

# MEETING REPORT ROMANI QUEER WOMEN AND INTERSECTIONAL POLICY GAPS

**PRESENTED BY**

Romnja Feminist Library

DATE: TUESDAY, 21 APRIL 2026

LOCATION: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BRUSSELS

HOST: MEP MÉLISSA CAMARA (GREENS/EFA,  
FRANCE)

ORGANIZERS: ROMNJA FEMINIST LIBRARY; FEMINIST COLLECTIVE  
OF ROMANI GENDER EXPERTS; INSPIRE UP; INSTITUTE FOR QUEER,  
TRANS & INTERSEX AUTONOMY (IQTIA)

PARTNERS: EQUINOX INITIATIVE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE;  
EUROPEAN ROMA GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS NETWORK;  
EUROCENTRALASIAN LESBIAN\* COMMUNITY (EL\*C);  
EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE (ERRC); ROMA TRAVELLER  
DIVISION (COUNCIL OF EUROPE)

## CONTEXT AND POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This event took place during the 10th edition of Roma Week as a political intervention against the continued erasure of Romani queer women within European policymaking and dominant equality discourses. At a moment marked by growing anti-rights mobilisation, racial violence, shrinking civic space, and increasing attacks against racialised and trans communities across Europe, the event insisted on the necessity of creating political space where Romani queer women are not spoken about, but speak for themselves as activists, knowledge producers, and policy makers.

The discussions made visible how structural racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, borders, and socio-economic exclusion operate not as separate systems, but as interconnected structures of power. While European institutions increasingly adopt the language of inclusion, equality, and intersectionality, speakers repeatedly highlighted that institutional recognition alone does not dismantle violence. Policies on Roma inclusion, gender equality, anti-racism, and LGBTIQ+ rights continue to be designed and implemented in silos, reproducing fragmentation and leaving those most affected by structural violence outside policy priorities.

The event therefore challenged the assumption that inclusion is enough and policymaking is neutral. Instead, discussions exposed how institutions, funding structures, legal systems, and political priorities continue to determine whose lives are protected, whose knowledge is legitimised, and whose experiences are pushed to the side. By situating Romani queer women's struggles alongside those of other racialised women, LGBTIQ+ communities and migrants, the event called for connecting policies and strategies, centering the most marginalised and towards solidarity rooted not in symbolic recognition, but in transformation from a perspective of collective resistance to systems of oppression.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY, POLICY GAPS, AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Opening the session, Aldessa Georgiana Lincan, Director and co-founder of the Romnja Feminist Library, framed the gathering as both a political and historical intervention. Centering Romani queer women within Roma Week disrupted long-standing exclusions within both institutional and movement spaces. Her intervention insisted that policymaking cannot continue to speak about communities while excluding them from shaping political agendas, knowledge production, and decision-making processes. She grounded the discussion in the understanding that lived experience is political knowledge and that those most impacted by structural violence must lead conversations about justice and transformation.

MEP Méliissa Camara situated the discussion within a broader political context shaped by increasing backlash against equality and anti-racist struggles across Europe. Emphasising that oppression functions through interconnected systems, she stated:

**“WHEN WE TALK ABOUT QUEER WOMEN, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE WHO FACE SEVERAL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE SAME TIME.”**

Her intervention highlighted how these systems materialise through barriers to employment, exclusion from housing, unequal access to healthcare, and marginalisation from political participation. She also identified the contradictions within EU policymaking itself, noting that there are many strategies but still treat separately. In doing so, she exposed how institutional fragmentation reproduces exclusion, even within frameworks claiming to advance equality and inclusion.

From the European Commission, JUST LGBT Unit, Margherita Logrillo acknowledged that intersectionality has increasingly entered institutional language and policy frameworks. However, she also recognised the limitations of symbolic commitments, noting that

**“MENTIONING INTERSECTIONALITY IS NOT THE SAME AS DELIVERING ON IT.”**

Her intervention reflected on the gap between discourse and implementation, pointing to the need for structural accountability, stronger institutional practices, and more effective use of resources. She also reaffirmed the role of civil society organisations not as external actors supplementing institutions, but as political actors holding institutions accountable and pushing for systemic change.

Gabriela Hrabanova, Executive Director of the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network, further grounded the discussion by naming the continued absence of intersectional realities from dominant policy frameworks.

**“IT’S ALSO OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THAT WE CAN CREATE THE SAFEST SPACES WITHIN OUR ROOMS”**

She stressed that Romani queer women remain systematically underrepresented and underprotected while navigating both institutional racism and exclusion within their own communities.

