FACING
ALL THE
FACTS

GUIDE TO
ROMA
COMMUNITIES
FOR POLICE

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FACTS

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This publication is part of the Facing All the Facts online course on anti-Roma hate crime.
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Facing all the Facts is a project coordinated by CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe (Belgium) that takes a collaborative approach to unmask the full extent and nature of hate crime and hate speech working through a coalition of civil society organizations, policy leads, national law enforcement authorities and practitioners.

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Introduction

This publication was developed in the framework of the **"Facing all the Facts"** project, an EU funded initiative led by **CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an inclusive Europe** in partnership with a diverse coalition of civil society organisations and national law enforcement authorities, aiming to unmask the full extent and nature of hate crime and hate speech through a collaborative approach. Facing Facts fosters and advocates for better cooperation among civil society and public authorities in recording and monitoring of hate crime. We hope this guide will support better recognition and appreciation of Roma communities and organisations towards better responses to anti-Roma hate crime.

Along with research and advocacy, training is one of the key activities of the Facing all the Facts project. This booklet stands as an important component of the new Facing Facts Online course on recognizing and identifying anti-Roma bias indicators for civil society and law enforcement. The course was developed in close cooperation with partners and relevant experts in the field of anti-Roma hate crime. The course is available on the project's e-learning platform **http://www.facingfactsonline.eu** along with additional online courses on other bias motivations (antisemitism, anti-disability, anti-Muslim, anti-LGBT, anti-migrant, anti-Black), three online courses on hate crime for police in UK, Italy and Hungary and an online course on recognizing and combating hate speech currently available in English, French, German and Italian.

Lead partner: CEJI-A Jewish contribution to an inclusive Europe

Facing All the Facts partners:

- Community Security Trust (CST)
- Dutch Centre for Documentation and Information Israel (CIDI)
- ENARIreland
- European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)
- European Roma Information Office (ERIO)
- Movimiento Contra la Intolerancia (MCI)
- National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- National University of Public Service (NUPS)
- Osservatorio per la sicurezza contro gli atti discriminatori (OSCAD)
- Praksis

Who are the Roma?

The term Roma (literally translated as "people"[1]) refers to a number of different ethnic groups such as Romani, Sinti, Gitanes, Manouche, Kale, etc. who have their own cultural identities, but are often generally categorized with the negative term "Gypsies" by outsiders, a category that erase the large diversity of Roma people across Europe[2]. The correct name of the culture and the people is Roma (or Romani culture, Rrom culture), "gypsy" is very derogatory and therefore must not be used.

It is believed that Roma descend from an original westward migration of people out of Northern India around 1000 years ago, that later spread in the Middle East, Northern Africa and Europe. The first documents describing the presence of Roma people in European countries are, more or less, from the Middle Ages, from the XIV century[3]. The term "Gypsy" may derive from the fact that these migrants where sometimes mistaken for Egyptians or from the migratory movements they enacted from North Africa, Greece and Middle East towards Europe.

Roma people are famous for their nomadic lifestyle: in the past, they used to move from a country, region or city to the next one offering several services to the local communities. They were famous for their ability of repairing objects, working with metals, shearing sheep, raising livestock, breeding horses, selling home-made objects and for entertaining itinerant shows, including music as a key element of the culture. With the passing of time, Roma people became less nomadic and started settling down in different cities and regions of the world. Very few of them still travel (especially during summer).

