

Minority Rights Group Europe “Countering Online Antigypsyism and Cyberhate (COACH)  
Programme”,  
funded by the European Commission  
(Project 101084694).

## **EVALUATION REPORT<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The content of this report is based on TOR, the evaluation team’s bid, and the materials of the Countering Online Antigypsyism and Cyberhate (COACH) Programme provided by Minority Rights Group Europe.

## **PREFACE**

The "Countering Online Antigypsyism and Cyberhate" (COACH) Programme, project number 101084694, received funding from the European Commission. Its implementation was coordinated by the Minority Rights Group Europe (MRGE), working in cooperation with two international partner organizations. These partners were the *Tsentar za mezhdnetnicheski dialog i tolerantnost Amalipe* (Amalipe), located in Bulgaria, and the *Inštitút ľudských práv* (HRI) from Slovakia. This collaborative effort between MRGE, Amalipe, and HRI spanned from December 2022 to November 2024, covering two years dedicated to the programme's implementation.

The project aimed to counter online hate speech targeting the Roma community by supporting the development of balanced online narratives and promoting critical thinking among internet users, especially youth, in Slovakia and Bulgaria. Focusing on Roma, the most vulnerable and discriminated ethnic group in both countries, the project sought to raise awareness of Roma rights through accurate and positive online portrayals of this community. A key objective was equipping civil society organizations, activists, and decision-makers with the necessary tools to effectively counter online hate speech and antigypsyism. Furthermore, the project was designed to foster collaboration among stakeholders to identify patterns and categorize instances of online hate speech, promoting effective solutions for addressing the issue.

This evaluation was commissioned by Minority Rights Group Europe (MRGE). A two-member independent evaluation team undertook the project evaluation from November 2024 to January 2025 and submitted this final report.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the "Countering Online Antigypsyism and Cyberhate" Programme (project number 101084694, funded by the European Commission). The project was implemented by Minority Rights Group Europe in cooperation with two partners: Amalipe from Bulgaria and HRI from Slovakia. From December 2022 to November 2024, MRGE, Amalipe, and HRI collaborated to implement a program countering online hate speech against the Roma community in Slovakia and Bulgaria. The project promoted balanced and objective online

narratives about the Roma, critical thinking among internet users (especially youth), and aimed to raise awareness of Roma rights through positive online portrayals.

Commissioned by MRGE, a two-member independent team conducted the evaluation from November 2024 to January 2025, analyzing project documentation and conducting semi-structured online interviews with representatives from MRGE, HRI, and Amalipe. Using a partially participatory approach, the evaluation assessed intended and unintended outcomes and impacts, project performance, relevance, fulfillment of objectives and results, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The evaluation revealed successful implementation across all four Work Packages. Project objectives aligned with the problems facing the Roma population, outputs conformed to aims, and delays were justified, leading to more in-depth monitoring. Achievements were commensurate with the complexity of the issues and available resources. Prior collaboration between partners enhanced project management and interaction. HRI and Amalipe had considerable discretion in designing activities within Campaigns and awareness-raising, Online hate speech monitoring, and advocacy campaigns. This flexibility facilitated effective audience engagement, tailoring approaches to the specific contexts of Slovakia and Bulgaria, and fostering focused dialogue with relevant decision-makers.

The project's success, amplified by prior collaboration, provides a foundation for the sustainability of outcomes in future endeavors of the project partners.

Based on the project assessment, the evaluation team developed the following set of recommendations:

- Continuation of regular hate speech monitoring and advocacy campaigns in both countries.
- Analysis of the changes pertaining to online hate speech in a mid- and long-term perspective.
- Continuation of the involvement of young influencers in social media to raise awareness towards Roma-related issues, particularly among the youth.
- Reliance on this project's experience to explore further ways of using AI tools to monitor online hate speech.

