

Systemic practices of discrimination and challenges faced by Roma communities

CZECH REPUBLIC

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

SLOVAKIA

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

ITALY

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

FRANCE

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

ROMANIA

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

MACEDONIA

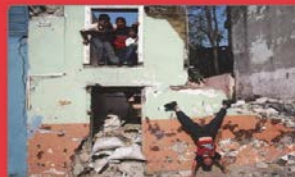
A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

TURKEY

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

SERBIA

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

UKRAINE

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE



Country Profile
2011-2012

CHALLENGING

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION PROMOTING EQUALITY

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION PROMOTING EQUALITY

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION PROMOTING EQUALITY

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION PROMOTING EQUALITY



The ERRC country profiles

- The ERRC country profiles are produced to give a snapshot of the situation of Roma and the work of the ERRC in 2011-2012 and first quarter of 2013.
- The ERRC country profiles are focusing on ERRC core themes such as the state response to violent incidents, housing and evictions, access to education, free movement and migration.
- Negative stereotypes and strong anti-Roma sentiments are the chief obstacles in improving the life standards of Roma. Discrimination is still a common factor in all countries.
- Despite efforts to improve the situation of Roma communities and policy developments human rights challenges remain largely ineffectively addressed.
- In 2012/2013 national Courts in HU, UA, IT, TK acknowledged hate crimes and illegal measures adopted against Roma.

Stigmatizing discourse and violence against Roma

- Attacks against Roma and their property as well as anti-Roma protests and anti-Roma statements have been reported at an increase rate in CZ including over the summer of 2013. The Czech Intelligence Service (BIS) has raised serious concerns about the widespread anti-Roma atmosphere.
- Anti-Roma statements often emerge in the discourse of state officials in FR focused on criminality linked with Romanian nationals. This rhetoric on criminality and the policy of expulsions has been used by representatives of both national or local level authorities or politicians and has been widely disseminated in the media. ERRC monitored several attacks against Roma settlements in 2012 as well as 2013 including arson and physical attacks by individuals or groups.
- Stigmatizing anti-Roma rhetoric in public and political discourse with explicit or implicit reference to Roma as an ethnic group engaged in criminal behavior are as well present in the discourse of officials in RO, HU, CZ or IT.

Hate speech and violence

- In IT political parties exploit anti-Roma sentiments in the population and contribute to a climate of hate. Attacks against Roma settlements have been reported in 2012 and more recently in April 2013 when anti-Roma protests led to throwing stones into a Roma camp and fascist slogans and fascist salutes were made.
- Several law enforcement interventions led to killing two Roma individuals in RO in the summer of 2012. Police raids undertaken in the autumn of 2012 as well as summer of 2013 in SK led to excessive use of force by physical and verbal abuse against Roma including of elderly and disabled people. In June 2012 a local off-duty municipal police officer shot three people dead and wounded two others, all from same family.

Hate speech and violence

- Instances of violence and police use of disproportionate force against Roma have been monitored by ERRC in MK. For instances occurred in 2012 and the most recent in May 2013 when a special police unit, along with the regular police force, used excessive and arbitrary force when they entered a Roma neighborhoods.
- Anti-Roma violence has been reported in 2012 and 2013 in RS and in some cases such instances occurred in the aftermath of forced evictions.
- Violence remains a serious problem in UA and in some cases, incidents involved state actors as well. A violent police raid in a Roma settlement took place in January 2012 when officials used tear gas and beat several residents. Unknown perpetrators burned to the ground a Roma settlement in May 2012. Officials in UA sometimes resort to stigmatizing rhetoric against Roma, through offensive remarks, equating Roma and homeless people with animals or with criminality.

Evictions and expulsions

- Research by NGO's in FR indicate that a total of 5,482 people were forcibly evicted by the authorities in the second quarter of 2013, compared to 2,883 in the first three months of the year. The biggest increase in forced evictions happened in the Ile de France region, with evictions focused around Paris and surrounding areas. Eight massive distributions of expulsion orders (OQTF) took place by July 2013 and were distributed to 424 people in settlements. Operations are usually conducted quickly without genuine consideration of personal situation.
- IT authorities have focused their housing policy for Roma on constructing segregated “nomad camps” and forcibly evicting informal camps without consideration of relevant standards such as consultation, prior notice, due process, alternative accommodation etc.
- In SK and RO, Romani settlements are in several cases segregated by walls, creating new ghettos. In RO Roma communities have been relocated near by garbage dumps or industrial areas. In July 2013 the SK Public Defender of Rights has ruled that a municipality acted illegally when it demolished a Roma settlement under environmental law, treating the settlement as ‘communal waste’.

Evictions and expulsions

- Apart from substandard living conditions, forced evictions remain a persistent problem disproportionately affecting the Roma in Serbia. In the last 4 years more than 2700 Roma individuals have been evicted. Authorities often fail to make a distinction between long-established settlements for decades and those established spontaneously. Alternative accommodation when provided is in general segregated and improper.
- With new legislative developments in Turkey, Roma settlements have been dismantled and evicted. The most infamous example is the demolition of the Sulukule settlement one of the oldest in Europe.
- In Ukraine many Roma do not possess legal titles for the land and the houses thus at high risk of being evicted. On the other hand the housing living conditions are inadequate.

Substandard and segregated housing persists

- Roma are still living in substandard housing conditions, in socially excluded and segregated environments and fell under constant threat of eviction in CZ and SK. In RO some communities live next to rubbish dumps or other hazardous areas. In IT many migrant Roma live in formal camps segregated from cities or close to industrial areas. In FR Roma live outside large cities in poor living conditions and in some areas in local segregated camps (village d'insertion")
- Roma are still living in substandard housing conditions in Macedonia or Serbia where up to 39 % do not have improved water source or sanitation conditions. Turkish authorities have initiated in recent years urban renovation projects which affected Romani neighborhoods and led to forced evictions.

Segregated and inferior education continues

- Romani children continue to be over-represented in schools and classes designed for children with mild mental disabilities or in segregated settings in CZ and SK. In RO there are still gaps between Roma and non-Roma in terms of enrolment, attainment and literacy.
- There is still a disproportionate literacy level between Roma and non-Roma in Macedonia as well as a high percentage of Roma children attending “special needs” schools. High dropout rate are reported in Serbia as well as misplacement of students in special schools and classes.

Unemployment gaps remain

- Roma continue to face barriers in accessing formal employment. The unemployment gap between Roma and non-Roma remains large in CZ and SK. In RO the participation of Roma in the labour market remains low; in IT levels of unemployment are disproportionately higher among Roma women. In FR the lack of access to formal employment and language barriers affect directly Roma.
- Unemployment rate among Roma in MK exceeds 50%; the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma in RS is 29% and less Roma are engaged in formal employment.

Concluding

- Contradictory developments: a significant deterioration in conditions for Roma, and the co-existence with other communities vs. political commitments to address challenges faced by Roma communities both at European and national level
- Public discourse about Roma is dominated by prejudices, misrepresentations and even hate speech which in general, remains unsanctioned.
- A shift from open anti-Roma agenda from of right-wing groups towards mainstream politics and politicians using Roma as scapegoats, the “Gypsy criminality” argument, the idea of abusing the social welfare, or the refusal to integrate.
- The poor socio-economic status of Roma, the radicalisation of the public discourse and the migration phenomenon are clear indicators that current policies are not producing effective change on the ground and much more political will is needed particularly at local level.