to build trust between police and Roma, and as suggested by a 2022 expert study on police accountability, establishing an external non-police oversight body which includes Roma and human rights activists, might be an effective way to eliminate bias in reviewing the complaints against police and to increase the public credibility of police<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> See United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2019), 'Preventing and countering racial profiling of people of African descent, Geneva', <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2019/12/preventracialprofiling-en.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Iulius Rostas (2005), 'ID checks and police raids: Ethnic profiling in Central Europe', in *Ethnic Profiling by Police in Europe*, Open Society Justice Initiatives: New York.

<sup>11</sup> Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fifth Opinion on Romania, Adopted on 3 April 2023, <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-romania-en/1680ac3917>.

<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet et al. (2022), 'Democratic Oversight of the Police', European Union: Brussels, 3 May, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/703590/IPOL\\_STU\(2022\)703590\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/703590/IPOL_STU(2022)703590_EN.pdf).

## 2.3. Culture

The establishment of the National Roma Culture Museum in Romania has been marred by bureaucratic inefficiency and a lack of genuine inclusivity. Despite the adoption of Law No. 238/2023 on July 20, 2023, which mandated the creation of this institution, the Romanian Government has failed to fulfill its legal obligation to identify a suitable location within the stipulated 90-day timeframe<sup>13</sup>. This delay not only undermines the law's intent but also calls into question the government's commitment to preserving and showcasing Roma history and culture.

The conceptualization of the museum, led by the National Agency for Roma (NAR), has made some headway but falls short in crucial areas. While a committee of experts, including both Roma and non-Roma members, was involved in developing the museum's concept, there is a notable lack of broad consultation with Roma communities and organizations. This limited engagement raises concerns about the museum's ability to authentically represent the diversity of Roma perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, the current structure of the museum does not appear to ensure that Roma have adequate control over the museum's collections and management. This oversight could potentially lead to misrepresentation or misinterpretation of Roma culture and history. Ensuring greater Roma involvement in decision-making processes and management roles would not only enhance the museum's authenticity but also align it more closely with the principle of self-representation, which is crucial for such a culturally significant institution.

## 2.4. Implementation of the National Roma Strategy

The recent report on the implementation of the Government Strategy on Roma prepared by the Office of the Prime Minister and the National Agency for Roma reveals limited progress in implementing the strategy overall<sup>14</sup>. The report suggests several underlying issues contributing to this lack of progress, including insufficient coordination between responsible institutions, inadequate allocation of resources, and a lack of political will to prioritize Roma inclusion initiatives.

The implementation of measures under Objective 6, aimed at combating discrimination, hate speech, and anti-Roma attitudes, reveals a concerning lack of substantive progress and a failure to address these critical issues with the urgency they demand. While the report

---

<sup>13</sup> Law No. 238/2023 regarding the establishment of the National Museum of Roma History and Culture in Romania, published in the Official Gazette, Part I no. 670 of July 20, 2023 and in force since July 23, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Office of the Prime Minister and National Agency for Roma (2024), 'Annual Report regarding the progress in implementing the Strategy of the Romanian Government for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027', presented to the Cabinet meeting on 25 September 2024, Bucharest, <https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/RAPORT.pdf>.

outlines various training initiatives, particularly within law enforcement agencies, these efforts appear piecemeal and lack the comprehensive, society-wide approach necessary to tackle deeply entrenched prejudices and discriminatory practices. No data is presented regarding the implementation of the law on combating antigypsyism. The fact that no prosecution has taken place since its adoption confirms the skepticism of those experts who regarded the law as a benchmark to comply with international commitments rather than a deep commitment of the government to tackle antigypsyism. The absence of progress in creating and disseminating educational resources for public and private employers, as well as the failure to establish a platform for sharing best practices in anti-discrimination efforts, indicates a superficial commitment to addressing systemic discrimination against Roma communities. Moreover, the report's silence on concrete actions to monitor and counter hate speech, especially in online environments, is particularly alarming given the pervasive nature of anti-Roma rhetoric in digital spaces. The lack of progress in adapting internal documents of public institutions to reflect anti-discrimination legislation suggests a bureaucratic inertia that undermines the strategy's effectiveness. Additionally, the absence of targeted awareness campaigns and the failure to engage effectively with civil society organizations in combating discrimination point to a top-down approach that fails to harness the expertise and reach of grassroots movements. These shortcomings collectively paint a picture of an objective that, despite its critical importance, has been relegated to a series of token gestures rather than being pursued with the vigor and resources necessary to effect meaningful change in societal attitudes and institutional practices towards Roma communities.