- Implementation of similar project to continue monitoring and further test the capacities of AI tools in addressing the linguistic nuances of hate speech, particularly against the Roma, in the smaller languages spoken in the CEE region.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The evaluation of “Countering Online Antigypsyism and Cyberhate (COACH) programme”, funded by the European Commission (Project 101084694) aims at assessing the project’s results and impacts. This project emerged as an initiative prepared and implemented by MRGE, the Tsentar za mezhdnetnicheski dialog i tolerantnost Amalipe (hereinforth: Amalipe, Bulgaria) and Inštitút ľudských práv (hereinforth: HRI, Slovakia).

The project has been designed to counter illegal online hate speech against Roma by supporting the development of online balanced narratives and promoting critical thinking by internet users, particularly among youth, in Slovakia and Bulgaria.

The project was implemented from December 2022 until November 2024.

This project specifically targeted Roma, Bulgaria’s and Slovakia’s most vulnerable ethnic groups. It was envisaged to raise awareness about Roma rights through accurate and positive online narratives and to equip civil society, activists, and decision-makers with tools to counter online hate speech and antigypsyism. It also sought to foster collaboration to identify regulatory gaps and promote effective solutions for addressing online hate speech.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION**

The project evaluation aimed to assess the project’s performance in order to determine the relevance and fulfillment of the project’s objectives and project results, project’s efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

The main objectives of the evaluation were to provide the MRGE with the tools based on the project’s design and performance, prepare a set of recommendations for potential projects of a similar kind for the MRGE and its partner organizations, as well as to report to the EU on the effectiveness and efficiency of their funds allocated for the project.

This evaluation examined the extent to which the anticipated results of the program were achieved, assessing, as stated in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this evaluation, the outcome and impact levels:

- Outcome level assessed whether activities achieved planned results, citing evidence of success or explaining hindrances and MRGE's responses, examined external factors influencing the project, identified any unplanned outcomes, and reviewed the integration of gender, intersectional discrimination, and cross-cutting issues.
- Impact level addressed the project's expected short-, medium-, and long-term results and its tangible and intangible effects on target groups, particularly Roma women, examined how the identified gap was reduced and how activities improved the situation compared to the start, and explored whether the project introduced innovative solutions.

The evaluation combined:

- the analysis of the project materials and review feedback provided by MRGE; and
- participatory approach with online meetings with MRGE, HRI and Amalipe.

The participatory part of the assessment was organized in the form of joint meetings and individual interviews with the representatives of the organizations involved in the project and based on the preliminary analysis of the project documentation provided by MRGE.

The project evaluation comprised the following stages:

- 1. Document review: Familiarization with and review of project documentation, encompassing core components and implemented activities.
- 2. Stakeholder semi-structured interviews: Conducting online interviews with representatives from MRGE, Amalipe, and HRI.

The primary goals of this evaluation were:

- Assessment of achieved results: The final evaluation determined the degree to which the program's projected outcomes were realized. Online meetings with implementing partners facilitated this assessment.

- Alignment with the logical framework: The evaluation referenced the objectives, results, indicators, and means of verification outlined in the project's logical framework.
- Impact analysis: The evaluation analyzed both the current and potential future effects of project activities, as defined in the logical framework.
- Assessment of unintended consequences: The evaluation identified any unforeseen positive or negative impacts resulting from the project.
- Consideration of cross-cutting issues: The evaluation incorporated gender and other relevant cross-cutting concerns throughout the assessment process.

Aligned with the stated evaluation objectives, this report utilized a partially participatory approach. Adhering to the Terms of Reference, the primary focus was analyzing both intended and unintended outcomes and impacts. The report also provided assessments and findings on the project's effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

This evaluation does not include an assessment of Amalipe's last report due to its late submission. However, all of Amalipe's second-year project activities were addressed through interviews with their representatives.

## **IMPLEMENTATION / STATE OF PLAY**

### **Project outputs**

#### **Campaigns and awareness-raising (*Work Package 2*)**

The Project Work Package 2 included three components. Partner capacity-building on online campaign techniques envisaged that HRI conducted three training sessions for Amalipe on online campaigning. Training topics included online campaign strategy and techniques, youth outreach, content promotion and visibility, and online security. Such distribution was successful taking into account the specifics of these two organizations, and HRI's impactful visibility in social media confirmed, inter alia, by the significant number of views, comments and interactions pertinent to the campaign products produced by the HRI within the framework of this project. This synergistic approach allowed Amalipe to benefit from the partner's expertise and expand their respective capabilities.