**LIVED REALITIES AS KNOWLEDGE: TESTIMONIES AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE**

The second panel moderated by Alba Hernandez Sanchez, Director of the Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts shifted the discussion away from institutional abstraction and toward lived experience as a form of political analysis and collective knowledge production. Romani queer women activists from different countries exposed how structural violence is normalised through institutions that fail to recognise complex forms of harm while simultaneously demanding that marginalised communities continuously justify their existence and suffering.

Ana Jovanović, Romani queer activist from Serbia, addressed the failures of asylum and protection systems in recognising intersectional violence. She highlighted how institutional systems often only acknowledge violence when it appears in visible or exceptional forms, while everyday structural harm remains invisible and unaddressed. As she explained,

**“VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION DO NOT LOOK OBVIOUS ALL THE TIME... A LOT OF IT HAPPENS IN EVERYDAY LIFE.”**

Her intervention exposed how institutional frameworks narrow the definition of persecution, particularly within accelerated asylum procedures that leave no space for complexity or intersectional realities. She called for a rethinking of how harm is understood within protection systems and stressed the importance of including Romani trans perspectives in shaping policies that directly impact their lives.

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Elvira Drangoi, Roma feminist lesbian from the Republic of Moldova, expanded this analysis by speaking about the emotional, political, and material burden carried by intersectional activists. She described a reality in which Romani queer women are expected to sustain movements and communities while simultaneously surviving violence, precarity, and exclusion themselves.

**“ROMA QUEER ACTIVISTS FACE LAYERED, MUTUALLY REINFORCING RISKS”,**

she stated, pointing to EU protection mechanisms, being insufficiently intersectional in practice. Her intervention rejected the depoliticised language often used within institutional spaces and insisted on the humanity behind policy discussions: **“we are not just policies on papers.”** She called for protection mechanisms, access to resources, and support structures that recognise the realities of those doing frontline organising work under increasingly hostile political conditions.

Alexandra Corcoveanu, co-founder of Asociatia inspireUP from Romania, further exposed how exclusion operates through systems demanding singular and simplified identities.

**“YOU ARE EITHER TOO ROMA IN SOME SPACES... OR TOO QUEER IN OTHERS,”**

she observed, describing the impossibility of belonging within institutions and movements that continue to reproduce conditional forms of acceptance.

Her intervention challenged tokenistic approaches to diversity and representation, warning that “visibility without power becomes tokenization.” She stressed that representation without redistribution of resources, safety, and decision-making power only reproduces existing hierarchies. Her contribution called for structural transformation rather than symbolic inclusion.

## **FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE TO POLICY: KNOWLEDGE, GAPS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The presentation of the policy brief moderated by Oana Taba from the Roma Traveller Division, Council of Europe, marked a transition from testimony to collective political analysis. Rather than treating lived experiences as isolated stories, speakers framed them as evidence of structural failures embedded within European equality frameworks.

Dragana Todorović, Executive Director of the EuroCentralAsian Lesbian\* Community (EL\*C), described the exclusion of Romani queer women from policymaking not as accidental oversight, but as a structural issue embedded within institutional priorities.

### **“THIS IS NOT A NICHE ISSUE... IT’S A STRUCTURAL GAP.”**

Her intervention highlighted how current equality frameworks fail to capture the complexity of intersecting forms of discrimination while simultaneously marginalising grassroots knowledge and community-led expertise. She stressed that policymaking cannot continue to rely on extractive consultations while excluding those most impacted from shaping agendas, priorities, and solutions.

Presenting the findings of the policy brief, Aldessa Georgiana Lincan further exposed the disconnect between institutional frameworks and lived realities.

### **“NOT EVERYTHING THAT WE ARE IS REFLECTED IN THESE POLICIES,”**

she stated, pointing to the persistence of structural racism and the limitations of institutional approaches that treat intersectionality as rhetorical language rather than transformative political practice. Her intervention insisted that communities must no longer be positioned as beneficiaries waiting for institutional recognition, but as co-creators of knowledge, policy, and political strategy.

## CROSS-MOVEMENT SOLIDARITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The final panel moderated by Ilaria Tode, Advocacy Director at Eurocentralasian Lesbian\* Community - EL\*C focused on solidarity, movement-building, and the tensions shaping struggles for justice across Europe. Speakers reflected on the ways institutions, funding structures, and political systems continue to divide communities while rewarding fragmented approaches to oppression.

