



Digital Inclusion of Roma: Current Patterns, Trends, and Barriers

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Prepared by:



October 2024



Justice
and Consumers

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
Directorate D – Equality and Union Citizenship
Unit D Non-Discrimination and Roma Coordination

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels



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Manuscript completed in October 2024

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PDF	ISBN 978-92-68-22658-2	doi: 10.2838/8317932	Catalogue number DS-01-24-016-EN-N
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How to cite this report:

Roma Civil Monitor (2024) *Digital Inclusion of Roma: Current Patterns, Trends, and Barriers*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. By Mustafa Jakupov.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024

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This transnational thematic report was written by Mr Mustafa Jakupov (ERGO Network).

The text was proofread by Mr Simon John Milton.

The report was prepared as part of the initiative '[Preparatory Action – Roma Civil Monitoring – Strengthening Capacity and Involvement of Roma and pro-Roma Civil Society in Policy Monitoring and Review](#)' implemented by a consortium led by the Democracy Institute of Central European University (DI/CEU), including the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC). The initiative was funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) under service contract no. JUST/2020/RPAA/PR/EQUA/0095.

The report represents the author's findings and does not necessarily reflect the views of the consortium or the European Commission, which cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Roma, Europe's largest ethnic minority group, have endured a long history of marginalisation, systemic discrimination, and exclusion from essential services and opportunities. This exclusion is rooted in structural inequalities,¹ manifested through antigypsyism²: a specific form of racism against Roma. Antigypsyist prejudices depict Roma as inherently inferior, leading to discrimination and violence, whether direct or indirect, public or private, conscious or unconscious, within or outside the community. In recent years, the digital divide has become an increasingly acute issue, affecting all people, including the Roma. Addressing the digital divide for the Roma requires not only technical solutions but also deep, structural changes to counter these exclusionary practices. Additionally, the impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated the digital divide by increasing reliance on online platforms for education, employment, and access to essential services, thereby widening the gap for those unable to engage digitally.

As technology increasingly shapes social and economic opportunities, digital exclusion has become one of the most pressing aspects of the broader exclusion faced by the Roma. This exclusion is not simply a failure of access to services but a failure of policy reform³ that addresses systemic antigypsyism. This paper takes a comprehensive look at the patterns and trends surrounding digital inclusion among Roma communities in Europe. It explores the historical and contemporary factors—socio-economic, cultural, institutional, and political—that sustain the digital divide, with an emphasis on the role of antigypsyism as a root cause. In doing so, this research highlights pathways for fostering more equitable digital inclusion and empowerment for Roma communities through targeted interventions, policies, and broader societal shifts.

While digital exclusion affects various marginalised groups globally, the situation for the Roma is uniquely severe. Historical legacies of discrimination, which have excluded Roma from education, employment, and social services, now also extend into the digital sphere. This exclusion is not solely due to a lack of access to devices or connectivity but also reflects broader issues such as limited digital literacy, linguistic barriers, and deeply entrenched prejudices. Furthermore, antigypsyism continues to influence policy decisions,⁴ resource allocation, and societal attitudes, preventing meaningful engagement with digital technologies.

Recent studies confirm that Roma communities across Europe are disproportionately affected by the digital divide.⁵ Disparities in the access to and adoption of digital technologies persist, limiting Roma individuals' ability to fully participate⁶ in an increasingly

¹ ERGO Network. (2019). *Antigypsyism as a structural barrier to Roma inclusion*.

² Alliance against Antigypsyism. (2016). *Reference paper on Antigypsyism*.

³ Rostas, I. (2018). A Task for Sisyphus? Why Europe's Roma Policies Fail. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 40(2), 323-349.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2020). *Roma and Travellers in Six Countries*.

⁶ Yates, S., & Carmi, E. (Eds.). (2024). *Digital Inclusion: International Policy and Research*.

digitised world. These digital inequalities further compound the social, educational, and economic marginalisation⁷ already experienced by the Roma. Systemic failures in Roma inclusion policies, which are often more symbolic than actionable,⁸ further aggravate this exclusion by reinforcing antigypsyist biases and limiting meaningful policy reforms.

“It’s like being trapped in the past,” says a Roma activist from North Macedonia.⁹ “The digital world is moving forward, but many Roma communities are stuck because they don’t have the same access.” Research indicates that in many cases, Roma communities face systemic barriers to digital inclusion that mirror the social exclusion they have experienced for centuries, especially in terms of socio-economic status, low educational attainment, and geographical isolation.¹⁰

In this context, it is essential to view digital exclusion not as an isolated issue but as part of a broader continuum of social exclusion. Digital exclusion is both a symptom and a driver of wider social inequalities, often mirroring the pre-existing disadvantages individuals face in the physical world. While digital access offers some anonymity, effectively leveraging digital technologies typically relies on social capital—such as networks of support, shared knowledge, and trust within communities—that can help individuals navigate and benefit from these tools.

This comprehensive understanding of digital exclusion is critical for framing the discussion around Roma digital inclusion. The digital divide for the Roma extends beyond mere access; it involves their ability to effectively use digital tools to improve their life circumstances.

For Roma individuals and communities, bridging the digital divide requires addressing the social, educational, and economic inequalities that have historically marginalised them.¹¹ Simply providing access to technology will not suffice; efforts must focus on building digital skills, fostering digital literacy, and addressing the cultural and institutional barriers that limit Roma participation in the digital age.

Digital inclusion efforts for the Roma must tackle underlying social disadvantages and structural inequalities, as these factors impact not only access but also the capacity to use digital technologies in ways that lead to meaningful socio-economic gains. Social capital, in this context, can empower individuals to overcome barriers, connect with resources, and build resilience against societal exclusion.

In recent years, several initiatives have sought to address digital inclusion among Roma communities. Governments, NGOs, and grassroots organisations have begun to explore ways to increase access¹² to technology and internet connectivity, as well as provide digital literacy

⁷ Helsper, E. J. (2012). A Corresponding Fields Model for the Links Between Social and Digital Exclusion. *Communication Theory*, 22(4), 403–426.

⁸ Rostas, I. (2018). A Task for Sisyphus? Why Europe’s Roma Policies Fail. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 40(2), 323–349.