The second component included online campaign design and planning. Here, the Slovak and Bulgarian components of the project exhibited a significant and commendable level of independence in carrying out the initiative within their respective countries. This autonomy allowed them to adapt to and address the circumstances and specific needs inherent to each national context. In doing so, the project revealed certain differences in the methods and approaches employed by HRI and Amalipe within this and other working packages. These distinctions justified by the fundamental nature of the two organizations, both of which bring a wealth of experience in advocating for Roma rights. HRI operates as a broad-based human rights organization, with Roma rights constituting one important aspect of its overall mission. In contrast, Amalipe is a Roma grassroots organization with a specific focus on issues affecting this community in Bulgaria. The HRI defined its campaign's target audience as internet users, specifically young people between 14 and 25 years of age. The Amalipe designated it as young people aged 14-30, of all genders, primarily located in urban and suburban areas, with diverse educational backgrounds. Focusing on this demographic, who primarily receive information through social media, proved to be a key factor in the project's success, as these groups were particularly receptive to the project's online products, the third component of Work Package 2.

Specifically, HRI prepared videos distributed across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. Amalipe prepared online products published on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and the organization's website. The statistics confirm a significant discrepancy in the views, engagements, and interactions generated by the video content created by HRI and Amalipe, particularly during the first year of the project's implementation. While the media products developed by HRI achieved an impressively high level of performance, the results associated with Amalipe's videos were less notable, indicating a need for enhancement. However, during the second year of the project, there was a noticeable improvement in Amalipe's metrics, demonstrating progress in their ability to engage audiences effectively. This initial variation in outcomes can be attributed to the previously mentioned differences in the organizational focus of the two entities, as well as their distinct strategies for utilizing social media platforms. One of the most effective approaches employed by Amalipe involved collaborating with local young TikTok influencers. These influencers developed video content that skillfully highlighted and emphasized factual information about Roma, portraying the community in a positive and relatable manner. Their approach was characterized by simplicity and accessibility, making the content particularly engaging and

impactful for younger audiences. Hence, the implementation of Work Package 2 successfully achieved its initial goals in both Bulgaria and Slovakia.

### ***Hate speech monitoring (Work Package 3)***

Work Package 3 involved monitoring. The primary challenge highlighted by all stakeholders involved in the project was the capacity of the AI tool to effectively address and process sensitive Roma-related issues in both the Bulgarian and Slovak languages. The AI tool, provided by Textgain, was integrated into the project, with specialized monitoring channels being established within the European Observatory of Online Hate (EOOH) dashboard. The decision to focus on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as the primary social media platforms in both countries was well-justified, given their widespread popularity among the general population. These platforms are extensively used by Roma and non-Roma individuals alike, spanning various generations and encompassing users with diverse political perspectives. This strategic choice ensured that the monitoring activities could reach and analyze a broad and representative segment of social media users. The evidence highlights the complexity of the issue of anti-Roma hate speech disseminated through social media, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to effectively address and combat it. However, in both Bulgaria and Slovakia, researchers encountered a significant challenge: the AI tool was not consistently effective in capturing the nuanced language and contexts associated with the Roma community. This limitation extended to seemingly neutral terms and even certain emojis that internet users employed in their posts, which could carry implicit or coded meanings. In certain instances, as evidenced particularly in Bulgaria, the identification of hate speech proved impossible without manual human review. In the researchers' view, this issue could be attributed to the need for further adaptation of the AI tool to accommodate the specific linguistic and cultural features of smaller European languages, such as Bulgarian and Slovak, as well as the relative novelty of applying this kind of approach to such a sensitive topic.

Despite these challenges, the tool demonstrated its effectiveness in processing and analyzing large volumes of data—an otherwise nearly insurmountable task for human researchers alone. Nevertheless, all flagged content required manual review and detailed analysis to evaluate the severity of each case and to ensure accurate categorization. This combination of automated and



manual processes proved essential for addressing the complexities inherent in monitoring hate speech on social media. Thus, the implementation of Work Package 3 was successful.

