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Mapping regional attitudes on discrimination based on ethnic origin in Italy, Sweden & Romania

A descriptive study
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Young European Federalists

This study is part of the MINDSET project

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I. About the MINDSET project

The project

MINDSET is a project co-financed by DG JUST. The concept was developed due to the gap between EU legislation in the field of non-discrimination based on ethnic origin and the implementation on the ground at national level. Indeed, a lack of awareness of rights, bodies and redress mechanisms; unclear understanding of what discrimination really means and insufficient media coverage are a reality in our societies. Particular focus will be given to Romania, Italy and Sweden, allowing for an interesting geographical representation and the possibility to highlight differences in national implementation of non-discrimination law.

The objectives

Media will play a vital role in raising awareness of these issues. Thanks to the complementarity of the consortium members, the objectives which will be reached throughout the project lifecycle are:

- Raise awareness on non-discrimination legislation and its application at national level providing a large media coverage on Euractiv websites;
- Contribute to the clarification and understanding of the specific terminology related to the non-discrimination field thanks to experts in that area;
- Promote the role of the Equality Bodies in the three focused Members State;
- Inform young citizens outside the “legal bubble”.

The consortium

The consortium consists of Euractiv, the Young European Federalists, Euractiv Romania and the Migration Policy Group. Euractiv, via its Brussels, Berlin and Paris offices, which will guarantee the communication strategy, media coverage and implementation of training and workshops. Euractiv Romania will provide the editorial coverage in Romania and create a link with Romanian actors in the field of non-discrimination. Young European Federalists will open channels of dialogue with youth organisations and stakeholders. Finally, the Migration Policy Group (subcontractor), as experts in migration, integration and non-discrimination, will provide the legal expertise.

The activities

A set of complementary activities will be implemented.

- Communication and awareness-raising thanks to editorial coverage and multimedia products (articles, reports, video, interviews...) and a social media campaign
- Expert Reports: Independent Report on non-discrimination law; Mapping of Regional Attitudes in Romania; Italy and Sweden, Survey of the Needs of Equality Bodies and CSOs;
- Events: Media Training for journalists in order to use the correct terminology; Workshops for the Needs of Equality Bodies and CSOs.

The duration

The project started on the 01/04/2020 and will be carried out over a period of 20 months.

1. Discrimination based on ethnic origin and the MINDSET project

Discrimination based on ethnic origin is on a rise in the European Union. In many countries, especially ethnic minorities are experiencing discrimination, hate speech and economic and social disadvantages. This is also does not stop when it comes to reporting in the media, which is why the Euractiv Media Network, Euractiv Romania, the Migration Policy group and the Young European Federalists (JEF Europe) started the project MINDSET project (“Moving the Ideas of Non-Discrimination: Supporting an Equality Transformation”). The following study was conducted between October 2020 and January 2021 in Italy, Romania and Sweden and aims to give an overview of the views of the young people in those countries on the situation regarding discrimination based on ethnic origin.

The project’s main objective is to understand and combat non-discrimination against EU citizens in the form of ethnic origin by

- a) discussing the concept of discrimination based on ethnic origin in order to understand where it derives from,
- b) comparing national and EU protections within three EU countries with a focus on the effectiveness of Equality Bodies,
- c) mapping regional attitudes within these countries
- d) exchanging good practice and knowledge, and disseminating the contents at different levels.

The study’s aim is to map the regional attitudes towards the concept of discrimination, particularly discrimination based on ethnic origin, to understand the mindset at local level and the different realities within these differing cultures. This was achieved primarily through the development, dissemination and analysis of surveys that were answered by young people aged 18-35 from the three project countries, namely Italy, Sweden and Romania.

It is difficult to analyse discrimination based on ethnic origin as a separate phenomenon. Generally speaking, discrimination implies social rejection and exclusion based on particular characteristics, such as an individual’s ethnic background. While ethnicity is a major reason for the discrimination of ethnic minorities, additional characteristics subjected to discrimination such as gender, age, disability, sexuality or physical appearance may play a role as well (Kamberi et al., 2015: p. 201/202). Hence, ethnicity intersects with other dimensions of social inequality (Kofman/Roosblad/Keuzenkamp, 2009: p. 47).

The final report on this study is divided into four main parts. Following a description of the methodology and the overall process of our research, we will give an outline of the findings gathered through extensive, preliminary desk research on the status quo of ethnic

discrimination in Italy, Sweden and Romania. We will then examine the country-specific data that we received through our survey and conclude the report by comparing the results, focusing on discrimination based on ethnic origin and discrimination in the media.

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Research

At the beginning of the study, extensive desk research was conducted to get an overview of scientific findings on discrimination in Europe. The research focused on discrimination based on ethnic origin in Italy, Sweden and Romania. Using various academic databases, such as JSTOR, Web of Science and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, we reviewed the current state of research on the topic in the European academic field. Additional information was gathered from websites and reports of organisations and institutions active in the field of anti-discrimination, as well as from the “Special Eurobarometer 493 - Discrimination in the European Union” published in 2019. As this study focused on the current situation of discrimination in Italy, Sweden and Romania, we mainly considered publications and data from the last decade in this research.

The main aim of this step was to define the outcomes of previous studies. Furthermore, it sought to identify research gaps, i.e. areas in which (recent) primary data is lacking. The volume of relevant material available varied significantly according to the country. As for scientific studies made available on international databases, there were few sources for all of the countries. Most of them were centered around very specific issues, such as discrimination against a certain minority group at work. Nevertheless, several findings were useful in designing the survey and interview questions.

Contentwise, the secondary research analysed the (perceived) prevalence of different forms of discrimination in the European Union, strongly focussing on the issue of discrimination based on ethnic origin in the project countries. It identified the overall scope of scientific findings on this type of discrimination in the project countries. Moreover, it gave an outline of especially affected groups and areas of society, meanwhile providing an overview of national infrastructures to combat and prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin. For that matter, we also created a list of contacts featuring national equality bodies and organisations or networks committed to combating discrimination. Many of them were contacted to help with the promotion and dissemination of the survey via their platforms.

2.2 Survey conduction in Italy, Romania & Sweden

In order to collect recent primary data and to complement the findings of the desk research, an online survey was designed and conducted in the project countries Italy, Sweden and Romania. It sought to determine people’s mindset, attitude and opinions on how prevalent different forms of discrimination are in their country or region. Moreover, it assessed the

awareness of legal protections, equality bodies or organisations tackling the issue, both at national and EU level. Respondents were asked about specific groups affected by discrimination in their country. Furthermore, the individual perception of media coverage related to discrimination was evaluated.

