

AUSTRIA

Country Fiche

Assessment of the progress in the NRSF implementation
between 1 June 2023 and 30 March 2025

APPROACH OF THE NATIONAL ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (NRSF)	Austria's NRSF (updated 2021) aligns with the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020–2030, focusing on equality, inclusion, and participation. Key areas include combating antigypsyism, education, employment, healthcare, housing, and social protection. The strategy lacks quantitative targets, hindering measurable progress.
ESTIMATED ROMA POPULATION	Between 25,000, ¹ and 120,000. ² Autochthonous Roma reside primarily in Burgenland; allochthones Roma are concentrated in Vienna and urban areas.
National Roma Contact Point (NRCP)	Federal Chancellery of Austria, Department for Ethnic Groups (Volksgruppen)

HORIZONTAL OBJECTIVES

1. FIGHT AND PREVENT ANTIGYPSYISM AND DISCRIMINATION

PROGRESS MADE	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some progress has been made in promoting Roma visibility and fighting antigypsyism. The Austrian Parliament celebrated International Roma Day and National Minorities Day (2023–2025), with the involvement of Roma organisations.³ In 2024, exhibitions on Roma language and history were organised in public institutions and museums.⁴ Public funding supported Roma cultural events, including the Romano Svato theatre festival, concerts, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last Antigypsyism report was published in 2017, with no updates since. The Austrian government has not yet adopted national plans against racism and discrimination. The above-mentioned anti-racism strategy from 2024 is limited only to employees in culture, arts, and sports. Advisory councils on antigypsyism and Roma media representation, foreseen in the NRSF, remain unestablished

¹https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu-country/austria_en

² Pultar, Anna / Fink, Marcel, Austria. Promoting Social Inclusion of Roma. A Study of National Policies. Report to the European Commission via Network of Independent Experts in Social Inclusion, 2011, p. 6; Given that the population census is conducted based on citizenship, and that many Roma don't declare their ethnicity or language out of fear of discrimination, it's almost impossible to determine the exact number of Roma living in Austria.

³<https://www.parlament.gv.at/erleben/veranstaltungen/1192732>; <https://volksgruppen.orf.at/roma/meldungen/stories/3279804/>; <https://www.parlament.gv.at/erleben/veranstaltungen/1142236?selectedtab=inhalt>; <https://www.parlament.gv.at/erleben/veranstaltungen/1192732?selectedtab=inhalt>

⁴ Such exhibitions were organised the Austrian Parliament, the Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art, the Carinthian State Museum, the Burgenland State Museum and the Ebensee Museum. Demokratiewebstatt, „Jubiläum „30 Jahre Anerkennung der Roma als Volksgruppe in Österreich“, available at: <https://www.demokratiewebstatt.at/aktuelles/news/jubilaum-30-jahre-anerkennung-der-roma-als-volksgruppe-in-oesterreich>; <https://initiative.minderheiten.at/wordpress/index.php/2024/04/ausstellungbomben-gegen-minderheiten-rechter-terror-1993-1996/>; Volksgruppen ORF, „Die österreichische Romanes. Ausstellung im Landhaus Eiesenstad“, available at <https://volksgruppen.orf.at/roma/meldungen/stories/3278341/>; Salzkammergut 2024, „Ceija Stojka. Hoffnung – Das war was uns stärkt“, at <https://www.salzkammergut-2024.at/projekte/ceija-stojka-hoffnung/>;

<p>the annual Roma Ball.⁵ The KDA,⁶ within the Ministry of Culture, developed and presented in 2024 Anti-Racism Strategy that recognises antigypsyism but applies only within the Ministry of Culture, Arts, Public Administration, and Sports. On 17 February 2024, the <i>DSA-Begleitgesetz</i> (Digital Services Act – Accompanying Law) came into force, which enhanced protection against online hate.⁷</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination persists in education, housing, and employment.⁸ Anti-discrimination workshops for employees in institutions and public organisations should be mandatory and more systematic. • Since November 2022, Austrian police been recording and publishing hate crime cases, but cases of antigypsyism remain unquantified due to the absence of a dedicated category. It should be changed. • Roma-related educational materials in schools are still not widely implemented. • More support for research studies examining discrimination against Roma is needed.
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2. REDUCE POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

PROGRESS MADE	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant achievements have been made in reducing poverty and social exclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty and material insecurity continue to be a harsh reality for many Roma men and women in Austria. A significant number live in highly precarious conditions, especially in the western provinces, relying heavily on low-threshold services such as Caritas contact projects or support from civil society organisations like Waldhüttl and the Bettellobby (Begging Advocacy Group),⁹ which remain unrecognised by the National Roma Strategy Framework (NRSF). Homeless Roma immigrants are particularly vulnerable, often falling through the gaps of Austria’s social welfare system and are largely overlooked in the NRSF’s measures. Beyond material and social hardships, many Roma face unfavourable legal statuses that exclude them from social

⁵ <http://www.dschungelwien.at/festival-e-bistarde>; <http://www.voiceofdiversity.at/>; <https://hango-roma.at/projekte/>

⁶ KDA is Competence Centre for Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Discrimination (*Kompetenzzentrum für Diversität, Antirassismus und Antidiskriminierung*), established in 2022 within the Ministry of Culture, Arts, Public Administration, and Sports.

