

Why the threat to scrap a long-delayed EU Directive threatens LGBTI Roma rights

[Blog](#), [Inclusion and Equality](#), [Legal Protection](#), [European Union](#), [Intersectionality](#)

As the EU considers cancelling a crucial anti-discrimination measure, LGBTI Roma are vulnerable to even greater marginalisation. On International Roma Day, we're mobilising people power to safeguard equality for all.

Today, on International Roma Day, we honour the resilience, creativity, and struggles of Roma communities across Europe. But celebration alone is not enough. As the European Commission signals its intention to withdraw the long-stalled draft Directive on anti-discrimination, we are raising an alarm. This proposed directive, stuck in limbo for over a decade, was never perfect, but it was a crucial step forward. It aimed to establish much-needed EU-wide safeguards against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation, extending protection beyond employment.

For Roma communities, and particularly for LGBTI Roma, this directive matters. It is about confronting the intersecting layers of oppression that continue to push LGBTI Roma to the margins – antigypsyism, homophobia, transphobia, and structural exclusion. With rising hate and shrinking civic space, now is the time to strengthen protections, not dismantle them.

ILGA-Europe has launched a [joint petition](#), bringing together civil society allies to urge EU institutions and Member States, especially those blocking progress, such as Czechia, Germany, and Italy, to reconsider. We are calling on the European Commission to reverse the decision to withdraw the Directive, or at the very least, to replace it with a stronger and more inclusive legal framework developed in consultation with civil society.

As Isabela Mihalache, Senior Advocacy Officer on Antigypsyism and Intersectional Justice at [ERGO Network](#), explains:

“The withdrawal of the draft anti-discrimination directive would be a serious blow to Roma communities, who continue to face structural racism, exclusion, and intersectional discrimination. This directive is crucial to ensuring equal protection for all, including LGBTI Roma, who experience compounded vulnerabilities. At a time when hate and antigypsyism are on the rise, the EU must not step back from its commitment to equality and justice. We urge EU leaders to stand firm in defending fundamental rights and to advance, not abandon, protections that Roma and other marginalised groups urgently need.”

In recent years, ILGA-Europe has supported racialised LGBTI groups, including LGBTI Roma-led groups, through the No One Left Behind Fund. This fund provided funding, peer learning, and networking opportunities for LGBTI organisations working for socio-economic and racial justice. These groups work in often hostile environments, with little institutional support, yet with immense courage. Their work is a testament to the urgent need for policies that recognise people in all their complexity.

According to David Tišer, Director of [ARA ART](#), an organisation that combines art, activism, and education to support the Roma LGBTI community and address issues of multiple discrimination:

“At ARA ART, we would like to express our strong stance on the Anti-discrimination Directive proposal and its significance for Roma communities, especially for LGBTIQ+ Roma individuals. This directive is crucial for ensuring equality and protection against discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors that impact the daily lives of Roma people.

If the Directive were withdrawn, it would not only mean the loss of legal protection for marginalised groups but also weaken the efforts towards a fair and inclusive society. Such a move would have a devastating impact on our communities, which are already facing systemic discrimination and social exclusion. This moment calls for solidarity and collective action for stronger protection of everyone’s rights. We must stand against all forms of discrimination and ensure that all communities, including LGBTIQ+ Roma, have equal access to rights and protection across Europe.”

As we reflect on the struggles and celebrate the achievements of Roma communities today, it is clear that we are at a moment when the fight for equality and protection must intensify. If the European Commission withdraws the proposed Directive on Anti-discrimination, they will be closing a door on safeguarding equal rights for people across the EU at a time when protection against discrimination is being attacked and dismantled across the world. We cannot allow this to happen. Today, on International Roma Day, [sign the joint petition](#) to demand the EU upholds its commitment to ensure protection from discrimination throughout the EU.

The time to act is now – for the sake of Roma, LGBTI, and all marginalised communities across Europe.