

# Monthly Newsletter

March 2025



# GFOCD

GLOBAL FORUM OF  
COMMUNITIES DISCRIMINATED  
ON WORK AND DESCENT



## CDWD MATTERS

*69th Commission on the Status of Women, Strides at the Human Rights Council, UN ECOSOC Youth Forum, Financing for Development and the road to the Seville Conference, and more*

### CDWD at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women



The 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) provided a crucial platform to amplify the voices of women discriminated on work and descent (CDWD) and push for stronger global action toward gender justice. Here are some of the key highlights from our engagements

### Centering CDWD Women & Girls as a Policy Imperative: A Side Event in collaboration with UN Women

On March 19, the UN Headquarters hosted a pivotal event, *"Centering Women and Girls in the Global Movement of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD): A Policy Imperative."* This gathering brought together international organizations, grassroots leaders, civil society representatives, and policymakers to **shape a policy brief addressing the unique challenges and transformative potential of CDWD women**. With participation from countries including Ukraine, Moldova, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Albania, Turkey, and Spain, discussions emphasized the need for intersectional approaches, meaningful participation, and global cooperation.

- **Permanent mission representatives** called for concrete actions, including centering CDWD women's voices in policymaking, ensuring their meaningful participation, adopting intersectional approaches, and strengthening global cooperation. They also suggested creating a "Group of Friends" for CDWD work to provide a space for interested member states to advance political commitments and policy issues.
  - **Representatives from UN Women, OHCHR, and the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women** emphasized addressing systemic barriers to women's empowerment and discussed strategies to integrate Roma women's voices into policy frameworks.
  - **Civil society representatives from CDWD** highlighted how intersecting forms of discrimination—such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status—compound inequalities for marginalized women and stressed the urgency of inclusive policies.
- This discussion marked a critical step in amplifying CDWD women's voices and ensuring their perspectives shape global policymaking.



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## From the UN Floor..



### Maria Atanasova on Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

GFoD's former Rights Expert, Maria Atanasova raised the voice of CDWD Roma women from the UN floor at the CSW69 Official Interactive Dialogue, highlighting the unique challenges faced and recommending measures to address them:

- ✓ Recognition of CDWD women in CSW policies



### Simona Torotcoi on the Role of CSW

Simona Torotcoi intervened at the High-Level Interactive Dialogue on "accelerating the Beijing Platform for Action: the role of the Commission on the Status of Women", advocating for:

- ✓ Special CSW thematic sessions addressing CDWD discrimination



- ✓ Active policies to promote CDWD women's participation in all UN processes
- ✓ Accountability mechanisms for governments to include CDWD women in gender equality reviews

