

# **ERRC**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**



# **2024**





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# **A MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGEMENT**

By most accounts, 2024 was a dismal year. A year tainted by genocide in Palestine; war-torn humanitarian crises in Congo, Sudan, and Yemen; record casualties in the Russian war on Ukraine; a clear lurch to the far-right in countries across Europe; the hottest year on record in which the world hit 1.5° C of global warming; and the year when Donald Trump became the President of the United States of America. Again.

At the same time: the far-right lost ground in the Nordic countries; the EU's greenhouse gas emissions fell for the first time while China's seemed to have peaked; and a Brussels Court found Belgium guilty of Crimes Against Humanity in Congo and issued a landmark judgment with huge repercussions for the fight for reparations worldwide. Most notably, 2024 was a year of protest. Globally, people stood up against authoritarianism, corruption, and abuses of rights in some of the largest protests of the century - in Argentina (against social budget cuts), Bangladesh (against corrupt civil service quotas), Brazil (to protect the right to abortion), France (against the far-right), Kenya (against taxes on essential items), Georgia (for democracy), Serbia (for justice for victims of state corruption), and in ongoing demonstrations across the world in solidarity with the Palestinian people.



During this time, the ERRC has been working to preserve nothing short of the very survival of Roma Rights activism in Europe through its persistent activists, lawyers, volunteers, and partners across the continent. Whether it's holding racist police forces to account, demanding justice for environmental racism, standing up for LGBTQI+ Roma visibility, or defending hard-won justice for victims of involuntary sterilisation, the ERRC has remained at the forefront of Roma Rights in 2024.

The impact of our grassroots legal mobilisation over traditional litigation to restore equitable access to infrastructure for Romani communities stood out particularly this year. More grassroots mass complaints were brought on behalf of local Romani communities in 2024 than ever before. Importantly, this has led to us forging solid relationships with institutions such as Equality Bodies and Ombudsman's offices. Through them we have been able to build precedent-setting cases from the ground up to allow for wider legal actions on similar issues which Roma face across the region.

Difficult times demand dedicated activists. We don't know what the future holds for Europe, as human rights are assailed from all sides, but we do know that we are in it for the long-run. Throughout 2024 - by winning landmark judgments to challenge institutional racism in state care, by defending the rights of youth offenders to a decent education, by supporting Romani women against racist obstetric violence - our activists have shown they have what it takes to continue to hold states accountable, and to fight for a more just future for Roma for many years to come.







# WHAT DOES THE ERRC DO?

**WE TAKE LEGAL ACTION ACROSS EUROPE WITH THE AIM OF EXPOSING AND ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATORY STRUCTURES THAT VIOLATE ROMANI PEOPLE'S HUMAN RIGHTS.**

**WE ENSURE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES CONCERNING ROMA ARE FIRMLY ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.**

**OUR LEGAL AND ADVOCACY TEAMS WORK TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY, ADDRESS, AND COMMUNICATE THE ISSUES THAT EUROPE'S LARGEST ETHNIC MINORITY FACE.**





# 2024 IN NUMBERS

- — **34** — NEW LEGAL ACTIONS BROUGHT
- — **94** — VOLUNTEERS ACROSS  
**6 COUNTRIES**
- — **19** — COUNTRIES ACROSS EUROPE
- — **8** — RESEARCH REPORTS
- — **1** — ROMA RIGHTS  
SUMMER SCHOOL
- — **57** — COMMUNITY LEGAL ACTIONS
- — **29** — ROMA RIGHTS NETWORK  
MEMBER ORGANISATIONS
- — **194** — CASES PENDING BEFORE NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL DECISION MAKING  
BODIES AND COURTS





# WHERE WE WORK



- We have ongoing legal actions in 20 countries across Europe and brought new cases in 11 countries in 2024.
- We have human rights monitors and country facilitators covering 15 countries, keeping us informed about where we need to take action.
- We also have passionate volunteer groups, our Roma Rights Defenders, in 6 countries with plans to keep expanding.
- Our Roma Rights Network includes member organisations from 20 countries.