The questions of the survey were designed by the researchers in English, based on the project's objectives mentioned above and being aware of the project as a cooperation of civil society organisations and media organisations. The developed survey therefore consists of three levels; discrimination based on ethnic origin in Europe and the country it was conducted in, the coverage of discrimination in the media and the identification of the awareness of the people in the assessed countries as well as possible solutions, including working with established equality bodies or civil society organisations.

After structural and narrative design, the questions were translated into Romanian, Italian and Swedish to reach out to as many people as possible and avoid language barriers. The structure, questions and methods remained the same and after conducting the survey, the results were translated into English where necessary, i.e. for the means of comparison. Names of organisations and media mentioned in the national languages were not translated.

The survey consists of 20 questions, using various formats. It includes two multiple choice questions on discriminated groups and reporting media, five Likert scale questions, seven Guttman scale questions ('yes' or 'no') and three open-ended questions, the latter allowing for individual responses and deeper reflection on the matter. It also comprises three single choice questions to assess evolutions (possible answers are: 'got/get worse', 'stay/ed the same', 'got/get better') or frequencies (the categories being 'never', 'once a month', 'once a week', 'several times a week' or 'every day'). In most of the Likert scale questions, respondents are asked to rate their personal agreement with a given statement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 showing strong disagreement, 5 showing strong agreement and 3 meaning that the person neither agrees, nor disagrees. The first Likert scale seeks to evaluate the perceived prevalence of discrimination, 1 meaning that the country is not affected at all, 3 meaning that it is affected to a certain extent and 5 meaning that it is very much affected by the issue.

The survey was conducted online with the software Typeform. The time frame for the survey was 4 December 2020 (= date of the first response in all three countries) to 9 January 2021 (= date of last response from Italy). The target group consisted of young people aged 18-35, possibly affected by discrimination themselves or working in the context (e.g. NGOs active in the field of anti-discrimination, anti-racism etc.) as well as young people from national and local media.

The survey was disseminated by contacts provided by JEF's national sections. In all three countries, Facebook Ads were used throughout December to increase and diversify the audience. They were regularly adjusted according to the number of incoming responses.

Additionally, a semi-structured interview was conducted online with Bjoern Brodin, the Equality Ombudsman in Sweden (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen*). The interview took about 30 minutes and contained similar questions as the survey, although any suggestions or scales were left out to avoid framed answers. Through this qualitative interview,

assessments and clarifications were obtained from the perspective of a national equality body. The supplementary information was used to analyse and evaluate the survey outcomes for this final report.

2.3 Final report

This final report seeks to compare the findings from the desk research with the results from the surveys and the interview. Examining all the information gathered throughout the study, it evaluates the status quo of discrimination based on ethnic origin in Italy, Sweden and Romania. It further analyses differences and similarities between the project countries.

3. Discrimination based on ethnic origin

The desk research served to identify areas of discrimination in the EU, more specifically discrimination based on ethnic origin, that have been examined in the past years. We firstly analysed the findings from the Special Eurobarometer 493 which was published in 2019. This data was complemented with investigations into publications on discrimination in the three project countries, such as scientific studies that were conducted in the past decade.

3.1 Discrimination in the EU - Findings from the Eurobarometer

Resources at the EU level can be a useful tool to facilitate cross-country comparisons, which is why they were considered at the beginning of our desk research. Apart from the Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey contains question on individual experiences of discrimination. The 2008 EU-MIDIS survey specifically targeted ethnic minorities to find out about their perception of discrimination in nine areas of social life. In this survey, the reported rates of discrimination were especially high among Roma and people of Sub-Saharan origin as well as among those with a North-African background (Nilsson/Wrench, 2009: p. 34). Surveys generally pointed out that the groups that are most discriminated against vary from one European country to another (idem: p. 33).

The “Special Eurobarometer 493 – Discrimination in the European Union” was the most recent and complete report that we found on the subject of ethnic discrimination. It monitors perceptions of and attitudes towards discrimination in the EU, analysing the phenomenon in relation to ethnic origin and skin colour, being a Roma, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion/beliefs and disability (European Union, 2019a: p. 1). For the purpose of this study, we focused on the category of ethnic origin, including data on discrimination based on skin colour and on being a Roma.

Overall, the survey shows that the “proportion of respondents who think discrimination is widespread in their country has generally declined since 2015 but perceptions vary significantly depending on the group asked about” (idem: p. 6). Discrimination for being Roma was considered the most widespread among the respondents (61%), followed by

discrimination based on ethnic origin and skin colour, with almost six in ten respondents (59%) perceiving these two types of discrimination as being widespread in their country. However, the survey pointed out that figures vary significantly between the Member States (idem: p. 7).

Compared to 2015, the survey observed that respondents now say they feel more comfortable with people from groups at risk of discrimination, although wide variations have been noticed depending on the group in question (idem: p. 9). The proportion of respondents being comfortable with having a person from a different ethnic origin than most of the population elected at the highest political position in their country increased by 10% since 2015 (idem: p. 9). In total, 65% of the respondents stated being comfortable with a person from a different ethnic origin in the highest political position and 72% said they would be comfortable with a person with a different skin colour. Respondents felt least comfortable with a Roma being elected at that position: 49% said they are comfortable with the idea, while 28% were uncomfortable (idem: p. 9).

In comparison to the results from 2015, respondents also felt more comfortable having someone of the mentioned groups as a work colleague. The proportion of respondents feeling comfortable with a Roma person as a colleague increased by 10%. Nevertheless, with 64% of the respondents saying they would feel comfortable, the Roma were still those with the smallest proportion of people feeling comfortable (idem: p. 10). Being asked how they would feel about their child being in a love relationship with a Roma person, less than half of the respondents (48%) said they were comfortable with the idea, although “a wide range of variation across Member States” was observed (idem: p.12).

Attitudes towards Roma have become more accepting since 2015, but figures vary widely between Member States (idem: p. 14). 39% of the respondents thought that citizens of their country would feel comfortable about their children having Roma schoolmates. More than six in ten respondents (61%) agreed that society could benefit from a better integration of the Roma (idem: p. 25). On the other hand, no more than 19% considered their country’s integration efforts regarding the Roma population to be effective (idem: p. 26). The survey concludes that “Roma still face the highest risks of discrimination” despite some positive development (idem: p. 26). Compared to people with a different ethnic origin or skin colour, Roma are still the group that respondents are less likely to feel comfortable with in a range of situations (idem: p. 26).