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[1] Amnesty International : https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/04/roma-in-europe-11-things-youalways-wanted-to-know-but-were-afraid-to-ask/
[2] Dosta! Guide: http://dosta.org/media/PREMS_45213_GBR_1490_DOSTA_TOOLKIT_A5.pdf
[3] Osservazione.org: http://www.osservazione.org/dati/mat/9/doc/485.pdf
Council of Europe: http://romafacts.uni-graz.at/view_pdf.php?t=history&s=h_2_0&l=en

The Guide Dosta! explains this stereotype that many people still have of Roma as nomadic:

"This almost romantic picture of Roma life is very far from reality. Only 20% of European Roma today are still nomadic, almost exclusively in Western Europe. In previous centuries nomadism was almost never a matter of free choice but of persecution. Continuous expulsion is a main feature in Roma history. Thus, nomadism was mistakenly interpreted as a cause of "inadaptability" of the Roma in modern society. Behind the concept of "adaptation", promoted by non-Roma authorities, is not only ignorance and the failure to recognise cultural values and the tendency of ethnic assimilation, but worse, a deeply racist view, where the main issues dealt with are poverty, disease and education, thus issues related to social status, not ethnicity."[1]

Today, Roma people are the largest ethnic minority in Europe, counting a population of 10-12 million people all around the world, 6 million of which live in the EU. They cherish a rich cultural and musical heritage, that has defined them for centuries and that has also inspired other population's cultures and works of art. Nonetheless, prejudice and bias portrayed the Roma as a homogenous, big population, minimizing the differences between the various groups and offering a flat, general image. They spread a negative stereotyped image of the population, which erases groups' identities and peculiarities and gives a general, inaccurate idea of Romani people. It is important to remember that the various sub-groups speak different dialects, that they have different traditions and that they may have different cultures and life-styles.

The Roma ethnic group has been discriminated and stigmatized during the course of history, suffering exclusion, hatred and persecution from several political regimes. Roma continue to experience misunderstanding, intolerance, discrimination and racism across EU member states, and this has repercussions on the relationship between Roma and the hosting societies. It is for this reason that Roma people may struggle to present themselves and interact with society in an open and direct way, having trouble communicating with health services or trusting interpreters who come from the settled communities of their countries of origin.

[4] Dosta!: http://dosta.org/media/PREMS_45213_GBR_1490_DOSTA_TOOLKIT_A5.pdf
[5] Osservazione.org: http://www.osservazione.org/dati/mat/9/doc/485.pdf

Persecutions, discrimination, separation from society and slavery[4] also reinforced the image, the cultural heritage and the identity of Roma people, rather than weakening it. The discrimination and hard moments lived consolidated the Roma identity and the bonds and strength related to the family and friends circle, protecting their traditions and culture till nowadays[5].

The sub-groups

The definition as "Roma" is not always desired, liked or wanted by everyone; some people just identify with their subgroup and not with the whole ethnic community. Even within the same country we can find different Roma subcultures (for instance, in Romania, rudari, kalderash, lautari, ursari, etc.). The fact that Roma live in almost all countries of Europe since almost 1000 years means that there is a high diversity of cultures and traditions. Despite the famous stereotype ("Roma don't want to integrate") Roma people mixed with other populations and traditions, adopted different religions, and included within their language (Romani, see below) some words of the countries' languages they lived in.

The main sub-groups are the following:

- Ashkali (or "Balkan Egyptians") – Albanian-speaking Roma communities in the Balkans

- Bashaldé – Hungarian-Slovak Roma diaspora in the US from the late 19th century

- Calé is the endonym used by both the Spanish Roma *(gitanos)* and Portuguese Roma *ciganos*; Caló is "the language spoken by the *calé*".

- Erlides (also *Arlije, Yerlii* or *Arli*) in Greece

- Kaale, in Finland and Sweden.

- Kale, *Kalá,* or *Valshanange* – Welsh English endonym used by some Roma clans in Wales. (Romanichal also live in Wales.) Romani in Spain are also attributed to the Kale.

- Khorakhanè, *Horahane* or *Xoraxai,* also known as "Turkish Roma" or "Muslim Roma" – Greek Roma and Turkish Roma.

- *Lalleri*, from Austria, Germany, and the western Czech Republic (including the former Sudetenland).

- Lovari, from Hungary, known in Serbia as *Machvaya*, *Machavaya*, *Machwaya*, or *Macwaia*.

