



Global Roma Alliance for Strategic Security

Lumjaki Alijansa Romani pala Strategikano Arakhajmos



RomaniPhen



WITHWINGS
ANDROOTS

To

President of European Council António Costa

President of European Commission Ursula von der Leyen

Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib

Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, Rule of Law and Consumer Protection Michael McGrath

Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration Magnus Brunner

Copy to

President Roberta Metsola and Members of the European Parliament

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dr. Michael O'Flaherty

Director of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Maria Telalian

30 June, 2025



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Roma Security at Risk: Addressing the Growing Threats

An Open Letter on the Underrepresentation of Roma Security in the ProtectEU Internal Security Strategy

Dear Presidents Costa and von der Leyen,

Dear Commissioners Lahbib, McGrath, and Brunner,

The Global Roma Alliance for Strategic Security - GRASS (Lumjaki Alijansa Romani pala Strategikano Arakhajmos) is an international coalition uniting Roma civil society organisations and advocates from Europe, North and South America, committed to advancing the security and resilience of the global Roma community. We believe that security is a foundational pillar for meaningful progress in all areas of life. That is why our mission is to ensure that this vital issue is brought to the forefront of policy discussions at all levels of governance.

We welcome the adoption of the ProtectEU Internal Security Strategy¹ on 1 April 2025 which seeks to bolster Europe's security by addressing terrorism, organized crime, cybercrime, hybrid threats, and other security challenges both online and offline. However, we are deeply concerned that the security of Europe's historically most marginalized and 'largest minority' - Roma - has been overlooked in this strategic document.

In the absence of Roma voices in the European Parliament - a gap that raises serious concerns about the inclusiveness of European democracy - we feel compelled to address you directly. We urge a thorough revision of the ProtectEU Internal Security Strategy to ensure inclusive and equitable security measures, and also transparent and accountable monitoring of the EU funds, allocated for its implementation, especially where their impact may disproportionately and adversely affect Roma. This is particularly critical, as unlike other minorities in Europe, the Roma can rely neither on political representation nor on diplomatic protection, and furthermore, lack strong civil society structures capable of consistently advocating for their interests - as evident in the diminishing visibility of Roma issues across European policy agendas.

A reconsideration of the EU's internal security strategy is essential in light of the harsh realities faced by millions of Roma across Europe. If the EU aims to curb deepening inequalities and societal divisions - especially amid war at its eastern borders - it should also recognize and respond to the needs of its 'largest minority', present in every European country. Prioritising

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025DC0148>



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the security of some communities at the expense of others, risks being perceived as bias and a failure of strategic vision - an oversight the EU cannot afford at such crucial moment for its future.

- 1. The European Commission's website indicates that only a limited number of civil society organisations participated in the public consultations on the draft Security Strategy - with no Roma organisations represented among them.**

There is a striking absence of organizations representing vulnerable communities - those most frequently affected by racial profiling, securitization, and discrimination. This raises an important question: Has the draft strategy been effectively publicized and made accessible to the relevant stakeholders (such as civil society groups, private sector entities, and academic institutions) ensuring the Commission gathers a more diverse and representative range of opinions?

- 2. The newly adopted Internal Security Strategy starkly contrasts with the EU's Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation (2020–2030), which asserts that 'The EU has a duty to protect its Roma minority from discrimination, antigypsyism and social exclusion'².**

Yet, this commitment is neither upheld nor reinforced in the new strategy, raising concerns about its alignment with the EU's broader principles of minority inclusion and protection.

- 3. By prioritizing the security of Jewish and Muslim communities while excluding Roma, the strategy exemplifies what scholars call a 'hierarchy of vulnerability' reinforcing disparities in security considerations without clearly articulated reasoning or criteria - thereby exposing the strategy to valid criticism, as it fails to justify why the lives of Roma, often described as the EU's most discriminated-against citizens, should be treated as less worthy of protection than those of other communities.**

According to the ProtectEU Strategy: *"Given manifest vulnerabilities, the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030) will continue guiding Commission's actions on protecting the Jewish community. The Commission will equally ensure that appropriate tools are in place to support Member States in combatting anti-Muslim hatred."*

² https://commission.europa.eu/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_en



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While the Jewish and Muslim communities in EU undoubtedly face real and documented threats, the Roma are rendered invisible in the policy space where visibility often determines resource allocation and legal protection.

- 4. The prevailing impression is that the security of 12 million European Roma is not a priority. This cannot be overlooked in silence, as in this historic year when Europe commemorates 80 years since the end of World War II and the liberation of Roma from the Nazi camps the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has likewise failed to address the growing antigypsyism in its 2025 Fundamental Rights Report³ - unlike previous editions, the very term 'antigypsyism' is conspicuously absent. This omission sends a clear and troubling signal: the exclusion of Roma security from the EU Internal Security Strategy is not an isolated oversight, but part of a broader, deeply concerning pattern within EU institutional discourse. Even more worrying is that this trend has gone largely unchallenged by Roma civil society in a visible and coordinated way - an absence this letter seeks to address with urgency and resolve.**

In fact, we do not need to go back to the World War Two era; the plight of Roma from the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine serves as a stark reminder of the consequences when the Roma security is neglected. How does the European Commission account for these pressing concerns in its new security strategy?

