

Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)



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Roma and Travellers

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

French edition:
Plan d'action stratégique du Conseil de l'Europe
sur l'intégration des Roms et des Gens du voyage
(2020-2025)

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Council of Europe **Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion** (2020-2025)

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of the Council of Europe on 22 January 2020
at the 1365th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies

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1. Context

Many of the 10-12 million Roma¹ and Travellers in Europe suffer from extreme poverty and exclusion. The existence of widespread anti-Gypsyism reinforces and aggravates their economic and social deprivation. These inequalities persist despite ongoing efforts at national, European, and international level to tackle anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes and address further their inclusion.

The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma² adopted in 2010 provided a strong impetus for co-ordinated and concerted action of governments and European stakeholders to support national, regional and local level authorities in their efforts towards improving the social and economic situation of Roma and Travellers. It was complemented by the Council of Europe's Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019). However, the implementation of the Declaration and the Action Plan reveal that in the four main areas in which action has been undertaken – access to education, employment, health care and housing – further action and co-ordination are needed. Both the Council of Europe and its member States, as well as the European Union and other international organisations, should take further action and increase co-ordination to advance the social and intercultural inclusion of Roma and Travellers in Europe. Proven successful projects and examples of good practices should be upscaled and mainstreamed.

It is also recalled that the European Court of Human Rights and other Council of Europe monitoring bodies closely monitor the situation of Roma and Travellers and deal with discrimination and other human rights issues.

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1. The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers
 2. CM(2010)133-final Strasbourg Declaration on Roma adopted at the Council of Europe High Level Meeting on Roma, Strasbourg, 20 October 2010

2. Implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)

The Council of Europe's Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019),³ approved by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016, focused on three key priority areas (tackling anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes ("anti-Gypsyism"), demonstrating innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable, and promoting innovative models for local-level solutions) and aimed to provide a concrete and practical operational tool for the implementation of the 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma.

Through intergovernmental co-operation, dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society, and co-operation projects with member States, several accomplishments have been possible, in particular as regards the fight against anti-Gypsyism and in the field of good local governance with the active participation of Roma and Travellers.



3. SG/Inf(2015)38-final Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)



The Thematic Action Plan has ensured a coherent approach to the Council of Europe's work for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers, demonstrating both the Organisation's capacity to apply its instruments and tools and the commitment of member States to achieve this objective. The main achievements include:

- ▶ **the development and adoption of new standards, such as Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)10 on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe;**
- ▶ **the provision of peer reviews through the thematic work and reports of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM); and**
- ▶ **the organisation of co-operation and capacity-building activities in the framework of joint programmes implemented with the European Commission, (e.g. INSCHOOL, JUSTROM, ROMACT, ROMACTED and ROMED).**

Implementation of the Thematic Action Plan has been supported by member States through voluntary contributions (Finland, Germany, Greece and Hungary) and staff secondments (Finland, Greece, and Poland). In addition, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe have given political support towards the implementation of this plan. The Council of Europe has also co-operated with international partners, including UNESCO, OSCE/ODIHR, the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) for the implementation of several activities.

The implementation of the Thematic Action Plan has contributed to the enhancement of the commitment and co-operation between various sectors of the Council of Europe and strengthened synergies. It has also contributed to the implementation of the Organisation's Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019).

As regards combating anti-Gypsyism, education and culture, the EU/Council of Europe Joint Project “Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children (INSCHOOL)” has piloted this concept in five countries by building the capacity of schools to respond to the specific needs of Roma children, to celebrate difference and to support their learning experience. The project targets education policy review and adaptation at national level. Furthermore, the EU/Council of Europe Joint Programme “Access to Justice of Roma and Traveller women (JUSTROM)” aims to empower Roma women and girls to fight discrimination in co-operation with equality bodies and national human rights institutions, legal professionals, local authorities, social services, academia, the media and civil society organisations. Through JUSTROM, legal and other relevant professionals have been trained on human rights, discrimination, hate speech and hate-motivated violence, and gender issues. The Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Alliance for ERIAC and OSF, established the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC) whose “objective is the promotion of arts and culture and education as a means to promote human rights and intercultural understanding and thereby to tackle anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe and to increase their self-esteem”⁴.

Materials such as the child-friendly toolkit of the “Dosta! Campaign” and factsheets about Roma history, culture and language have been produced based on studies on how Roma and Travellers are represented in school curricula, textbooks and museums.

