



ERIO's Recommendations to the Romanian EU Presidency

January-June 2019

Romania takes over the Presidency of the Council of the EU from January to July 2019 at a challenging time when political and social trends are putting at risk equality and human rights in the EU. With the upcoming European elections, populist and extreme right-wing parties and movements are steadily growing and dividing Europeans where minority groups like the Roma, are targets of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. As an anti-discrimination European network, we call on the Presidency to commit to Roma's equal treatment and ensure that their rights are guaranteed and respected by taking into consideration the following recommendations.

1. Strengthen the fight against racial discrimination and anti-Gypsyism

ERIO welcomes the Presidency's priority to work for a Europe of common values such as human rights, equality, respect for human dignity and anti-racism. With only such values and by guaranteeing that all citizens, including minorities, are treated fairly can we ensure a racist free and more equal EU. During the upcoming European pre-election campaign, the Presidency has a key role to play in monitoring and not tolerating hate and racist speech and behaviour by politicians and public officials. The Presidency should urge member states to implement the [Racial Equality Directive 2000/43](#) and the [recommendations](#) of the 2018 European Roma Platform, as well as the Commission's [report](#) on the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

2. Protecting the fundamental rights of Roma in the Western Balkans

ERIO welcomes the Presidency's aim to support the EU enlargement in the Western Balkans. A large number of Roma in the Western Balkans face widespread human rights violations, discrimination and poverty. This situation has to stop. As such, we ask the Presidency to ensure that the European Commission pressures candidate countries to meet the criteria set out in the [Strategy for the Western Balkans](#). Tackling widespread discrimination and anti-Gypsyism, can help ensuring that the human rights of Roma are respected, therefore, speeding up the enlargement process. Furthermore, the Presidency should pressure candidate countries to transpose and implement the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies or to adapt existing national strategies to European Commission's and Council Recommendation's requirements as well as the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43.



3. 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework

EU funding, in particular the next 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, is a powerful instrument to ensure human rights are promoted and respected across the European Union. During the negotiation process on the Framework, the Presidency should ensure that a human rights dimension is part of the conditionalities and that the use of the funds are monitored in order to assess if these have been allocated to Roma equality and its impact on Roma communities. The Presidency should also ensure that the Framework calls on member states to make better use of the EU Structural Funds to tackle discrimination of Roma communities. Finally, the Presidency should ask the European Commission to ensure that EU funds are allocated to essential stakeholders working for Roma inclusion and equality such as media, academia and Roma civil society.

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For more information, please contact: Tel: +32 273 33 462 E-mail: office@erionet.eu

The **European Roma Information Office (ERIO)** is a European 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.

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