

RomanoNet z.s., and the Path to Systemic Change

An umbrella organization of Roma and pro-Roma NGOs in the Czech Republic, advocating for systemic change in Roma and disadvantaged group integration.

The **Společně proti anticiganismu** (Together Against Anti-Gypsyism) project aims to change the narrative shaped by false myths and stereotypes about Romani people. These misconceptions contribute to harmful generalizations, reinforce negative biases, and even incite prejudicial violence. The project seeks to **systematically combat antigypsyism** and strengthen the protection and fulfillment of Roma rights in the Czech Republic. The project duration is from October 2023 to September 2025.

MAIN FINDINGS

CREATING AN ADVOCACY PLATFORM

Thanks to the project, the **Advocacy Forum** was created - a space for dialogue between Roma and institutions and influencing policy. It brings together leaders, activists, experts and other actors in the fight against antigypsyism and seeks stronger Roma representation in decision-making processes.

CHANGING THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON ANTIGYPSYISM

The project actively participated in **highlighting the issue of antigypsyism in the media**, which led to increased public awareness. The personal stories of Roma presented in the campaigns helped to show the real effects of discrimination and prejudice.

IMPACT ON LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICIES

The project **helped to get the issue of antigypsyism into government strategies and initiatives**, increasing the chances of for systemic change. The project has reinforced the principle of **"nothing about us without us"**, i.e. that Roma must be part of the decision-making processes on measures that affect them. **Better coordination** between Roma organisations and government agencies has been achieved, allowing for more effective Roma involvement in the development of legislation and strategies.

“We have a wealth of data on how Roma people experience racism and discrimination at the institutional level. The public often fails to recognize the impact this has on individuals' personal lives and tends to notice only hate speech or physical attacks. Racism takes many other forms, and we wanted to bring these closer to the public—whether through training sessions or lectures.

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(Specialist in awareness campaigns and education)



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CHANGES IN THE LIVES OF THE TARGET GROUP

The project **helped Romani people understand antigypsyism**, its forms, and ways to resist it. **Training and campaigns** provided individuals and organizations with practical tools to defend their rights and combat discrimination.

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We conduct very personal interviews with people. Most of them describe their first encounter with racism as early as kindergarten or elementary school. The main goal is to deeply study the manifestations of racism, particularly from an institutional perspective.

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(Specialist in awareness campaigns and education)

The project established a **sustainable advocacy model** for combating antigypsyism long-term. It highlighted the need for both **reactive and preventive measures**. Research, analysis, and storytelling provided key evidence for policy and legislative changes to improve state-Roma relations.

5 PILLARS OF THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM

Legal support and reporting discrimination

Advocacy activities and legislative changes

Education and awareness

Building the professional capacities of Roma

Media representation and the fight against stereotypes

IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

REPORTING DISCRIMINATION IS DIFFICULT AND REQUIRES TRUST

The project has shown that **Romani people often do not dare to report discrimination because of a deep-seated distrust of state institutions** or fear of secondary victimization. It was necessary not only to provide legal information, but also to build a sense of security and psychological support for those who decided to come forward with their stories.

COOPERATION BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS IS NECESSARY FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

Roma involvement is crucial - real help only works when it is provided by those who know the reality of their communities. "About Roma without Roma" **does not** lead to effective solutions.

The project has shown that **connecting Roma initiatives is key to systemic change**. Sharing experiences and coordinated advocacy are essential for lasting change.



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