The report on the implementation of the Government Strategy on Roma evidences a particularly concerning lack of advancement, especially in regard to cultural recognition and historical reconciliation. Several key initiatives under Objective 5 have failed to materialize, indicating a significant gap between the strategy's ambitions and its practical execution. One of the most glaring shortcomings is the failure to establish the State Roma Theater. This institution was envisioned as a cornerstone for promoting Roma culture and providing a platform for Roma artists. Its absence represents a missed opportunity to elevate Roma voices and cultural expressions in the mainstream Romanian cultural landscape. Similarly, the proposed National Institute for Research and Conservation of Roma Culture and History has not been established. This institute was meant to play a crucial role in documenting, preserving, and studying Roma history and culture. Its absence hampers efforts to build a comprehensive understanding of Roma contributions to Romanian society and impedes the development of evidence-based policies for Roma inclusion.

The promotion of the Romani language, a vital aspect of Roma cultural identity, has also seen little progress. The report indicates no advancements in developing auxiliary study materials for different Romani dialects or in expanding Romani language education. This

lack of action undermines efforts to preserve and revitalize the Romani language, which is crucial for maintaining Roma cultural heritage.

Perhaps most concerningly, there has been a complete lack of progress regarding historical reconciliation measures. No information regarding the Commission for the Studying of Roma Slavery is provided by the Government. Established in 2007, the Commission was not meant to be a Truth and Reconciliation Commission<sup>15</sup>. It was meant to serve as an expert commission and to produce knowledge on Roma slavery based on archival research<sup>16</sup>. The only public disclosure of information on the state of the Commission for the Studying of Roma Slavery was on March 3, 2023, as part of the discussions following the presentation of the 2022 report 'Antigypsyism in Romania: Lessons (not) Learned'. The discussions included a point on the potential use of the commission to advance knowledge on Roma slavery.

The NAR President underlined that although it is in his power to revitalize the commission, there are budgetary and political decisions to be made that are outside of his mandate. The revitalization of the Commission for the Studying of Roma Slavery could be instrumental in achieving some of the specific objectives of the Government Strategy on Roma. For example, the strategy called for revising school curricula to include elements of Roma history, including traumatic events such as slavery and the Holocaust. However, based on the report on the implementation of the Government Strategy on Roma, no steps have been taken to implement these crucial educational reforms. This inaction perpetuates historical amnesia and fails to address the deep-rooted prejudices and misconceptions about Roma people in Romanian society.

The report does highlight some positive developments, such as the adoption of a law to establish the National Museum of Roma History and Culture. However, even this achievement is tempered by delays in identifying a suitable location for the museum, indicating ongoing challenges in implementing even those initiatives that have been approved. While there have been some cultural events and exhibitions promoting Roma art and culture, these appear to be isolated initiatives rather than part of a comprehensive, strategic approach to cultural promotion as envisioned in the strategy<sup>17</sup>. The lack of

---

<sup>15</sup> For some key features of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission based on international standards see Ana Carballo-Mesa et al. (2023) *Paving the Way for Truth and Reconciliation Process to Address Antigypsyism in Europe: Remembrance, Recognition, Justice and Trust-Building*, Brussels: CEPS, <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/paving-the-way-for-truth-and-reconciliation-process-to-address-antigypsyism-in-europe/>.

<sup>16</sup> Government of Romania Decree No. 546/2007 from June 6, 2007 regarding the establishment of the Commission for the study of Roma slavery, published in the Official Gazette on 8 June 2007.

<sup>17</sup> The report highlights several cultural activities purportedly aimed at promoting Romani culture and a positive image of Roma. However, some of these initiatives have been criticized by Roma activists and scholars for perpetuating stereotypes rather than challenging them. For instance, the report mentions performances of the operas 'Carmen' and 'Traviata' in various Romanian venues, as well as the screening of the documentary film 'Pocalul. Despre fii și fiice' (directed by Cătălina Tesar and Dana Bunescu, 2022) at different film festivals.

progress on Objective 5 is particularly troubling given the crucial role that cultural recognition and historical reconciliation play in combating discrimination and fostering social inclusion. By failing to implement these measures, Romania misses vital opportunities to challenge stereotypes, promote understanding, and build a more inclusive society.

