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My name is Torotcoi Simona, I am a Roma from Romania, and I am a rights expert for the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent – an umbrella network bringing together Dalits, Roma-Sinti, Quilombola, Burakumin, Haratine, Oru, Shambara amongst many other communities.

Unfortunately, we were not involved in the preparation of the national report.

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Today I would like to point out three main important human rights issues facing the Roma communities:

- The antigypsyism Roma communities in Romania face, also known as anti-Roma discrimination/ racism affecting Roma women and the Roma LGBTIQ+ community
- The persistent school segregation of Roma children, and
- The forced housing evictions and the housing deprivation Roma communities encounter

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The capacity of the Romanian antidiscrimination law to combat racial discrimination remains very limited.

The term ‘antigypsyism’ – as a specific form of Roma discrimination and racism did not receive recognition from state institutions, and the society at large.

The current legislation does not include provisions on what antigypsyism is and its manifestations (including cumulative and intersectional discrimination).

Both the European Union Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030 and the 2021 Council Recommendation on Roma, ask the Romanian government to introduce antigypsyism as a horizontal objective and to set quantitative targets by 2030 to combat and prevent it! We expect that Romania, a country with a high Roma population to engage into more ambitious actions.

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In order to make social inclusion measures more effective and increase their sustainability, we recommend to the Romanian government to recognize antigypsyism as a specific form of racism against Roma, treat it as a horizontal issue in all policy areas and ensure its mainstreaming in all relevant policies and legislation, including funding instruments; to monitor antigypsyism and to collect gender-disaggregated data on antigypsyism and include Romani women both in policy making mechanisms and consultation processes, and as targets in national programs and strategies, and to strengthen the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation and ensure access to justice for Roma.

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Roma students continue to face problems in the education system, namely early school leaving, poor quality of education, racism, and ethnic segregation despite the many public policy measures implemented in recent decades.

School segregation of Roma children in education in Romania represents the most egregious manifestations of antigypsyism.

School segregation persists yet there is no accurate data is available regarding the extent of school segregation; in spite of the legal obligation of the Ministry of Education to report annually on the state of education in Romania

The most recent report presented to the Romanian Parliament by the Association Center for Advocacy and Human Rights (CADO) found that 285 schools out of 805 in 11 monitored counties register at least one form of segregation.

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We recommend the Romanian Government to

Implement the existing legal framework on school segregation and take sufficient **preventive measures to protect Roma children against discrimination** by reporting on the status of Roma children's education on an annual basis.

Stop delaying and apply nationally as soon as possible the Ministerial which approved the Methodology for **monitoring school segregation and initiate the desegregation** process

And, to immediately reactivate the National Commission on Desegregation and Inclusive Education, and develop a national wide desegregation methodology and plan

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In addition to precarious living situations, Roma often live in substandard housing, face obstacles when looking for new accommodation (many landlords explicitly state no Roma), and experience (and fear) evictions (reportedly) more often than the general population.

Roma face evictions because of a lack of property documents (which highly associated with a lack of identity documents), because of the illegality of the construction, the development real estate projects – in many cases associated with corruption, etc.

If evicted Roma are not provided adequate alternative housing and many continue to live in makeshift barracks for years after they have been evicted, highly exposed to environmental hazards.

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I call upon the Romanian Government to:

- Adopt and implement legislation to ensure that evictions are carried out in compliance with international human rights standards and take safeguards against Roma discrimination and marginalisation.
- Increase the annual budget allocation for social housing and immediately relocate to safe and sanitary environments those who were forcibly evicted and placed in unsuitable living conditions.
- Amend law on public housing to establish a clear national framework of allocation of social housing that prioritize vulnerable groups, including Roma people
- Strengthen administrative support to Roma communities to legalise their housing titles and increase access to alternative housing, making sure that there is no discrimination in the awarding of social housing leases.

Slide 9 Thank you, from all the members of our coalition!