In 2025 we have to remind again European institutions that combating antigypsyism should be as important in the "Union of Equality" as combating antisemitism and Islamophobia. This is a particularly sensitive issue given that **the Commission has already been alerted in 2020 by the MEPs from EU Parliament's Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI) about a case of EU funds (EUR 1.7 million) being used by an EU Member State (Bulgaria) to racially profile and collectively stigmatise its citizens of Roma origin as 'vulnerable to radicalisation' in violation of the principle of non-discrimination⁴.**

Moreover, a recently published report by Bridge EU, on 26 May this year, revealed that **EU funded projects in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, Hungary and Romania, amounting to approximately EUR 1.1 billion, have been used in ways that violate the fundamental rights of Roma, as well as people with disabilities and people with a migrant background⁵.**

³ <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2025/electoral-manipulation-violence-against-women-online-hate-testing-times-fundamental>

⁴ <https://www.errc.org/news/racism-in-bulgaria-meps-call-for-eu-funding-to-be-blocked-following-interior-ministries-roma-radicalization-police-training>

⁵ [PRESS RELEASE - 1,1 billion EUR, 63 projects, six countries, one pattern: how EU funds violate fundamental rights](#)



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It is precisely the lack of sufficient monitoring and effective sanctions regarding such projects and practices that give rise to the legitimate question of how the European Union will ensure that its new Internal Security Strategy does not contribute to further securitisation of Roma communities in EU Member States. This concern is particularly pressing given that the strategy fails to acknowledge rising antigypsyism as a security risk and makes no explicit reference to right-wing extremism.

The Roma in EU face growing intolerance in their home countries and expect to be protected against hate speech, hate crimes and violent extremism. For decades, human rights organizations have documented a vast array of Roma rights violations across Europe, providing EU bodies with extensive information, and yet they continue to overlook these findings in their security-related strategies and decisions. Here are just a few examples from the last ten years:

- **In November 2011, former MEP of Roma origin Viktória Mohácsi was compelled to flee Hungary after receiving death threats** and discovering an explosive device beneath her car. Seeking safety, she applied for asylum in Canada, where she continues to reside. Despite being the recipient of numerous international awards for her contribution to human rights, Mohácsi has not received any support from European institutions and has left Europe disappointed⁶.
- **In May 2025, another former MEP of Roma origin Peter Pollák received comments referencing Dachau and Auschwitz under a photo of his children on Facebook** - messages that remain publicly visible to thousands. Pollák wrote on his personal Facebook profile that he will continue to fight racism despite the threats.
- In contrast to the previous examples, **the 2025 European elections saw the election of a Slovak politician with an extremist background - one who had been convicted by Slovakia's Supreme Court for inciting hatred against Roma and expelled from the Slovak parliament on these grounds**⁷. Despite this history, his election as a MEP was met with indifference from the president of the parliament and fellow MEPs, treating it as a routine occurrence.
- **Three of the nine victims of the 2016 Munich shooting were young people of Roma and Sinti descent, targeted and killed by an 18-year-old perpetrator motivated by xenophobic and extremist views**⁸. Their deaths serve as a tragic

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/eu-lawmaker-to-canada-asylum-seeker-a-romas-long-trek-idUSBRE95F07X/>

⁷ <https://spectator.sme.sk/politics-and-society/c/politico-slovakias-smiling-racist-among-the-weirdest-meps>

⁸ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anschlag_in_M%C3%BCnchen_2016#Opfer.



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reminder of the deadly consequences of hate-driven extremism and the urgent need for inclusive remembrance and justice.