The failure to establish key institutions, promote the Romani language, and address historical injustices reflects a wider pattern of neglect in the strategy's implementation. To make meaningful progress, Romanian authorities must demonstrate stronger commitment, allocate adequate resources, and prioritize the cultural and historical aspects of Roma inclusion. Without concerted effort to address these shortcomings, the strategy risks becoming another unfulfilled promise to the Roma community.

---

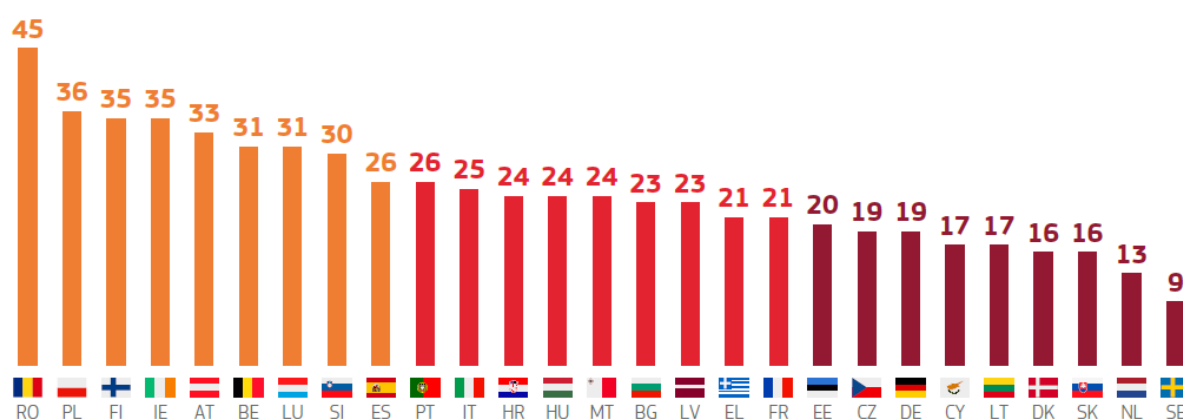
While these are presented as positive contributions, they have been contested by Roma representatives for their potentially problematic depictions of Roma people. These examples underscore a critical issue in the implementation of the strategy: the lack of meaningful consultation with Roma communities in deciding what constitutes authentic and respectful representation. The inclusion of such contested works as examples of progress raises questions about the depth of understanding among policymakers regarding the complexities of Roma representation and the potential harm of reinforcing stereotypes, even when done with ostensibly positive intentions.

### 3. Overview of discrimination-related data

Recent research regarding discrimination reveals that discrimination against Roma is more pronounced in Romania compared to the EU average<sup>18</sup>. The 2023 Eurobarometer data measuring the prevalence of discrimination shows that 53 % of Romanians perceive discrimination against Roma as widespread, compared to 65 % across the EU. Regarding comfort levels towards Roma, only 22 % of Romanians would feel comfortable having a Roma person as a work colleague, compared to 53 % across the EU. Only 21 % of Romanians would feel comfortable if one of their children was in a relationship with a Roma person, compared to 50 % across the EU. A high level of intolerance towards Roma is also shown when it comes to political representation and employment. Thus, only 42 % of Romanians would feel comfortable if a Roma person held the highest elected political position in the country, compared to 54 % across the EU. 42 % of Romanians believe that being Roma could disadvantage a candidate in a hiring process where two candidates have equal skills and qualifications.

In spite of these high rates of intolerance and discrimination against Roma, above the EU average, Romanians report the highest rates of effectiveness when it comes to the efficiency of government efforts to integrate Roma.

According to **24%** of respondents the **efforts made in their country for the integration** (in the fields of education; health, housing and employment) **of its Roma population are effective**<sup>19</sup>. Results vary widely at national level:



Source: Eurobarometer 2023, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2972>

A 2024 report on non-discrimination in Romania notes that no improvements took place in improving the antidiscrimination legal framework in Romania, indicating as key issues: (1) failure to ensure adequate sanctions which are dissuasive, proportionate and effective; (2) the NCCD and the courts cannot find and sanction discrimination in cases of discriminatory norms (de jure discrimination); (3) legal concepts still needing clarification and

<sup>18</sup> European Commission, Discrimination in the European Union, Brussels, December 2023, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home>.

interpretation; (4) institutional limitations of the national equality body; (5) lack of equality data; and (6) failure to adopt a national strategy for equality.