# A SPORTING CHANCE

&  
TRAVELLERS

In 2024 we shone a spotlight on racism in sport as part of the EU funded Moving On project.

We published a detailed research report focusing on access to sport for Roma, Sinti, & Travellers in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy, and Spain, and highlighted the experiences of athletes fighting racism through sport with a visual exhibition held in Brussels and an accompanying anti-racist fanzine.

Through compelling articles written by sports-mad activists, a series of vivid vignettes, and interviews with key players, the fanzine details the experiences of Romani and Traveller people in sport, both historical and contemporary, and serves as an anti-racist celebration of sport as a tool to fight discrimination.

The exhibition and fanzine, A Sporting Chance, presented a compelling insight into the boundaries and communities that exist between activist art, sport, and the human rights challenges faced by Europe's largest ethnic minority group.

Funded by  
the European Union





Europe's criminal legal systems are not broken. They are functioning exactly as they were designed to.

They just weren't designed to serve Roma and other racialized minorities.

We must address antigypsyism throughout the system as a root cause of discrimination.

# ROMA JUSTICE PROJECT

This year, on Roma Resistance Day, we launched the [Roma Justice Project](#): a long-term, evolving initiative demanding real change in Europe's criminal legal systems. The goal is for greater accountability and fairer representation for Roma before the law.

For years, the ERRC has exposed institutional racism in Europe's criminal legal systems, including in our latest report published this year. Currently, around **half of our active legal case files concern police misconduct against Romani people**. Roma experience ethnic profiling, systemic discrimination, mistreatment at the hands of law enforcement, and disproportionate representation in prisons.

The Roma Justice Project platform serves to illuminate and document the reality of racist policing for Roma across Europe. It includes an interactive map, detailing incidents of police misconduct; first-hand testimonies from Romani victims of racialised violence; and interviews with legal experts fighting for change.

The platform is currently in beta testing and will continue to be expanded as the project continues.



# ROMAGIC

2024 also saw us continue championing Romani LGBTQ+ rights in Europe through the launch of the **RoMagic project**, co-funded by the European Union.

This groundbreaking initiative is both an overdue celebration of the Romani LGBTQ+ community, and a disruptive intervention aimed at highlighting the intersectional forms of discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ Roma.

The project seeks to foster an activist group of LGBTQ+ Roma and challenge existing prejudices by rendering the life experience and personal narratives of LGBTQ+ Roma visible to diverse audiences across Europe.

Through a combination of photography, audio, film, and physical exhibitions the initiative will not only document discrimination but act as a testimony to the resilience of LGBTQ+ Roma. The photos, showing LGBTQ+ Romani individuals getting ready in their own homes, is an intimate glimpse into their real lives.

The project kicked off on Roma Resistance Day 2024, and will culminate in an exhibition held across Bucharest, Belgrade, and Brussels in 2025.



# STRATEGIC LITIGATION

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The ERRC uses litigation as a fundamental tool to ensure the rights of Romani people across Europe are being respected.

Our strategic litigation team is led by our Legal Directors; two Romani women lawyers who are pushing our litigation to reflect the intersectional lived experiences of Romani people and ensuring that Romani people themselves can lead the fight against antigypsyism.

We are active on the domestic and international level, working wherever and however we can to make sure Romani people are being heard; we provide legal representation, intervene in cases, and take cases in our name or that of Romani litigants.

When domestic courts don't provide justice we take it further, bringing cases to the European Court of Human Rights.





IN 2024 THE ERRC  
SUPPORTED

**34 NEW CASES**

AND WE  
COMMUNICATED...

**5 RULE 9  
SUBMISSIONS**

WE HAD

**194 CASES**

PENDING BEFORE  
INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL  
DECISION MAKING  
BODIES AND COURTS



OUR LITIGATION ADDRESSED MULTIPLE  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AREAS...

● ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

● WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE  
RIGHTS AND HEALTH

● HATE SPEECH AND CRIME

● ACCESS TO JUSTICE

● DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

● POLICE  
HARASSMENT

● CHILDREN  
IN STATE CARE



# GRASSROOTS LEGAL MOBILISATION

We continued supporting Romani communities in the Western Balkans as part of our Community Legal Project, submitting:

**57 NEW COMMUNITY LEGAL ACTIONS TO RELEVANT BODIES ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES**



This means in 2024 alone we supported over **13,000** Romani people seeking justice for key issues for their communities. Since the start of the project we have submitted 230 complaints, all reflecting ongoing challenges in human rights protection across the region.

This large-scale legal activism aims to flood decision-making bodies with legal complaints, making the issues impossible to ignore. This approach reveals patterns of discrimination, exposes overarching inequality, and places legal advocacy into the hands of Romani communities themselves so they are better able to fight for the issues that really matter to them.

This year, complaints addressed critical issues such as school segregation, police harassment, inadequate housing, and unequal access to essential services.

These complaints underscore the urgent need for systemic reform to promote equality and protect the rights of Romani communities on fundamental issues.



# THESE COMPLAINTS LED TO REAL CHANGE FOR ROMANI COMMUNITIES...

## MONTENEGRO

- Montenegro's Equality Body confirmed that cutting off electricity to 10 displaced Romani families in Podgorica during the COVID-19 pandemic was discriminatory. The decision ordered authorities to reconnect the families and remove administrative barriers.

- They also confirmed and recognised systemic discrimination against Romani and Egyptian communities denied access to healthcare due to lack of legal status and documentation. The Equality Body recommended removing financial and administrative barriers to accessing healthcare for these communities.

## NORTH MACEDONIA

- North Macedonia's Equality Body ruled that JSP-Skopje, the capital's public transport provider, engaged in direct discrimination against Romani residents of Shuto Orizari. The Commission for Protection against Discrimination found systemic issues, including skipped stops, inadequate routes, and unreliable service, forcing residents to rely on costly alternatives. The ruling demands urgent reforms to improve transport access and end discriminatory practices.

- They also confirmed that Roma in informal housing faced barriers to obtaining ID documents due to unregistered addresses, and that this amounted to indirect discrimination. The Ministry of Interior responded by amending the law, and the Assembly adopted the changes on 3 October 2023. To support implementation, key institutions received training in November 2024 under the EU and Council of Europe-backed "Integration of Roma Phase Three" project.

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

- The Bosnian Ombudsman found systemic discrimination after the repeated eviction of ten Romani families in Mostar. The Ombudsman's investigation highlighted how legal barriers to accessing residency status worsen exclusion for Roma. Authorities were urged to formally recognise informal housing and support access to residency registration to prevent future rights violations.



# WE ALSO HAD SOME KEY VICTORIES IN THE COURTS...

## NORTH MACEDONIA | MAY 2024

The Supreme Court issued a groundbreaking ruling in North Macedonia in favour of the ERRC, concerning discrimination against Romani children in a correctional home in Tetovo. The ruling confirms that the centre failed to provide equal access to education, and as most of the children were Romani this constituted indirect discrimination based on ethnicity - a first for this court. The Court of Appeal later upheld this ruling, confirming the authorities' obligation to ensure equal education for detained children.

## CZECH REPUBLIC | FEBRUARY & APRIL 2024

Following the introduction of a law to compensate victims of forced sterilisation, the ERRC has been supporting Romani women in their fight for compensation where applications have been denied. In February 2024, the Municipal Court in Prague delivered a positive judgement in Ms. E.V's case, concluding that her case should be re-examined as the burden of proof of consent lies with the Ministry of Health.

After a joint complaint submitted by the ERRC and the Forum for Human Rights, the European Committee of Social Rights issued a landmark ruling against the Czech Republic, acknowledging that the lack of sufficient data collection on the overrepresentation of Romani children in state care constitutes indirect discrimination. Access to data on ethnicity is crucial in revealing the structural nature of discrimination and antigypsyism.