- **Between March 25 and April 9, 2019, totally 25 attacks against Roma people were recorded in France, primarily in towns around Paris** - Bobigny, Clichy-sous-Bois, Montreuil, Bondy, Colombes, Montfermeil, Saint-Ouen, Champs-sur-Marne, Aulnay and Sevran⁹. The attacks stemmed from a social media-driven disinformation campaign falsely accusing Roma of child abduction - an alarming example of how age-old racist stereotypes can be weaponized to create division and incite violence even in Western Europe.
- **Among the nine victims of the 2020 Hanau terror attack in Germany, three were of Roma origin:** Mercedes Kierpacz (35) from Germany, Kaloyan Velkov (33) from Bulgaria, and Vili Viorel Păun (22) from Romania¹⁰. Their tragic loss highlights the ongoing risks faced by Romani communities and raises urgent concerns about their security and protection.
- **In June 2021, Stanislav Tomáš, a Romani man, died in Teplice, Czech Republic after being restrained by police in a manner similar to the killing of George Floyd in the USA¹¹.** A video captured by a bystander showed an officer kneeling on Tomáš's neck for almost 6 minutes. Yet unlike the global reckoning that followed Floyd's murder, the officers involved in Tomáš's case were publicly praised by the Czech government for their handling of the incident.
- **In March 2024, a devastating arson attack carried out by right-wing extremist claimed the lives of a Muslim Roma family from Bulgaria in Solingen, Germany - the victims included two young parents, their toddler, and an infant¹².** The following year, in 2025, another arson attack targeted a residence in Solingen inhabited by Roma people. Thankfully, that incident did not result in any injuries, though it reignited deep fears within the community.
- **In October 2024, approximately 80 swastikas and the initials of a right-wing extremist political party were spray-painted throughout a residential building**

⁹ <https://theconversation.com/why-are-roma-people-being-attacked-in-france-115030>

¹⁰ <https://ran.eu.com/rechter-terror-in-deutschland/>.

¹¹ <https://www.brusselstimes.com/176211/european-commission-calls-for-independent-investigation-of-deadly-arrest-of-roma-man-in-the-czech-republic>

¹² <https://www.n-tv.de/panorama/Indizien-fuer-rechtsextremes-Motiv-hinter-Solinger-Brandanschlag-article25666917.html>



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housing several hundred Roma people, many of whom refugees from former Yugoslavia¹³. In a further escalation, small fires were deliberately set in front of apartment doors, resulting in minor property damage and deep concern among residents.

- **In April 2025, a memorial in Liberec, Czech Republic, dedicated to Roma children murdered during the Holocaust, was vandalized with an axe – just a year after its unveiling¹⁴.** An unknown perpetrator struck the bronze plaque, damaging the engraved names of eleven infants who were born in a local concentration camp and later deported to Auschwitz, where they lost their lives.

The list of similar incidents is far too extensive to capture in this letter alone. Yet across all cases, European and national authorities have consistently failed to enact targeted measures to protect the affected individuals and communities, despite persistent threats and well-documented surge in anti-Roma hate crimes across the EU - clearly illustrated in the 2025 Annual Report by Germany's Antiziganism Reporting and Information Center (MIA)¹⁵.

Alarmingly, none of the security frameworks developed in EU to safeguard Jewish or Muslim communities have ever been extended to the Roma. No dedicated funding has been allocated for their protection, nor has there been any comparable commitment to acknowledging or addressing the scale of this threat. This systemic neglect raises urgent and legitimate concerns - now brought forward, for the first time, by members of the Roma community before the highest political leadership of the European Union.

Dear Presidents and Commissioners,

It is time for the European Union to take seriously the security of the millions of Roma citizens and to ensure that this priority is explicitly reflected across its strategic and security frameworks. Through this letter, we call on the EU to take swift and decisive action in response to the escalating wave of anti-Roma violence across Europe - violence that remains persistently underreported in mainstream media and inadequately addressed by relevant authorities. We further urge the establishment of robust safeguards to prevent EU funding from being channelled into securitisation measures that may further marginalize, or even endanger, the lives of Roma citizens, in direct contradiction to the objectives of EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation.

¹³ <https://ran.eu.com/80-hakenkreuze-im-iduna-zentrum-der-faschismus-bedroht-roma-weiterhin/>).

¹⁴ [Liberec, Czech Republic: Axe used to damage memorial to Romani children who died during the Holocaust - Romea.cz - Everything about Roma in one place](#)

¹⁵ [Die Melde- und Informationsstelle Antiziganismus MIA veröffentlicht ihren 3. Jahresbericht zu antiziganistischen Vorfällen in Deutschland. Die Vorfallzahl ist im Vergleich zum Vorjahr um ca. 40% gestiegen - Melde- und Informationsstelle Antiziganismus](#)



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Sincerely,

Bundes Roma Verband e.V., Germany
Nizaqete Bislimi-Hošo

Chachipe, Denmark
Murat Haliti

Council of the Roma Organisations and Communities in the Americas (Saveto katar le Organizatsiyi ay Kumpenyi Rromane anda'l Americhi) - SKOKRA, Argentina
Jorge Bernal

Human Rights Project, Bulgaria
Dimitar Georgiev

Internationale Kultur und Sport Verein der Roma Carmen e.V, Germany
Sami Dzemailovski

Roma Center e.V./ Roma Antidiscrimination Network, Germany
Kenan Emini

Roma Diplomacy Network, Belgium
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Pinto Horse Web Portal, Bulgaria
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Emiliya Dancheva, Bulgaria – journalist

Dzhavid Sali, Germany – activist