⁷ <https://www.bmj.gv.at/themen/EU-und-Internationales/Digital-Services-Act.html> ; Federal Ministry of Justice. (2023). *Entwurf für ein DSA-Begleitgesetz (DSA-BegG)* [Draft for a DSA Accompanying Act (DSA-BegG)], available at: [https://www.bmj.gv.at/ministerium/gesetzesentwuerfe/Entw%C3%BCrfe-2023/Entwurf-f%C3%BCr-ein-DSA-Begleitgesetz-\(DSA-BegG\).html](https://www.bmj.gv.at/ministerium/gesetzesentwuerfe/Entw%C3%BCrfe-2023/Entwurf-f%C3%BCr-ein-DSA-Begleitgesetz-(DSA-BegG).html)

⁸ University of Vienna. (2022). ‘Sensiro’ – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich [‘Sensiro’ – Study on the Evaluation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma in Austria], p. 64, 67, 103, 105, 111, 116, 154-156, 193. Available at: <http://sensiro.univie.ac.at/>; Kugler, A. “Segregation von Roma-Kindern in Salzburger Volksschule” [Segregation of Roma Children in a Salzburg Primary School.], *Romano Centro* 100 (2024), p. 10.

⁹ <https://www.caritas.at/spenden-helfen/auslandshilfe/auslandsprojekte/europa/detail-auslandsprojekt-europa/news/72626-bildung-schenkt-roma-kindern-zukunft-rumaenien/>

support programmes and health insurance.¹⁰ Social support is mentioned in a general sense for all citizens in Austria, and this also applies to Roma, as it were, but they often fall through the cracks due to a lack of requirements for entitlements or services. Austrian social services, at the regional or municipal level, generally do not have a strategy aimed at directly addressing the Roma population and compensating for their inequalities. More sensibility in this regard would be desirable.

3. PROMOTE PARTICIPATION THROUGH EMPOWERMENT, COOPERATION AND TRUST

CONTEXT

- Representatives of Roma associations have the opportunity to influence decisions on various issues concerning Roma in Austria through the Roma Dialogue Platform, organised by the National Roma Contact Point (NCRP).¹¹ At these platforms, representatives of government institutions discuss issues with representatives of Roma organisations, but unfortunately, in practice, Roma have little real influence on the final decisions made. They have no impact on the selection of topics or the outcomes of the discussions within the Roma Dialogue Platform.

PROGRESS MADE

- No significant achievements have been made

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Only 36% of Roma in Austria are aware of the existence of the NRSF.¹² Measures are needed to raise awareness about the NRSF among both Roma and the majority population. Public campaigns should be promoted to increase awareness of the NRSF.
- More school projects and cultural events that promote dialogue of Roma with the majority population would be beneficial.

SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

4. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY INCLUSIVE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

PROGRESS MADE

No significant progress has been made in this area during the period covered by this report (June 2023-

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Formal education and preschool attendance rates among Roma are significantly lower

¹⁰ University of Vienna. (2022). 'Sensiro' – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich ['Sensiro' – Study on the Evaluation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma in Austria], p. 119-120. Available at: <http://sensiro.univie.ac.at/> ;

¹¹ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen/roma-strategie/dialogplattform-roma-strategie/>

¹² University of Vienna. (2022). 'Sensiro' – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich ['Sensiro' – Study on the Evaluation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma in Austria], p. 39. Available at: <http://sensiro.univie.ac.at/> ; <https://www.statistik.at/statistiken/bevoelkerung-undsoziales/bildung/bildungsstand-der-bevoelkerun>

March 2025). Projects supported by the Austrian government, aimed at improving the situation of Roma children in the school system — such as learning support programmes and Roma school mediation — continue to be implemented without major changes compared to the previous period. The only notable change we can mention is that the Burgenland School Directorate developed both digital and non-digital teaching materials for Roma language classes in primary and secondary schools in Burgenland.¹³

compared to the majority population in Austria.¹⁴ Additionally, the NRSF has identified early school dropout among Roma students as a big problem.¹⁵ The learning support measures, and Roma school mediation are proven effective projects. Although the Austrian government supports initiatives such as Roma school mediation (e.g., by Romano Centro) and Learning aid for Roma children, these projects should be structurally strengthened, and long-term funding should be ensured.