## SERBIA | JUNE 2024

A Romani man was beaten by police in Belgrade and had his ID card confiscated. He was later informed that he was being charged for not carrying an ID card. With ERRC legal support, he was acquitted for that minor offense and has now initiated a criminal complaint against the police officers for ill-treatment.

## BULGARIA | SEPTEMBER 2024

Following legal intervention by the ERRC and Equal Opportunities Initiative, a district court in Bulgaria ruled in favour of a Romani family whose four children were wrongfully removed into state care. The judgment takes immediate effect and the case highlights ongoing human rights issues with the child welfare system and discrimination towards Romani people in Bulgaria.

# **BUT SOMETIMES THE COURTS STILL FAIL TO BRING JUSTICE...**

**NORTH  
MACEDONIA**  
02 FEBRUARY 2024

For nearly 50 years, over 300 Romani residents in Tenekje Maalo, Kavadarci, have lived without access to safe drinking water, sanitation, or a clean environment. Most homes are not connected to the municipal water system or sewage network. Despite an order from the Commission for Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination to provide water and start legalising the homes within six months, the Municipality refused. The ERRC initiated an actio popularis case against the Municipality, but the court dismissed the case.

In 2019, the local government of Nyíregyháza demolished homes in the Keleti Romani community as part of an EU-funded urban rehabilitation program. While the aim was to provide more integrated housing, most families were moved to the Huszár neighbourhood which is also segregated. The European Commission later found the use of EU funds to evict Romani families in this manner to be contrary to EU core values.

The Hungarian Supreme Court (Curia) dismissed the ERRC's case claiming spatial segregation, siding with the municipality. Unlike the European Commission, the Court ruled that it was lawful to relocate residents from one segregated area to another. The judges argued that ruling otherwise might discourage municipalities from demolishing segregated settlements altogether. They also noted that since a few families were placed in integrated housing, the project had at least some positive desegregation effects.

**HUNGARY**  
**18 MARCH**  
**2024**

**We believe these decisions are a serious failure to deliver justice for Roma.**



# ADVOCACY AND COMMS

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Our Advocacy and Communications team works alongside our Legal team, bringing the issues of racism and inequality against Romani people to the national, European, and international agenda and holding those in power accountable for their actions.

Through direct advocacy, media outreach, research, social media, and submissions we ensure that our Roma Rights message reaches as far as possible.





## IN 2024 THE ERRC...

- Boycotted the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union in protest at the decades of racist policy, denial of basic human rights, and democratic backsliding of the Fidesz regime.
- Joined calls to re-establish the Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup in the European Parliament.
- Continued to uphold the rights of Ukrainian Romani refugees, revealing their struggles with inequality in Romania through our documentary film.
- Nurtured the next generation of Roma Rights Defenders through our volunteer programme and human rights education initiatives.
- And, of course, continued to ensure awareness of the fight for Roma rights is raised through research, reporting, and communications.

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## BREAKING NEWS



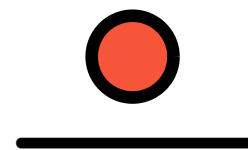
We made sure that stories of discrimination against Romani people and Roma Rights issues were reliably reported on throughout the year. In 2024 we published **25** press releases and over **40** news posts related to relevant, unfolding news stories and our ongoing work.



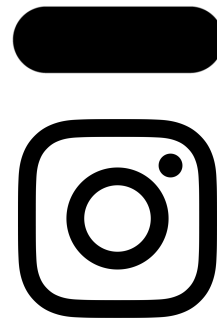
**FOLLOWERS: 23,509**  
**REACH: 80,000**



**COMBINED  
AUDIENCE OF**  
**31,815**



**FOLLOWERS: 1,357**  
**IMPRESSIONS: 77,367**



**FOLLOWERS: 6,949**  
**REACH: 152,400**

# **SOCIAL MEDIA**

In December 2024 the ERRC made the decision to leave X (formerly Twitter) and stop posting updates on the platform.

