Roma minority are Europe's largest ethnic minority, out of an estimated 10 to 12 million Roma living in Europe, approximately 6 million are citizens or residents of the EU. Many EU Roma are still victims of prejudice and social exclusion, despite the discrimination ban across EU Member States. 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.

One of the most well-known European mainstream strategies Europe 2020 talked about inclusive growth by fostering a high-employment economy delivering economic, social, and territorial cohesion. The Roma minority were not an explicit target of these strategies, and these measures were not reaching them.

European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) data from 2021:

- On average, 43 % of Roma aged 20 to 64 in the countries surveyed were in paid work in 2021 – that is, in full-time work, part-time work, doing ad hoc jobs, in self-employment or occasional work – or had worked in the past four weeks of the interview/research.

Roma community tends not to work under employment contracts and therefore does not benefit from the payment of health and social contributions. This endangers their future social protection.

- The gender employment gap reached an average of 31 percentage points in 2021.
- 56% of the surveyed Roma aged 16–24 were NEET in 2021
- Discrimination experiences in employment doubled on average between 2016 and 2021. Every third Roma older than 16 experienced discrimination due to being Roma when looking for work in the last 12 months

As far as Roma youth themselves are concerned, we would expect that the higher the level of their education and the more favourable the region where they live, the greater their access would be to the labour market.

- However, research by the Roma Education Fund found that Roma are not only underrepresented in higher education; they are also underrepresented in natural sciences, engineering, manufacturing, and construction, which has a negative impact on their competitiveness in the job market because these fields tend to be the most competitive in today's EU job market.
- Based on research conducted by the ERGO network, it was revealed that Roma youth living in disadvantaged areas (mainly rural ones) are less likely to get jobs compared to Roma living in urban areas.
- The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) has shown that public works schemes exacerbate inequalities and diminish the prospects for many Roma to access the primary labour market. Such schemes create a permanent underclass of unskilled workers, increasingly vulnerable and dependent upon local political forces.

- A significant number of Roma are garbage collectors. Despite playing an important social role in protecting the environment, informal waste collectors have been rejected by the entire community in many cases their activity is often considered a crime. Revenue from waste sorting constantly varies and they work undeclared without pension and health insurance and are subject to blackmail by some waste buyers.

Poverty and the urgent need to provide for basic needs reduce motivation among Roma to attend vocational education training (VET) or professional short-term courses and oblige them instead to pursue alternative solutions, usually in the informal labour market.

According to the Institute of Roma Culture in Albania - IRCA study in Albania 2020 from 1000 interviewers 66% of them declared that are unemployed because of:

- Lack of vocational training,
- Lack of professional capacities and appropriate education.
- No information on employment programs:
- Discrimination at work
- Lack of urban transport in some Roma settlements

The majority work in informal jobs specifically in used clothing trading, recyclable materials collection, agriculture, music, tailoring and hairdressing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Providing Labor Market exploration and orientation for Roma unemployed individuals.
2. Providing a coaching program aiming to inform, train and prepare Roma for the labour market.
3. Offering financial support and business orientation for employment and self-employment.
4. Re-activation of artisanal works, musical culture and agricultural crops.
5. Promotion of employment incentive programs within businesses and the Roma community aiming to increase the access of Roma in the labour market.
6. Enhancing Roma women's economic power through dedicated employment and self-employment program.
7. Providing financial literacy courses for Roma
8. National Governments across the EU must invest in education that provides professional development and qualification.
9. National Governments across the EU should also address early school dropout at different levels of education so that Roma young people increase their chances of getting fair jobs.