⁹ Anonymous interviewees. (9, 18, 19 and 20 September 2024). Personal communication.

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Óhidy, A. (2019). Educational pathways for Roma students in Europe: Overcoming barriers and achieving success. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(12), 2210–2227.

training tailored to the specific needs of Roma individuals.¹³ For example, some projects have focused on bridging the gap in education through e-learning platforms¹⁴ and community-driven digital literacy programmes that emphasise employment.¹⁵ While these initiatives are promising, they must be sustained and scaled to reach the broader Roma population. Moreover, they need to be embedded within a broader framework of combating antigypsyism and promoting social justice.

This debate ties in with the EU Roma Strategic Framework's¹⁶ focus on addressing social inequalities, including digital exclusion. The first 'Roma Civil Society Monitoring Project'¹⁷ (RCM) examined national policies—many of which address digital inclusion in various ways and clearly recommends: "Efforts to urgently improve the digital inclusion of Roma are needed by Member States." Furthermore, the EU's Digital Education Action Plan¹⁸ emphasises e-inclusion and the need to ensure that all marginalised communities, including Roma, have access to and benefit from digital education.

By drawing the links between social and digital exclusion, this paper argues for a comprehensive approach that considers the role of antigypsyism, socio-economic status, and educational inequality in shaping Roma access to and use of digital technologies. It seeks to delve into these areas and initiate a discussion on the obstacles Roma face utilising a mixed-methods approach that integrates a comprehensive literature review with qualitative interviews and survey data collection.

This analysis provides a thorough understanding of the digital exclusion experienced by Roma communities and identifies promising practices and emerging trends in digital inclusion initiatives. Interviews were conducted between July and October 2024 through a combination of online video calls and in-person meetings, depending on participants' availability and access to digital tools. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and followed a semi-structured format, allowing for both open-ended discussion and focused questions related to specific digital inclusion issues.

The survey data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to civil society representatives. The questionnaire covered various dimensions of digital inclusion, such as access to technology, digital literacy training, and the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives. Respondents were also asked about the challenges Roma communities face in engaging with online platforms, barriers to participation in digital education, and suggestions for policy improvements. By combining these diverse methods—a first comprehensive literature review, 4 semi-structured interviews, and survey data from 16 civil society organisations

¹³ Bobáková, D., Madarasová Gecková, A., Dankulincová Veselská, Z., & Rosicová, K. (2022). Desirable but not feasible: Measures and interventions to promote early childhood health and development in marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10.

¹⁴ Sándor, P., Varga, A., & Németh, L. (2018). Digital inclusion challenges for Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe. *Central European Digital Review*, 14(3), 64-81.

¹⁵ Anonymous interviewees. (9, 18, 19 and 20 September 2024). Personal communication.

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu_en

¹⁷ Roma Civil Monitor (2020) *A synthesis of civil society's reports on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies in the European Union: Identifying blind spots in Roma inclusion policy*.

¹⁸ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

that are part of the Roma Civil Monitoring Network this research offers a nuanced and multi-faceted understanding of the digital inclusion of Roma communities in Europe. As a systematic attempt to examine digital inclusion among Roma at this scale, this study not only highlights barriers and challenges but also uncovers emerging trends and potential pathways for policy reform. Ultimately, this research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for overcoming the persistent digital divide and advancing digital equity for Europe's largest and most marginalised minority group.

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This literature review includes an analysis of academic studies, policy reports, and grey literature related to the digital inclusion of Roma communities. The digital divide remains one of the most critical challenges facing marginalised communities across Europe, with the Roma being disproportionately impacted. The disparities in technological adoption within Roma communities remain unresolved. Many marginalised groups across Europe experience barriers to technology access, but the Roma face particularly strong inequalities. For example, a 2020¹⁹ survey by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights revealed that only 43% of Roma households had internet access, compared to 87% of households across the EU. Furthermore, just 19% of Roma adults reported having basic digital skills, sharply contrasting with over 50% of the general population. This digital divide is intensified by high poverty rates, limited access to education, and systemic barriers, which together restrict Roma access to the digital tools essential for participation in today's economy.

The ongoing experience of the digital divide reveals deeper gaps in our social structures—gaps that go beyond mere access to technology. It highlights the need for everyone to have the skills and support to use digital platforms in ways that genuinely improve their lives, whether through better job opportunities, reaching educational goals, or being active in their communities. For instance, meaningful access could mean using online platforms to learn new skills that match job market demands, enrolling in courses that support educational growth, or accessing digital services for healthcare, social benefits, or legal rights. Research makes it clear that this exclusion is not just about technology; it is layered with social, economic, and institutional barriers²⁰ that disproportionately impact Roma communities, widening the divide between them and the majority population.

The persistent digital divide is far more than just a bandwidth problem, as stated above. It reflects deep-rooted social, economic, and political barriers that restrict technology use and engagement, especially for marginalised groups like the Roma. Socially, negative attitudes and limited support networks discourage many Roma from accessing technology or using the Internet for work-related opportunities.²¹ Language barriers associated with self-help platforms, combined with a lack of digital literacy in Roma communities, further isolate individuals from the educational and employment opportunities available online.

Economic barriers also weigh heavily: with high poverty rates, many Roma households struggle to afford devices, internet access, or basic digital training, making it nearly impossible to participate in the digital world. This financial strain means that even when Roma individuals want to learn new skills, apply for jobs, or take online courses, they face significant challenges that are difficult to overcome.²²

¹⁹ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2020). *Roma and Travellers in Six Countries*.

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ Anonymous interviewees. (9, 18, 19 and 20 September 2024). Personal communication.

²² Amaro Foro & Partners. (2023). *DIGITALIZE - tools for Roma adults to use the internet and promote education* <https://www.digitalizenow.eu/index.html>.

And finally, the institutional barriers add yet another layer of exclusion. Systemic discrimination in education and public policy has long denied Roma communities access to resources and opportunities. Traditional educational institutions and training programmes often fail to meet the needs of the Roma community because they lack cultural relevance, rarely incorporating values or community-based approaches. Additionally, language barriers persist, as educational content and digital platforms are often unavailable in Romani languages, excluding non-native speakers of national languages. Programmes are typically designed with rigid schedules and formats that do not account for the realities of Roma life. Moreover, the lack of accessible e-government services, social protection, and legal aid locks Roma individuals out of essential services that could otherwise support their upward mobility.

