

ROMANIA

LEGACY OF EXCLUSION: UNMASKING STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

JEKHIPE RESEARCH FINDINGS 2025

Based on research conducted in
Romania under the JEKHIPE Project

Historical Context

Romania has **one of the largest Roma populations in Europe**, shaped by a long history of structural persecution.

- Roma were **enslaved** in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia for **over 500 years** (1385 - 1856).
- During WWII, **over 25,000 Roma were deported to Transnistria**, where around 11,000 died from hunger, disease, and violence.

Education Inequality

Educational segregation remains a major structural issue. 20.1% of Romanian schools practiced segregation according to a national monitoring report.

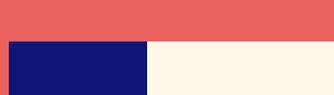
To address this, Romania created a **National Commission for School Desegregation**, but implementation has been slow and limited.

Public Attitudes and Discrimination

 **70%** of Romanians say they do not trust Roma

 **Only 22%** of Romanians would feel comfortable working with a Roma colleague

 **Only 21%** of Romanians would feel comfortable if their child had a Roma partner

 **42%** of Romanians believe being Roma could disadvantage someone in hiring decisions

*Eurobarometer data

Cultural Representation Gap

There is neither a state-funded museum nor a theatre dedicated to Roma culture in Romania.

Romania has **only one senior and two junior Roma academics**, all within the Romani Language and Literature Study Program in Bucharest. The program now faces **imminent abolition** due to harsh new economic criteria regarding minimum student enrollment.

The **National Roma Culture Museum**, mandated by law in 2023, **has still not secured a location**, highlighting delays in implementation.

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Laws and Policies: Limited Impact

Romania has adopted several policies addressing antigypsyism, with anti-discrimination legislation in force since 2000.

- **Law No. 2/2021 on combating antigypsyism**
- **National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2027**

HOWEVER

- **No prosecutions have been recorded under the 2021 antigypsyism law**
- **Many policies lack funding, coordination, and enforcement mechanisms**

Environmental Racism

Several Roma communities have been subjected to **forced relocations to polluted or hazardous areas**. In Pata-Rât (Cluj-Napoca) Roma families were relocated next to a garbage dump, exposing residents to severe environmental risks.

Roma Slavery Legacy

Roma slavery in the Romanian principalities lasted for **half a millennium** (1385 - 1856).

This was a state-sanctioned system where **Roma were treated as property** of the Crown, the Church, or boyars, creating a legacy of systemic inequality that persists today.

Pathways to Restorative Justice

Acknowledgment: Address the 500-year legacy of state and church-sanctioned Roma slavery (1385–1856).

Formal Recognition: Enact comprehensive reparatory policies and official acknowledgment.

Education: Mandate Roma slavery history in the national school curriculum.

Commemoration: Establish a state-funded National Roma Slavery Memorial.

Research: Launch a national initiative to document the history and legacy of enslavement.

Why This Matters

Research highlights several systemic issues:

- Persistent exclusion in schools.
- Violence and ethnic profiling.
- Hate speech prevalence in media and politics.
- Barriers to cultural institutions.
- Low accountability for discrimination.
- Lack of Roma voice in policymaking.

Addressing antigypsyism requires:

Enforce Laws: Strengthen anti-discrimination legal action.

Accountability: Hold institutions responsible for bias.

Participation: Include Roma in policymaking.

Recognition: Honor Roma history and culture.

Investment: Fund education and cultural institutions.