

# Ways of Europe

From antidiscrimination to the  
future of Europe

Ways of Europe aims to redefine citizen engagement and strengthen access to rights and democracy across the EU by amplifying underrepresented voices. In March 2026, partners of Ways of Europe gathered in Barcelona for a transnational event focused on anti-discrimination and the fight for equal rights for all citizens. The sessions combined informative inputs on discrimination against Roma communities with participatory dynamics aimed at fostering dialogue, sharing experiences, and collectively proposing actions to combat discrimination affecting Roma people as well as other marginalized groups. The following manifesto emerges from these reflections, with the aim of promoting more inclusive, equitable, and rights-based societies across Europe.

## Invisible and normalized discrimination

Ways of Europe partners want to highlight that discrimination processes remain deeply normalized and often invisible in our societies. These dynamics affect multiple dimensions of life, from racial and gender discrimination to urban segregation and unequal access to healthcare and public services. Despite their structural impact, these forms of discrimination continue to be socially tolerated and insufficiently addressed. These dynamics are sustained not only by individual attitudes but also by institutional practices and systemic inequalities that must be critically examined and transformed.

## Making discrimination visible

The normalization and invisibilization of discrimination prevent us from collectively recognizing these injustices and placing them at the center of public debate. As a consequence, meaningful responses and transformative policies are often delayed or weakened. Making discrimination visible is therefore a political and social priority. Visibility must also include data collection, research, and the recognition of lived experiences, ensuring that discrimination is documented without reinforcing stigma.

## Education as a transformative tool

Education plays a key role in challenging these dynamics. It is essential to raise awareness among students, families, professionals, and communities, fostering critical thinking and active citizenship. Anti-discrimination perspectives must be systematically integrated into school curricula, teacher training, and non-formal education spaces. Education should not only transmit knowledge but also promote values of equity, diversity, and social justice. Educational approaches must also be inclusive of diverse narratives, particularly those historically excluded, such as Roma histories and contributions, and should challenge dominant Eurocentric perspectives.

## Roma communities: from discrimination to recognition

Roma communities have historically faced persistent discrimination and segregation, and these injustices continue today. Stereotypes are still reinforced through media, social networks, and entertainment, often associating Roma people with marginalization, criminality, or folklorized representations that strip away complexity and dignity. Urban and school segregation remain among the most pressing challenges, limiting access to opportunities and reinforcing cycles of exclusion. At the same time, Roma communities demand the recognition and recovery of their history, memory, and cultural heritage, ensuring that future generations can access and take pride in their identity. It is

essential to ensure that Roma voices are central in shaping how their realities are represented, moving away from narratives imposed by external actors.

### **Avoiding homogenization: recognizing diversity within Roma communities**

When referring to Roma communities, it is essential to avoid generalizations. Roma people are not a homogeneous group; they represent diverse identities, histories, languages, and experiences across Europe. Policies and actions must reflect this diversity, avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches and instead promoting context-sensitive, community-led responses.

### **Working with Roma communities: from representation to co-creation**

Working with Roma communities requires moving beyond symbolic inclusion or representation. It means ensuring meaningful participation and co-creation in all stages of decision-making processes. This involves building trust, recognizing lived experience as expertise, and supporting leadership within Roma communities themselves.

### **Intersectionality as a guiding principle**

Discrimination does not occur in isolation. People experience overlapping forms of inequality based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, class, age, disability, sexual orientation, and migration status. An intersectional approach is therefore essential to fully understand and address discrimination. Policies and practices must reflect this complexity to avoid reproducing exclusion.

### **Community empowerment and equity**

At the community level, it is essential to move from paternalistic approaches to genuine empowerment. Communities must be supported to tell their own stories, define their priorities, and lead decision-making processes that affect their lives. This is not a matter of integration into unequal systems, but of achieving real equity, justice, and redistribution of opportunities and power.

### **Anti-discrimination as a continuous and transformative practice**

Anti-discrimination work goes beyond awareness-raising. It requires actively identifying, questioning, and transforming the structures, norms, and practices that reproduce inequality. This includes challenging institutional biases, addressing power imbalances, and ensuring accountability at all levels. Anti-discrimination must be understood as an ongoing, reflective, and action-oriented process that involves individuals, communities, and institutions alike.

### **Our responsibility as social actors**

As individuals and professionals working in the social field, we acknowledge our responsibility to act. This includes recognizing and using our positions of privilege to listen, to question our own biases, and to amplify the voices of those who have historically been silenced. We must create inclusive spaces where all people can express themselves freely and be heard. Staying informed, promoting critical thinking, and fostering dialogue are essential tools to challenge discrimination in our daily practices. This responsibility includes adopting anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practices in our professional environments, as well as committing to continuous learning and unlearning processes.

Furthermore, from our position as workers and technicians within social organizations, it is not enough to simply declare our commitment to equity; we must engage in an ongoing, and often uncomfortable, examination of how our own practices may reproduce the very inequalities we aim to challenge. Too often, we fall into generalizations, paternalistic narratives, or frameworks of victimization that, despite good intentions, reinforce unequal power dynamics and limit people's agency. Our role is not to speak on behalf of others or to simplify complex realities, but to question where we speak from and who may be excluded in the process.

Acknowledging that we hold prejudices and stereotypes, shaped by our personal, social, and cultural backgrounds, is not the issue; failing to critically examine them is. This requires making them visible, placing them at the center of our professional practice, and actively questioning them, even when doing