Structural Barriers to Digital Inclusion

Physical access

One of the primary drivers of the digital divide for Roma communities is the persistent poverty and socioeconomic marginalisation they experience. Across Europe, Roma individuals and households are significantly less likely to have internet access, smartphones, or computers compared to the general population. The ERGO report²³ highlights findings from a Council Recommendation on key enabling factors for digital education, which identifies Roma among the disadvantaged groups with reduced access to digital devices at home and delayed exposure to technology, along with other learners facing poverty, low skill levels, or with a migrant background.²⁴ Research indicates disparities in internet access ranging from 30 to 50 percentage points in some countries, with Roma households significantly less likely to own a computer or have internet access at home.²⁵ This lack of access is further exacerbated by the fact that many Roma reside in segregated or rural communities where digital infrastructure is poorly developed or entirely absent.²⁶

For example, in Slovakia, Bobáková et al. (2022)²⁷ found that 60% of Roma living in marginalised communities had no internet access, a striking contrast to just 16% of the general population. Similar patterns are observed elsewhere; a survey²⁸ conducted among 11,000 Spanish Roma participants during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that limited

²³ ERGO Network. (2023). *ERGO Network reacts to the Council Recommendations on digital skills and digital education and training*. <https://ergonetWORK.org/2023/07/ergo-reaction-to-council-recommendations-on-digital-skills/>.

²⁴ OECD (2018). *Getting ready for the digital world, PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations*. Paris: OECD Publishing https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-results-volume-vi_1b045c06-en.

²⁵ Amaro Foro & Partners. (2023). *DIGITALIZE - tools for Roma adults to use the internet and promote education* <https://www.digitalizenow.eu/index.html>.

²⁶ Sándor, P., Varga, A., & Németh, L. (2018). Digital inclusion challenges for Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe. *Central European Digital Review*, 14(3), 64-81.

²⁷ Bobáková, D., Madarasová Gecková, A., Dankulincová Veselská, Z., & Rosicová, K. (2022). Desirable but not feasible: Measures and interventions to promote early childhood health and development in marginalized Roma communities in Slovakia. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10.

²⁸ Fundacion Secretariado Gitano (April, 2020) *Impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on the Roma Population: Results of a Survey of 11,000 Participants in Programmes organized by FSG*: https://www.gitanos.org/upload/40/87/EN_ENCUESTA_PARTICIPANTES_FINAL.pdf

access to technology severely impacted students and families. This survey highlighted that a significant proportion of Roma families did not have access to computers or a stable internet connection, which hindered students' ability to complete educational tasks and stay engaged in remote learning.

The limited physical access to digital technologies, compounded by factors such as low income, geographic isolation, and inadequate digital infrastructure, creates significant barriers to digital inclusion. These obstacles prevent Roma individuals from fully engaging with digital services, educational resources, and the broader digital economy. The survey findings from Spain reflect a broader issue across Europe, where restricted access to digital tools not only impacts educational opportunities but also affects Roma families' access to essential online services and the ability to participate in a digitally driven workforce. These barriers reinforce socio-economic marginalisation, keeping Roma communities on the periphery of society's technological advancements and economic progress.

The *DIRA Survey Report*²⁹ highlights significant digital inclusion challenges faced by Roma in Finland, Italy, Serbia, and North Macedonia, focusing on barriers to accessing and effectively utilising digital technologies. The report identifies a lack of internet access and digital devices as primary obstacles, compounded by limited digital literacy and a scarcity of targeted support programmes. For many individuals, these barriers are further intensified by socio-economic factors, such as low income and geographic isolation, particularly in rural or segregated areas. The report underscores that without tailored interventions to address these unique needs—such as community-based digital skills training and improved infrastructure—marginalised groups are likely to remain excluded from the benefits of digital participation. Additionally, it notes the impact of COVID-19, which has exacerbated the digital divide by increasing reliance on online platforms for education, employment, and access to essential services, thereby widening the gap for those unable to engage digitally.

Educational Disparities and Digital Literacy

Educational barriers play a crucial role in perpetuating the digital divide, as Roma children face significant challenges in accessing quality education. The disparities between Roma and non-Roma students are obvious: only 27% of young Roma adults have completed upper secondary education, compared to the EU average of 85%.³⁰ This gap is especially concerning because educational attainment is directly linked to digital competence, particularly the ability to use and engage with technology in ways that promote personal and professional development.³¹

Research indicates that Roma individuals often lack the necessary digital skills to navigate the internet, use digital devices and applications, and leverage online resources for personal,

²⁹ Digital Skills in the Roma Community – Results of the survey implemented by DIRA Project in Finland, Italy, Serbia and North Macedonia: https://www.hdl.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DIRA_SurveyReport_final.pdf.

³⁰ European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). (Updated 2024). *Understanding EU Action on Roma Inclusion*: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690629/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)690629_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690629/EPRS_BRI(2021)690629_EN.pdf).

³¹ *ibid*

educational, and professional development.³² The skills gap in digital literacy among Roma communities is influenced by several factors, including the historical exclusion of Roma from quality education, linguistic and cultural barriers, and the scarcity of targeted initiatives that cater to their unique cultural contexts and learning styles.³³ Cultural barriers extend beyond language; they encompass distinct educational expectations, values, and norms that may differ from mainstream approaches to learning. For instance, Roma communities often emphasise oral traditions and experiential learning over formal, institutionalised education, which can create a disconnect with digital literacy programmes structured around traditional classroom methods. Additionally, mainstream digital literacy programmes may lack culturally relevant content, failing to address topics or examples meaningful to Roma learners.