#### ***Advocacy (Work Package 4)***

Work Package 4 comprised three key elements. First, national conferences were held both in Slovakia and Bulgaria, disseminating the findings of the monitoring reports and showcasing the associated videos. Second, a series of national advocacy meetings planned for at least ten per country were conducted. These meetings served to present the monitoring findings, address relevant policy gaps concerning online hate speech and antigypsyism, and influence decision-makers on potential policy and legal amendments. Third, a series of European advocacy meetings, planned for at least three, were convened in Brussels, providing a platform to present findings and discuss potential solutions with EU decision-makers. All the meetings were well-planned and contributed to the achievement of the project's goals.

Both HRI in Slovakia and Amalipe in Bulgaria had considerable discretion in designing the content of the national conferences and advocacy meetings. This flexibility was instrumental in effectively reaching relevant audiences, enabling each organization to tailor their approach to the specific context of their work and the particular circumstances in each country. This adaptable approach facilitated more focused engagement with stakeholders. By tailoring the content and format, HRI and Amalipe addressed specific domestic concerns and fostered dialogue with the relevant decision-makers, ensuring the discussions were consistent with the relevant contexts of Bulgaria and Slovakia. This flexibility contributed to the successful implementation of Work Package 4.

#### **Project outcomes and impact**

##### ***Increased Positive and Accurate Counter Narratives (Result 1):***

The documentation provided by MRGE highlights the successful implementation of the project in both countries. In Slovakia, HRI demonstrated exceptional effectiveness in promoting online products within the scope of Work Package 2. For example, in 2023, the lowest number of views for a single video was 31,000. Consequently, during the first year of the project, the total number

of views approached 600,000—an impressive figure that was six times higher than the country-specific project target.

In contrast, the reach in Bulgaria was substantially lower, with a total of 82,554 people engaged across all social platforms during the same period. However, some of Amalipe's most successful videos during the first year of the project focused on debunking myths about Bulgarian Roma living on social benefits and raising awareness about the Parajmos (the Roma Holocaust). These topics are particularly critical for fostering a deeper understanding of Roma-related historical and contemporary contexts. As such, they provided significant value, compensating to some extent for the relatively smaller reach of other content. Data from the second year of the project indicates an improvement in Amalipe's online product performance, bringing it closer to the country-specific project target.

In both cases, the involvement of influencers contributed to the promotion of positive narratives about Roma. In Slovakia, the collaboration with the history podcast *Dejepis Inak (History Differently)* on a video about the history of segregated Roma settlements generated significant audience engagement, including personal stories shared in the comments, and the reaction of the audience was largely positive. In Bulgaria, the engagement of young Roma influencers proved particularly effective, with their videos highlighting facts about Roma generating significant interest and receiving positive reactions from viewers.

### ***Improved Data and Analysis on Online Hate Speech: (Result 2)***

In both countries, the monitoring followed the same methodology, aligned with the EOOH dashboard, utilizing the AI tool provided by Textgain, which was adapted to the specific linguistic features of Bulgarian and Slovak. The monitoring focused on posts from Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, selected as the primary social media platforms due to their widespread popularity among the general population in both countries. In Slovakia, the monitoring analyzed over 50,000 comments collected from social media, with 1,352 identified as hateful. A similar approach was applied in Bulgaria. HRI and Amalipe produced comprehensive reports summarizing the monitoring outcomes.

In Bulgaria, however, there was a specific emphasis on Facebook, resulting in a separate report titled *“Speech Containing Offense, Prejudice, and Hate Against Roma on the Social Media Platform Facebook.”* This report analyzed 1,252 texts mentioning Roma and found that at least 80% of all publications were negative toward this group. The figure rose to over 90% when Roma-related groups were excluded from the analysis. These findings reflect the thoroughness of the methodology, which combined AI-driven identification of hateful content with detailed follow-up analysis by human experts.