- Lyuli, in Central Asian countries.

- Rom in Italy.

- Roma in Romania, commonly known by majority ethnic Romanians as *Țigani,* including many subgroups defined by occupation:

    - Boyash also known as *Băieși, Lingurari, Ludar, Ludari,* or *Rudari,* who coalesced in the Apuseni Mountains of Transylvania. Boyash or *băieși* is a Romanian word for "miners". *Lingurari* means "spoon makers", *Ludar,Ludari,* and *Rudari* may mean "woodworkers" or "miners". (There is a semantic overlap due to the homophony or merging of lemmas with different meanings from at least two different languages: the Serbian *rudar* miner, and *ruda* stick, staff, rod, bar, pole (in Hungarian *rúd,*. and in Romanian *rudă*.
    - Churari, from Romanian *Ciurari*, "sieve makers", Zlătari "gold smiths"
    - Ursari (bear trainers, from Moldovan/Romanian *urs* "bear"),
    - Ungaritza blacksmiths and bladesmiths
    - Argintari silversmiths.
    - Aurari goldsmiths.
    - Florari flower sellers.
    - Lăutari singers.
    - Kalderash, from Romanian *caldarar* meaning tinsmith, tinker, kettlemaker; also in Bessarabia and Ukraine.
    - Roma or *Romové,* Czech Republic
    - Roma or *Romská,* Slovakia
    - Romanichal, in the United Kingdom, emigrated also to the United States, Canada and Australia
    - Romanisæl, in Norway and Sweden.
    - Roms or *Manouche* (from *manush* "people" in Romani) in France
    - Romungro or Carpathian Romani from eastern Hungary and neighbouring parts of the Carpathians
    - Sinti or *Zinti,* predominantly in Germany, and Northern Italy; *Sinti* do not refer to themselves as Roma, although their language is called *Romanes*.

The Roma and the "Gadje"

The term *"Gadjo"* refers to a non-Roma man, while a non-Roma woman is a *"Gadji"*. This word comes from the Sanskrit *"gadjjha"* meaning *"non-warrior"*. The first Roma who left India a thousand years ago belonged to the "warrior caste", while the Gadje were the people who did not belong to that caste. Today "Gadje" is referred generally to outsiders (not necessarily a homogeneous group), so non-Roma and sometimes Roma who do not follow a Romani lifestyle[6].

Language and communication

When considering Roma people and their relation with other societies, it is important to consider two common kinds of barriers: barriers based on linguistic issues and barriers based on communication issues. While the first item is related to the group composition and cultural heritage, the second one is more related to the communication process between Romani and other cultures.

Not all Roma people share a common language or only one dialect, which may complicate the interaction between two different sub-groups and, or, between one group and the rest of the society. For example, a segment of the Roma communities across Europe speaks a dialect of **Romani** (the traditional language) although usually they also speak, to various degrees, the majority language of the country they live or lived in. Sometimes Romani is confused with the Romanian language, although they are two completely separate languages with different origins. This may make communication more difficult for CSOs or police officers: in case an interpreter is required, it is important to clarify what language will meet the person's needs best and, those who speak Romani will follow an interpreter speaking the standard dialect. Due to the complexities of the language and cultural issues involved it may be more beneficial to source a Roma cultural mediator/interpreter where possible[7].

On the other hand, the communication process between Roma and other cultures may be particularly difficult when approaching professional or specific topics, such as those related to laws, rules, access to the health system, education or legal documents. Relevant information is often written or told in a complex language, which is not easy to understand for people with a low level of education.

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[6] ERIO: http://cloud2.snappages.com/ecc3fa83da15cf423fe3aaa342f545fa355b24f3/Brochure_Holding%20Us%20Back.pdf
[7] http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/SocialInclusion/InterculturalGuide/Roma/Roma.pdf

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Moreover, police and civil society organizations may not always be aware of Roma practices, traditions, and communication processes, making it even more difficult to have a smooth communication between the two groups[8].