## 4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Since the 2022 CHACHIPE Country Report on Romania, there has been limited progress in combating antigypsyism in Romania. Despite recent legislative and policy initiatives aimed at addressing antigypsyism in Romania, the evidence presented in this report reveals a concerning gap between formal commitments and meaningful change on the ground. The persistence of widespread discrimination against Roma, as demonstrated by both national surveys and Eurobarometer data, coupled with the slow implementation of key institutional reforms and cultural initiatives, suggests that antigypsyism remains deeply entrenched in Romanian society.

While steps such as the establishment of the National Commission for School Desegregation and the legal framework for the National Roma Culture Museum represent potential progress, their impact has been limited by bureaucratic delays, inadequate resources, and insufficient Roma participation in decision-making processes. The failure to fully address historical injustices through truth and reconciliation processes, combined with ongoing challenges in areas such as police violence, educational segregation, and cultural representation, underscores the urgent need for a more comprehensive, well-resourced, and Roma-led approach to combating antigypsyism in Romania. Only through sustained political commitment, meaningful institutional reform, and genuine engagement with Roma communities can Romania begin to effectively address this persistent challenge to its democratic values and social cohesion.

Based on the findings of this report, the following recommendations are addressed to the Government of Romania:

### **Policy Recommendation 1: Education Reforms**

The Romanian Government must prioritize comprehensive educational reform to address systemic discrimination against Roma students. This should begin with strengthening the National Commission for School Desegregation through clear operational mandates, enforcement powers, and resources to monitor and combat segregation effectively. Schools must be required to implement measurable desegregation plans with specific timelines and accountability measures. The Ministry of Education should revise the national curriculum to include accurate and respectful representations of Roma history, culture, and contributions to Romanian society, ensuring these materials are mandatory across all educational levels. To support linguistic rights and cultural preservation, a comprehensive Romani language education program should be developed, including teaching materials for different dialects and expanded opportunities for instruction. Additionally, universities should establish targeted programs to increase Roma representation in academia, particularly in senior positions, with specific quotas and support mechanisms for Roma scholars.

## **Policy Recommendation 2: Policing and Justice System Reforms**

A fundamental overhaul of law enforcement practices regarding Roma communities is essential. The government should establish an independent external oversight body, which includes members of the Roma community and human rights experts, specifically tasked with investigating police misconduct and violence against Roma, with powers to enforce accountability measures and impose sanctions. This body should be complemented by mandatory human rights and anti-discrimination training programs for all law enforcement personnel, with regular reassessments and clear consequences for non-compliance. Specific protocols must be developed to eliminate ethnic profiling, including detailed guidelines for police interactions with Roma communities and regular audits of police practices. The implementation of the anti-antigypsyism law should be strengthened through clear prosecution guidelines, specialized training for judicial officials, and regular monitoring of case outcomes.

## **Policy Recommendation 3: Cultural Recognition and Representation**

The Government must expedite the establishment and proper funding of key cultural institutions dedicated to Roma heritage and expression. The National Roma Culture Museum, mandated by Law No. 238/2023, should be prioritized with immediate allocation of suitable premises and adequate funding. Similarly, the State Roma Theater and the National Institute for Research and Conservation of Roma Culture and History should be established with guaranteed annual budgets and clear operational mandates. These institutions must ensure meaningful Roma representation at all levels, particularly in leadership and decision-making positions. A comprehensive cultural promotion strategy should be developed, including public awareness campaigns, cultural events, and media initiatives that challenge negative stereotypes and highlight Roma contributions to Romanian society.

## **Policy Recommendation 4: Roma National Strategy Implementation**

To ensure effective implementation of the National Roma Strategy 2022-2027, significant reforms are needed in its governance and execution. The inter-ministerial committee should regularly report on the progress in the implementation process. Each ministry involved should designate a senior-level official responsible for Roma inclusion measures, supported by dedicated staff and resources. Clear budget allocations must be established for each strategic objective, with transparent monitoring mechanisms and regular public reporting on progress. The strategy's implementation should incorporate mandatory consultation with Roma civil society organizations at all stages, from planning to evaluation. Additionally, the National Agency for Roma should be strengthened with enhanced powers, increased resources, and a more prominent role in coordinating and monitoring strategy

implementation across all government institutions. Annual implementation reports should include specific metrics for each objective, with clear accountability measures for institutions that fail to meet their targets. These reforms should be supported by a robust data collection system to track progress and inform evidence-based policy adjustments.