As for individual experience of discrimination, 17% of respondents stated having personally felt discriminated against in the last 12 months. For those who considered themselves part of a minority group, the percentage was higher: 49% for Roma and 40% for ethnic minorities (idem: p. 27). Being asked for the circumstances under which the discrimination took place, most respondents said this had happened in a public space (23%), at work (21%) or when looking for a job (13%) (idem: p. 27). Most of the respondents said they would preferably report their case to the police (35%), a friend or a family member (20%) or an equality body or Ombudsman (12%) (idem: p. 28).

A majority of respondents agreed that school lessons and material should include information on diversity, such as ethnic origin or skin colour (82%) and Roma culture and history (72%) (idem: p. 28).

Being asked about the effectiveness of national efforts to fight discrimination, 26% of the respondents considered their countries' measures to be effective and a further 36% said they were moderately effective, while almost three in ten (28%) did not believe they were effective (idem: p. 30).

As the survey portrayed significant differences between the attitudes and perceptions on discrimination in the EU Member States, it is necessary to evaluate each country individually to get an idea of the regional status quo. We therefore had a closer look at the Eurobarometer figures for Italy, Sweden and Romania before examining previous scientific work on specific issues in the three project countries.

3.2 Discrimination based on ethnic origin in the project countries

3.2.1 Italy

According to the 2019 Eurobarometer, discrimination on the basis of being Roma was considered as the most widespread phenomenon in Italy, with 79% of the respondents considering this type of discrimination to be very or fairly widespread in their country. The following categories were ethnic origin (66%) and skin colour (69%) (European Union, 2019b: p. 1).

With 38%, Italy was the country where respondents felt the least comfortable working with a Roma person (European Union, 2019a: p. 12). It was the only country where most respondents felt uncomfortable (39%) with this situation (idem: p. 14).

Italy was among the countries where respondents considered the citizens of their country the least comfortable with their children having Roma schoolmates (29% comfortable, 38% uncomfortable) (idem: p. 25). Moreover, more than half of the respondents (51%) were uncomfortable with their child being in a love relationship with a Roma person (European Union, 2019b: p. 2).

In employment, 36% of the Italian respondents said that being Roma could put a candidate at disadvantage. 24% thought that the skin colour could be a disadvantage and 18% thought that ethnic origin could play a negative role in this regard (idem: p. 3). As for the promotion of diversity in their workplace, 72% of the respondents did not believe that enough is being done as far as a Roma origin or background is concerned, 56% did not think so when it comes to ethnic origin and 54% answered negatively referring to skin colour (idem: p. 3).

A total of 22% considered Italy's measures to combat discrimination to be effective, with another 33% thinking they were moderately effective. On the other hand, 26% of the respondents said they were not effective (idem: p. 4). The figures for effectiveness were slightly lower than the EU average. 70% of the respondents agreed that school lessons and material should include information about diversity in terms of ethnic origin and skin colour and more than half of the respondents agreed as for Roma culture and history (53%, figures below EU average) (idem: p. 4).

The Italian respondents were most likely to report a case of discrimination to the police (38%), followed by an equality body or ombudsman (15%), a lawyer (14%) or a friend or family member (11%) (idem: p. 4).

Academic studies on discrimination in Italy were usually centered around the phenomena of discrimination in hiring processes or in housing and revealed that Muslim and Roma minorities are especially affected by discriminatory practices.

There are several studies focusing on the impact of ethnic discrimination in accessing European labour markets (Nilsson/Wrench, 2009: p. 23). In a study carried out by the ILO in Italy, **foreign names** were identified as a disadvantage for applicants with an immigrant background, frequently leading to their rejection, unless face-to-face contact was established (idem: p. 36).

In her study on labour market outcomes of immigrants in Italy, Giovanna Fullin found that all **immigrants**, regardless of their origin and their physical appearance, are connotated with negative stereotypes and prejudices (Fullin, 2016: p. 397). While Fullin stated that employment rates among immigrants do not differ considerably from those among Italian natives, she did point out that “the overwhelming majority of immigrants are employed in jobs at the bottom of the occupational ladder” (idem: p. 392). Fullin further mentions that studies specifically examining labour market discrimination confirm that **ethnic origin** has an impact on the selection process for jobs involving contact with customers, while it “matters less in hiring decisions made by manufacturing or construction firms” (idem: p. 394). Although discrimination on the Italian market has not undergone any extensive studies so far, analysis suggests a slightly higher discrimination rate in Italy compared to other European countries” (idem: p. 396).

Oh and Yinger analysed discriminatory behaviour in housing markets through comparing results of audit studies. They thereby provide “evidence of statistically significant discrimination against homeseekers who belong to a historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic group” (Oh/Yinger, 2015: p. 15). Among the featured studies is one of Baldini and Federici (2011) which was conducted in Italy in 2010. It showed that the probability of getting a positive response was 22 percentage points lower for **Arabs** and 16 percentage points lower for **East Europeans** compared to native Italian renters (idem: p. 43).

Another more recent study analysed the relationship between immigration, housing discrimination and employment, finding that “migrants residing in more immigrant-dense areas are less likely to be employed, even if they are proficient in Italian” (Boeri et al., 2015: p. 82).

According to a briefing paper published by the Open Society Foundations on restrictions on Muslim women’s dress in European countries, “anti-Muslim prejudice is widespread in Italian society”, with Muslims being stigmatised and discriminated against, particularly in the employment sector (Open Society Foundations, 2018: p. 53). This is especially true for Muslim women wearing religious clothing (idem: p. 53).

A report examining the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) in European countries states that about 85% of the Italian population hold unfavourable views of Roma. Furthermore, around 64% of the Roma in Italy stated feeling discriminated against when looking for a job (Open Society Foundations, 2017: p. 20). According to Italian CSOs, housing belongs to the “most deeply-felt and problematic issues” for Roma in the country, with forced evictions and segregated housing still taking place (idem: p. 21).

3.2.2 Sweden

With 70% believing that discrimination based on ethnic origin is widespread in their country, Sweden was one of the countries with the highest proportions. Sweden was also the country with the highest proportion of respondents thinking that discrimination based on being a Roma is widespread in their country (82%) (European Union, 2019a: p. 7). For discrimination based on skin colour, 63% of the Swedish said it is widespread in their country (European Union, 2019d: p. 1). Hence, discrimination for being a Roma, on the basis of ethnic origin or skin colour were the three types considered to be most spread in Sweden, with the proportion of respondents sharing this opinion constantly being above EU average (idem: p. 1).

Sweden consistently belonged to the countries where respondents were the most likely to feel comfortable with someone from a group at risk of discrimination (European Union, 2019a: p. 12) For example, 86% of the Swedish respondents stated being comfortable working with a Roma person (EU average: 64%) (idem: p. 12). Furthermore, 71% would feel comfortable with one of their children in a love relationship with a Roma (idem: p. 14). Yet, the Roma were the group that the Swedish respondents were least comfortable working with (European Union, 2019d: p. 2).

