

International
cooperation in respect
of ethnic minorities
FSG's experience



The Roma community in Europe

Roma is a decidedly European minority. According to most accounts, the Roma people originally came from the north of India and made their way to Europe around the 11th century. They are believed to have arrived in Spain around 1425.



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An estimated 10 million Roma citizens live in Europe today and are unevenly distributed throughout the whole of the continent but tend to concentrate in Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria).



Given their history and the different contexts in which they have lived, Roma is a heterogeneous and diverse people. However, if there is a common denominator characterising Roma in the countries where they have settled, it would have to be the conditions of poverty and marginalisation. Social exclusion and rejection on the part of the majority society are conditioning factors which have left their mark. Although this situation has been improving for many Roma, it is still urgent for a large proportion of Europe's Roma population: much higher unemployment rates than for the rest of the citizens, much lower levels of education, precarious health and run-down housing conditions. Furthermore, Roma is the most rejected social group and the one suffering the greatest discrimination from majority peoples. For all of these reasons, intervention taken to improve the integration of the Roma community in their respective societies is more than warranted.

FSG’s experience in international cooperation

For over a decade now the FSG has been working in Europe-wide projects and participates in transnational networks and hence, the Foundation's international dimension has been growing over the years. Now that work in Spain has taken root, it is free to broaden its geographical horizons and spheres of action through European projects.