### **Policy Recommendation 5: Addressing Historical Injustices**

The Government must take concrete steps to address historical wrongs against the Roma community. The Commission for the Study of Roma Slavery should be revitalized with enhanced powers, dedicated funding, and a clear mandate to produce a comprehensive report on historical injustices. This should be accompanied by the establishment of a proper Truth and Reconciliation Commission that meets international standards, ensuring strong Roma representation and creating pathways for meaningful reconciliation and reparative justice, including slavery, Holocaust and assimilation policies during communism. Environmental racism must be addressed through strengthened housing legislation and anti-discrimination measures that explicitly protect Roma communities from forced evictions and prevent their relocation to hazardous areas.

The European Commission should make sure that there a stronger coordination between its different funding instruments and the objectives and commitments assumed by Romanian Government, especially when it comes to achieving the objectives of the EU Roma strategic framework on equality, inclusion and participation 2021-2030. Some of the measures the European Commission should adopt to improve efficiency of the EU funding for Roma inclusion in Romania might include:

1. Establish explicit fundamental rights compliance criteria that must be met before releasing tranches of EU funds. The Commission could use a 'milestone system' where subsequent funding tranches are released only after demonstrating concrete progress on previous commitments;
2. Link continued funding to measurable improvements in key areas for Roma inclusion such as school and housing desegregation, police and justice reform, and cultural institution development, or combating antigypsyism using transitional justice tools;
3. Enhance monitoring and audit mechanisms by requiring detailed documentation of consultation with Roma communities in project planning and implementation and applying real-time tracking systems for fund utilization and project implementation;
4. Provide dedicated technical assistance to national authorities for project design meeting EU standards, financial management and reporting, monitoring and evaluation systems.

## References

### Domestic legislation

1. Law No. 238/2023 regarding the establishment of the National Museum of Roma History and Culture in Romania, published in the Official Gazette, Part I no. 670 of July 20, 2023 and in force since July 23, 2023.
2. Government of Romania Decree No. 546/2007 from June 6, 2007 regarding the establishment of the Commission for the study of Roma slavery, published in the Official Gazette on 8 June 2007.
3. Office of the Prime Minister and National Agency for Roma (2024) Annual Report regarding the progress in implementing the Strategy of the Romanian Government for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2022-2027, presented to the Cabinet meeting on September 25, 2024, Bucharest, <https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/RAPORT.pdf>.
4. Order No. 3141/2019 of the Minister of National Education, published in the Official Monitor of Romania, Part I, No. 154 of February 27, 2019.
5. Order No. 3665/2021 of the Minister of National Education, published in the Official Monitor of Romania, Part I, No. 464 of May 4, 2021.
6. Order No. 6832/2023 of the Ministry of Education, published in the Official Monitor, Part I No. 73 of January 26, 2024.