Holidays and festivities

- The 8th of April is the International Day of the Roma, a day to raise awareness of the issues facing the Roma community and celebrate the Romani culture.

- There are different religious ceremonies and festivals of Roma music in many countries of Europe. For example in France the pilgrimage of Roma to Saintes Maries de la Mer (May 24th and 25th) is very popular. In Spain there are many Virgins of Gitanos and Catholic Brotherhoods of Gitanos, with specific ceremonies in Easter or other dates. There are also the Khamoro music festival in Prague, Manouche jazz festivals in France, flamenco festivals in many cities of Spain, and in some towns in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic there are Roma music festivals.

- The 2nd of August is the memorial of the Porrajmos[9] or Samudaripen, to remember the Roma victims of the Holocaust. It is commemorated in some countries, and in European institutions (Council of Europe, European Parliament).

- The 5th of November is the International Day of the Romani Language (proclaimed at the IRU (International Romani Union) Conference held in Zagreb, Croatia, from 3 to 5 November 2009).

- The 16th of May is the Romani Resistance Day. On the evening of May 16th 1944, in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, SS guards armed with machine guns surrounded the area of the camp designated for Roma and Sinti prisoners.

[8] http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/SocialInclusion/InterculturalGuide/Roma/Roma.pdf
Practical guide to prevent discrimination against the Roma community for police services. https://gitanos.org/upload/76/24/Guide_Police_services_and_Roma.pdf
[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porajmos

Their intent was to round up the nearly 6,000 prisoners there and send them to the gas chambers. But when the guards approached the area, they were met with armed resistance from the inmates. The prisoners had learned of the planned "liquidation" and fashioned weapons from sheet metal, wood, pipes, rocks, and any other scraps of material they could get their hands on. According to the memories of survivors and witnesses to the incident, the inmates forced the guards into retreat, and though some prisoners were shot that night, the act of resistance allowed the Roma and Sinti prisoners to put off execution for several more months.

Society and family

The traditional Roma communities are patriarchal: men have more authority and they tend to protect young women. It is not unusual for a man to speak on behalf of his wife and/or family. Nonetheless, it has been noted that the matrons may have also an important role in the family[10]. Roma people do not actively choose a leader for their community, but they support and respect men who have proven their wisdom, courage, knowledge and decision-making attitude. Sometimes, it is possible to see a woman in a leading role: as for men, women can become the representative image and reference point to the community if the family/group has noticed, approved and supported their knowledge, their problem-solving skills and their commitment to the well-being of the group[11]. It is important to remember that patriarchy is not something specific of Roma, but of all European societies. Today many Roma men and women are organized to fight patriarchy and to promote equality between men and women[12].

Elderly people are respected and taken into high consideration, since they are seen as the main source of knowledge. They also represent and transmit Roma culture and traditions orally, having a strong impact on the younger generations[13]. It is important to notice, in fact, that Roma cultural heritage has mostly been kept and developed orally. It was only in the 20th century that Roma authors started writing down their literature and stories, to preserve them and fix them permanently.

[10] http://www.corepol.eu/findings/Intercultural_Manual_final.pdf
[11] Osservazione.org: http://www.osservazione.org/dati/mat/9/doc/485.pdf
[12] Ethel C. Brooks, "The Possibilities of Romani Feminism," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 38, no. 1 (Autumn 2012): 1–11.
[13] http://www.corepol.eu/findings/Intercultural_Manual_final.pdf

In some very traditional Roma communities women are prepared for marriage since childhood and are seen as care-givers in case of illness. They tend to marry young, usually between the ages of 14 and 18, and to have high birth rates, but this fact can't be used as a description of all Roma communities today.

