



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Working Visit of the National Roma Contact Point of Greece to Slovakia Bratislava, 27–29 May 2025**

As part of the efforts to strengthen transnational cooperation for the social inclusion of Roma, the National Roma Contact Point of Greece conducted a working visit to Slovakia from 27 to 29 May 2025. The Greek delegation was hosted by the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary Office for Roma Communities.

During the visit, both sides had the opportunity to present their national strategies and ongoing actions for Roma inclusion in Greece and Slovakia, exchange good practices, and explore possibilities for future collaboration.



The visit agenda included:

- Presentation of the Greek strategy for the social inclusion of Roma, focusing on implementation progress, community mapping, and the development of monitoring indicators.
- Corresponding presentation of the Slovak strategy, the role of regional offices, and the involvement of the Plenipotentiary's Office in managing EU structural fund allocations.
- Exchange of experiences from completed projects, such as Development Teams and support for legal processes concerning land ownership issues in Slovakia.



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Ministry of Social Cohesion  
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- Discussion on ongoing actions and projects such as the Roma branches of Community Centers, focusing on the critical role of mediators, UNICEF's WASH program, and KLIMAKA's "Roma Influencers" project addressing early marriages.

On the second day, the delegation visited local municipalities and communities where traditional occupations and community center operations were showcased.

**Specifically, on-site visits were conducted at:**



- **The Municipality of Dunajská Lužná**, where Roma inclusion programs are implemented. A highlight was the visit to a traditional blacksmith workshop, where Roma blacksmiths keep the trade alive. Notably, they crafted significant parts of Bratislava's urban architecture, such as the gates of the Presidential Palace and Michael's Gate.

A meeting followed with the Mayor, who discussed the creation of a themed blacksmithing park aimed at highlighting Roma cultural heritage on a European level.



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**The Municipality of Dunajská Streda**, where the delegation visited the Community Center and the Town Hall. Local authorities presented the challenges faced due to the high percentage of Roma residents in the population.



Mr. Dasko Alexander, Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, and Ms. Fotini Vlachaki, Deputy Head of the Roma Department of the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation, emphasized the importance of transnational cooperation for knowledge exchange and effective policy implementation. Mr. Konstantinos Paiteris, President of the Union of Greek Roma Mediators, welcomed the initiatives of both the Slovak and Greek Governments, noting that they provide valuable insights and experiences to be transferred to Roma communities in Greece.



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The visit also included cultural activities, such as wreath laying at the Roma Holocaust Memorial in Dunajská Streda and a dinner at a Roma-owned restaurant featuring traditional Roma cuisine.



The visit concluded with a discussion on future cooperation prospects, focusing on areas of particular interest to the Slovak side, including:

- Nationwide housing programs,
- Reception classes for Roma students,
- Development of the social economy,
- Joint development of Roma inclusion policy monitoring tools.

This visit was part of the European project **“Development of the National Roma Platform for Consultation and Dialogue of the National Roma Contact Point”**, under the **CERV-2022-NRCP (GA No: 101095343) – RomaPlatformEL**. The General Secretariat warmly thanks the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary’s Office for Roma Communities for its gracious hospitality and constructive cooperation.



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