While member States have the overall responsibility for the elaboration of national Roma inclusion strategies, local authorities play a crucial and often decisive role in their implementation on the ground. The Council of Europe has focused its efforts on building capacities to develop policies and public services that are inclusive of all, including Roma, through exchanges of good practices. The CAHROM thematic visits and reports and the respective EU/Council of Europe joint programmes on “Building up political will and understanding of Roma inclusion at local and regional level (ROMACT)” and “Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level (ROMACTED)” are the Organisation’s main tools in this regard.

In the field of active participation, the Council of Europe has implemented specific activities to promote the participation of Roma and Traveller women and youth. Active participation, empowerment and capacity building are at the core of the EU/Council of Europe joint programmes ROMED, ROMACT and ROMACTED. Mediation between marginalised communities and local institutions has contributed to change at local level, through the establishment of Community Action Groups and the empowerment of Roma to participate in public life and in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the Roma Political Schools aim at fostering the participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life at local, national and European level. The Council of Europe has established the dialogue mechanism with Roma and Traveller civil society, a structured platform for direct consultations and dialogue with Roma and Traveller NGOs and individuals, including those working at grass roots level.

4. Statutes of the association “European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture”, Art. 2 Objective of the association

3. Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)

This Strategic Action Plan on Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) (“the Strategic Action Plan”) translates the strategic objectives of the Council of Europe regarding the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law into a policy framework for the social and intercultural inclusion of Roma and Travellers in Europe. The Plan provides a framework that is flexible and adaptable to country-specific conditions, serving as a roadmap and practical tool for the design, implementation and adjustment of programmes and actions.

The objectives of the Strategic Action Plan are to promote and protect the human rights of Roma and Travellers, to combat anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, and to foster inclusion in society.

The Council of Europe’s actions will draw on the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and build upon the findings and recommendations of the monitoring bodies, in particular the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Committee for Social Rights of the European Social Charter, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Support will be provided by the Organisation to member States through the action plan in order to ensure better outcomes in relation to the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised Roma and Travellers and to sustain and build on the results achieved within the framework of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019).

Following the assessment of the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) as set out in chapter 2 above, and in order to address the current key challenges for Roma and Traveller inclusion as identified during Council of Europe stakeholder consultations (intergovernmental and civil society), this Strategic Action Plan is structured around three main lines of action:

- **combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination and supporting real and effective equality;**
- **supporting democratic participation and promoting public trust and accountability; and**
- **supporting access to inclusive quality education and training.**

In addition, the intersectional needs of specific groups of Roma and Travellers who are particularly vulnerable or suffer from multiple discrimination, will be taken into account as a cross-cutting issue in all action under this Plan.

4. Fundamental principles governing the Strategic Action Plan

The Strategic Action Plan will be governed by the following fundamental principles:

- ▶ a human rights-based approach, with a central place for the principle of non-discrimination;
- ▶ respect for the rule of law;
- ▶ respect for difference and diversity;
- ▶ effective participation as full members of society;
- ▶ equality between women and men; and
- ▶ participation of Roma and Travellers in all decisions affecting them, at both individual and collective level through their representative organisations.



5. Priority areas and main lines of action for 2020-2025

In keeping with the Council of Europe's mission and expertise, the Strategic Action Plan focuses on the following:

COMBAT ANTI-GYPSYISM



Combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination in its diverse forms by raising awareness of the Organisation's standards and instruments, fostering their application and implementation and supporting access to justice

PARTICIPATION



Ensuring the effective participation of Roma and Travellers in decision-making processes

IMPLEMENTATION



Combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination in its diverse forms by raising awareness of the Organisation's standards and instruments, fostering their application and implementation and supporting access to justice



5.1. Combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination and supporting real and effective equality

Despite many efforts and some progress made, there is still ample evidence showing that Roma and Travellers in Europe continue to suffer from widespread and persistent anti-Gypsyism, which is recognised as a specific form of racism fuelled by prejudice and stereotypes. In addition, Roma and Travellers remain victims of various forms of discrimination, including school segregation and a forced sedentary lifestyle, as well as hate speech and hate-motivated violence in many member States.

This is borne out by judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, results of the monitoring activities of the Council of Europe, in particular the findings of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI),⁵ the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Committee of Social Rights, as well as reports of the Commissioner for Human Rights and surveys conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).⁶

The Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe⁷ states that anti-Gypsyism is one of the most powerful mechanisms of Roma exclusion. It recognises the interdependence of inclusion and anti-discrimination and therefore recommends that initiatives to improve the situation and integration of Roma should include measures combating discrimination and addressing anti-Gypsyism, in addition to measures promoting the social and economic inclusion of Roma in areas such as education, health, employment and housing.