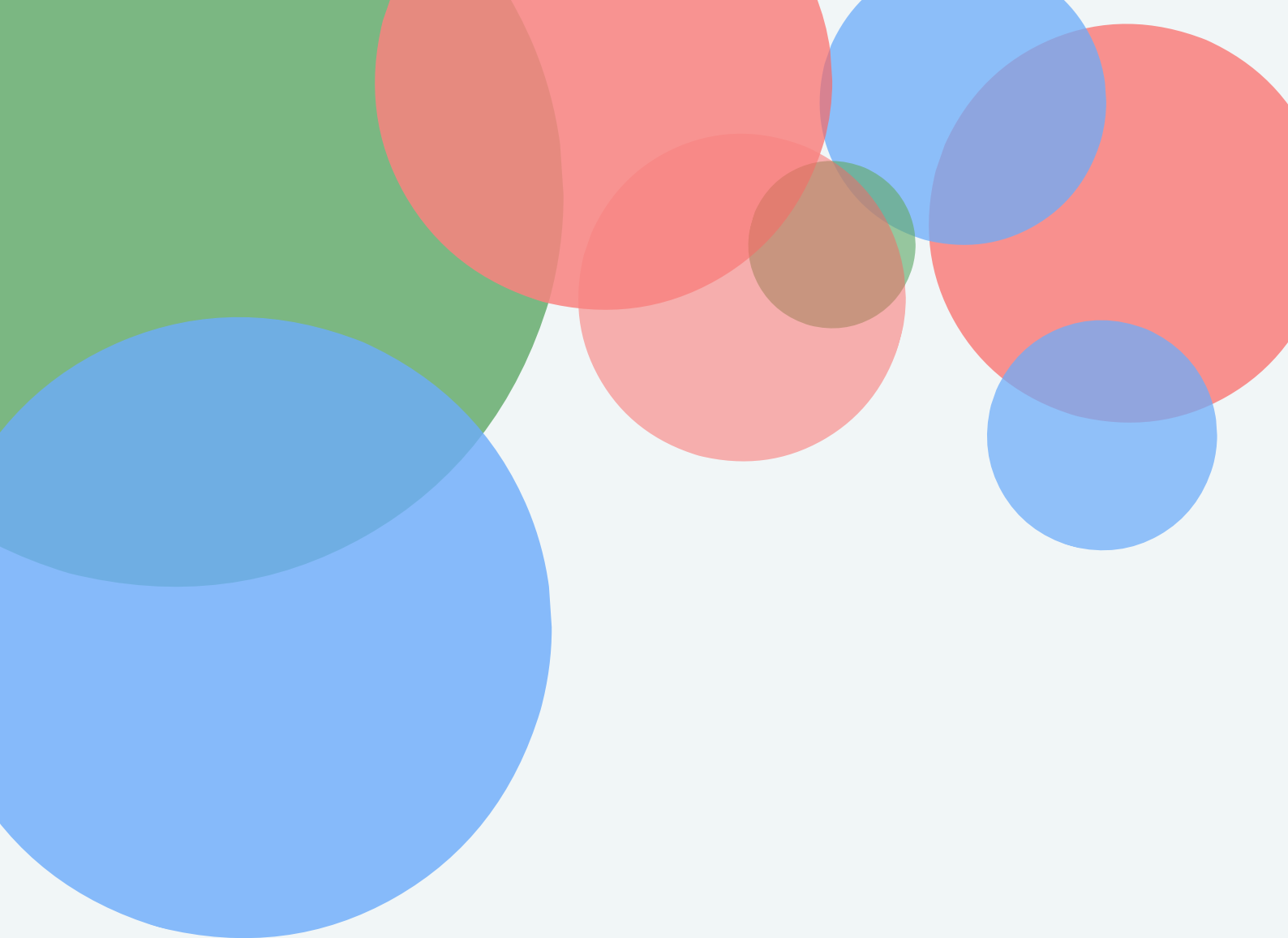
### Articles and Papers

1. Ana Carballo-Mesa, Sergio Carrera, Pedro Casermeiro Cortes, Iulius Rostas, Jan Selling, Lavinia Stan (2023) *Paving the Way for Truth and Reconciliation Process to Address Antigypsyism in Europe: Remembrance, Recognition, Justice and Trust-Building*, Brussels: CEPS, <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/paving-the-way-for-truth-and-reconciliation-process-to-address-antigypsyism-in-europe/>.
2. Judit Ignác (2024), 'Standing Against Ethnic Profiling: The Fight For Romani Youth Rights In Romania', ERRC, 9 February, <https://www.errc.org/news/standing-against-ethnic-profiling-the-fight-for-romani-youth-rights-in-romania>.
3. Judit Ignác (2024), 'Romani Mother And Children File Criminal Complaint Over Violent, Racist Attack In A Playground In Bacău, Romania', ERRC, 8 February 2024, <https://www.errc.org/news/romani-mother-and-children-file-criminal-complaint-over-violent-racist-attack-in-a-playground-in-bacau-romania>.
4. Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet, Niovi Vavoula, Anastassia Tsoukala, Monika Baylis, (2022), 'Democratic Oversight of the Police', European Union: Brussels, 3 May, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/703590/IPOL\\_STU\(2022\)703590\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/703590/IPOL_STU(2022)703590_EN.pdf).

5. Iulius Rostas (2005), 'ID checks and police raids: Ethnic profiling in Central Europe', in *Ethnic Profiling by Police in Europe*, Open Society Justice Initiatives: New York.

#### Other Sources

1. Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fifth Opinion on Romania, Adopted on 3 April 2023, <https://rm.coe.int/5th-op-romania-en/1680ac3917>.
2. European Commission, Discrimination in the European Union, Brussels, December 2023, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home>.
3. Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, South Africa, 31 August to 8 September 2001, para. 72, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Durban\\_text\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Durban_text_en.pdf).
4. United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2019), 'Preventing and countering racial profiling of people of African descent, Geneva', <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2019/12/preventracialprofiling-en.pdf>.



# JEKHIPE

Reclaiming Our Past, Rebuilding Our Future:  
New Approaches to Fighting Antigypsyism

---