In Sweden, 80% of the respondents declared being comfortable with a person from a different ethnic origin (89% for different skin colour) occupying the highest elected political position in their country (European Union, 2019a: p. 12), while 70% would feel comfortable with a Roma in the highest elected political position (idem: p. 14). Referring to employment in general, 57% said that being a Roma could be a disadvantage, 51% said so about ethnic origin and 50% about skin colour (European Union, 2019d: p. 3). Again, all the figures were above EU average (idem: p. 1).

In terms of diversity, 71% of the respondents said that enough is done to promote it in their work place with regard to skin colour and ethnic origin, while 37% were of this opinion when a Roma origin or background is concerned, which equals the EU average (idem: p. 3). When it comes to the effectiveness of anti-discrimination measures, 28% considered them to be effective and another 37% thought they were moderately effective (idem: p. 4).

As for school lessons and material, 94% of the Swedish respondents would like to see information on diversity in terms of ethnic origin or skin colour included and 89% shared this opinion in terms of Roma culture and history (idem: p. 4).

If they were the victim of discrimination, the Swedish would most likely report their case to an equality body or ombudsman (32%), followed by friends and family (22%), the police (19%) or trade unions (16%). Except for the second category, those findings differed significantly from the EU average, with equality bodies and trade unions playing a more important role and the police being a less frequent choice (idem: p. 4).

Other reports, analysis and studies on the situation of ethnic discrimination in Sweden revealed similar target groups as in Italy and equally focused on labour market and housing discrimination, meanwhile extending research to other areas such as healthcare and politics.

In Sweden, the existence of ethnic discrimination is mainly monitored by international organisations, with a focus on particularly vulnerable groups such as **Muslims**, people of **African** descent and **Roma** (Open Society Foundations, 2014: p. 50). However, regional data on specific target groups seems to be rarely available. Some studies tried to fill this gap, for instance a report published by the Open Society Foundations on the situation of Somalis in Malmö (idem: p. 52).

Another example is the national TIES Study which analysed the integration of descendants of Turkish migrants in Stockholm and also examined perceptions of ethnic discrimination (Behtoui, 2015: p. 69). In this study, 26.6% of the respondents with a **migrant** background declared to have experienced hostility or unequal treatment due to their origin at least on an occasional basis, compared to 4.2% of the native Swedish respondents (idem: p. 69). Descendants of migrants encountered discrimination more often when going out or by the police rather than in their neighbourhood (idem: p. 76). In general, more than 60% of the respondents said that Muslims were frequently or regularly subject to discrimination in the country. For black people and those of Turkish descent, the proportions were 58% and 42% respectively (idem: p. 76).

A report by the Open Society Foundations shows that Muslims in Sweden are subjected to negative attitudes and discrimination in several areas of their lives, such as media, laws, politics, education, employment and public perception (Open Society Foundations, 2018: p. 71). Muslim women wearing Islamic clothing are the most vulnerable, in spite of the country being a pioneer in terms of gender equality (idem: p. 71).

Several studies have been conducted to examine the impact of ethnic discrimination on the probability of becoming employed in Sweden. In his study on experimental research on labour market discrimination, David Neumark highlighted the “consistent evidence of labor market discrimination against applicants of **Middle Eastern** origin (often immigrants)” in Sweden (Neumark, 2018: p. 832). The same phenomenon seems to apply to Arab-Muslim men in the country (idem: p. 833). Another study by Moa Bursell confirms the presence of “extensive ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market against applicants with Arabic and North African **names**”, examining differences in callback rates (Bursell, 2014: p. 399).

Nordin and Rooth also conducted a study on the apparent ethnic employment and income gap in Sweden. They found that ethnic minorities from southern Europe or outside Europe are at risk of experiencing unequal treatment in the labour market compared to their national counterparts (Nordin/Rooth, 2009: p. 490). Throughout their analysis, it became clear that

labour market discrimination in Sweden is responsible for the country's ethnic employment gap, whereas the income gap is mainly attributed to differences in skills (idem: p. 491).

Carlsson and Rooth also turned their attention to the ethnic wage gap in Sweden and analysed to what extent prejudice, i.e. a negative attitude toward a certain ethnic minority, plays a role in creating this gap (Carlsson/Rooth, 2016: p. 228).

In their analysis of housing discrimination audit studies, Oh and Yinger included examples from Sweden, such as the study conducted by Ahmed, Andersson and Hammarstedt (2010) in 2008, which discovered that the probability for Arabic males to receive a call back was up to 23 percentage points lower than for Swedish males. Moreover, an increased amount of information in the application did not reduce discrimination (Oh/Yinger, 2015: p. 42). Another study by Carlsson and Ericksson (2014) underlined that "including employment status does not change the magnitude of ethnic discrimination" (idem: p. 44).

3.2.3 Romania

Among the Romanian respondents, 60% perceived discrimination based on being Roma as widespread, 44% had the same perception in terms of ethnic origin and 42% for skin colour (European Union, 2019c: p. 1).

52% said they would feel comfortable with a person from a different ethnic origin in the highest elected political position of their country and 49% said they would be comfortable with a person having a different skin colour, while 38% said they would be comfortable with a Roma, compared to 34% who felt uncomfortable with this scenario (idem: p. 1).

In Romania, 52% of the respondents said that they would feel comfortable working with a Roma person. This proportion is well below the European average of 64%, but still way higher than in Italy (38%) (European Union, 2019a: p. 12). Furthermore, less than a third said that they would feel comfortable if their child was in a love relationship with a Roma person (31%) (European Union, 2019c: p. 2).

In terms of discrimination at the workplace, 25% said that the fact of a candidate being Roma could have a negative impact on their chances to be employed. 15% considered the skin colour to be a disadvantage and 13% did so for the ethnic origin (idem: p. 3).

Out of the Romanian respondents, 43% thought that enough is being done to promote Roma origin or background in their workplace and 40% thought that enough is being done in terms of ethnic origin (48% disagreed) and 39% agreed in terms of skin colour (48% disagreed) (idem: p. 3). Most of the respondents agreed that school lessons and material should include information on ethnic origin or skin colour (67%) and Roma culture and history (59%) (idem: p. 4).

In Romania, 30% thought that the national efforts to fight discrimination were effective and another 33% considered them as moderately effective, with 24% believing they were not effective (idem: p. 4).

