

1st International Conference
of the Danube Labour Market Policy Platform for Roma Inclusion

Roma Empowerment for the Common Labour Market

20 Years of Successful Project Implementation in the Danube Region

Date: Thursday, Oct. 16th - Friday Oct. 17th 2025

Venue: Marmorsaal (1st floor), Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of the Republic of Austria ([Stubenring 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria](#))

Working Language: English and German (with simultaneous translation)

International Conference hosted by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of the Republic of Austria, focussing on integration of Roma/Romnja and Sinti/Sintizze into the labour market of the Danube Region.

There are several occasions and anniversaries for this conference:

- 20 years: “European Parliament Resolution on the Situation of the Roma in the EU” and “Thara Projects of Volkshilfe Austria”
- 15 years: “European Union Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation” and Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups within the “Danube Region Strategy”
- 10 years: “Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market” Programmes and Projects in Austria, co-financed also by the European Social Fund (ESF)

20 years ago, in April 2005, for the first time, the European Parliament has condemned all the forms of discrimination faced by the Roma people and urged all Member States and candidate countries to take concrete measures to improve the access of Roma to labour markets with the aim of securing better long-term employment. In Austria, in the same year, within the framework of the EQUAL Programme, the association Volkshilfe Österreich started a series of labour market projects for the Roma community called “Thara”.

Consequently, in 2010, the efforts for Roma integration became more formalised within the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation, establishing National Roma Integration Strategies in the Member States, including respective programmes and policies. A specific geographic focus was added in the same year under the umbrella of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, which also puts an emphasis on the integration of vulnerable groups in countries with significant Roma populations.

In Austria, from 2015 onwards, “Roma Empowerment for the Labour Market” Programmes and Projects support the integration of Roma and Sinti into the labour market. These projects were co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and, since 2022, are funded by national resources through a Special Directive that is valid until 2030.

Despite the progress in some respects, challenges faced by Roma people remain tremendous in many Member States and candidate countries, which makes mutual learning a necessity. Speakers and project promoters from the Danube Region will have the opportunity to highlight and discuss challenges and best practices with the aim to find answers for the future.

Programme

Moderator: Žaklina Radosavljević, Vivaro - Viva Romnja* Association

Thursday, 16 October 2025	
09.30	Setting up and Checking in
10.00	Opening of the Conference <i>Music Performance: Branko Bako Jovanović and Zika Jovanović, Guitar</i>
	- Korinna Schumann, Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria (Video Message) - Petre-Florin Manole, Minister of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity, Romania - Danijela Cicvarić, Managing Director, Romano Centro - Roma Association Vienna, Austria - Erich Fenninger, Managing Director, Volkshilfe Austria
10.45	Keynote Speeches
	- Sabrina Steindl-Kopf, University of Vienna, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology - Jaroslav Kling, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Equality, Roma and Social Rights Unit
11.15	Coffee Break
11.45	Panel Discussion <i>"Challenges and Opportunities of Roma Empowerment Projects and Initiatives for a Better Inclusion into the Common Labour Market"</i>
	- Szabolcs Schmidt, Head of Unit, Non-Discrimination: Anti-Racism and Roma Coordination, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission - Zuzana Havírová, European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network - Emmerich Gärtner-Horvath, Chairman, Roma Ethnic Group Advisory Council of Austria - Sabrina Steindl-Kopf, University of Vienna, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology - Raúl Pérez González, International Department, Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), Spain - Jaroslav Kling, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Equality, Roma and Social Rights Unit
Q&A	
12.45	Lunch break
14.15	Working Group 1: Roma Empowerment Projects – the Key to Success for the Common Labour Market
	- Usnija Buligovic, "THARA E butjako zutimako Kher - Labour Market Counselling Centre" Project, Volkshilfe Austria - Danijela Cicvarić, "BARUVAS KETHANE! Grow Together!" Project, Romano Centro - Roma Association Vienna, Austria

15.00	Working Group 2: Roma Empowerment Projects – the Key to Success for the Common Labour Market
	- Jelena Zlojutro, “AMARO DROM - Our Path” Project, Volkshochschule (Adult Education Centre) Brigittenau Vienna, Austria - Eva Schwarzmayer, “O DROM ANDI CUKUNFT - The Path to the Future” Project, Trendwerk Oberwart, Austria - Alexander Gerganov, Labour Market Integration of Roma in Bulgaria and the Danube Region: Evidence and Policy Perspectives, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Bulgaria
15.45	Conclusions
	Roland Hanak, Head of Staff Unit Bilateral Cooperation in Labour Market Policy, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria
16.00	Music and Buffet <i>Musical Accompaniment: Branko Bako Jovanović and Zika Jovanović, Guitar</i>

Friday, 17 October 2025

09.30	Coffee and Interactive Project Visits
	Information stands of Roma Empowerment Projects
10.30	Sum-up of the First Day
10.45	Working Group 3: Roma Empowerment Projects – the Key to Success for the Common Labour Market
	- Simon Bordt, “BUDI - Work” Project, Newo Ziro Association, Austria - Nenad Vladislavljev, Lessons Learned from Working with Most Marginalised Roma in Serbia towards Labour Market Integration, Udruzenje romskih studenata URS (Association of Roma Students), Serbia - Ana Savanović & Višnja Šamadan, “Step by Step to Employment” ESF Project, Projekt građanske demokratske inicijative - P.G.D.I (Civic Democratic Initiative), Croatia
11.45	Conclusions
	Roland Hanak, Head of Staff Unit Bilateral Cooperation in Labour Market Policy, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Austria
12.00 - 13.00	Light Lunch