- There is an overrepresentation of Roma children in special schools (*Sonderschulen*) within the Austrian school system.¹⁶ Improving overall conditions in the Austrian education system, addressing the shortage of teaching and specialist staff, and increasing the attention of educational institutions and decision-makers to the challenges faced by Roma children would help overcome these obstacles.
- In recent years, representatives of Roma associations have had the opportunity to influence education-related decisions through the Roma Dialogue Platform, organised by the National Roma Contact Point (NCRP). In the last two years, three dialogue platforms have been organised, two of which focused thematically on education. At these platforms, representatives of government institutions discuss issues with representatives of Roma organisations, but unfortunately, in practice, Roma have limited real influence on the final decisions. Representatives of Roma association and activist should have greater impact on topic selection and outcomes within the Roma Dialogue Platform.

5. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

PROGRESS MADE

- Labour Market Projects: Since 1.1.2023, the Ministry of Labour has been financing up to 10 two-year projects (with budgets ranging

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The Public Employment Service (PES) does not have programmes or projects specifically aimed at the employment of

¹⁴ University of Vienna. (2022). ‘Sensiro’ – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich [‘Sensiro’ – Study on the Evaluation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma in Austria], p. 65-66. Available at: <http://sensiro.univie.ac.at/>.

¹⁵ Federal Chancellery of Austria. (2021). Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich [Strategy for Continuing Roma Inclusion in Austria], p. 11.

<p>from 250,000 to 270,000 EUR per project) aimed at increasing employment among Roma, in line with the Ministry of Labour and Economic Affairs' special guidelines "Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market 2023–2030".¹⁷ This initiative consists of four two-year cycles (until 2030), thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts. These projects aim to target unemployment and to combat the entrenchment of unfavourable living conditions of Roma due to a lack of integration and inclusion in the labour market. The projects are implemented by some Roma associations as well as several non-Roma CSOs, which partly collaborate with Roma CSOs. The first evaluation of these projects is planned for 2025; however, representatives of Roma CSOs have already expressed positive views regarding the initial results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2023, the Austrian Parliament approved a four-year project titled '<i>Level Up – Erwachsenenbildung</i>' (Level Up – Adult Education),¹⁸ worth 170 million EUR, designed to help young people and adults to gain basic skills and qualifications even after finishing school. This programme is intended for the most vulnerable groups in Austria, and 91% of the participants are of migrant origin. Although this measure is not explicitly aimed at Roma, they also benefit from it. 	<p>Roma. Moreover, the PES is neither directly nor indirectly connected to the associations that run labour market projects funded by the Ministry of Labour and Economic Affairs. Considering that the PES is the first point of contact for both employers and job seekers, this potential should be better utilised in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accessibility of information for members of the Roma community should be further improved. This primarily refers to better access to information about appropriate training courses, employment and education support programmes, diploma recognition and the organisations that provide assistance in these processes. • There is a need for more programmes and projects that empower Roma women to overcome traditional and patriarchal norms. Additionally, programmes and workshops that raise awareness of the importance of education should be offered to the members of the Roma community on a larger scale. • Implementation of competence training and qualification measures for socially and economically disadvantaged Roma, especially Roma women should be expanded and improved.
<h2>6. IMPROVE ROMA HEALTH AND EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES</h2>	
<p>PROGRESS MADE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No progress has been made in improving the health of the Roma population. 	<p>AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roma in Austria often fall through the cracks of healthcare and social welfare systems because many do not meet the strict eligibility requirements tied to citizenship, residency status, or length of stay. Although

¹⁵ Federal Chancellery of Austria. (2021). Strategie zur Fortführung der Inklusion der Roma in Österreich [Strategy for Continuing Roma Inclusion in Austria], p. 11.

¹⁶ University of Vienna. (2022). 'Sensiro' – Studie zur Evaluierung der nationalen Strategie zur Inklusion der Rom*nja in Österreich ['Sensiro' – Study on the Evaluation of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma in Austria], p. 67. Available at: <http://sensiro.univie.ac.at/>.

¹⁷ Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy. (2022). Sonderrichtlinien des Bundesministeriums für Arbeit und Wirtschaft 'Roma Empowerment für den Arbeitsmarkt 2023-2030' [Special Guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy 'Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market 2023–2030']. Available at: <https://www.bmaw.gv.at/Themen/Arbeitsmarkt/Arbeitsmarktpolitik.html>.