If they were the victim of discrimination, most of the respondents would report their case to the police (27%). 13% would prefer a friend or family member, 12% a lawyer, 11% the courts and 9% an equality body or ombudsman (idem: p. 4).

The academic work that has been carried out on the situation of ethnic discrimination in Romania in recent years mostly focuses on the Roma population and gives an outline of all the areas in life where this specific group is targeted by discriminatory practices. It emphasises the role of national politics with regard to the issue.

A considerable part of the scientific literature on ethnic discrimination in Romania is dedicated to the occurrence of “antigypsyism” as a form of racism. It is apparent that the presence of this ideology contributes to the creation of “discriminating social structures and violent practices that reproduce structural disadvantages” (Taba, 2021: p. 72). Marius Taba underlines the role of the state in (co-)producing discriminatory knowledge, norms and politics towards Roma communities, such as segregation, unfair recruitment practices or an unproportional use of police and military force (idem: p. 75).

It has become apparent that Roma are constantly excluded from the national labour market due to low levels of education and ongoing discrimination (Open Society Foundations, 2017: p. 21). In addition, the geographical segregation of Roma communities reinforces their social exclusion (idem: p. 21). According to Amnesty International, Roma communities in Romania experience “discrimination and segregation in many areas of life such as education, access to housing and employment” (Amnesty International, 2019). What is more, they “are often confronted with institutionalised racism and are prone to excessive use of force by the law-enforcement authorities” (idem).

Among the recorded cases of discrimination against Roma are the forced eviction by local authorities, the publishing of discriminatory job advertisements by newspapers or companies and discriminatory declarations expressed by politicians or public figures (Open Society Foundations, 2010: p. 66). After Romania’s EU accession, violent attacks, hate speech and hate crimes targeting Roma have occurred in the country (Matache, 2014: p. 326). Margareta Matache points out that in Romania, “strongly-held beliefs that Roma are inferior have not been tackled through anti-bias education (e.g. schools, television grams, and media) and enforcement of laws, but have instead been boosted by outspoken racists who encourage the present extremist views and among ordinary” (idem: p. 326).

Roma in Romania are especially vulnerable to unemployment and poverty (Open Society Foundations, 2013: p. 8). A study by Kamberi et al. proved that perceived ethnic discrimination among Roma results in lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness in the minority group compared to the country’s non-Roma population (Kamberi et al., 2015: p. 199). Moreover, a report by the Open Society Foundations states that “Roma face systemic discrimination and exclusion in areas ranging from citizenship, education and employment to housing and access to justice, all of which bear significantly on the health of Roma populations” (Open Society Foundations, 2013: p. 8).

A briefing paper on Muslim women in Europe further stated that anti-Islam sentiments are increasing in Romania and supported by mainstream media as well as national politics (Open Society Foundations, 2018: p. 65).

In all of the three project countries, most of the scientific studies were conducted in the field of labour market or housing discrimination. The analysis revealed specific target groups of ethnic discrimination, which were mentioned accordingly by the respondents in our survey.

4. Country analysis - descriptive study

4.1 Italy

4.1.1 Overview

In Italy, 74.4% of the participants of the survey answered that general discrimination is a problem in Italy. As the three main reasons for being discriminated against in Italy, they named skin colour, sexual orientation and ethnic origin. As this study focuses on the discrimination on ethnic origin, this will be prioritized.

In terms of discrimination based on ethnic origin, a total of 75.2% of the respondents answered that they agree or strongly agree that discrimination based on ethnic origin is a problem in Europe, while the number of participants who agree or strongly agree with this statement regarding the situation in Italy rose to 87%.

When being asked to name a specific group affected by ethnic discrimination, a closer look at the figures shows that the main ethnic groups considered to be affected by discrimination in Italy are people of African ethnicity and people of Arabic ethnicity. The same applies for Roma, Sinti and Camminanti, whose specific situation will be explained in the following chapter.

4.1.2 Roma, Sinti and Camminanti

As the majority of the respondents to the question of specific minority groups indicated Roma, Sinti and Camminanti as the people who are most affected by ethnic discrimination, the circumstances connected to these numbers require a closer look at the Italian society. While Roma and Sinti are also present in other European countries, the Camminanti are almost only present in Sicily.

In its country profile on the *Size, composition and historical presence of the Roma, Sinti and Camminanti communities* in Italy, the Council of Europe estimates that the total number of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti in Italy are a 140 000 people, around 50% of them being Italian

citizens (Council of Europe/Bova, 2016). This leads to the conclusion that most of the Roma, Sinti and Camminanti living in Italy are affected not only by one discrimination factor, but also being discriminated for not being Italian, meaning a large group is affected by intersectional discrimination, as more than half of the questioned people (58.9%) answered they believe discrimination based on nationality is affecting the Italian population.

4.1.3 Immigrants and ethnic origin

Another group that is expected to face discrimination based on multiple factors are people of colour of African ethnicities with a migration background. Out of the total 121 persons who answered in the survey that migrants, immigrants and non-Italians are the main groups affected by discrimination, 24.8% specified their answer to people immigrating from the African continent are the ethnic group within the total number of migrants in Italy most affected by discrimination. Another 15.7% named people with an Arabic ethnicity facing the biggest discrimination in Italy.

4.1.4 Awareness of (measures against) discrimination based on ethnic origin

When the participants were asked about the awareness of discrimination based on ethnic origin in their country, 21.2% agree that the Italian society is aware of this compared to a proportion of 58.8% thinking that their family and friends are conscious of the importance of it. When being asked if the European Union and the Italian state are working enough to reduce the number of cases of discrimination of ethnic groups, 13.4% (strongly) agreed with the measures taken by the European Union. On a national level, 6.5% answered that they agree or strongly agree with the number of measures taken by the Italian government and almost two thirds (65.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similar percentages apply in Italian society, where 56.1% strongly disagree or disagree that there is sufficient work done within the civil society.

This raises the question who is to be the main actor in anti-discrimination work if the trust in national and international institutions is low and the civil society in general is not seen as a thriving force in anti-discrimination work either and a conscious environment is rather seen in the closer social contacts, such as friends and family.

4.1.5 Civil Society organisations and equality bodies

A possible answer could be the work of civil society organisations and Equality Bodies. Being asked if they can name a civil society organisation or Equality Body that can be addressed in cases of discrimination based on ethnic origin or that is working on an improvement of the situation, more than half of the interviewed people stated that they could name one Equality Body or civil society organisation. The graphics below represents the Equality Bodies and organisations working on ethnic discrimination that were mostly mentioned.