In some communities marriage is also seen as a milestone in a person's life, a fundamental step that signifies entering adulthood and acquiring a solid position in the family and in the tribe. The extended family that creates with each marriage, through new births and social bonds, represents the broader organization of the Roma society. The community, in fact, is structured as several families linked together, who share everyday life experiences, concerns, objectives and desires. They create an inner, smaller identity that distinguishes each group, creating a strong sense of family loyalty and duty[14].

Traditions and religion

Roma people don't have a particular religion connected to their ethnic identity; they rather assimilate the religion –or the most important traits of it- of the hosting country, merging it with personal myths, stories, beliefs and taboos. For this reason, it is possible to meet Roma people who are of different confessions (or with no belief). Nonetheless, there are few recurring elements that bring Roma people of different origins together, from the approach to celebrations to the presence and role of the community. During celebrations and events, family plays a fundamental role and it is very common for Roma people to spend these occasions together. Besides during holidays and special events, the family comes together for occasions like interment rituals and mourning. The mourning has a strong impact on the social life of Roma for what concerns the clothing and the rules. Traditionally, black clothing is worn for up to one year following the death of a close relative and men do not shave. These social rules tend to be followed irrespective of religious affiliation, but it is important to mention that today many Roma do not follow these rituals[15].

[14] http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/SocialInclusion/InterculturalGuide/Roma/Roma.pdf
[15] http://www.corepol.eu/findings/Intercultural_Manual_final.pdf http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/SocialInclusion/InterculturalGuide/Roma/Roma.pdf

Among the traditions that Roma people carry on and preserve, mingling them with the religion acquired, nature is an important element.

Some cultural features[1] of Roma people are the following:

- Respect of the elderly.

- High value of the family (extended family).

- Value and respect of the verbal agreement or verbal contract.

- Set of rules or protocols to solve problems internally.

- Mourning (often wearing black clothes, avoiding music or public parties, etc. during some months).

- Gender roles for men and women (as in many other patriarchal societies).

- Musical traditions (great diversity among countries and regions). There is not a single *"Roma music"* but different music styles belonging to groups, regions, countries, etc.

- Solidarity and hospitality.

- The Romani language (there are many Roma that don't speak Romani, for instance in Spain and Portugal, but they feel Roma as well).

- Value of the freedom.

- Oral traditions (tales, legends).

Anti-gypsyism (hostility, stereotypes and bias)

To understand the current situation of Roma in Europe it is very important to know the discrimination and hostility faced by Roma people through centuries in almost all countries of Europe.

Markus End defines "anti-gypsyism" as follows:

- "a homogenizing and essentializing perception and description of certain groups under the stigma of "Gypsy" or other related terms;
- an attribution of specific deviant characteristics to the stigmatized;
- along with discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background."[1]

The reference paper of the Alliance against anti-gypsyism provides this definition:

"Anti-gypsyism is the specific racism towards Roma, Sinti, Travellers and others who are stigmatized as 'gypsies' in the public imagination. Although the term is finding increasing institutional recognition, there is as yet no common understanding of its nature and implications. Anti-gypsyism is often used in a narrow sense to indicate anti-Roma attitudes or the expression of negative stereotypes in the public sphere or hate speech. However, antigypsyism gives rise to a much wider spectrum of discriminatory expressions and practices, including many implicit or hidden manifestations. Anti-gypsyism is not only about what is being said, but also about what is being done and what is not being done1. To recognize its full impact, a more precise understanding is crucial."[1]

Roma people still face discrimination, exclusion and attacks. They are often marginalized from the main hosting society because of a number of bias and misconception related to Roma's culture, identity and lifestyle. There are common and articulated prejudices that depict Roma in many ways; two common images are the romantic one and the criminal one. They represent Roma as anything from thieves to talented and artistic people[16], feeding the stereotypes of Roma as criminal and untruthful people, 'free' from societal constrains.