The unique cultural contexts and learning styles of Roma communities include a preference for community-based learning and practical, hands-on approaches. Many Roma individuals learn more effectively through collaborative, family-centred, or peer-supported methods rather than solitary study or abstract theory. However, few digital literacy initiatives incorporate these culturally specific approaches, and many also lack content in Romani languages, limiting accessibility and engagement for Roma learners.³⁴ This disconnect highlights the need for programmes that integrate Roma cultural values and learning styles, thereby making digital literacy education more accessible and relevant to Roma communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the digital exclusion of Roma communities, highlighting how structural antigypsyism underpins their digital divide. Antigypsyism—seen as a specific form of systemic discrimination against Roma—affects the allocation of resources, support, and policies that could otherwise improve Roma access to digital technology. This prejudice influences the low prioritisation of Roma needs in digital and educational planning, resulting in inadequate digital infrastructure, fewer resources, and limited access to devices in Roma-populated areas.³⁵ During school closures, Roma students—particularly those from low-income households—struggled to participate in remote learning due to their lack of access to devices and reliable internet connections. The pandemic exposed the deep-rooted inequalities that Roma children face in education, for example, in Spain, where 62.8% of Roma students do not complete compulsory secondary education.³⁶ The ‘Empleando Digital initiative’, part of the ‘Acceder’ programme focused on employment and training, found that remote learning alone was insufficient for Roma students during the pandemic. Instead, it recommended hybrid methodologies as a more effective approach, particularly for those with limited access to digital devices and weak

³² Sarafian, H. (2022). Key Considerations: Tackling Structural Discrimination and COVID-19 Vaccine Barriers for Roma Communities in Italy. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 28(4), 546-560.

³³ Jakupov, M. (2021). *Digital deprivation should not become a new obstacle for Roma students*.

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2023). *The Educational Situation of Roma Students in Spain*: https://www.gitanos.org/estudios/la_situacion_educativa_del_alumnado_gitano_en_espana.html.en.

digital skills. While digital support initiatives were helpful, they were not enough to fully bridge the educational gap for Roma students.³⁷

Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

Cultural and linguistic barriers significantly hinder Roma communities from fully engaging with digital platforms. Language barriers, for instance, restrict access to digital resources because much of the content is unavailable in Romani languages.³⁸ Beyond language, cultural barriers also play a role; for example, many digital platforms and learning resources are designed with assumptions about prior digital familiarity and formal education that may not align with the experiences of Roma individuals. Traditional Roma culture often values oral knowledge transmission and community-based learning over solitary, text-based approaches. This cultural disconnect makes it less likely that Roma individuals, particularly older generations, will feel comfortable using digital tools or accessing online resources that do not reflect these learning preferences.

Moreover, there is widespread mistrust of mainstream institutions within Roma communities. This mistrust, deeply rooted in centuries of persecution against Roma, extends to digital platforms, where Roma often fear that their personal information will be misused or that they may be subjected to increased surveillance. Civil society representatives interviewed in 2024 noted that older Roma individuals, in particular, feel disconnected from the digital world because they view it as a foreign, untrustworthy space. One interviewee observed, “Many Roma feel that the internet, like other aspects of society, is not made for them and reinforces their sense of exclusion.” This cultural isolation from the digital realm means that many Roma do not benefit from the services or opportunities that the Internet provides.

The exclusion from digital public services further exacerbates these challenges. A study³⁹ on the digital divide in Italy found that digital public services often fail to meet the needs of marginalised communities like the Roma. Essential services—such as accessing housing assistance, enrolling children in school, and applying for social benefits—are frequently inaccessible online for Roma communities. This is due to a combination of factors, including illiteracy, bureaucratic hurdles, and the absence of services designed with Roma needs in mind. Without tailored e-government platforms, Roma individuals miss out on critical information and resources related to social services, healthcare, and employment opportunities that could improve their socio-economic standing and quality of life.

Institutional Barriers and Policy Failures

The lack of targeted and effective policies for Roma digital inclusion remains a significant barrier, as highlighted in both the literature and interviews. Although various EU Member States have introduced initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide, these efforts have

³⁷ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG). (2021). Empleando Digital: https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/empleando_digital.html.

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ Colucci, F., Vianello, G., & Garcés, M. (2019). The digital divide and public service accessibility for marginalized communities in Italy. *Journal of Marginalized Populations Studies*, 23(3), 123-140.

often fallen short of achieving lasting, substantive change.⁴⁰ Many policies are too general and fail to address the specific needs of Roma communities, such as affordable access to technology, culturally relevant digital literacy training, and support services in Romani languages. Without tailoring to these needs, Roma individuals are frequently left out of digital literacy campaigns and educational initiatives intended for the broader population. These policy shortcomings often stem from their symbolic nature, with governments slow to address the root causes of structural antigypsyism. The absence of comprehensive, Roma-specific policies reflects a reluctance to implement structural changes that would tackle the underlying discrimination limiting Roma access to technology and digital resources.⁴¹

The Roma community often shows reluctance to participate in data collection efforts, a pattern rooted in a long history of targeting, exclusion, and negative experiences with authorities. Such encounters frequently reaffirm harmful stereotypes or result in outright exclusion, fostering deep-seated mistrust.⁴² This mistrust is compounded by historical trauma, including the Roma Genocide during World War II, which has left many Roma wary of sharing personal information. Consequently, it is common for Roma individuals to avoid identifying as Roma in surveys or to decline participation in activities that might disclose personal information, fearing that such data could be misused against them.

Moreover, the criteria used for monitoring and evaluating interventions often overlook the specific needs, cultural practices, and challenges faced by Roma communities. For example, cultural norms that prioritise oral over written communication, linguistic barriers due to limited Romani-language materials, and the geographical isolation of many Roma settlements can all hinder accurate data collection and skew results, as seen in FRA's and ERGO's data.⁴³ In Bulgaria, for instance, a report on Roma access to education revealed that rural Roma communities were often left out, leading to incomplete data that failed to represent their true access to educational and digital resources. Similarly, evaluations in Romania indicate that language barriers exclude many Roma who may not speak the national language, resulting in misrepresentations of educational and digital inclusion among Roma individuals.

This deficiency in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) extends beyond Roma-focused projects and reflects a broader issue within EU social programmes, where inadequate M&E limits the effectiveness of interventions for marginalised populations. The absence of a robust M&E framework in many EU social inclusion projects complicates progress tracking and impact assessment, weakening the ability of these programmes to address the needs of marginalised groups. Digital inclusion initiatives, in particular, risk ineffectiveness if they fail to account for the unique challenges of Roma communities, as they may inadvertently increase barriers rather than reduce them. Ensuring the success of these initiatives requires

⁴⁰ Carrera, S., Rostas, I., & Vosyliute, L. (2019). *Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism: Responses and Promising Practices in the EU and Selected Member States*. CEPS.