In terms of Equality Bodies, the most popular one was the UNAR (Ufficio nazionale antidiscriminazioni razziali), the Italian organisation working on anti-discrimination connected to racism. Others named were the institutions for general equality; the Dipartimento delle pari opportunità, Comitato nazionale di parità, Le Commissioni pari opportunità, Vox diritti - Osservatorio Italiano sui Diritti as well as the ministry of equality (Ministero per le Pari opportunità).

Regarding civil society organisations, they have to be splitted in international organisations and national organisations in Italy. The national organisations named that were connected to the topic discrimination based ethnic origin were often organisations working with migrants and refugees, while, regardless the big awareness for the discrimination of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti, no organisation working on this topic was listed. The two most mentioned organisations however were Amnesty International and the Croce Rossa Italiana, the Red Cross Italy, both working both on a huge variety of topics related to discrimination and do not necessarily focus on discrimination based on ethnic origin. A full list of all organisations can be found in the annex.

4.1.6 Discrimination in the media

The situation of media reporting on discrimination based on ethnic origin in Italy is quite diverse.

Two important findings of the survey regarding the Italian media and discrimination are that a large majority (76.4%) of respondents believes that the media is not reporting enough about the topic and additionally 81.3% think the Italian media is not using non-discriminatory language. Nevertheless, about every third person (32.9%) claims to have read, seen or listened to a piece of media on ethnic discrimination. More than two thirds (70.4%) of these media reporting was done via online media, while 11.1% stated they have read an article in a newspaper. This raises the question if “traditional media”, especially paper newspapers, are less likely to report on discrimination based on ethnic origin than online media resources. Another reason could be that most young people do not read newspapers anymore. Further studies would be necessary to come to affirming conclusions. Concerning the specific topics covered by the media, the respondents name that the articles they read were mainly covering the topic of discrimination of people based on their skin colour or religion in the Italian employment or sports sector.

4.1.7 Future perspectives

As for past developments, more than six in ten respondents (64.1%) thought that discrimination based on ethnic origin has become more prevalent in Italy and nearly three in ten (28.2%) said it had stayed the same.

Regarding the future development of discrimination based on ethnic origin in Italy, almost half of the respondents (46.1%) believe that in the upcoming years, discrimination based on ethnic origin will increase in Italy, while 16.9% believe the number of people who are discriminated based on their ethnic origin will decrease.

4.2 Sweden

4.2.1 Overview

As for discrimination in general, 36.9% of the Swedish respondents perceived their country as being much or very much affected. More than a third of the respondents (34.8%) stated that Sweden is affected by discrimination to a certain extent, while 28.3% believed it to be little or not at all affected. According to the respondents, the main reason for being discriminated against in Sweden is ethnic origin (named by 77.8% of the participants of the survey), followed by (supposed) racial origin, skin colour and national origin, all of which were mentioned by 65.2% of the participants. Sexual orientation was the least frequently chosen category, still being considered as a national reason for discrimination by more than one third of the respondents (37%).

In terms of discrimination based on ethnic origin, more than seven in ten (71.7%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this is an issue in Europe, while 60.9% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement regarding the situation in Sweden.

As a specific group facing discrimination based on ethnic origin in Sweden, the Sámi people were named by the representative of the *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen*. The Sámi are an indigenous people that is mainly present in the North of the Scandinavian countries and Russia. In Sweden, the number of people identifying as Sámi is estimated to be between 20,000 - 40,000, living mainly in the northern provinces. One of the main issues the Sámi are facing is the loss of their culture and the lack of self-determination (Minority Rights Group 2018).

4.2.2 Awareness of (measures against) discrimination based on ethnic origin

When the respondents were asked to evaluate the awareness of discrimination based on ethnic origin in their country, six in ten (60.9%) agreed that the Swedish society is aware of this as a problem, with more than a quarter (26.1%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 21.7% rather or strongly disagreeing. Meanwhile, 56.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their direct environment is aware of the problems caused by ethnic discrimination in Sweden and 28.3% were uncertain about the awareness among their closer social contacts.

When being asked whether the European Union is doing enough to prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin, more than half of the respondents (54.3%) rather or strongly disagreed, while 17.4% rather or strongly agreed that EU measures are sufficient in this

area. At the same time, almost three in ten (28.3%) neither agreed, nor disagreed with the given statement.

Similar tendencies were observed on a national level, with 52.1% of the survey participants thinking that the Swedish government is not doing enough to reduce the case numbers of discrimination based on ethnic origin and 21.7% sharing an opposite opinion. As for the civil society, the respondents seemed to be slightly more convinced of its efficiency in tackling the issue. However, while 30.4% considered the civil society to be doing enough to prevent ethnic discrimination, an absolute majority of 52.2% of the respondents rather or strongly disagreed that civil society is working sufficiently on this matter.

The figures show that dissatisfaction with the commitment of national and international institutions as well as civil society organisations is relatively high among Swedish respondents when it comes to combating ethnic discrimination. Consequently, on the basis of this survey, no main actor (i.e. a thriving force) could be identified in this specific field of anti-discrimination in Sweden.

4.2.3 Civil society organisations and equality bodies

In Sweden, 52.2% of the respondents stated having heard of an equality body or organisation tackling the issue of discrimination in their country. Being asked to give examples, more than a third of the participants who answered this question (36.7%) mentioned the *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen* (Equality Ombudsman, 11 times out of 30). The second most common answer was the *Jämställdhetsmyndigheten* (Swedish Gender Equality Agency, 3 times).

Apart from that, mostly international organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UNICEF and the UNHCR were named. When referring to the national level, *Friends* (an organisation to counteract bullying), anti-discrimination agencies and trade unions were brought up. There were no examples for NGOs or associations focusing specifically or exclusively on discrimination based on ethnic origin.

4.2.4 Discrimination in the media

More than a third of the respondents (36.8%) declared hearing about discrimination based on ethnic origin in the media at least once a week, with 13% saying that they heard about it several times per week. A relative majority of 37% heard about it approximately once per month. Meanwhile, almost two in ten (19.6%) seemed to never hear about it.

With 63% of the respondents, a majority did not think that the Swedish media is reporting enough about discrimination. However, 87% said that the media in Sweden is using non-discriminatory language. This shows that there seems to be great awareness with regard to the use of sensitive language in Sweden, also in the media context.

About seven in ten respondents (69.6%) did not remember a specific recent article or report on discrimination. Those who did were asked to name the topic(s) it was written about. The topics mentioned mainly fell into the category of discrimination based on ethnic background and racism (5 times out of 12), followed by contributions concerning the discrimination of women (4 times), discrimination at workplace based on ethnic origin (3 times) and issues or stories related to migration (2 times).