[16] Villano, Fontanella et alli, 2017. "Stereotyping Roma people in Italy: IRT models for ambivalent prejudice measurement" https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0147176716301286

This representation continues to be misused to delegitimize minority groups, especially Roma, negatively impacting their efforts to fit into society and change their social perception[17].

A 2012 survey conducted in eleven EU countries highly populated by Roma people highlighted how Roma's quality of life, employment, education, housing and health situation are unsatisfactory[18]. On average it is worse than the situation of the non-Roma living close by. The report notices also that Roma continue to experience discrimination and **are not sufficiently aware of their rights** guaranteed by EU law.

This survey also provides data about relations between Roma and the Police regarding discrimination:

- Between 65% and 100% of Roma, depending on the country surveyed, failed to report their experiences of personal victimization to the police.

- The main reason given by Roma for not reporting their experiences of criminal victimization to the police was that they did not feel that the police would be able to do anything about it.

- On average – 1 in 3 Roma respondents were stopped by the police in the previous 12 months, half of whom indicated that they believed they were stopped specifically because they were Roma.

- Roma who were stopped by the police were stopped 4 times on average over a 12 months period.

- On average – 1 in 4 Roma respondents who were stopped by customs or border control over the previous 12 months when returning to their country believed they were stopped specifically because they were Roma[19].

[17] Ibid.
[18] Fra: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/situation-roma-11-eu-member-states-survey-results-glance
[19] Sáez, Gimenez, (2014). Practical Guide for Police Services to Prevent discrimination against the Roma Communities, Net-Kard Project. https://gitanos.org/upload/76/24/Guide_Police_services_and_Roma.pdf

A more recent report of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA, 2018) concludes that *"Despite ambitious initiatives, the fundamental rights situation of Roma in the European Union (EU) remains profoundly troubling. The persisting phenomenon of anti-gypsyism has proven to be a barrier to efforts to improve the life chances and living standards for Roma. Many continue to face discrimination, harassment and hate crime because of their ethnic origin. As a result, significant parts of the Roma population struggle with challenges – homes without running water or electricity, lack of health insurance, or even hunger – that one would believe no longer exist in the EU."*[1]

Stereotypes do not just affect Roma's relationship with the majority of society, but they also impact the relations with other sub-groups of the Roma community. This inner-group bias may be due to low-life circumstances, unemployment and poverty, or cultural or historical differences, and may lead to neighbourhood conflicts or domestic violence[20].
Moreover, some people may not identify with the general definition of "Roma" and may take the distances from it, using the name of their sub-group, remarking their identity and their belonging to a specific cultural background, rather to a general group and definition[21].

The most extreme expression of anti-gypsyism took place under the Nazi regime.
Under Adolf Hitler, a supplementary decree to the Nuremberg Laws was issued on 26 November 1935, classifying Gypsies as *"enemies of the race-based state",* thereby placing them in the same category as the Jews. Thus, in some ways the fate of the Roma in Europe paralleled that of the Jews in the Jewish Holocaust. Historians estimate that between 500,000 and 1.5 million Romani were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators.
Ian Hancock[22] puts the death toll as high as 1.5 million. The holocaust of Roma people is called **Porrajmos**, or **Samudaripen**. The Memorial Day of Porrajmos is 2nd August.

In many European regions, Roma were forced into slavery, a practice which continued into the 19th century in Romania and elsewhere. Roma were also sentenced to death throughout the medieval era in England, Switzerland and Denmark. This later grew into organized persecution. Many countries, including Germany, Poland and Italy, ordered the expulsion of all Roma. After the war, Roma continued to be discriminated against and oppressed, especially in the Soviet Union. Between the 1970s and 1990s, the Czech Republic and Slovakia sterilized around 90,000 Romani women against their will.

