

# A REFERENCE PAPER ON ANTIGYPSYISM.

## A WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTIGYPSYISM.

### ALLIANCE AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM

The 'Alliance against Antigypsyism' is a coalition of organizations that promote equality of rights for Roma and a racism-free society. The aim of the Alliance is to advance an understanding of antigypsyism as a specific form of racism, and to strengthen the political will, institutional mechanisms and civil society in order to address, monitor, combat and sanction antigypsyism in Europe.

### THE REFERENCE PAPER ON ANTIGYPSYISM

The Alliance has developed the document *Antigypsyism – a reference paper* which proposes a working definition of antigypsyism that reflects a deeper, systematic understanding of this phenomenon. The paper explores characteristics and background of antigypsyism, as well as dimensions of its manifestation. The rationale behind this paper is that the current lack of a common understanding of the scope, depth and implications of antigypsyism hinders the formulation of effective answers to tackle it. The full reference paper is available at: [www.antigypsyism.eu](http://www.antigypsyism.eu)

### WORKING DEFINITION

Antigypsyism is a historically constructed, persistent complex of customary racism against social groups identified under the stigma 'gypsy' or other related terms, and incorporates:

- a homogenizing and essentialising perception and description of these groups;
- the attribution of specific characteristics to them;
- discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background, which have a degrading and ostracizing effect and which reproduce structural disadvantages.

### ANTIGYPSYISM – THE SPECIFIC FORM OF RACISM THAT IMPACTS ROMA

1. It is essential to see that antigypsyism is not a 'minority issue'. To combat antigypsyism, our attention needs to shift to the mainstream societies while simultaneously raising the usually silenced voices of those dramatically affected by it.
2. Antigypsyism is not a result of the poor living conditions many Roma have to live in, nor is it the result of 'how different they are'. The idea that promoting the 'inclusion' or 'integration' of Romani individuals can be the main path toward countering antigypsyism is a fallacy that misconstrues the origins and essence of antigypsyism by inverting cause and effect.
3. 'Roma inclusion' or 'Roma integration' will remain illusory as long as we do not confront antigypsyism as the "headwind" or "virus" itself.
4. What sets antigypsyism apart is its high level of social acceptance. It motivates violence, hate speech and discrimination by individuals and movements but is also widely accepted in mainstream society and state institutions. This makes the challenge of tackling it both more urgent and more difficult.

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**CENTRAL COUNCIL** [of German Sinti & Roma]

# ALLIANCE AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM.

## MAINSTREAMING THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM IN ALL POLICY AREAS

The European Parliament recently adopted a report on the “Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism” (2017/2038(INI)) highlighting the persistent antigypsyism at all levels of European society, despite the efforts undertaken under the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the EU legislative framework against discrimination and hate crime. In this context, we call on Member States to take stock of the situation **and adopt complementary policy measures** to respond to the deep challenges experienced by Roma in Europe. Based on the recommendations adopted by the European Parliament, we recommend in priority:

### TO MEMBER STATES:

- **End forced evictions and demolitions of Roma’s houses**, the placement of Roma in segregated camps and emergency shelters cut off from basic services, the erection of walls around Roma settlements, and the failure of public authorities to secure Roma people’s full access to daily potable tap water and to sewage systems;
- **Condemn publicly forced sterilisation and provide compensation** to Roma women having been subjected to systemic and state-supported forced sterilisation, accompanied by a public apology to the victims of this crime against humanity;
- **Take school desegregation measures** using adequate resources and methodology;
- **Mark 2nd August as Roma Holocaust Memorial Day with a specific tribute to Roma victims**, in line with 2015 European Parliament’s resolution;
- **Ensure that targeted measures against antigypsyism** are included in National Action Plans against Racism and are in line with National Roma Integration Strategies;
- **Collect disaggregated data on hate crimes, recognising antigypsyist bias** to allow for analysis by national authorities of trends of hate crimes affecting Roma; develop effective responses to ensure recording, prosecution and adequate support to victims of racist violence and speech, in conjunction with civil society.
- **Conduct trainings to unmask antigypsyism in structures, legislation and practices**, for law enforcement officers, police, teachers, the judiciary, civil servant, in close collaboration with Roma and anti-racist civil society experts;
- Take steps to **ensure participation of Roma, in particular Roma women, in policy and decision-making structures**, at local, regional and national level, including by promoting their meaningful representation and recruitment into public administrations;

### TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION:

- **Ensure that infringement proceedings** launched against Czech Republic (2015), Slovakia (2016) and Hungary (2017) for breach of the Race Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) remain open until governments take effective and comprehensive measures to end discrimination and segregation of Romani children in education;
- **Launch infringement proceedings against Member States** that, through legislation or practice, breach Roma’s right to equal access to housing including by carrying out forced evictions, creation of segregated camps and reception centres and by applying directly or indirectly discriminatory criteria for access to social housing;
- Publicly denounce and take adequate sanctions **against stigmatising and racist rhetoric** from high level officials and politicians, in cooperation with the European Parliament when relevant;
- Strengthen and complement the work of the Non-discrimination and Roma Coordination Unit by reinforcing the team with a **dedicated coordinator on combatting antigypsyism**, with adequate resources and capacities;
- Adopt guidance on **hate crime data collection methodology** to ensure that antigypsyist bias is fully recorded according to victims’ and witness’ perceptions and other bias indicators;
- Commission the FRA to **publish a study on antigypsyism in the EU** and candidate countries, providing a deeper analysis of EU MIDIS II survey and looking at discriminatory practices and policies;
- Revise the European Commission’s **diversity strategy** to include targeted measures for racial and religious minorities including Roma staff members, such as two-day internal training on understanding antigypsyism.