When being asked in what kind of media they heard or read about this discrimination, most of the respondents named online media (64.3%), followed by newspapers (28.6%) and the radio (7.1%).

4.2.5 Future perspectives

Being asked to evaluate the recent evolution of discrimination based on ethnic origin in Sweden, more than half of the respondents (52.2%) said that the situation got worse in the past years. Those who considered it to have stayed the same accounted for 28.3% and the percentage of those seeing improvement was 19.6% among the participants.

Concerning the prospects for the upcoming years, about a third of the respondents (34.8%) expected the situation regarding ethnic discrimination to get better in Sweden, compared to 28.3% who thought that it will get better. With 37% of all the answers to this question, a relative majority of respondents expected discrimination based on ethnic origin to remain at the same level in Sweden for the years to come.

4.3 Romania

4.3.1 Overview

In Romania, 70.9% of the respondents thought that discrimination, generally speaking, is a problem, stating that their country is much or very much affected by discrimination. According to the respondents, the three main reasons for being discriminated against in Romania are ethnic origin (named by 76.4% of the participants of the survey), sexual orientation (74.5%) and national origin (58.2%).

In terms of discrimination based on ethnic origin, a total of 69.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that discrimination based on ethnic origin is an issue in Europe, while 78.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement regarding the situation in their country.

When being asked to name a group that they consider to be especially affected by ethnic discrimination in Romania, respondents mainly mentioned Roma (44 times), followed by Hungarians (12 times). As to the specific groups being discriminated against in general,

ethnic minorities (including Roma) were referred to 62 times, whereas the second most common answer was the LGBTQ+ community with 16 references.

4.3.2 Roma

The Roma are an officially recognised ethnic minority in Romania and the country's second-largest ethnic minority after the Hungarians (Open Society Foundations, 2017: p. 19). However, they are usually framed as a “socially vulnerable group”, a definition referring to poverty, social exclusion (including school segregation) and marginalisation (idem: p. 19).

In the 2011 Population and Housing Census in Romania, 612,600 people declared themselves Roma, representing 3.3% of the total population (Institutul național de statistică, 2011: p. 5). According to this census, the Roma are distributed relatively evenly throughout the country, with shares ranging between 1.1% in Botoșani County and 8.9% in Mureș County (idem: p. 5). The Council of Europe estimates that about 1.85 million Roma live in Romania, which would be a share of 9.5% of the population. This discrepancy is often explained by the “reluctance among Roma to self-identify for fear of stigmatisation and discrimination” (ECRI, 2019: p. 24).

4.3.3 Hungarians

As claimed by the 2011 Census, Hungarians account for 6.5% of the Romanian population and are mostly residing in the Transylvanian region, forming the majority of the population in the counties of Harghita (85.21%) and Covasna (73.74%) and are a large percentage of the residents in Mureș (38.09%), Satu Mare (34.65%), Bihor (25.27%), Sălaj (23.35%) and Cluj (15.93%) (Institutul național de statistică, 2011: p. 5). In absolute numbers, 1,227,623 people were registered as Hungarians in the country in 2011 (Institutul național de statistică, 2011: p. 5). The Hungarians are one of the 20 groups recognised as national minorities in Romania (ECRI, 2019: p. 24).

4.3.4 Awareness of (measures against) discrimination based on ethnic origin

When the participants were asked to evaluate the awareness of discrimination based on ethnic origin in their country, 21.8% agreed that the Romanian society is aware of this as a problem, compared to 47.3% of the respondents who disagreed with this. About three in ten respondents (30.9%) were unsure about the societal awareness of ethnic discrimination as a problem. Meanwhile, six in ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their direct environment (i.e. family and friends) is aware of the problems caused by ethnic discrimination.

When being asked if the European Union is doing enough to prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin, an absolute majority of respondents (54.5%) neither agreed, nor disagreed. As more than half of the respondents didn't state a strong opinion about the efficiency of the

European Union in this field, there might be a lack of clear information on European action linked to anti-discrimination in the Romanian society. More than one in five respondents (21.9%) said that they would rather or even strongly disagree with this statement. On another hand, 23.7% of the respondents said that the EU is doing enough from their perspective.

On a national level, however, there was a clear tendency towards disagreement, with 70.9% of the participants thinking that the Romanian government is not doing enough to prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin and 7.2% having an opposite opinion. As for the civil society, Romanians seem to be rather uncertain about its efficiency in reducing the national number of cases of ethnic discrimination. While 43.6% of the respondents disagreed when being asked whether civil society is doing enough to prevent this type of discrimination in Romania, one in three (32.7%) neither agreed or disagreed and 23.6% agreed that there is sufficient work done within the civil society.

The figures show that distrust in the Romanian government is high when it comes to tackling the issue of discrimination based on ethnic origin on a national level. In comparison, the respondents were more satisfied with measures that have been taken by the European Union and with the contribution of Romanian civil society. Nevertheless, according to the results of this survey, none of the three actors seemed to play the role of a thriving force in anti-discrimination work. As it has previously been stated, the consciousness is mostly perceived among close social contacts.

4.3.5 Civil society organisations and equality bodies

Almost two thirds of the respondents (64.8%) have heard of an equality body or organisation tackling the issue of discrimination in Romania. Being asked to name one, the most frequently mentioned institution was the *Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării* (CNCD, National Council for Combating Discrimination) (11 times out of 40), a national equality body and member of EQUINET. Other institutions that were named more than twice were the *Agentia Nationala pentru Egalitatea de Sanse intre Femei si Barbati* (ANES, National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men) (6 times) and *Centrul Filia*, a feminist NGO affiliated to the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) (5 times).

Respondents usually thought of national civil society organisations, such as *ActiveWatch - Agenția de Monitorizare a Presei*, an NGO combating hate speech in the media or *Asociația ACCEPT*, an LGBT association. In general, the participants' answers covered a broad spectrum of answers, including organisations for the support of Roma, women, LGBTQ people and other target groups of discrimination in Romania.

Focusing on ethnic discrimination, *E-Romnja* was mentioned as an association for promoting Roma womens' rights, as well as the *Roma Education Fund* and the organisation *MaghiaRomania*, which also supports Hungarians residing in Romania and combats discrimination in national politics.

4.3.6 Discrimination in the media

Being asked whether they remember a recent article or report on discrimination, 61.1% of the respondents said they did, but none of the respondents could name a title or specific topic. One person declared that they had read about discrimination in online media, which was the only type of media mentioned at all in this context.

Referring to frequencies in media coverage, 47.2% of the survey participants declared that they hear about discrimination based on ethnic origin in the media at least once a week, with 21.8% hearing about this topic several times per week. Another 34.5% of the respondents answered that they heard about it in the media approximately once per month.