We are proud of our ongoing, crucial work countering online hate speech, and of our Roma Rights Defenders who challenge digital antigypsyism every day. As such, we were not comfortable staying on a platform with no real content moderation, that provides a safe space for racists and fascists, and is owned by a far-right billionaire who uses his power to attack activists, racialised communities, LGBTQI+ people, and even democracy itself.



**Challenging  
Digital Antigypsyism**  
**Roma Rights Defenders  
in their own words**



**Moving On:**  
**ACCESS TO SPORT FOR  
ROMA, SINTI,  
& TRAVELLERS IN EUROPE**



**RUTHLESS AND RACIST:**  
**POLICING ROMA IN THE BALKANS**  
GREECE | NORTH MACEDONIA | SERBIA



# RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

In 2024 we published **8 research reports** covering a variety of thematic areas. We exposed [racist policing in the Balkans](#), highlighted the [ongoing fight against online hate](#), revealed the state of [state care for Romani children in Bulgaria](#), detailed [inequal access to sport for Roma, Sinti, and Travellers](#), and continued to expose the [inequalities faced by Romani refugees from Ukraine](#).

ERRC research is invaluable and contributes to awareness-raising, policy developments, and strategic litigation. Our monitors and researchers collect reliable, necessary data on the human rights situation of Roma across Europe to support ERRC advocacy work and litigation.

We also submitted written comments to **8** relevant international bodies, including:

- The UN Committee against Torture re. **North Macedonia** and **Turkey**
- The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination re. **Albania** and **Greece**
- The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child re. **Albania**  
The Advisory Committee on the Framework  
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities  
concerning **Hungary**

Our submissions ensure that awareness of the reality of the situation for Romani communities is raised, and that inaction on the part of states is reported on and they are held accountable.





# ROMA RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The next generation of Roma Rights activists is vital. That's why our volunteer programme unites young, passionate activists to learn, fight, and take action.

In 2024 **94** Roma Rights Defenders worked across **6** countries :

**ALBANIA BULGARIA ROMANIA SERBIA SLOVAKIA TURKEY**

We also had **4** volunteer contributors to the ERRC Newsroom, where young Romani writers receive editorial support and a place to publish Roma-created content on issues affecting Roma.

On 8 April, ERRC volunteers joined activists, academics, and representatives of state bodies, met up in Bratislava for the **Countering Anti-Roma Hate Speech and Safeguarding Democratic Values** conference.

Tackling online hate speech against Roma is a key part of what our Roma Rights Defenders do: they're building digital communities, reporting hate speech, flipping the script on racist comments, and creating resources to stop the spread of racist disinformation. Coming together to share experiences and strategize is crucial to ensure they are making real change and taking real action.



# ROMA RIGHTS SUMMER SCHOOL

## CLASS OF 2024



This year the Roma Rights Summer School took place in **Athens, Greece**. 19 passionate activists from 11 countries attended the intensive 10-day in person training, covering topics from strategic litigation to advocacy skills to effective communication using a human rights approach. Participants were able to learn, network, and celebrate diversity and their ethnic identity.

The annual Roma Rights Summer School offers an introduction to a human rights approach, providing the basic skills and knowledge for students to become human rights activists. The Summer School also serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas, innovation, and expertise for participants who are at an early stage in their careers.

**THE ROMA RIGHTS SUMMER SCHOOL HAS BEEN THE LAUNCHPAD FOR MANY DEDICATED ROMANI ACTIVISTS WHO ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE TODAY.**





# OUR FINANCES

The ERRC receives funding from private foundations, individual donors, and governmental and non-governmental agencies, including the European Union.

The **Swedish International Development Agency** is the long-standing core funding supporter of the ERRC.

In 2024, the ERRC's total income was **€1.925.501,40**