5. See, for example, ECRI's 5th Reports on Croatia, the Republic of Moldova or Portugal

6. See, for example, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-anti-gypsyism-barrier-roma-inclusion_en.pdf

7. Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 February 2012 at the 1132nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

Anti-Gypsyism creates a barrier to efforts aimed at improving the living standards of Roma. Data published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in April 2018⁸ for EU member States show that, despite the action taken, Roma and Travellers continue to suffer from harassment, hate-motivated violence and discrimination in education, health care, housing and employment. These processes perpetuate the marginalisation of Roma and Traveller communities and individuals and hinder policy initiatives to improve their situation.⁹

In response to the situation of Europe's Roma population, ECRI has called upon member States to adopt a comprehensive and multidisciplinary set of measures to combat anti-Gypsyism.¹⁰

Anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and hate crimes require a combination of the following measures:

- ▶ **legal responses and standard-setting work (for example, on combating hate speech and hate-motivated violence) and other intergovernmental co-operation (for example, peer reviews, thematic visits and thematic reports);**
- ▶ **training of the legal profession, public authorities and law enforcement in Council of Europe standards and relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights;**
- ▶ **capacity building of national, regional and local level authorities and civil society, including through the Council of Europe dialogue mechanism with Roma and Traveller civil society; and**
- ▶ **specific empowerment for particular groups, such as Roma women and youth; and**
- ▶ **awareness-raising actions for the general public.**

There is growing recognition of the need to address anti-Gypsyism and to raise Roma self-esteem through the promotion of Roma arts, culture, history and language. To this end, ERIAC was set up in 2017 and is rapidly developing into a key institution in this field. The Council of Europe will continue to work with ERIAC to promote common values and principles.

The Council of Europe/EC Joint Programme JUSTROM has shown that when Roma and Traveller Women are aware of their rights, and the barriers in accessing justice are removed, they seek justice. This line of work should remain a priority for the Organisation which will continue to work with equality bodies and national human rights institutions and train legal professionals.

8. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-anti-gypsyism-barrier-roma-inclusion_en.pdf

9. Recent EU high-level meetings on anti-Gypsyism and resolutions reiterate the urgent need to combat this phenomenon

10. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma, adopted on 24 June 2011. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805cc62a



Expected results

COMBAT HATE SPEECH



1. Development of a legal instrument on a comprehensive approach to addressing hate speech within a human rights framework

AWARENESS



2. Increased awareness of Roma and Traveller issues of the general public through awareness-raising activities

PROTECTION



3. Enhanced performance of institutions protecting the rights of Roma and Travellers through professional training; increased access to justice by Roma and Travellers through capacity-building activities

VISIBILITY



4. Increased visibility of Council of Europe actions, including the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the findings and recommendations of the monitoring bodies

5.2. Supporting democratic participation and promoting public trust and accountability

The participation of Roma and Travellers in political and public life has increased over the past decade. However, it does not yet adequately reflect the demographic weight of Roma and Traveller communities, particularly at local level. Evidence has shown that Roma and Travellers, particularly women and youth,¹¹ encounter a variety of social barriers and prejudices that severely impede their capacity to effectively participate in public and political life. They are consequently largely absent from the local or national political arenas and decision-making processes affecting them. This invisibility undermines their potential to reverse embedded marginalisation and discrimination. It is essential to enhance their political participation and representation to bring Roma citizens closer to local, national and European decision-making bodies and improve their active participation and interaction with public administration and their presence in the public sphere.

Inclusive policy measures at local level are crucial to bringing about concrete improvements in the social inclusion of Roma across the key areas of education, housing, employment and health care. Administrations and locally elected representatives and administrations are frequently sceptical about the potential to achieve progress in these areas because they fail to see how progress can be achieved, feel a lack of support to shoulder complex problems, and have insufficient expertise to mainstream the various issues, develop an integrated approach, and design relevant measures and projects, and attract national and or external funding for that purpose. In addition, co-operation and the proper use of domestic and external resources are hindered by the lack of mutual trust between local Roma communities and local administrations.

Following on from the results of the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), in particular the intergovernmental co-operation and peer reviews carried out through thematic visits and thematic reports, the dialogue mechanism with Roma and Traveller civil society, the biennial international Roma women's conferences and other specialised events, the EU/Council of Europe joint programmes implemented at local level on good governance and empowerment (ROMED, ROMACT, ROMACTED), activities targeting both authorities and citizens will be pursued further in years to come. Technical assistance provided at local level to increase the capacity of the authorities for sustained policy engagement will be combined with empowering Roma citizens to enhance their active participation in political and public life.