At the same time, more than eight in ten of the respondents (87%) did not think that the Romanian media is reporting enough about discrimination in the country. When being asked whether they believe that the media in Romania is using non-discriminatory language, 50% said yes, while the other half did not think so. This result might indicate that there was uncertainty among the respondents related to the definition of sensitive, i.e. non-discriminatory language and the way it impacts media reporting.

4.3.7 Future perspectives

In a final section of the survey, participants were asked to evaluate the recent evolution of discrimination based on ethnic origin in Romania. While two thirds of the respondents (67.3%) said that the situation stayed the same in the past years, 23.6% stated that it got worse. The percentage of those seeing improvement was 9.1% among the respondents.

Concerning the prospects for the upcoming years, a third of respondents (32.7%) expected the situation with regard to ethnic discrimination to get worse in Romania, compared to a fifth who thought that it will get better. With 47.3% of all answers, a relative majority of respondents expected discrimination based on ethnic origin to remain at the same level in their country for the years to come.

5. Comparative analysis of countries

This last part is dedicated to a comparative approach of the main findings gathered through the survey in each country. After sharing some information on basic statistics, we will take a closer look at similarities and differences between Italy, Sweden and Romania, focusing on ethnic discrimination media reporting related to discrimination.

The average age of the respondents was about 26.8 years in Italy, 28.4 years in Sweden and 29.3 years in Romania. Regarding the living place of the respondents, proportions different between the countries, with almost nine in ten of the Romanian respondents

(88.9%) and about eight in ten living of the Swedish respondents (82.6%) in an urban area, while about a quarter of the Italian respondents (24.4%) came from a rural area.

5.1 Discrimination based on ethnic origin

Compared to the perception of the Swedish respondents, those from Italy and Romania considered their country to be slightly more affected by discrimination. In each country, more than a third of the respondents said their country was much or very much affected by discrimination. Ethnic origin was considered to be the most frequent reason for discrimination in Sweden and Romania. In Italy, where it was the third, discrimination based on skin colour and sexual orientation were the most chosen categories. Ethnic origin was still mentioned by more than 72% in each country.

A clear majority in every country saw discrimination based on ethnic origin as a problem in Europe (75.2% in Italy, 71.7% in Sweden and 69.1% in Romania). Figures varied more considerably on the national level. While 87% of the Italian respondents said that this type of discrimination was an issue in their country, agreement was lower in Romania (78.1%) and Sweden (60.9%).

When being asked whether the society in their country is aware of the problem, almost half of the respondents in Italy and Romania considered the society to be unaware, whereas more than half of the respondents in Sweden (52.2%) thought that the society was aware of the problems caused by ethnic discrimination on a national level. Being asked about the awareness of their family and friends, more than half of the respondents in Italy, Sweden and Romania agreed that their close contacts were aware. In each country, the ratings for awareness among close contacts was higher than the one for the society.

In all three countries, a minority of the respondents thought that the European Union is doing enough to prevent discrimination based on ethnic origin. While an absolute majority in Sweden disagreed with this statement (54.3%), the absolute majority in Romania (54.5%) as well as half of the respondents in Italy (49.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Absolute majorities in all three countries disagreed that their national government is doing enough in preventing discrimination based on ethnic origin. The rates of disagreement were especially high in Romania (70.9%) and Italy (65.4%), while the satisfaction with the Swedish government was more positive, with 21.7% of the respondents considering it to be doing enough to tackle the issue.

The evaluation of civil society was similar in the surveyed countries. Most of the respondents believed that it is not doing enough to prevent ethnic discrimination, the highest dissatisfaction being among the Italian respondents (56.1%). Yet, three in ten respondents in Sweden agreed that civil society's work is sufficient.

Concerning specific equality bodies and organisations fighting discrimination, more than half of the respondents knew some in each country, the highest figure being 67.3% in Romania.

As for individual perceptions of the national situation, most of the respondents in Italy (64.1%) and Sweden (52.2%) stated that discrimination based on ethnic origin had increased in their country in the last years, whereas the majority in Romania (67.3%) thought it had stayed at the same level. Referring to future perspectives, Italian respondents appeared to be the most pessimistic, with 46.1% expecting the situation to get worse in the coming years. While about a third of respondents in Romania (32.7%) shared this assessment regarding their country, 47.3% considered the situation likely to stay the same. In Sweden, the respondents were a bit undecided: whereas the relative majority (37%) did not expect the situation to change, 34.8% expected it to get better and 28.3% thought it is likely to get worse.

5.2 Discrimination and the media

In each of the surveyed countries, more than a third of the respondents declared hearing about discrimination based on ethnic origin in the media at least once a week (40.2% in Italy, 36.8% in Sweden, 47.2% in Romania). Figures varied especially for those hearing about it several times a week, with 33.7% choosing this answer in Italy, compared to 21.8% in Sweden and 13% in Romania.

In all three countries, most of the respondents did not think that the national and local media is reporting enough about discrimination. The proportion of people disagreeing ranged from 63% in Sweden to 87% in Italy. When it comes to non-discriminatory language, more than eight in ten of the Italian respondents said that it is not used by the media in their country, whereas 87% of the respondents from Sweden indicated that it is used in their country. There was no tendency towards agreement or disagreement in Romania.

In general, more than six in ten respondents did not remember a recent article or report on discrimination, but those who had read about it recently delivered way more responses on specific topics than the respondents in Sweden or Romania. Digital media were the most mentioned source in all three countries. Though there was a difference between Italy, where the television was the second most chosen answer, followed by the newspaper and Sweden, where the newspaper accounted for 28.6% of the responses, followed by the radio, the TV not being mentioned at all.

6. Discrimination based on ethnic origin and the Mindset project

This study has shown that no matter where in Europe, people are facing discrimination based on ethnic origin in every country. It provides extensive information and the regional attitudes towards the concept of discrimination, especially discrimination based on ethnic origin and understand the mindset of the people in Italy, Sweden and Romania and provide new data to help understanding the differences and similarities in the countries.

Depending on the country, however, the aim of discrimination and the degree may vary: Countries more connected to the Sinti & Roma community face more discrimination, being a national minority group or simply because you have a migration background. Furthermore,

this study has underlined that the media plays a crucial role in reporting about discrimination and raising awareness for it. This is why the joint project of Euractiv and JEF Europe, Mindset, aims to provide essential training for journalists and activists from the civil society organisations in the countries involved in the project, to guarantee and improvement of the situation and work together on a brighter future.

The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains”.



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I. Annex

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