

ROMA HISTORY IS EUROPEAN HISTORY

JEKHIPE RESEARCH FINDINGS 2025

Sources:
JEKHIPE National Research Papers (2025)
ERIAN Research & Cultural Initiatives
Council of Europe Roma Factsheets

Centuries of Presence and Belonging

Roma communities have lived across Europe since the 14th century. Their history is not marginal to European history, it is interwoven with the political, cultural, and social development of European nations.

By occupying specific economic niches, as well as through forced labour, Roma people contributed to, and were exploited in, the shaping of European wealth.

Roma contributions are foundational to European cultural heritage:

- Music traditions across Central and Eastern Europe
- Visual arts, literature, theatre, and contemporary film
- Craftsmanship, language, trade, and social movements



Roma history is national history. It is European history.

Historical Exclusion and Its Legacy

Roma history also includes centuries of anti-Roma legislation and structural exclusion, for example:

- The Pragmaticas of the Spanish Catholic Kings (from 1499)
- Roma slavery in the Romanian principalities (between 1385 and 1856)
- Anti-Roma legislation from early Middle Ages until today
- Forced assimilation policies under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in Spain
- Extermination of Roma during the Holocaust

Understanding contemporary antigypsyism requires understanding this history.

Communicating Roma History Responsibly

- **Avoid a victim-only frame**
- **Center Roma agency and resistance**
- **Use personal stories and historical figures**
- **Avoid portraying Roma as a homogeneous mass**
- **Highlight civil rights movements and cultural leadership**