The electoral factor added significant value to the analysis in both countries, as elections there often exacerbate discriminatory narratives targeting marginalized communities like the Roma. During these periods, monitoring can a valuable tool to document patterns of systemic discrimination in the political discourse, and address inflammatory language used by politicians to mobilize electoral support, particularly through social media platforms.

Bulgarian and Slovak researchers acknowledged that the absence of elections could have led to different outcomes. However, the electoral context proved to be a positive element, offering a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Roma-related issues, including the use of negative narratives by political groups targeting Roma.

Overall, the monitoring activities in both cases were highly successful, with outputs that provided actionable insights for decision-makers and other key stakeholders. The presence of the aforementioned electoral context amplified the impact of the findings, enhancing their relevance and comprehensiveness.

### ***Increased Awareness among Key Stakeholders (Result 3):***

This section assesses the project's impact on raising awareness among key stakeholders about antigypsyism, extremism, and good practices to counter it, through online training, the video on hate speech, and other dissemination activities.

As part of Work Package 4, HRI and Amalipe operated independently in organizing national conferences and selecting relevant stakeholders for advocacy campaigns in Slovakia and Bulgaria,

respectively. The project framework envisioned these national conferences to include a minimum of 25 attendees per country. In Slovakia, invitations were extended to over 20 prominent media organizations, 30 individual journalists, and all key Roma NGOs and activists. The conference was well-received, attracting 36 participants, 22 of whom attended in person. At the time of the evaluation, the event recording had been viewed 230 times on YouTube. All major Slovak media outlets were represented at the event, including Slovak public television (RTVS), the national news channel TA3, Slovak public radio (SRo-RTVS), the SITA press agency, and the daily newspaper *Pravda*. Following the conference, a total of eight online media publications covered the event, featuring reports in all major Slovak outlets. Additionally, the conference video was widely disseminated across all HRI social media platforms and through their mailing list, significantly amplifying its reach. By the time of evaluation, the video had accumulated 6,412 views on the HRI YouTube channel, underscoring its impact and the broad interest it generated among various audiences.

In Bulgaria, a similar launch event organized by Amalipe attracted 65 participants, including representatives of the country's Ombudsman. Amalipe representatives highlighted the importance of continued efforts to address disinformation, hate speech, and advance children's rights, including policy advocacy, awareness campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives. While the related video on Amalipe's YouTube channel received 166 views, the organization's consistent work prioritizing Roma advocacy within dialogues with key stakeholders suggests a broader impact and interest towards the issue, particularly given Amalipe's nature as a grassroots organization run by Roma activists.

#### ***Enhanced Collaboration and Policy Influence (Result 4):***

The HRI advocacy campaign in Slovakia included meetings with ten Slovak stakeholders, comprising four women and six men, encompassing politicians, officials, media representatives, and experts. This fulfilled the project target. The selection of these individuals reflects both the country's specific context (which also accounts for the limited media coverage) and HRI's expertise as a human rights organization. This comprehensive approach addressed HRI's activities concerning Roma issues in Slovakia, hate speech targeting Roma online, and broader strategies to combat it from a minority-related perspective. Each meeting yielded specific recommendations

and follow-up strategies for further collaboration, underscoring the sustainability of HRI's efforts in this area beyond the COACH program.

The advocacy campaign in Bulgaria employed different, yet equally effective, tactics tailored to the Bulgarian context and Amalipe's profile as a Roma grassroots organization. Eleven advocacy meetings were held, including discussions with the Bulgarian president and prime minister, members of parliament, and officials, as well as participation in international conferences organized by Bulgarian ministries. This comprehensive and sustainable approach, reflecting Amalipe's ongoing commitment to Roma rights advocacy in Bulgaria, successfully met the project's target.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND MAJOR FINDINGS**

