

ODIHR and Roma and Sinti Issues



Roma and Sinti communities, often referred to as 'Roma', share common cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties, and constitute the largest ethnic minority in Europe. Found throughout the OSCE region, mainly in Central and South-Eastern Europe, they have been persecuted throughout history. They still face many challenges in accessing their rights and services and remain under-represented in public and political life, with Roma women often at particular risk of exclusion and exploitation.

In 1990, the OSCE recognized the "particular problems of Roma [...]" in the context of the proliferation of racial and ethnic hatred, xenophobia and discrimination ([Copenhagen, 1990](#)). The Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI), the first such office established by an intergovernmental organization, is a dedicated department in ODIHR that promotes the rights and integration of Roma and Sinti communities.

What we do

Based on the 2003 [Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area](#) and subsequent [Ministerial Council Decisions](#), ODIHR assists participating States by:

- Providing practical support on the implementation of OSCE commitments to participating States and civil society;
- Monitoring progress on implementation through regular reporting (status reports, assessment and study visits) and human dimension meetings;
- Helping to shape policies to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti;
- Serving as a clearing house for information, good practices and data on Roma and Sinti policies; and
- Facilitating dialogue between governments, international organizations and civil society on Roma and Sinti issues.



Photo: Piotr Markowski

Focus areas

- **Combating racism and discrimination:** helping to address anti-Roma racism, discrimination and hate-motivated incidents and crime; developing and delivering training for law enforcement, to improve trust and understanding between police and Roma and Sinti; monitoring the human rights situation of Roma and Sinti communities across the OSCE; and supporting the work of national human rights institutions and equality bodies.
- **Advancing equality and social inclusion:** promoting equal access to education, housing, health care and civil registration; policy advisory; supporting the integration of Roma history, culture, and the genocide of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust in particular, into educational materials; and promoting the fair portrayal of Roma and Sinti by the media.
- **Increasing participation in public and political life:** tailored training, including on electoral engagement, e.g., the 'Nicolae Gheorghe' Roma Leadership Academy; supporting civil society

and activists, including women and youth, to take part in OSCE events, allowing them to raise awareness about the issues they face; and developing national training programmes to foster dialogue, cooperation and community engagement.

- **Empowering Roma and Sinti women and youth:** documenting the needs of Roma and Sinti women's organizations and activists and developing responses; tools and training for Roma women and girls; and ODIHR's [Junior Expert programme](#) for Roma and Sinti youth.
- **Support in crisis and post-crisis situations:** monitoring the human rights situation of displaced Roma in conflict zones; training Roma civil society how to respond and advocate for redress; fostering dialogue between civil society, governments and the international community; and strengthening cooperation with state authorities on human rights-based approaches to the needs of Roma.

Key ODIHR resources



Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area - Fourth Status Report



Anti-Roma Hate Crime Factsheet



Effective and Human Rights-Compliant Policing in Roma and Sinti Communities: OSCE/ODIHR Training for Law Enforcement Officers



Understanding Anti-Roma Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Roma and Sinti Communities: A Practical Guide



Integrating Roma and Sinti issues in the work of National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies — Guidelines

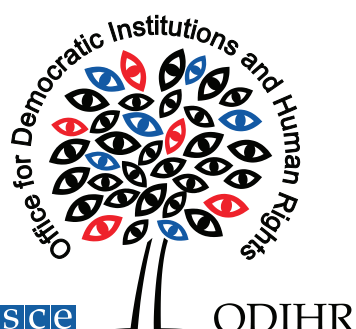
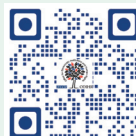


Guidelines for Activists in Addressing Situations of Evictions of Roma and Sinti



Opening Doors for Children: Prevention of Childhood Statelessness - Good Practices in the OSCE Area

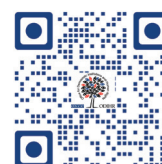
All ODIHR resources on Roma and Sinti are available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma> or contact ODIHR at roma@odihr.pl



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