

Please provide an overview of your organisation. (2-3 sentences)

The Working Group Against Hate Crimes (GYEM) is formed by four Hungarian NGOs: Amnesty International Hungary, Háttér Society, Hungarian Helsinki Committee and the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU). GYEM's members provide legal advice and representation in front of authorities and courts for victims of hate crimes, furthermore, they conduct research and publish articles relevant to this field. GYEM also develops training curricula and conducts training programs for professionals dealing with hate crimes. GYEM's member organisation responsible for filling out this questionnaire is HCLU that has a project dedicated specifically to dealing with the discrimination of those who belong to the most vulnerable groups within Hungarian society (the Equality Project) and it also monitors the media platforms, different activities and demonstrations of far-right groups.

What are the targets of racism in your country? (top 5 targets)

Roma citizens are without doubt the biggest target of racism in Hungary. This is quite tangible not only on a personal and institutional, but also on a systemic level in every possible field of life, from education and healthcare to policing, administration and the criminal justice system.

Ever since 2015, when the Hungarian government started its anti-migration communication campaign that included placing billboards all around the country that showed people seemingly of Middle-Eastern and North-African origin, possibly and seemingly belonging to an Arabic ethnicity, individuals who carry external features similar to the ones described, are also often targets of racism. A specific ethnic group cannot be highlighted in this regard, since both the goal and the effect of the government's communication campaign was the creation of fear and hatred towards any group and any person who possesses such external characteristics, regardless of their real individual religion or ethnic origin.

We are aware that racist incidents resulting in bodily injuries are also frequently committed against people of Black African origin. Similarly to the above-mentioned case, no specific ethnicity or country of origin can be mentioned in this regard either that would be a primal target of racism.

People belonging to the Jewish community have increasingly been experiencing antisemitism in the last decade as well. According to a survey¹ from 2019, 33% of Hungarian society has certain antisemitic views, 13% of which can be considered extreme.

How does racism occur in your country? (3-4 examples)

Firstly, racism appears visibly on the level of government: the Hungarian government has been using an outstandingly racist rhetoric since the year 2015, and has conducted an

¹ 4 Antiszemita előítéletesség a mai magyar társadalomban Budapest, Tett és Védelem Alapítvány 2019., https://tev.hu/wpcontent/uploads/2019/07/TEV_Antiszemitizmus2018-Median_72dpiKE%CC%81SZ.pdf

extremely harmful communication campaign throughout these past years. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination found in its 2019 report² that the language used by high-ranking politicians with regard to migrants and refugees can be regarded as hate speech and is very much capable of increasing intolerance and inciting hatred in Hungary. Racism in Hungary cannot be looked at without taking into account the extremely hostile environment towards migrants, refugees and ultimately, towards any group or person that has the external characteristics of a potential foreigner, created by the government as mentioned above.

Moreover, government officials, even the Prime Minister himself talk about Roma communities in a deeply racist, demeaning and discriminatory manner openly. For instance, in 2020, governing party politicians launched a concerted public campaign when a judgment awarded damages to the parents of Roma children who were educated in segregated classes in the elementary school of Gyöngyöspata. The Prime Minister publically claimed this judgment unjust and stated that *“if I lived there [...] I would be asking myself how, for some reason, members of an ethnically identifiable group living in my village could receive a significant amount of money without doing any kind of work.”*

Secondly, racism also appears quite visibly on the level of public administration and in policing practices. During the time of more severe restrictions due to the pandemic, ethnic profiling seemed to be even more common than usual. In our experience for instance, Roma citizens were punished with administrative fines for violating curfew regulations much more frequently than non-Roma citizens. Furthermore, we experience a high level of racism within the child protection and family support system as well, since families most affected by the removal of their children are of Roma origin.

Thirdly, it is crucial to mention that racism appears in the form of hate crimes as well. GYEM continuously documents such incidents on its website³ indicating the vulnerable group concerned, while HCLU monitors the different activities and demonstrations of far-right movements. Therefore, we have recently discovered that the members of right extremist groups are rather actively participating in illegal actions mainly to the detriment of Roma citizens and refugees⁴ in order to “protect” public safety and wish to carry out duties of the police in relation to preventing and combating crime. Such practices are sanctioned by both the Criminal Code of Hungary and the Law on Administrative offences, however, the police almost never investigate such cases to our knowledge.

For further details see the Submission by GYEM to the third cycle of the UPR of Hungary: https://gyulotellen.hu/sites/default/files/gyem_upr_2021.pdf and the joint Submission of HCLU and the Civic Roma Women of Bódva-völgy regarding the discrimination of Roma persons: https://tasz.hu/a/img/Roma_UPR_2021.pdf.

² Concluding Observations (2019) CERD /C/HUN/CO/18-25
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD/C/HUN/CO/18-25&Lang=En

³ <https://gyulotellen.hu/esetek>

⁴ “Attacks followed by manhunt on the border”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OdGbyPaJ88&t=891s>

Do you have any data on racism in your country? Please, provide some examples of data sources, if possible.