The Roma Political Schools will continue to provide training and mentoring to Roma and Traveller citizens with the aim of bringing them closer to local, national and European decision-making bodies, including Roma and Travellers who intend to stand for election at local, national or European level.

11. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly "Resolution on Promoting Policies in Favour of the Roma Population" and its "Resolution on Promoting Policies on Equality between Women and Men of the Roma Population", adopted in 2011, call on OSCE participating States to provide more space for the increased public and political presence of Roma and to "promote equal opportunities for Roma women in politics". For further information, see "Resolutions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Adopted at the Twentieth Annual Session" held in Belgrade from 6 to 10 July 2011, available at: <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/annual-sessions/2011-belgrade/declaration-4/3030-belgrade-resolutions-eng/file> (see respective references Article 22, p. 46, and Article 15, p. 48)



Special attention will be paid to Roma and Traveller women and youth who are interested in actively participating in public or political life in their respective municipalities or countries.

Expected results

INCREASED PARTICIPATION



1. Increased participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life at local, regional, national, and European level

REINFORCED CAPACITIES



2. Reinforced capacity of national and local authorities to perform their roles and responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner when designing and implementing plans, policies and projects, particularly active inclusion measures that improve the situation of Roma and Travellers

INCREASED CAPACITIES



3. Increased capacity of local authorities to access and use national and international funding, particularly EU funds, to support their Roma inclusion strategies

INCREASED EXPERTISE



4. Increased level of Roma and Traveller expertise and understanding across the Council of Europe Secretariat

5.3. Supporting access to inclusive quality education and training

Common challenges for many educational institutions across Europe when it comes to Roma and Traveller children include non-enrolment, early school leaving, school drop outs, and irregular attendance.

School segregation appears to be a major factor contributing to low educational performance. The practice of separating groups of pupils into specific schools or classes despite the existing anti-discrimination legislation and policies may even be on the rise. School segregation is one of the worst forms of discrimination and a serious violation of the rights of children,¹² and the development of international human rights standards has contributed to fighting school segregation in many countries. The European Court of Human Rights has built up an extensive case law on school segregation that particularly concerns Roma children. It has repeatedly found member States in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights for breaching the rights of these children not to be discriminated against with respect to their right to education.¹³

The Organisation's work on inclusive education (for example, the EU/Council of Europe Joint Project INSCHOOL) will continue to raise awareness of the need to ensure the legal prohibition of segregated schooling policies and practices, support member States in the development and application of desegregation strategies in line with the case law of the Court, and promote parental participation for quality education and schooling through civil society and stakeholders at the local level.

A challenge for Roma youth remains the transition from education to employment.¹⁴ As a result, the number of young Roma who are "Not in Education, Employment or Training" (NEET) is extraordinarily high.¹⁵ Roma youth, and particularly the NEETs, are by far the most disadvantaged youth within the EU¹⁶ and probably throughout the Council of Europe.

The results from several EU surveys¹⁷ show a considerable gap between Roma and non-Roma children attending school and confirm that Roma children lag behind in terms of educational achievements. Despite the efforts to increase school enrolment, as many as 50% of Roma children in Europe fail to complete primary education, whilst only 25% complete secondary education. Low educational outcomes are particularly alarming since education has a direct and decisive impact on any individual's opportunities in life. The future of young Roma depends largely on their education. Poor education correlates with poor health, unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

There are currently no systematic efforts to support governments, the media or other stakeholders to adequately communicate the contribution of Roma and Travellers to European societies, especially through the means of culture, arts or history.

12. CommDH/PositionPaper(2017)1, 12 September 2017 Fighting school segregation in Europe through inclusive education

13. See, for example, the case of D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic of 13 November 2007

14. EU FRA, EU-MIDIS II, Transition from education to employment of young Roma in nine EU Member States, 2018.

15. Ibid

16. Report on the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, COM(2018) 785 final

17. Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey/publication/2016/eumidis-ii-roma-selected-findings

In those member States which have developed an educational policy on minorities, for example regarding the use of educational material, Roma are often the only minority about which no educational tools exist as there is no kin state to provide them; in addition, for the same reasons, Roma need to record, construct, develop and organise knowledge of their history, culture and language to be able to maintain, affirm and develop their identity.

