

Together towards Roma Equality: Implementing the EU Roma Strategic Framework

Online Roundtable, 22 February 2021

CONCEPT NOTE

Discrimination against Roma is an everyday reality of European societies, characterised by systemic racism and antigypsyism. Despite EU efforts to guarantee the inclusion and equal treatment of Roma, these communities continue to be subject to inequality, social exclusion, poverty and discrimination across all areas of life. Unfortunately, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted in 2011 has been insufficient to deliver a major breakthrough in improving the situation of Roma in Europe, so the new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation published in 2020 is all the more important.

Equality bodies can make an important contribution to effectively implementing the EU's new strategic framework. By reason of their various competences and expertise, equality bodies play a central role in promoting equality and in fighting discrimination experienced by Roma in many jurisdictions. Their considerable experience can be particularly valuable in the development and monitoring of the National Roma Strategic Frameworks. For this purpose, it is key to further strengthen the engagement and cooperation among relevant actors working with Roma, including civil society.

This online event will bring together the European Commission, Member State representatives, civil society representatives and equality bodies to identify best ways to cooperate for our common goal of furthering Roma equality and to identify the roles national equality bodies can and should play.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the roundtable is to discuss and identify ways to improve cooperation in light of the new EU Roma Strategic Framework. The roundtable aims to:

- Increase awareness of equality bodies about the EU Strategic Framework;
- Enable equality bodies to exchange insights regarding their involvement in the development and monitoring of the national Roma strategic frameworks and EU funding for Roma equality, and discuss ways to strengthen their contribution;
- Develop a common understanding of each participant's roles and challenges; and
- Help coordination of different actors to ensure a more effective implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework.

The roundtable's conclusions will be collected in a short summary to guide the work of equality bodies in contributing to the implementation of the EU Roma Strategic Framework.

PARTICIPANTS

The roundtable will bring together the European Commission, Member State representatives, equality bodies' staff members, as well as civil society organisations.

METHOD

The roundtable will take place online in the form of a 3-hour session. It will feature presentations, discussion groups and Q&A sessions, including:

- Introduction to the EU Strategic Framework on Roma Equality
- Spotlight on some promising measures and existing challenges
- Lively discussion and dynamic exchange of views

Platform: ZOOM MEETINGS

DRAFT AGENDA

09:30 Online check-in

09:35 Welcome & housekeeping

09:45 Opening Session – Setting the scene

09:45 Brief presentation on the work of Equinet on Roma equality

09:55 Presentation of the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation

- European Commission
- FRA

10:20 Short Q&A

10:25 Coffee Break

10:35 Focus Session 1 – Existing situation and challenges

Dialogue between Member State representatives, civil society representatives and equality bodies: short presentations and Q&A.

This first session will be focused on:

- Lessons learned from the implementation of the framework and focus of actions for improving the design and implementation during the new period in particular in the field of equality and non-discrimination; and
- The roles their different organisations play and the challenges they face in contributing to the implementation of the EU Framework

Speakers (short interventions of 4-5 minutes):

- **National equality bodies**
- **Bernard Rorke** – European Roma Rights Center
- **Belén Sánchez-Rubio** – Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Spain
- **Andrea Buckova** – Government plenipotentiary for Roma communities (National Roma Contact Point), Slovakia (TBC)
- **Romeo Franz** – Member of the European Parliament

10:55 Questions and Answers, Discussions

11:30 Coffee Break

11:40 Focus Session 2 – Building bridges

Following the insights from the previous EU Framework and the launch of the new EU Strategic Framework for Roma equality, now the EU has an opportunity to improve its implementation. This session will:

- Discuss concrete actions needed to develop and how these will lead to a better implementation of the EU Framework and to a more efficient fight against Roma discrimination; and
- Discuss ways and forms of cooperation and synergies, with a particular focus on the role and contribution of equality bodies

Speakers (short interventions of 4-5 minutes):

- **National equality bodies**
- **Gabriela Hrabanova** - European Roma Grassroots Organisation Network
- **European Commission's Roma Team**
- **Maria Ilie** - Ministry of European Funds (National Roma Contact Point), Romania (TBC)

12:00 Questions and Answers, Discussions

12:40 Closing Remarks