



European Roma Information Office

ERIO's Recommendations to the Estonian EU Presidency

July-December 2017

Estonia assumes the Presidency of the Council of the EU from July to December 2017 at a crucial time for Europe. In the face of rising populism, nationalism, xenophobia and racism, we need a strong Presidency able to restore confidence in the EU's ability to protect its founding values of equality and non-discrimination. To support the aims of the Estonian Presidency, ERIO proposes the following recommendations:

1. Fighting anti-Gypsyism is key in ensuring Europe's safety

ERIO welcomes the Presidency's priority to work towards a "safe and secure Europe". Clearly, Europe's safety will increase by ensuring the equal treatment with respect to the fundamental rights of Europe's largest minority, the Roma.

Despite the adoption of EU anti-discrimination legislation and the EU Framework for NRIS, extremist organisations, individuals, public officials and politicians continue to openly discriminate against Roma at an alarming rate. We can observe increasing, anti-Roma hate speech, anti-Roma sentiments and anti-Gypsyism and persistent patterns of violent attacks and actions against this minority. The Presidency should take all necessary measures to ensure that Roma's right to security and life are protected since this is key in ensuring that Europe is a safe and secure place for all its citizens.

Moreover, the Presidency should 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 outlined in the 2014 European Commission's implementation [report](#) on the [Racial Equality Directive](#). Member states should also be called upon to prevent the violation of Article 21 of the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#).

2. Promote equal opportunities for all in education and employment

ERIO welcomes the Presidency's priority to work towards an "inclusive and sustainable Europe" and ensuring equal opportunities for high quality education, in the labour market and social inclusion.

To build a fully inclusive Europe, all children need to have equal access to quality education to ensure they can fully participate in the labour market afterwards. Roma children and youth across the EU continue to be denied equal access to quality education and still face discrimination and segregation. In many member states, they are educated in inferior segregated environments which subsequently led the European Commission to initiate infringement proceedings against Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary for breaching the Racial Equality Directive in their treatment of Roma school children. Lack of adequate education and training, compounded by discrimination in the labour market causes Roma to face a higher risk of unemployment. Investing in Roma's employment is an important strategy to ensure social inclusion, as this group holds great economic potential. In order to



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ensure that the potential of the Roma in Europe is not wasted, it is important to specifically consider the Roma when ensuring a smooth transition from education to employment, as this is the moment where many face injustice and unequal treatment.

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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](#)



This publication has been funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union