- ✓ Guidelines to ensure CDWD women are included in gender review

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Watch here

## NGO CSW Side-event: Empowering Women, Ending Work & Descent-Based Discrimination



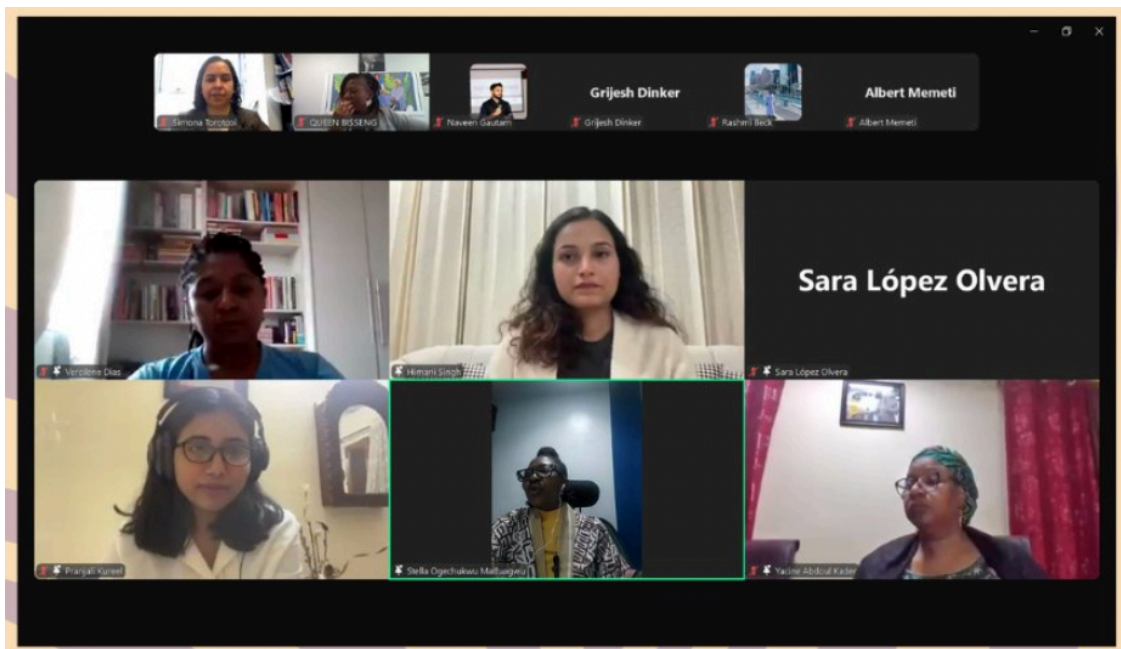
Our CSW69 side event, *"Empowering Women, Ending Work & Descent-Based Discrimination,"* successfully brought together global leaders, grassroots advocates, and policymakers to discuss key challenges and solutions for women facing discrimination based on work and descent.

The event began with a keynote address by H.E. Ambassador Ms. Sue La Janina, Permanent Representative of Albania to the UN, who highlighted the urgency of addressing systemic discrimination against marginalized women, and extended support to the efforts of Global Forum of CDWD. Her address was followed by powerful testimonies from CDWD women leaders across Asia, Africa, and Europe, ensuring grassroots perspectives shaped the discussion.

## Empowering Grassroots Women Discriminated on Work and Descent: A Virtual NGO CSW Side Event

The virtual side-event at CSW69 on *Empowering Grassroots Women Discriminated on Work and Descent: Advancing the Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action* brought together voices from Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, offering critical insights and a strong call to action for gender equality and social inclusion.

Speakers highlighted systemic discrimination faced by marginalized communities across different regions. Sara Lopez Olvera criticized Spain's Roma inclusion strategy for lacking data, clear goals, and accountability. Ogechukwu Stella Maduagwu (IFETACSIOS) exposed Nigeria's Osu caste system and called for urgent action. Verci Kalunga (CONAQ Quilombos) emphasized the struggles of quilombola women in Brazil, urging targeted policies. Pranjali (GFoD) stressed the need for global frameworks to recognize women from Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). Yacine Abdoul Kader (TIMIDRIA) warned that systemic discrimination continues to limit disadvantaged women's rights in Niger despite legislative progress.



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## Engagements with Permanent Missions



During CSW69, we deepened global alliances to advance the rights of women from CDWD through key diplomatic engagements. We held successful meetings with representatives from the representatives of the Austria Mission and Austria Foreign Ministry in Vienna to build international support for CDWD women's rights. At the side event on 19th March, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Agnes Chimbiri-Molande of Malawi reaffirmed her country's commitment to gender justice and extended support to the Group of Friends. We also engaged in productive discussions with Nepal's Permanent Representative and Minister, urging greater inclusion of CDWD women in global gender policies and equality reviews. Additionally, H.E. Suela Janina of the Permanent Mission of Albania spoke at our side event to the NGO CSW Forum and expressed solidarity with CDWD women, particularly Roma communities in Europe.



