

IT'S TIME WE BUILT BRIDGES, NOT WALLS



Campaign in support of Roma communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

— by Milka Stoycheva, Sofija Gajic, —
and Zdravko Cherkezov

Europe's Roma settlements: a recipe for disaster

12 million Roma in Europe → most living in shanty towns with no access to water, electricity, or sanitation

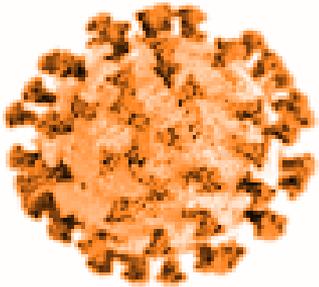
750 000 Roma in Bulgaria → two big Roma settlements in Sofia under blockade, another one in Sliven sealed off with a 2-meter wall

"The children there are covered in so much dirt that you can't see the diseases on their skin. Many residents suffer from tuberculosis and hepatitis." -- Ciprian-Valentin Nodis

Roma under lockdown: socio-economic catastrophe

86% - at-risk poverty rate among Roma

55% - pre-crisis unemployment rate (65% for young Roma aged 16-24)

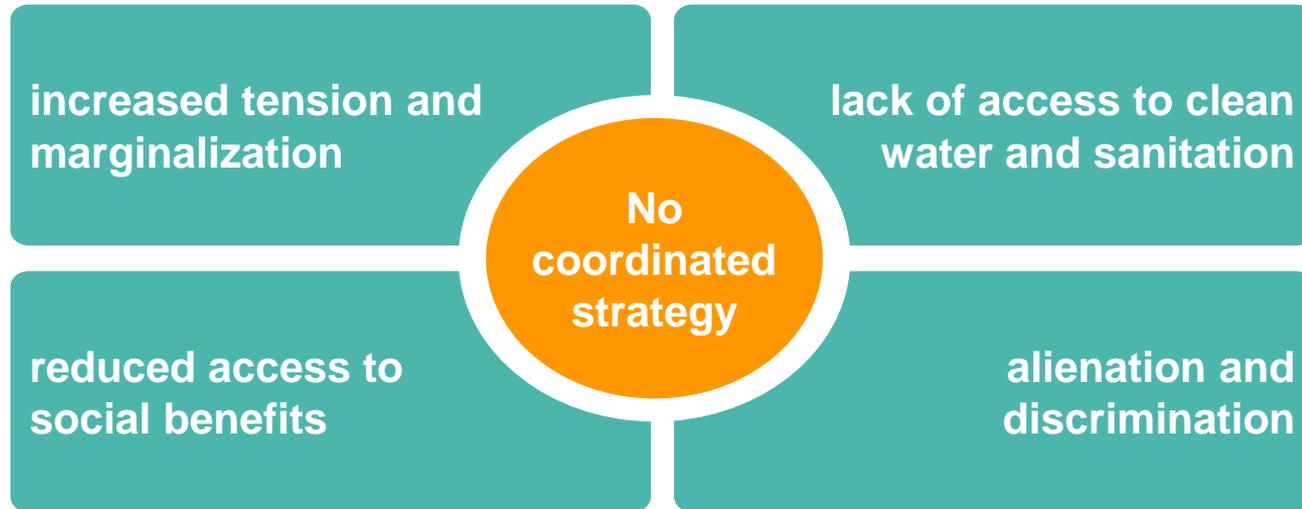


traditional income sources blocked

excluded from corona-response related social protection measures

"Thousands are left without the means by which to purchase food."