In general, the findings from the evaluation reveal that the programme was implemented with considerably high quality. Analysis of the documentation provided by MRGE, combined with subsequent interviews conducted with representatives from the participating organizations, confirms the project's effective and efficient implementation. MRGE's substantial prior experience in managing similar projects, including those specifically focused on Bulgaria and Slovakia, proved invaluable. Furthermore, the pre-existing successful collaborations between MRGE, HRI, and Amalipe fostered a strong foundation for the project. This shared expertise and history of effective cooperation contributed significantly to the project's successful management and smooth communication. All project work packages were implemented on schedule. Any instances of postponement were reported promptly, accompanied by comprehensive justifications, and ultimately did not adversely affect the project's overall implementation. Specifically, the postponement of the hate speech monitoring so that it timely coincides with the parliamentary electoral campaign in Slovakia and the local election in Bulgaria could be seen as a serious advantage that brought more specific insights as if these activities were conducted during the period with no important election at stake. In terms of added value, these delays seem to bring more additional insights that could not have been so visible in the absence of the electoral campaigns.

It is important to stress that the differences in organizational focus and strategy between HRI and Amalipe should not be seen as disadvantages or obstacles to successful project implementation. Rather, this variation reflects the inherent strength of a tailored, country-specific approach. It highlights the benefits of designing and executing projects that consider the distinct settings and needs of the individual countries involved, even within the framework of a single, overarching initiative. This approach provides an effective pathway for identifying and implementing innovative solutions to address and promote a positive and accurate image of Roma communities using modern social media platforms. The primary challenge highlighted by all stakeholders involved in the project was the capacity of the AI tool to effectively address and process sensitive Roma-related issues in both the Bulgarian and Slovak languages. The AI tool, provided by Textgain, was integrated into the project, with specialized monitoring channels being established within the European Observatory of Online Hate (EOOH) dashboard. The decision to focus on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as the primary social media platforms in both countries was well-justified, given their widespread popularity among the general population. These platforms are extensively used by Roma and non-Roma individuals alike, spanning various generations and encompassing users with diverse political perspectives. This strategic choice ensured that the monitoring activities could reach and analyze a broad and representative segment of social media users.

The evidence highlights the complexity of the issue of anti-Roma hate speech disseminated through social media, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to effectively address and combat it. However, in both Bulgaria and Slovakia, researchers encountered a significant challenge: the AI tool was not consistently effective in capturing the nuanced language and contexts associated with the Roma community. This limitation extended to seemingly neutral terms and even certain emojis that internet users employed in their posts, which could carry implicit or coded meanings. In certain instances, as evidenced particularly in Bulgaria, the identification of hate speech proved impossible without manual human review. In the researchers' view, this issue could be attributed to the need for further adaptation of the AI tool to accommodate the specific linguistic and cultural features of smaller European languages, such as Bulgarian and Slovak, as well as the relative novelty of applying this kind of approach to such a sensitive topic.

Despite these challenges, the tool demonstrated its effectiveness in processing and analyzing large volumes of data—an otherwise nearly insurmountable task for human researchers alone. Nevertheless, all flagged content required manual review and detailed analysis to evaluate the severity of each case and to ensure accurate categorization. This combination of automated and manual processes proved essential for addressing the complexities inherent in monitoring hate speech on social media.

### **Effectiveness**

The COACH programme is an example of sustainable effective cooperation among the organizations involved in its implementation. Notably, MRGE had prior experience in carrying out similar programmes across various countries within the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region, including Slovakia and Bulgaria. Furthermore, both HRI and Amalipe had previously worked with MRGE on comparable initiatives, establishing a strong foundation of collaboration and shared experience. This project, therefore, benefited from the synergy created by the organizations' prior activities and their history of working together. These preexisting relationships and accumulated expertise contributed significantly to making the cooperation smoother, more cohesive, and ultimately more efficient throughout the programme's duration.

### **Coordination**

The project's implementation and coordination progressed smoothly and effectively due to the established collaborative relationship between the three project partners. MRGE's leadership, combined with their extensive experience working on Roma rights issues in Central and Eastern Europe, was a key factor in the project's overall management. This central guidance was complemented by the regional expertise of the Bulgarian and Slovak partners. Their autonomy in adapting to local contexts and addressing specific regional considerations, particularly in organizing advocacy campaigns and adjusting data collection and monitoring methodologies to ensure accurate representation and impactful results, ensured alignment with the overarching project objectives and outcomes. This decentralized approach allowed for nuanced and responsive

project execution, maximizing the effectiveness of each partner's contributions while maintaining a cohesive project direction.