For data regarding hate crimes recorded by the police, see: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/hungary>

Regarding racism in relation to migration, see “The Social Aspects of the 2015 Migration Crisis in Hungary” a research conducted by the TÁRKI Social Research Institute, 2016: https://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2016/kitekint/20160330_refugees.pdf

Regarding racist views in relation to childcare and family support services that result in the removal of many Roma children from their families, see “Roma children in state care”, a research conducted in the county of Nógrád, 2016: http://www.esely.org/kiadvanyok/2016_4/2016-4_3-1_Darvas-Farkas-Kende-Vigh_Roma_gy_erekek.pdf

Regarding antisemitism, see a report by FRA from 2018 that also examined Hungary specifically: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf

How effective have existing anti-racism measures and legal strategy been in your country? (4-5 sentences)

It is our experience that almost no effective anti-racism measures and legal strategies have been implemented (see the exception below), we can say quite the opposite: the central government has largely contributed to racism being highly accepted within our society and in the course of public communication.

The Equal Treatment Authority (ETA) previously responsible for discrimination cases relating to racism was quite an efficient and well-functioning state authority, with a well developed caselaw, easily accessible website and a network of equal treatment consultants on a local level in each county, who gave free legal aid in discrimination cases - also relating to racism - to those in need. As of January 1, 2021 the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary overtook ETA's role - even though in June 2021 the Commissioner was recommended to be downgraded to classification B by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions⁵. The valuable network of consultants was also abolished this year, along with a much more up-to-date and user friendly website.

What are the specific measures which have been effective in fighting discrimination and racism in your country? (3-4 sentences)

A forward looking measure we can name is that on 1 August, 2019, a decision of the Chief of Commander of the Police has entered into force, which for the first time in Hungary deals

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/NHRI/StatusAccreditationChartNHRIs.pdf>

specifically with police duties regarding hate crimes and includes a list of hate crime indicators - as also suggested by GYEM - that have to be considered in the course of the investigation. It is also stated in the protocol that policemen must refrain from using stereotypical and demeaning statements when talking to the victim concerned. The effectiveness of these legal measures are for now questionable in practice, however, we still find that this an important step forward that could possibly be used effectively.

Is there a National Action Plan against Racism in your country? If so, what are its measures and how effective have they been? Are there any related financial instruments or budgets to support the action plan? (4-5 sentences)

On the national level we can only mention a convergence strategy⁶ in this regard that aims to better the inclusion of the Roma population within Hungarian society. In reality, the strategy does not prove to be effective at all and civil society organizations are not included in or consulted with during the decision making process⁷. Although the strategy identifies anti-gypsyism and stigmatisation as two of the main factors contributing to the exclusion of the Roma population, it does not offer any effective tools as to how to address these problems, and even the measures it does offer (such as preventing hate speech) lack credibility, since almost every action of the government counters the goals and proposals of the strategy.

Does racism manifest in the practices of certain institutions? If so, what institutions? (2-3 sentences)

Yes, absolutely visibly. Racist views often manifest within the police and in all institutions that are part of the criminal justice system, in child protection services and family support services, as well as schools and healthcare facilities. We also find that local municipalities are often unwilling to cooperate with the municipality of the local Roma ethnic community.

What about racism in your country has changed over the past 10 years? Do you have any concerns about these changes? (2-3 sentences)

Racism in the past 10 years has become more focused on migrants, refugees and foreigners in general, who are now targets of a very deeply-rooted hatred and aggression. Apart from the government's actions, the many platforms social media offers might also have contributed to a culture of hatred and racism, which we also find worrisome.

Regarding the Roma population: even though the racist movement called Magyar Gárda (Hungarian Guards) was dissolved in 2009, since then, new far-right movements have been

⁶ http://romagov.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/MNTFS2030_1201-tervezet.pdf

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<https://telex.hu/belfold/2021/03/31/nem-mutatja-meg-a-miniszterium-a-roma-felzarkoztato-szervezeteknek-a-roma-felzarkoztatas-strategiajat>

formed that are quite active. Due to the government's hateful communication techniques, racist statements have become much more accepted in everyday discourse as well.

In your opinion, where should policy makers in general and the European Parliament, in particular, focus on in order to strengthen protection against racism, xenophobia and racial discrimination? (3-4 suggestions)

We suggest that the focus should not only be on dealing with extremist movements and parties, but also on offering effective tools against hate speech used by politicians and state officials who potentially reach a much broader audience than a far-right group, and that public discourse promoting equality should be very actively promoted.

We further propose that emphasis should be placed on comprehensive and timely data collection regarding hate crimes, as well as regular victimization surveys, so that the underreporting of hate crimes may be tackled.

Reducing racism and discriminatory practices within the police and the criminal justice system, so that victims of racist atrocities can regain (or simply gain) trust in these crucial state functions would be vital for strengthening protection against racism. Last but not least, educational facilities and childcare and family support services need to go through the same changes through trainings and education.



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