## Advancing Justice and Equality for CDWD Women: Key Highlights from Global Advocacy Efforts



Our delegates at the 69th CSW also made their presence felt and their voices heard through their interventions at the various events happening across the forum. For instance, at the **African Union High-Level Dialogue** during the Beijing+30 Review, a powerful call to action by GFoD's Queen Bisseng emphasized that **CDWD women must be the first beneficiaries of reparation and gender justice** for true equality and sustainable development. Advancing land rights and gender justice. Discussions at the **Tanzania** side-event carried forward by Beena Pallical focused on **rural women's land tenure insecurity** as a critical issue. In the **Cameroon** side-event, Queen Bisseng urged the **inclusion of Bororo and Baka Bageli communities** in anti-violence programs. **Financial justice** was also a key theme, with **Priyanka Samy** moderating a session by the **International Budget Partnership**, emphasizing economic policies that empower marginalized women. This is only a glimpse, as our CDWD colleagues at the UN raised powerful voices to ensure #CDWDatCSW.

## Highlighting Discrimination Based on Work & Descent at the UN Human Rights Council



Earlier in March, in a landmark moment for global advocacy, **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk**, officially acknowledged **Discrimination Based on Work and Descent (DWD)** in his address at the 58th session of the Human Rights Council on March 3 in Geneva.

*"Other communities face deep-seated, caste-based discrimination, related to work and descent." he notes. This mention reflects the persistent efforts of GFoD, which engaged with the High Commissioner during the 2024 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva, securing his solidarity on the issue. As we push for stronger global action, this recognition marks an important step in ensuring CDWD communities are no longer ignored.*



In March, two of our young CDWD women Rights Experts got an opportunity to intervene, through video, at the 58th regular session of Human Rights Council:



[Watch Here](#)

At the 48th Meeting of the 58th regular session of the Human Rights Council, Alima Taal shed light on the ongoing reality of caste-based discrimination in The Gambia. She highlights the struggles of CDWD in the country, who face barriers to basic rights, limited opportunities, and confinement to menial labor. She references the recent ACHPR resolution, which calls for a continental study on this form of discrimination, reaffirming the rights and lived experiences of affected communities. However, she emphasizes that regional efforts alone are not enough, saying, "We need global instruments to address this unique form of discrimination... Strengthen domestic frameworks and drive inclusive change."

At the 50th meeting of the 58th regular session of the Human Rights Council, Kunjani Pariyar Pyasi brings attention to the systemic discrimination faced by Dalit communities in Nepal. She highlights the recent case in Siraha, Nepal, where a Dalit family's home was demolished by local authorities and they were forcefully relocated to make way for a religious event organized by an upper-caste group. Speaking on the urgent need for justice, she calls for decisive action at local and national levels to protect Dalit communities from such violations.



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## Participate in the coming UN ECOSOC Youth Forum!

For the first time, CDWD Youth will participate actively, loudly, and powerfully in the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum! GFoD, TIP, and partners, in collaboration with the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), will host two virtual side-events at the Forum. These sessions will explore:

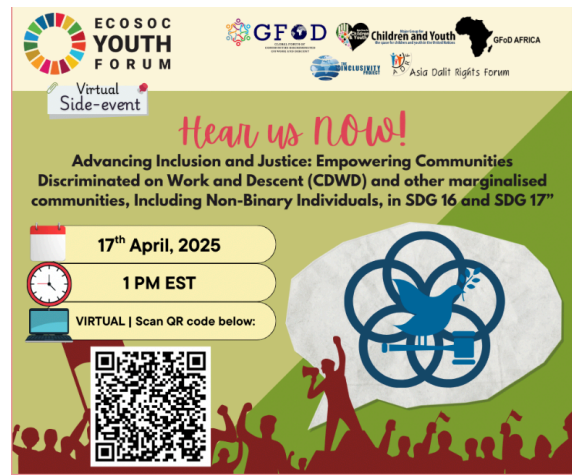
**Harnessing Science for Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG 8)**  
**Advancing Inclusion and Justice in areas related to SDGs 16 and 17**

We encourage youth to attend and participate in large numbers—your voice matters. We also call on allies and stakeholders to support these powerful voices from our communities.