## **Relevance**

The COACH project is extremely relevant and timely due to a combination of several factors. Both Bulgaria and Slovakia have significant Roma populations, who are the most vulnerable ethnic groups in these countries and are subject to considerable victimization and persistent stereotyping. The presence of strong right-wing political elements in both countries further exacerbates this vulnerability, as Roma victimization is often integral to their political agendas. This aligns with the broader European trend of rising right-wing populism. Therefore, countering hate speech against the Roma is particularly crucial in the current political and social climates of Bulgaria and Slovakia. HRI and Amalipe strategically focus on young people, recognizing that social networks are their primary source of information. By targeting this demographic, the project aims to cultivate a more tolerant and inclusive future by influencing the next generation of decision-makers and shaping social discourse regarding Roma communities in both countries.

## **Equity<sup>2</sup>**

The project fostered new knowledge and skills development through Textgain's training for COACH program participants and HRI's training for Amalipe. The project also tested the application of AI for analyzing sensitive issues like antigypsyism and hate speech, adapting its use to complement manual monitoring by human specialists. This approach allowed for an assessment of AI's limitations, particularly with smaller European languages like Bulgarian and Slovak, and employed human expertise to mitigate these shortcomings.

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<sup>2</sup> Equity is understood as an evaluative approach that prioritizes the ongoing development of knowledge, the implementation of diverse techniques, and adaptive adjustments throughout the process of implementation.



## **Coherence**

The project complied with relevant EU frameworks and initiatives. It adhered to the provisions of the *acquis communautaire*, particularly Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Furthermore, it aligned with the goals of the EU Roma Strategic Framework, two EC Council Recommendations on Roma integration and equality, and the EU anti-racism action plan. The monitoring methodology, based on the EU Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, further strengthened this alignment. This comprehensive approach ensured the project's actions were consistent with established legal and policy frameworks, reinforcing targeted approaches to addressing Roma-related issues in Bulgaria and Slovakia.

## **Efficiency**

The project demonstrated efficiency by successfully executing all planned events and achieving increased views and engagement, particularly in Slovakia. Its effective use of influencers, especially young Roma influencers in Bulgaria, efficiently engaged youth audiences. Furthermore, the partners' autonomy in adapting plans optimized results, showcasing the project's agile and efficient approach.

## **Project added value**

This project tackled EU-wide Roma discrimination by producing practical, transferable findings, such as effective campaign messaging and monitoring research. Implemented in Slovakia and Bulgaria, it fostered cooperation among CSOs, activists, and youth. The project directly supported EU legal norms and complemented existing Roma integration programs. Its transferable results are particularly relevant for other European countries with significant Roma populations. In addition to these issues, it provided the ability to test the limits of AI in addressing online hate speech aimed against the Roma community in smaller EU official languages, Bulgarian and Slovak. These results offer a strong foundation for further AI development. Adjustments to address linguistic nuances could enhance the identification of hate speech, expanding its applicability beyond Bulgarian and Slovak to other smaller European languages.

A key strength is also the involvement of youth in online activities, particularly in countering online hate speech and promoting positive narratives among Roma communities. The engagement of young TikTok influencers in Bulgaria, where Roma youth actively identified and reported anti-Roma hate speech, serves as a successful example of this approach.

### **Sustainability**

The COACH programme stands as a good example of sustainable cooperation among the organizations involved in its implementation. The COACH programme highlights the likelihood that all three organizations involved in the project will continue their collaboration in addressing Roma-related issues in the future. A central aspect of this cooperation was the dual functionality of the AI tool. On one hand, it equipped HRI and Amalipe with enhanced capacities to monitor and respond to Roma-related hate speech within their respective countries. On the other hand, the insights gained from its application in Bulgaria and Slovakia can serve as a valuable foundation for further refining the AI tool by its owner Textgain within the scope of future project with similar thematic scope. Such refinements could focus on addressing the deeper and more nuanced aspects of hate speech monitoring while overcoming its current limitations. Additionally, these improvements could ensure the tool is better adapted to the linguistic and cultural specifics of smaller languages commonly spoken across the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region, thereby increasing its overall effectiveness. In turn, MRGE, HRI, and Amalipe could effectively rely on this experience to explore further ways of using AI tools to monitor online hate speech.

