

THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

ERGO NETWORK SNAPSHOT OF...

Old Age Income and Pensions



Roma people have between 5 to 10-year shorter life expectancy compared to other groups.



55% of Roma women aged 50+ are in bad health compared to 29% of non-Roma women.



Life expectancy at birth for Roma women in six countries is 9.8 years shorter than among women in the general population, while for Roma men the gap is wider at 10.2 years.

Older Roma in Europe often find themselves in a more difficult situation than their non-Roma counterparts of the same age. A life spent in poverty, often with inadequate housing and nutrition and in difficult working conditions, leads to health inequalities such as shorter life expectancy and increased health risks and chronic diseases. The current pandemic has placed them at higher

risk of contagion, since access to basic sanitary measures is not a given in Roma communities, and older persons with underlying health issues are a particularly vulnerable group. Older Roma are also in a significantly difficult income situation, given low employment rates and over-representation in precarious, low-paid work or atypical employment.

The umbrella term "Roma" encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.), as defined by the European Commission.

These give access to no or low pension entitlements, in a circumstance where older Roma face additional costs deriving from poorer health status and limited access to health and long-term care. Additionally, prevalent negative attitudes, discrimination and stereotypes against both Roma and older people place older Roma in a particularly vulnerable position in society.



ERGO Network Recommendations

- Ensure that the support provided to Roma people follows a life-cycle approach, which includes age-appropriate measures to deal with different realities per age group.
 - Provide adequate statutory minimum pensions available to all regardless of previous employment status, to avoid older Roma falling into even deeper poverty and exclusion. Ensure that such schemes are enough to provide for dignified living, and accessible to Roma claimants.
 - Explicitly prioritise older Roma in Covid-19 responses and beyond, to guarantee their access to protective equipment, sanitation and decent as well as quality healthcare, including vaccines and medicines, and long-term care.
- Pay particular attention to the plight of older Roma women, who experience additional disadvantages because of poor health, low employment record, and vulnerability to gender-based violence, as well as intersectional discrimination.
 - Counter pervasive ageism in conjunction with antigypsyism in public policy as well as public discourse, to ensure that older Roma do not suffer from multiple discriminations and are able to access their full rights and social participation.
 - Support access to lifelong learning opportunities for older Roma, as well as active ageing and decent employment, through targeted interventions such as second-chance schools and adapted workplaces that respond to their needs.

Sources

- AGE Platform Europe, Older Roma, a forgotten dramatic experience of ageing in time of pandemic, 2020
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Roma and Travellers in Six Countries, 2020



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This snapshot is an excerpt from ERGO Network's position paper [How to ensure that the European Pillar of Social Rights delivers on Roma equality, inclusion, and participation?](#), October 2020.