[Register Here](#)



[Register Here](#)



[Register Here](#)

### A Pre-Consultation for CDWD and Indigenous Youth on Decent Work, Gender Equity, Health, and Technological Justice

As we prepare for the 2025 UN ECOSOC Youth Forum, it is vital that the voices of youth from historically marginalized groups—particularly youth from Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) and Indigenous communities—are meaningfully included in shaping global conversations around development, equity, and justice.

This pre-consultation aims to create a dedicated space for youth from these communities to gather, share lived realities, and co-develop intersectional perspectives on key themes of Decent Work (SDG 8), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), and leveraging Science, Technology, and Innovation for Inclusive Development. It will also serve as a preparatory platform for meaningful engagement in the main ECOSOC Youth Forum and beyond.

✨ In another historic first, the CDWD Stakeholders Group will also participate as co-organizers at the Youth Forum, and Naveen Gautam from GFOD will be moderating a plenary session in the lead-up to the World Social Summit, happening on April 17, 2025. This marks a major step forward in visibility, recognition, and influence for CDWD youth voices on global platforms.

CDWD Youth voices will also take the stage as speaker (Naveen Gautam speaking on world social summit session and human rights issues) during the ECOSOC Youth Blast, ensuring we are well-prepared, visible, and equipped to engage meaningfully in the upcoming UN ECOSOC Youth Forum.

Join us in shaping an inclusive and just future. Let's rise together—loudly, proudly, and powerfully.

## Key Submissions to UN Special Rapporteurs

**Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics: Access to Justice for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD)**

This submission highlights the systemic exclusion of CDWD—Dalits, Roma, Quilombola, and Haratin—from justice in toxic exposure cases. Engaged in hazardous work, they face severe health risks with little legal protection. Despite legal frameworks, discrimination, high litigation costs, and weak enforcement hinder justice. Cases from India, Kosovo, and Bangladesh reveal ongoing failures. GFoD urges legal reforms, stronger enforcement, and recognition of CDWD as key victims of environmental injustices to ensure equitable access to justice and human rights protections.

[Read Here](#)

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#### **Input on NeoNazism - Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism**

We submitted this report to highlight the ongoing racism, xenophobia, and violence faced by Roma communities across Europe, often increased by the glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism. Recent incidents in Hungary, Romania, Germany, and the Czech Republic demonstrate the alarming rise of far-right rhetoric and neo-Nazi violence against Roma. We urge the Special Rapporteur to prioritize the protection of Roma communities through stronger legal frameworks, state intervention against hate speech, and systematic data collection on hate crimes, and more.

[Read Here](#)

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#### **Submission on Worst Forms of Child Labour - Input to SR on Contemporary forms of Slavery**

GFoD has submitted recommendations to the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, highlighting the disproportionate impact of the worst forms of child labour on Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD). From hazardous labour to bonded servitude, systemic discrimination pushes children into exploitative conditions with little access to protection or justice. Our submission calls for stronger legal enforcement, inclusive education, and targeted social protections to break this cycle. Read more and support efforts to end child labour!

[Read Here](#)

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#### **Input to the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism**

GFoD's submission highlights the intersectionality of caste, work, and descent (CDWD) with race, indigeneity, and minority status. Communities like Brazil's Quilombolas and Europe's Roma face both racial and descent-based discrimination. CDWD communities are historically forced into demeaning labor, reinforcing exclusion. Women and girls face severe marginalization, gender-based violence, and barriers to justice. The submission calls for urgent need for stronger policies to combat compounded discrimination and ensure comprehensive protection for all affected groups.

[Read Here](#)

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#### **Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty: A Roadmap for Eradicating Poverty Beyond Growth**

GFoD's submission emphasizes that discrimination based on work and descent is a major barrier to equality, justice, and sustainable development. DWD perpetuates poverty, distorts labor markets, and hinders economic efficiency. Inequalities stemming from such discrimination not only violate human rights but also fuel armed conflicts and undermine development progress. The submission calls for a shift toward a human rights-based economy, urging greater investment in economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as the right to development. Addressing structural discrimination is essential to eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable growth.