⁴¹ Rostas, I. (2018). A Task for Sisyphus? Why Europe's Roma Policies Fail. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 40(2), 323-349.

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ *ibid*

not only targeted M&E approaches but also adaptations that address the specific realities of Roma communities to achieve meaningful, sustainable inclusion.

During interviews conducted with civil society representatives, the latter emphasised the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of digital inclusion efforts across Europe.⁴⁴ Governments have been slow to invest in Roma-majority areas, particularly in terms of improving digital infrastructure and providing access to digital literacy training. Furthermore, digital inclusion programmes have often been limited to pilot projects, which lack the necessary funding and political support to be scaled up into comprehensive national initiatives.

Bobáková et al. (2022)⁴⁵ found that Slovakian schools provided some digital resources to Roma students, but these efforts were not accompanied by broader reforms to address poverty, housing segregation, and other structural issues that prevent Roma from fully engaging with digital education programmes.

The Impact of Digital Exclusion on Employment

The role of digital skills in accessing employment opportunities is well documented, especially as the labour market becomes increasingly digitised. For Roma individuals, such as for example in Spain, barriers to employment are often compounded by low levels of digital literacy, limited access to digital tools, and generally lower levels of formal education, which restrict access to many technology-based roles that require higher qualifications. Additionally, even for conventional jobs impacted by technology, Roma individuals frequently face a lack of specialised training, making it more challenging to adapt to roles that now demand digital competencies.⁴⁶

The Acceder⁴⁷ programme, managed by Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), has operated in Spain since 2000, focusing broadly on improving employment opportunities for Roma individuals through job training and support, as well as collaboration with companies. Although not solely centred on digital skills, Acceder has successfully reached over 150,000 participants⁴⁸ (around 70% being Roma), helping 43,000 find employment. With nationwide reach, Acceder has become the primary employment service for most Roma in Spain, engaging approximately 11% of the total Spanish Roma population. The challenge now lies in scaling this successful model to other EU Member States to expand its impact. The initiative emphasises the importance of hybrid methodologies that combine in-person and remote training, acknowledging the challenges Roma individuals face in accessing the digital world.

⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG). (2021). Empleando Digital: https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/empleando_digital.html

⁴⁸ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) Annual Report 2023: https://www.gitanos.org/centro_documentacion/publicaciones/fichas/159033.html.en

The Empleando Digital initiative, led by FSG in partnership with the Spanish Red Cross and Accenture Foundation, focuses on equipping Roma individuals with digital skills tailored to the modern labour market. Since its inception, the programme has trained over 9,800 participants, with a significant proportion completing foundational and advanced courses. Specialised training in areas such as digital sales and software development has also been introduced, resulting in job placements in technology-focused roles. Now in its third iteration, the programme continues to adapt to emerging labour market demands, emphasising digital inclusion as a pathway to employment for Roma individuals.

The 2020–2023 edition of Empleando Digital expanded training to include IT support, cybersecurity, PHP programming, app development, and other technological areas. Collaborating with over 100 tech companies across Spain, the programme trained 73 individuals in specialised IT roles, achieving placements for 10 participants and further job offers for those in digitally impacted occupations. The programme has also fostered workshops with technology companies and adapted the European DigComp Framework to support labour market integration.

In an interview, a respondent highlighted the importance of private-sector partnerships, particularly with technology companies like Accenture Foundation and Google, which have played a key role in delivering high-quality digital literacy training to Roma participants. However, the respondent also noted that the main limitation is not merely a lack of investment but the need for successful programmes, like Acceder and Empleando Digital, to be adopted as public policies. Institutionalising these proven initiatives would provide the sustained funding and policy backing necessary to expand digital and employment opportunities more widely among Roma communities.

Antigypsyist Online Speech and Digital Exclusion

The rise in online hate speech against Roma communities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights how antigypsyism has infiltrated the digital realm. Antigypsyism, the systemic racism and prejudice directed at Roma individuals, is prevalent on social media platforms and in other digital spaces. The growing hate speech against Roma has worsened digital exclusion, alienating individuals from fully participating in the digital world.⁴⁹ This underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to address online discrimination, which not only impacts the psychological well-being of Roma individuals but also perpetuates their broader social and economic marginalisation.

Online Manifestation of Antigypsyism

Antigypsyism manifests in various ways in online spaces, from derogatory language and discriminatory memes to targeted campaigns of harassment against Roma individuals. Common forms include:

- Racist slurs and dehumanising content: Social media posts often use offensive language to dehumanise Roma individuals, portraying them as criminals, parasites, or unworthy of inclusion in society. This fuels stereotypes that have long been associated with antigypsyism.

⁴⁹ ERGO Network. (2022). *PECAO Synthesis Report on Antigypsyist Online Hate Speech*.

- Conspiracy theories: Roma communities have been subject to conspiracy theories that link them to crime or social unrest, especially during periods of crisis, such as the pandemic. These conspiracy theories often spread through social media platforms like Facebook and X (Twitter), where users can share misinformation without moderation.
- Organised hate campaigns: In some cases, far-right groups or organised online communities have targeted Roma individuals with coordinated hate campaigns, encouraging harassment, threats, and the spreading of antigypsyist content across multiple platforms.

A study identified a sharp increase in such cases, with nearly 1,795 instances of online hate speech against Roma documented during the pandemic. This rise can be attributed to the increased time spent online due to lockdown measures, as well as the heightened tensions in society that were fuelled by economic and social instability.⁵⁰

Platform Responses and Their Limitations

Social media platforms like Facebook, X (Twitter), and YouTube have made efforts to address online hate speech, but their actions are often insufficient for tackling the problem of antigypsyism. While these platforms have policies against hate speech, enforcement remains inconsistent, with Roma activists and civil society organisations often struggling to have harmful content removed.