Chaber, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, highlighted the relationship between visibility, data, and political power, noting that

**“PARTIAL DATA AFFECTS PARTIAL POLICIES.”**

Their intervention exposed how institutional systems make communities invisible by failing to collect data capable of capturing intersectional realities, while also pointing to housing exclusion as a central issue affecting racialised queer communities across Europe.

Jonathan Lee, Advocacy Director at the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), stressed that intersectionality cannot be reduced to institutional vocabulary disconnected from material realities.

**“INTERSECTIONALITY IS NOT JUST A LIBERAL BUZZWORD... THESE ISSUES OVERLAP,”**

he stated, drawing attention to the ways poverty, segregation, exclusion from services, and structural racism shape the lives of Roma LGBTQ+ communities. He also pointed to the absence of legal strategies addressing these forms of violence and exclusion.

Carmen Gheorghe, President of E-Romnja Association for Promoting Roma Women Rights, offered a critical analysis of power, legitimacy, and access to resources within both institutions and movements. Naming what she described as **“distributive injustice in terms of access to resources,”** she highlighted how Romani queer women are often denied legitimacy, credibility, and protection within systems claiming to advance equality.

Her intervention challenged movements to confront their own internal hierarchies and exclusions, insisting that

**“INTERSECTIONALITY IS NOT JUST ABOUT IDENTITIES... IT’S ABOUT POWER STRUCTURES.”**

Sarah Chander, Director of the Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice, situated the discussion within a broader critique of state power and institutional violence. Challenging the idea that policy is neutral, she argued that

**“POLICIES...ARE NOT NEUTRAL INSTRUMENTS, THEY ARE WEAPONS, AND UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THESE WEAPONS.”**

She stressed that solidarity must move beyond symbolic recognition and become a collective political practice rooted in resisting systems that disproportionately target Roma, racialised, queer, and trans communities. Emphasising that “recognition is the bare minimum,” she called for a fundamental reshaping of political priorities, including the redistribution of resources and stronger alignment across movements in support of those most marginalised.

#### **CONCLUSION: FROM RECOGNITION TOWARD STRUCTURAL CHANGE**

Throughout the event, a consistent political message emerged: Romani queer women remain excluded from European equality frameworks not by accident, but through systems that continue to prioritise institutional comfort over structural justice.

The discussions exposed how fragmented policymaking, unequal distribution of resources, and limited participation mechanisms reproduce exclusion while simultaneously claiming inclusion. Speakers repeatedly challenged institutions to move beyond symbolic commitments toward material transformation rooted in accountability, redistribution, and collective power.

At the same time, the event demonstrated the transformative potential of centring lived experience, grassroots organising, and intersectional political analysis. Across panels, participants insisted that solidarity must move beyond representation and become a practice of confronting systems of violence together.

The discussions reaffirmed that Romani queer women are not marginal voices waiting to be included within existing frameworks, but political actors actively shaping movements, resistance strategies, and collective futures. The event therefore concluded with a collective call to move from tokenistic inclusion toward co-creation, from consultation toward redistribution of power, and from recognition toward structural transformation.

As expressed by Ana Jovanović through lived experience and political clarity, the demand remains both simple and urgent: **“we just want to live our life... without fear.”**

## **BACKGROUND**

The discussions and political analyses emerging from this event build on ongoing research, advocacy, and knowledge production led by Romani queer feminist organisers and partner organisations over the past years. The themes raised throughout the panels are directly connected to the research [“Intersectionality in action — When racism gets in the way of LBQ women and non-binary persons. Lived Realities of Black, Racialized, Roma, and Central Asian lesbians\\* \(EL\\*C \(2025\)\)](#), which documented the lived realities, structural exclusions, and political experiences of Romani queer women across Europe. They also built upon the policy brief [Addressing the Lived Experiences of Romani Queer Women through an Intersectional Approach](#) developed by the Romnja Feminist Library in 2025, which examined the intersectional gaps within EU frameworks on Roma inclusion, gender equality, anti-racism, and LGBTIQ+ rights, while advancing concrete recommendations for more accountable and structural policymaking. In addition, the discussions are rooted in the collective narratives, testimonies, and political reflections gathered through the Romani queer feminist zine [Beyond the Frame](#), which centers community voices and lived experience as forms of resistance, memory, and knowledge production. Together, these resources challenge the continued erasure of Romani queer women within institutional frameworks and contribute to building an evidence base grounded not only in data, but also in lived realities, collective organising and resistance.