The Council of Europe will update relevant educational material and disseminate it in member States. Through its partnership with ERIAC, material on Roma and Traveller culture and arts, including Roma history and culture factsheets and other pedagogical materials, as well as the representation of Roma and Travellers in educational curricula and textbooks, will be designed and produced.

Expected results

QUALITY EDUCATION



1. Removal of concrete obstacles to equal access to quality education is supported at national and school level; enhanced capacity of teachers to manage diversity and adopt inclusive teaching methods

PROMOTING ROMA AND TRAVELLER HISTORY



2. Promotion of the teaching of Roma and Traveller history and the Roma Holocaust and inclusion in school curricula and textbooks, also through training of trainers and teachers

INCREASED CAPACITIES



3. Increased visibility and recognition of the Roma Holocaust

INCREASED EXPERTISE



4. Increased chances for a successful transition from education to employment for Roma and Traveller youth

6. Cross-cutting issues

Several Roma and Traveller groups and individuals experience multiple discrimination or live in specific situations of vulnerability. They often experience more severe exclusion and lower levels of participation in society. Consequently, in order to ensure their protection against discrimination and their full participation in society, inclusion strategies need to consider and address their specific situation.

It is increasingly recognised that there can be several – intersecting – grounds for discrimination at play in a given case. A person who is a victim of racial discrimination might also suffer discrimination on any other ground covered by Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, amongst others sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity,¹⁸ age or disability. These different forms of discrimination are not mutually exclusive; multiple discrimination requires multi-layered responses. Unfortunately, neither the concept of multiple discrimination nor intersectionality has yet been integrated into legal remedies, policy making or data collection.

In line with the 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, which highlights women's rights and gender equality, the Council of Europe will remain sensitive to multiple discrimination and intersectionality as cross-cutting issues which will permeate all specific actions in a horizontal way.

The capacity of the Organisation to address multiple discrimination and intersectionality will be greatly enhanced by the creation of a new intergovernmental structure with a broad anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion mandate.

18. See CM/Rec(2010)5 "on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity", which can be understood as also applying to intersex persons; several delegations made declarations upon adoption of this Recommendation at the Deputies' 1081st meeting (31 March 2010); the Russian Federation expressed its position on this Recommendation in its corresponding interpretative statement made at the time of adoption of the Recommendation

7. Implementation and follow-up of the Strategic Action Plan

This Strategic Action Plan applies to the whole of the Council of Europe and the aim is that the “toolbox” of the entire Organisation be used in a transversal way between all entities to implement relevant actions. Transversality, internal co-ordination and co-operation between relevant departments will be facilitated by regular intersecretariat meetings on Roma and Traveller issues in order to achieve visible outcomes and tangible results. A specific objective in this context is to increase the mainstreaming of Roma and Traveller issues into all policy areas of the Organisation whilst recognising the continuous need for specific measures.

Implementation of the Strategic Action Plan will be overseen by an intergovernmental structure (steering committee and subordinate body) ensuring the co-ordination and co-operation with member States (for example, intergovernmental peer reviews and support activities). Partnerships will be enhanced with European institutions and agencies and other international organisations, equality bodies, national human rights institutions and civil society. In this respect, the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller Civil Society, set up by the Committee of Ministers in 2015, is particularly important and will play a key role in involving Roma and Traveller non-governmental organisations and individuals in the implementation and follow-up of the Strategic Action Plan.

Specific conferences or events, such as the Council of Europe’s international Roma women’s conferences, will contribute to advancing certain key aspects of the Strategic Action Plan.

The Committee of Ministers will be regularly informed about progress made in the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan.

A midterm review of the Strategic Action Plan’s implementation will be carried out in 2022, with a final evaluation planned for 2025.

Many of the 10-12 million Roma and Travellers in Europe suffer from extreme poverty and exclusion. The existence of widespread anti-Gypsyism reinforces and aggravates their economic and social deprivation.

This Strategic Action Plan on Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) translates the strategic objectives of the Council of Europe regarding the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law into a policy framework for the social and intercultural inclusion of Roma and Travellers in Europe. It provides a framework that is flexible and adaptable to country-specific conditions, serving as a roadmap and practical tool for the design, implementation and adjustment of programmes and actions.

The objectives of the Strategic Action Plan are to promote and protect the human rights of Roma and Travellers, to combat anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, and to foster inclusion in society.

The Strategic Action Plan is structured around three main lines of action:

- ▶ combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination and supporting real and effective equality;
- ▶ supporting democratic participation and promoting public trust and accountability; and
- ▶ supporting access to inclusive quality education and training.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.