Platforms like Facebook have introduced tools that allow users to report hate speech, but many Roma individuals lack the digital literacy skills or knowledge to effectively use them. Moreover, the content moderation algorithms now commonly used to automate the removal of hate speech struggle to detect antigypsyism due to the complexity of the language used and the subtle ways it is expressed online. This makes human oversight critical in the review process, but the sheer volume of content that is produced limits thorough human moderation.

Some progress has been made: YouTube, for example, has strengthened its policies against hate speech, including antigypsyism, by demonetising or removing channels that promote racist content.

However, many antigypsyist narratives are shared through private groups or encrypted platforms, such as Telegram channels, where far-right parties and individuals frequently disseminate hate speech and racist messages. On these channels, such content circulates with minimal scrutiny, bypassing the moderation found on more traditional social media platforms like YouTube, X (Twitter), or Facebook.

Policy Interventions and Governmental Action

Governments across Europe have recognised the need to tackle online antigypsyism and hate speech, but their responses have varied. For instance, Germany's Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG) requires social media companies to swiftly remove illegal content, including hate speech, or face fines. While this has increased accountability, it still relies heavily on

⁵⁰ ERGO Network. (2022). *PECAO Synthesis Report on Antigypsyist Online Hate Speech*.

users reporting such content, which, as mentioned, is a barrier for many Roma individuals due to their low digital literacy.⁵¹

The EU has taken steps through initiatives such as the ‘EU Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online’, which encourages cooperation between technology companies, civil society, and governments to reduce hate speech. While this is a step in the right direction, Roma communities continue to face systemic challenges in navigating these systems, and the enforcement of policies specific to antigypsyism remains weak.⁵²

In some countries, such as Spain and Bulgaria, collaboration between the government and civil society organisations has helped raise awareness about online hate speech and antigypsyism. For example, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), Spain and Integro, Bulgaria have partnered with local authorities to promote digital literacy and educate Roma individuals on how to report hate speech and seek legal recourse. However, such initiatives need to be expanded across Europe to have a more meaningful impact on reducing online hate speech.⁵³

Civil Society Responses

Civil society organisations have been at the forefront of tackling online antigypsyism by raising awareness, advocating for policy changes, and providing digital literacy training to Roma individuals. The ERGO Network and other NGOs have played a key role in documenting instances of hate speech and pushing for better regulation of online platforms. These organisations have called for:

- Stronger penalties for platforms that fail to remove antigypsyist content.
- The inclusion of antigypsyism as a distinct category of hate speech in European legislation, alongside racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination.
- Improved access to legal support for Roma individuals who have been targeted by online hate campaigns.

In conclusion, addressing online hate speech and antigypsyism requires a multi-pronged approach that involves governments, civil society, and technology companies working together to develop and enforce policies that protect Roma individuals from digital discrimination. Efforts should be focused not only on removing harmful content but also on educating Roma communities about their digital rights and empowering them to actively participate in digital spaces without fear of harassment or exclusion. Moreover, ensuring that content moderation systems are equipped to deal with the unique challenges of antigypsyism is essential to creating a safer, more inclusive digital landscape.

⁵¹ Library of Congress. (2021). *Germany: Network Enforcement Act amended to better fight online hate speech*. Retrieved from <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2021-07-06/germany-network-enforcement-act-amended-to-better-fight-online-hate-speech/>

⁵² European Commission. (2020). *EU Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online*. Retrieved from https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en

⁵³ Integro Association. (2022). *Monitoring Report: Combating Antigypsyist Hate Speech Online*. Retrieved from <https://integrobq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Monitoring-report-hate-speech-ENG.pdf>

Promising Initiatives

The survey also explored emerging trends and promising practices aimed at addressing these barriers. A majority of respondents noted the importance of community-driven digital literacy programmes and partnerships between Roma organisations and technology companies to bridge the gap. Some respondents shared examples of e-learning platforms that have been integrated into social inclusion efforts, offering both children and adults new ways to learn and engage with the digital world. However, despite these initiatives, respondents generally agreed that such efforts remain fragmented and insufficient in scale to create a widespread impact.

In response to the question about what could improve national policies, several respondents recommended first addressing systemic poverty and economic disparities. One respondent suggested that “governments need to prioritise combating poverty” before expecting digital inclusion to have any real effect. Another highlighted the need for simple language in digital training materials to accommodate varying literacy levels and cultural sensitivities. Additionally, there was a strong emphasis on the need for governments to target disinformation circulating in digital spaces, as this disproportionately affects Roma communities, who often rely on social media as a primary news source.

The survey data and interview findings underscore the need for a more comprehensive, coordinated approach to digital inclusion for Roma communities. While community-driven initiatives are a promising step forward, they are currently insufficient to address the scale of the digital divide.

Despite the significant barriers and challenges identified in the research, there are several promising practices and initiatives that offer pathways for improving digital inclusion among Roma communities. These initiatives are driven by grassroots efforts, partnerships with the private sector, and targeted policy interventions. However, the research indicates that scaling these efforts to reach the broader Roma population will require sustained financial and political commitment at both the national and EU levels.

Community-Driven Digital Literacy Programmes

One of the most effective strategies for closing the digital divide among Roma populations has been the development of community-driven digital literacy programmes. These programmes, often led by Roma civil society organisations, are tailored to the specific needs and challenges of Roma communities.

Spain is home to a notable example of this approach. In order to provide targeted digital skills training, Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) launched the Empleando Digital programme in partnership with the Spanish Red Cross and the Accenture Foundation.⁵⁴ Since its start, the initiative has had two editions (2017–2019 and 2020–2023), with a third underway, focusing on equipping Roma individuals with the digital skills needed for today’s job market. Through Empleando Digital, over 9,800 participants have received digital skills training—more than 5,900 in basic courses and 2,328 in advanced digital skills. An additional

⁵⁴ Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG). (2021). Empleando Digital: https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/empleando_digital.html

1,848 people have gained foundational digital knowledge through ‘Digital Classroom’ sessions, and 304 participants have completed specialised courses in fields transformed by digitalisation, such as digital sales and tech products. Of these, 48 individuals were trained in software development (JavaScript and Java), leading to 12 job placements in the tech sector.