[20] http://corepol.eu/project/final-conference/Police-and-Roma-in-Hungary_Andrea-Kozary.pdf
[21] Osservazione: http://www.osservazione.org/dati/mat/9/doc/485.pdf
[22] Hancock, Ian (2005), "True Romanies and the Holocaust: A Re-evaluation and an overview", The Historiography of the Holocaust, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 383–396

All these forms of anti-gypsyism of the past and of the present (slavery, evictions, hate crimes, stereotypes, discrimination, school segregation, hostility, ethnic profiling by police, hate speech, urban segregation, violence, holocaust, sterilization of Romani women, etc.) produce a deep impact in the life and feelings of many Roma people across Europe, and are key barriers to their social inclusion. This is important also to understand the lack of trust of many Roma in the police forces, given a long past of hostility and harassment.

Key principles for interviews

When conducting an interview to assess the crime experienced by the victim and to collect the deposition, it could be useful to adopt some of these tips. They can help you offer a supportive and sensitive service and collect more information.

Objectivity
- Remain as factual as possible (avoid basing information on perceptions).
- Choose a neutral place for the interview.

Confidentiality
- Offer to hide names and certain information.
- Ask consent to use information, recording, etc.

Respect for the interviewee (especially for victims)
- Be aware of their trauma.
- Respect their private life, offer confidentiality and the possibility to conceal/change their identity to protect their privacy.
- Offer to take breaks during the interview.

Further advice:
- Be clear about your objectives and clearly state your objectives to interviewee.
- Prepare various types of questions (background questions, open-ended questions, specific questions).
- Allocate sufficient time for the interview.
- Create a safe environment for the interviewee – let them know that the interview can be stopped at any time, and that they can stop if there is a question that they do not wish to answer.

General observations to make during an interview:
- Observe how the interviewee is behaving:
- Signs of nervousness (e.g. tone of voice, eye contact, body language, etc.).
- Signs of emotions/tears.
- Responsiveness to questions (hesitation, difficulty in understanding, etc.).
- Be aware of the setting of the interview: Who is present at the interview?
- Does the interviewee feel comfortable with everyone present?

Pay attention to special words (slur, insults, Anti-Roma derogatory language):
If during an attack or crime against a Roma person the perpetrator pronounces derogatory words (or dehumanizing words, comparing Roma with dogs, rats, animals, etc.), "nasty gypsy", "tigan", etc… it is important that police officer writes down in the report these words, as they are key elements for prosecutor to assess if this is a hate crime, and for the judge to decide about the racist bias of the crime.

In case of doubts or questions on how to proceed, the police may contact Roma organizations for suggestions or information, and also to talk with a "person of respect", usually an old man (or woman) respected by the community, who can explain the context of the problem and help the police to access places and facilitate communication[1]. Pay attention to their identity and privacy, be respectful and open-minded.

Good practices and tips against stereotypes and bias

In light of what seen so far, there are some useful tips that could be kept in mind when interacting with Roma people, in particular when supporting and helping them in case of hate crimes:

- In case of identity checks, some Roma people may prefer to be treated by a same gender practitioner, in particular women[23].

- Make sure that the victim and the relatives are aware of their rights and of what the various procedures consist in. When doing so, use an accessible language and avoid complicate phrasing.

- Respect the social roles of the family/society and make sure the group is comfortable and aware of the various procedures.

- Avoid judging Roma people based on stereotypes perpetrated by the media or by society: help and support the victims with an open mind and ask directly to them for clarifications or curiosity.

- If the Roma victim/group does not speak the language of the hosting country, make sure to provide a translator.

- Avoid a paternalistic behavior or being overly protective: it could cause further closure and the Roma community taking the distances[24].