¹⁸ Level-UP Erwachsenenbildung. (2023). Executive Summary: Monitoring Report HJ1 2023. Available at: https://www.levelup-erwachsenenbildung.at/DOWNLOADS/monitoring/monitoringberichte/ExSum_Bericht_HJ1_2023.pdf

social support is formally available to all citizens, including Roma, in practice, they often fall through the cracks due to a lack of clear requirements for entitlements or services. Additional challenges include low health literacy, language barriers, and exclusion from targeted support in the National Roma Strategic Framework. Training and deployment of health mediators from within Roma communities, the development of low threshold and outreach services, promotion of health literacy, awareness-raising among healthcare professionals, and, most importantly, improving the overall living conditions of Roma populations would improve the situation in this area.

- A higher number of Roma employed in the health sector would be beneficial.
- Formulating a public health policy directly addressing health care provision for vulnerable groups (like Roma), linking public health services to existing CSO structures, and developing models of public-private partnerships for the provision of a service¹¹⁶ would ensure an accessible and inclusive healthcare service delivery.
- Organising targeted information events for the members of Roma community could be an effective measure to enhance awareness and understanding of available healthcare services in Austria.

7. INCREASE EFFECTIVE EQUAL ACCESS TO ADEQUATE DESEGREGATED HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

PROGRESS MADE

- No new nationwide Roma-specific initiatives have been introduced. No significant results have been achieved. The only noteworthy development in the past two years has been the publication of the SORA study,¹⁹ which revealed a high level of discrimination in the rental housing market.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Housing services are difficult for many Roma due to linguistic, legal, and social barriers. Roma suffer discrimination when searching for a flat. In 2023, a research institute SORA conducted a general study about discrimination in housing in Austria with alarming results.²⁰ Further research and studies, as well as the development of a dedicated strategy, would be highly beneficial.

¹⁹ SORA. (2023). You Won the Lottery, You Are the First Austrian Who Called: Ethnic Discrimination on the Housing Market

²⁰ SORA. (2023). You Won the Lottery, You Are the First Austrian Who Called: Ethnic Discrimination on the Housing Market.

- There is currently no targeted housing initiative for Roma in Austria; this should be changed.
- Housing counselling services for Roma should be expanded and improved.

PARTNERSHIPS AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Roma NGOs had limited involvement in the design, implementation, monitoring, and review of the NRSF. Their main formal participation is through the Roma Dialogue Platform, organised by the National Roma Contact Point,²¹ where the representatives of Roma NGOs can discuss issues related to the NRSF with government bodies. However, in practice, Roma NGOs have little real influence on policy formulation and final decisions related to the NRSF through this platform. Apart from the Roma Dialogue Platform, Roma individuals or associations are not part of the teams within public institutions responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring, and review of the NRSF. The Roma Minority Advisory Board, established in 1995 within the Federal Chancellery of Austria, exists but is not directly involved in NRSF processes beyond participation in the dialogue platform.

Regarding hate crime and hate speech, networks such as *Hatecrimekontern* (Countering Hate Crime)²² and the *No Hate Speech Komitee* (No Hate Speech Committee)²³ include Roma organisations like Romano Centro. These networks actively engage in media campaigns to raise awareness about these issues and the harms of discrimination, while promoting and initiating activities and methods to combat them.

PROMISING PRACTICES

- Employment projects as described in section number five.
- School mediation is a project initiated by the Romano Centro Association, which started in the 2000/2001 school year, while ‘Learning Aid’ projects are even older. Additionally, in Styria, there is also the initiative ‘*Chavore*’ (Children) implemented since 2017 aimed at integrating Roma children into schools and kindergartens through counselling, administrative and financial support, tutoring and leisure time activities.²⁴ These projects improve Roma children's educational opportunities, promote access to education, and support their integration into the school system. Roma school mediators assist Roma children in the educational process and mediate between Roma children, their parents, and teaching staff/schools to support their integration into the education system and ensure their regular school attendance.²⁵ These projects are still ongoing.

²¹ <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/themen/volksgruppen/roma-strategie/dialogplattform-roma-strategie.html>

²² HateCrimeKontern. (n.d.). Counter Hate Crime – English Information. Available at: <https://hatecrimekontern.at/en/>

²³ No Hate Speech Committee Austria. (n.d.). Komitee Mitglieder [Committee Members]. Available at: <https://www.nohatespeech.at/komitee/mitglieder/>

²⁴ <https://www.caritas-steiermark.at/hilfe-angebote/flucht-integration/bildung-arbeit/chavore-schulunterstuetzung-fuer-romakinder>

²⁵ <https://www.romano-centro.org/14-jahresbericht/160-romano-centro-jahresbericht-2024-1>