The 2020–2023 edition of Empleado Digital expanded offerings to include IT support, cybersecurity, PHP programming, app development, and other tech-focused skills. Collaborating with over 100 tech companies across Spain, the programme trained 73 individuals in specialised IT roles, leading to job placements for 10 participants and further offers in digitally impacted fields. The programme has also fostered workshops with tech companies and adapted the European DigComp Framework to better support Roma individuals in joining the labour market.⁵⁵

The programme’s success lies in its ability to adapt its methodology over time and the collaboration with various companies, combining technical skills training with the development of soft skills, which are essential for navigating the modern workplace.

Similarly, the Digital Hungary programme has worked to integrate Roma communities into the digital economy through community-based digital literacy workshops.⁵⁶ These workshops are designed to be culturally sensitive, with Romani-speaking trainers who are members of the Roma community. This approach has been instrumental in building trust and encouraging participation, as participants feel more comfortable learning from individuals who understand their cultural context. In addition to this, the Afterschool Geekery programme, initiated by the Foundation for Global Human Dignity, offers digital literacy education to disadvantaged children, including Roma, in Hungary. It employs similar culturally sensitive methods, using Romani-speaking trainers to foster trust and encourage participation. Despite the success of these localised efforts, both programmes face limitations in terms of reach and highlight the need for greater investment to effectively serve the broader Roma population.⁵⁷

Hybrid and Online Training Models

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of hybrid and online training models that allow individuals to participate in digital literacy programmes both remotely and in person. This model has been particularly beneficial for Roma communities, many of whom live in geographically isolated areas and may lack the resources to attend in-person training sessions regularly. A respondent emphasised that FSG’s hybrid model has enabled a wider range of Roma individuals to participate in digital literacy programmes, even in areas where infrastructure is lacking.

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ *Digital Education Strategy of Hungary (2023)* <https://digitalisjoletprogram.hu/en/content/des-digital-education-strategy-of-hungary>.

⁵⁷ Foundation for Global Human Dignity. (2023). *Afterschool Geekery Programme: Digital literacy for disadvantaged children in Hungary*. Retrieved from <https://ghdfoundation.com/the-foundation-for-global-human-dignity/our-afterschool-geekery-programme-is-now-running-in-hungary-ukraine-and-slovakia/>

However, civil society representatives also warned that relying too heavily on online training could exclude those Roma individuals who do not have reliable access to digital infrastructure or sufficient technical skills or lack the means to follow and engage with online learning platforms. It is crucial, therefore, that digital literacy programmes remain flexible and accessible, offering both online and in-person training options to ensure that no one is left behind.

Partnerships with Technology Companies

Partnerships with the private sector have been a critical factor in advancing digital inclusion initiatives for Roma communities. Collaborations with technology companies, such as Accenture Foundation and Google.org, have enabled organisations like Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and the ERGO Network to develop innovative training methods, including the use of virtual reality for technical skills training and strategies to combat online antigypsyism.⁵⁸

In the Empleado Digital programme,⁵⁹ these partnerships extend beyond digital literacy to include training in high-demand technological occupations, such as programming in Java and JavaScript. This approach has equipped Roma individuals not only to use technology but also to contribute to its creation, preparing them for quality jobs and promoting inclusion ‘from the inside’ within the tech sector. While corporate social responsibility (CSR) has helped raise awareness about the digital exclusion faced by Roma communities, FSG’s experience suggests that CSR alone is a short-term solution. Long-term employment opportunities depend on companies finding well-trained, skilled workers, which underscores the importance of effective training and sustainable partnerships for lasting impact.

However, interviewees stressed that these partnerships need to be scaled up and sustained over the long term to have a meaningful impact. While pilot programmes have shown promising results, they are often limited in scope and fail to reach the most vulnerable Roma populations. National governments must play a more active role in facilitating partnerships between Roma organisations and the private sector, ensuring that these collaborations are sustained and expanded beyond the pilot phase.

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/employment/empleando_digital.html

3. CONCLUSIONS

The persistent digital divide that affects Roma communities across Europe represents a critical social justice issue that extends far beyond mere access to technology. As the research findings have consistently demonstrated, this divide is deeply intertwined with historical and structural inequities related to socio-economic status, cultural barriers, educational disparities, and institutional discrimination. Addressing the digital exclusion of Roma communities requires a multi-faceted, coordinated approach that involves governments, civil society, and the private sector working together to promote equitable access to digital resources and technologies.

The Urgency of Addressing the Digital Divide

The Roma face a particularly severe digital divide that threatens to further marginalise them in an increasingly digital world. Economic mobility, social integration, and educational opportunities are now closely linked to digital access and skills. Without the necessary tools, Roma communities risk being left behind in an economy that is rapidly evolving and dependent on digital proficiency. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored and intensified existing digital inequalities, as the rapid shift to online services—from education to healthcare—became a substantial barrier for Roma communities. Many Roma households, lacking both reliable internet access and essential digital skills, were unprepared for this digital transition, which further marginalised them from vital services. The pandemic exposed the urgent need for governments to take action; without intervention, marginalised populations like the Roma risk being excluded from increasingly digital public services. As more services move entirely online, the absence of offline alternatives will deepen this exclusion, leaving Roma communities without access to education, healthcare, social benefits, and other essential resources. This shift highlights a critical responsibility for governments to address digital inequities proactively to prevent further marginalisation of vulnerable communities in the digital age. This exclusion from digital spaces has far-reaching consequences, especially at a time when access to the internet is increasingly seen as a fundamental right. Digital exclusion not only limits access to information and education but also impedes Roma individuals from participating in civic life, accessing public services, and engaging in the labour market. Roma exclusion from the digital world is more than a technological gap; it reflects and amplifies existing social inequalities, making this a critical issue for policymakers.

Public-Private Partnerships and Long-Term Investment

The pathway to bridging the digital divide for Roma communities lies in sustained collaboration between governments, the private sector, and civil society organisations. Public-private partnerships have demonstrated significant potential in addressing digital exclusion, particularly when designed with a long-term perspective. These partnerships must evolve beyond pilot programmes and isolated initiatives to become robust, scalable solutions that can deliver widespread and lasting impact.