[Read Here](#)

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## **Financing for Development and the road to the Seville Conference**





The [Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development \(FfD\)](#) is scheduled to take place in Spain from June 30 to July 3, 2025. The conference is expected to produce an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome, along with summaries of the plenary meetings and other discussions, which will be included in the conference report.

This conference is an opportunity for global leaders to tackle pressing issues in financing sustainable development. This is an important conference for CDWD because it will include topics related to reforming the international financial architecture and mobilizing resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

GFoD's main advocacy priorities include urging all Member States to establish adequate social protection floors with a focus on marginalized and vulnerable communities. Another key priority is the inclusion of communities discriminated on work and descent as a targeted vulnerable group in the outcome document. In the context of climate justice, GFoD is highlighting the need to consider the local requirements of vulnerable groups and their participation in the decisions that affect them, including addressing systemic forms of oppression such as discrimination based on work and descent which acts as barriers and hinders communities' access to funds, such as climate finance and the Loss and Damages Fund.

GFoD, through its membership in the NGO Committee on Financing for Development (a committee of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations), continues to be active in the preparatory processes leading up to the conference.

**Link to GFoD input into the zero draft of the Financing for Development Conference 2025 provided in April 2025 as part of the 3rd Preparatory Committee meeting in New York:**

[Check out here](#)

## This Month in Our Podcast Series! 🎧



[Listen Here](#)

This month, we launched a new episode of our podcast series, featuring the incredible Ms. Queen Bisseng from Cameroon, UN Programme Specialist for Africa at GFoD! A dedicated researcher and advocate, Queen has worked tirelessly to champion the recognition of human rights defenders supporting Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent.

From regional mechanisms to UN forums like the Human Rights Council, Queen's powerful voice has been instrumental in pushing for justice and visibility for these communities. In this episode, she sat down with Naveen Gautam from GFoD for an in-depth conversation, sharing her insights and experiences.

## Upcoming Events

## World Equality Day Celebration

Each country, each territory, has a person who believed that we all have right to dignity, and respect. Yet, many of these persons are unsung heroes, as they are not necessarily known outside of their own country, certainly not universally. It is time to celebrate their contribution to the society, it is time to acknowledge their vision, efforts and dedication.

In the lead up to the Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R Ambedkar, a revered leader and philosopher from the Dalit community on 14th April, Universal Equality Day, and follow up to the Roma Week, from 7-10 April, we are organizing a world-wide Zoom-a-thon on April 12th. This is an attempt to acknowledge the unsung heroes in the history who believed in Equality. Join us!

[Register Here](#)



### Participating Countries:

Yemen	New Zealand	Sri Lanka	Saudi Arabia	Hungary	United Kingdom
North Macedonia	Australia	India	Belarus	Germany	Brazil
Hungary	Timor-Leste	Pakistan	Lithuania	Denmark	Canada
Cameroon	Japan	Oman	Egypt	Sweden	USA
Niger	Singapore	UAE	Tanzania	Netherlands	• EST
Ghana	Malaysia	Qatar	Israel	Belgium	• UST
Mali	Bangladesh	Bahrain	Cyprus	Italy	• PST
Mauritania	Nepal	Kuwait	Bulgaria	Spain	... connecting more

JOIN US AT 10:00 AM LOCAL TIME OR  
ANYTIME ON APRIL 12TH 2025

REGISTER TODAY, VISIT:  
[INFO@AMBEDKARMISSION.ORG](mailto:INFO@AMBEDKARMISSION.ORG)



**Dr. Ambedkar  
International  
Mission (AIM)**



### Intersectional Discrimination and Racism Against Racialised Minorities in Europe

Roma Week has kickstarted to strengthen Roma inclusion and leadership within the European Union's political framework and to address the unique challenges facing Roma, Sinti, and Traveller communities in a changing Europe! In this event being organized by European Roma Grassroots Organizations (ERGO) Network, our very own Simona Torotcoi will represent the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work & Descent to highlight the challenges faced by Roma communities across Europe in workplace and beyond - centering systemic issues in the discussion.

