

ERIO's Recommendations to the Austrian EU Presidency July – December 2018

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

1. Reinforce the protection of Roma by eradicating discrimination and anti-Gypsyism

'A Europe that protects' is the slogan of the upcoming Austrian EU presidency. This must be a commitment for the presidency to protect all European citizens equally, including Roma, regardless of their origin, ethnicity or culture. In the wake of rising populism and nationalistic discourses all over Europe, Roma are more than ever victims of discrimination and hate speech coming from every level of society. **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. Use the new 'Strategy for the Western Balkans' to improve the situation of Roma

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. The '[Strategy for the Western Balkans](#)' which gave a credible enlargement perspective to the Western Balkans must now be used by the presidency as a mean to drive reforms to protect fundamental rights of the Roma population. Therefore, we ask the Presidency to ensure that the European Commission exerts political pressure



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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](#)

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*’** 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](#).

3. Organize a public consultation on post-2020 priorities

The presidency should organize a **European-wide consultancy with civil society and national governments** to set up the **post-2020 priorities for Roma integration** in the wake of the end of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.



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