The success of initiatives such as Acceder in Spain underscores the importance of collaborative efforts that combine digital and soft skills training. However, scaling up these efforts to reach broader segments of the Roma population, including rural and informal settlements, requires coordinated investment and targeted action. Expanding the

geographical scope of successful programmes and integrating them into national and EU-level digital strategies—such as the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) or the Digital Europe Programme—can provide the necessary resources to sustain these efforts.

A key factor in sustaining these collaborations is the establishment of clear governance frameworks that define the roles, responsibilities, and long-term commitments of all stakeholders. Governments can play a central role by incentivising private-sector engagement through tax benefits or subsidies and by creating funding mechanisms to ensure continuous support for digital inclusion programmes. These mechanisms should prioritise Roma communities as part of broader national and EU strategies for digital education and inclusion.

Moreover, performance metrics and accountability systems are essential to monitor progress and adapt programmes to evolving needs. Indicators such as digital literacy levels, internet access, and employment outcomes can help evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and guide improvements. Regular assessments ensure that programmes remain relevant and impactful, delivering tangible benefits to Roma communities.

Innovative approaches to digital inclusion, driven by private-sector contributions, have already shown promise. Companies like Google, Microsoft, and the Accenture Foundation have played a critical role in providing training, infrastructure, and devices to marginalised communities. However, their commitment must extend beyond initial investments. By building lasting relationships with Roma civil society organisations, the private sector can ensure that programmes address the unique needs of Roma communities and equip individuals with both digital and entrepreneurial skills to succeed in the digital economy.

Ultimately, the success of public-private partnerships in promoting digital inclusion for Roma communities hinges on sustained engagement, long-term investment, and the ability to scale proven initiatives. By fostering innovative solutions, maintaining clear governance, and committing to continuous funding, these partnerships can serve as a cornerstone for bridging the digital divide and creating equitable access to opportunities in an increasingly digitised world.

A Holistic, Sustainable Approach

The research shows that achieving meaningful and lasting digital inclusion for Roma communities requires more than just addressing technological access. It requires a holistic approach that recognises the multi-faceted nature of exclusion and works to dismantle the social, economic, and institutional barriers that prevent Roma individuals from fully participating in society. Digital inclusion must be part of a broader strategy that includes education reform, anti-discrimination efforts, and economic development initiatives.

This holistic approach must be sustained over time, with a focus on capacity building and the development of sustainable models for digital inclusion. Governments, civil society, and the private sector must work together to ensure that digital inclusion efforts are not short-term fixes but rather part of a long-term vision for Roma empowerment. Only through sustained commitment can we ensure that Roma communities are not left behind in the digital revolution.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the digital inclusion of Roma communities, a more coordinated and comprehensive approach is necessary. This approach requires the active participation of a range of stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society organisations, technology companies, and Roma communities themselves. Key elements of this approach need to include:

Targeted and community-driven strategies: Digital inclusion initiatives must be designed in collaboration with Roma communities to ensure they are culturally sensitive and address the specific needs of this diverse minority group. This means creating digital literacy programmes that consider language barriers and educational disparities while also addressing the unique priorities of Roma individuals. Initiatives like the Acceder programme in Spain, which integrates both digital skills and cultural understanding, serve as important models.

An integrated, holistic approach: Digital inclusion should be part of broader social inclusion and anti-discrimination programmes. Tackling digital exclusion in isolation will not address the root causes of the problem, which are linked to systemic inequalities. Effective policy requires a deep structural transformation to dismantle the antigypsyist framework that has historically marginalised Roma communities. Digital inclusion efforts must work in tandem with these broader policies to create sustainable change.

Sustained investment and long-term commitment: Achieving meaningful digital inclusion requires more than just short-term projects or pilot programmes. It calls for sustained investment in digital infrastructure in Roma-majority areas and a long-term commitment to capacity-building within Roma communities. This includes investments in digital literacy training, affordable internet access, and digital devices to ensure that Roma individuals can fully engage with the digital.

Increased representation and participation: Roma communities must be given a central role in the design, implementation, and evaluation of digital inclusion initiatives. Ensuring that Roma voices are heard and their perspectives integrated into decision-making processes is essential for creating initiatives that are both effective and respectful of their unique experiences. This participatory approach helps to build trust between Roma communities and mainstream institutions, fostering greater engagement with digital tools.

Investments into infrastructure: Governments must invest in reliable internet connectivity and digital infrastructure in Roma-majority areas. Without this foundational support, digital inclusion efforts will continue to falter. National and EU-level policies should prioritise the development of broadband networks in rural and segregated communities, ensuring that all Roma individuals have access to the digital tools and resources they need.

Investment into skills: Digital literacy programmes should be comprehensive and tailored to the specific needs of both young and older Roma individuals. These programmes must focus not only on building foundational skills but also on developing more advanced competencies that prepare Roma individuals for employment and education in the digital economy.

Cross-sectoral collaboration: Governments and civil society organisations should scale up partnerships with technology companies to ensure that Roma communities have access to cutting-edge training and employment opportunities. These partnerships should focus on long-term sustainability, ensuring that digital inclusion initiatives are not limited to short-term pilot projects.

Fighting online hate speech: Governments, civil society organisations, and technology companies must work together to address the pervasive issue of online hate speech targeting Roma communities. This includes enforcing stricter content moderation policies, promoting digital citizenship, and providing Roma individuals with the tools they need to report and respond to online abuse.

Inclusive but non-segregated approach: Digital inclusion initiatives should be designed to integrate Roma individuals into mainstream societal structures, promoting inclusivity for the Roma communities. This requires a dual approach: targeted measures to address the specific barriers faced by Roma populations—such as low digital literacy, limited access to devices, and unique cultural needs—combined with guaranteed access to mainstream digital services. By ensuring that Roma individuals can access the same digital infrastructure, literacy programmes, and online services available to the broader population, these initiatives foster genuine inclusion. To make this approach effective, it is crucial to collect ethnic data with safeguards against discrimination, ensuring that Roma-specific needs are met while also promoting equal participation in both digital and civic life.

Monitoring and evaluation: Governments and civil society organisations should establish clear frameworks for monitoring and evaluating the impact of digital inclusion initiatives. This will ensure that programmes remain effective, scalable, and responsive to the needs of Roma communities.

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