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**News from Partners**



## Ensuring Dalit Voices in India's SDG Commitments

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), in collaboration with NITI Aayog & UNDP, successfully hosted a key consultation on SDG Goals 3, 5, 8 & 17 as part of India's Voluntary National Review (VNR) process. This important gathering brought together Dalit organizations and activists from across the country, who shared critical insights and demanded concrete action on social justice and equality.

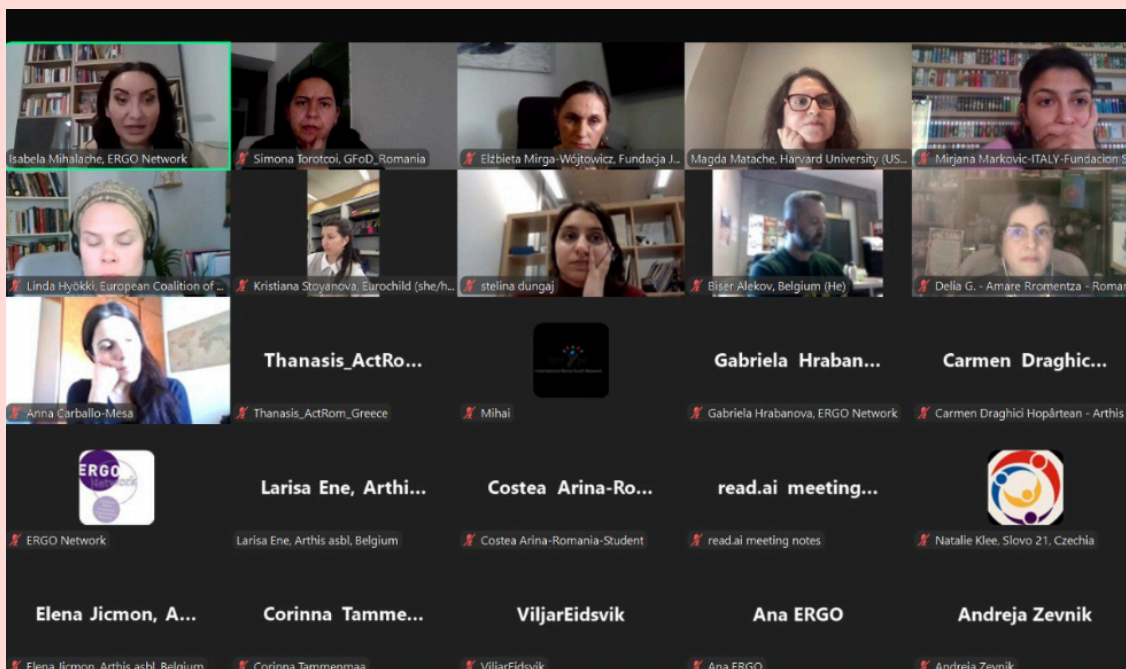
We're proud that our members and partners were a part of this crucial conversation, contributing to the discussions that aim to platform marginalized voices and ensure that Dalit perspectives are reflected in India's SDG commitments.



## Transitional Justice and the Fight Against Antigypsyism

On April 1st, an online debate moderated by Isabela Mihalache of ERGO Network gathered experts to discuss how transitional justice can address antigypsyism and historical injustices faced by Roma communities. Speakers Dr. Magda Matache, Dr. Delia Grigore, Dr. Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz, and Dr. Biser Alekov explored national and EU-level efforts to acknowledge past wrongs, ensure accountability, and promote reconciliation.

The discussion focused on challenges in policy implementation and highlighted best practices, including truth-seeking, reparations, and institutional reforms. Participants engaged with the panelists on how transitional justice can be a powerful tool for combating antigypsyism and creating lasting change for Roma communities.





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