### **Gender balance**

The COACH documentation demonstrates that the programme engaged a substantial proportion of female participants in both Bulgaria and Slovakia. Additionally, during the monitoring phase, specific terms and keywords relevant to Roma women were thoughtfully incorporated into the list of targeted vocabulary, ensuring that the analysis captured issues specifically affecting this group.

## **Conclusions**

The project has been successfully implemented, all delays were justified and seemingly provided ground for more in-depth monitoring results. The previous collaboration between the organizations involved provided an additional capacity for the project's success. It also serves as a potential ground for the sustainability of the project's outcomes in the future endeavors of the participating organizations.

## **Recommendations**

- Continuation of regular hate speech monitoring and advocacy campaigns in both countries.
- Analysis of the changes pertaining to online hate speech in a mid- and long-term perspective.
- Continuation of the involvement of young influencers in social media to raise awareness towards Roma-related issues, particularly among the youth.
- Reliance on this project's experience to explore further ways of using AI tools to monitor online hate speech.
- Implementation of similar project to continue monitoring and further test the capacities of AI tools in addressing the linguistic nuances of hate speech, particularly against the Roma, in the smaller languages spoken in the CEE region.

## **ANNEX I**

A set of open questions used during the semistructured interviews with the stakeholders:

1. Were project activities completed on time? If not, what caused the delays? How would you assess the quality of these activities?
2. Did external factors affect planned activities and their implementation? If so, how?
3. Did the project achieve its expected results? Was the project timeframe sufficient to meet its goals and objectives? How did project activities contribute to achieving the project's aims?
4. Did the project produce any unintended outcomes? If so, please describe them.
5. What factors, if any, hindered the achievement of specific project results or objectives?
6. Did project activities and outputs (including training and publications) align with project aims and meet the expected quality standards?
7. What risks, challenges, or opportunities arose during project implementation? How did the partners mitigate or adapt to these factors?

## **ANNEX II**

### **EVALUATION TIMEFRAME**

December 10, 2024: Submission of an Inception report.

December 1 - 18, 2024: Conducting interviews, analyzing the provided project documentation and annual reports

January 6, 2025: Submission of a five-page statement of preliminary findings.

January 8, 2025: Submission of a draft report by the evaluating team.

January 15, 2025: Comments returned to evaluator by MRGE.

January 20, 2025: Submission of a final report by the evaluating team.

## ANNEX III

Name and position	Date and mode	Organization	Gender	Comments
Andrea Spítálszky (Legal Programmes Coordinator) / Ágnes Dinnyés (Roma Programmes Assistant)	November 4, 2024 (online)	MRGE	Female / Female	Evaluation kick-off interview
Andrea Spítálszky (Legal Programmes Coordinator)	December 5, 2024 (online)	MRGE	Female	Evaluation of MRGE's performance within the project
David Kováč (Data Analyst)	December 10, 2024 (online)	HRI	Male	Evaluation of the hate speech monitoring conducted by HRI
Peter Weisenbacher (Director) / Dominika Stuchlíková (Project Manager)	December 16, 2024 (online)	HRI	Male / Female	Evaluation of HRI's performance within the project
Boyan Zahariev (Data Analyst)	December 16, 2024 (online)	Amalipe	Male	Evaluation of the hate speech monitoring conducted by HRI
Deyan Kolev (Chair)	December 18, 2024 (online)	Amalipe	Male	Evaluation of HRI's performance within the project
Atanas Atanasov (Project Coordinator) / Denitsa Ivaniva (Social Media Coordinator)	December 18, 2024 (online)	Amalipe	Male / Female	Evaluation of HRI's performance within the project
Note: The online interview with Dimitar Dimitrov, Amalipe's Data Analyst, scheduled for December 18, 2024, did not take place due to a lack of response from him. The relevant questions were instead addressed during online meetings with other representatives of Amalipe.				