- Use and disseminate good examples of Roma inclusion in order to fight the negative perceptions that still remain in society towards these communities;

- Highlight the need to promote training on anti-discrimination and cultural awareness for professionals working at NGOs. NGOs can also be trainers of other professionals on these subjects;

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[23] http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/SocialInclusion/InterculturalGuide/Roma/Roma.pdf
[24] Sáez, Gimenez, (2014). Practical Guide for NGOs to Prevent discrimination against the Roma Communities, NetKard Project. https://gitanos.org/upload/76/24/Guide_Police_services_and_Roma.pdf

- Encourage professional training of Roma mediators and recognition of mediation as a profession. Roma mediators are key players in facilitating work between Roma communities and NGOs and through their work they can help break down the stereotypes held by both groups;

- Work directly with Roma communities in tackling problematic practices where they exist, i.e. deficient participation at school, and informing about rights, duties and procedures for reporting situations of discrimination.

- It is important for the police to reach out to a wide range of Roma groups to identify those who are more open to collaboration. The assistance of civil society can be very helpful in identifying and encouraging these groups to become committed.

- The commitment for change must be expressed in practice through the establishment and maintenance of long-term partnerships between the police and Roma communities and through the sharing of successful examples of partnership-based initiatives with other cities, regions, or EU countries.

- Assess the gap between international police standards and currently existing national practices in consultation with national police forces, NGOs and Roma organization representatives.

- Elaborate, where appropriate, and in close partnership with international organizations and Roma NGOs, policy statements, codes of conduct, practical handbooks and training programs.

- Encourage Roma to work in law-enforcement institutions as a sustainable means of promoting tolerance and diversity.

- Law-enforcement officers should be provided with on-the-job training to prevent racially-motivated acts among the police themselves and active measures be taken to prevent and expeditiously prosecute such acts in order to ensure the long-term safety and security of Roma.

- Police officers should be made aware of direct and indirect racism and anti-gypsyism in the course of their general training.

- Train police on the issue of racial profiling and the use of the reasonable suspicion standard, and about Roma history and anti-gypsyism.

- Ensure that the police communicate with the media and the public at large in a manner that does not perpetuate hostility or prejudice towards members of minority groups.

- Recruit and train adequate numbers of mediators, in particular from the Roma population, in order to ensure a liaison between Roma and the police.

- Pay attention to multiple discrimination, intersectional discrimination, and the situation of Roma women, who often can face multiple discrimination for being woman and Roma.

ECRI Recommendation n°13 on combating anti-gypsyism

ECRI Recommendation n° 13 on combating anti-gypsyism provides useful guidelines regarding policing and Roma.

It suggests to combat racist violence and crimes against Roma, and accordingly:

- pay particular attention to the implementation of ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing, especially Chapter III on the role of the police in combating racist offences and following up racist incidents;

- set up a comprehensive system for recording acts of violence against Roma;

- take steps to encourage Roma victims of racist violence and crimes to lodge complaints, in particular by making them aware of the adequate bodies and by ensuring that if need be they receive the necessary assistance;

- give the police, prosecuting authorities and judges special training concerning the legislation punishing racist crimes and its implementation as concerns Roma victims;

- ensure that the police and the prosecuting authorities conduct the requisite investigations of racist crimes and acts of violence against Roma so that the culprits do not go unpunished;

It also suggests to combat manifestations of anti-gypsyism likely to come from the police, and accordingly:

- pay particular attention to the implementation of ECRI's Recommendation No. 11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing[1];

- encourage Roma who are victims of misconduct by the police to lodge complaints, offering them the necessary support;

- ensure that investigations are conducted where there are allegations of police misconduct towards Roma, and that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished;

- train the police in human rights and relevant legislation, particularly in order to improve their relations with Roma communities;

- raise police awareness of the problems Roma face and give them training about the problems that affect Roma, particularly violence and racist crimes, in order to better prevent and combat these phenomena;

- take measures to promote Roma recruitment to the police force by conducting, to that end, information campaigns in Roma communities;

- ensure that Roma enjoy equal opportunities for career development within the police;

- recruit and train adequate numbers of mediators, in particular from the Roma population in order to ensure a liaison between Roma and the police;

- ensure, in accordance with paragraph 10 of ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 11, the creation of an independent body for investigating complaints made against the police, particularly by Roma[1].

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