Problems with the current policies



EU dimension

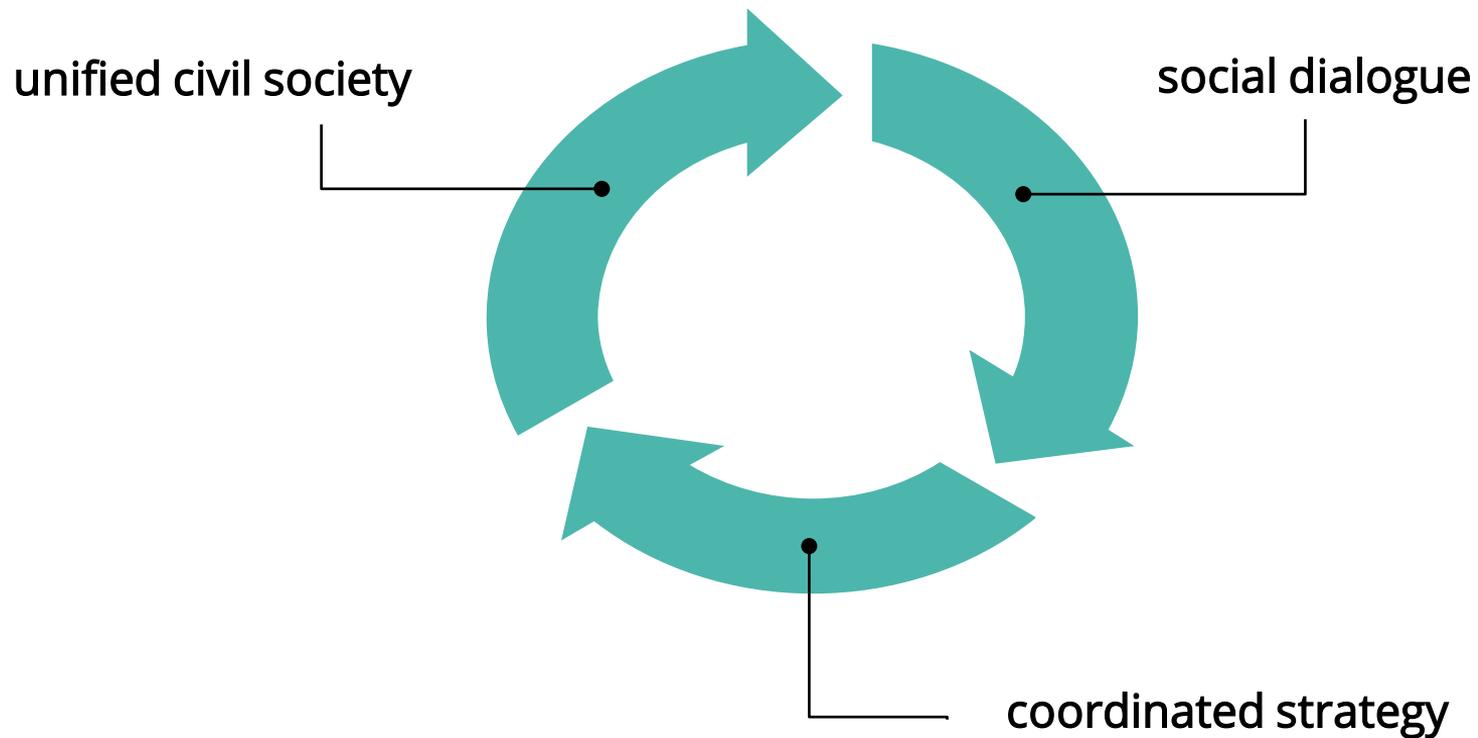
European Convention on Human Rights

European Social Charter

National Roma Strategies

"I am concerned by reports that some European countries have adopted measures that could result in further compromising the human rights of Roma and hampering their equitable access to the provision of basic public services..."
(Marija Pejčinović Burić)

Our goal



Need for action



**Ensure access to
running water and
basic sanitation**



**Provide efficient
safety net**



**Inform the
communities**



**Mobilize more
health mediators**



**Ensure equal
access to
healthcare**

Campaign strategy

 media presence

 open letters

 petition

 discussion panels



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bridges, not walls.

Beyond Bulgaria: potential applications

SHORT TERM **Serbia** - similar neglect, 75 health mediators for 150 000 Roma people

ROMANIA - largest Roma population in Europe, worst conditions

LONG TERM lingering **investment** in vital infrastructure;

lingering sense of **social inclusion** among Roma people;

lingering policy measures included in an **EU-wide Roma Strategy**



— **JOIN US!** —
