



European Roma Information Office

ERIO's Recommendations to the Bulgarian EU Presidency January - June 2018

Bulgaria assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union between January and June 2018. As an anti-discrimination European network, ERIO calls on the Bulgarian Presidency to speed up efforts to guarantee Roma's rights and equal treatment by taking into consideration the following recommendations:

1. Speed up efforts to eradicate discrimination and anti-Gypsyism

With the rising nationalistic racist sentiments, and far-right and populist parties across Europe, anti-Roma hate speech has become part of political campaigns and public life, instigating discrimination and hatred against the Roma. Moreover, it is deeply worrying to see a far-right populist party such as the United Patriots from Bulgaria be part of the next EU Council presidency and given the opportunity to play a key role in EU affairs. **The Presidency should not tolerate racist speech and behaviour during its presidency.** The normalization of these tendencies, together with the unvaried discrimination levels and anti-Gypsyism faced by these communities must be **urgently tackled, equality needs to be preserved and all forms of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism have to stop.** Therefore, we ask the Presidency to ensure that member states **horizontally adopt anti-discrimination legislation in the national system** in the different fields of action (i.e. education, health, housing and employment) and follow **the recommendations of the [EU 2017 Roma Platform](#) and European Commission's [midterm review](#) of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration strategies.** Member states should also be urged **to strongly condemn, penalise and oppose all forms of anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech** by politicians and public officials and to **implement the [Racial Equality Directive 2000/43](#).**

2. Improve the human rights situation of Roma in the Western Balkans

The large Roma population in the Western Balkans faces persistent human rights violations, exclusion and lives in extreme poverty. In this region, as well as in the Union, Roma are rarely considered as equal citizens to other ethnic groups, and not enough is done to improve their living conditions and the high levels of anti-Gypsyism and discrimination. Preventive and corrective measures need to be undertaken to ensure decent living conditions for these communities as well as the protection of their fundamental rights. Therefore, we ask the Presidency to ensure that the European Commission exerts political pressure on and encourages governments in Western Balkans to **increase their efforts to tackle anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, and to improve the economic and social inclusion of Roma. Roma inclusion should remain an 'acquis communautaire'** for potential accession countries during accession negotiations to ensure the enlargement is beneficial for everyone. Potential and accession countries should **transpose and implement the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies** at national, regional and local levels or adapt existing national strategies **compliant with the [2013 Council Recommendation](#), the [2016 Council Conclusions](#) and the [2017 Commission's midterm review](#) of the EU Framework.** Moreover, potential and accession countries should **adopt and implement the [Racial Equality Directive 2000/43](#) and the [Framework Directive 2000/78](#).**

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The **European Roma Information Office (ERIO)** is an international advocacy organisation which promotes political and public discussion on Roma issues by providing information to the EU institutions, civil society and governments. Through its wide network, it aims to combat racist discrimination against Roma through awareness raising, lobbying and policy development. [Website](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Twitter](#) - [LinkedIn](#)



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